

Baptist & Reflector

Wide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

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TBC files formal 'complaint' against Belmont University

ist and Reflector

ASHVILLE — The Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board has a "complaint" in Davidson County Chancery Court against Belmont University.

The complaint seeks "enforcement of rights and remedies of the convention" under a 1951 agreement signed by officials of both the convention and university, according to Clay Austin, chairman of the Belmont Study Committee, president of the TBC Executive Board.

In May 9 the Tennessee Baptist Convention authorized and directed Belmont Study Committee (expanded to 14 members) of the Executive Board to "carry out all rights, powers, actions, and remedies of the convention with respect to Belmont University through any and all means deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, private negotiations/settlement, mediation, arbitration, and/or litigation in order to protect and enforce rights of the convention relating to Belmont University, including, without limitation, all of the convention's rights and interests under applicable governing documents, under the 1951 agreement (signed by convention and university leaders), and under the Tennessee

Nonprofit Corporation Act."

The Belmont Study Committee, a cross-section of Baptist pastors and laymen, persons of acknowledged spiritual maturity and respecters of the legal process, have pursued its assigned task with responsible action accountable to Tennessee Baptists," Austin said.

He noted the committee's process of work "has focused on seeking truth and honoring applicable biblical and legal principles."

The first task the members of the expanded committee felt compelled to tackle was determining the intent of the convention from the actions taken during the special-called meeting on May 9, Austin said.

After long debate and prayerful consideration, the committee concluded that the convention had given it two specific goals, Austin said. The first was to re-establish the affiliated relationship with Belmont whereby the convention would elect the members of Belmont's board of trustees.

If this primary objective was not attainable, then the committee was charged with the second or alternative goal of seeking the convention's rights and remedies under the agreement entered in 1951 with Belmont, Austin continued.

As background, Belmont University,

on Nov. 10, 2005 and by unanimous action of its board of trustees, undertook the initial legal action intended to sever its affiliated relationship with the convention. This legal action was the filing with the Tennessee Secretary of State of a new corporate Charter which eliminated the process whereby the Tennessee Baptist Convention elected its trustees, a process which had remained intact and uninterrupted since 1951.

On Nov. 15, 2005, the leadership of Belmont University acknowledged the existence and their discovery of the agreement executed in 1951. The 1951 agreement states that the convention would provide support to and elect the members of the board of trustees of Belmont. The document also states that if the right to elect the members of Belmont's board of trustees is ever lost to the convention, then Belmont would refund to the convention the financial support it had received, including the monies allocated and distributed to it from the Cooperative Program.

"With the charge from the convention, the Belmont Study Committee maintained a prevailing hope of achieving the primary goal of the convention while always reserving a willingness pursuant to the second goal to negotiate a fair and agreeable settlement

under the 1951 agreement with Belmont University representatives," Austin said.

"From deliberations to date with representatives of Belmont University and despite on-going disagreements on a number of points, one issue has been clearly resolved.

"Belmont has advised the committee that it has no desire to return to any relationship with the convention which would involve the convention participating in the election of the members of its governing board of trustees. With this revelation, the committee has concluded that the primary goal of the convention is not attainable."

As a result, Austin continued, "the committee set its efforts on the second or alternate goal of the convention through private negotiations with representatives of Belmont.

"Through private negotiation efforts to date, the parties have been unable to span the disparity between the positions of the two sides," Austin related.

"The committee was then left with having to pursue the charge of the convention through means other than private negotiations. After prayerful consideration and much debate among the members of the committee during a meeting on Sept. 25, the Belmont Study — See TBC, page 2

Vote for marriage amendment, various leaders urge

Linda Lawson
ist and Reflector

RENTWOOD — While advertisements for political candidates are fanning the airwaves, the most important one facing Tennessee voters on Nov. 7 may be an amendment to the state Constitution addressing marriage, according to several Baptist and government leaders.

The proposed amendment defines marriage between one man and one woman as the

only "legally recognized contract" in Tennessee. It further states that "any policy or law or judicial interpretation" defining marriage in any other way will be "unenforceable in Tennessee." Finally, the amendment declares that marriages taking place in other states or countries that are prohibited by Tennessee law shall not be legally recognized in the state. (See box for full text of the amendment.)

To date, 20 states have adopted similar amendments

and eight states, including Tennessee, vote Nov. 7 on marriage amendments. The Tennessee Baptist Convention has launched a statewide effort to garner support for the Tennessee Marriage Amendment, "God's Plan: One Man & One Woman."

"Tennessee Baptists, we together have the opportunity, privilege, and responsibility to stand firm for the biblical concept of marriage by voting for the Tennessee Marriage Amendment to the state constitution on Nov. 7," said James Porch, executive director-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

"Marriage is a sacred institution described by Jesus in Matthew 19:5 when He said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh,'" Porch continued. "Throughout our history, God's ideal for marriage has been foundational to our society."

Requirement for passage

The Tennessee Marriage

Amendment was passed in two consecutive sessions (2005-06) of the state legislature as specified by law. To become an amendment to the constitu-



tion, it must receive one more vote of support than all votes cast in the Nov. 7 gubernatorial race.

Rep. Harry Brooks, R-Knoxville, and a member of Union Baptist Church in Knoxville, expressed concern that voters understand the implications if they should vote for a candidate for governor but fail to vote on the marriage amendment.

"I want Tennesseans to understand that a failure to

vote on this issue is a 'no' vote. We cannot choose to leave this item on the ballot blank," Brooks said.

He noted that proposed constitutional amendments on other subjects have received a majority vote but failed to meet the standard of 50 percent plus one vote of all votes cast for governor.

"I worry about that more than anything else," Brooks said. "We've got to stand up and be counted. This is critical. This vote will be one of Tennessee's most significant votes as it relates to families and the future of families in Tennessee."

Amendment increases legal standing

Representative Craig Fitzhugh, D-Ripley, and a member of First Baptist Church, Ripley, said, "Marriage between one man and one woman is very clearly the law in Tennessee due to legislation passed in 1996. However, the constitutional amendment would give — See Vote, page 4

Text of the

Tennessee Marriage Amendment

The historical institution and legal contract solemnizing the relationship of one man and one woman shall be the only legal-recognized marital contract in this state. Any policy or law or judicial interpretation, purporting to define marriage as anything other than the historical institution and legal contract between one man and one woman, is contrary to the public policy of this state and shall be void and unenforceable in Tennessee. If any other state or foreign jurisdiction issues a license for persons to marry and if such marriage is prohibited in this state by the provisions of this section, then the marriage shall be void and unenforceable in this state.

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House OKs bill to deny ACLU legal fees

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives has approved a bill to prevent the American Civil Liberties Union from collecting government funds when it succeeds at legal challenges to public expressions of religion.

Representatives voted 244-173 Sept. 26 for the Public Expression of Religion Act (PERA), with 26 Democrats joining 218 Republicans in the majority.

The effort to gain Senate approval of the legislation likely will be a difficult one. Congress was scheduled to recess Sept. 29 or 30, though it is expected to reconvene in November for a "lame-duck" session.

PERA would change a federal law that allows a court to award

attorneys' fees when it finds a government official or body has violated a person's civil rights. The measure would no longer permit a judge to require government officials or entities to pay such fees in cases involving the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion. PERA, H.R. 2679 in the House, would still allow a court to issue an injunction against the governmental policy or practice in such cases.

Rep. John Hostettler, R.-Ind., designed the measure to close what he considers a loophole that has allowed organizations such as the ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State to collect attorneys' fees when they win lawsuits challenging religious symbols on or religious groups' use of government property.

"Because of PERA, Americans will have the opportunity to fight the systematic agenda of the ACLU and their minions to

remove the vestiges of our religious heritage in this nation," Hostettler said in a written release after House passage. "Patriots will have their day in court." □

Sam Shaw to lead church in Miss.

Baptist and Reflector

GERMANTOWN — Sam Shaw, who left as senior pastor of Germantown Baptist Church here last spring after a bylaws dispute, will become pastor of First Evangelical Church in Tupelo, Miss., reported the *Commercial Appeal* of Memphis.

Shaw will assume his new duties Dec. 3. Shaw told the



SHAW

daily newspaper he considered number of offers in Mississippi and 10 states.

The Tupelo church has 900 members.

Shaw served as Germantown Baptist senior pastor for years. He stepped down in the *Commercial Appeal* after, after a proposed change the church's constitution bylaws, which he supported soundly defeated.

There were some expectations that Shaw would go to Hope Church, which former Shaw supporters after his departure from Germantown Baptist and meets weekly at the *Appeal*, the newspaper reported.

Shaw denied that his move to an Evangelical church is a indication that he had hoped change the church if the amendment was successful. Shaw said he never considered transitioning the church from Southern Baptist heritage. *Commercial Appeal* reported

Colleges can be true to heritage: Dockery

Union news service

JACKSON — Baptist institutions can successfully navigate the treacherous course between fundamentalism and liberalism by being Christ-centered and church-connected, according to Union University President David S. Dockery.

Dockery addressed the university community during the annual fall convocation in September and insisted that Union can be true to its Baptist heritage without abandoning its ties to the church, as so many other Baptist institutions have done.

"Connecting with the great Christian intellectual tradition of the church at large can provide insight for today and guidance for the future," Dockery said. "Knowledge of the past keeps us from confusing what is merely a contemporary expression from that which is enduringly relevant."

In addition to Dockery's address, the university officially installed Barbara McMillin as associate provost and dean of instruction; Gregory Thornbury as dean of the School of Christ-

ian Studies; and Jimmy Davis as vice president for Union's Germantown campus and director of institutional effectiveness.

Entitled "Between Galatians and Colossians: A Renewed Vision for Baptist Higher Education," Dockery's address traced the history of Baptist higher education and charted a course for Union University to follow as it emphasizes both intellectual inquiry and Christian commitment.

Dockery referred specifically to a *New York Times* article from July about the number of Baptist institutions severing their relationships with the church. Some Baptist college leaders suggest that such action is necessary for Baptist academic institutions to remain faithful to the academy.

Dockery, however, rejects that philosophy and said that Union University will remain faithful to the church while



DOCKERY

maintaining its academic rigor and commitment to the academy. He recognizes that doing so is "swimming upstream" from what almost every other academic institution in the country is doing, and that some will question the legitimacy of remaining tied to the church while engaging both the culture and the academy.

But Dockery is confident that such an approach is both necessary and possible.

"A renewed vision for Baptist higher education will have a focus on the church," Dockery said. "This university is not a church, but we must stay connected to the church. We will aim for the best in the academy, and will always have one eye on the historical past of the Christian tradition. The challenge is to preserve and pass on the Christian tradition while encouraging honest intellectual inquiry in the areas of teaching, research, and scholarship."

The Apostle Paul is an example for how universities like Union can achieve this task, Dockery said. Paul wrote the book of Galatians to challenge the false teaching of Jewish

legalism and to stress the message of the true gospel.

The book of Colossians, meanwhile, was written to oppose a religious philosophy that appeared to challenge the essence of Christian teaching, Dockery said. This wrong teaching had some connections with Christianity, but it denied the supremacy of Christ in all things.

Dockery told the Union community there is no place for a university for an anti-intellectualism that fails to engage the academy or to influence the culture.

"We must also recognize the free inquiry unanchored to theology and tradition often falls in unbelieving skepticism, advancing the direction that characterizes some of higher education today," Dockery said.

Thus, in walking between these two ditches — a fundamentalist legalism on one side and a secularized anti-Christian mindset on the other — Dockery said Union University will remain committed to the essentials of the Christian faith. □

TBC files formal 'complaint' against Belmont ...

— Continued from page 1

Committee, by unanimous action of the 14 members of the committee either voting at the meeting or subsequently providing concurrence by phone, authorized the filing of a complaint in the Davidson County Chancery Court seeking enforcement of the rights and remedies of the convention under the 1951 agreement," Austin said.

"While this was not the preferred action of the committee, it was concluded that in order to protect and preserve the rights and remedies of the convention, this was a necessary step in the overall process," he said.

"This action allows the parties to pursue the next option of mediation in hopes of reaching an amicable resolution of the issues. If mediation is unable to result in a mutually acceptable resolution of the issues, then and only then would the litigation process be continued.

process be continued.

"One important point that must be affirmed is that the committee will never cease its willingness and desire to resolve the issues through private negotiations with representatives of Belmont," Austin stressed.

TBC Executive Director James Porch observed that "together in 1951, Tennessee Baptists and Belmont began writing a story of higher education. For over 50 years the story was a joint dialogue.

"Now Belmont has chosen to write Tennessee Baptists out of their story and continue alone. Baptists of Tennessee have contributed greatly to assist Belmont in becoming a university that today provides quality higher education," Porch said.

"I trust that our Baptist people, regardless of the situation, will continue to intercede in prayer for Belmont University," he added.

Members of the Belmont Study Committee are Austin, pastor, First Baptist Church, Blountville; Raymond Boston, pastor, First Baptist Church, Covington; Roger Freeman, pastor, First Baptist Church, Clarksville; Chuck Groover, pastor, Victory Church, Juliet; Tad Harris, layman and attorney, Nashville; Philip Jett, pastor, English Baptist Church, Jackson; Lynn King, pastor, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Dyersburg; Landrith, pastor, Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville; Jerry Masse, pastor, First Baptist Church, Paris; Robert Layman (retired), Hendersonville; Roger Ham, pastor, First Baptist Church, Morristown; Bill Seale, layman and attorney, Morristown; Ron Stewart, pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Knoxville; and Richard Wallace, layman, attorney, Sevierville. □ — Full text of the complaint can be found at www.tnbaptist.org

First Baptist, Bemis, reaches 'outside walls of church'

Donnie Davis Bushey
Baptist and Reflector

BEMIS — "God has done so many things to get us outside the walls of our church," said Mark McSwain, pastor of First Baptist Church here near Jack-

One of the things church members have done is provide a "Free Prayer" ministry on the lawn of the church during the Sunday School time.

The ministry can be identified by "Free Prayer" signs which are posted along the road. Several folks sit near the signs under a portable pavilion in lawn chairs. Some stand near the street. They often wave at passersby. The volunteers also provide water, Bibles,

"It's a simple little thing but it has encouraged so many people," said McSwain, who gives credit for the idea to Doug Stephenson, a member who also leads the ministry. In fact, McSwain didn't know when the ministry would be offered until he arrived at church one Sunday morning about six weeks ago. He saw Stephenson and a few members sitting and standing in the sun with the signs posted. Stephenson provided those. He operates a printing company in Jackson.

"It's not a novel idea, but it's free — prayer is free," noted McSwain, who has led the

church for five years.

The ministry, is just one of several activities of the church to reach "outside the walls of the church," which became "a vision" sweeping the church, said McSwain.

Members of First Baptist also are knocking on the doors of fellow residents, said McSwain, although some members were nervous about it.

Teams of two to four members accepted an assignment of about 15-20 houses the first of August. Each team is developing its own strategy. About 20 teams are participating. The project will culminate with a Hope Rally Oct. 21.

But church members aren't just visiting the residents to invite them to the rally. And they aren't equipped with a survey or script to follow. McSwain asked church members participating not "to go with anything in your hand. Just show them you care."

He also suggested that participants not "go in there promising to meet all of their needs."

The project already has been rewarding, said McSwain, as church members have "uncovered needs" and met people.

He said he developed the project after realizing the church knows "so little" about people who don't attend First Baptist. He thinks some may be "intimidated by our facility."

The church wants people to know Jesus loves them, we love them, and they're welcome here, he detailed.

One team already has bought and installed a window air conditioning unit for a family. One of the members of that family



STANDING near the road to welcome cars to the prayer ministry is Doug Stephenson who came up with the idea for the ministry.

has visited the church.

McSwain has seen teams out visiting on bicycles and out early on a Saturday morning visiting.

He and his family were able to minister to another minister in the city as they visited residents.

Another turning point for the church occurred in March when 14 members served in Honduras, 12 of which experienced their first overseas mission trip. The mission project also was the first overseas effort of the church.

McSwain credits the involvement of members of First Baptist to a study of *Empowering Kingdom Growth* by Ken Hemphill held about a year ago. Hemphill personally helped and encouraged McSwain, he said, as he considered the study. It was held in all Sunday



SIGNS OFFERING "Free Prayer" are posted by the portable pavilion from which the prayer ministry of First Baptist Church, Bemis, is offered each Sunday while volunteers visit with passengers of a vehicle which stopped. — Photos by Morris Abernathy



C. H. WILLIAMS, left, and Doug Stephenson of First Baptist, Bemis, pray with a passerby as part of the church's new prayer ministry.

School classes and a video was used.

"We eared before but this has equipped us to demonstrate that care," said McSwain, referring to First Baptist members. Members are not concerned with "how we've always done it."

Since he has served the

church, it has grown from 140 - 260 in Sunday morning worship with about 130 attending Discipleship Training.

The Great Commission says to "go and get people. We can't neglect some people ... We have to get them before we can disciple them," said McSwain. □

Church in Troy reaches unchurched with after-school program

Baptist and Reflector

TROY — About a year ago Troy Council, pastor, Blessed Hope Baptist Church here, reached children were riding bikes through the church property during Sunday School time. The church is located just south of Union City in West Tennessee.

During the last couple of weeks Council have around during a period of time to see if other children are outside playing rather than in church.

Council became burdened for these children. He prayed and asked God for help. Then he read a note in the church's bulletin which read "It's Coming" and then "It's Coming, AfterCare," for several weeks. Soon church members asked about AfterCare and became

involved in starting the after-school ministry to children.

To start the ministry, children were simply invited to an after-school program each Tuesday and Thursday, reported Phillip Senn, a member of the church.

In the year since, the group has grown to about 20 children who gather at the church after school. They receive "a good meal, are given spiritual instruction from God's Word, are helped with homework assignments, and given opportunity to share in a fun time of games," stated Senn.

Since the inception of AfterCare, six of the participants have made professions of faith with two of those being baptized. In addition, seven to eight of the children who were not in church are now attending a church, some Blessed Hope Baptist and some other churches in Troy, reported Senn.

"I didn't start this to get our church numbers up," explained Council. "I did it because the Lord laid it on my heart to min-

ister to those kids." He also saw it "as a means of sharing with their parents," stated Council.

At the beginning AfterCare wasn't easy to provide, admitted Senn. The first few meetings "were somewhat chaotic," recalled Council.

The children were seeking attention without regard to anything else. Thankfully, when they started receiving attention, "they became less involved in trying to gain attention and simply enjoyed that which was offered," he observed.

"Whenever the children arrive at AfterCare, the first thing they do is get their hugs," Council described. "They simply need someone to show them that they care for them, and through that we are able to show them that God loved them enough to send His Son Jesus for them."

The children are not the only ones who have been affected by this ministry, said Senn. Blessed Hope members also have received much from this ministry, he added.

About 12 adults have served



PARTICIPANTS of the AfterCare program of Blessed Hope Baptist Church, Troy, stand with leaders from the church. The AfterCare program is an after-school ministry of the church especially for children who don't attend church.

as leaders of AfterCare.

"Those involved in the ministry to these kids are being blessed, as well as being a blessing to the kids," said Senn.

Thelma Miller, one volunteer, said, "Just getting to spend time with these kids is a special blessing for me."

Wanda Spaulding said, "My hope is that, somewhere down the road the kids will remember the love that was shown to them

by those of us that worked in AfterCare."

Still others responded about how wonderful it is that some of the children have come to faith in Christ, and will be with them in heaven.

"All of this is a result of the message of Christ being shared with them, along with the love and fun they experience through AfterCare," said Senn. □



COUNCIL

NBC edits VeggieTales for religion: creator says

By Anita Wadhvani
The Tennessean

Editor's Note: VeggieTales products are for sale at LifeWay Christian Stores of LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville.

NASHVILLE — A creator of the animated Christian-themed VeggieTales series says NBC ordered some references to God and the Bible be chopped from the popular cartoon just before it made its Saturday morning network debut earlier this month.

Phil Vischer, co-creator and the voice of character Bob the Tomato, says he was taken by surprise just weeks before the show was to air by requests from network executives to cut dialogue mentioning God. The network replaced the show's signature sign off, "God made you special and He loves you very much," with "Thanks for coming over to my house, kids. See you next week."

And Vischer wrote on his web site that NBC was making false statements by saying publicly that the cuts were made for length and not for religious content.

"The show wasn't too long," said Vischer, who was hired to pare the longer, original DVD episodes down to 23 minutes for the network. "It was too religious."

NBC said in a statement that it was "committed to the positive messages and universal values of VeggieTales. Our

goal is to reach as broad an audience as possible with these positive messages while being careful not to advocate any one religious point of view."

A spokesman for Franklin-based Big Idea Productions Inc., which now owns the rights to the show and negotiated with NBC to air the edited versions, said the edited show still delivered the same message.

"While specific references were taken out, we still think the message remains true to the show's core values," said Terry Pefanis, chief operating officer. "It was not our intent to sell out, but to bring VeggieTales to a broader audience."

VeggieTales has been a hit with the under-age-8 crowd and their parents, selling 50 million DVDs since it was created in 1993. Its shows inject humor into Christian messages, sometimes reenacting a biblical parable in modern times, and at other times offering plots imitating shows like "Gilligan's Island," but with vegetable characters talking about God. Its slogan is: "Sunday Morning Values, Saturday Morning Fun."

The DVDs have spawned a host of spin-off products such as CDs, T-shirts, Bible covers, puzzles, and computer games. Its signature characters — Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber — sometimes appear as mascots at ball games.

Vischer, who now works as a consultant for Big Idea Productions Inc., was

hired to edit the fuller-length DVD shows into the 23-minute segments that could accommodate commercials that are required by network television.

The network was clear in the beginning that biblical verses routinely recited at the end of the episodes would have to be eliminated, Vischer said.

But two weeks before the Sept. 9 airing of its first episode, "Asparagus of LaMancha," he said, he learned that NBC was asking for more cuts in religious content.

Bob the Tomato's signature sign-off was the first to go, he said. Then he learned that NBC executives wanted other lines in the dialogue out as well.

Eliminated lines from one episode included "Calm down. The Bible says we should love our enemies."

In another episode, Vischer said, NBC allowed the line "the Bible says Samson got his strength from God." But the next line — "And God can give us strength, too" — was out.

The changes included cuts in dialogue where characters utter the word "God" and were so last-minute and awkward, Vischer said, that in some cases "it makes the stories not work very well."

For the sign-off, where the original words were simply voiced-over, "the lips don't match, so it kind of looks like a Japanese cartoon with lips moving" out of synch with the words, he said.

"It seems like its OK to talk about

the Bible or God as a historical but not to give it any applicability to daily life," Vischer said. "As for major media is programmed out of New York and L.A., where church attendance is lower than elsewhere, I guess not going to see a whole lot of the depictions of religion on TV."

Vischer's Internet blog about the edits inspired a host of responses, said, adding: "Fans are angry."

One television watchdog organization said slicing Christian references out of the Christian-based cartoon like "Gunsmoke without the gun" or "Monday Night Football without football."

The Los Angeles-based Parent Television Council wrote a letter to NBC asking the network to explain the cuts, but a council spokeswoman yesterday said the group had not gotten a response.

Pefanis said the decision to edit the show for network television "weighed heavily on us."

The company is being paid for the production costs of editing the show, he said.

"It wasn't done for financial reasons," he said. "It was done to reach a broader audience." The company hopes the edited NBC version will inspire sales of the DVDs with their full religious content, he said. □ — Reprinted with permission from *The Tennessean*, Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 23 edition.

Vote for marriage amendment, various leaders ...

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the law a bit more standing."

Fitzhugh emphasized the importance of Tennesseans voting on the issue. "The Tennessee Marriage Amendment gives citizens an opportunity to voice their support."

Affirm family foundation

Rep. David Davis, R-Johnson City and a member of Central Baptist Church of Johnson City, served as a co-sponsor of the marriage amendment out of his conviction that marriage between one man and one woman is God's ideal.

"As a Christian legislator I can think of nothing more important than the foundation of the family. It is biblical. We must be sure it is protected, not only in state law, but in the state constitution. I am now encouraging people of faith to take their responsibility and this opportunity to vote for the Tennessee Marriage Amendment on Nov. 7," said Davis, a candidate for the U.S. Congress.

What can you do?

Philip Jett, president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and pastor of Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson, said, "I urge every pastor to encourage members to register, become informed and vote 'Yes' on the marriage amendment."

The deadline for registering to vote in the Nov. 7 election is

Sunday, Oct. 8. Persons registering at their election commissions should do so by Friday, Oct. 6, unless their commission has Saturday hours. Registrations mailed in should be postmarked by Saturday, Oct. 7, unless mailed from a post office that accepts mail on Sundays.



JETT

People may vote during the early voting period, Oct. 18-Nov. 2 or on the general election date, Nov. 7.

"There will be many candidates and many issues, but none will be more important than the Tennessee Marriage Amendment," Jett said. "It is urgent that we vote for this amendment and join many other states that are affirming the definition of marriage as between only a man and a woman."

For resource information to educate church members about the marriage amendment, Jett and Jett urged going to a special TBC web site, www.tnmarriage.org. Information includes a fact sheet; frequently asked questions; suggested communication actions by churches; sample items for church

Tennessee Marriage Amendment Fact Sheet

1. For the second consecutive year, the Tennessee House of Representatives on March 17, 2006, passed by a vote of 88-7 a Constitutional amendment that defines marriage as a legal contract between one man and one woman. Earlier the state Senate had approved the resolution 29-3. After approval by two consecutive sessions of the legislature, the proposed amendment now goes to the voters Nov. 7, 2006. To pass, it must garner one vote more than 50 percent of all votes cast for governor.

2. Twenty states already have adopted marriage amendments. They include: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Utah. Every state marriage amendment voted on by the people has passed, ranging from 57 percent in Oregon to 86 percent in Mississippi, according to a publication of the Alliance Defense Fund.

3. As of Sept. 1, 2006, voters in eight states will be voting in November on a marriage amendment. In addition to Tennessee, they

include Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

4. If amendments pass in six of the eight states considering them in November, a majority of the 50 states will have adopted amendments affirming marriage between one man and one woman.

5. To vote Nov. 7 for the Tennessee Marriage Amendment, a person must be registered 30 days before the election. Because Oct. 8 falls on a Sunday, voters registering on their county election commission must do so by Friday or Saturday, Oct. 6 or 7, depending on whether the commission is open on Saturday. Voter registrations being mailed in must be postmarked no later than Sunday, Oct. 8. Please note: Not all post offices accept mail on Sundays or holidays. Check with your local postal service for the nearest location that will postmark on Sundays and holidays.

6. Persons wishing to vote for the Tennessee Marriage Amendment during the early voting period may do so between Oct. 18 and Nov. 2. Check with your election commission for locations. □

newsletters, bulletins, or web sites; downloadable logos; and statements from state Baptist and government leaders. A suggested sermon outline for Sunday, Nov. 5, will be posted

in mid-October. Churches are free to download any resources for use in newsletters, bulletins, or web sites. Churches also are free to link their web sites to tnmarriage.org.

In addition to Tennessee, marriage amendments will be on the ballot in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, and Wisconsin. □

Baptists need to speak up for marriage amendment

Reflections



Lonnie Wilkey, editor

vention, led by Executive Director James Porch, is working hard to help Tennessee Baptists realize the importance of their vote.

Under the theme "God's Plan: One Man & One Woman," the TBC has launched a statewide effort to garner support for the Tennessee Marriage Amendment (see page 1).

There is no doubt in my mind that most Christians favor this amendment. However, our strongest opponent in this election may not be those who favor gay/lesbian marriages. Our most feared opponents could be apathy and complacency.

It is easy to think that there is no way opponents of the Tennessee Marriage Amendment could channel enough

support to defeat the amendment. Take heed — that's exactly what they would want you to believe.

Those against the amendment will have their voters out in full force. Count on it.

What will hurt the TMA is for Christians and others who favor the amendment to become complacent and either not vote in this election, or simply vote for a gubernatorial candidate and ignore the constitutional amendment.

Keep in mind that if you vote for a governor and do not vote on the marriage amendment, you are, in effect, casting a "no" vote. In other words, a non-vote is a no vote if you vote in the governor's race.

For the amendment to pass it must receive one vote more than half of the votes cast in the gubernatorial election.

As the election nears, I



appeal to our state pastors, ministers, and lay leaders to make this a fervent matter of prayer. Encourage members of your congregations to support the Tennessee Mar-

riage Amendment.

I would also appeal to our churches to keep our focus on the sanctity of marriage, and not get into rhetoric with opponents of the TMA regarding gay/lesbian marriages. They will use those arguments and try to discredit Christians as being too judgmental and discriminatory.

Let us take the high road and emphasize marriage as God intended it to be (see Matthew 19:5 among other examples).

As Christians we have an opportunity to stand up on Nov. 7 and make a strong statement for marriage and for God. Let's not let apathy or complacency win this election for the other side. □

World Hunger Fund helps disaster relief, other needs

Guest Columnist

By Dwayne Hastings

Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts can be traced to 1977, when a small group of volunteers served hot meals and cooked on small "buddy stoves" to victims of Hurricane Camille.

Southern Baptist disaster relief work has developed over the years into a well-oiled machine that coordinates the efforts of trained volunteers in the United States and Canada. In 2005, those efforts included the preparation of 24,738 meals, 14,556,541 which were in response to four hurricanes that devas-

tated Florida and the Gulf Coast.

While contributions to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund typically are not used for disaster relief, the natural disasters of 2005 prompted the North American Mission Board (SBC) to tap its domestic funds to aid those in need because of these disasters. With this redirection of hunger funds and an increase in requests for money from missionaries involved in hunger ministries in North America, many projects went either underfunded or completely unfunded.

Human needs and suffering are most visible during a major natural disaster, yet there are always families who are hungry in the U.S. These stories of despair usually don't make the headlines. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported in 2004

that 11.9 percent of all U.S. households were "food insecure." In other words, there were times these people didn't know where their next meal was coming from. America's Second Harvest, a network of secular food banks, did an analysis of their recipients and found that 36 percent of them were under the age of 18.

Across the country, Southern Baptist missionaries are ministering in Jesus' name to hungry people through the gifts given to the World Hunger Fund.

In Gainesville, Ga., Good Samaritan Ministries serves over 5,000 families a year, according to ministry coordinator Mike Walston. This ministry relies on hunger funds generously provided by Southern Baptists to provide families in need with non-perishable food. He said those served include the

elderly on fixed incomes, shut-ins, the unemployed, and those who may have a job but whose income falls short of providing for their family.

Every person who is given a box of food gets to hear the Good News of the gospel, Walston said. "We don't force it on them; we just want to know where they are in their walk with the Lord. There is no pressure put on them at all," he explained. Walston said every year an average of 75 people accept the Lord at the center, which is staffed by volunteers from churches in the Chattahoochee Baptist Association.

You can be a part of these ministries by making a contribution to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund. Unless otherwise designated, twenty cents of every dollar donated is sent to the North American

Mission Board and eighty cents to the International Mission Board. The North American Mission Board uses its hunger funds to support hunger projects in the United States and Canada, such as the one at the Good Samaritan Center in Gainesville. The International Mission Board uses its hunger funds for direct hunger ministry as well as water well drilling, agricultural education, water purification, etc. Because personnel and volunteers are already in place and promotional expenses come through other budgets, you can be confident that 100 percent of your gifts will be used to minister to the hungry in Jesus' name. □ — Hastings is vice president for the Ethics and Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is located in Nashville.

Lesson I learned from watching some pigeons

Heart Talk



By James Porch

Each afternoon, rain or shine, snow or sun, Mr. Johnson, who lives a half a mile down the road from our Rehoboth home, exercises his racing pigeons. Last Saturday, as they soared up into the sky, they caught my attention in an unusual way and for the next 30 minutes I enjoyed the fascination of just watching the flight of God's creatures bank and turn, soar and dive with incredible speed. Somehow watching the grey-white birds, I detected their flight to my connection of the life of the local church. As I am no expert on racing pigeons, I am sure there

are flaws in this lesson, but so what. All illustrations of kingdom life contain flaws if you look long enough.

OK, back to the pigeons. First I could not find or identify the leader. Still because of the quick turns, change of direction, alternation of speed, he (or she) had to be there. The birds knew the leader, and after all, his position had not been selected for my benefit. Church effectiveness, not success, but **effectiveness** depends assuredly more on being led than the ego, pathos, vanity, or even drum-major skills of a leader. Yes, I'm one of those few church folk who believe a leader is more effective blending in than demanding a congregation step to his waving baton. Such applies to church usually when a leader has spent enough time among the flock, and shall we say, has earned his wings. This is a way

of expressing trust.

So in summary, I am pitching a case for enough leaders among the flock who do not have to prove their leadership or continue to cry, "I am your leader." Didn't Jesus earn fellowship by example?

Those pigeons moved in graceful flight. The sun reflecting off their wings accentuated the rhythm of their movement. They flew as a group, seemingly in a spirit of excitement. Christ intends constant movement by His people, unlike pigeons released for a periodic exercise. As the church goes about bearing witness to Christ, being salt and light, building up God's kingdom, the body can function as a people with a grace attitude. However, because of the presence of the church's powerful adversary, the grace movement will demand intentional spirit-led action. A graceful flight, while generic to pigeons,

requires learned behavior by God's people.

While continuing to watch the flock, I realized they occasionally interrupted their own flight plan and ventured over new landscape and then retreated back to their usual north and south movement. I sensed their urge to venture a bit, risk their daily routine. The local church's calling includes challenging its own routine. Life needs change. People change, and through a changeless gospel we must adapt our ministries to changing needs.

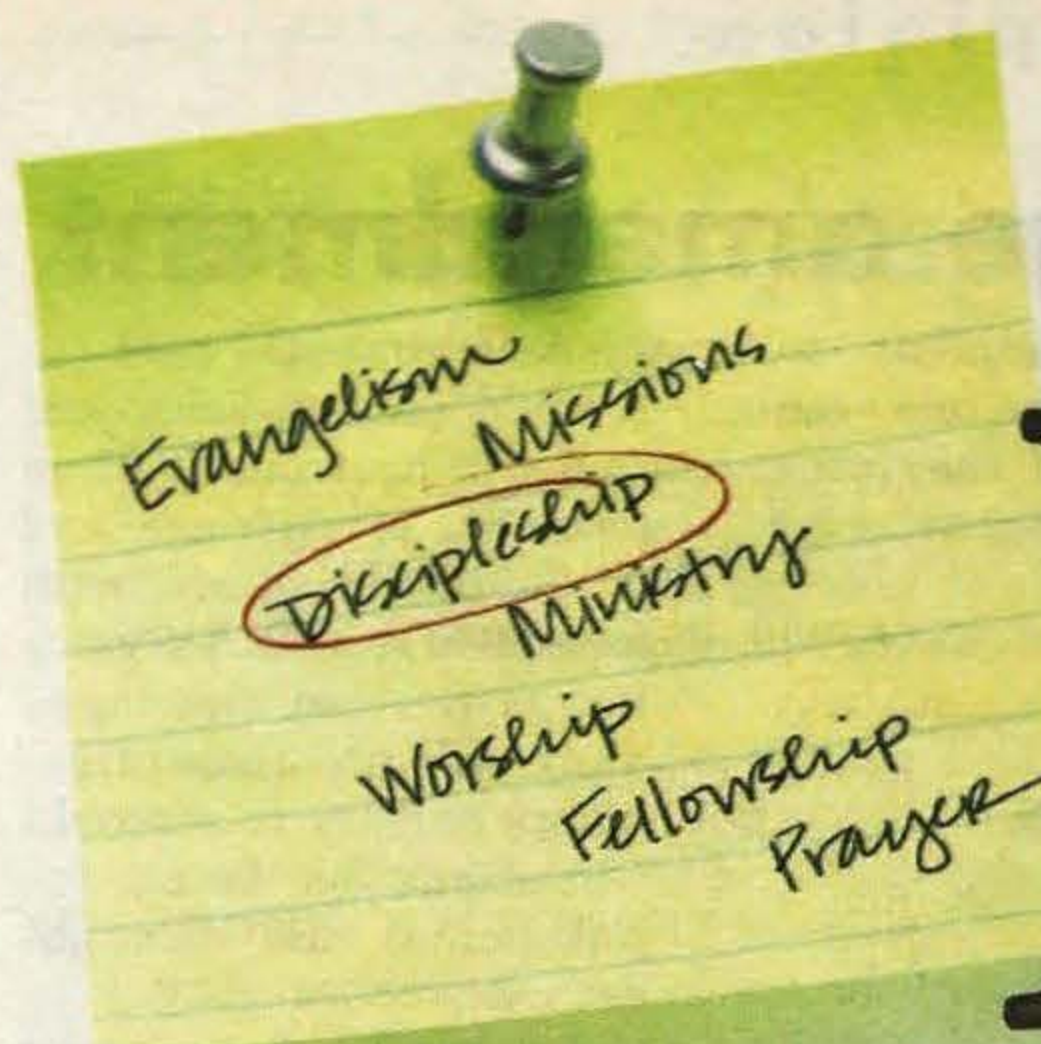
While I watched curiously from a distance, the pigeon master viewed their flight up close and with a sense of delight. Our heavenly Father stays close to His church, but alas, what does He see in our often erratic and ambivalent attempts to be His people?

Herein rests the need for our

repeated calls for grace, His enabling yet unmerited favor that offers the community of faith the best way to exercise our gifts in kingdom pursuits.

Seemingly, the birds' flight ended quite quickly. They responded to a signal and obediently flew back into their coop. I wrestled with this feature of their flight as to its relevance to the church. Maybe the lesson lies in God's people holding a holy aversion to perpetual flight. Activity in a church never guarantees Christian maturity or even response to kingdom focus. Even God rested on the seventh day. Could a slackened pace allow more who frequent the house of God the privilege to be alone with God and enjoy just being His child?

As the occasion arises, I'll watch my pigeon friends again. I think they have other lessons I've yet to discover. □



Church Health Matters

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

Discipleship Matters

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus taught his disciples about being good "stewards" in several parables.

The biblical concept of the steward is "manager of something that belongs to another." In the New Testament, steward and stewardship refer to responsibility and responsible actions. Stewardship includes giving money through one's church, but its implications go much deeper. For the Christian, to be a steward is to manage responsibly all of one's life, influence and resources. The application of all biblical truths to the living of one's life is the application of stewardship.

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 stewardship.

Stewardship Help and Church Budgeting

Archer Thorpe (615) 371-2017

Richard Skidmore (615) 371-2009

Personal Money Management Seminars

Richard Skidmore (615) 371-2009

Archer Thorpe (615) 371-2017

Cooperative Program Information or Stewardship

James Porch (615) 371-2090

Gary Rickman (615) 371-2020

Tammy Harris (615) 371-7912

Deal or No Deal?

By Archer Thorpe

I was 28-years-old, a possessor of a doctorate from one of our Southern Baptist Convention seminaries, and the pastor of a strong church. A deep friendship developed between me and one of the key leaders in the church, who was a wealthy senior adult businessman.

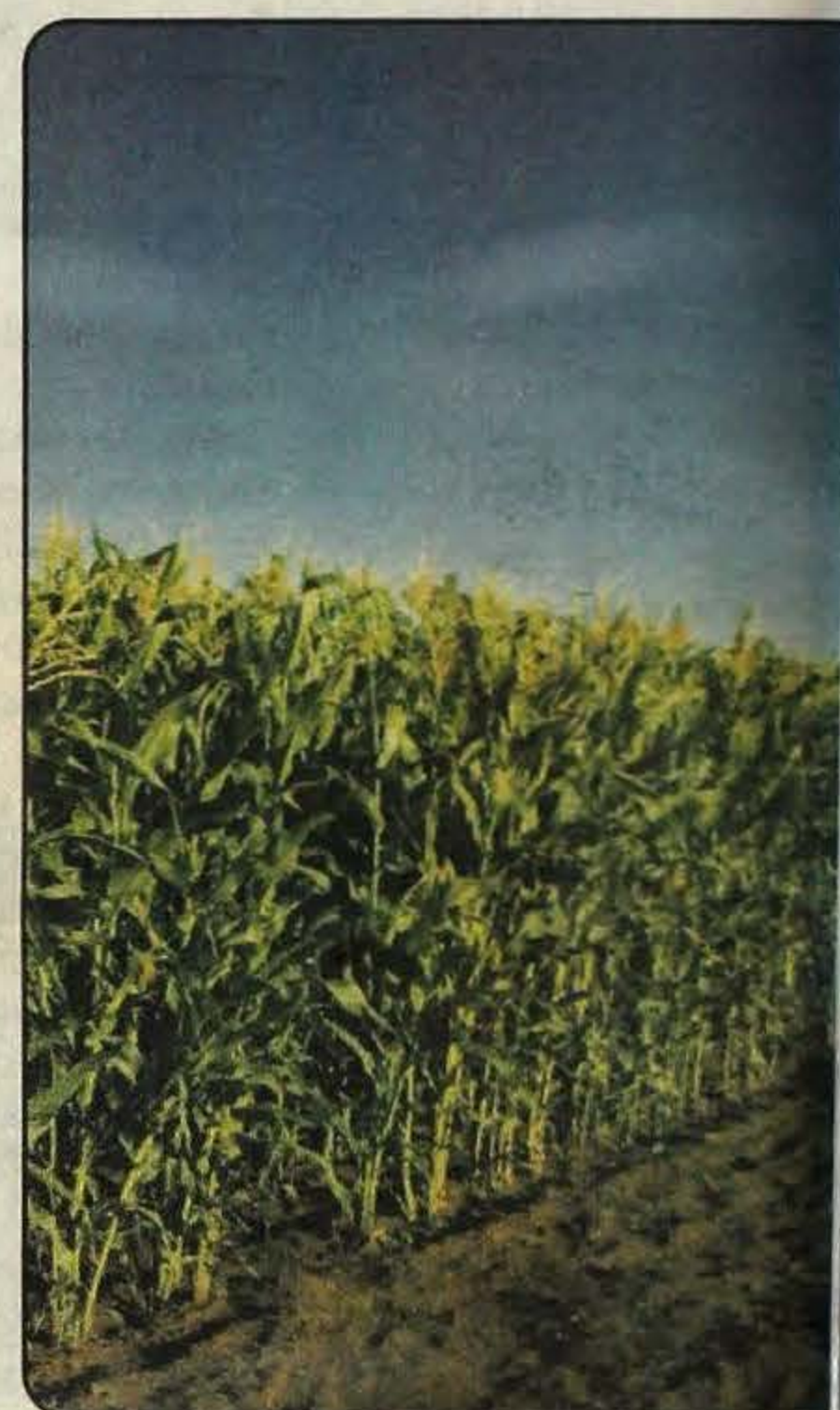
This relationship led to an offer that had the potential of being life altering. I received a phone call on Monday morning and was invited to lunch. My friend was a generous host, so we often ate lunch together. Today, the casual conversation would take an unexpected turn. At the end of our meal, he leaned into the table and used a voice tone that commanded my attention.

Here is the offer he made to me. "As you know, I do not have any children," he said. "I would like to adopt you, in a manner of speaking, as my son. I will be retiring in a couple of years, and I would like to invite you to allow me to mentor you in the leadership of the businesses that I own. When I retire, you will become the CEO; and when I die, the businesses will be given to you."

Deal or no deal? What would you do? Would I abandon the call of God upon my life? Would I push aside God's purpose for me? You already know my decision.

I do not believe that there is evil in money or the possessions that money can buy. God wants us to have the "things" of life. In fact, He promised that if we would seek His kingdom first, then He would provide the necessary "things" (Matthew 6:33).

Here are the questions. Can I find joy in life experiences apart from material possessions? Does a life filled with the abundance of "things" insure happiness? Am I willing to sacrifice my health, both physically and spiritually, in the pursuit of "more?" Do I recognize that the ultimate source of my income is God? Am I dependent upon Him or am I depending on my own intelligence and skills?



Here is an illustration. The farmer's house fly makes a three-point landing on the sweet smelling, sticky, fly paper. The fly thinks, "My fly paper!" The fly has found just what he needs to satisfy his appetites and longings. You watch the fly attack and enjoy his treasure only to discover that the fly is stuck. Then you hear the fly pester you with "My fly, my fly!"

Jesus talked about the rich farmer who said, "My corn, my barns!" At the time, the farmer had "Succes\$\$" within his grasp. He didn't worry about crop failure, drought, floods. The farmer was financially independent and could tell everyone to back-off. The farmer made one error: he thought the farmer graduated from A&M with honors, he lost sight of the fact that a man's soul (unlike the flesh) cannot be fattened on corn. The farmer didn't see that a man can die spiritually while sitting in a barn full of grain. As the farmer lied to himself, he could hear his barns say, "My fool, my fool." Deal or no deal?

Building a Church Budget Bridge

By Archer Thorpe

Building a church budget bridge has never been easy. Four components are required for this process. They are:

Action One: Seeking Spiritual Direction

- Seek God through prayer. Ask Him for wisdom in how to best communicate the purpose for having a church financial ministry plan.
- Develop a clear statement of the church's mission.

- Include personal stewardship as a primary response to fulfilling the church's mission.
- Project next year's ministry priorities.

Action Two: Consulting with Church Leaders

- Enlist the church's best leaders in financial planning.
- Secure budget proposals from all persons responsible for ministries.
- Consult with church leaders regarding adjustments to budget requests.

- Finalize a coherent plan that addresses each proposal.

Action Three:

Building Congregational Acceptance

- Write an attractive budget proposal.
- Provide a copy for every member.
- Make a formal budget presentation.
- Allow opportunity for dialogue.
- Call for congregational adoption.
- Conduct a church-wide stewardship development emphasis.

Action Four:

Encouraging Personal Commitment

- Interpret what the Bible says about stewardship of possessions and giving.

- Model expected behavior through testimonies.
- Ask members to declare their intentions for giving through a commitment.
- Remind the congregation of progress in giving.
- Express gratitude for faithfulness in giving.
- Provide offering envelopes for each person (children and youth included).

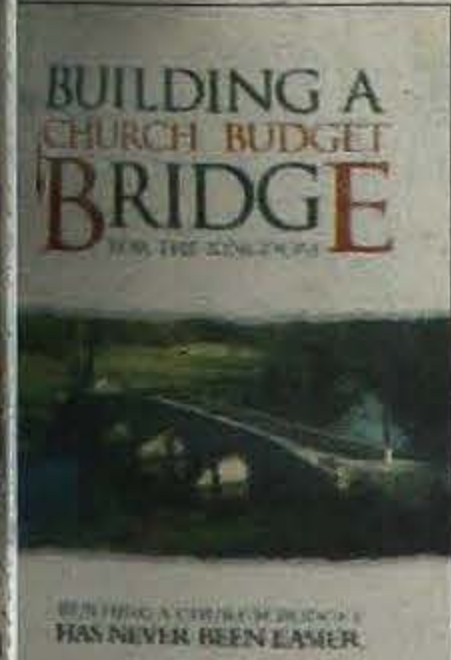
The "Building a Church Budget Bridge for the Kingdom" leadership guide is available at the Tennessee Baptist Convention web site at www.tnbaptist.org/page.asp?page=189.

New Stewardship Resources from the TBC at No Cost to Your Church



Three-Sunday resource designed to encourage members to tithe. Your congregation will RECEIVE encouragement from God's Word, RESPOND with encouragement from God's promises, and REJOICE with encouragement from God's provisions!

You will receive on CD a Preparation Guide, Sunday School lessons for all age levels with teacher guides and commentary, sermons with accompanying PowerPoint presentations, and Circle of Tithe presentation and newsletter graphics. You will be provided with bulletin inserts for three Sundays and large full-color theme poster. Tithing tracts are also available.



Building a Church Budget Bridge is a resource that addresses the nuts and bolts of budgeting. Key issues in the resource are: Seeking Spiritual Direction, Consulting with Church Organizational Leaders, Building Congregational Acceptance, and Encouraging Personal Commitments.



A comprehensive, 69-page resource which addresses most of the questions a church treasurer would ask.



Catch the Vision is a resource to help your Stewardship Team or Committee develop action plans for a strong stewardship ministry in your church.

Order form is located on our web site, www.tnbaptist.org. Resources are developed and made available by your gifts through the Cooperative Program of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Coming Up!

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Oct. 7 | Tennessee Church Library Fall Clinic, Hermitage Hills Baptist Church, Hermitage |
| Oct. 8 | World Hunger Day |
| Oct. 9 | Music & Worship Leader Roundtable, Highland Park Baptist Church, Jackson |
| Oct. 9-13 | Campers on Mission Work Week, Boys Ranch, Millington |
| Oct. 12 | Minister of Missions Meeting, First Baptist Church, Gladeville |
| Oct. 12 | Music & Worship Leader Roundtable, Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory |
| Oct. 12-13 | Youth Ministry University, Baptist Center, Brentwood |

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

IT'S A NEW DAY.

HOW WILL YOU SPEND IT?



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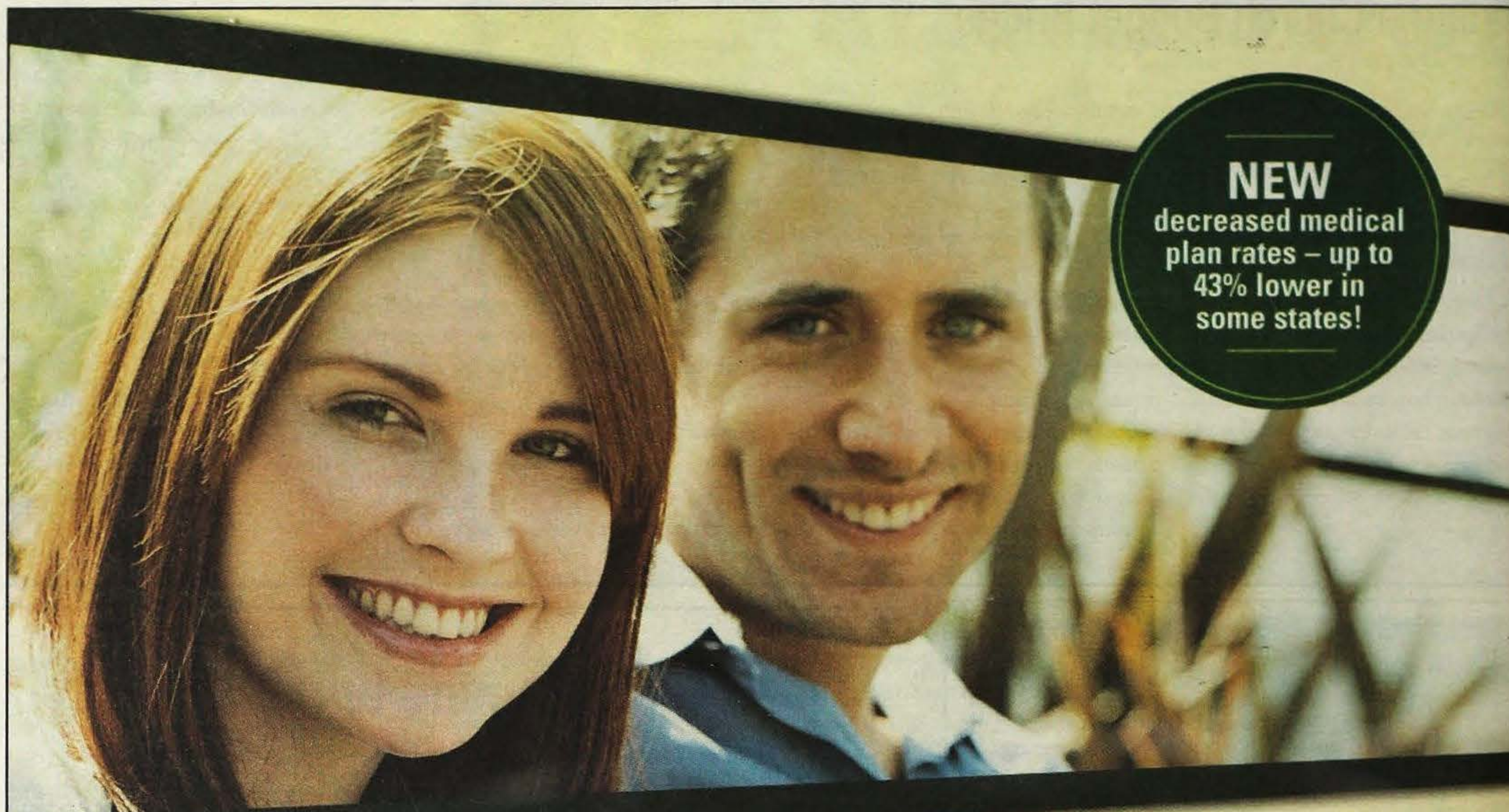
{ ...if churches and church members were not burdened with debt and free to do the ministry that God has called each of us to fulfill. }

The SBC Executive Committee announces a new and collaborative agreement with Crown Financial Ministries.

Now, and until the end of January 2007, Crown Small Group Study materials, Leader's Guide, Student's Guide, Couples Guide, can be purchased at a greatly reduced price (with discount). These discounted prices are only available to SBC churches. Please use the "It's A New Day" toll free number to place your order.

866.902.6578

C. A. Miller, Executive Director
SBC Executive Committee
a national public debt relief organization
SBC Executive Committee
a national public debt relief organization



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43% lower in
some states!

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Southern Baptist ministers, church staff, seminary students and denominational employees are eligible to apply for coverage through GuideStone. Underwriting is required.




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Record number of companies make 'gay friendly' list

Baptist Press

KASHVILLE — A record number of U.S. companies — including such big names as AT&T, Coca-Cola, Ford, Kraft, Walgreens — received perfect scores this year for being "gay friendly" according to an annual report by the nation's largest homosexual activist organization.

The report, released Sept. 19

by the Human Rights Campaign, said that 138 of the 446 major American companies it surveyed achieved a perfect score of 100 — an increase from last year, when 101 companies made the list.

And, companies apparently are fighting to get on the list. HRC officials say some companies contacted them ahead of time to make sure they knew this year's requirements.

To obtain a perfect score, a company had to meet several criteria, including offering domestic partner benefits, such as health insurance, to spouses of same-sex employees; providing at least one "transgender well-

ness benefit" (such as paying for a "sex-change" operation or offering short-term leave for it); providing "diversity training" covering "sexual orientation;" providing "diversity training" covering "gender identity" or having "gender transition guidelines" in place (both categories protect cross-dressers and those who undergo "sex changes"); prohibiting discrimination based on "sexual orientation" and "gender identity/expression" (the latter term referring in part to cross-dressers); and engaging in advertising, marketing, or philanthropy to the homosexual community.

"They're trying to buy the loyalty of gays and lesbians who have more disposable income than the average American family," Peter LaBarbera, president of Americans for Truth, a conservative organization that counters the homosexual agenda, told

Baptist Press. "... It's not that every gay and lesbian is wealthy. But just because of the lack of children and because of two incomes, they have a lot of money to spend."

Companies typically say their policies are in place so that they can stay competitive in the business market and also keep their homosexual employees happy.

Three companies — Exxon-Mobil, Meijer, and Perot Systems — finished last with scores of 0, meaning they have no policies in place.

Christians who are looking for alternatives to some of the companies that made a perfect score may have a tough time. For example, while Coca-Cola made the list, so did Pepsi. AT&T is on there, but so is BellSouth. And while Ford made the list, DaimlerChrysler, General Motors, and Volkswagen did, too.

A handful of other household

names — the Clorox Company, General Mills, Johnson & Johnson, and Levi Strauss — made the list. Also, several computer hardware/software companies attained a perfect score, including Adobe, Apple, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, and Microsoft.

But the "perfect score" companies are just the tip of the problem. Although many companies didn't make the "perfect" list, a lot came close.

LaBarbera said it's getting "real hard" to boycott companies that support homosexual activists "because there's just too many" companies involved. He suggested targeting only a few companies, which is what the American Family Association and other companies have done with Ford, which supports homosexual causes and advertises in homosexual magazines. In June a letter was sent to Ford headquarters on behalf of 78 Texas Ford dealers, who said the boycott was "affecting [their] business." □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — PASTOR

Donia Baptist Church seeking vocational pastor for country church in northwest Weakley County, parsonage available. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, c/o Lloyd Hawkins, 19 Sidonia Road, Sharon, TN 37555.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Pop Creek Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tenn., is now accepting resumes for a full-time pastor position. Applicants must meet biblical qualifications. GCBC is a conservative Missionary Baptist church located in East Tennessee near Cumberland Gap. Please send resumes to Cecil Perkins, 160 Yorkshire Dr., Harrogate, TN 37752.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Philadelphia Baptist, Waynesboro, a rural traditional church is accepting resumes for the position of full-time or bivocational pastor. Parsonage available. Send resumes to Jeff Alley, 964 W. 99, Waynesboro, TN 38485. E-mail: icba@netease.net.

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

Belle Haven Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a part-time children's minister. Interested applicants may submit resume to, 6825 E. Holmes Rd., Memphis, TN 38141, fax (901) 7-1650 or labellehaven@bellehaven.net. Attn: Winford Baker.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Theologically conservative, methodologically creative East Tennessee church seeks a full-time minister for children and young families. Please send resume with references to Children's Minister Search Committee, Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, 308 Wildwood Rd., Maryville, TN 37804.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

W Union Baptist Church in Dayton, Tenn., is seeking a full-time preschool/children's director. If interested, contact the church at (423) 775-0515.

You are invited to join other Tennessee Baptists for our **AWAIIAN Paradise Cruise & Tour with Christian Life Tours** February 26-March 9. Excellent space is so available for a **Mediterranean & Greek Isles** cruise in May, and for **Alaska** in June. Round trip airfare included from your closest major airport. For brochures, or to make a reservation, call **877-557-0073** (toll free) or e-mail ddale1950@aol.com.

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — STUDENT

Theologically conservative, methodologically creative East Tennessee church seeks a full-time minister for youth. Please send resume with references to Youth Minister Search Committee, Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, 3508 Wildwood Rd., Maryville, TN 37804.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

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.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Middlefork Road Baptist Church is currently seeking a part-time youth minister. Resumes will be received until Oct. 20. Please send resume with cover letter to Middlefork Road Baptist Church, 3955 Middlefork Rd., Luray, TN 38352.

MINISTRY — MUSIC

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, LaVergne, TN 37086.

MISCELLANEOUS

We have approximately 500 boxes (various arrangers/composers) of choir music that we would like to donate to a church that could put it to good use. For more information contact Mark Wofford, Gladeville Baptist Church, (615) 444-9550 or mwofford@gladevillechurch.org.

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Northwest Tennessee Bible Conference

Hosted by Milan First Baptist Church

October 22-25

Guest speakers:

- Dr. James Merritt; Duluth, GA
- Dr. Sam Cathey; Oklahoma City, OK
- Dr. Steve Gaines; Memphis, TN
- Dr. Stan Coffey; Amarillo, TX
- Dr. Don Whitt; Medina, TN
- Dr. Fred Luter, Jr.; New Orleans, LA

Bible Conference Schedule:

October 22 — a.m. service — Dr. Don Whitt

Services begin nightly at 6:30 p.m. (Except for Sunday Evening, October 22 which will begin at 6:00 p.m.)

October 22 — Sam Cathey — Stan Coffey

October 23 — Stan Coffey — Fred Luter

October 24 — Fred Luter — James Merritt

October 25 — James Merritt — Steve Gaines

Sam McElroy and the FBC Worship Choir will be leading in Praise & Worship During the Bible Conference Services.

For more information please contact Milan, First Baptist Church at (731) 686-3385 or www.fbcmilan.org

Junior Hill writes autobiography

Baptist Press

HARTSELLE, Ala. — He is not retiring. He is not even slowing down after more than 50 years in the ministry. In fact, he is busier than he has ever been with a full schedule for the next three years.

Why then did well-known evangelist Junior Hill write his autobiography now?

"I was 69 when I started the book. I wanted to write it while I could still remember things. As you get a little older, things fade in your mind. It just seemed like an appropriate time to do it," Hill, from Hartselle, Ala., said.

Although his memory has not begun to fade, he still found writing his memoir to be a challenge.

"Constructing your life is difficult," Hill said. "I tried to get the important things in the book, but you can never get everything in it."

Laughing, he displayed a characteristic flash of humor.

"Some things you don't want to tell."

The book, *They Call Him Junior*, chronicles Hill's life and ministry. It also includes a touching letter his wife, Carole, wrote to a young evangelist who had asked how she dealt with Hill's frequent absences.

Hill said he received more comments about his wife's letter than anything else in the book.

"I think people enjoy getting a glimpse into the life of a preacher. It was just a letter from my heart," Carole Hill said.

Alabama Baptists who have followed Hill's ministry will find many of the facts related in the book familiar, such as his election in 1989 as first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

There are portions of the book, however, that might prove surprising for some readers.

One example is an episode during the height of the civil rights era that resulted in Hill's dismissal as pastor from a small Mississippi church. Although he said he was devastated at the time, the experience resulted in a ministry to discouraged pastors.

Hill's book is available at www.juniorhillministries.com. □

FamilyNet Radio moves to channel 161 on Sirius

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — FamilyNet Radio has moved to a new spot on Sirius satellite radio — channel 161 — in order to place it in the network's expanded family category.

Effective Sept. 26, FamilyNet's former channel 159 is occupied by programming produced by the Catholic Archdiocese of New York.

FamilyNet also has added 13 new programs to its lineup in

To the best of our knowledge all ads in the *Baptist and Reflector* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always use caution in responding to ads.

September, including preaching by Johnny Hunt, airing on Sundays from 12:30-1 p.m. Eastern with a replay on Mondays at 12:30 a.m. Hunt is pastor of the Atlanta-area First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga.

"Jerry Vines by the Book," also on Sundays, from 8:30 to 9 a.m., features the preaching and teaching of the retired senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla. □

Amid speculation, Missouri board affirms exec.

Baptist Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — After more than six hours of discussion in executive session Sept. 22, the Missouri Baptist Convention's Executive Board affirmed the MBC's executive director, the chairman of the nominating committee and the works of that committee and all other MBC committees.

The affirmations come after speculative reports in the media and e-mails circulating around Missouri prior to the meeting that conservatives in the MBC are divided over the future of MBC Executive Director David Clippard and that a vote to dismiss him was possible. One

association, Fellowship Baptist Association, went so far at its fall meeting as to issue a resolution affirming Clippard amid the circulating rumors.

Such speculation proved untrue. The discussion did not center on Clippard's dismissal and no motions or votes to dismiss were taken. Instead, the executive board affirmed Clippard, calling him "God's man to be our executive director" and going on to say that "we rejoice in all that unifies us to the glory of God."

The executive board also affirmed Roger Moran, the acknowledged leader of the conservative resurgence in the state and his work as chairman of the MBC's nominating committee. It is the nominating committee that recommends people to fill slots on the convention's various board agencies and committees. The board went on to affirm the works of "all Missouri Baptist Convention

committees this year."

The meeting was presided over by MBC President I. Sawyer, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wentzville, Mo. was attended by 46 of board's 53 members. All attendance were five invitees presidents of the convention.

Six board members were in attendance and one remains vacant following resignation of Ken Jones, recently accepted a pastorate in Virginia.

A press release issued by MBC Executive Board Secretary said the board "investigates concerns brought to the board before it acted on Sept. 22 to affirm Clippard, Moran, works of the nominating committee, and all convention committees this year. The release said the board rejoiced in its findings, one being "the conservative resurgence in the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention." □



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book review

awn Ferguson

Just Walk Across the Room

by Bill Hybels
Zondervan, 2006

ote: A few weeks ago I wrote about 16-year-old Nathan son (see Aug. 30 B&R), and the incredible witness he for Christ prior to his death. Something his mother said a an impact on me that caused me to pick up this book. said that Nathan did so easily what many of us make so – and that's witnessing. On many occasions I have reluctant to share my faith with others. This book has ed me see why I might be reluctant and has guided me path that will hopefully make me a more fervent seed ar.

an you tell someone why you're a Christian in 100 is or less?

hat's what Bill Hybels, minister of Willow Creek rch in Illinois, challenged his congregation to do. els believes that if our story is clear and we're able to municate it we'll be more prone to leave our comfort es and share it with others. We'll be more prone to Walk Across the Room into the zone of the unknown! It's as simple as this ... Who were you before, and are you now, as a result of Christ's passionate inter- ion in your journey?"

our story needs to be concise – clear – easy to under- d and not full of "religionese" but full of humility. ointing people to Christ is the highest and best use of lives. "True joy in the Christian adventure unfurls n you play the role that the Spirit asks you to play," es Hybels. "Our job is to say – God, I am open for tever role you might have me play. Whatever it is – available to be used."

But you've got to be ready when the opportunities sent themselves. To be the seed-sowing person that els believes we should be, we must get close to ungod- eople and build relationships first.

Hybels' focus is on witnessing with wisdom and dis- amment. We need to establish relationships so people open up to us – so people will listen to what we say. duct yourself with wisdom toward outsiders, states ssians 4:5.

When people living far from God throw open the door ask sincere questions about your faith, you don't d to freeze up," Hybels writes. "You also don't need to off machine-gun bursts of Scripture verses that make ense to them. Or jump on a soapbox about how they d to start flying straight. Or launch into any number nhelpful sermonettes."

Hybels also stresses that our stories don't have to be ctacular. They don't have to involve miracle healings life of shame or addictions. They can be as simple as eling of emptiness prior to finding Jesus and now an ndant life because of Him.

All of us who bear the name of Christ must improve ability to communicate our faith stories," says Hybels. ause when they're not carefully thought out and rly communicated, the results can be hideous."

Many people are reluctant to share their faith stories others – even with the people they love and are close f you find yourself in that category, this book is a t tool to help you discover why you may be reluctant give you a plan for overcoming your reluctance – and emind you of the joy that comes from helping someone ver the love of Christ.

This book is not a step-by-step guide that tells you how communicate your faith story in 10 easy steps. It's ed on the real-life experiences of a minister who has what does and doesn't work in sowing seeds and ng hard ground. And, it's a reminder that evangelism e task of the whole church! □



Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions
Funding missions in Tennessee

Take hold of godliness

By Craig Christina

Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 4:6-16

Many people want to be something that they are not. Some want to be skinnier. Others strive to be wealthier. Still others want to be happier. If you think about it, people invest a lot of time and energy trying to "improve" themselves in order to reach some personal goal of self-fulfillment.

While nothing is wrong with trying to improve ourselves, most of these pursuits focus on the outer self. How do I look? How can I look better, younger, or wealthier?

Have you seen the commercial where the husband is reading the newspaper and his wife asks him, "Does this outfit make me look fat?" The husband is not really paying attention. Thinking his wife has told him to do something, he offers his standard reply, "Yes, dear." We are a culture obsessed with our outward appearance.

Christians also get caught up in these superficial pursuits. If we're not careful, we become more concerned with looking like Brad Pitt or Jennifer Aniston than we do with looking like Jesus. Don't get me wrong, we should take care of our bodies. But more important than our investments in outer beauty, we should strive to have a beautiful spirit (v. 8).

In the same way a family physician promotes physical health, Paul offers us a three-step plan to take hold of godliness.

Eat right (vv. 6-7a). You've heard it before: garbage in, garbage out. We can never expect to look more like Jesus unless we receive the proper

nourishment. So Paul reminds Timothy to be *nourished by the words of faith and of the good teaching that you have followed* (v. 6).

As a pastor, I am constantly amazed at the tangents some Christians will pursue. Whether it is angels or the end times, some believers will study secondary things more than the primary things. They can't tell you the Ten Commandments or one thought from the Sermon on the Mount, but they can give you a detailed outline of events and date for the return of Christ.

Study secondary issues as an appetizer, but let the main entrée be the fundamentals of the faith. Getting sidetracked by *irreverent and silly myths* (v. 7) is not healthy for the individual or the body of Christ.

Exercise regularly (vv. 7b-10). No one can deny the physical benefits of regular exercise. It makes us feel better in practically every way. Yet, a physical workout only provides *limited benefit* (v. 8). The best exercise involves training for godliness because *godliness is beneficial in every way* (v. 8).

In other words, we need to exercise our faith in order to grow stronger in our relationship with Jesus. Stagnant Christianity does not exist! Just like the physical body, we are either growing stronger in our walk with Christ by learning how to build a foundation of faith to weather the coming (or current) storm. Or we are backsliding and growing weaker by the day.

We must *labor and strive* to look more like Jesus (v. 10). How do we exercise our faith to accomplish this

Sunday School Lesson
Bible Studies for Life
Oct. 8

goal? We engage regularly in evangelism, worship/prayer, discipleship, fellowship, and ministry. Sitting in the pew alone is not enough to build spiritual muscle. God wants worshipers who will also be warriors for the cause of Christ (Ephesians 6:10-17).

Exemplify righteousness (vv. 11-16). After we receive the proper nourishment and training for godliness, we must live out our faith by being *an example* (witness) to others (v. 12). Don't worry about your youth, status, class, or past history. Everyone has a circle of influence among families, friends, church, neighborhood, classroom, or workplace.

What does it mean to exemplify righteousness? Live your life in such a way that others will be pointed to Christ through your *speech, conduct, love, faith, [and] purity* (v. 12). Also, allow the pastor to fulfill his primary tasks of preaching and teaching the Word of God (v. 13). The Christians in Ephesus could not be built-up in their faith unless pastor Timothy was empowered to *equip the saints* (Ephesians 4:12).

So keep those workouts going! Only, don't forget about the greatest workout of all; the training for godliness. It may not result in looking like Aniston or Pitt, but it will please God that we look more and more like Jesus. □ — Christina is pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson.

Determine to mature

By Bob Orgeron

Focal Passage: Hebrews 5:11 - 6:12

This passage is addressing the maturity status of the believers addressed in the book of Hebrews. The emphasis of the passage is on their need to move toward maturity. In this study we encounter a third warning passage. So far we have observed two such passages. The first warning is in Hebrews 2:1-4 and the second, in Hebrews 3:7-19. This third warning is concerning the need for the readers to grow toward maturity. The writer interrupts his teaching about Christ as our great High Priest with this warning and challenge.

Description of immaturity, 5:11-14. In verse 11 the writer pens a brief transition between the teachings of our *Great High Priest*, and the warning to follow. It is *not easy to explain* (Phillips, p. 461), not because of some defect in the writer or the difficulty of the subject, but because of the slowness of the learners. So he utters a strong warning about the dangers of standing still rather than progressing toward Christian maturity. The recipients of the letter were people of whom better things seems to have been expected. They had evidently been converted for quite some time, and they ought to have made more progress in the faith but seemed to have stalled.

Directions to the immature, 6:1-8. Since the readers were still in need of milk, the tendency might be to anticipate that this is what the writer is about to provide. Instead, he says *he will leave elementary things and go on to maturity* (Phillips, p. 461).

In verse 1, the writer links himself

with his readers by his use of the personal pronoun "us," the idea being let us go in the right direction together, let us move on the maturity. In verses 4-6 the student is presented with some of the most challenging verses in the passage. The descriptive words sound like someone who has made a profession of faith.

However, there is the troubling wording in verses 4 and 6. These thoughts have given rise to several views that have been espoused through the generations that are worth noting. For example, there is the view that this is directed to some of the Jewish people who professed to be believers in Christ but stopped short of true faith in Him after advancing to the threshold of salvation. If this view is the case then evangelism is a no-brainer. It seems obvious that they lack understanding at some point.

There is also the view that this is nothing more than a hypothetical case, that if someone hypothetically speaking could possibly "fall away," that it would be impossible to renew him or her again to repentance.

A third view is that this warning is directed toward believers who have fallen into sin to such an extent that they by their very lifestyle have crucified to themselves the Son of God all over again. This view is also called the "backslider's view." If this view is indeed the case then restoration of a fallen brother or sister through church discipline and recovery ministry through repentance and faith is the opportunity, if not an outright evangelistic opportunity.

And fourth, there is the view that this warning is directed toward those who are believers in the Lord Jesus

Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
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Christ and are in danger of losing their salvation.

So which is it? Certainly out of these views two of them could possibly be applicable to this passage. Certainly we all have known people who have been active and involved in our church who have learned later that they were not truly born again and have placed their faith and trust in Christ. And certainly we all have known of people who have professed to be saved and frankly they just were not walking the walk.

This passage is a stern warning to each believer and is a call to assess one's spiritual walk and one's spiritual level of maturity.

Encouragement for maturing 6:9-12. In this concluding passage he encourages them to go forward. In verse 9, the writer addresses his readers as brothers in Christ. The writer concludes in verses 11 and 12 by saying *It is our earnest wish that each one of you would continue to show a similar kindness in growing to the point of fully grasping the hope that is within you, until the end of your journey.*

He encourages them by saying we don't want any of you to grow weary or slack, but follow the example of those who through patience of faith continued to the possession of the promises. So grow toward maturity. Grow up in Jesus. Imitate the faith of those who have gone before you. □ — Orgeron is pastor of Park Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville.

Leaders

◆ **Melody Maxwell**, a native of Collierville and a graduate of Union University, Jackson, attended the Younger Leaders Gathering 2006 Sept. 24-30 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Maxwell is design editor for children's missions educational materials, national Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala. She was one of 77 leaders from North America to attend the conference. The gathering is a ministry of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism, which developed from the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization convened by Billy Graham in Lausanne, Switzerland.



MAXWELL

◆ **Wayland Holbrook** will celebrate his 50th anniversary of being ordained by preaching at New Middleton Baptist Church, Gordonsville, Oct. 8 at 10 a.m. The church ordained



EUGENE HUGHETT, of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Morristown, holds a plaque received for 36 years of perfect Sunday School attendance. Hughett, who is 86 years old, was honored by his church on Aug. 27. He also received a standing ovation from the congregation.



WILMA REDMOND, left, church clerk, Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Harrogate, receives a plaque from Clayton Dunsmore, director of missions, Cumberland Gap Baptist Association, Harrogate, during the church's 100th anniversary observance. The celebration was held Sept. 9-10. Johnny Bussell, former member who is pastor of a church in Milan, Mich., spoke.



A NEW STEEPLE was added recently to the new worship center of West Hills Baptist Church, Lebanon. The 23,000-square-foot addition is scheduled to open Nov. 12. The church is eight years old.

him after he grew up attending there. Holbrook is serving in Belle Fourch, S.D. A luncheon will follow. For more information, contact glendab@dtccom.net.

◆ **Hermitage Hills Baptist Church**, Hermitage, has called **Paul Brady** as the interim minister of satellite development and disaster relief. Brady began serving Oct. 1 at the church's first satellite branch at Rayon City Baptist Church, Rayon City.

◆ **Fair Havens Baptist Church**, Powell, recently called **Daniel Rosenbalm** as pastor. He previously served as the church's interim pastor.

◆ **Jud Reasons** recently resigned as minister of education of First Baptist Church, Knoxville, to serve in a similar position in an Alabama church.

◆ **Little Flat Creek Baptist Church**, Corryton, has called **Ryan Baltrip** as pastor.

◆ **Norwood Baptist Church**, Knoxville, recently called **Jason Sweeton** as pastor.

◆ **Bethel Springs Baptist Church**, Bethel Springs, recently called **Winston Torbett** as pastor.

◆ **Calvary Baptist Church**, Etowah, recently called **Jeff Blanchette** as pastor.

◆ **Tom Byrge**, pastor of Clinch River Baptist Church, Clinton, for 21 years, announced

his retirement effective Sept. 3. A retirement celebration was held Sept. 1 at the church for Byrge and his wife, Minnie. He also served in many leadership roles in the Clinton Baptist Association, Clinton.

◆ **Rocky Creek Baptist Chapel**, Castalian Springs, recently called **Robert (Bob) Hunt** as pastor. Hunt served as an associate pastor and bivocational pastor of several churches in Sumner County before coming to Rocky Creek Chapel. He also serves in several roles in Bledsoe Baptist Association, Gallatin. In addition, the church will hold a revival Oct. 15-18 with their new pastor as the speaker. Music will be led by Forrest Creekmore, pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Gallatin.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Columbia, called **Pete Tackett** as pastor effective Sept. 10.

Churches

◆ **First Baptist Church, Bluegrass, Knoxville**, recently celebrated its 100th anniversary.

◆ **Eagleville Baptist Church, Eagleville**, will host a nightly fall revival Oct. 29-Nov. 1. Rick Ousley, former senior pastor of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, Ala., will speak. For information, contact Derrell Billingsley at (615) 542-2927 or derrellb@eaglevillebaptist.org.



ATTENDING A SEND-OFF for the youth minister of Piney Baptist Church, Oakdale, Mark McCullough, center, who also is a sailor are, from left, Vicki McCullough, his wife; Lincoln Davis, U.S. congressman; McCullough, Navy Petty Officer; and Peggy and Junior McCullough, his parents. McCullough was sent to Kuwait in August. He will serve there until Spring. Davis spoke at the event of his visits to Iraq.



STANDING IN THE new fellowship/education building of Bowman Baptist Church, Jonesborough, at its Aug. 6 dedication from left, Johnny Payne, deacon; Tony Crossnoe, pastor; Cha Barkley, builder; and Gale Ramsey, chairman of the building committee. The \$400,000 building was dedicated on the 137th anniversary observance of the church.



PAUSING IN KIEV, Ukraine, are members of a team from Cumberland Gap Baptist Association, Harrogate, who served there 21-31. As a result 141 people made professions of faith, churches were started, and churches were strengthened. Members are, from left, front row, Greg Long; Don Williams; Ki Clark; Walter Dunn; Robert Zavattieri; Tammy Sipiczky; Ni Long; back row, Robert Hilliker; Arnold King; Robert Zie Steven Flippo, Clayton Dunsmore, leader of the group who is a pastor of missions of the association; and Ida Robinson.

eaglevillebaptist.org.

◆ **Woodbury Road Baptist Church, Murfreesboro**, will host a homecoming celebration Oct. 22 with old-fashioned preaching, singing, and eating, according to pastor Willard Runnels. For information, call him at (615) 896-6928.

◆ **Prosperity Baptist Church, Auburntown**, will host the Institute for Creation Research's Creation Bus the night of Oct. 4. In addition, there will be a video presentation and a separate presentation for children. A love offering will be taken. For information, contact

Ricky L. Scott, pastor, at 408-4300 or ProsperityPastor@wlv.com.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Dyer**, will hold revival Oct. 11. Robert Hammer will present "Sermons in Art." For information, contact the church at (731) 692-2549.

Schools

◆ **Harrison-Chilbo Baptist Academy**, Seymour, seeking a director of development. For more information contact Walter Grubb, president, at wgrubb@thekingsacademy.net.



TWENTY-SIX TENNESSEANS from Salem Baptist Association, Liberty, stand with new friends in front of the First Indian Baptist Church on Rocky Boy Indian Reservation in Montana this summer. The group added an entryway to the church. The Tennesseans also worked with Immanuel Baptist Church in Havre, conducting a neighborhood survey and leading a revival. The project was organized by Whorton Springs Baptist Church, Smithville, and supported by the Tennessee/Montana Baptist Partnership.