

Baptist & Reflector

statewide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

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No issue next week; have a safe holiday
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — In accordance with the production schedule of the Baptist and Reflector, there will not be an issue next week in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

Late-breaking news and Sunday School commentaries for Sept. 10 will be posted on the Tennessee Baptist Convention web site at www.tnbaptist.org.

The next issue, which will be dated Sept. 13, will feature reports of the TBC's committee on Committees and Committee on Boards. Convention bylaws require the publication of those reports 60 days prior to the annual meeting which will be held this year on Nov. 14-15 at Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova. □

Baptists nurturing hope a year after Katrina

By Adam Miller
Baptist Press

GULFPORT, Miss. — One year after hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma devastated the Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coast region, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief leaders are looking back at the remarkable ministry already accomplished — and settling in for the daunting task still ahead.

More than 60,000 homes and 160 churches were damaged or destroyed along the Mississippi coast. Countless people were left homeless in New Orleans. Southern Baptists rolled in just hours after Hurricane Katrina hit bringing with them a convoy of relief — and an eternal hope rising above earthly circumstances.

In all, Southern Baptist volunteers from 41 state conventions, including Tennessee, prepared more than 14 million hot meals, completed 16,973 cleanup and recovery jobs, provided 103,556 hot showers, cleaned 25,826 loads of laundry, cared for 7,817 children, and purified 21,595 gallons of water.

Through the efforts of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and

other agencies, God is bringing brighter days to the Gulf Coast.

"We never envisioned anything could impact our coast that much," said Jim Didlake, director of disaster relief operations for Mississippi Southern Baptists, who also noted an unprecedented impact of another kind: "We already are seeing God use this to open doors and reach people in ways we would have never dreamed possible."

To date, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief has involved more than 15,000 volunteers in relief and recovery efforts that have now transitioned into a massive rebuilding campaign.

More than 3,000 homes are being rebuilt in Mississippi through the financial support of the North American Mission Board and several state Baptist conventions.

The Tennessee Baptist Convention, in conjunction with five metropolitan Baptist associations in the state, are in the midst of a two-year commitment with Robinson Road Baptist Church in Gulfport to send volunteers there, according to David Acres, Tennessee Baptist disaster relief director.



MARY NIMMO, on ladder, a member of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Nashville, and staff member of the Baptist and Reflector, puts insulation in the wall of a Gulfport, Miss., home that was severely damaged last year by Hurricane Katrina. Helping her are Annette Roberts, left, and Mary Creek.

And even a two-year commitment probably won't be enough, he admitted. "We are looking at five to 10 years of rebuilding in portions of Mississippi and

Louisiana," Acres predicted.

Through Operation NOAH (New Orleans Area Hope) Rebuild, Southern Baptists will — See Baptists, page 9

Youth ministers find MySpace to have both benefits and risks

Lonnie Wilkey & Scott Barkley
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — My Space, an online phenomenon that is approaching 100 million users, mostly students, has both benefits and risks, youth leaders in Tennessee and Georgia agree.

Anyone can register for a free MySpace web page to network with friends by blogging (online journaling),

uploading pictures and videos, or sending messages quickly among individuals or groups.

For many youth ministers MySpace is one of the most effective ways to reach today's teenagers.

Five to 10 years ago the most effective way to communicate with youth was e-mail, reflected Alec Cort, minister of youth at Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory.

"Now, the most effective way to communicate is through MySpace and text messaging on cell phones," he said.

Jason Garris, student minister at Hermitage Hills Baptist Church, Hermitage, agreed that MySpace is a good way to communicate with teens.

"When my youth have a question they 'MySpace' me," Garris said, explaining that he receives an e-mail informing him of a message on his MySpace page.

"It is a great way to stay in contact with teens," observed Garris, who has his own MySpace site.

Garris and other youth ministers also use MySpace to advertise and promote youth events.

The youth ministry at First Baptist Church, Gallatin, has its own MySpace site. "We use it to get information on events at the

church out to our youth," said Brian Prince, the church's youth pastor. He noted the youth respond well to MySpace messages.

The communications aspect has caused Kent Shingleton, youth evangelism specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, to begin a YEC (Youth Evangelism Conference) MySpace page (www.myspace.com/tnyec).

"Our desire is that it will pass on information about the YEC and provide a place for Christian students to comment about their YEC experiences with one another," Shingleton said.

Ricky Smith, minister of youth at Piney Grove Baptist Church, Columbus,

Ga., observed it is much easier for him to communicate with his students "through MySpace than even e-mail."

"Kids maturing in their faith will keep me informed about their struggles. Nothing takes the place of one-on-one, but this has really opened up the door to accountability," Smith said.

Todd Bishop, minister of youth at Woodmont Baptist Church, Nashville, learned about the popularity of MySpace while on a youth mission trip last summer in Ecuador.

Students wanted to spend free time at an Internet cafe, he recalled. They would log onto MySpace to tell friends of their — See Youth, page 4

Reader survey available online

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — The Baptist and Reflector is offering its second reader survey.

We invite readers to respond to this question: "Is it appropriate for church leaders to use a cultural phenomenon such as MySpace for ministry purposes?"

If you would like to respond, answer the question "yes" or "no" and then state your reason in 100 words or less.

We will print as many responses as we can in a future issue as well as post-

ing responses on the web site.

To respond to this question, go to www.tnbaptist.org and go to "this week's news" and click on the story, "Youth ministers find MySpace to have both benefits and risks."

For those who do not have computer access, send your response to Baptist and Reflector, P. O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024; or fax to (615) 371-2080.

Preference will be given to shorter, concise answers. Be sure to include your name, city, zip code, and phone number (phone numbers will not be published). □ — Lonnie Wilkey, editor

6/12/2006 8:25 AM

hey! my heart just smiles seeing yall back and hearing all the incredible things God did and is continue to do! it's so evident He was there and did something awesome things in the youths' lives!! :) we REALLY have to catch up!! call me when ever you have a couple free minutes!! ohpe you're getting caught up on your sleep. talk to ya later!!

7/14/2006 10:40 PM

okay, so, the lesson the other night totally made me think. I mean god has so much he wants to do with my life, and I'm not letting him do it. he wants me to change, with the music I listen to and the people I hang out with, and now I have learned and I've kept up the prayer to let him change me. I know it's going to be tough; I just have to believe. I am so amazed at what god can do. I love you ricky; you're amazing

--nelson

MYSPACE pages come with a comment section where youth pastors and students can stay in constant contact. — Photo courtesy of The Christian Index

about your newsjournal

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Southern Baptists bolster relief in Middle East

Baptist Press

MIDDLE EAST — As the United Nations mobilizes troops to maintain a fragile ceasefire, Southern Baptists are stepping up relief efforts in Lebanon and Israel, funneling more than a half-million dollars in aid into the war-torn region.

Damage from air raids and rocket attacks has flattened homes and leveled buildings, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. Some spend hours sifting through ash-colored rubble, trying to salvage any trace of their former lives — perhaps a photograph or family heirloom. Most of the devastation is concentrated in southern Lebanon, an area recently visited by a Southern Baptist medical assessment team.

"They've got no possessions left; there is not a single chair that's intact," a Christian medical worker said. "Everything is smashed and covered with concrete. The smell of dead bodies, either human or animal, is prevalent in these communities."

So far, Baptist partners in both nations have distributed \$100,000 worth of supplies — food, water, temporary latrines and showers, medicine and cleaning supplies — to people displaced by the fighting.

"We never show any kind of favoritism," a Southern Baptist relief consultant said. "We're distributing aid to anyone who has need, regardless of their faith."

An additional \$250,000 has been earmarked to provide more of the same, as well as blankets and portable heaters for the region's rapidly approaching winter.

Food supplies are especially critical, which is why Southern Baptists also have purchased more than 250,000 cans of tuna fish. High in protein, tuna was an obvious choice because it's already part of the Middle Eastern diet, the consultant said. The cans are slated to be shipped to Lebanon before the end of October.

At a cost of \$300,000, the tuna bumps the total amount of Southern Baptist aid to those affected by the conflict to \$650,000, making it this year's second-largest relief project. Though the sum may appear to be a drop in the bucket compared to the \$230 million pledged by the United States, it will be used to minister to areas outside large population centers, which often are neglected in times of turmoil.

"In a major crisis like this, you always have a lot of governmental agencies as well as large aid organizations that provide resources," the consultant explained. "Sometimes, however, these resources never get to the

Union schedules church-related events

Union University news office

JACKSON — The beliefs and practices of Baptists, the unity of Scripture, and global warming will be the topics for four church-related events sponsored by Union University over the next few months.

The first event, "Baptists in America: Baptist Way or Baptist Ways?" is a symposium scheduled for Oct. 16 on the meaning of the Baptist tradition. Speakers will be Gregory A. Wills, professor of church history at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Bill J. Leonard, dean and professor of church history at Wake Forest University Divinity School.

"This will be an engaging conversation between two distinct Baptist voices," said Greg Thornbury, dean of Union's School of Christian Studies. "Both men are widely respected scholars, and we're expecting a thought-provoking dialogue."

The event will begin at 10 a.m. in Harvey Auditorium in the Student Union Building, with a luncheon and question-and-answer session at 11:30 a.m. Cost for lunch is \$5.

The second event, "Evangelicals and Global Warming: A Formal Debate," will be held Oct. 30 and will feature two key voices in the debate over global warming. David Gushee, the Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy at Union, and Cal Beisner, associate professor of historical theology and social ethics at Knox Theological Seminary, will debate how evangelical Christians should respond to the global warming controversy.

Union University professors Charles Baldwin, the Hammons Professor of Pre-Medical Studies, and Michael Salazar, assistant professor of chemistry, will also participate.

The two-hour debate will begin at 10 a.m. in

Union's Savage Chapel. It is free and open to the public.

The third event will be Union's second "Baptist Identity Conference" Feb. 15-17. The theme for the conference will be "Convention, Cooperation, and Controversy."

Speakers include Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School; Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova; Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Russell Moore, senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources; Ed Stetzer, missiologist and research team director at the North American Mission Board; Mike Day, director of missions for the Mid-South Baptist Association in Memphis; and Union President David S. Dockery and Thornbury.

The fourth event will be the biannual conference of Union's R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies, set for April 27-28.

The conference theme will be "One Bible, One Gospel: Exploring the Unity of Scripture." Speakers for the conference will be Paul House, associate dean and professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School; Ken Mathews, professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School; Grant Osborne, professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; and Christian recording artist Michael Card.

Union University Christian studies faculty members will also lead sessions at the conference. Cost is \$45 and registration will open this fall. More details about all events will be forthcoming. For more information or to register, call (731) 661-5117. □

people who really need the help. That's why it's often advantageous to come in a little later, allowing us to see more clearly and to minister to needs that have been overlooked or neglected." □

FDA OKs 'morning after' pill

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The federal government approved Aug. 24 the non-prescription sale to adults of Plan B, a "morning-after" pill for women that has abortion-causing qualities.

Pro-life and pro-family advocates responded with dismay and criticism to the announcement from a presidential administration that normally has sided with them in its policies regarding unborn human life.

The Food and Drug Administration's new policy will make Plan B available without a prescription for use by women 18 and older. Females 17 and under will need a prescription, a requirement previously for women of all ages. Plan B will be available for purchase at pharmacies and health clinics. It is to be kept in stock behind the counter at each pharmacy, so proof of age can be checked, according to the FDA.

Plan B is basically a heavier dose of birth control pills. Under the regimen, a woman takes two pills within 72 hours of sexual intercourse and another dose 12 hours later. The "morning-after"

pill, also known as emergency contraception, works to restrict ovulation in a woman. But it also can act after conception, thereby causing an abortion, pro-lifers point out. This mechanism of the drug blocks implantation of a tiny embryo in the uterine wall.

The FDA's decision means a prescription will continue to be required for birth control pills but not for stronger doses of the same drug.

Critics said the new policy not only will destroy tiny human embryos but make it difficult to keep it out of the hands of underage girls and undermine parental rights in the process.

Southern Baptist ethicist Richard Land called it "a sad day for America."

"Allowing drugs with such powerful physiological and emotional effects to be sold over the counter to adults without a prescription will have significant consequences, none of them good," Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, told Baptist Press. □

Oklahoma judge upholds display of Commandments

Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge in Oklahoma has upheld a Ten Commandments display outside a county courthouse, saying county officials did not advance any religious viewpoint

by allowing the monument to be built two years ago.

United States District Judge Ronald White ruled Aug. 18 that Haskell County, Okla., commissioners did not err in allowing the eight-foot-tall stone monument to be erected on the county courthouse's lawn in Stigler. He relied on recent opinions by the U.S. Supreme Court suggesting that government displays of religious symbols or texts that are important parts of Western civilization can be done in a constitutional manner, depending on their contexts and histories.

White wrote that county commissioners did not "overstep the constitutional line demarcating government neutrality toward religion" in allowing the monument. The stone monument has a translation of the Decalogue on one side, and a copy of the Mayflower Compact on the other.

He noted that there are several other monuments on the Haskell County Courthouse lawn, including ones honoring veterans of various wars and the Choctaw Indian tribe, decreasing the religious value of the Decalogue display.

"A reasonable observer would see that the [commandments] monument is not the focus of the courthouse lawn," White wrote. "The mélange of monuments surrounding the one at issue here obviously detract from any religious message that may be conveyed by the commandments." □

More than 150 professions of faith

Baptist teen's witness continues weeks after his death

By Dawn Ferguson
Baptist and Reflector

HENDERSONVILLE — "If it means me dying and lost people coming to know Christ, I'd die."

Those words were spoken by 16-year-old Nathan Johnson this past summer at camp — a few months before he lost his life in a car accident.

In more than 240 remembrances written in notebooks by visitors at his funeral service, it is clear that Nathan had a passion for God and meant what he said.

"God shined through him." "He had a full life with God at the center." "God's Word — he lived it." "He loved God — everyone knew it." And on and on.

Nathan's father Chris, who is pastor at Central Baptist in Hendersonville and a LifeWay employee, says that on one of the worst days of his life (July 28, 2006, the date of Nathan's accident) he remembered one of the best days of his life — the day he got the call from his wife Kathy informing him that 7-year-old Nathan had gotten off the bus from school and told his mom he had been thinking about Jesus and he was ready to pray to receive him. "I talked to him about it and asked him questions and it was clear to me that he was ready and he understood," said Johnson.

And since that time, Nathan made it the passion of his life to share Christ with everyone he came into contact with.

"Nathan was an incredible kid," said Jeff Lovingood, youth minister at Long Hollow Baptist Church where Nathan worshipped. "He got it. Wherever he went, he shared Christ. He was a special kid. When he entered a room and flashed that million dollar smile, it was evident he was different."

From everyone who has been given much ...

When Nathan was in the fourth or fifth grade, an influential coach told him — "from everyone who has been given much, much will be required — Luke 12:48." Evidently, that passage stuck with Nathan

throughout his life. His mother recalls a time when Nathan was really pondering over it and asked her why she thought God had given him so much. "Because He knew He could trust you. He knew you would use it for His glory," she answered.

By all accounts, Nathan had everything going for him. He was a gifted athlete — the place kicker and punter for Beech High who was being compared to the University of Tennessee's current kicker James Wilhoit.

He was also a gifted musician. His band, "Through A Glass," named from the Scripture I Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see through a glass, darkly," was scheduled to perform the night of his death before three major labels at RocketTown, a popular Nashville music venue.

And, he was gifted with "GQ" looks. He had a smile that was infectious and looks that would make the girls drool, according to one entry from the funeral books.

"He had the 'it' factor," said Jeremiah Barnes, Nathan's friend who shared the spotlight with him in the band. "I'm not sure what 'it' is, but he definitely had it. Everybody was attracted to him — girls and guys. He wasn't friends with just one crowd — he was everybody's friend. To all kinds of kids."

Allie Brooke Shelby, who was dating Nathan at the time of his death, says she has an aunt who had encouraged her to begin praying for the kind of husband she wanted. "What I wanted, he (Nathan) had," she said. "He had it all. He was always so happy and had such a passion for Christ."

A passion for Christ

Nathan used all these gifts — his athletic ability, his musical talent, and his charisma and good looks — to share with others his obvious passion for Christ. As far back as the third grade, his parents recall Nathan using the resurrection eggs during a show and tell exercise to share the gospel with his classmates in a public school. From



16-YEAR-OLD Nathan Johnson had it all — looks, charisma, musical talent, athletic ability, and more importantly, a passion for Christ. As a result of his life, people are still making professions of faith weeks after his tragic death in an automobile accident on July 28. — Photo by Allie Brooke Shelby

that time forward, there are numerous accounts of Nathan sharing the gospel with those around him.

"His freshman year in high school — he was attending his first football camp — and he called me and told me he had led two guys to Christ the night before," said Kathy. "He said he was reading his Bible to them and talking and he looked up and the whole team was looking at him and finally someone said 'hey everybody, shut up, Nathan's talking about God.' That night, two guys prayed to receive Christ — one of whom he had been concerned about for awhile."

Kathy laughs and says Nathan then told her that one of the guys asked him if that meant he was going to have to stop smoking weed. She said that caught Nathan by surprise, but he responded "Well, yeah. But He'll give you the strength to stop."

Two girls Nathan had met on spring break in Florida this summer drove down for his funeral from Indiana because Nathan had made an impact on their lives. "They told us that they had only known him for a week, but he had changed their lives," said Chris. "They said he didn't just tell them — he showed them."

And he showed them not just by the way he lived, but through his Bible. "We don't have life unless we breathe His Word," Nathan wrote in his journal.

Nathan easily did what many of us make so difficult. "We make it (witnessing) hard," said Kathy. "Nathan let it be part of who he was. He lived it. He would just start talking to people and say 'Hi, I'm Nathan Johnson. Do you know Jesus?'"

His mission —

Start a revolution

On Aug. 8, 2005, Nathan made the following entry into his personal journal. "Today ... He has enlightened the eyes of my heart to His will in which He

has with no doubt called me ... His will for me is to radically impact my school for Him ... This will be the start of a revolution at my school for God and by the grace of God."

Nathan toyed with the potential possibility of fame through his band. With three record labels present for the July 28 performance, there was a real possibility for it to happen. But he told one friend that if the band became famous and started touring, he wouldn't be able to fulfill his mission ... to start a revolution for God at his school. So he said he would forfeit the fame.

So why did Nathan die? Could it be that in death, his life is having even more of a "radical" impact on saving souls?

Lovingood, who's been at Long Hollow for almost five years, says he's never seen anything like the responses that have occurred since Nathan's death. "At visitation, it took four hours to get in and just say something to his parents," he said.

"The morning of his funeral I woke up in a cold sweat wondering about what I would say," added Lovingood. "I knew I had to give an invitation — if I didn't Nathan would be mad at me."

In 24 years of ministry, Lovingood says he's never seen anything like it. After the invitation to the 1,000 plus attendees at Nathan's funeral, 30 to 40 people came forward and prayed to receive Christ. In fact, in just the first week since his death, more than 150 people had prayed to receive Christ. And more are being reported every day.

"Last night (Aug. 23), 25 people prayed to receive Christ," Lovingood added. "We had 800 to 900 youth last night. He's still having an impact. It's like he's still alive, and he is through all the people his life and his story are continuing to touch."

Someone who had met Nathan briefly wrote the Johnsons from New Zealand and told

what an impact Nathan's life and now death had made to him. "I was given an opportunity to witness to a person down here ... the day after I heard of Nathan's accident. I bought the person a Bible and used what happened to Nathan as a way to share the gospel," wrote Hunter Gray. He added that he had been given another opportunity the next day and had shared Nathan's story again.

"Your son is making waves for Christ even after he is gone," Gray wrote. "Your son is impacting lives all the way on the other side of the world."

Right now, that may be of little consolation to his parents and brothers, Andrew and Matthew. "We'll always have a hole in our hearts," said Chris. But perhaps down the road as they continue to hear Nathan-influenced salvation stories, the pain will ease.

Until that time, those closest to him are continuing his revolution. A couple of students approached Lovingood after Nathan's death with an idea for a T-shirt. The front says "What's it all about?" The back states "Nathan knew — Let's finish what he started — Romans 12:2."

"We can't keep the shirts in stock," said Lovingood. "We print about 150 every week and they're sold out before we know it."

All proceeds from the sale of the T-shirts go towards Nathan's pledge to Long Hollow Baptist's new \$16 million youth center.

"Our youth group is still struggling," admits Shelby. "A lot of kids are still asking why. But we've come to realize that God's will is perfect. Even though we don't understand it, so many great things have happened as a result. And people are starting to realize we never know when something like that may happen to any of us. We've grown closer spiritually."

"Nathan lived every day for Christ," Shelby added. "I'm trying to do that now. I'm living Philippians 1:21 — For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

"We've renewed our sense of urgency about evangelizing and telling people about Jesus," said Barnes about the band. "Real people die every day. There's no excuse not to minister. We believe God will use us. Nathan wouldn't have wanted us to quit and neither do his parents. You can't shut down a ministry."

If you visit Nathan's grave, you'll read "Dude, Heaven is sweet. See you there" on the marker.

"Nathan said Dude a lot," explains Chris. "And there's no period after see you there because he's still telling his story and witnessing."

Now, Nathan no longer sees through a glass, but face to face. And he knows even as he is known. □



DISPLAYING "NATHAN KNEW" T-shirts in memory of their friend Nathan Johnson are, from left, Gracy Garrett, Haley Hamilton, and Emily Ricker, who are active in the youth program of Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville.

Youth ministers find MySpace to have both ...

— Continued from page 1

experiences in Ecuador. In that regard the site was being used for good as a witness, Bishop said. He also recognized it as a primary communications tool for youth.

He noted that experience made him realize the need to become more familiar with MySpace.

Words of caution

Bryan Bulmer, youth pastor at Fletcher Memorial Baptist Church in Statesboro, Ga., grants that MySpace can have positive aspects for ministry but nonetheless voices strong words of caution for youth leaders.

"Anybody who's a minister and wants to get on MySpace needs to have some strong accountability," Bulmer said. "There are images on there that can appear before you very easily."

Cort agreed. MySpace does have risks, he warned. Despite filters and safeguards that are in place, inappropriate material can get on someone's page, he said.

For that reason Cort has chosen not to have his own page. While MySpace opens up communication with students, it also "opens up a broad range of questionable pictures and comments that I choose not to associate myself with," he said.

Potential risks

A major risk of MySpace is that students often post too much personal information, youth ministers agreed.

Many times they think the information is seen only by their friends, but others can view it as well.

"Students do not realize who might be looking at their

account," said Scott Kindig, youth ministry consultant with the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Bishop agreed, noting that MySpace and similar sites such as Xanga and Facebook give students a forum, but because they feel invincible they aren't always as aware or as careful as they should be.

"Predators could 'mine' information from a MySpace account that endangers the user. Future bosses look at MySpace histories as they consider whom they might hire, looking for the character of job candidates," Kindig warned.

Prince agreed that potential teenage predators is a reality that must be faced and many students simply are not careful.

He noted younger students sometimes "falsify their age" in order to get a MySpace account.

While they do it primarily for "fun," they do not realize that the deeper they go into lists of friends, the potential is there for predators to gain personal information, Prince said.

If they are careless they could post photos or other information that would make it easy to be found, he cautioned.

Bishop verified that employers do look at MySpace sites.

He noted that two of his youth who were looking for summer employment discovered that both LifeWay Christian Resources and the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention used MySpace to research prospective employees.

Bishop said other businesses do the same thing.

Sites such as MySpace also

provide youth ministers an opportunity for "an authentic look at who their kids are," Kindig said.

"Some have learned things — encouraging and discouraging — about where their students really are morally and spiritually by looking at MySpace accounts," he noted.

"It's a double-edged sword," Bulmer agreed. "Students will write things in their online journal that are heartfelt and reveal their depth. On the other hand, they will post things — which may be sexually charged — they think will make others laugh. There's no filter for them."

"Kids are incredibly honest about what they say online," said Chris Trent, middle school pastor at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga. "I don't think they realize how many eyes are seeing what they're writing."

"For some, it's a place to vent. As a society they may struggle with communication, and it's a place to be honest about their lives," Trent noted.

Another risk is the exposure of youth, particularly younger teenagers, to questionable advertising that appears on MySpace, youth leaders agreed.

There is advertising on the site that is not "wholesome," Prince warned.

Monitoring needed

Youth leaders agreed that parental involvement lessens many of the risks involved with their children's use of MySpace.

Parents need to be involved and to know what their children are putting on their MySpace pages, Garriss stressed.

It is a huge plus when parents are aware and know the content of the pages, he observed.

The problem is when students go against their parents' wishes and obtain a MySpace account without parent knowledge or consent, he said.

"It's crazy how teenagers will reveal things about themselves to the whole world on the Internet," Shingleton observed.

"As moms and dads we must monitor what our kids are doing. Look at their pages," he encouraged.

Bishop agreed that parental involvement is essential and he advises parents to monitor their children's pages.

Some parents of his students have blocked features of their children's page on MySpace, such as their profiles, which protects personal information, Bishop said.

"It's about being aware of what's going on," he said.

Youth leaders have held seminars to educate parents about both the benefits and risks of MySpace and similar sites.

Accountability is a key, according to Chris Altman, youth pastor at Ropville Road Baptist Church in Carrollton, Ga.

"It has been addressed within our ministry that students are to hold each other accountable. Our parents are aware and web-savvy enough to check out what is happening online. For those that aren't, I'm there to look and then inform them," he stated.

One thing that Garriss fears is that MySpace creates a false sense of community for students.

"A lot of teenagers will replace small group fellowship and friendship with hundreds or even thousands of 'friends' on MySpace," Garriss said.

"That is a false sense of community and it replaces what God intended."

Additional benefits

Despite its faults, Smith said MySpace is an effective tool in his ministry.

"It's allowed me to make a positive connection with kids," Smith said.

"On my page, I've started a devotional blog. Eventually, this will become a discipleship tool where students and I can study a passage together. I'll go online each week and comment on a passage I've read. Because of the comment section, we can have a back-and-forth-discussion on it."

Garriss also uses MySpace to post blogs, giving students "points to think about," he said.

Garriss and Prince affirmed that MySpace can be a good ministry tool.

Prince recalled that soon after the First Baptist youth ministry began having its own MySpace page he received a phone call from a parent.

He feared at first that the parent was not happy with the move, but she had called to thank him and the church for being "where the teenagers are."

Prince said having a MySpace site "sends a message to students that we are not afraid of their culture and that we want to understand their world." □ — Barkley writes for *The Christian Index* in Georgia. Connie Davis Bushey, *B&R* news editor, also contributed to this story.

Tomlin honored for 50-year ministry

Baptist and Reflector

JACKSON — Ward's Grove Baptist Church here honored W. Matt Tomlin on his 50 years in the ministry on Aug. 6.

Tomlin preached his first sermon at West Shiloh Baptist Church in Hardin County, the first Sunday of August, 1956.

Riding a Greyhound bus from Jackson to Selmer, Bob Kennedy, a member of West Shiloh met him and transported him to the church.

Numerous friends and family arrived for the surprise celebration. Dick Wakefield, of Hartsville, Mo., a friend since freshman days at Union Uni-

versity in 1956, spoke at the morning worship service.

Later, after a church-wide luncheon, many members and guests paid tribute to Tomlin for his years in the ministry.

County Mayor, Jerry Gist, proclaimed the day, "Dr. Matt Tomlin Day." The church presented him with a plaque in recognition of this service and a scrapbook of his life and work at Ward's Grove.

Tomlin graduated from Union University with a bachelor of arts degree, and holds the master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Active in Baptist life, he has served on various denominational boards, including the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention Commit-

tee on Boards, and the Tennessee Baptist Convention Foundation Board. He also has served as moderator of the Madison-Chester Association of Baptists.

Tomlin has served as pastor of Morris Chapel Baptist Church, Morris Chapel; New Hope Baptist Church, Paris; Smith's Grove Baptist Church, Smith's Grove, Ky.; First Baptist Selmer, Selmer; and Ward's Grove Baptist Church from 1984 to the present.

As an active member of community life, he has been involved in the Rotary Club and the Exchange Club.

Tomlin and his wife, Carolyn, a columnist for the *Baptist and Reflector* and freelance writer, have two grown children — Cindy Tomlin Coulston and Kevin Tomlin — and six grandchildren. □



TOMLIN

New SS lesson writers chosen

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Two Tennessee pastors will write the Sept.-Nov. Sunday School commentaries for the *Baptist and Reflector*.

Robert M. "Bob" Orgeron, pastor of Park Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville, will write the Explore the Bible series.



ORGERON

A native of New Orleans, Orgeron holds degrees from Blue Mountain (Miss.) College and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Cordova, where he earned his master of divinity degree.

He has been pastor of churches in Missouri, Mississippi, and West Tennessee.

Craig Christina, pastor of

First Baptist Church, Jackson, will write the Bible Studies for Life series.

A native of Corpus Christi, Texas, Christina is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, and holds the master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

He also has served as pastor of churches in Oklahoma and Indiana.

Christina has written for several magazines and journals and currently serves as a trustee of Union University. He also has served on the SBC Resolutions Committee and SBC Committee on Nominations. □



CHRISTINA

Three signs of optimism for the American church

guest
columnist



By Thom S. Rainer

I am deeply concerned about the American church. Evangelistic effectiveness is waning. Biblical illiteracy is growing. And many of the 100,000 churches in the United States seem to be caught up in activities with little purpose of meaning.

You may therefore be surprised that I would even begin to suggest that the American church has reasons for optimism. Indeed, I must be careful in making such claims. Our initial work at the new entity, LifeWay Research, indicates that the American church is still in a mess. I cannot for one moment claim that significant negative trends are reversing. To the contrary, the overall path of churches in our nation is not good.

But what compels me to write about reasons for hope are the exceptions we are discovering in our research. Some of the stories are just too good to neglect. Please allow me to categorize these exceptions as

three signs for optimism.

The first sign is that we are finding more churches that are focusing on conversion growth rather than total growth. For years the most heralded churches in America have been those that are growing the fastest numerically. But, upon closer examination, these churches are often growing at the expense of others. This transfer growth, rather than conversion growth, is the source of the large numbers reported by the churches. Still, we are seeing hopeful signs as many church leaders are asking serious questions about their methodologies and theology. They have a growing desire to impact the world of the lost and the unchurched rather than gaining members from other churches.

Though their numbers are relatively few now, I am gratified to see a greater concern among these churches for the lostness of our world. If more church leaders begin to move in this direction, we may truly see a significant evangelistic impact.

Second, in a growing number of churches we are seeing a concern for both meaningful membership and evangelistic outreach. The more common pattern we documented in the

past focuses on one at the neglect of the other. In other words, some of the churches with the most focused resources on evangelism have done little to develop new converts into fruit-bearing disciples. Or, in the desire to see decisions, these churches have sometimes produced unregenerate members, or members who are not really Christians.

Yet other churches are focused on regenerate and meaningful membership while neglecting evangelism. The result is a small church of non-evangelistic but otherwise dedicated disciples.

The early findings of our research are encouraging. Imagine what a church could be if it had the fires of evangelism and the devotion to produce true disciples.

A third and hopeful sign is a growing desire for more significant and deeper teaching and preaching. I was recently visiting a church where the pastor of 15 years lamented that many members sitting under his preaching for his entire tenure were still, by their own admission, woefully ignorant of biblical doctrine. I commend him for stating his very clear decision to change the ministry of the church and

his preaching ministry so that the riches of God's Word would be consistently taught and preached.

My lamentations of the past are still valid. The American church as a whole is hardly evangelistic at all. Membership is so inconsequential in many denominations, including my own, that a "good attendance day" is when only half of the purported saints show up. And biblical ignorance among evangelicals is pervasive and worsening.

Yet, I have taken careful note of the exceptions. And I do not believe that I am the only person noticing these incredible churches. As more take note, more will emulate them. And in doing so, they will not simply be copying yet another church growth fad or idea. Instead they will be emulating a healthy New Testament church.

The trends are not significantly sufficient to declare a new direction of the American church. But these exceptions give me hope.

Perhaps God is not yet done with our churches. Perhaps the exceptions will become the rule. Perhaps the best is yet to come. □ — Rainer is president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Tennessee is included in the Great Commission

As churches prepare budgets for 2007 and begin preparations for the Week of Prayer for State Missions (Sept. 10-17) and the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions, this is a good time to remind all Tennessee Baptists that our state is included in the Great Commission.

Sometimes we get so caught up in thinking that all our missions efforts and dollars should go to international missions that we forget about our own nation, state, or even our own neighborhood.

The latest statistics provided by the evangelism office of the Tennessee Baptist Convention reveal that there are three million people in Tennessee who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That is about half of our state's population.

So, do we forget about those three million lost people in Tennessee or do we find ways to minister to them and to reach them with the good news of Jesus Christ?

Of course we cannot forget them because Jesus loves lost Tennesseans just as much as He loves people who do not know Him in other states and in other countries.

That is what is so good about the Cooperative Program. We help fund missions and ministries in other states and around the world in a cooperative effort with Southern Baptists in other states.

But keep in mind no other state convention funds ministries in Tennessee except for the Tennessee Baptist Convention. That is why we keep a portion (and that portion has decreased in the last year or so) in Tennessee to help reach the lost in our state.

That is why we also have our own state offering — the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions — which funds many worthwhile and vital ministries that are not included in the state's Cooperative Program budget.

Pray for the lost people in our state who do not know Christ.

Pray for our state missionaries and the ministries that are made possible in Tennessee through the Cooperative Program and the Golden Offering.

And, pray about what you will do to tell others about Christ. Never forget this — the Great Commission not only includes Tennessee, it also includes you and me. □



letters to the editor

Greatest Baptists

Tennessee Baptists are the greatest Baptists in the world. And they are the greatest Baptists in the world because they understand that being a Baptist means being devoted to Christ first; serving him freely; and showing a lost world that Jesus really can make a difference in their lives and ours.

Baptists in Tennessee don't renege on themselves and hide from society, they engage it, minister to it, and make a difference in it.

They don't lose sight of the major issues facing the church

and they don't get caught up in all the political wranglings ripping apart so many state and local conventions and associations.

Tennessee Baptists are the greatest Baptists in the world, and I'm proud to minister among them.

Jim West, pastor
Petros Baptist Church
Petros 37845

Correct stance

I read the article in the July 26 issue which included a response to Danny Akin's work on alcoholism and Southern Baptists.

I find the response of (Benjamin) Cole a little misleading when he is claiming that he believes the Bible backs him on his view.

I would ask him about the priest entering the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament; (Leviticus 10:9) if there was to be alcohol on his breath his

life was required of him. And, in the New Testament, the Holy of Holies is in the heart of the believer (I Corinthians 6:19).

Also, Proverbs forbids Kings and Princes (Proverbs 31:4) to drink strong drink, and in the New Testament we are told we are of a Royal Priesthood! (I Peter 2:9)

If we are not careful, we will make Scripture contradict itself with Cole's interpretation.

The next step in this "new" theology may be to justify concubines.

We need to be careful in how we interpret Scripture and be sure to do it as a whole, not taking isolated sections to justify something we want to justify.

For someone who claims such adherence to the believing literally the Bible, our Rev. Cole sure dismissed the Nazarite Vow very easily, especially if Jesus followed the vow as some theologians suggest.

I just hope this isn't typical of the "new" leadership within the SBC, and I don't believe it is!

We as Southern Baptists have been correct on our stance of drinking, socially and doctrinally.

Roger Briggs, DOM
Fayette & Haywood
Baptist Associations
Somerville 38068

Music influences

Regarding the article about "sexually charged music" in the Aug. 16 issue, I was surprised that you did not comment on the music as well as the lyrics.

No doubt the lyrics are harmful, but the music can be just as harmful if not more so. Music is not amoral, but has a morality of its own and can have great influence for good or for evil.

I believe we are seeing this in our churches today with some of the "music of the world" being brought into the worship service, hoping to enhance worship but having a detrimental influence in the lives of the young people as well as the older people. We wonder why our people are having trouble living the kind of moral life that is taught in the Word of God. This problem was present to a much lesser degree before this worldly music was brought into the church.

I'm sure there are other reasons for the poor spiritual conditions in the church in the USA today, but there is a definite correlation regarding to type of music that is being used. Let us pray that our God will have mercy on us and use whatever means is necessary

Sam Gentry, pastor
Cambodian Baptist Church
Memphis 38134

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



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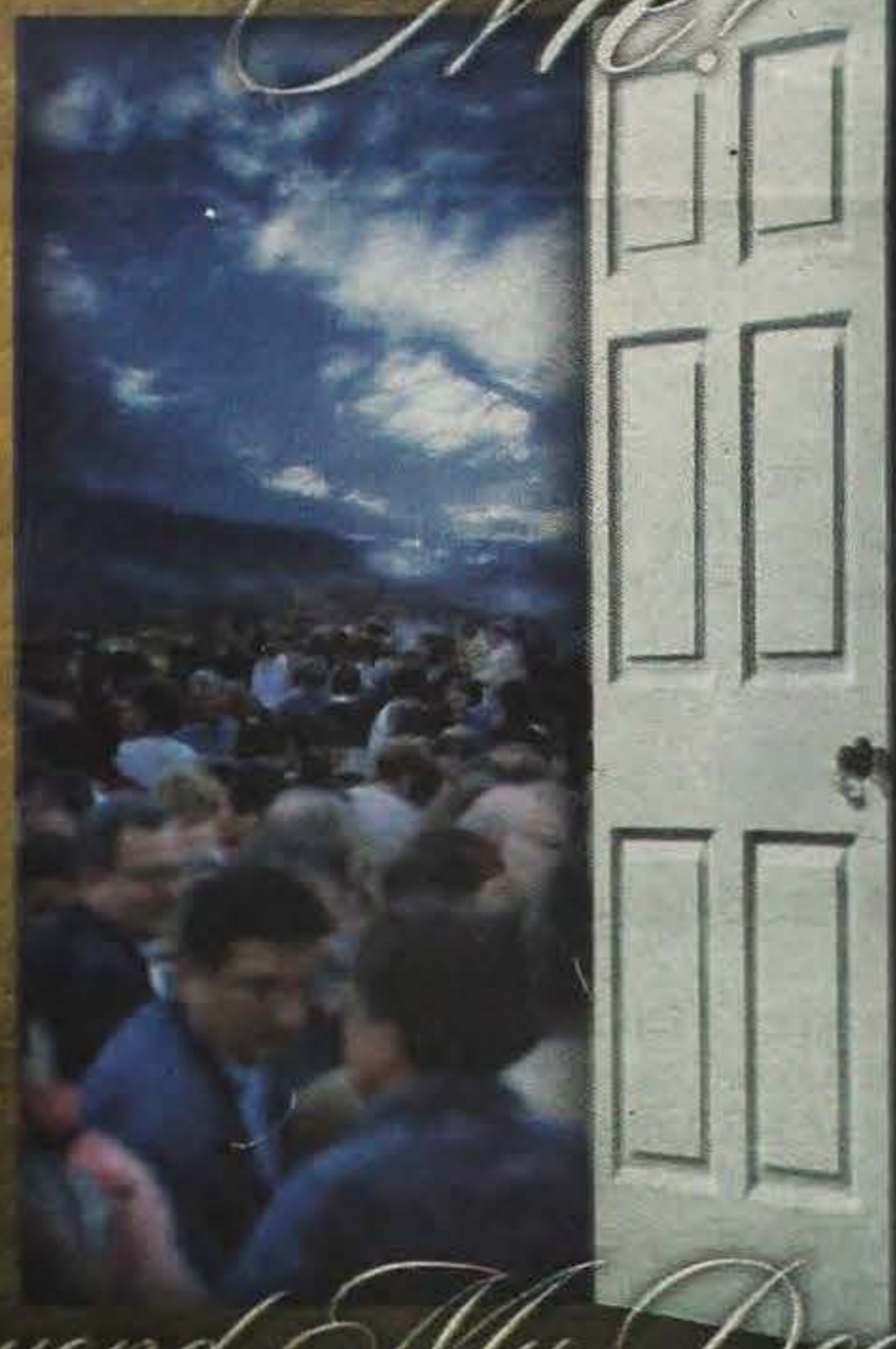
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- October 30—LOWER WEST—Kirby Woods Baptist Church, Memphis

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Tennessee case reveals pressures faced by ministers' wives

By Hannah Elliott
Associated Baptist Press

SELMER — Mary Winkler allegedly killed her husband, a 31-year-old pastor, because of financial and familial problems — problems often present but undetected in the lives of pastors' wives.

After posting her \$750,000 bond, Winkler's lawyers said, she left jail Aug. 15 for McMinnville, where she is living with a family friend and working at a local dry cleaners until her first-degree murder trial starts in October.

At a June bond hearing, officials said Winkler said she shot her husband March 22 because she "snapped" in response to his repeated criticism and her ongoing stress about finances. Matthew Winkler was pastor of Fourth Street Church of Christ in Selmer. Congregants found him in the church parsonage with a fatal bullet wound in his back.

Mary Winkler, 32, reportedly fell prey to the "Nigeria Scam," a popular e-mail scam that gets victims to pay advance fees to receive supposed lottery winnings. Annual losses to all forms of the Nigerian scam total more than \$100 million in the United States and more than \$1.5 billion worldwide, according to law enforcement officials, even though only 1 percent of the people targeted are duped. The average loss is \$5,575, according to the FBI.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said Winkler also deposited more than \$17,000 by check-kiting — writing a check from one bank, depositing it at a second bank and then withdrawing the money before the check clears.

The Winkler case has brought to light the oft-hidden tension and dysfunction that sometimes haunts pastors' families. While counselors and family experts can only speculate about Winkler's particular case, they can offer an inside look into the pressures prevalent among pastors' wives.

Karen Luce, who co-wrote *Claiming the High C's* about marriage and family relationships, has worked in Christian counseling and teaching for nearly 40 years. According to Luce, disagreements about money are the cause of family trouble 65 percent to 80 percent of the time.

"When frustration and hurt and fear are not dealt with, anger will always erupt, and angry people can act out in innumerable sinful ways," Luce told Associated Baptist Press. "Depression is the other side of this. So you can often see either anger coming out at other people or depression being turned inward at self. The end results would be murder or suicide. These are not uncommon."

Oftentimes, Luce said,

women who have excelled in school or other activities are left behind or overlooked in favor of their pastor-husbands, who often must work long hours and spend intimate time with other women in counseling sessions. The new role of taking a backseat to her husband can cause some wives to resent him or the church, Luce said.

"These are women who have shone, and now they are considered secondary," Luce said. "And perhaps all they are asked to do is work in the nursery ... which may not even be related to their spiritual gifts."

Jon Christian Ryter, a journalist who writes opinion news on his blog, www.newswithviews.com, reported that an estimated 2 million to 4 million women in the United States fall victim to domestic violence each year. But twice that number — 4-8 million spouses — become

the victims of emotional abuse.

Most experts define emotional abuse as anything designed to humiliate or psychologically hurt or control another person. It includes belittling remarks, insults, name-calling, cursing, and threatening others.

"Clearly, there was something wrong in paradise," Ryter wrote of the Winklers in a March 29 post.

"If Mary Winkler was an emotionally abused wife, the Winklers managed to keep their secret from all of those who knew them."

According to the Associated Press, Winkler told police she had suffered from her husband's criticism, complaining that he "had really been on me lately, criticizing me for things—the way I walk, what I eat, everything. It was just building up to a point. I was tired of it."

Church members also con-

tribute to the problem, counselors say. Besides dishing out insensitive criticism, they sometimes gossip about pastors' wives under the guise of telling "prayer requests." Apparently, church members in the small Tennessee town had no idea how Mary Winkler felt. Reactions from neighbors and church members consisted of shock and dismay at the previously undetected dysfunction.

"The Mary we knew didn't do this," Anita Whirley, a Church of Christ member, told Ryter. "She was a wonderful person. We just don't understand. They were a good Christian family. They always seemed so happy."

And that perception of happiness is part of the problem, said Tony Rankin in an Associated Baptist Press interview right after Winkler's initial hearing. Rankin is a pastoral and family counselor for the Tennessee

Baptist Convention.

In Rankin's opinion, pastors' wives sometimes engage in an unattainable quest for perfection, often isolating themselves and losing a sense of reality along the way. Staff member and congregations alike would do well to remember

that just because a woman has married a minister doesn't mean she's perfect, he said.

"Living this intensely does not mean increased production," Rankin said. "You just have to set some boundaries."

Rankin also said that the absence of boundaries create physical, mental, and emotional damage that can sap energy and happiness. □



RANKIN



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Baptists nurturing hope a year after Katrina ...

Continued from page 1

like a thousand homes livable again and restore a number of churches in the New Orleans area. And people are coming to Christ who might never have come to church.

"We see so many of them saying, 'At the time of our greatest need this church reached out and we want to invest into it with our lives,'" Didlake recounted.

"I've been a Southern Baptist all my life, but this was Southern Baptists at their best," he added. "If you have any doubts about the Cooperative Program, just look at what's going on."

Ministry opportunities have opened up after disasters such as Katrina because Southern Baptists have made the most of the situation, said Jim Burton, NAMB's director of volunteer mobilization. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, though 39 years in existence, was seen in a new light through Katrina's onslaught.

"[P]eople are looking to us and counting on us. I've heard this from Homeland

Security, the American Red Cross, and others," Burton said. "It's an issue of stewardship. When God gives you a call upon your life, you want to be a good steward of that opportunity so God will unfold other opportunities."

Tobey Pitman, project coordinator for Operation NOAH Rebuild, sees unfolding opportunities in New Orleans that will have a physical as well as spiritual impact on the city for years to come.

At each rebuild site, volunteers prayerwalk the area. Chaplains join local pastors in ministering to residents, and churches are crossing denominational lines to help each other meet needs in the city.

"People I talk to today still say you can tell a difference in the city," Pitman said. "Our people have been able to meet and walk with the hurting people in New Orleans trying to meet needs. The churches that are still standing have been amazing. This has opened up new avenues of ministry that I don't



SERVING ON THE kitchen team at Robinson Road Baptist Church in Gulfport, Miss., recently were, from left, Denny Meredith, Munford Baptist Church, Munford; Bill and Martha Shaeffer, Crosspointe Baptist Church, Millington; John Ely, Donna Brownlow, and Kathy Talley, all of Munford Church.

think they've dreamed of."

The need grows for volunteers in New Orleans and Mississippi as the rebuild continues. Both areas have developed the infrastructure to support incoming volunteers, and coordinators anticipate

the rebuild to continue for several years. The biggest needs now are workers skilled in electrical and plumbing, but "unskilled workers with lots of energy and enthusiasm are always welcome," Pitman said.

For Burton, last year's Gulf Coast storms were one more shining example of how God has used partnerships among Southern Baptists to accomplish remarkable things.

"Other organizations have said to me, 'Man, I wish I could get that many volunteers with a few phone calls.' We can do that because our state Baptist conventions have created an incredible network of volunteers." □

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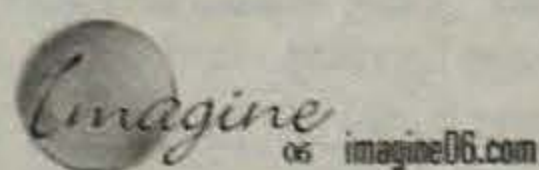


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Robert C. Pitman

Pastor

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

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Coalfield, Tenn., seeks a pastor. Church parsonage is available if needed. Send resume and tape to Pastor Search Committee, 1306 Fairview Road, Coalfield, TN 37719 — for more info see www.pleasantgrovebaptist.net/seek_pastor.html.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Holston Baptist Association of Johnson City, Tenn., is accepting resumes for a bivocational hearing impaired pastor. Send resumes to Holston Baptist Association, 207 University Parkway, Johnson City, TN 37604. Fax to (423) 929-8240 or e-mail to hba@holstonbaptist.org. Please send to the attention of the Deaf Pastor Search Committee Chairman.

Coca-Cola ranks as best family advertiser: PTC

Baptist Press

LOS ANGELES — Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc. ranks as the best family friendly advertiser this year on the Parents Television Council's fifth annual list of "Top Ten Best and Worst Advertisers," which ranks advertisers according to how frequently they sponsor wholesome, family oriented television shows or those containing sexually graphic, violent, or profane material.

The Campbell Soup Company, The Walt Disney Company, Ford Motor Company, and Cingular Wireless rounded out the top five best advertisers, while General Motors Corp., Toyota Motor Corp., Volkswagen, DaimlerChrysler, and Target Corp. were the top five worst, according to the rankings released Aug. 22.

"Why is this important? Quite simply because it is adver-

tising dollars that make TV shows possible, both the good shows and the awful shows," Brent Bozell, president of the Parents Television Council, said in a media conference call.

Bozell quoted David Stanley, producer of "The Man Show" on cable's Comedy Central, in a statement Stanley made to the *Los Angeles Times*.

"There was a time when the airwaves were a public trust and the television code was enforcing it. Today, if there's a real difference, the line is being drawn almost exclusively by the advertising industry. If advertisers are willing to buy time on shows with more risqué content, they will go ahead and

sell it," Stanley said.

In a real way, advertisers are now driving the bus, Bozell said, and there is good news and bad news.

"We compliment those who made the top 10 best," he said.

"We also say to the top 10 worst that perhaps they have no idea the degree to which they are polluting the popular culture. But they simply must take responsibility. They're sponsor-

ing it. Without their advertising dollars, these horrific shows would disappear, and we wish they would shape up."

Other companies on this year's best advertisers list are Altria Group (parent company of Kraft Foods, Post Cereals, etc.), DreamWorks, Schering-Plough Corp. (products include Claritin, Dr. Scholl's), Darden Restaurants Inc. (Olive Garden, Red Lobster), and Sears Holdings Corp.

The rankings were based on each company's prime-time network television ad buys between October 2005 and May 2006, and each company listed purchased at least 25 ads on prime-time broadcast programs. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — COMBINATION

Central Baptist Church in Oak Ridge, Tenn., (www.orcbc.org) is accepting resumes for the position of minister of music/senior adults. The church has a live television broadcast of its Sunday morning worship service on local cable TV and a 30-minute edited broadcast (see www.intimeslikethese.org) which airs over the entire Greater Knoxville/Gatlinburg area twice a week in primetime. We are looking for a music minister who will direct us in a blended music worship style. Please send resumes to brobobby@orcbc.org or Dr. Bobby Mullins, 130 Providence Road, Oak Ridge, TN 37830.

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First Baptist Church, New Tazewell, Tenn., is searching for a full-time pastor to students/associate pastor. Some music background helpful but not required. Resumes will be received until Sept. 1st. Send resume with cover letter to newtazewellfbc@centurytel.net or to Student Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 248, New Tazewell, TN 37824.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Farley Community Church, a growing SBC church in Huntsville, Ala., is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resumes to Personnel Committee, Farley Community Church, 12302 Bell Road, Huntsville, AL 35803, personnel@farleycc.org.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

First Baptist Church of Manning, SC is seeking a full-time minister of youth and children. Seminary degree required. Please send resume to fbcmanning@ftc-i.net or mail to First Baptist Church, 49 West Boyce Street, Manning, SC 29102.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Nashville area retirement community seeking full-time employee to do general maintenance work. For application, contact Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes at (615) 371-2050.

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Scenic Hills Baptist Church, The Church of New Beginnings, has a set of handbells for sale. The cost is \$6,000. For more information, contact Sister Lavelle Byrd at (901) 626-5464.

MINISTRY — POSITIONS

We're hiring a full-time administrative assistant and a part-time weekday preschool director. For more information, call (615) 794-7000. Please send resumes to Walker Memorial Baptist Church, 1350 West Main Street, Franklin, TN 37064.

CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH WORKSHOP

There will be a 14-hour Conversational English Workshop on Sept. 8-10, 2006 at the Tennessee Baptist Convention Building. The times for this workshop will be Friday 6:00-9:00 p.m., Saturday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and Sunday 1:30-4:30 p.m. There is a \$25.00 registration fee for this workshop. The deadline for registration is Sept. 4th. Certification will be provided to those who attend all sessions and complete given assignments. To register or request additional information, please contact Tim Hill or Aurie Nin at the Tennessee Baptist Convention at (615) 371-7916 or you can find information on our web site at www.tnbaptist.org/events.

Mississippi Baptist Minister to Host

Alaska Cruise

And Pacific Northwest Vacation

On June 19, 2007, join your Spiritual Director, Baptist Minister Rev. Billy Williams on this 15-day vacation including a 7-day deluxe Alaska Cruise with Holland America Line and a 7-day Pacific Northwest vacation with Your Man Tours. Devotions will be made available daily while on board ship for those in the group who wish to participate. Rev. Williams, now retired, has served as a Baptist Minister for 47 years. For 23 years he was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gautier, MS. He and his wife Rebecca have cruised Alaska's inside passage twice before. Once in 2005 as a Your Man Tours Baptist Chaplain on this same vacation package. They look forward to returning as your hosts visiting the land of the midnight sun during the year's longest daylight hours. Your group will fly into Seattle for a night before a scenic motor coach drive to Vancouver where you'll board the five-star ms Zaandam. Next, travel through a wondrous maze of forested island and glacier carved fjords, past charming coastal villages, migrating whales and calving glaciers to Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and spectacular Glacier Bay. After the cruise you'll start a six-night motor coach tour with daily escorted sightseeing visiting British Columbia; the Cascade Mountains; Washington; the Grand Coulee Dam; Lake Coeur d'Alene; Montana; two days at Yellowstone (Old Faithful) National Park, West Yellowstone, Grand Teton National Park; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; and in Utah: the Great Salt Lake, Mormon Tabernacle, and more. You'll fly home after a night in Salt Lake City. Prices for this 15-day vacation start at only \$2348 (per person, double occupancy). Included is round trip airfare, port charges and taxes, lots of escorted motor coach sightseeing throughout the Pacific Northwest, the 7-day deluxe Alaska cruise, 7 nights in quality hotels, transfers, and baggage handling.

\$100 deposits are now due. Friends and family are welcome.

For information, reservations, brochure, and Rev. Williams' letter call:

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CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — EDUCATION

Seeking an energetic, dynamic, seasoned individual who will provide leadership in the areas of education, evangelism, and discipleship. Will have supervisory responsibilities for administrative and facilities maintenance staff. Reports to the senior pastor. Requires seminary training with a minimum of 5 years experience in the areas listed above. Leadership and team work skills required. Send resumes to the church, Colonial Heights Baptist Church, 108 Colonial Heights Rd., Kingsport, TN 37660, Attn: Wayne Strong.

MINISTRY — MUSIC

Oakland First Baptist Church in Oakland, Tenn., is currently seeking a part-time worship leader. The applicant must be comfortable with both traditional and contemporary music, and be able to provide planning, leadership, and direction for all worship services of OFBC and related music programming. Some college and/or seminary education preferred; two years of successful experience in the music ministry also preferred. Please mail your resume to Oakland First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 268, Oakland, TN 38060. You may also e-mail your resume to oakland1stbapt@bellsouth.net or fax it to (901) 465-8186.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Bivocational minister needed to lead the church music program for congregation size approximately 275. Minimum of 3 to 5 years leading a church music program required. Blended music style preferred. Please send resume to Miracle Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 10, LaVerne, TN 37086.

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

First Baptist Church, Cookeville, is accepting resumes for the position of director preschool and children's ministries. This part-time position oversees all areas of preschool and children's ministries including Sunday School, MDO, and summer Day Camps. Interested applicants may request more information and/or submit resumes to FBC Cookeville, 18 S. Walnut Ave., Cookeville, TN 38501. Attn: Personnel Committee.

faith at the front

five reasons why we trust

Sara Horn

Cynicism and skepticism may run high in our post-modern culture these days, but thankfully, negative attitudes like these haven't made us completely faithless.

Over the years, the pollsters have asked the question repeatedly, but the result is the same — the majority of Americans still believe in God. And, despite the recent attempts we've seen by some to take God out of our schools, our pledge, and even our national motto, God remains very much a part of our country's makeup.

As the publisher of a faith-based military news site, I'm all aware that there are some who consider faith and any form of government an oxymoron, but I have to disagree. There's a reason why "In God We Trust" has been around for 100-plus years. In fact, I can think of five.

(1) Evil still exists. The media almost went postal in the days after 9-11 when our president brought the term "evil" to the forefront, talking about the "axis of evil" and those in our world who are, well, evil. Hard to comprehend for people who refuse to believe that someone else could actually want to hurt and harm. After all, the "evil" people can't help how they feel, right? And who am I to tell them they can't do that?

Whether it's been David and Goliath, FDR and Hitler, or today's match up between Bush and Osama, there have always been evil men out doing evil things and good men out stopping them, and it has always been God we've turned to as our nation during days of crisis. Why wouldn't we, especially when we have seen first-hand why we should? Which brings us to our second reason...

(2) Good still exists too. How many times have you seen a prayer answered? How many people have you talked to who have a story of faith, where God is the only explanation? I know in my own life I have seen the good that God has done, and I've heard countless stories from other people, including soldiers and sailors and Marines. They see God's goodness through His protection from a mortar strike that doesn't hit anyone, they've seen His goodness in coming home to be with family and friends, and they've even found His goodness in the darker moments, when they discovered unexplainable strength to keep going, despite being wounded or losing a loved one.

God is good. And He is also kind, and loving, and we can count on those qualities as we work to spread hope around the world, whether in bringing aid to tsunami-stricken countries or fighting for freedom to the oppressed.

(3) We also trust in God for history's sake. Let the naysayers deny it all they want but our country was built on Christian principles and led by people who honored and respected God, and dare I say it, one of the reasons America has been blessed as a nation.

• George Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and Bible."

• Benjamin Franklin said, "Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God."

• Abraham Lincoln said, "I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

• And more recently, Ronald Reagan, when he said, "I'm convinced more than ever that man finds liberation only when he binds himself to God and commits himself to his fellow man."

(4) We trust in God for our future's sake. It's clear that the world is a different place than 50 or even 20 years ago. Disturbing ideologies exist that don't promise to go away any time soon. The global war on terror is very real, the terrorists are real, and they're not going away either.

Patrick Henry said, "It is when people forget God that tyrants forge their chains." There's a lot of truth to this — as a nation, we have forgotten God in a lot of ways. When we argue over Christmas trees in store windows or graduation prayers on high school football fields, we have forgotten God. And yet, our future is fragile without Him. And most of us, hopefully, still know that.

(5) We trust in God for God's sake. If a tree falls in the woods alone, does it still make a sound? If everyone chooses not to believe in God, is He still really there? Yes! When God is far away, it certainly isn't because He backed up a few feet. We've left Him in the dust to do our own thing.

This of course doesn't give us license to beat those who walk away over the head with our Bibles — ultimately, it is God who is going to show Himself to someone, not us. But we can reflect His love. And we can be an example of His goodness. And we can share His joy and care for others.

This is why we can say, "In God We Trust." For as the scripture says, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." That's the best freedom of all. □ — Horn is the editor and publisher of AGreaterFreedom.com, a faith-based military news site that offers positive stories of what our military is doing. She can be contacted at sara@agreaterfreedom.com.

Who me? A leader?

By Craig Christina

Focal Passage: Joshua 1:1-15

God wants all of us to be courageous leaders. Every Christian has a circle of influence within his family, neighborhood, classroom, or business. No matter who you are, somebody looks up to you. Someone is watching you. We each have influence. The question is whether or not we will seize the opportunity to influence others for Christ.

When God called Moses to heaven, He raised up Joshua to take Moses' place. Joshua had already proven himself to be a man of vision, passion, military leadership, and obedience to the Lord. Now, God was giving Joshua the opportunity to lead His people into the Promised Land. From Joshua 1, we can each learn how to be courageous leaders for Christ.

Anticipate great challenges. The first thing God told Joshua was to prepare for this great challenge by getting the people ready to move (vv. 2, 10-11). God was going to give them the land, but they had to get ready to fight for it. It wasn't going to be easy.

We must anticipate the tremendous challenge in reaching our communities for Christ. It's not going to be easy. Most lost people are not going to walk in our doors. We have to prepare to reach out to them. We must anticipate that Satan is going

to oppose us each step of the way. So prepare for the battle.

Acknowledge God's control. God wanted Joshua to know that this was not a new idea, it was the fulfillment of His covenant promise from Abraham to Moses (vv. 3, 6). In other words, God was reminding Joshua, "Guess what, Joshua, I'm in control. This is all a part of my plan that has been unfolding over hundreds of years."

Knowing that God is in control should give us courage because God is absolutely going to do what He promises to do. God's promises will be fulfilled in our lives. So walk by faith and leave the results to Him.

Accept God's companionship. When you get right down to it, all Joshua needed to hear was that God was with him. So the Lord told Joshua, *I will be with you ... I will not leave you or forsake you ... the LORD your God is with you wherever you go* (vv. 5, 9). When we are in God's will doing God's work, He is always with us to equip and empower us.

During the Civil War, someone told President Lincoln, "Surely, God is on our side." Lincoln responded, "My great hope is not that God is on our side, but that we are on God's side." Be confident that when God calls us to do something, He goes with us. When we are on God's side, nothing can stand in our way.

Arm yourself with God's com-

Pay attention

By Bob Orgeron

Focal Passage: Hebrews 1:1-8, 14; 2:1-4

The first century church underwent much persecution. The intended recipients are believed to have been Jewish Christians who under the pressures of persecution were considering abandoning their faith and lapsing back into their former practice of Judaism. The writer of the letter exhorts them to hold on to their confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The letter opens with the voice of God ... Speaking to the fathers in the prophets ... and in these last days, ... speaking to us in His Son. In the former times, He spoke through the prophets in many portions and in many ways. But in these last days, God has spoken His final revelation to us through His Son.

It could never be said of a prophet what is said of the Son of God. The phrase "by His Son" found in verse 2 stands in sharp contrast to the phrase "by the prophets" seen in verse 1. The writer lists seven ways in which Jesus is better than the Old Testament prophets. He writes:

- (1) Jesus is heir of all things.
- (2) It is through Him that the world has been made.
- (3) He is the radiance of His glory.
- (4) He is the exact representation of His nature.
- (5) He upholds all things by the word of His power.
- (6) He has made purification of sins.
- (7) He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Space will not permit a detailed discussion of the affirmations of Christ however we will observe one of them. The writer of Hebrews is

obviously using them to confirm in the hearts of the Hebrew Christians that a return to the temple would return them to the prophets, to Moses, and the ordinances of the temple. Verse 3; reveals the first mention of Christ's priestly work and by His taking His seat ... "at the right hand of the majesty on high." Here we see Christ in a posture of sacrifice and dignity. He is fulfilling the teachings of the Prophets.

On the heels of the seven affirmations, we find seven Old Testament quotations pointing to the deity of Christ and His superiority over the angels. Space prevents us from discussing all seven Old Testament references. Verse 4, is a transition between the emphasis of Christ and the prophets and Christ and the angels. Verse 4; says, "having become as much better than the angels," There is a time element that is suggested here in verse 4, i.e., Christ was superior to the angels in His preincarnate state, He was temporally a little lower than the angels in His incarnation, and now "having become as much better than the angels, He has inherited a more excellent name than they." We see the contrast between the name "angel," and the name "Son," and superiority is in view. Verse 5, begins with a rhetorical question to which the answer is obvious. No angel has ever been individually referred to as the "Son of God." Next verse 5; quotes, from Psalm 2:7; which reads *Thou art my Son*, and in verse 5b; God says *I will be a Father to Him*. which is a quote from II Samuel 7:14; and a reference no doubt to David's greatest son, the Messiah. In verse 6 the angels are called by God to worship the first begotten. There is some question as to whether the reference

Sunday School Lesson Bible Studies for Life Sept. 3

mands. God tells Joshua the secret to true success in life: *Be strong and very courageous to carefully observe the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. ... For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do* (vv. 7-8). The measure of our success in life is tied directly to how well we follow God's instructions and plans. If we arm ourselves with the truth of God's Word by memorizing it, meditating on it, and doing it, God will bless us in every way that matters.

Advance with Godly companions. God didn't intend for Joshua to do this by himself. Neither did God command some of Israel's tribes to participate. This effort was to be supported by all of God's people (vv. 12-15). Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were expected to fight alongside the rest of God's people. Good leadership will get everyone involved, for God expects all of us to go and make disciples.

Whether we realize it or not, we are called to be leaders. So be strong and courageous as you influence others for Christ, for the Lord will be with you wherever you go. □ — Christina is pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson.

Sunday School Lesson Explore the Bible Sept. 3

is to the incarnation or to the second coming. Verse 6 reads *And when He again (emphasis added) brings the firstborn into the world, He says, and, let all the angels of God worship Him*. Certainly, the angels worshiped the incarnate Christ in Bethlehem and they will worship Him at the time of his second coming. The point of this "call to worship," is that worship is only offered to one who is superior. Christ is superior to the angels.

Establishing that Jesus is superior to both the prophets and the angels, and because the new revelation is superior to the old, the writer of Hebrews turns to the first of five admonitions found in the book of Hebrews. His purpose is to encourage the believers to pay attention to the Word of God and to obey the Word of God. The writer's argument flows from the lesser to the greater. If the Law could not be broken without divine punishment taking place then how shall we escape such punishment if we neglect the progress of the gospel message delivered to us by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The gospel message was delivered by the Son of God, confirmed by various testimonies, and signs and wonders and miracles as well as gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the will of God. It is for this reason that the writer of Hebrews admonished the Hebrew Christians, as he admonishes each of us. As he called the Hebrew Christians he calls us to "pay attention to that which you have heard." □ — Orgeron is pastor of Park Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville.

Leaders

◆ **Adam Sanders**, pastor, Wilsonville Baptist Church, Newport, has retired. Sanders served the church for 12 years. The church honored him on Aug. 20. Sanders has formed International Volunteer Mission Board to coordinate missions efforts. He has made nine trips to Brazil and has three projects planned. He has been supporting the Tennessee/Rio Baptist Partnership. Sanders also served for 22 years in the military and retired from the U.S. Army. He can be reached at pradam@charter.net or (423) 623-7039.

◆ **David Tydings** of Johnson City has been called as interim pastor, Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Limestone, effective July 1. He is the retired director of missions, Grainger Baptist Association, Rutledge. Tydings also works for Avanta Hospice in Elizabethton.

◆ **Jerry Heflin**, associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Goodlettsville, for 16 years, will retire Aug. 30. He has served 50 years in the ministry among Tennessee Baptist churches. Heflin also taught Bible at Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour, for 15 years. He and his wife will retire in Goodlettsville and continue to serve in Chile. They will lead their 14th team there next year. Heflin is available for pulpit supply, interim positions, and other ministry



JIMMY VINEYARD, right, church treasurer of Block Springs Baptist Church, Blaine, is honored by **Wayne Ballard**, pastor, and the church for serving 55 years. Vineyard was recognized on July 31.

work. Contact him at jerrgh@comcast.net.

Churches

◆ **First Baptist Church, Tullahoma**, has been celebrating its 150th anniversary. Activities have included video features of members for 50 years or more. On Aug. 27 the cornerstone was opened. To be held on Sept. 16 will be an open house and historical exhibit from 9-11:30 a.m. and a banquet at 6 p.m. On Sept. 17 will be a special service featuring James Porch, executive director, Tennessee Baptist Convention, and former pastor. Tom Madden, retired executive director, TBC, and another former pastor, also may be in attendance. Other former ministers also will be present. The service begins at 10:30 a.m. and the Celebration Fellowship from 9-10:15 a.m. For

more information, contact the church at (931) 455-5461.

◆ **Friendship Baptist Church, Beech Bluff**, held revival recently. As a result, eight people made first-time commitments to God. Randy Isbell, pastor, Hopewell Baptist Church, Savannah, spoke. "God is working in our church and we are so excited," reported Paul Garrison, member.

◆ **Concord Grandview Baptist Church, Brentwood**, will hold its annual Brotherhood Fish Fry Oct. 14 from 4-7 p.m. Also the church will sell pumpkins at its annual Pumpkin Patch Oct. 14-31. Part of the proceeds will go to keep casinos from being built on the Navaho Indian Reservation. For more information, call (615) 941-2293.

◆ **Hopewell Baptist Church, Savannah**, will cele-



THIS TEAM FROM First Baptist Church, Bethel Springs, of 17 youth and leaders served this summer in Muncie, Ind., with 250 others through World Changers. They did roofing, painting, replacing windows, replacing siding, and building wheelchair ramps. In the evenings they worshiped and enjoyed youth activities. Participating were, from left, Kaitlyn Smith; Haley Hickman; Samantha Harris; Hannah Thomas; Maggie Moore; Kelsey Smith; Kirbie Smith; and Kelcey Amerson; back row, Sandy Thomas; Regina Plunk; Spencer Farrar; Terry McDonald, minister of students; Eric Allen; Turner Cagle; Tyler McDonald; Taylor McDonald; and Randy Smith.

brate its 125th anniversary Sept. 9-10. Festivities will begin at 4 p.m. on Saturday with lemonade on the porch and culminate Sunday at noon with a luncheon. A Saturday evening meal requires a reservation. For more information, call (731) 925-5842. The incorrect phone number was reported last week.

◆ **Round Lick Baptist Church, Watertown**, will host Children of the World International Children's Choir Sept. 14 at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call the church at (615) 237-3052.

◆ **Cairo Baptist Church, Alamo**, will hold revival Sept.

10-13. Phil Glisson, evangelist of Memphis, will speak. For more information, call the church at (731) 696-4367.

Statewide Events

◆ **The 2006 Appalachian Regional Ministry Summit** will be held Sept. 7-8 at Central Baptist Church, Johnson City. It will feature volunteer missions in Appalachia. For more information contact Beverly Smothers of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff at bsmothers@tnbaptist.org or 1-800-558-2090 ext. 2044.

For second year

Salem Association helps lead VBS in Copper Basin Association

For Baptist and Reflector

LIBERTY — When volunteers from Salem Baptist Association, based here, returned this summer to Ducktown to serve at Copper Basin Baptist Association, they were glad to see James, 10. James was the first participant of the Vacation Bible School led by the Salem group to make a profession of faith.

They learned James had changed during the intervening year. His grades at school had been F's. Now he was on the school's honor roll. During this year's VBS, James served as a classroom assistant. His goal is to become a chaplain, reported Donna Nichols, Salem volunteer of Auburn Baptist Church, Auburntown.

Wanda Martin, volunteer from Snow Hill Baptist Church, Dowelltown, also was glad to return. Last year she met Willie, who won a bicycle in a drawing held during VBS. Willie gave the bicycle to his grandfather for transportation. This year Martin

returned with a bicycle for Willie. It was bought by Martin and her fellow construction co-workers.

This year northern lights, caribou, and a polar bear were a part of the Appalachian scene on Highway No. 64 in Ducktown, Nichols reported. A total of 111 children and adults participated, learning about Christian courage through the Arctic Edge VBS.

One result of the VBS was that 11 people made professions of faith. It was spearheaded by Karen and David King, members of Hollow Springs Community Church, Woodbury.

Christian courage also was taught by Hunter Vickers, 7, of the Salem team. He is a member of Sycamore Baptist Church, Woodbury. He told VBS participants about how God helped him through an emergency room visit after an accident in Ducktown.

Steve Puckett, pastor, Snow Hill Church, taught many more adults in VBS this year. Enrollment increased from

three to 16.

The Salem Association team also worked at the Copper Basin Crisis Center, operated by Al and Margaret Patterson, missionaries there through the North American Mission Board. Al also is director of missions of Copper Basin Association.



MEMBERS OF THE 44-MEMBER team from Salem Baptist Association, Liberty, served in Copper Basin Baptist Association, Ducktown, for the second year. They include, from left, front row, Haley Parker, Taylor King, Hunter Vickers, Brittany Pruett, Michelle Pruett, Lindsay Sissom, Caleb Sissom, Autumn King, and Allison Sherrill; second row, Jennifer Mosley, Frances Foster, Erin Todd, Jenny and Mark Sissom, Carter Rogers, and Margie McFerrin; third row, Lisa Vickers, Eugene and JoAnn Sissom, Bonnie Patton, Nathan Sanders, Bea Barton, Scott Pack, David and Karen King, and Pam Sherrill; back row, Russell Vickers, Donna Nichols, Talma Mosley, Lynn Parker, Bobby Patton, Annie and Buck Barton, and Billy Sherrill.

on Tuesday and Thursday.

The Salem volunteers came from nine different churches. The association provided \$2,700 to help fund the effort. Volunteers from Salem plan to return next year. For more information, contact David or Karen King at (615) 563-4966. □