

#BXNHFRX *****CR LOT 0148A**C044
#01499102# REG 176/1
UNION UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
1050 UNION UNIVERSITY DR
JACKSON TN 38305-3697

Emma Waters Summer Library
UNION UNIVERSITY
Jackson, TN 38305

Baptist & Reflector

Wide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

Vol. 172 / No. 20; May 24, 2006

Have a safe
Friday; next
issue is June 7
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Due to production schedule of *Baptist and Reflector*, this issue will not be an issue of paper on May 31.

The next issue will be June 7. Late breaking and Sunday School committees for June 4 will be on the Tennessee Baptist Convention web site, at tnbaptist.org.

Readers are encouraged to send the paper news items or questions for stories and to share their opinions through letters to the editor.

The staff of the *Baptist Reflector* wishes our readers a happy and safe Memorial Day holiday. □

Anti-Christian culture number one family issue, divorce is second, says LifeWay survey

LifeWay news office

NASHVILLE — A two-round survey conducted last November and December by the Internet strategies department of LifeWay Christian Resources found that modern families struggle with a variety of issues ranging from an anti-Christian culture to materialism.

In November 2005, the Internet strategies department of LifeWay, an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, began soliciting participation in an online research project, the "Top 10 Issues Facing Today's Family."

From the initial list of responses, LifeWay compiled the 20 most frequently submitted answers and sent that list to

the original survey respondents. During January, those participants used the same Internet survey tool to rank their top 10 from among those 20 issues.

Based on responses, the top 10 issues facing today's family are: (1) Anti-Christian culture; (2) Divorce; (3) Busyness; (4) Absent father figure; (5) Lack of discipline; (6) Financial pressures; (7) Lack of communication; (8) Negative media influences; (9) Balance of work and family; (10) Materialism.

Overall, more than 2,000 people from around the country offered their opinions in the survey, making this survey pool even larger than the one that contributed to last year's research project, "Top 10 Issues Facing Today's Church."

LifeWay began revealing the

results of this year's survey in early March with the announcement of materialism as the No. 10 issue. Each week, the Internet strategies department unveiled another topic in ascending order along with an extensive list of resources and information addressing that issue.

"This was an opportunity to put forward the best our organization has to offer related to the top issues as identified by the survey participants," said Michael Epps Utley, marketing coordinator in Internet strategies. "LifeWay exists to provide biblical solutions for life, and this survey gave us some additional insight into the solutions people are looking for in order to address key challenges among their families."

Some of the survey results proved somewhat surprising, Utley said. For instance, it was expected that substance abuse would rank in the top 10. Instead, unexpected issues such as busyness (No. 3) and lack of communication (No. 7) received a majority of votes.

"We were a little surprised to see anti-Christian culture rank as the No. 1 issue," Utley added.

"But when we took a look at the rest of the list, we realized that today's anti-Christian cultural mentality could be considered a contributing factor when it comes to these other issues."

Additional issues will be released this month by LifeWay.

Reports and resources compiled to address the top 10 issues are available on line at www.lifeway.com/top10. □

Youth participate in state competitions at Baptist Center



WINNERS OF THE 2006 Xtreme Bible Challenge were, in top left center photo, from left, Grant Kelley, Thomas Willis, and Hannah Davison of ClearView Baptist Church, Franklin. Runners-up, in top right photo, were, from left, Lorren Holliday, Aubrey Ham, Jason Hardy (alternate), and Brittney Ham of True Life Baptist Church, Atoka.



PARTICIPANTS IN the 2006 State Youth Speakers' Tournament were, in top left photo, from left, front row, Ashlee Willett, Calvary Baptist Church, Greeneville; Brooke Stiles, Holston Baptist Church, Strawberry Plains; Matt Brewer, First Baptist Church, Martin; Joy Howard, Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova; back row, Josh Coleman, Parkway Baptist Church, Goodlettsville; Crystal Cartwright, Kimball Baptist Church, Kimball; Juliana Robbins, Calvary Baptist Church, Waynesboro. Coleman was the state winner and Cartwright was first runner-up. Both speakers will be featured at the 2007 Youth Evangelism Conference.

2006 STATE YOUTH Bible Drill Participants were, in photo to left, from left, front row, Amber Williams, Union Hill Baptist Church, Ardmore; Mary Yom, Korean Baptist Church, Collierville; Brittany Young, Turkey Creek Baptist Church, Savannah; Christina Hale, Parkway Baptist Church, Goodlettsville; second row, Paige Clark, Speedwell Baptist Church, Bulls Gap; Cayla Ham, True Life Baptist Church, Atoka; Katie Yarbrow, First Baptist Church, Martin; Haleigh Scott, Prosperity Baptist Church, Auburntown; Taylor Sturgiss, Dallas Bay Baptist Church, Hixson. Not pictured is Becca Fisher, Norwood Baptist Church, Knoxville. Ham was the state Bible Drill winner and Williams was first runner-up. — Photos by Marcia Knox

about your newsjournal

Subscribe to the *Baptist and Reflector* for one year and receive 47 copies. Individual subscriptions, \$11; Church Leadership Plan, \$8.75 per subscription; other plans available

Lonnie Wilkey, editor
(615) 371-2046,
lwilkey@tnbaptist.org

Connie Davis Bushey, news editor
(615) 371-7928,
cbushey@tnbaptist.org

Susie Edwards, circulation/ executive assistant/advertising
(615) 371-2003,
sedwards@tnbaptist.org

Mary Nimmo, church pages/ administrative assistant
(615) 371-7929,
mnimmo@tnbaptist.org

Marcia Knox, special features assistant
(615) 371-2089,
mknox@tnbaptist.org

Office — Baptist and Reflector,
5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood, TN 37027

Mailing address — P.O. Box 728,
Brentwood, TN 37024

Phone — (615) 371-2003

FAX — (615) 371-2080

Web Site — www.tnbaptist.org

Publisher — Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board

Shared Ministries Committee —

Wendell Boertje chairman;
Tonda Strong, vice chairman;
Donna Cardwell, Marty Comer, Orvind Dangeau, Mary Beth Duke, Tim Frank, David Green, Nancy Hammons, George Hollander, Doug Jennings, Tommy Lemmonds, Ed Porter, Kenneth Sparkman, Mildred Thompson, Larry Triplett, Wes Turner

Postmaster —
Periodical postage paid at Brentwood and at additional mailing office. (USPS 041-780) POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Baptist and Reflector*, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024.

Frequency of issue —
Published weekly except for the weeks of Christmas, New Year's, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day.

Printed on
recycled paper

Marriage Protection Sunday set for June 4

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission is asking Southern Baptist churches to consider observing Marriage Protection Sunday June 4, the eve of Senate debate on a constitutional amendment regarding the issue.

Senators are scheduled to begin consideration of the Marriage Protection Amendment June 5, with a floor vote expected June 6 or 7. The MPA, S.J. Res. 1, defines marriage as only between a man and a woman. The proposal is designed to protect the institution against continuing legal efforts to legalize "homosexual marriage."

The ERLC, the Southern Baptist Convention's public policy entity, is requesting pastors to address "same-sex marriage" June 4 and to encourage church members to ask their senators to support the amendment.

"Supporters of traditional marriage need to bombard their senators' offices with e-mails and phone calls," ERLC President Richard Land told Baptist Press, "and preachers across America need to let the pulpit ring forth in clear and no uncertain terms on Marriage Protection Sunday, June 4, and help create a groundswell of support for this amendment. I can assure you the opponents of traditional

marriage are doing their best to let their voices be heard in the corridors of the Senate. It is up to us to let our voices be heard loudly as well."

Massachusetts is the only state to have legalized "same-sex marriage," but state supreme courts in New Jersey, New York, and Washington could legitimize such unions before the end of the year.

Southern Baptists and others may contact senators by calling the Capitol switchboard, (202) 224-3121, and asking for their offices. E-mails may be sent to the Senate's Internet site, www.senate.gov. □

Judge strikes down marriage amendment in Ga.

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — In a ruling sure to increase calls for passage of a federal marriage amendment, a Georgia state judge ruled May 16 that the state's constitutional marriage amendment — approved by 76 percent of voters in 2004 — violates the state constitution.

In tossing out the initiative, Judge Constance Russell ruled that the amendment is unconstitutional because it deals with two subjects — "gay marriage" and same-sex civil unions. The amendment bans both.

The ruling itself did not deal with the legality of "gay marriage" — only with a technical legal question as to whether the

amendment's language was constitutional.

Homosexual activists filed the lawsuit shortly after voters overwhelmingly adopted the amendment in November 2004, and both sides had been awaiting a decision.

The Georgia constitution prohibits amendments from dealing with more than one subject. Amendment supporters, though, contend that "gay marriage" and same-sex civil unions comprise the same issue. Legal in Connecticut and Vermont, civil unions grant homosexual couples the legal benefits of marriage without using the word "marriage."

"People who believe marriages between men and women should have a unique and privileged place in our society may also believe that same-sex relationships should have some place although not marriage," Russell wrote, according to the Associated Press. "The single-subject rule protects the right of those people to hold both views and reflect both judgments by their vote."

The ruling in Georgia is expected to be appealed.

"I am very disappointed by this decision to countermand the people of Georgia's voice in defining marriage in our state as a union between a man and a woman," Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue, a Republican, said in a statement. "This decision highlights the effect activist judges can have on our system of governance."

"The people of Georgia exactly what they were when an overwhelming cent voted in support of the constitutional amendment. I am sure that a single judge has the power to reverse their decision. I am fully assessing the option to ensure that the will of the people will not be thwarted."

The U.S. Senate is scheduled to debate the Marriage Protection Amendment, S.J. Res. 1, June 5. Supporters of the amendment contend that such as the one in Georgia make a national solution necessary. □

Ky. board affirms school's decision

Associated Baptist Press

BAGDAD, Ky. — Members of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board have affirmed the University of Cumberland's recent decision to dismiss an openly homosexual student.

Citing "the recent public controversy surrounding the Baptist school's dismissal of a student for violating the school's code of conduct," the board action noted that "we commend the university's firm stance on principles and appreciate the high standards to which it holds itself and its student body."

Board members pledged to pray for the university's leadership, faculty, and students well as "the young man" affected by this decision. □

S.C. pastor to be nominated for SBC presidency

Compiled from BP, ABP reports

TAYLORS, S.C. — South Carolina pastor Frank Page confirmed May 19 he will allow his name to be placed in nomination for president of the Southern Baptist Convention to set forth a choice in cooperative missions methodology.

Page told Baptist Press, "I can certainly confirm that I am going to allow my name to be recommended in Greensboro," where the SBC's June 13-14 annual meeting will be held.

Page's decision ensures that messengers to the June 13-14 annual convention will have a choice between two distinct visions for the SBC's future. It also means Wade Burleson, widely speculated as a candidate for the post, will not be nominated.

Page is expected to face Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd, who is the favorite of the SBC's established leadership, which has controlled the presidency for 27 years. But Floyd has been criticized for his church's weak support of the Cooperative Program, the SBC's central budget that supports the denomination's ministries and agencies.

First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., where Floyd has been pastor for 20 years, gave \$32,000 — or 0.27 percent of its \$12 million in undesignated receipts — to the Cooperative Program last year. During the same period, First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., where Page is pastor, gave \$535,000 — or 12.1 percent of its \$4.4 million in undesignated receipts.

Floyd defended his church giving record. "It's real difficult to spend percentages," he told a conservative newspaper. "You spend dollars and cents. I don't think we need to be

judging a church in relationship to what it gives percentile-wise. It violates the whole essence of the Cooperative Program, which is voluntary cooperation."

A blue-ribbon SBC panel, alarmed by sluggish CP giving, is calling for Southern Baptists to elect officers who represent churches that contribute at least 10 percent.

Asked his reasons for entering the race, Page said, "Obviously, number one, is, I have a peace from the Lord about it, that I have been seeking and did not have until this morning, that it was OK [to be a nominee]."

Second, he said, "I think it is healthy for our convention to have a choice ..."

"It is [a choice] about methodology," Page said. "I just believe that it's time for people to not only say they support the work of Southern Baptists, but to show it. And I hope that my candidacy will bring that discussion to light."

Page has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C., the past five and a half years.

"Our church gives over 12 percent to the Cooperative Program and we have a huge missions program on top of that, so we believe that one can do both. And I think that's a model that I would like for people to be able to consider."

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' channel for supporting state,

national and international missions ministry.

"I want it to be very clear that this is about theology — we're both conservative," Page said of himself and Ronnie Floyd. "It's not about personalities. I love Ronnie and think he's a wonderful man."

Page said he had not yet determined if he will place his name in nomination at the convention when the election is held June 13.

Burleson told Associated Baptist Press that he would not run since Page has been

"I just believe it's time for people to not only say they support the work of Southern Baptists, but to show it. — Frank Page"

to be nominated. "The competition is going to be very strong," Burleson had written. "I have been wonderful," he suggested. "I will ask the same of Burleson articulated."

"We must stop narrowing the parameters of cooperation in the area of missions and evangelism," Burleson wrote in a 16-page posting.

"We cannot, we must not, define Southern Baptists in more narrow terms than Baptist Faith and Message, and more importantly, we cannot disenfranchise conservative Southern Baptists who believe in the integrity of the Scriptures and the interpretations of minor doctrines of the sacred text."

This will be the first time since 1994 that the SBC presidency has been seriously contested, with at least two candidates announced ahead of time. □

Baptisms show decline in both SBC and TBC in 2004-05

First Press, B&R reports

NASHVILLE — Recently released statistics for the Southern Baptist Convention show that baptisms — which peaked in 2004 after a year-long decline — slumped in 2005, according to LifeWay Christian Resources president and CEO Thom S. Rainer. According to the Annual Church Profile (ACP), information gathered by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, baptisms last year dropped from 387,947 to 371,850, or 4.1 percent. Rainer said, noting that totals for baptisms dropped to the lowest since 1991. “We must focus our efforts, prayers, and resources on teaching people for Christ. Baptism is the outward act of obedience that pictures God’s love of redemption in a person’s life, and so for Southern Baptists the ACP results indicate we are faltering in our efforts to reach a world.” Among Tennessee Baptist Convention churches, baptisms dropped from 26,882 in 2004 to 24,728 in 2005. In the Southern Baptist Convention, the ACP showed a decrease of 234 churches published in 2005 for a total of 3,699, up from 43,465 in 2004. Total membership increased slightly to reach

16,270,315, and total receipts and missions expenditures were up.

In Tennessee, however, there was a drop in both resident and total members. Resident membership in TBC churches dropped from 842,746 to 785,318 or 6.81 percent.

Total membership, however, decreased only by 1.57 percent, from 1,118,325 to 1,100,714.

Other key areas saw decreases in both the SBC and TBC.

In the SBC decreased enrollments were Sunday School (8,068,780 — down 137,660), men and boys mission education (388,264 — down 34,943) and WMU enrollment (804,983 — down 162,848).

See chart on this page for additional Tennessee Baptist Convention statistics.

Nationally, the totals for several categories were impacted by the fact that 33 associations in Texas did not ask all of the 2005 ACP questions. This impacted discipleship training, music ministry, WMU, men/boys mission education, total gifts, and the value of congregational property.

Rainer also pointed out that the impact of the hurricanes on the Gulf Coast in 2005 is not fully known. While the state conventions involved made efforts to minimize the impact on reporting and statistics, three of the state conventions in the affected area — Florida, Mississippi, and

ACP Comparison Totals 2005 vs. 2004

	2004-2005	2003-2004	Difference	% Difference
Total Members	1,100,714	1,118,325	-17,661	-1.57 %
Resident Members	785,318	842,746	-57,428	-6.81 %
Baptisms	24,728	26,882	-2,154	-8.01 %
SS Enrollment	537,663	562,908	-25,245	-4.48 %
SS Average Attendance	285,702	289,780	-4,078	-1.41 %
DT Enrollment	125,009	138,960	-13,951	-10.04 %
Music Enrollment	119,596	124,119	-4,523	-3.64 %
WMU Enrollment	58,302	61,800	-3,498	-5.66 %
Men's Ministry Enrollment	30,782	32,994	-2,212	-6.70 %
CP Gifts	\$35,225,569	\$34,306,811	\$918,758	2.68 %
Undesignated Gifts	\$516,137,176	\$506,644,011	\$9,493,165	1.87 %
Designated Gifts	\$148,398,633	\$149,813,172	-\$1,414,539	-0.94 %

	2005	2004
# of Churches Reporting	2,751	2,656 (reported on at least 1 item on the ACP)

the Baptist General Convention of Texas — reported a loss in total membership, while two — Alabama and Louisiana — reported slight gains.

Total offering receipts were up \$550,347,520 to more than \$10.72 billion, Rainer reported. Total mission expenditures increased 2.82 percent, Rainer pointed out, bringing receipts to \$1.23 billion.

“Last year was a difficult year for Southern Baptists and the communities where they minister,” Rainer said. “While natural disasters dominated the headlines, relief and rebuilding efforts in the Gulf

Coast and Southeast Asia captivated the hearts of our churches. Southern Baptists have been blessed with bountiful resources and in 2005 we saw the church respond in unprecedented ways both home and abroad.”

In Tennessee, churches reported increases in both undesignated gifts and Cooperative Program gifts.

CP gifts increased 2.68 percent, from \$34,306,811 to \$35,225,569. Undesignated gifts rose 1.87 percent, from \$506,644,011 to \$516,137,176.

Designated gifts in Tennessee dropped slightly, 0.94

percent, from \$149,813,172 to \$148,398,633.

Libby Eaton of the TBC staff observed that ACP data reveals so many stories about Tennessee Baptist churches.

“However, most importantly for Tennessee churches is that the story of Jesus Christ is told.

“The annual collection of this type of data allows us one method to measure our effectiveness in telling the story of Jesus,” Eaton said. □ — See page 4 for a listing of the top churches in Tennessee in baptisms and CP giving.

Bivocational ministers association asks NAMB to fund office at meeting

Donnie Davis Bushey and
Diam Perkins

PICAYUNE, Miss. — The Southern Baptist Bivocational Ministers Association is asking the North American Mission Board to fund an office of bivocational ministry, and will submit the proposal to messengers attending the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June in Greensboro,

The resolution, which was approved unanimously by bivocational ministers attending the organization’s May meeting near Picayune, has been referred to the NAMB Board of Trustees and SBC Executive Committee members.

The meeting was held at the camp of Pearl River Baptist Association and drew about 100 ministers. (A report on the meeting appeared in last week’s issue.)

The resolution noted “bivocational existing churches baptize more believers per 100 members than churches led by full-compensated pas-

It was presented by Dale Holloway, bivocational consultant of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board staff.

NAMB, the resolution read, “no longer supports a national bivocational missionary who provides assistance and encourages bivocational ministers and their churches, except in cases of new church plants.”

Holloway said the timing is right because the convention needs to “get the strength restored back in our national agencies.”

Holloway told the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector that NAMB has a staff person who does some work for bivocational ministers, but the staff person also has several other jobs.

Holloway, who formerly worked in bivocational ministry at the Home Mission Board (now NAMB) reported that NAMB had a bivocational ministry consultant for 21 years until 2003.

The bivocational (bivo) ministers also heard a report on their numbers. Lloyd Elder of the Moench Center for Leadership Training, Belmont Uni-

versity, Nashville, reported that about 70 percent of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention have 92 members or less. Projections are that most of those churches are led by bivocational pastors.

Heard from president

The president of the Southern Baptist Bivocational Ministers Association, Adolphus Cleveland of Lubbock, Texas, addressed participants.

He spoke against “Schiavization” in the Southern Baptist Convention. He explained that some believe churches which “don’t give much to the Cooperative Program” and “don’t come to our meeting” can just die.

He appealed to SBC leaders and church members to help small churches “be the best they can be where they are.”

Cleveland challenged “every association in the Southern Baptist Convention to help at least one pastor a year become mortgage-free.”

He asked associational leaders to “minister to bivos” rather than be “hostile” to them.

Some churches need to be “re-pur-

posed,” he said, especially if survival is their goal. Some anglo churches need to become black and some black churches need to become Hispanic churches, he suggested.

An African-American, Cleveland referred to the racial and economic divisions in America and said divisions exist in the SBC. Bivo ministers can help other ministers and churches see those gaps and build bridges to cross those gaps.

“We need to break out of our ghetto,” Cleveland said, referring to bivo ministers and their churches.

Some bivo ministers can’t afford to attend this meeting or to obtain needed training, he concluded.

Missions project

The bivo pastors also participated in mission projects to help bivo ministers who were victims of last fall’s Gulf Coast hurricanes. They served along with members of their churches May 1-4 and 8-12 at sites in both Louisiana and Mississippi. □ — Bushey is news editor of the Baptist and Reflector and Perkins is editor of The Baptist Record of Mississippi.

Top 50 TBC Churches in Total Cooperative Program Giving, 2004-2005

Church	Resident Members	Cooperative Program
First Baptist Church, Hendersonville	7285	\$568,345
First Baptist Church, Clarksville	4022	\$421,127
Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova	21958	\$338,940
West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson	2888	\$301,576
Hermitage Hills Baptist Church, Hermitage	2672	\$283,109
Red Bank Baptist Church, Chattanooga	2869	\$282,540
Silverdale Baptist Church, Chattanooga	2421	\$265,604
First Baptist Church, Millington	2552	\$256,279
First Baptist Church, Cleveland	3570	\$247,509
Grace Baptist Church, Knoxville	3633	\$246,700
Belle Aire Baptist Church, Murfreesboro	2243	\$238,798
First Baptist Church, Morristown	1513	\$238,179
First Baptist Church, Smyrna	3258	\$229,619
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church, Nashville	2392	\$222,270
Westwood Baptist Church, Cleveland	1959	\$213,007
Alpha Baptist Church, Morristown	1432	\$208,301
Germantown Baptist Church, Germantown	6403	\$208,166
Wallace Memorial Baptist Church, Knoxville	2599	\$207,564
Ridgedale Baptist Church, Chattanooga	1501	\$205,766
First Baptist Church, Cookeville	1681	\$201,874
First Baptist Church, Sevierville	3479	\$201,341
Immanuel Baptist Church, Lebanon	2675	\$200,794
Forest Hills Baptist Church, Nashville	2076	\$198,948
First Baptist Church, Lexington	1222	\$194,368
Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett	2211	\$186,480
Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville	1768	\$185,399
ClearView Baptist Church, Franklin	1533	\$181,785
First Baptist Church, Dickson	2060	\$179,222
First Baptist Church, Humboldt	1028	\$179,097
First Baptist Church, Mt Juliet	1871	\$178,857
First Baptist Church, Lenoir City	2236	\$178,149
Thompson Station Baptist Church, Thompson Station	1979	\$169,604
Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville	3591	\$168,681
First Baptist Church, Paris	982	\$158,066
Judson Baptist Church, Nashville	1360	\$157,269
Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Kingsport	1095	\$152,777
First Baptist Church, Jackson	1095	\$149,821
Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson	2707	\$149,624
Central Baptist Church, Johnson City	1516	\$146,076
Bayside Baptist Church, Harrison	2490	\$142,849
Northside Baptist Church, Murfreesboro	1020	\$142,441
First Baptist Church, Nashville	1904	\$138,800
First Baptist Church, Tullahoma	1122	\$138,318
Bartlett Baptist Church, Bartlett	1897	\$134,933
Manley Baptist Church, Morristown	1640	\$133,980
First Baptist Church, Greeneville	1132	\$130,968
First Baptist Church, Collierville	2102	\$128,453
Hilldale Baptist Church, Clarksville	1624	\$128,221
First Baptist Church, Kingston	1013	\$124,978
First Baptist Church, Milan	1716	\$124,802

Top 50 TBC Churches in Per Capital Giving to CP, 2004-2005

Church	Resident Members	Amount Given Per Member
Hopewell Baptist Church, Savannah	64	\$474
Hickory Valley Baptist Church, Hickory Valley	30	\$300
Smyrna Baptist Church, Burlison	155	\$295
Grace Park Baptist Church, Spring Hill	8	\$247
Bethel Baptist Church, Greenfield	365	\$240
Eastanallee Baptist Church, Riceville	486	\$233
Carson Springs Baptist Church, Newport	6	\$226
Riverview Missionary Baptist Church, Loudon	13	\$217
24 Church, Pleasant View	36	\$213
Southwestern Baptist Church, Johnson City	387	\$199
Island Community Church, Memphis	7	\$195
Fairview Baptist Church, Oak Ridge	40	\$188
Hillcrest Baptist Church, Dyersburg	388	\$185
First Baptist Church, Wartrace	59	\$184
One Accord Community Church, Hixson	6	\$179
First Baptist Church, Humboldt	1028	\$174
First Baptist Church, Camden	424	\$172
Tazewell Baptist Church, Tazewell	43	\$170
Woodland Baptist Church, Brownsville	123	\$168
Calvary Baptist Church of Rutherford, Inc. Rutherford	33	\$164
First Baptist Church, Paris	982	\$161
Ararat Baptist Church, Jackson	245	\$160
First Baptist Church, Lexington	1222	\$159
Crossway Baptist Church, Brighton	23	\$158
First Baptist Church, Morristown	1513	\$157
First Baptist Church, Covington	704	\$151
Persia Baptist Church, Rogersville	316	\$147
First Baptist Church, Grand Junction	188	\$146
Stanton Baptist Church, Stanton	30	\$146
Alpha Baptist Church, Morristown	1432	\$145
Kelleys Chapel Baptist Church, Waynesboro	52	\$142
Concord Baptist Church, Chattanooga	673	\$142
Northside Baptist Church, Savannah	47	\$141
Buffalo Trail Baptist Church, Morristown	520	\$140
Northside Baptist Church, Murfreesboro	1020	\$140
Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Kingsport	1095	\$140
First Baptist Church, Counce	376	\$138
Central Heights Baptist Church, Dandridge	29	\$138
Ridgedale Baptist Church, Chattanooga	1501	\$137
North Cleveland Baptist Church, Cleveland	648	\$137
First Baptist Church, Jackson	1095	\$137
Leawood East Baptist Church, Cordova	502	\$136
First Baptist Church, Bradford	141	\$135
North Etowah Baptist Church, Etowah	644	\$131
White Oak Baptist Church, Chattanooga	383	\$127
Third Baptist Church, Murfreesboro	895	\$127
Harmony Baptist Church, Newbern	40	\$127
First Baptist Church, Somerville	797	\$126
Bethel Baptist Church, Greenbrier	471	\$125
Oak Grove Baptist Church, Gray	222	\$125

Top 50 TBC Churches in Total Baptisms, 2004-2005

Church	Resident Members	Total Baptisms
Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova	21958	663
Crosspointe Baptist Church, Millington	2820	361
Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville	3591	327
Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville	4683	229
First Baptist Church, Hendersonville	7285	210
First Baptist Church, Concord, Knoxville	5958	206
Grace Baptist Church, Knoxville	3633	189
First Baptist Church, Millington	2552	184
Germantown Baptist Church, Germantown	6403	168
Faith Promise Church, Knoxville	1635	162
The People's Church, Franklin	2224	147
First Baptist Church, Smyrna	3258	141
Thompson Station Baptist Church, Thompson Station	1979	136
First Baptist Church, Sevierville	3479	134
Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville	3426	124
First Baptist Church, Clarksville	4022	121
Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood	4562	112
First Baptist Church, Columbia	1824	106
Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett	2211	104
Central Baptist Church, Hixson	4202	100
Watson Chapel Baptist Church, Madisonville		100
Gladeville Baptist Church, Gladeville	1549	97
First Baptist Church, Cleveland	3570	94
Silverdale Baptist Church, Chattanooga	2421	92
Second Baptist Church, Union City	1336	88
Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville	1768	87
First Baptist Church, Joelton	1666	79
Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson	2707	74
First Baptist Church, Mt Juliet	1871	74
Kirby Woods Baptist Church, Memphis	2107	72
ClearView Baptist Church, Franklin	1533	72
Bartlett Baptist Church, Bartlett	1897	71
Cornerstone Baptist Church, McMinnville	775	71
Higher Ground Baptist Church, Kingsport	3018	70
West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson	2888	69
Bayside Baptist Church, Harrison	2490	67
Hillcrest Baptist Church, Lebanon	1664	67
First Baptist Church, Dickson	2060	66
First Baptist Church, Saint Bethlehem, Clarksville	932	65
New Vision Baptist Church, Murfreesboro	1219	65
Bethel Baptist Church, Palmyra	422	65
Greater Missionary Baptist Church, Clarksville	300	65
Sunnyside Baptist Church, Kingsport	1043	63
First Baptist Church, Collierville	2102	59
Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory	1945	59
Second Baptist Church, Clinton	1175	59
Stones River Baptist Church, Smyrna	1105	58
Beaver Dam Baptist Church, Knoxville	1758	58
Belle Aire Baptist Church, Murfreesboro	2243	57
Ellendale Baptist Church, Bartlett		56

Top 50 TBC Churches in Members/Baptisms Ratio, 2004-2005

Church	Resident Members	Total Baptisms	Members Baptisms
Living Water Hispanic Church, Kingsport	4	16	0.3
One Accord Community Church, Hixson	6	20	0.3
Lakeview Baptist Church, Tiptonville	24	23	1.0
Calvary Baptist Church, Spring Hill	14	13	1.1
Hilham Baptist Mission, Hilham	18	13	1.4
Faith Baptist Church, Vanleer	60	30	2.0
New Chapel Baptist Church, Decaturville	10	5	2.0
Williamsport Baptist Church, Williamsport	78	34	2.3
Island Community Church, Memphis	7	3	2.3
Epiphany Baptist Church, Springfield	74	27	2.7
Johnson Chapel Baptist Church, Santa Fe	14	5	2.8
Iglesia Bautista La Gran Comision, Morristown	97	34	2.8
Iglesia Nuevos Horizontes, Manchester	26	9	2.9
Cornerstone Baptist Church, Columbia	38	12	3.2
Crossroads Baptist Fellowship, Lebanon	125	39	3.2
Alva Baptist Church, Southside	14	4	3.5
New Center Baptist Church, Sevierville	60	17	3.5
Keplar Baptist Church, Rogersville	44	12	3.7
First Baptist Church, Mineral Springs, Monterey	129	35	3.7
First Baptist Church, Westmoreland	126	34	3.7
Hopewell Baptist Church, Savannah	64	17	3.8
Pioneer Community Baptist Church, McMinnville	194	51	3.8
First Baptist Church, Hampshire	88	23	3.8
Grace Baptist Church, Doyle	40	10	4.0
Crosspoint Community Church, Chattanooga	85	21	4.0
First Hispanic Church, McMinnville	41	10	4.1
True Life Baptist Church, Atoka	133	32	4.2
East Valley Baptist Church, Dunlap	42	10	4.2
Hope Community Church, Munford	51	12	4.2
Tazewell Baptist Church, Tazewell	43	10	4.3
Sugar Tree Chapel, Holladay	65	15	4.3
Harmony Baptist Church, Dresden	54	12	4.5
Mount Isabella Baptist Church, Tellico Plains	45	10	4.5
Sonlight Baptist Church, Gainsboro	23	5	4.6
Greater Missionary Baptist Church, Clarksville	300	65	4.6
Fishers Creek Baptist Church, Rogersville	42	9	4.7
Faith Fellowship, Johnson City	110	23	4.8
Lakeview Baptist Church, Lewisburg	48	10	4.8
Friendship Baptist Church, Knoxville	68	14	4.9
Ridgeway Baptist Church, Knoxville	73	15	4.9
Iglesia Hispana Cherokee, Memphis	120	24	5.0
Fairview Missionary Baptist Church, Lancing	85	17	5.0
Amazing Grace Community Church, Gallatin	35	7	5.0
Sugar Loaf Baptist Church, Sevierville	15	3	5.0
Southwest Baptist Church, Rockwood	15	3	5.0
Union County Baptist Church, Maynardville	5	1	5.0
Slayden Baptist Church, Slayden	76	15	5.1
East Hickman Baptist Church, Lyles	88	17	5.2
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Andersonville	26	5	5.2
Friendship Baptist Church, Shelbyville	42	8	5.3

Belmont's offer offers differing views of recent meeting



By Kevin Shrum

clarity and precision.

Fourth, I believe that Belmont assumed Tennessee Baptists would blink. Though the 1951 document, the Davidson County land deeds, and the long-standing relationship we have had with Belmont make for a substantive case, many thought Tennessee Baptists would break under the threat of a law suit and other adversarial actions. But we did not blink. We simply cleared our eyes of the sleepiness of indifference and looked square into the face of the issue with courage and conviction.

And because we did not blink Tennessee Baptists demonstrated a biblical truth: it is possible to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 6:15). Armed with legal acumen, the courage of conviction, and the velvet glove of conscience, Tennessee Baptists proceeded to 1) not accept an inadequate offer of five million dollars to "call it even," 2) to empower the study committee to move with authority to resolve this issue using the legal arts of negotiated settlement, mediation, arbitration and, of last resort, litigation, 3) and solemnly voted to remove the current trustees as an act of institutional accountability.

Once this is resolved, Tennessee Baptists must take what we have learned from this process and apply the same principles to our first priorities — evangelism, missions, and developing in the followers of Jesus a Christian worldview. The courage, conviction, and unity on display on May 9th must embolden us to confront a hostile, anti-Christian world with the unrelenting truth of the gospel, lived out with love and conviction.

As Christians we face many challenging issues, i.e. rampant materialism, the loss of a God-consciousness, the post-modern mindset, an anti-truth bias, complacent Christianity, etc. Such issues call for what we displayed at the special called meeting — a measured, resolute response with Christ-like grace. Words do mean things, ideas do matter, and the Scripture calls for us to capture every thought making it submissive to Christ (II Corinthians 10:5), but doing so with meekness and humility (I Peter 3:15).

Our choice is not either we become isolated prudes lost in a yesteryear mentality or total acquiescence to that which is not true. Rather, our choice is that of compassionate conviction, total truthfulness, and righteous resolve.

I do not know what the outcome will be of the deliberations with Belmont. It is my prayer that litigation can be avoided if at all possible. All I know is that for one, bright and shining moment, Tennessee Baptists confronted an issue with the courage and conviction many of us have longed for. May we have many more days like this! □

guest columnist



By L. Joseph Rosas III

A brief history

Belmont's request to allow for a minority of non-Baptist Christian trustees was formally raised over a decade ago. Then Belmont President, William Troutt, said that funding and affordability were among the greatest challenges faced in private Christian higher education.

An Education Committee subcommittee was appointed to study funding trends. The dramatic decrease in Cooperative Program funding as a percentage of the overall revenue of each institution reflected the significant growth of Belmont, Carson-Newman, and Union. This trend continues. All remained grateful to Tennessee Baptists for prayers, support, and the students entrusted to them. The TBC is still the most generous of all the SBC affiliated state conventions in the percentage of its budget allocated for Christian higher education.

President Troutt, with the concurrence of the other presidents, requested a study of the implications of this trend for trustee selection. The subcommittee was charged with addressing both the broadening and streamlining of trustee selection in ways that might be beneficial for all.

Dr. Troutt initiated this discussion noting that Belmont would benefit from the opportunity to include some non-Baptist evangelical Christians on its board. This would allow Belmont to maximize support in the Nashville business community and its diverse alumni base.

Among other suggestions shared were: allowing multiple trustees from a single church, term limits being extended from two to three terms, streamlining the selection process where institutions recommended only one name for each vacancy and a system requiring the approval by the institution and the TBC Committee on Boards before trustees could be elected by the convention.

Carson-Newman's charter change dramatically shifted the dialogue. Although many of the requested changes in trustee selection were eventually approved by the TBC, the idea of non-Baptist trustees — a primary reason for Troutt's initial request — was never seriously considered.

Since then Belmont leadership has repeatedly sought discussion of this option — to no avail. The proposed shift from program statements to covenant agreements provided Belmont

leadership an opportunity to again raise the issue with specific proposals reflecting school needs.

After several aborted efforts at a decision, the Education Committee narrowly approved Belmont's covenant proposal. However, the Executive Board rejected it by a vote of 44 to 29 in September of 2005.

A few corrections

In spite of accusations to the contrary, Belmont has been straightforward and above board in its dealings with Tennessee Baptists. For over a decade Belmont has sought a meaningful dialogue allowing for some committed Christians who are non-Baptist to serve as trustees.

After being advised by TBC officials of a rumor suggesting the existence of a 1951 document, Belmont acted with integrity in conducting a search. It appears that neither TBC nor Belmont officials had prior knowledge of the existence of this document. After school officials located a copy of the document and learned that the TBC could not locate one, Belmont notified the TBC of their find on the next business day with a copy provided to the TBC before the end of the week.

Belmont has maintained a commitment to its Baptist heritage and Christian values.

Even after the TBC vote rejecting an immediate settlement, Marty Dickens, Belmont Board chair, said, "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."

The TBC took several actions in the 1990s designed to protect itself from ascending liability claims. These actions also made clear that the TBC did not own or operate its affiliated entities. Not-for-profit entities are not "owned" — one cannot steal that which cannot be owned.

A Christian way of parting

Many faculty, trustees, staff, students, and alumni of Belmont who are members of our churches are known for their love, obedience, and service in response to Jesus. They deserve a Christ-like reply from Tennessee Baptists.

Christians sometimes differ and must go their separate ways — but we remain bound by the command of Jesus to love one another.

Paul condemns believers who took one another to court. (I Corinthians 6:1-6) Litigation may well cost more than the proposed settlement offer. The witness for Christ of both the TBC and Belmont is best served by a settlement.

Messengers of differing opinions frequently stated, "Belmont is owned by God." Amen! And Belmont remains in God's hands. □

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

No apology for this complaint

In my eight years as editor I have gotten a few letters or e-mails from people wanting to cancel their subscriptions. Usually the person had a good reason or was upset with me or something that was printed in the paper.

I have tried to be courteous in my responses and, when needed, apologize for anything I might have done to offend the individual, or at least explain the rationale for whatever we had done.

Last week I received yet another request to cancel someone's subscription "immediately." As I read it to see what we had done "this time," I had to reread the letter again to make sure I understood the writer's complaint.

In a nutshell, he was upset because the paper had been too positive in some cases.

While he did acknowledge he was tired of the controversy surrounding Belmont and the International Mission Board couple (the Dobbses) who was going to be terminated, then were reinstated, his primary complaint was:

"I'm weary of hearing what Tennessee Baptists have accomplished and what Baptist church is doing what."

He went on to note that Southern Baptists do not "have the corner on the market when it comes to serving the Lord ... I am interested in hearing how God works in and through the lives of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, who may be Baptist, but I'm just tired of hearing the denomination being lifted up and exalted."

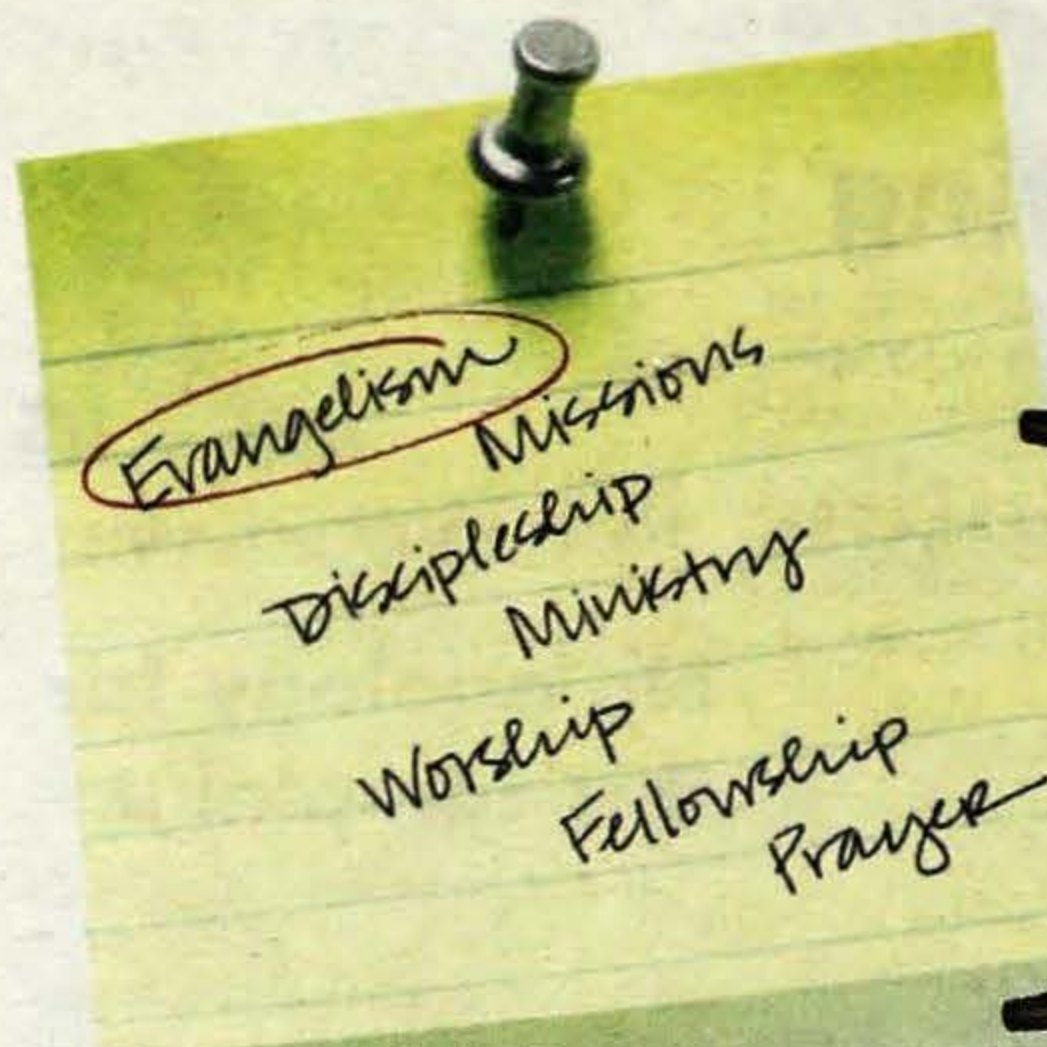
First disclaimer. I never try to exalt the TBC or SBC. God is the only One deserving of exaltation. Our stories are designed to share how God is exalted through the efforts of our churches.

Second disclaimer. I can't and won't apologize for the fact we focus on what Tennessee Baptists are doing. The *Baptist and Reflector* is the official newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

I can only imagine the complaints we would get if we discontinued our focus on Tennessee Baptists and our churches.

I am sorry this individual feels the way he does, but if the good things Tennessee Baptists do bothers him, then he needed to cancel his subscription.

As long as I am allowed the privilege of serving as editor, Tennessee and Southern Baptists will be our focus, and hopefully, God will always be exalted and lifted up. □



Church Health Matters

"Building healthy churches empowered by the presence of God"

CHURCH PLANTING Matters

Your state missionary staff is available to help your church with church planting in the following areas:

- Provide demographic information on your community
- Assist in recruiting a potential church planter
- Assessment of potential church planter
- Assist in developing a strategy for church planting
- Provide training for new church planters - Basic training for Church Planters
- Provide funds for church plant as funds become available

Included below is the contact information for members of your state missionary staff that are available to help you and your church in any area related to church planting.

Bill George(615) 371-2043
Church Planting
West Tennessee
bgeorge@tnbaptist.org

Wayne Terry(615) 355-7905
Church Planting
Middle Tennessee
wterry@tnbaptist.org

Fred Davis(865) 988-7783
Church Planting
East Tennessee
fdavis@tnbaptist.org

Tim Hill(615) 371-2032
Ethnic Church Planting
thill@tnbaptist.org

Chuy Avila(615) 371-7913
Hispanic Church Planting
cavila@tnbaptist.org



Church Planting Is an Effective Way to Evangelize

By Tim Hill

We have all heard the alarming statistics about the lostness of America. It is estimated that there are more than 200 million people in North America that are lost or unchurched. We are now the third largest mission field in the world.

North America is the only continent where Christianity is not growing. Churches in America are losing 2,765,000 members per year. The most recent report from our Southern Baptist Convention indicated that last year baptisms were down more than 4.15 percent.

I think we can all agree that we are losing America, and we need a movement of God among our people and in our land.

Church to Population Decline Ratio in US

1900
27 churches for every 10,000 Americans
1950
17 churches for every 10,000 Americans
1996
11 churches for every 10,000 Americans

Closer to home there are an estimated 3 million of our 5 million population in Tennessee lost or unchurched. Among this

number are the growing unreached groups such as 124,000 Hispanics, Asians, 15,000 Native Americans, Deaf, and some 56,000 from other groups. Some 90% of people who live in multi-housing residents are unchurched.

We are the strongest Protestant nation in the world. We have some of the finest leaders. We have the best and resources available for presenting the gospel. Yet we continue to lose ground to those who profess to be Christians but are not. We must again believers and unite with other Baptist and Tennessee Baptist churches. I doubt we live in a complicated society, in which we are trying to keep the non-changing and life transforming gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have never heard.

Therefore with these things in mind, an attempt will be made to provide fixes or pat answers as to how to evangelize the lost in our society. Below highlight several churches and organizations that are using church planting to reach the lost in their communities.

Why is church planting a viable way for reaching the lost? Let's hear from some in our state who are doing it.

Church Planting Helps Association

By Ray Jones

In the life of Jesus, we see the Son of God's primary passion is to "seek and save the lost." Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus gave us a command to do what He had been doing which was to show other people the way to a personal relationship with God.

In the Big Hatchie Baptist Association, Covington, we have found that starting new churches is one very effective method of producing more people to Jesus. Since 1980, Big Hatchie churches have started 10 new churches. Big Hatchie statistics show that new churches reach more people. During 2005, one-third of the Sunday School attendance of the 42 churches was in the 10 churches started since 1980. Also they counted for 133 of the 329 baptisms in Big Hatchie churches in 2005. New churches reach more people.

New churches have a greater diversity in membership. This includes socioeconomic and ethnic. One of our new churches is an African-American church in Ripley. In this new church will start an African-American Bible study in Covington which will lead to another African-American church.

Two English as a Second Language (ESL) groups are currently meeting which we hope will result in a Hispanic Bible Study and then a church. If we are to reach the multitudes, we must have diversity in our churches.

New churches have introduced us to new approaches of building relationships with people. Two new approaches which we have experienced are Block Parties and Servant Leadership. As other churches have witnessed, how effective these approaches have been for our new churches. The churches have said, "We can do that!" And they are successfully building new relationships.

New churches have helped us to reach more people with the good news of salvation which is only through Jesus Christ.

Ray Jones is the Big Hatchie Association, Covington, director of missions. He may be reached at (901) 476-6759 or bighatchiebaptist.org.

What Are the Joys and Heartaches of Church Planting?

By Steve Tiebout

Some 10 years ago the idea of church planting was not even on my radar screen. I mean after all I grew up in Tennessee where there seemed to be a church on every corner.

What changed was being around a church planting environment and seeing how many miracles God did in the midst of a church plant and how my lost friends were attracted to a new church.

The first church my wife and I planted was in Redwood City, California. My wife and I being from Tennessee with a strong southern accent were somewhat like fish out of water, but the Lord used us anyway. That church is still there today as one of only two Southern Baptist Convention churches in a city with a population of over 70,000.

Sure the need is great in California, but what about the need in Tennessee. When my friends began to ask us to come here to plant a church, we were skeptical of the need. There are many great churches in Cookeville that love Jesus and are winning souls. So why plant a new church here?

What the Lord showed me is that in today's culture there are so many different people from so many different backgrounds, and these people are all attracted by the gospel in their culture. The Gentiles in the New Testament were attracted by the gospel of Christ, but not by the Jewish traditions. They felt weighed down by many of the aspects of the early church that were Jewish, but not necessarily Christian.

In the same way, many people in our culture today are attracted to the gospel, but not to the traditions of their parent's church. Let me say clearly here, that neither are right or wrong, but merely different vessels of faith carrying the good news to a lost world.

Once I saw how a new church could effectively reach the unchurched, I was sold on the idea of starting as many new churches as possible to carry the Gospel to as many communities as possible. When we started our church in Cookeville four years ago, we decided that we wanted to start a new church every two years.

Since that time we have started two new churches. Some said that there was no need, but this Easter alone over 900 people worshiped the Lord in these three venues, many who were not in church just one year earlier.

Don't get me wrong, it has not been all easy. Already we have had disappointments in starting churches. We have had difficulties finding people to start churches. We have had people asking us why we would be so crazy as to send out 37 of our own people to start another church instead of hanging on to them and growing bigger. When I think of all of the baptisms that we have seen and the changed lives that have occurred, I ask myself the question. Is it worth it? And my answer is always, no doubt!

(Steve Tiebout is the pastor of The River Community Church, Cookeville. He is also the founder and leader of the Churches Planting Churches Network that now supports five new churches. He may be reached at (931) 528-3660 and at Steve@TheRiverCC.com.

What is the East Tennessee Church Planting Network?

By Jimmy Inman

While there are many local churches, all true Christians are part of the Body of Christ and are called to work together to build God's kingdom and fulfill the Great Commission. This idea is one of the foundational convictions that undergirds the concept of cooperative missions.

My biblical conviction is that church planting is at the heart of New Testament missions and is something that every church should be a part of daily. Pragmatically, I believe that church planting is a necessity to impact our nation and our world in the times in which we currently live.

As a church planter, I believe that new churches should lead the way in planting other new churches. The DNA of every church plant should include reproducing itself by birthing new disciples, leaders, cell groups, and church plants.

It was these convictions that motivated several like-minded church planters to birth the East Tennessee Church Planting Network in December of 2005. The network has been meeting on a monthly basis since then for the purpose of encouraging and equipping one another as church planters.

The Network Vision is:

- To link together like-minded churches, individuals, associations, and foundations for the purpose of expanding God's kingdom, both locally and globally through planting churches and birthing church planting networks.
- To love, build up, edify, and encourage one another in our God-given endeavors.
- To mentor and encourage new church planters.
- To birth other like-minded networks to impact Tennessee and the world.

We encourage anyone who shares this vision to join our network or begin a network in their geographic area. It does not matter if you are a new church or have been in existence for a long time.

God is calling us to partner together to reap the fields that "are already white for harvest" (John 4:35).

(Jimmy Inman is the church plant pastor for True Life Church, Jefferson City. He may be reached at (423) 277-1841 or at truelifechurchtn@aol.com.



SOME OF THE members of the East Tennessee Church Planting Network are: from left, Jimmy Inman, pastor of True Life Church, Jefferson City; Rodney Shelton, pastor of Zion Fellowship Church, Sevierville; Joseph Duckett, pastor of New Heights Church, Dandridge; Joel Ammons, pastor of Lakepoint Community Church, Jefferson City; and Bill Conrad, member of New Heights Church; and Fred Davis, Tennessee Baptist Convention East Tennessee church planting staff member.

Barna: one in five have read Dan Brown's novel

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — One out of every five Americans has read *The Da Vinci Code*, and 2 million of them have changed their religious beliefs because of it, a new Barna Group poll indicates.

The poll was released May 15, just four days before a movie based on the novel hits the big screen. According to the poll, roughly 45 million people — 20 percent of those polled — have read the book “cover to cover.” Among those who have read the book:

- Twenty-four percent said the book was “extremely,” “very,” or “somewhat” helpful to them in relation to their “personal spiritual growth or understanding.” That’s some 11 million people, an online analysis on Barna’s web site notes.

- Five percent said the book led them to change some of their beliefs or religious perspectives. That translates to 2 million people.

A murder mystery/thriller, *The Da Vinci Code* casts doubt on both the deity of Christ and the reliability of the Bible. Although its claims have been refuted by both liberal and conservative scholars, some readers nonetheless have embraced them. The first page of *The Da Vinci Code* states that much of the background of the story is true, when, in fact, it is not. The documents that serve as the basis of the story are forgeries.

“[A]ny book that alters one or more theological views among two million people is not to be dismissed lightly,” Christian researcher George Barna said in an online analysis. “That’s more people than will change any of their beliefs as a result of exposure to the teaching offered at all of the nation’s Christian churches combined during a typical week.”

The controversy likely will only increase with the movie, which is rated PG-13. According

to Barna’s research, more than 30 million people likely will see the movie in the theater, with 10 million of those viewing it having never read the novel. If the polling data for the book proves to be true for the movie, then roughly 500,000 people will change some of their religious beliefs after seeing it.

The DVD version of the movie — likely months out — also could add to the hoopla. Barna said the DVD version could have a particular impact on teens and young adults.

“We know that in a home setting, young people frequently watch movies over and over, memorizing lines and absorbing ideas that they might not have caught during their first viewing,” Barna said.

Nevertheless, Barna said, most people do not change their beliefs upon reading the book.

“Before reading *The Da Vinci Code* people had a full complement of beliefs already in place, some firmly held and others loosely held,” Barna said. “Upon reading the book, many people encountered information that confirmed what they already believed. Many readers found information that served to connect some of their beliefs in new ways.”

“But few people changed their pre-existing beliefs because of what they read in the novel ... The book generates controversy and discussions, but it has not revolutionized the way that Americans think about Jesus, the Church, or the Bible.”

The telephone poll of 1,003 adults was conducted in May. □

Second seminary president endorses SBC candidate

Associated Baptist Press

WAKE FOREST, N.C. — A second seminary president has endorsed Ronnie Floyd for Southern Baptist Convention president, despite an admonishment from the convention’s chief executive, Morris Chapman.

In an e-mail to students and others May 15, Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, described Floyd as a “godly man” who “would make a fine president if he is elected by our convention.”

Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., is the presidential choice of the convention’s leaders, who have controlled the presidency for almost three decades, usually without opposition.

Earlier, Akin also announced he will nominate J. D. Greear, pastor of the Summit Church in Durham, N.C., as second vice president.

Akin’s endorsement of Floyd came two days after Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, warned in his blog: “Nominating or being nominated for an elected office of the SBC, or endorsing a nominee for an elected office, in my opinion, lessens the importance of the work to which the entity head has been called.”

Chapman said most SBC agency executives historically have avoided endorsing or nominating candidates for denominational office — or serving as an officer — because of potential conflicts. His comments were clearly directed at Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the only recent SBC president to

serve simultaneously as an agency executive. Patterson endorsed Floyd May 12.

Unlike the recent past, this year’s presidential election is expected to be hotly contested. A network of younger conservatives and others not involved in current convention leadership have called for more openness in SBC life and an end to the politics of “exclusion.”

Others have argued Floyd, one of the most visible SBC leaders of late, is poorly suited to be president because his church contributes less than 1 percent of its undesignated budget through the Cooperative Program, the central budget that funds state conventions and SBC agencies.

A special SBC panel studying sluggish Cooperative Program giving is encouraging the denomination to elect leaders from churches that give at least 10 percent.

Akin, in his endorsement memo, argued Floyd’s Cooperative Program giving is better than it seems.

During the past 20 years, he wrote, “First Baptist Church Springdale has been a leader in both the state of Arkansas and across our convention in Cooperative Program giving. During

the time Dr. Floyd has been pastor of First Baptist Church Springdale, the church given \$5,988,114 to SBC causes. In 2005, the actual amount given to SBC causes by First Baptist Church Springdale was \$489,862.”

According to a church member, the Springdale congregation gave \$32,000 in through the Cooperative Program — which includes both state and national conventions — or 0.27 percent of undesignated receipts of \$11,952. Another \$189,000 — 1.8 percent — was sent to the national Cooperative Program, bypassed the state, and \$489,862 was designated for undisclosed “SBC causes.”

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — PASTOR

Beaver Dam Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., is now accepting resumes for the position of full-time senior pastor. Please send resume to P.O. Box 77, Knoxville, TN 37938, or e-mail to pastorsearch@bdbc.org.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

First Baptist Church, Monterey, Tenn., is now accepting resumes for a full-time pastor position. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, 108 Chestnut St., Monterey, TN 38574. Post to the attention of Sonny Gilpatrick.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Hills Crossing Baptist Church is seeking God’s will in finding a full-time pastor, who has a heart for people, is evangelistic, who is mission-minded. We are a traditional, conservative Southern Baptist church, situated in a growing area of Northeast Georgia. Please send resumes to Chestnut, P.O. Box 14, Clarkesville, GA, 30523, by May 14, 2006.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

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

MINISTRY — EDUCATION

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

MINISTRY — MUSIC

Church pianist/keyboardist needed at Fairfield Glade First Baptist Church, Fairfield Glade, Tenn. Proficiency in sight-reading, improvisation, and accompanying desired, with a primary focus on enhancing worship. Must be a Christian who is available Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, and occasional special rehearsals. Please contact Eric Hinson @ (931) 200-4

BOWLING UNITED INDUSTRIES
Manufacturers of Lights, Baptisries, Steeples
www.BUchurch.com
1-800-446-7400
P.O. Box 2250 • Danville, Virginia 24541

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — STUDENT

Part-time minister of youth, Sanford Hill Baptist Church, Henderson, Tenn., (731) 989-5397 or shbc1964@charterinternet.com. See job description www.sanfordhill.com youth page.

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

We are searching for God’s person to fill our full-time minister to preschoolers and children at Bellevue Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn. Please send resume to Dr. Mike Shelton, 7400 Hwy. 70S, Nashville, TN 37221 or by e-mail at pastor@bellevuebaptist.com.

MINISTRY — COMBINATION

First Baptist Church, Somerville, Tenn., is seeking a full-time minister to students & church activities director. Experience in a Southern Baptist church preferred. We are a growing church with 350-400 in worship. Job description available upon request. Interested applicants send resume to Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church 12685 South Main St., Somerville, TN 38068.

Myrtle Beach Ocean Front

Corner condo, smoke-free, pool view and lazy river.
Cell phone: (843) 602-0466
Home phone: (843) 248-4561

Affordable Beachside Vacation Condos

www.gulfshorescondos.com
All size units available, Summer Special 2 night weekend, \$225.00; 4 week-nights, \$430.00 Efficiency Unit (2 Adults, 2 Kids) Good 5-26 thru 8-6 (205) 556-0368 or (205) 554-1524



Christian Laser Creations

State of the art laser engraving system that can engrave your special message, picture, or information on glass, mirror, brass, or wood. These plaques are great for church fund raisers, mission trips, or a gift for that special graduate.

Jerry & Diana Smith
(615) 449-6317

E-mail: jds@bellsouth.net

LifeWay CHURCH BUSES
Buses provided for LifeWay by **Carpenter Bus Sales**
Franklin, TN • Since 1953
1-800-370-6180 • carpenterbus.com

BusGroup Commercial Bus Sales
We offer buses from 8 - 57 passengers. Call about our FREE:
• CDL Training class March 18
• Fundraiser package
• Transportation Solutions package
• Quote
866-726-5142
www.bushgroup.com

Knoxville choir performs choral classic for its original purpose

Baptist and Reflector

KNOXVILLE — The music ministry of Central Baptist Church, Bearden, here, recently took a choral masterpiece and used it for what it was originally intended — to bring comfort to grieving families.

German Requiem" by Johannes Brahms is a Protestant oratorio written to provide comfort for those who live through the death of a close family member or friend.

The Scriptures for the movements were selected by Brahms himself from Martin Luther's German Bible (the German Requiem). Verses and music were chosen to bring consolation, hope and faith to those who were grieving.

Going back to the music's original purpose was the intent of the music and worship ministry of Central Baptist when it presented "Brahms Requiem" on April 30.

During the last two or three years we have suffered an unusual number of deaths in our church family, members of all ages," said Wendell Boertje, minister of music and worship at Central.

As a music ministry we need to say to all of these families that we care about them in their grief and desire to keep the memory of their loved one alive in our church.

"The Requiem by Brahms was the strongest way we could do that."

Members of the adult choir were asked to volunteer for this monumental undertaking and were formed into a festival chorus which was opened to all Central and community musicians who had sung the Brahms Requiem before and wished to join on this project.

A full professional orchestra was enlisted as well as soloists Emily Douglass, soprano, and Perry Ward, baritone, Boertje added.

Letters were sent to more than 80 individuals in the church who had lost a loved one in the last three years. They were invited to come as guests and be seated in a center section reserved for them. They were asked to submit the name(s) of their deceased loved one for printing in the program.

The Requiem was presented in honor of the guests and in memory of those who had died. Some 65 persons accepted the invitation to attend as guests and 100 names were printed as memorials.

Harold Bryson, a retired denominational employee and seminary professor, gave expositions of the Scriptures of each movement before that section was sung, Boertje explained. The full text was printed in the program. Bryson's comments were



THE ORCHESTRA and choir of Central Baptist Church, Bearden, in Knoxville, recently took a choral classic and performed it for what it was originally intended — to comfort people who had lost a loved one.

directed to those guests in the center section, Boertje said.

The purpose of the writing of Brahms Requiem and the intention of its presentation at Central was realized, he noted.

Boertje said comments began to come immediately. One professional orchestra musician said that he had played the Brahms multiple times but had never been asked to hear the Scriptures or think about them.

He shared from one person who sat in the middle section. "My husband died four years ago and the Scripture and music were so uplifting."

Boertje reminded his choir that too many great sacred masterpieces have been taken from the church to the concert hall where they have been relegated to a performance.

"It's time for some of our church music ministries to recapture these great works for the sacred and spiritual purposes for which they were intended," he said.

"While it becomes increasingly difficult to challenge our musicians with works of this stature the rewards have become greater than ever. I told the choir before we left the choir suite that evening that talents come from God but character is something we are responsible to build decision by decision and challenge by challenge.

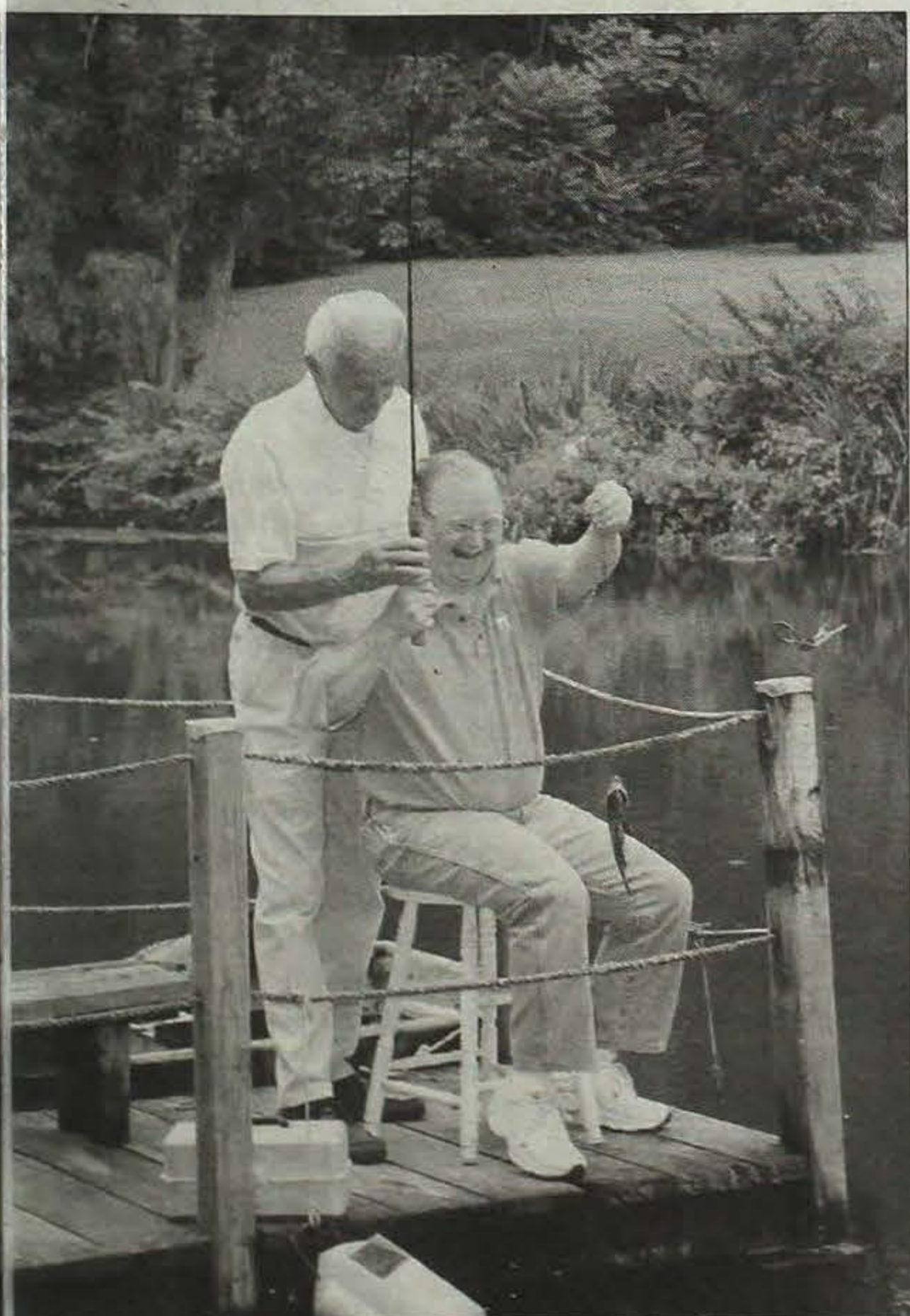
"The challenge of our preparing this work has strengthened the character of our choir," Boertje said.



WENDELL BOERTJE, minister of music and worship at Central Baptist Church, Bearden, in Knoxville, leads the choir and orchestra in a recent performance of "A German Requiem."

The spiritual impact and ministry will continue for a long, long time, he added. □

FATHER'S DAY OFFERING 2006



Be generous and willing to share.

1 Timothy 6:18

Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes is a benevolent Christian ministry providing quality and affordable residential care for senior and developmentally disabled adults at eight locations across the state.

Your gifts through your church help us subsidize the cost of care for more than 400 residents. Give generously and willingly in honor of, or as a memorial to, your father on Father's Day.

Thank you for your prayers and gift!!

Father and son sharing an eventful moment captured by Glenn Johnson/LifeWay.

Missionaries with state ties appointed

NAMB news office

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Three missionaries with Tennessee ties have been appointed by the North American Mission Board.

Elizabeth G. Sessions will serve as a special ministries missionary for Smoky Mountain Resort Ministries, serving in Gatlinburg.

As an international ministry coordinator, the Alabama native will minister to the international students who live and work in Sevier County, who come from all over the world to earn money and get an "American" experience.

Michel L. and Jeniver Boyer, both Tennessee natives, are serving in Morgantown, W. Va., where he has been appointed as a local collegiate evangelism



J. BOYER



M. BOYER

missionary.

The couple holds degrees from Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville and he is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

The Boyers have two children, Charis and Aranaïs. □



SESSIONS

Ladies Chorus finds ministry opportunities abound in Montana

By Marcia Knox
Baptist and Reflector

BILLINGS, Mont. — The Tennessee Ladies Chorus (TLC) recently traveled April 22-May 1 on a mission choir trip to Montana where they led worship for a ladies conference, held a formal concert, and performed in eight different Baptist churches.

The 30 ladies were under the direction of Paul Clark of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff. Vickie Wright, organist for First Baptist Church, Nashville, served as the group's piano accompanist.

The women came from 21 churches across Tennessee, representing different worship styles and church sizes. Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory, had the largest single group on the trip with four participants.

The TLC anchor event was the Montana Southern Baptist Convention state women's conference held April 27-29 at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Billings, the largest Southern Baptist church in Montana.

Around 230 women attended this year's "Celebration for Women" Conference, which doubled in attendance from last year and is an annual event.

"Several Montana women who attended the conference told of never hearing a choir when the TLC led worship music Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at the sessions," said Clark.

"It was inspiring to watch worshipers in Montana at the Celebration for Women Conference and then in the Montana churches on Sunday as they sang with enthusiasm in response to the leadership our Tennessee ladies provided."

The TLC soon discovered that though they came to minister, they were also being ministered to.

"I was shocked how I was ministered to on this mission trip," said E'lane Draughon, current president of the TLC and member of Tulip Grove Church.

Draughon said circumstances in the lives of many TLC members tried to "rob us" of preparation time and joy. "However, we knew that we were going to minister, but we were ministered to by the women of Montana and by Angela Thomas of Knoxville, who led the devotional sessions," she said.

"It was the Montana women's precious spirits,



PAUL CLARK of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff recently led members of the Tennessee Ladies Chorus on a trip to Montana. Team members included (not as pictured) Linda Bentley, Kathy Bowman, Nena Carruth, Sylvia Charton, Theresa Chastain, Tina C. Beck, Becky Cox, Carol Dickerson, E'lane Draughon, Jeanette Gilley, Charlotte Hanson, Allison Leding, Leigh Ann Leslie, Mitzi Lundy, C. McLeod, Jennifer Milligan, Nena Moss, Glenda Nelms, Jolita Nemeth, Carla Nichols, Elaine Nunnery, Leanne Robbins, Debbie F. Sharon Southall, Nanette Tatum, Marilyn Taylor, Pamela Wall, Teresa Wood, and Vicki Wright, accompanist.

which created a hunger for the music," added Draughon. "Those women looked to us for worship leadership to sing louder and better. Their faces held excitement and joy, which energized us and created a desire for the Lord."

"It amazes me the controversy in church music that people have in the South," said Nena Moss, TLC East Tennessee representative and member of Central Baptist Church, Kingston.

"They don't fight over musical styles in Montana. They were so happy to get anything that could be used in their worship. Maybe we are a little spoiled in the South with our music. Montana churches just weren't distracted by a desire for a particular style. It was refreshing."

Montana churches just weren't distracted by a desire for a particular style. It was refreshing. — Nena Moss, Kingston

At least two years prior to the trip, Clark became interested in the TLC doing a choral event by themselves instead of accompanying the Tennessee Men's Chorale.

"Nothing meshes a group together more than going on a mission field with a choir tour," said Clark. "We had half

of the total group of the TLC ladies on the tour. We also had a good mixture of voices with all the parts represented."

Pam Smith, who serves as the Montana convention staff, was the catalyst who put the TLC together with the Montana women's conference. As early as December 2004, Clark, Smith, Draughon, and others met to put together the mission trip.

Smith told Clark that Montana Baptist churches struggled for music. He also found out that there were no relationships among the Montana churches with musicians and music teachers in the communities and no connections with the Billings Symphony.

"With these musical issues in mind, we began to focus prayers on the unique gifts, the sounds, and the voices of this group of TLC ladies who would be traveling to Montana," added Clark.

A Friday night formal concert, "An Evening of Sacred Music" was held April 28 at the Lincoln Center, an arts center in Billings.

"An answer to prayer came from a Christian couple in the symphony, John and Cheri Sinz, a bassoonist and a pianist, who joined the TLC ladies as guest artists for the concert," noted Clark.



PAM SMITH of the Montana Southern Baptist Convention introduces the Tennessee Ladies Chorus during a conference at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Billings, the largest Southern Baptist church in Montana.

Mark Langley, the Montana convention's music counterpart to Clark, also led the formal concert by directing some hymns, anthems, and classical pieces. More than 500 people attended the performance in the Lincoln Center which raised money for the Montana convention with ticket sales of \$10 each and of TLC CDs.

On April 30, the TLC broke into eight different ensembles to perform in the Montana churches. One group traveled more than four hours to reach their church.

The Montana convention took requests from their churches for the ensembles and had matched the groups with the musical style of the churches.

"Sometimes I think we have full music ministries in our churches so accustomed to what we have that we become the blessing of being participate in making as a means of worship Lord," noted Clark.

"A beautiful outcome of partnership mission efforts can be the refreshment that comes from sharing those who are hungry that honors the Master."

"It was evident that was a hunger for music in Montana churches. When the Montana ladies sang their faces lit up, music touched them, they wanted to be engaged in the music, and they trembled."

minister's corner

A. Steelman

At the other day at a busy intersection where the lights were not working. It was extremely congested and there was no officer on the scene to direct. Then happens, impatience and unkindness got the best of many drivers. As I watched the deterioration, I was reminded of how important those traffic lights are to everyday life. Too, I wondered what a difference there would be if one with authority were standing at that intersection.

In life, there are many thoroughfares and intersections in which everyone needs guidance. I am especially sensitive to these thoughts because of where I am in my life.

Transition is a busy road that is crowded both with confusion and calm. The thing we want most is to keep these emotions in the correct lanes of life. There are many situations and events that bring us to intersections of choice, and we need to know we are headed in the right direction and in the appropriate lane.

Like the faulty traffic light, we have a Guide who is always in place. Many years ago there was a preacher who struggled with finding the right lane. Here is how he explained how he found his way.

"Your ears will hear a word behind you, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right or to the left" (Isaiah 30:21, NAS).

I discovered what we have come to know — that guidance is available to us in all of life's situations. It is incumbent upon the traveler to keep a keen ear for the voice of God. I am thankful for the testimony of a centuries old preacher who gave us this instruction to guide us along the road of life. □ — Steelman is pastor of Red Bank Baptist Church, Chattanooga.

Donald F. Murray

Gi Berra, America's favorite philosopher, once said, "It's gotta be determined to be determined." I think he has a good point. Life requires determination, which is made up of focus and persistence, in the things that matter.

Wise saying from the past goes like this: "Don't get discouraged. It's usually the last key in the bunch that turns the lock." Henry Ward Beecher once said, "It's not to go down a hill than up it, but the view is much better at the top." Robert Frost, in one of his poems, said, "The best way out is always through."

We must be determined followers of Jesus Christ. Life was not easy for Him, and it will not be for us. There is no greater joy than to follow in His steps! Perhaps, in this post-Easter season, you are feeling a bit tired, or discouraged. Life has its highs and lows, and perhaps you are feeling a little low. I know that since Mom's death in mid-March, I have felt a heaviness in my own heart. Life doesn't seem to flow now, as it normally does.

In life's low and high seasons, we need to remain faithful to our God, stay the course, and serve the Lord through His church. We need to be determined disciples.

If some of your spiritual disciplines have slipped, pick them back up again. Be fervent in your prayer life, diligent in your Sunday School and church attendance, faithful in your stewardship, and durable in your ministries.

All that we are and all that we do, we must let God live in our lives and be our strength. We must let His will be our guide, His way be our path, and His will be our voice. When we do that, the words of Isaiah will come true all over again: *Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.* □ — Murray is pastor of Central Baptist Church, Johnson City.

Mary: unwavering focus

By Phil Taylor

Focal Passage: Luke 10:38-41;
John 12:1-8

There are two places where we sit before the Lord — privately, when we are alone; and publicly, when we meet with His people to worship Him and to serve Him. It is very easy of course, just to sit, and not really to sit before the Lord. The trouble with most of us is that we are so much on our feet — hurrying, rushing, and working. What we need to do is to sit quietly before the Lord. This should be our posture. We need to do this deliberately, by setting aside time for it, and we need to do it regularly and frequently. *Mary sat at Jesus' feet* (Luke 10:39).

Mary's attitude of sitting before the Lord suggests some things to us. When we sit we are in a relaxed position; and what a need there is for every one of the Lord's servants to know how to relax — physically, mentally and, above all, spiritually! It is no exaggeration to say that the secret of good health, poise, peace, and power in body, mind, and soul is found in the art and practice of relaxation. This is true with regard to our bodies and our minds, and it is also true with regard to our souls. As we get older it is good for us if, in addition to our normal amount of rest at night, we can also rest occasionally during the day. Do you have the equivalent of this in relation to your spiritual life and needs?

In the case of Mary, her attitude of sitting before the Lord indicated submission. She was "at His feet." At whose feet? At the feet of the King, her Lord, and Sovereign. How great He is, and how small she was.

Our great need is to get into this place of submission to our Lord, where we recognize His majesty and holiness and where we yield completely to His sovereignty and authority in our lives.

When Mary sat before the Lord she was expecting that something would happen; and, of course, something did happen. The very fact that she had sat there in the presence of the King meant that she would never quite be the same again. How could this be? When Isaiah went into the presence of the Lord his life was completely changed and his ministry was revolutionized. Likewise, when we come to sit before the Lord we come in faith expecting something to happen. What does happen?

We see His face. Try to picture Mary as she sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His word. When we come to sit before the Lord it is to worship Him, to recognize His greatness, His glory, and His grace; and when we look into His face we are changed into His likeness.

Perhaps our greatest present need is simply to see the face of the Lord Jesus. To see His face will cure our ills, relieve us from our tensions, banish our pride, dispel our jealousies, and enable us to live vic-

Sunday School Lesson
Family Bible Series
May 28

toriously, happily, and effectively to God's glory.

We hear His word. Of course, when Mary sat at the feet of the Lord she spoke to Him; but what is more important is the fact that He spoke to her. And surely this is our great need: to hear what the Lord has to say to us.

This study really impresses upon us the importance of cultivating a holy walk with God. It emphasizes the essential requirements in the life of a Christian worker, namely, communion with the Lord Himself.

When British General Charles Gordon, the great Christian soldier, was in his tent praying, his men would know that he was alone with his God because of the white handkerchief attached to the entrance to his tent. This white handkerchief was a warning that no one was to enter and to interrupt the General's interview with his Lord. Do you have a white handkerchief outside your "tent?" □ — Taylor is director of missions for Bradley County Baptist Association, headquartered in Cleveland.



TAYLOR

Praise our incomparable God

By Marvin Nail

Focal Passage: Micah 7:8-20

It is never easy to keep our faith strong in the midst of difficult times. We keep wondering when God is going to step in and do something to deliver us from the trials. But worse still is having to suffer while those around us mock our faith because we are in such trying times.

In those situations we and they might wonder if God has deserted His own. Though we may endure those circumstances longer than we want, we can always be assured that our heavenly Father will come to us for our good.

God will still deliver His own
(vv. 8-10)

Judah was in the midst of terrible trials, first from the Assyrians and then from Babylon. The Assyrians had openly mocked God's people for thinking that He could deliver them from their god and the power of their army. The Babylonians were almost on the horizon to bring their nation to an end.

But the prophet Micah, like his contemporary Isaiah, was able to see that these enemies would be confounded. The prophet confesses that Judah deserved to be punished. She had earned the indignation of God; but He would purge them and then lift them again. But those who mocked her God and His people would come to a time of shame once He had accomplished

His judgment on them.

God still has a future for His own (vv. 11-13)

In ancient times nations sometimes erected low stone walls or fences along their borders simply to indicate the extent of their territory and not for protection. In this case the prophet looks to a time when new boundary markers would be built because the land of Judah would be greatly extended.

That day would also indicate a time of peace, even with longtime enemies symbolized by the mention of Assyria and Egypt. Not only would they be at peace, but these former enemies who had once been great powers would be coming to Judah seeking favor.

God will display His power for His own (vv. 14-17)

God will do this thing. Israel's power was never about its kings or the might of its people. It was about the power of her God. In this section of the lesson, Micah speaks to God and for God about the future blessedness of His people.

The redemption that God will be bringing to them will be as marvelous as the deliverance God brought to the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Their suffering had in many ways been as great as theirs, and so would their salvation.



NAIL

Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
May 28

In the process, these so-called great world powers would be ashamed of their might in the face of the real power of Judah's God. They would bow down in the dust in fear of a people with a God as strong as this God who fought on behalf of His people.

God will show His faithfulness to His own (vv. 18-20)

It surely seemed at times that their suffering would never end, especially when they remembered the story of the glory days when all the region took notice of the people of God. But the prophet assured them that He would again have compassion on them (v. 19).

Micah speaks of the forgiveness of God and His willingness to put their past transgressions out of mind. Along with that he speaks of the coming time when the covenant is restored, using terms like "loyalty" and "faithful love."

Both Micah and Isaiah conclude with hope in a time when it seemed that all hope was lost. They demonstrate that when God's errant ones are willing to return to Him in repentance, He is always willing to restore them. □ — Nail is a former pastor and current member of First Baptist Church, Nashville. He is an employee of LifeWay Christian Resources.

Leaders

◆ **Red Bank Baptist Church**, Chattanooga, will honor **Fred Steelman**, senior pastor, with a retirement celebration for 33 years of ministry June 4 at the Chattanooga Hamilton County Convention and Trade Center.

◆ **Rocky Mount Baptist Church**, Athens, has called **Jerry Plaster** as pastor effective May 14. He previously served the church as interim pastor and also served as pastor for 33 years in the area.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Athens, recently called **Carl Creasman Sr.**, as associate pastor to senior adults. A longtime Tennessee Baptist Convention parliamentarian, he has also served as a local educator and pastor.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Smithville, has called **Philip Dougan** of McMinnville as interim pastor effective May

14. He formerly served as interim pastor at West Main Baptist Church, Alexandria, for over a year.

◆ **Lakeview Baptist Church**, Tiptonville, has called **Darrell Morgan** as pastor.

Associations

◆ **Beulah Baptist Association**, Union City, will participate in a mission trip to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 16-25 to support the Tennessee/Rio Baptist Partnership. The association is also asking for churches and groups to adopt a soldier in the 913th Division of the National Guard. To adopt a soldier, contact Johnny Dyer at (731) 885-3193 or Connie Murdock at (731) 885-2254.

◆ **Sequatchie Valley Baptist Association**, Whitwell, is sponsoring a construction mission trip to First Baptist Church, Pearl River, La., July 8-15. Teams will

build at least two small houses for families who were victims of the hurricanes. Call the association mission center for more information, (423) 658-5491.

Events

◆ A recent revival held at **West Tennessee State Penitentiary**, Henning, resulted in 75 inmates accepting Christ and one inmate being called to preach, according to Paul Conquest, West Tennessee penitentiary chaplain, who coordinated the event. Evangelist Floyd "Lammie" Lammersfeld of McKenzie was the speaker.

Churches

◆ **LifeWay Baptist Church**, Atoka, held a recent revival which resulted in five people making professions of faith and one other decision. Floyd "Lammie" Lammersfeld,

evangelist, of McKenzie, spoke.

◆ **Una Baptist Church**, Nashville, is planning a senior adult trip to Niagara Falls, N.Y. and Toronto, Alberta, Canada, in September. The trip includes 6 nights lodging and meals along with tours. For information, call Sue Maynard, administrative coordinator, at (615) 361-5775.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Ashland City, will celebrate its 100th homecoming anniversary June 11. Former pastor David Smith, president of Brewton-Parker College, Mt. Vernon, Ga., will speak during the worship service. Jerry Boyte, former First Church minister of music, will direct the music. Lunch will follow the service. For information, contact Peggy McGowan at (615) 792-5400 or (615) 792-5401.

◆ The senior citizens of **Wildersville Baptist Church**,

Wildersville, will meet June 1 at noon. John Adams, pastor of East Union Baptist Church, Jackson, will speak.

◆ **Grace Baptist Church**, Springfield, will hold a burning service May 28 to present the debt-free status of its present building. The church dedicated the building May 24, 1998.

◆ **Brush Creek Baptist Church**, Brush Creek, will hold homecoming May 28. Sunday School begins at 9 a.m. The Wilburns will be in charge. For more information, call conniecdtccom.net.

◆ **Radnor Baptist Church**, Nashville, will hold a 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament June 3, beginning at 10:30 a.m. The event is a fundraiser for a youth mission trip to New Orleans. For more information, call the church at (615) 832-2004.

Mitchells honored by Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy

For Baptist and Reflector

SEYMOUR — David and Marsha Mitchell, missionaries in Ponce, Puerto Rico, have been named Outstanding Alumni of 2006 for Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy/The King's Academy here.

The school's International Alumni Association selected the Mitchells for their ongoing service as missionaries to Puerto Rico's deaf population since 1984. David Mitchell is President of Puerto Rico Deaf Ministries, Inc. His wife, Marsha, is administrator of the non-profit corporation.

The award was announced by academy president Walter Grubb May 6 during the school's annual Alumni Day festivities on its campus.

Trained as a barber, David Mitchell was working as a hair stylist in Martin, in the early 1970s when he sensed God's call to the ministry. He and his wife, Marsha, moved to Pineville, Ky., where they both pursued further biblical training at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. David earned the bachelor of theology degree from Clear Creek in 1979.

The Mitchells were serving Willingham Memorial Baptist Church in Ridgely in 1981 where David was pastor when he experienced dramatic hearing loss. As the loss worsened, he resigned as pastor.

The couple struggled to understand God's plan for their lives. Friends recommended they come to the academy in Seymour. The academy had a thriving educational ministry to deaf students at that time. At the academy, David and Marsha took classes as non-traditional students, immersing themselves in the deaf culture on campus.

David and Marsha now see clearly what was happening in their lives. "God permitted my hearing loss for a purpose," David says. "I would never have known of the serious needs of deaf people had I not become deaf."

Though unusual, their two children, David, Jr., and Lei Ann, attended Harrison-Chilhowee alongside their parents. David then served as the school's



DAVID MITCHELL, back row, far right, and deaf men he works with in Ponce, Puerto Rico, sign the message, "I love you."

chaplain to deaf students.

An invitation to visit Puerto Rico on a mission trip in 1984 lured the Mitchells there to assist a Southern Baptist missionary. After one week, they received a clear sense that God was moving them to Puerto Rico to serve the deaf population there. They have lived in Puerto Rico since 1985.

The Mitchells work as Mission Service Corps volunteers under the auspices of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. As such, they must raise all their own financial support, including travel, housing, and living costs, as well as ministry costs. David regularly travels to churches throughout the United States, sharing the story of need in Puerto Rico.

Limited educational opportunities exist for the deaf there, and social stigmas are even worse. Less than five percent of hearing families ever learn any method of communicating with their deaf children. Churches and government agencies do little to help.

Above the social concerns for the deaf people of Puerto Rico, the Mitchells seek to minister to their spiritual needs. Over 137,000 deaf people live in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. David serves both as pastor of the Deaf

Mission in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and pastor of the deaf department of Nazaret Baptist Church in Puerto Rico.

The Mitchells have personally been involved in leading over 500 people to profess the Christian faith. Five deaf mission points are established on the island now, with one deaf church constituted. They now focus on training as much as evangelism. Some weeks they travel over 1,500 miles.

David and Marsha conduct camps and retreats together to encourage Christian leaders. Marsha writes the curriculum for Bible lessons and retreat programs. They also coordinate a small army of volunteers from the United States who travel annually to Puerto Rico to help with the efforts.

Fifteen years ago, David lost all his hearing ability. A cochlear implant 10 years ago enables him now to communicate quite well, speaking and hearing. Marsha has had a bout with breast cancer. Although she has considerably less energy than before, she enjoys a clean bill of health at this time. David recently had a stint put in his heart, and is regaining his strength as well.

In accepting the Outstanding Alumni awards, David said, "Harrison-Chilhowee



DAVID AND MARSHA Mitchell stand in front of the academy in Seymour, Tenn., where they have served as missionaries to the deaf for more than 20 years.

will forever have a place in our lives. Because of what the academy did, the school shares in every soul saved and every life that is changed here in Puerto Rico.

"We owe a lot to Tennessee Baptist and the academy for integrating mainstreaming deaf students in our program before it was popular to do so. They showed me total communication and how to communicate with deaf people whatever way possible, in other words whatever it takes."

Of his wife, Marsha, David says, "When a spouse becomes deaf, marriage is a challenge. She kept me out of a divorce. We're a team!" declares David.

The Mitchell's daughter, LaRaine, 1985 academy graduate, accepted the award on behalf of her parents who were unable to attend the ceremony.

Harrison-Chilhowee operates under the corporate identity of Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy. Its school division has been known as The King's Academy since 1993. □