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Baptist & Reflector

Statewide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

Vol. 173 / No. 2; Jan. 17, 2007

TBC Executive Board adopts revised convention budget

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — The Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board overwhelmingly adopted a revised budget for 2006-07.

The board's action is retroactive to Nov. 1, the start of the fiscal year.

Action on the budget highlighted the board's Jan. 12 meeting. Board members also heard a number of reports on TBC-related ministries and went into session to hear a report from the Belmont Study Committee regarding a letter from Belmont trustee chairman Marty Dickens that was sent to TBC churches in January (see story below).

In November, TBC messengers originally rejected a \$37 million budget and adopted a substitute motion offered by Bob Agee of Jackson.

Confusion over the language of Agee's motion, compared to his intent, led messengers to rescind the substitute budget

and adopt the original budget prior to the conclusion of the annual meeting.

Prior to adjournment messengers then approved a motion by Roger "Sing" Oldham of Martin which requested the Executive Board to consider "the budget at its January meeting and amend the adopted \$37 million budget to reflect Bob Agee's intent (see Nov. 22 and Dec. 20 issues of *B&R* for more information).

The TBC Budget and Ministry Committee met Dec. 14 with entity leaders to discuss the budget and to consider a revised budget based upon Agee's motion.

The committee then unanimously adopted the revised budget.

Each of the seven entity heads (James Porch, Executive Board; Kenny Cooper, Adult Homes; Bryant Millsaps, Children's Homes; Bo Childs, Foundation; James Netherton, Carson-Newman College; David Dockery, Union University; and Walter Grubb, Harrison-Chil-



JERRY MASSEY, president of the TBC Executive Board is flanked by chairman of the board's seven standing committees. From left are Dale Gravatt, Collegiate; Phil Young, Christian Services; Chuck Groover, Church Health; Mike Dawson, Education; Mickey Basham, Budget and Ministry; Massey; Wendell Boertje, Shared Ministries; and Robert Moon, Administrative. — Photo by Connie Davis Bushey

howee Baptist Academy) endorsed the revised budget.

After a brief discussion, the full Executive Board, acting on behalf of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, adopted the revised budget with only one or

two dissenting votes.

The Executive Board then addressed the \$185,804 which had to be cut from the Tennessee Missions and Ministry budget under the revised budget which they approved.

Of the cuts, \$85,345 will come from two eliminated positions (currently unfilled) and \$100,459 will come from cuts in the core ministries area of the budget.

— See TBC, page 2

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Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Information is a key to all facets of life, including the church and the denomination.

The *Baptist and Reflector* has been telling the story of Tennessee and Southern Baptists for more than 170 years.

We invite Tennessee Baptist churches to become a part of our family of subscribers. We are seeking churches to add members to existing mailing lists or to begin sending the paper to its members, or, at least to its leaders. We are currently offering a 90-day trial plan which will send the paper at no cost to a church's membership list for three months.

Churches can also save money by printing its newsletter in the pages of the *B&R*. We can tailor the plan to fit any church's needs — from one or two pages weekly to one page once or twice a month.

For information on these plans and others, call Mary Nimmo or Susie Edwards at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2003. □

Convention leaders respond

Belmont University subpoenas TBC churches

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Belmont University has subpoenaed 100 Tennessee Baptist Convention churches asking for information on gifts churches "made to the Cooperative Program between 1951 and 2005."

In the letter, dated Jan. 3 and signed by Marty Dickens, chairman of the board of trustees at Belmont, he asked if "in making those gifts, the churches knew about or relied upon the 1951 document that is the focus of the Executive Board's lawsuit against Belmont."

The *Baptist and Reflector* obtained a list of subpoenaed churches and discovered that several of the churches on the list were not in existence in 1951 and at least one church reported no gifts through the Cooperative Program in 2005.

Belmont apparently mailed its letter to all TBC churches, not just to those which received subpoenas. In the letter, Dickens wrote, "We are not serving subpoenas on all of the affiliat-

ed churches of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Rather, we are serving them on the largest donors to the Cooperative Program because Cooperative Program funds are at the center of the Executive Board's claims against us."

Convention leaders responded to the Belmont leader in a three-page letter that was mailed to churches across the state on Jan. 12.

The TBC response was signed by Executive Director James Porch and Clay Austin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Blountville, and chairman of the Belmont Study Committee.

The letter noted that "During 2005 Belmont University acted to terminate its affiliated relationship with the Tennessee Baptist Convention through a charter change. The Executive Board and TBC did not want to have to initiate litigation against Belmont and, to that end, tried for many months to persuade Belmont to honor the promise it made to Tennessee Baptists in 1951.

"That promise, as many of you know, is memorialized in a

written document, the Repayment Agreement, which was signed by a former president of Belmont," the letter said.

Porch and Austin observed that the Repayment Agreement "contains a simple and clear promise from Belmont that it would repay all monies given to it by the Executive Board in the event that the

TBC ever lost the right to elect the directors/trustees of Belmont. It does not take a lawyer to understand the promise made by Belmont in 1951 in the Repayment Agreement," they wrote in the letter.

"By steadfastly refusing to acknowledge, much less honor, its promise to us, Belmont, not the Executive Board or the Belmont Study Committee, forced this matter into the court house," the letter stated.

In the Belmont letter, Dickens noted the request for information was "necessitated by the lawsuit filed against Belmont by the Executive Board" and also wrote that "we do not wish this request to create a costly or burdensome task for the churches and do not believe

that it will, but we have been informed by the Executive Board's attorneys that they do not represent the churches. Unfortunately, this means that

rather than seeking this information directly from the Executive Board, Belmont must request it from individual churches by sending them subpoenas."

In response to that assertion, Porch and Austin noted that "the unfortunate reality is that the information sought by the subpoenas is irrelevant to the lawsuit. None of the churches are parties to the Repayment Agreement. Furthermore, the Executive Board is seeking repayment of Cooperative Program funds only, not funds contributed by churches directly to or for the benefit of Belmont."

"If a church decides to seek repayment from Belmont of any monies it contributed directly to or for the benefit of Belmont since 1951, then the information sought by Belmont pursuant to the subpoenas may become relevant for that cause of action."

— See Belmont, page 4

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Former TBC president named vp at Union

Union University news office

JACKSON — Former Tennessee Baptist Convention President Jerry Tidwell, pastor of Ellendale Baptist Church in Bartlett, has been named vice president for church relations at Union University.

"Jerry Tidwell loves Union and loves the churches of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. He will bring great experience to this important position in the life of our university. Dr. Tidwell is widely respected across our state for his statesmanship, his churchmanship, and his exemplary commitment to evangelism, missions, and Christian higher education," said Union President David S. Dockery.

As vice president for church relations, Tidwell will work to cultivate relationships with local churches — both in West Tennessee and beyond. He will also serve as a liaison between Union and the Tennessee Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention.

In addition, Tidwell will teach courses in evangelism and pastoral ministry and will oversee Union's Master of Christian Studies program in Jackson.

Tidwell is the author of the widely used "GROW" program, published and distributed by LifeWay Christian Resources,



TIDWELL

for outreach and evangelism at local churches.

In addition to Ellendale, Tidwell has also served as pastor of West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson, and Grace Baptist Church, Tullahoma. He also has been a member of the TBC Executive Board and is a former chairman of the trustees at Union. □

N.C. editor to step down in July

Baptist Press

BUIES CREEK, N.C. — *Biblical Recorder* Editor Tony Cartledge will leave his post at the state newspaper in mid-year to join the faculty of Campbell University's divinity school here.

Cartledge, 55, will serve as associate professor of Old Testament beginning in August. He has served as editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, the journal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, since 1999. He taught Old Testament adjunctively at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Appalachian State University during the 1980s.

Cartledge holds a doctor of philosophy in Old Testament from Duke University, a master's degree from Southeastern, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia.

Prior to joining the *Biblical Recorder*, Cartledge served 26 years as pastor of churches in Georgia and North Carolina. □

Ridgecrest center to turn 100 in '07

Baptist Press

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains

near here, is a place many people are surprised to learn is not only one of the largest religious conference centers in the nation, but also is celebrating a century of ministry this year.

From humble beginnings in a single log cabin, LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center has grown into a 1,300-acre campus with 90,000 square feet of conference space and housing accommodations for more than 2,000 people.

For generations, this grand retreat in the mountains has provided a place where people can escape from the noise and interruptions of everyday life to enjoy fellowship and experience spiritual renewal.

"Ridgecrest has been a center not only for inspiration and blessing to people that live in Western North Carolina, but to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the country," wrote Billy Graham in a letter commemorating the 100th anniversary. Graham was a frequent speaker at Ridgecrest, especially in the early years of his ministry.

More than 3 million people have visited Ridgecrest, and that number continues to grow. Some have met their spouses there, while others have developed friendships that have lasted decades.

"There are many thousands of pastors, missionaries, and church staff members who can point to a moment at Ridgecrest when they committed their lives to Christ or to vocational ministry," said Byron Hill, national director for LifeWay Conference Centers.

"Marriages and entire families have been strengthened or transformed, and numerous laypersons have received training to

better equip them for ministry."

While Ridgecrest began as a retreat for Southern Baptists, in recent years the conference center has drawn visitors from Christian leaders and a variety of Christian denominations throughout the nation. □

LifeWay vp to retire Feb. 1

LifeWay news service

NASHVILLE — After a 15-year career at LifeWay Christian Resources, Mike Arrington, vice president of the corporate affairs division, has announced his retirement effective Feb. 1.

He will remain as a consultant to the president, providing leadership to LifeWay's "A Defining Moment" campaign and other capital resource and development efforts.

"I've said that in coming to LifeWay I stand on the shoulders of the giants who have come before me," said LifeWay President and CEO Thom S. Rainer.

"Mike has been a key leader in building LifeWay's legacy over these past 15 years, and we owe an expression of gratitude to him."

Arrington was an executive with Texas Utilities Electric Company when Jimmy Draper, then newly elected as president of the Sunday School Board, asked him to join his leadership team in December 1991.

Arrington and his wife, Paula, plan to remain in Nashville upon retirement. □

TBC Executive Board adopts revised convention ...

— Continued from page 1

Among the items eliminated from the budget were the annual pastors retreat, the senior adult retreat, and the single and senior adult ministry. In response to a question, Gary Rickman, TBC ministry coordinator said staff was in the process of "retooling the way we did the pastors retreat."

In such a process "it is good to lay it aside for a year or two so we can come up with something new and fresh," Rickman told board members.

Some board members expressed concern about taking \$50,000 or half of the budget money allocated for student center capital needs.

William Maxwell, TBC



TBC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR James Porch speaks to new members of the Executive Board during an orientation session prior to last week's January meeting.

administrative director, explained that the 14 student centers across the state have more than one-half million dollars of needs that should be addressed. The \$50,000 in question would have been used to fund emergency repairs such as those to heating/air conditioning units and leaking roofs. There is still \$50,000 in the budget for those needs, he said.

Porch told board members that "this is a much bigger problem" than \$50,000 can solve. He noted that the solution is local involvement in the associations where the student centers are located. "We hope we can address this matter as we face needs in the coming year," he said.

Mickey Basham, chairman of the Budget and Ministry Committee, reminded board members that the reductions the board were having to consider "are not just happening at our level."

They are happening at all of the other institutions as well,

Basham said. He also noted that the reductions brought to the Executive Board were recommendations of the TBC staff.

In response to a question about taking money from reserve funds, Porch said he would not be in favor of that option.

Roger Freeman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville, suggested that the board address unmet needs in the future should they arise. The board then adopted the budget reductions as presented.

Basham also informed the board that the quarterly reports of Cooperative Program receipts will no longer be printed in the *B&R*. The information will be posted on the TBC web site and will include more detailed giving information. The treasurer's report which shows the totals received and dispersed will continue to be printed in the paper, Basham said. □

VBS most common evangelism tool of churches: survey

LifeWay news office

PHOENIX — A new study released for the first time in the January/February edition of *Facts & Trends* magazine shows just how involved U.S. Protestant churches are in evangelism and community outreach, as well as what obstacles hold them back from being even more involved.

The study, conducted for *Facts & Trends* by Ellison Research of Phoenix, is a representative sample of 811 Protestant senior pastors nationwide. *Facts & Trends* is published bimonthly by the communications department of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Senior ministers were asked about the activities their church held in the past year specifically for the purpose of evangelism, as well as what types of community outreach and programs the church offered.

Methods of evangelism vary

Ninety-seven percent of all churches report doing something specifically for the purposes of evangelism over the last year, but the methods churches are using for evangelism are quite varied. The most common is Vacation Bible School, or VBS, utilized for evangelism by 70 percent of the churches in the last year.

At least half of the churches surveyed used literature such as tracts or magazines (59 percent), events such as block parties or a Fall Festival (56 percent), musical events or concerts

(51 percent), mailings or fliers (50 percent), and nursing home or retirement center visits (49 percent) specifically for the purposes of evangelism.

Other relatively popular evangelistic efforts include "invite a friend to church" days (42 percent), revivals or crusades (40 percent), evangelism training classes or groups (38 percent), door-to-door visitation within the community (37 percent), community service such as cleanup days (31 percent), online efforts such as blogs or web sites (27 percent), audio or visual products such as tapes or DVDs (26 percent), and booths at community events such as the county fair (20 percent).

Denominational evangelism efforts

What churches are doing to evangelize their communities differs quite a bit by denominational group. Southern Baptist churches are particularly big on using revivals or crusades, literature, evangelism training classes or groups, and door-to-door visitation, but are less likely than average to use any sort of online evangelism. Other Baptist groups (National, Progressive, General, etc.) are fairly close to average, but are a bit more likely than others to use literature and door-to-door visitation.

Methodist churches are more likely than average to use events, but less likely to use literature, door-to-door visitation, and revivals or crusades. Lutherans are particularly likely to rely on VBS, online methods, and mailings or fliers, and

less likely to use revivals or crusades, musical events or concerts, or audio/visual methods. Pentecostal churches are particularly likely to employ musical events or concerts, revivals or crusades, "invite a friend to church" days, and audio/visual products, but less likely than average to use VBS for evangelism. Presbyterians are especially unlikely to use literature, revivals or crusades, door-to-door visitation, or audio/visual products.

In general, evangelical churches use a greater variety of evangelistic tools than do mainline Protestant churches. Evangelical churches are considerably more likely to attempt evangelism through literature, revivals or crusades, evangelism training classes or groups, door-to-door visitation, and audio/visual products, while mainline churches have only a greater propensity for doing community service as a form of evangelism.

Community outreach efforts

The survey also explored the kinds of community outreach or programs offered by churches. Pastors were allowed to define their church's involvement; for instance, a large, well-funded, daily day care center, and having the youth group volunteer to baby-sit for single mothers within the congregation once a month could both qualify as "free or low-cost day care."

Only three types of outreach are offered by a majority of U.S. Protestant churches in a typical

Top 5 forms of evangelism:

Among different Protestant denominations

All Protestant churches: 

VBS 70%, Literature 59%, Events 56%

Music events/concerts 51%, Mailings or fliers 50%

SBC churches: 

VBS 80%, Literature 78%, Door-to-door visitation 65%

Music events/concerts 61%, Revivals/crusades 58%

Other Baptist churches: 

VBS 77%, Literature 73%,

Door-to-door visitation 48%, Events 48%, Mailings or fliers 47%,

Music events/concerts 47%, Revivals/crusades 47%

Methodist churches: 

VBS 79%, Events 70%, Music events/concerts 52%,

Mailings or fliers 50%, Nursing home/Retirement center visits 51%

Lutheran churches: 

VBS 91%, Mailings or fliers 50%, Literature 78%,

Events 65%, Nursing home/Retirement center visits 51%

Pentecostal churches: 

Events 67%, Music events/concerts 64%, Revivals/crusades 64%,

Literature 62%, Nursing home/Retirement center visits 55%

Presbyterian churches: 

VBS 77%, Events 69%, Mailings or fliers 55%

Invite a friend to church days 47%, Community service 42%

year: food pantry, food collection, or other food-oriented donations (73 percent), VBS (68 percent), and holiday food programs such as Christmas or Thanksgiving baskets for poor families (65 percent).

Just like with evangelism efforts, there are denominational differences in offering community outreach programs. For instance, 46 percent of Methodist churches have some sort of homeless outreach, compared to just 10 percent of Southern Baptists. However, with community outreach efforts there is also a larger pattern of commonality among evangelical churches and among mainline churches than exists with evangelism efforts. □

Fewer than one out of 10 Protestant churches offer any

Evangelism Conference

Jan. 22-24

Northside Baptist Church

127 Theta Pike, Columbia, TN 38401

Northside Baptist Church is having its Evangelism Conference Jan. 22-24. It begins on Jan. 22 at 6:30 p.m. with three speakers. Morning sessions begin at 8:45 on Jan. 23-24 with an afternoon session at 1 p.m. and an evening session at 6:30 p.m. There will be three speakers each session.

Guest evangelists include (Monday) Phil Glisson, Marlyn Ford, Melvin Mordecai; (Tuesday) Terry Mitchell, Jeff Myers, Benny Jackson, Bill Edmonds Sr., Toonie Cash, Henry Linginfelter, Michael Mason, Jerry Spencer, Mordecai; (Wednesday) Steve Pearson, Cash, Linginfelter, Mason, Edmonds, Don Pierson, Glenn Denton, Mordecai, and Spencer.

If you love gospel preaching and gospel singing you will not want to miss this conference. For information, call the church office at (931) 388-2504 or Pastor John Rushing at (931) 381-2493 or (931) 215-5496. Everyone is invited and a nursery will be provided for the evening sessions only.

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When God's People Pray - David McCollum
4:00pm Break
4:30pm Early Bird- Session II
When God Refuses to Listen - David McCollum
6:00pm Dinner
7:00pm *Pickin' & Grinnin' - Compassion*
8:00pm *General Session I*
9:00pm *Prayer: The Ministry of the Church - David McCollum*
Cottage Prayer Meetings for Revival

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2007

8:00am Breakfast
9:30am *Pickin' & Grinnin' - Compassion*
10:00am *General Session II*
The Prince of Prayer - David McCollum
10:45am Break
11:00am *Going Deeper - David McCollum*
12:00pm Lunch
1:00pm *A Time of Interceding- Laying of Hands - Don Pierson*
2:00pm Dismiss

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Tennessee Baptist churches giving through the Cooperative Program make this ministry possible.

Belmont University subpoenas TBC churches; convention ..

—Continued from page 1

The letter from TBC leaders also challenged an assertion that the request for information by Belmont from the subpoenaed churches will not be costly or "burdensome."

"Mr Dickens states that Belmont does 'not wish' for and does 'not believe' that its request will 'create a costly or burdensome task for the churches.'

"If your church had few books and records since 1951, then responding to the subpoena should not be costly or burdensome. If, however, your church has extensive books and records for the period of time in question, then this could be a monumental task for your staff," Austin and Porch wrote in the letter.

They noted that "at the very least, Belmont's subpoena requires each church to conduct a review of its 55-plus years of books and records. The review task must be undertaken by each church staff even if no documents responsive to Belmont's specific questions exist," they wrote.

Austin and Porch also informed churches that it is "unfortunate" that Belmont made this "unreasonable demand"

upon 100 TBC churches "even before receiving and reviewing the more than 30,000 pages from our books and records which the Executive Board will be providing to Belmont in response to discovery questions.

"In any event, we can say from experience that the review task alone will fully consume and exhaust the administrative staff of most, if not all, churches," the TBC leaders wrote.

Belmont has requested the churches that received subpoenas to mail their responses to the school's attorneys by Feb. 15. TBC leaders informed churches in their letter that "since Belmont has chosen to utilize subpoenas, each of the 100 churches which received a subpoena is compelled by law to respond accordingly."

The Belmont letter stressed that Belmont leaders "believed that a resolution of the disagreement between the Executive Board and the university could be reached within the Christian family without resorting to a secular court.

"We regret the decision of the Executive Board to take this matter to court," Dickens wrote. "We continue to desire to mediate this matter believ-

ing that this alternative is consistent with our faith," he continued.

Austin and Porch noted in their response that "settlement of any disputed issue requires good faith by both parties. Even after the TBC rejected Belmont's settlement offer during the special called meeting in May, Belmont did not return to the settlement table with a materially different proposal," the two men wrote.

"In fact, the present value of Belmont's 'revised offer' was less than the offer rejected by the convention. We did not view such as an act of good faith."

Austin and Porch also observed that "Belmont, for whatever reason, has taken the position that unless the Executive Board agrees to Belmont's settlement terms, then the Executive Board is the party which is being unreasonable and possibly even unbiblical.

"In furtherance of this goal, Belmont wants everyone to view the legal proceedings as a desire on the part of the Executive Board for money. In reality, Belmont wants everyone to overlook the true purpose of the legal proceedings — having Belmont honor its promise as

set forth in the Repayment Agreement which was executed by the parties in 1951."

Austin and Porch noted that aside from the burden Belmont has placed on the churches, "the most troubling element of Mr. Dickens' letter" is the implication that the Executive Board "has acted in an un-Christian manner by resorting to a secular court" or that the Executive Board "has not been true to the faith."

Porch and Austin noted that the Belmont Study Committee is comprised of 14 "dedicated, faithful, and committed Christian men, 10 of whom are pastors of vibrant, dynamic churches within our convention."

They stressed the "ultimate decision to initiate legal proceedings was not made lightly or in contradiction to Scripture."

The letter from the two TBC leaders stressed that the legal action "is about integrity and honoring one's word. For 55-plus years, Tennessee Baptists have been true to their word as set forth in the written Repayment Agreement signed in 1951.

"Belmont, unfortunately, can not make such an asser-

tion. In November 2005, Belmont chose to leave our Baptist family," the two men wrote.

"Belmont was not kicked out, forced out, or put out of our family. Belmont chose to follow its own vision and to forsake the path paved by Tennessee Baptists for the last 50-plus years.

"Now, Belmont does not want to be true to its word as set forth in writing in the Repayment Agreement," the letter said.

In the Belmont letter, Dickens concluded that the school looks forward "to the time when we can move forward together in a fraternal relationship that honors the Christian mission and character of Belmont and the Tennessee Baptist Convention." He also pledged that Belmont will "continue to be a student-focused, Christian community of learning and service with rich Baptist heritage that will foster and nurture."

Porch and Austin observe in their response that unless Belmont is communicating with Baptists, "references to Belmont to its Baptist roots, heritage, or anything else Baptist is conspicuously absent."

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Church planters — ordinary and God-called

guest columnist



By Wayne Terry

Church planters are ordinary people whom God has called and equipped to do an extraordinary thing — to start a healthy church in a community that will positively impact people with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. This simple description provides at least four characteristics of effective church planters.

(1) All church planters are ORDINARY people. Contrary to what you might think, church planters do not come from an elite class of "super-Christians." Rather, they are simply ordinary men and women who obey a call from God.

Right now, God is calling people from all professions, education levels, languages, and cultures to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to Tennessee, all of North America, and around the world. Some of these people plant churches in the communities where they currently live. Others plant churches in a completely different place reach-

ing a completely different people group from themselves. Some are able to plant full-time, others part-time. Some plant bivocationally, others are lay planters. Some serve on a church planting team, others plant as individuals.

(2) All church planters are CALLED by God. Throughout Scripture we see God actively calling people to do specific tasks. We see God calling David out of the sheep pens to become the shepherd of Israel (Psalms 78:70-72). We see God telling Philip to go up to the chariot and share Jesus Christ with the Ethiopian official (Acts 8). Could God be calling you into church planting?

One thing is for certain — the call of God to plant a church is paramount to the success of the church plant. Church planting is not just a good idea or a method of escaping a current situation. It is something that God calls people to do. If you feel God may be moving in your life to plant a church, begin with lots of prayer and search the Scriptures. Read about others in the Bible who were called. Talk it over with your family and pastor. Ask God if He is calling you.

(3) All church planters are EQUIPPED by God. Church planters come in all shapes

and sizes. Yet, most church planters share some common qualities that give them the perseverance, stability, influence, and clarity of purpose they need to gather a nucleus of people. They exhibit strong personal motivation; an ability to create a sense of ownership among all who are involved in the ministry; a passion to reach the lost; a knack for building relationships and an awareness of the community; flexibility, adaptability, and resilience; and a deep, vibrant faith in God.

Of course, no two people have exactly the same combination of gifts and abilities. That isn't important. What is important is that each one brings to the church plant those abiding gifts that consistently prove to be effective. Some of these gifts are:

Faith (I Corinthians 12:9) The ability to envision what needs to be done, to act with conviction, and to trust God to accomplish what others might see as impossible.

Leadership (Romans 12:8) The ability to lead others to passionately pursue God's vision for a specific community or situation.

Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11) The ability to clearly present the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers and lead

them to embrace Christ as Lord and Savior.

Communication/Teaching (Romans 12:7) The ability to clearly, compellingly, and creatively communicate truth in a relevant and timely manner.

Discernment (Philippians 1:10) The ability to make the right decision at the right time in new or unfamiliar situations.

(4) All church planters do an EXTRAORDINARY thing. Planting a church in a community that will positively impact people with the gospel of Jesus Christ is an extraordinary thing.

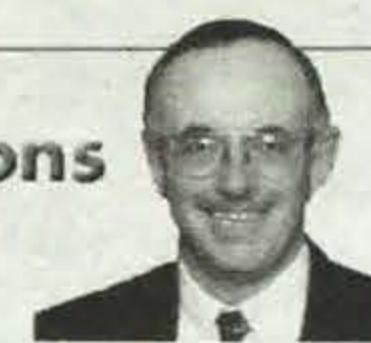
In fact, it's a God-sized thing. Church planting is difficult, demanding, and exhausting; yet, it is satisfying, uplifting, and exhilarating. If that kind of challenge appeals to you, then God may be calling you into church planting.

Is God calling you into church planting?

If your honest answer to that question is "yes" or "maybe," then you will want to check out "Church Planting — Is It For Me?" For more information go to www.tnchurchplant.org or call Wayne Terry at (615) 355-7905.

So, what are you waiting for? □ — Terry is church planting team leader for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

TBC Executive Board does the 'right thing'

After the annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention I heard the murmurings.

There were some who questioned whether the TBC Executive Board would respond to an action taken at the end of a very long day on Wednesday after many messengers had already begun their trek home.

Convention messengers reversed action on the budget (see page 1 for background), but asked the Executive Board to consider the budget at its January meeting and to amend it to reflect what the budget that originally was adopted intended to do. I know. It was confusing then and it is confusing now.

To make a long story short, the Executive Board did not hesitate. Under the leadership of Jerry Massey, president of the Executive Board, and Mickey Basham, chairman of the Budget and Ministry Committee, the board gathered "all the players" together in December and hammered out the budget which was presented to the full board last week.

Quite honestly, probably not everyone on the board was in favor of redoing the budget again. Don't forget that the budget messengers overturned and revised last November was the one the board had recommended after careful study and deliberation.

But Executive Board members laid aside their own feelings and responded to what they felt an overwhelming majority of convention messengers desired.

Executive Board members have been scrutinized over the years and often criticized for not being responsive. Hopefully, their action last week shows those criticisms may have been unfounded.

The board action also shows that people can still be cooperative even when they disagree.

Too often, if we don't get our way, we want to "take our ball and go home." The Executive Board did not do that and for that reason, they should be commended.

My hope and prayer is that Tennessee Baptists will stop designating Cooperative Program funds and fully support all CP ministries — both in our state and nationally.

If we stopped our designations, all of our ministries would benefit greatly. After all, isn't that what cooperation is all about? □

Measuring the worth of a year requires honesty

guest columnist



By Henry Blackaby

Life is very short, at best. It passes quickly, and it is uncertain at all times. "It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). David understood this all too well and pleaded unto the Lord:

"Lord, make to know my end,

"And what is the measure of my days,

"That I may know how frail I am.

"Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths,

"And my age is as nothing before You" (Psalm 39:4-5).

Like the years before, 2006 passed very quickly. Did you take time to take a careful and thorough inventory of not only the events of the year, but how you lived your life through those events? If not, take the time to meditate on each of the following questions:

• Did I gain a heart of wisdom as I passed through the year 2006?

tian? Was I self-centered instead of God-centered?

Do you need to remove sinful habits from your life? If so, ask God to remove those. Or perhaps you have broken relationships. Ask Him to forgive your transgressions against others and to remove any sin that is causing you and those around you harm. Or, if necessary, ask Him to place within you a heart of forgiveness towards those who have sinned against you.

Do not let your heart be filled with anger. Regardless of the circumstances, you must go and mend any broken relationships with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. These relationships need to be redemptively resolved in order to honor God in the year ahead.

In 2007 be inspired to be God's best! Be determined that all of the questions posed here will be answered this time next year with an emphatic and resounding "Yes!"

Allow God to

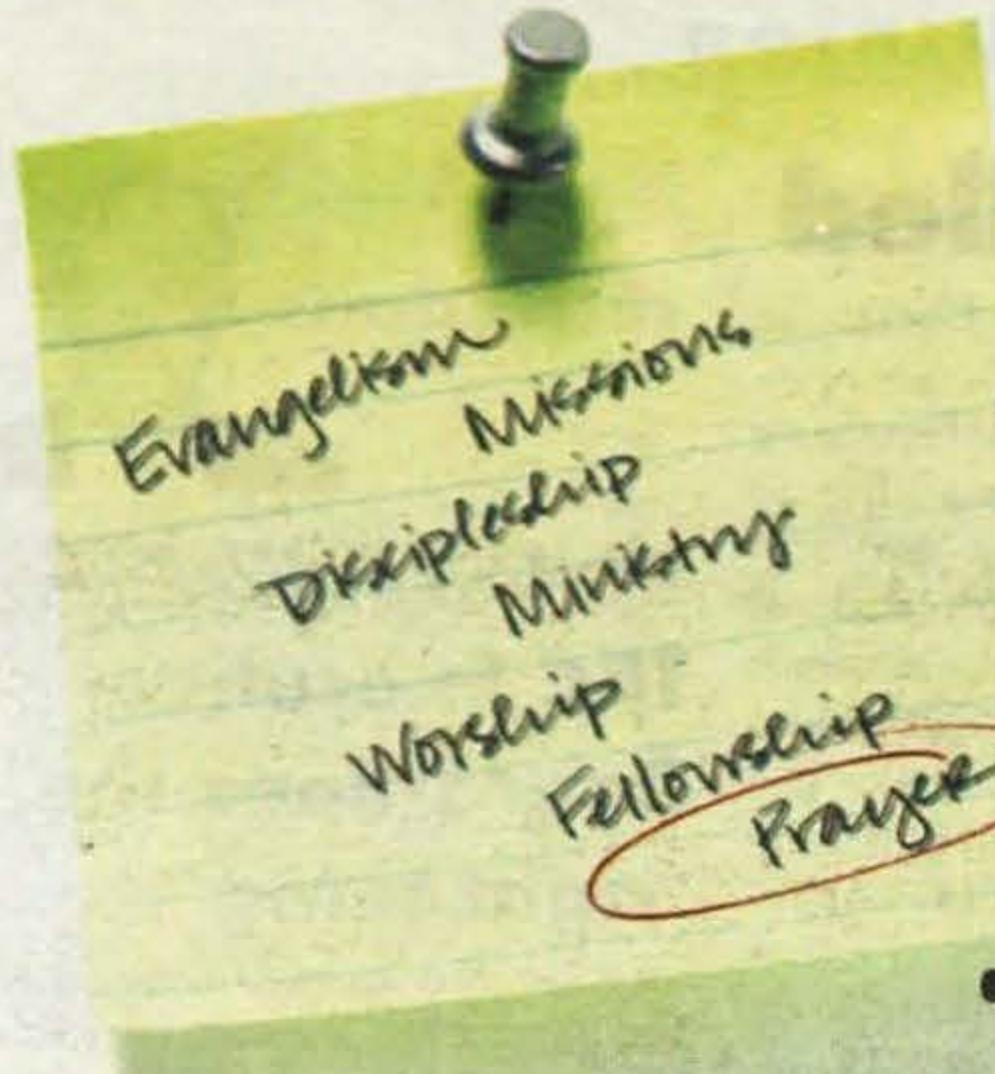
move you from where you are now to where He wants you to be. Make the right choices for your life and grow closer to Him.

Ask God to fill your life, and the lives of those you touch, with joy and gladness. And finally, surrender your life fully to Him so that He can create in you "a clean heart" and a greater spiritual maturity with each passing day. □ — Blackaby is founder and president emeritus of Blackaby International Ministries, based in Atlanta.

Book of Timothy



"I guess I missed a few more Sundays than I thought."



Church Health Matters

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

Prayer Matters



"Withal praying also for us..." Colossians 4:3 (KJV), said Paul in his letter to the brethren at Colosse. He encouraged them to continue in prayer with special attention given to praying for him and the other ministers with him.

This charge still holds true today, all ministers of the gospel should kneel in prayer and stand in need of prayer.

This issue of *Church Health Matters* is devoted to encouraging prayer for the bivocational pastor. Most bivocational ministers view their ministry as a calling. Many of them have served in this calling for years and have given up much in order to be faithful to that call. Their contribution to the kingdom of God has been felt by most of us. They and their families, as well as the churches that they serve, stand in need of our prayers.

The Tennessee Baptist Convention recognizes the value of the bivocational minister and seeks to assist them in fulfilling their calling. All of the ministries of the TBC are available to them and their churches. We invite them to tap into this valuable resource.

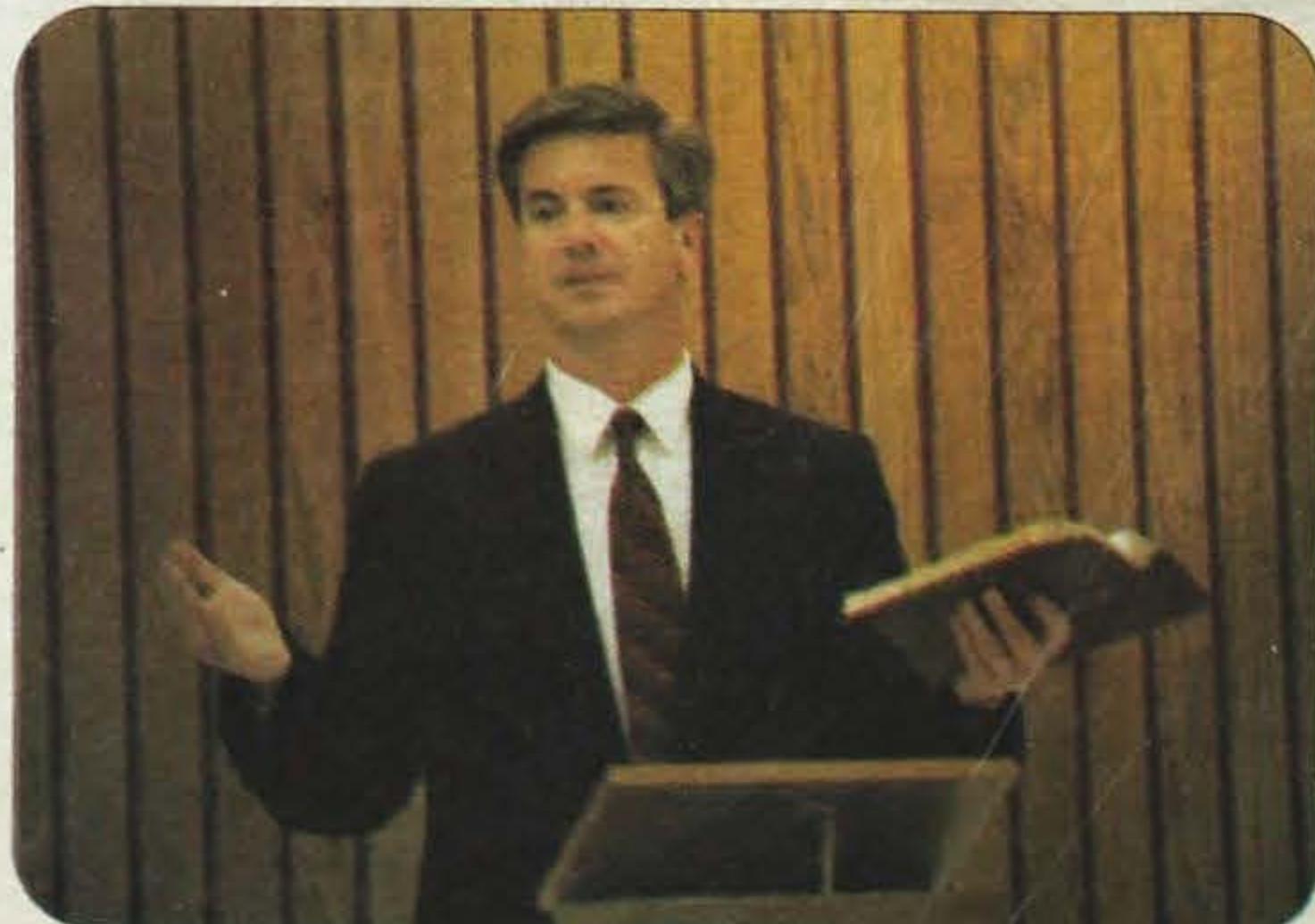
If you are interested in information about ministries available to the bivocational minister or how to pray for them, contact:

Ray Gilder

Bivocational Ministries, 1-800-558-2090 ext. 7907, (615) 371-7907 or e-mail him at rgilder@tnbaptist.org.

Don Pierson

State Prayer coordinator, 1-800-558-2090 ext. 7909, (615) 371-7909 or e-mail him at dpierson@tnbaptist.org.



How to Pray for the Bivocational Pastor

By Jeff Bennett

For 23 years I have been privileged to be the pastor of First Baptist Church, Taft, in south central Tennessee and bivocational the entire time. I have been employed as a police officer for 25 years with the Huntsville Police Department in Huntsville, Ala.

I spent six years and six months in the Vice and Narcotics Unit working undercover primarily in the area of vice and cult, occult and satanic cult groups. Many people with a sacrificial love for Christ have prayed for me over the years. They interceded in prayer for me in times that I was not aware of the spiritual and physical dangers that I was facing.

When I stand as a pastor before the judgment seat of Christ my works will not be judged with leniency, because I was bivocational or a police officer. My responsibility to God, family, and employer will be righteously judged by the Lord. At times being both a pastor and a police officer, I have felt I had "special circumstances" to be considered in doing God's will. See I Corinthians 10:13.

If we wander off God's designated path, we must repent and realize our "special circumstances" are not an excuse.

Each bivocational pastor endures the normal pressure, temptations, and dangers created by his job. "God's grace is sufficient" to allow the bivocational pastor to work his job and maintain the mentality to minister.

Pray for your bivocational pastor that he will not neglect his responsibility to God, because of the "special circumstances" created by his secular job.

Time management is an important issue for most bivocational pastors. In most cases the bivocational pastor has the equivalent of two full time jobs. Two important necessities can easily be overlooked in a pastor's life with this workload. First is the quality time a pastor needs to be alone with God in prayer,

meditation, and studying of the Bible. The solution is found in Acts 6:2-4. Churches need qualified deacons who are addicted to serving the church, including the pastor.

The second issue is not spending enough quality time with his family. Although most pastors know the priorities are God, family, church, and job, they are tempted and sometimes pressured toward neglecting their family. There is a limited amount of quality time, and the bivocational pastor's two full time jobs take most of it.

Pastors need to be led by the Holy Spirit to make the right decisions concerning the use of their time. Pray for your bivocational pastor to have the courage, compassion, and wisdom to take time for his family, fulfill his responsibility to them, and not sacrifice them for the sake of the church family.

To pray effectively for the bivocational pastor means getting to know his specific needs. On special committee nights, during revival meetings, and on Wednesday nights, he is tired from working all day just like everyone else. Working two jobs can mentally and physically drain him.

"God's grace is sufficient" in any situation, but the bivocational pastor must maintain the balance God expects between his family, pastorate, and secular job. To do this he must be diligent in prayer and keep God first in everything. You need to be diligent in praying for him.

As a pastor, working two jobs affects most of the aspects of church ministry. Outreach and in-reach, dealing with any personal problems of the church members, the organization and operation of the church, building programs, mission trips, special events or meetings at church, all must be approached with consideration given to the secular job. Get to know your bivocational pastor, and pray specifically for him. He will appreciate it, and both of you will benefit.

Why do Bivocational Pastors Stand in the Need of Prayer?

By Ray Gilder

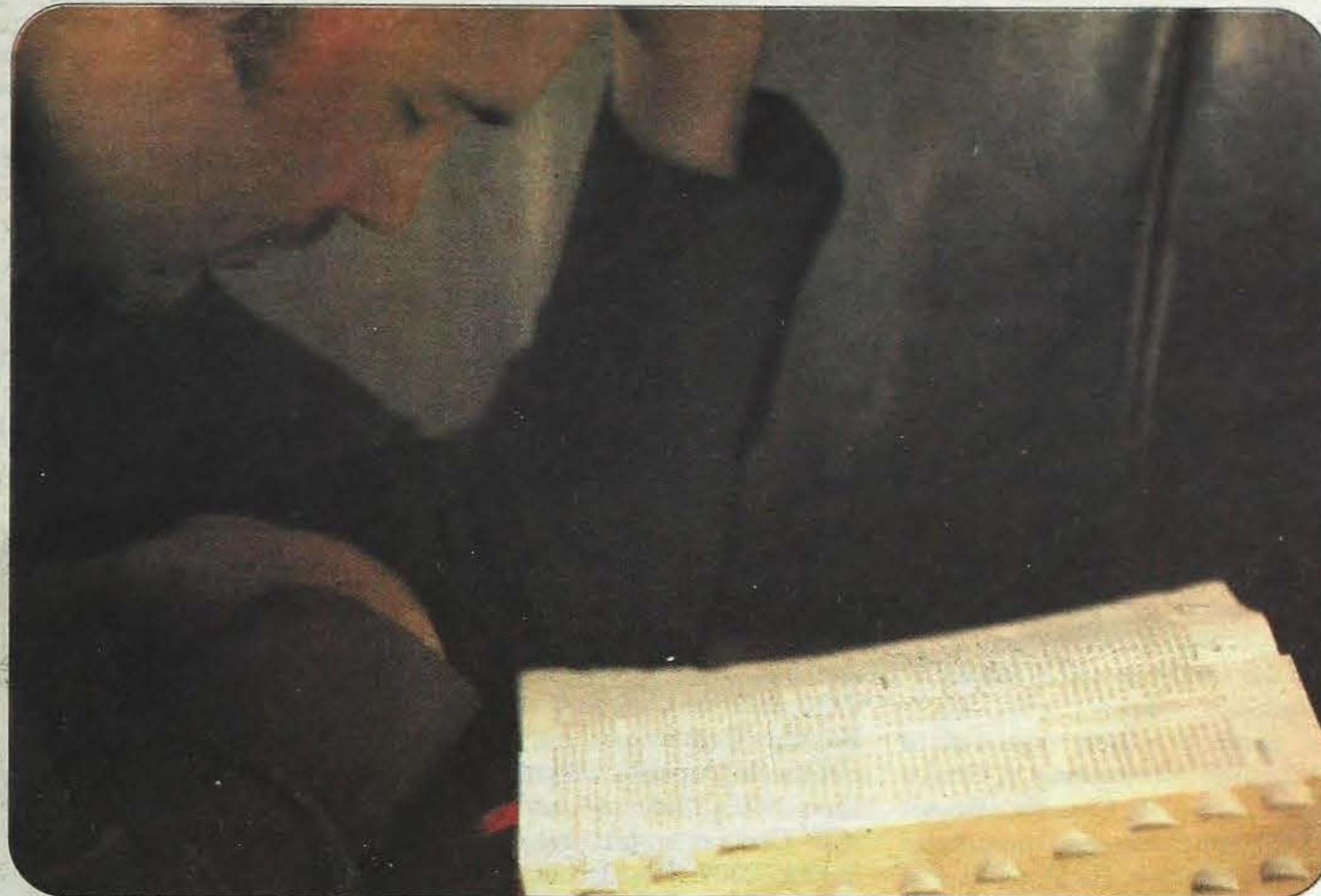
1. They must learn to juggle time between family, work, and church.
2. Time for sermon preparation is very limited.
3. Most have not had adequate training for their role as pastor.
4. There is the temptation to quit, because they do not believe they are making much of a difference.
5. Many have little or no family time, because of work and church.
6. Burnout is a real danger, because of so many responsibilities.
7. Many are lonely, because of lack of time for fellowship with other pastors.
8. Time away with their wife is very limited.

Intercessors Needed

We need intercessors to pray for revival and spiritual awakening in Tennessee. There are over 3,000 Southern Baptist churches in the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Around 1,500 intercessors have committed to pray for the ministry needs, for revival, and spiritual awakening in our state.

Intercessors are able to access prayer requests from the Prayer Strategies office via many avenues.

If you're interested in being an intercessor, please e-mail Bernie Baker at bbaker@tnbaptist.org, or call her at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 7925.



Important Prayer Dates

FEBRUARY

16 & 17 Great Commission Prayer Conference/Retreat, Linden Valley Conference Center, Linden — Contact Prayer Strategies at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 7925.

MARCH

4-11 Week of Prayer for North American Missions — Contact Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2038.

9-11

Greater Nashville Prayer Conference, Hermitage Hills Baptist Church, Nashville — Contact Hermitage Hills Baptist at (615) 883-5034.

SEPTEMBER

9-16 Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions Week of Prayer — Contact Tennessee WMU at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2038.

14-15

West Tennessee Women's Prayer Retreat — Contact Tennessee WMU at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2038.

26

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Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan. 23 | Church Planting – Is It for Me?, Baptist Center, Brentwood |
| Jan. 26-27 | Tutoring Children and Youth (TCY) Training, Baptist Center, Brentwood |
| Jan. 26-27 | Youth Project, West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson |
| Jan. 26-28 | International Student Retreat, Montgomery Bell State Park, Dickson |
| Jan. 30 | Church Planting – Is It for Me?, Faith Promise Baptist Church, Knoxville |
| Feb. 1-3 | Youth Ministry Conclave, Convention Center, Chattanooga |
| Feb. 2-3 | Associational Discipleship Training Directors Summit, Baptist Center, Brentwood |

For information see the TBC web site at www.tnbaptist.org.

Tennesseans graduate at NOBTS

NOBTS news office

NEW ORLEANS — Two Tennessee Baptists received master's degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here in December.

Andrew Kitzmiller of Kingsport was awarded the master of arts in marriage and family counseling **KITZMILLER** degree.

Jacob Strother, minister to emerging generations at Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood, earned the master of divinity degree. He is a native of Salem, Ill. □



Mohler released from hospital

Baptist Press

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MINISTRY — CHILDREN

Auburn Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of children/education. All applicants please submit resume to Auburn Baptist Church, 1138 Road 931, Tupelo, MS 38804 or e-mail auburnbaptistchurch@comcast.net.

MISCELLANEOUS

22 church pews available — free of charge. Each pew is 13 feet, 6 inches in length. Contact First Baptist Church, Counce, TN (731) 689-3233.

MINISTRY — STUDENT

Northport Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a bivocational youth minister. Interested applicants please submit a resume with references to Northport Baptist Church, 488 Duncan St., Newport, TN 37821, Attn: Youth Council. Resumes may also be e-mailed to browade@bellsouth.net. Newport is located in extreme East Tennessee on I-40. Resumes must be received before Jan. 31, 2007.

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nary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. was discharged Jan. 10 from Louisville's Baptist Hospital East following a two-week hospitalization that included extensive abdominal surgery and a four-day stay in the intensive care unit due to blood clots in the lungs.

Mohler and his family are "overjoyed to be back home," according to a press release. □

Page expresses hope for SBC in '07

Baptist Press

TAYLORS, S.C. — Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, is asking Southern Baptists to repent of their "self sufficiency" and plead with God for a spiritual revival during 2007. He also is calling upon the convention to seek rec-

onciliation over divisive issues that distract from the objectives of missions and evangelism.

"Let us confess our arrogance, our self sufficiency, our sinfulness," Page, pastor of First Baptist Church here, said in a statement to Baptist Press.

"Let us follow the advice of II Chronicles 7:14," he said. "The year 2007 stands as a year of opportunity before us," he added.

The SBC president expressed optimism for the future of the convention, urging its members toward reconciliation over issues that tend to divide them.

"I believe that God's people are more than tired of fighting among ourselves," Page said. "I believe that God's people want to get on with kingdom work."

Page asked Southern Baptists to pray earnestly for revival.

"As to a New Year's wish, I

ask all Southern Baptists to join in a heartfelt prayer to our Lord for spiritual awakening," he said.

"I call on all leaders to incorporate this prayer into the lives and areas of responsibility. I ask all state executives and evangelism directors to make upcoming evangelism conference meetings which focus upon prayer for revival," the SBC leader said. □

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MINISTRY — PASTOR

Lookout Valley Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumes to Search Committee, Lookout Valley Baptist Church, 23 Lilac Ave., Chattanooga, TN 37419.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Clymersville Baptist Church in Rockwood is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumes to Search Committee, c/o Lisa Jackson, 554 Shenandoah Dr., Rockwood, TN 37854.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Senior Pastor: Istrouma Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, La., is seeking a senior pastor. Candidates should have previously served in a similar position with a mid to large size church and be experienced supervising a staff. A seminary degree, with at least a master's, is required. Resumes, with a cover letter, should be sent to Senior Pastor Search Team at wbishop@eatel.net.

MINISTRY — COMBINATION

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church near Martin, Tenn., is seeking a paid (part-time) minister of children and youth. The individual is responsible for leading a very active, vibrant ministry in a rural church setting. Send resumes to Bro. David Freeman, pastor, 562 Old Troy Rd., Martin, TN 38237. For more information call (731) 587-5939.

"Well done..."

MATTHEW 25:21

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Zoning board rejects plan of church, Salvation Army

By Connie Davis Bushey
Baptist and Reflector

CLARKSVILLE — On Jan. 3 the Zoning Board of Clarksville rejected a request of New Providence Baptist Church here for rezoning which would have allowed the church to sell its building to the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army planned to develop a ministry center there.

The board rejected the request because of reaction by the community based on the fact an elementary school is located next to the building, said Robert Spurgeon, pastor.

Spurgeon, who has led the church for three years, said he is disappointed by the decision for the church and community but has faith that God will work it out.

The church wants to sell its current facility because it has

plans to construct a new building on land across the street. The current building is 54 years old and does not meet the needs of the congregation, explained Spurgeon.

The Salvation Army seemed like a perfect fit to the needs of the church and community, said Spurgeon.

The cost of the building fit the Salvation Army's budget. The Salvation

Army could have used the current buildings with some renovation. For instance, their programs include church services so they would have used the worship center of New Providence as a worship center, said Spurgeon.

The Salvation Army also



SPURGEON

would have helped the community, he added.

New Providence is located in the inner city of Clarksville in a needy community. Within a one mile radius of the church about 60 percent of students living there receive some kind of government assistance, noted Spurgeon. Crime is also present in the neighborhood, he added.

The Salvation Army would have helped the residents, said Spurgeon, in addition to what the church does. New Providence draws about 100 to Sunday morning worship. The Christian ministry planned to help the homeless and needy by providing food and other help, and through programs. Plans were to offer training on computers, both for adults and students, tutoring, after-school activities, and summer camp.

"It seemed like a perfect fit,"

said Spurgeon after several meetings with the Salvation Army.

Then the plan was reported in the local newspaper and later by a Nashville-based TV station.

"When the story broke the opposition began to build," said Spurgeon.

A bivocational pastor who works as a probation officer in Dickson, Spurgeon said the community became concerned about the contact between people coming to the Salvation Army for help and the children at the elementary school next door. The school has about 600 students attending from the neighborhood.

He said he can understand the concern for protecting children from pedophiles. But Montgomery County is known "as one of the best counties in supervising their sex offenders." Also the Salvation Army wouldn't allow a

sex offender to participate in their programs, said Spurgeon.

Concerning the rest of the folks who would have been coming to the Salvation Army center, it is "not like those people aren't already there," he said, referring to the neighborhood. "I minister in that community so I know who's there."

"The kids at the school also would have benefited from these programs. That's the part that really bothers me."

"It doesn't make sense," said Spurgeon of the decision.

The New Providence congregation is moving ahead, he observed. Several churches have looked at the property and buildings since the zoning board decision.

"I know bigger and better things are in store both for the Salvation Army and for our church," he stated. □

The Fellowship of Tennessee Baptist Evangelists



Benny Jackson
president,
Memphis



Keith Cook,
Springfield



Gary Buck,
music
coordinator,
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When: Jan. 22, 9:45 a.m. - noon

Where: Inglewood Baptist Church,
3901 Gallatin Road, Nashville

Host Pastor: Kevin Shrum

Program Personalities:



Keith Cook,
Springfield



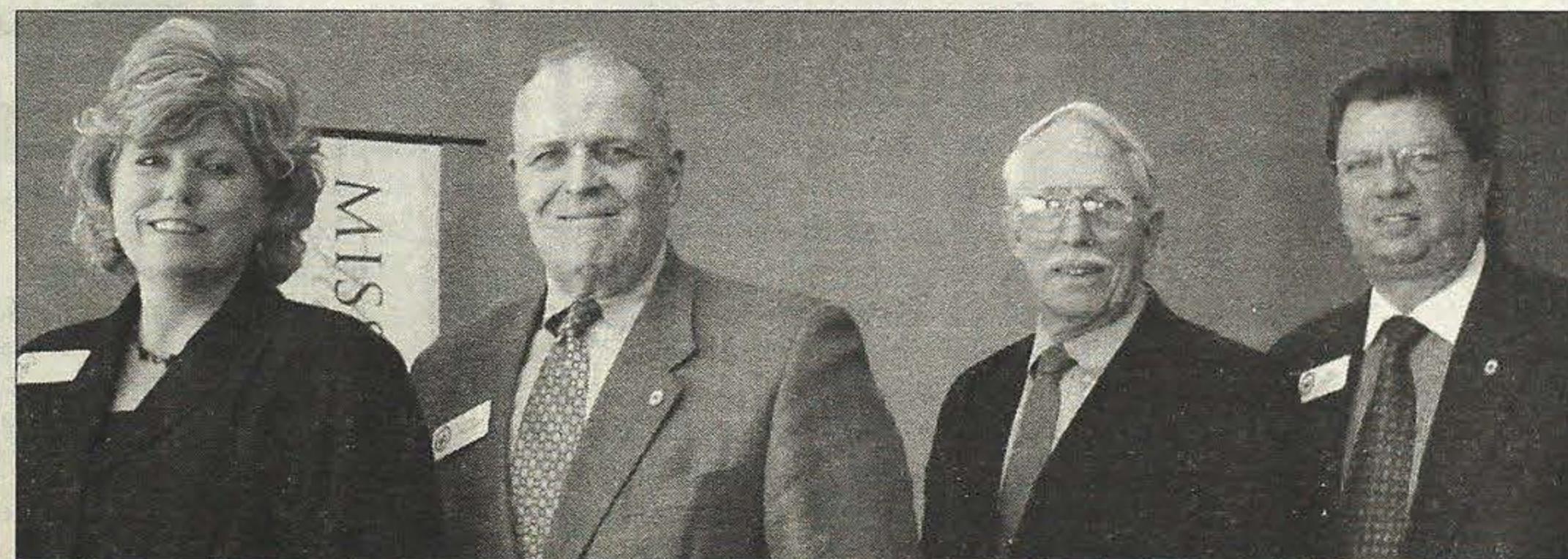
Jeff Myers
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Don Womack,
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Come and hear great preaching from our evangelists, including Don Womack, who has been an evangelist for more than 60 years. He will deliver his famous sermon, "Rivers of Blood!" We will also have outstanding music from our music evangelists. Everyone is invited to attend the sessions at Inglewood Baptist Church in Nashville.

For more information, contact Fellowship president Benny Jackson at (901) 757-2829.



HONORED for tenure with the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff at the Executive Board meeting on Jan. 10 were, from left, Barbara Powers, Shared Ministries, five years; Tim Holcomb, Executive Leadership, 10 years; Joe Wiles, Collegiate Ministries (Tennessee Tech in Cookeville), 15 years; and Gary Rickman, TBC ministry coordinator, 15 years. Not pictured is Bill Black, resort ministries in Gatlinburg, 25 years.

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Former presidents call for a new Baptist covenant

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton have proposed the establishment of a broadly inclusive alternative Baptist movement to counter what they called a negative image of Baptists and to address poverty, the environment, and global conflicts.

Carter and Clinton kicked off their plans with a news conference Jan. 9 at the Carter Center in Atlanta, flanked by leaders of moderate Baptist groups including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a breakaway group of an unverified number of churches that objected to the election of conservative leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention. Carter and Clinton announced a "Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant," tentatively set for Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2008, at the Geor-

gia World Congress Center in Atlanta, which they hope will attract 20,000 Baptists.

"This is an historic event for the Baptists in this country and perhaps for Christianity," Carter said at the news conference.

About 80 leaders of 40 moderate Baptist organizations claiming to represent 20 million Baptists in the United States, Canada, and Mexico met at the Carter Center for the announcement. Leaders from the Southern Baptist Convention were not invited to attend.

"This is an attempt to bring people together and say, 'What would our Christian witness require of us in the 21st century?'" Clinton said, adding that his goal is to be a "cheerleader" for the group.

Bill Underwood, president of Mercer University in Georgia, said at the news conference that the 2008 meeting is meant to draw attention away from "the Baptists who have the microphone," meaning conservative leaders who frequently appear in

the media voicing conservative views.

"North America desperately needs a true Baptist witness," Underwood said.

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C., took issue with

Underwood's assertion and Carter's and Clinton's remarks apparently aimed at Southern Baptists.

"Instead of engaging in a war of words, let's do a reality check," Page told Baptist Press. "Word games are fine, but reality says Southern Baptists are presenting a positive life-changing mes-

sage, impacting our culture with our ministries, and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ."

Page and Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, noted that Southern Baptists are radically diverse and have a good record of ministering to the poor. □

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On September 14, 2007 join your Spiritual Director, Baptist Minister Dr. Clarence Freeman 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. Daily Devotions will be made available for those in the group who wish to participate. 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 Zuiderdam.

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15 Passengers



18-29 Passengers



29-41 Passengers



30-46 Passengers

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26316	2006	Ford/Starcraft	25 w/ Rear Luggage	\$56,880
25429	2005	Ford/ElDorado	26	\$47,920
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minister's corner

The next step in being pro-life

by Matt Cannon

Having four children, I am more content than a man with four million dollars, because a man with four million dollars usually wants more.

I'm not sure where I first picked up this quote, but it surely applies to me. My wife and I are the parents of four wonderful children with an age range of 2-5 years. The two youngest are two months apart in age. So, they are not twins and my wife does not have the gestation period of a rodent. They are all adopted.

This month marks the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion. Consequently, pastors all over the nation will be delivering sermons on the topic and many churches will have bulletin inserts relating to this barbaric practice. Hopefully, Christians will be reminded of our responsibilities to the unborn, a group that is surely one of the "least of these" and make up their minds to do something about it.

The most common responses are to pray, to write letters to our elected officials, and to donate money to pro-life groups. All of these activities are important and worth our time and attention. However, there is another step that more and more followers of Jesus should be considering: adoption.

Women who become pregnant and feel that they cannot afford or otherwise take care of a baby are faced with great anxiety and guilt. If they keep the baby, they don't think that they will be able to support their child financially or even emotionally. However, if they choose to relinquish their parental rights, they may fear that the baby will go unadopted and spend his or her childhood being shipped from one foster home to another.

But aren't there many people out there who want to adopt? Yes, there are. But so many of them only want to adopt a particular kind of baby with the "right" gender and "right" race with no apparent physical or mental problems. Not only that, but there are a number of children who have been brought into the custody of the state who are not at the cute, cuddly stage, but have gotten older and been emotionally scarred by the actions of their former caregivers.

Before you dismiss the notion of adopting a child, ask yourself this: Have I every truly sought God's will on whether I should adopt or not, or have I pushed it away without committing it to prayer? If you've never asked or talked to your Lord about it, how do you truly know that it is not for you? Granted, adoption may not be for you and if it is, there are several hoops that you must jump through. However, the rewards are great as you see a child grow and you can teach them about the love of God.

So, if you are pro-life and truly believe that every child is precious and has a purpose, why not consider taking that next step of commitment to the sanctity of life and look into adoption. The child will be blessed by having loving, Christian parents and you will be blessed by showing God's love in such a meaningful way. □ — Cannon is pastor of Cardiff Baptist Church, Rockwood.



Funding missions in Tennessee
and around the world

What is human life worth?

By Reggie Weems

Focal Passage: Genesis 9:5-6;
Psalms 139:13-16; Proverbs
1:10-11, 15-16, 18; 24:10-12

After a 28-year reign of indescribable terror, Saddam Hussein was executed on December 30th, 2006. News of his death evoked multiplied and varying emotions from the Christian community. Many were elated to hear the news. Others lamented the eternal torment he now endures. In the Bible's first book, God pronounced the worth of human life by requiring the death of anyone who took human life (Genesis 9:5-6). Murder decapitates God's crown in creation – man. It also assumes God's place as the giver and taker of life. Thus, taking human life invokes retribution commensurate with the crime. Hence, the proof that there is no greater crime than taking human life is inherent in its divinely ordained punishment. Such judgment also evidences the divine perspective on humanity. The movie title "Whose Life Is It Anyway?" is definitively answered, "God's!" To gain God's perspective on human life we should:

(1) Biblically evaluate human life (Psalms 139). Every human being bears the *imago deo* (image of God) and the ramifications of that perspective are limitless. Since every human being is "fearfully and wonderfully made,"

(Psalms 139:14) i.e., created by God, He is the genuine Sovereign of each life. God grants life its sanctity as its Creator. As such, Christians should treat other people, both Christians and unbelievers in the light of God's creation. Once birthed, every single person will exist eternally somewhere. Understanding the soul's eternity, C.S. Lewis wrote, "You have never met a mere mortal" (*The Weight of Glory*).

(2) Personally value human beings (Proverbs 1:10-11, 15-16, 18). Devaluing human life will eventually destroy any society. For everyone's well-being, worth must be placed on life at conception. This kind of life-enhancing wisdom begins with God (Proverbs 1:7). Before and after birth, every human relationship depends on mutual respect. Christians cannot publicly stand against abortion and privately mistreat babies, teens, or adults. We must,

(3) Protect every life (Proverbs 24:10-12). The Christian perspective on the sanctity of life is God's view. To love God is to love humanity, working toward its good; sometimes even at the cost of opposing humans with whom we disagree. God requires His people to act like Christians and protect victims who



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are innocent of life-threatening crimes. We cannot ignore the reality of our own depravity. We cannot claim ignorance on the issue. Silence is the voice of death. We are thrust into the cauldron of this debate by countless Scriptures that call us to allegiance, attention, and action. And we, like the three Hebrew children, have a God who can deliver us and those whom we defend.

This year Great Britain will celebrate the 200th anniversary of slavery's abolition throughout the British Empire. This event was a monumental triumph by men such as William Wilberforce and John Newton who gave their post-conversion lives to its cause, motivated by their biblical convictions concerning the sanctity of every human life.

In like manner, 21st century Christians must work against abortion worldwide and for life's sanctity in places like Darfur, Sudan. On this issue, it is not simply that we know better; we know best! There is work for Christians in every city, county, state, and throughout the nation and world. □ — Weems is senior pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Johnson City.

Valuing every life

By Thurman Seber

Focal Passage: Psalms 139:1-16

Introduction. It has been said that life is cheap in our modern world. We are constantly bombarded with video images of death and dying, often in the most violent and gruesome ways. How many times have children witnessed death scenes before they become adults?

Is it surprising that human life is so lightly regarded and easily taken by so many? Should we not expect violent crime to rise, even among our youth?

What is the true worth of a child? Is there any value left in the life of an old man or an old woman? Are those with physical or mental deficiencies just in the way?

Value of being known (vv. 1-16). Everyone feels the need to be counted somewhere. For many, the only lists they seem to be on are the call lists of telemarketers and credit card companies. It does not satisfy to be listed only in the phone book or on the government tax roles. Surely we count for more than that.

Isn't it wonderful to know that we count for something with God? God knows every detail of who we



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are and what we do. He even knows our words before we speak them (v. 4).

This could be a problem for many, but should not be for those who follow God. In fact, it brings assurance that God is not making any kind of mistake by allowing our life to be lived. His awareness of our ways should influence our every thought and deed. It should prevent us from practicing sinful habits, doing crimes, committing suicide, or departing from our Christian faith. Does He know all about us? Yes, He does. Matthew 10:30, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Value of being accompanied (vv. 7-12). Sometimes we hear stories of small children being left alone to wander on busy highways or in airports. "How could anyone do that," we say, "don't they know how dangerous that could be? Somebody should have been watching that child." We partly measure how much children are wanted by the amount of loving attention they receive.

God never falls asleep or becomes negligent with our watch care. Every step we make is made with the watchful presence of God. He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. We must be worth a lot if God is always with us, every place we go.

Value of having purpose (vv. 13-16). The birth of a child is never an accident. The earthly parents may not have intended the child to

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be born, but God made no mistake. We are not born into this world by mistake. God makes no mistakes and God made us (v. 13).

There is more to us than the human eye can see. We love the old song about the "Unseen hand of God." Even though others may not be aware of it, the hand of God continues to guide us through our troubled ways.

Wouldn't life be scary if we didn't believe in God? If we thought we were without purpose or guidance? If we didn't know that God had His hand upon us (v. 5)?

Conclusion. Christians are in this world but not of it. We must continue to be the light and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:12-13).

Life is cheap in this world. Abortion is accepted. Murder is common. Old people are disrespected, often discarded as worthless. The poor are beaten down, and we miss God's mark.

God would have us to see the value of every human life, starting with our own. He knew us before we were born, brought us into this world for His good reasons, keeps close watch on us every day we live, and never forgets who we are. □ — Seber is a full-time evangelist, based in Liberty.

Deaths

◆ **R. Hershel Chevallier**, 71, died Dec. 22 in Maryville. Chevallier was pastor emeritus of Cumberland Baptist Church, Knoxville, where he served as pastor for 25 years. He was a pastor for more than 50 years, serving churches in Louisiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Chevallier held numerous leadership positions in Knox County Baptist Association, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. A past moderator of Knox County Association, he served on the TBC Executive Board from 1986-88, 1989-1991, and 1994-1996 and for eight years as a trustee of the SBC Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board). Chevallier is survived by his wife, Jerry; two children; and four grandchildren.

◆ **Nell Methvin**, 97, of Franklin died recently. She was a member of the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention from 1967-70. She was a member of First Baptist Church, Shelbyville, for 58 years and a member of Crievewood Baptist Church, Nashville, for 14 years at her death. While in Shelbyville she was Woman's Missionary Union director or secretary for the New Duck River Association for 27 years. She is survived by children Nelda Brown of Brentwood, George of Memphis, Jerry of Murfreesboro, seven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Leaders

◆ **Greg Brewer** has resigned as pastor of Poplar Creek Baptist Church, Clinton.

◆ Dotson Memorial Baptist Church, Maryville, has called **Dale Ellenburg** as pastor effective in January.

◆ First Baptist Church, Parsons, has called **Jason Varnick** as minister of music/youth effective Jan. 14. A graduate of Union University, Jackson, he served in the United States Marine Corps. He previously served as minister of music at Poplar Corner Baptist Church, Brownsville, and Eastland Baptist Church, Ripley. He also worked for Chick-Fil-A as a general manager in Franklin.

◆ Calvary Baptist Church, Rutherford, has called **Jerry W. Smith** as pastor.

◆ Pine Ridge Baptist Church, Benton, has called **Terry Daniels** as pastor.

◆ Oak Hill Baptist Church, Friendsville, has called **Kenneth Martin** as pastor.

◆ **Phil Glass**, youth pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist



TWO MEMBERS OF THE building committee of Gravel Hill Baptist Church, Eastview, burn a note on its Family Life Center on Dec. 31 to celebrate the debt free status of the center. The members are Russell Coin, left, and Tommy Leonhard. The \$300,000 building was paid for in five years though the church has a small membership, reported Patsy Pearson.

Church, Martin, has been called as associate pastor and family minister for North Knoxville Baptist Church, Knoxville.

◆ **Jonathan Lail**, pastor of Cottonwood Baptist Church, Ridgely, has been called as pastor of First Baptist Church, Pleasant View, Nashville.

◆ **Emory Minton Jr.**, minister of youth at Pump Springs Baptist Church, Harrogate, has been called to the staff of First Priority, a ministry to students.

◆ **Alan Moore**, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Erwin, retired Dec. 31. He continues to serve as interim pastor. Moore has served the church about two years. He also served as pastor of the church about 10 years ago. Moore is available to lead revivals, be interim pastor, and be supply preacher. Also **Carroll Kirby** has resigned as choir director of the church.

◆ **Bill White** resigned as pastor of Six Mile Baptist

Church, Maryville, effective November 2006.

Churches

◆ **First Baptist Church, Loretto**, will hold a one-day revival Jan. 21. Morris Anderson, evangelist of Oak Ridge, will speak.

◆ **East Alcoa Baptist Church, Alcoa**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary March 25 during the morning worship service. The church was started as McGinley Street Baptist Church, Alcoa.

Associations

◆ **The Nashville Baptist Association Toy Store**, held at Shelby Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville, served 1,700 children during December, according to reports.

◆ **Hamilton County Baptist Association**, Chattanooga, will host two workshops, "Tutoring Children and Youth" and "Conversational English/English as a Second Language" at the association



JARED HODGES, center, ministry assistant for missions/evangelism, First Baptist Church, Clarksville, stands with Ron Samuel, left, chairman of deacons of the church, and Roger Freeman, pastor, after he was licensed to the ministry Dec. 20. He is the son of Al and Karen Hodges, former missionaries to West Africa. Hodges is presently on the staff of the International Mission Board, Richmond, Va.

office Jan. 26-27, and Feb. 3. The association also will host "How to Plan a Mission Trip" the evening of Jan. 23 at the association office. Please register for material preparation. For more information, contact the association at (423) 267-3794 or hcba@baptistassociation.com.

◆ **Cumberland Baptist Association**, Clarksville, will host a Minister's Wives Brunch Jan. 27 at Memorial Baptist Church, Clarksville. The theme is "The Minister's Wife — There's More to Me Than That." Guest speaker will be Jeanne Davis, wife of Randy Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sevierville. Deadline to register is Jan. 24. For more information, call the association office at (931) 358-9036.

◆ **Bradley Baptist Association**, Cleveland, will host a men's conference entitled "Hang in There" Jan. 26-27 at Westwood Baptist Church, Cleveland. Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga., will speak. For reservations, call (423) 476-5493. The association also recently sent two disaster relief recovery teams to Buffalo, N.Y. to clean up debris left from October/November 2006 storms.

◆ Over 100 disaster relief volunteers are serving Jan. 14-20 with the **Nashville Baptist Association**, Nashville, to complete construction projects in the Gulfport, Miss., area, which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The disaster relief team is made up of 30 volunteers from **Cumberland Baptist Association**, Clarksville; 50 volunteers from **Mid-South Baptist Association**, Memphis area; and about 40 volunteers from the Nashville Association, according to team leader Don Mauldin, who is



BILL MAPLES, left, pastor, Henderson Chapel Baptist Church, Pigeon Forge, and his wife, Carolyn Faye, participated in the recent 150th anniversary observances of the church. This church milestone was recognized by President George W. Bush who sent a letter with greetings and commended the members for their dedication, service, compassion, and commitment to the faith. The church's homecoming and anniversary event drew 130 people.

retired from the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff and a member of Forest Hills Baptist Church, Nashville.

◆ **Cumberland Gap Baptist Association**, Harrogate, is planning a mission project late January or February to reconstruction work in Gulfport, Miss., which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Housing and food will be provided. Transportation costs will be shared by volunteer. To volunteer, call Richard Minton at (423) 869-5910, Clayton Dunsmore, director of missions, at (423) 869-8716.

Events

◆ **Mid-South Roy Ambassadors** will host the 4th annual RA Pinewood Derby Race Competition the afternoon of Feb. 17 at Traeger Village Baptist Church, Bartlett. The mission project to support the Teen Ministry of Gallaway Baptist Church, Gallaway. Deadline to register is Feb. 14. For information, contact Mike Freeman at (901) 849-0867 or rastaff@midsouthras.org.

◆ **The Tennessee Baptist Convention Volunteer Missions Team** is offering a Iowa Jericho Prayer March to be held June 25-29 to support the Tennessee/Iowa Baptist Partnership. Eight teams of three-five volunteers will be assigned to an Iowa prayer host for the week. Teams will be assigned to many of the 50 counties with no evangelistic witness, churches, and places where church plants and ministries are needed. Then they will gather in Des Moines for celebration and debriefing. For information, contact the Volunteer Missions office at 1-800-558-2090 ext. 2061 or (615) 371-2061.