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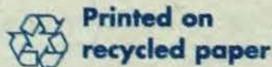
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Study finds misuse of ministry funds by some groups

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — ABC News targeted the spending habits of the heads of some Christian ministry organizations that repeatedly ask people for monetary donations, with its "20/20" newsmagazine citing multimillion-dollar censing and a private jet, for example, owned by Paul and Jan Crouch of Trinity Broadcasting Network.

"We've all been trained to not even think, to just give the money over and not ask questions and to just not be good stewards," Rusty Leonard, founder of Stewardship Partners, said on 20/20 March 23. "And all the satisfaction we get is in the act of giving, not of making sure that actual, good work gets done."

Leonard became so disturbed by the misuse of ministry funds that he started a website called ministrywatch.com, which monitors the spending habits of a significant number of Christian groups. He helps the public keep tabs on which organizations are trustworthy with money and which ones don't have financial transparency.

"It's a huge red flag. Nobody should donate to any of those ministries. There's no point in donating to a ministry that wants to take your money but not tell you a thing about how they're going to spend that money," Leonard told ABC. "... I'm human, you're human. If I had no constraints on me, I'd probably do all kinds of stupid things."

Trinity Broadcasting Network, the largest religious broadcaster in the world, is on Leonard's "Donor Alerts" list because he has serious concerns about how money given to the group is spent.

TBN "sits on a \$340 million cash hoard and owns houses in an exclusive Orange County, Calif., community hidden behind very regal gates," ABC reported. "They control a mansion worth about \$4 million, and an even bigger one — over 10,000 square feet — that's worth about \$6 million. The Crouches also travel the world in a jet worth a reported \$7 million."

Paul Crouch's response to criticism of his lavish lifestyle, 20/20 said, is, "If God's people are as poor as Job's turkey, who's going to pay to send the gospel to the ends of the earth?"

TBN Vice President Paul Crouch Jr. issued a response to the broadcast, saying the program was based on "unreliable," "outdated," and "incomplete" information and had used a "prejudiced source" — presumably referring to Leonard.

Ministrywatch.com gets about 4,000 hits a day, Leonard said, and some groups are actually asking him to evaluate

Annie Armstrong

Oklahoma lady finds extraordinary cousin

By Bob Nigh
Baptist Press

NASH, Okla. — Lenni Nordloh has always supported the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

She and her husband Marty, who is pastor of a small Baptist church in Oklahoma, have benefited from the offering for many years — first when Marty was a student at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and as they served as church planters in Wyoming and Arizona.

While Armstrong had always been a spiritual mentor of sorts, Miss Annie, as she was affectionately known, now holds a special place deep in Nordloh's heart. Last July, Nordloh, who is writing a book about her family history, sat stunned as she read words that changed her life forever.

"I was preparing for a family reunion we were going to attend in June of 2006 in Branson, Mo., when I decided to do some last minute research," the Colorado native writes in her book. "I knew that Henry Sater was one of my grandfathers, so I pulled up a computer Web search and put his name in to review. A new report popped up on him where it said, 'Her great-great-great-grandfather was Henry Sater.' What was this? It was a news article ... on Annie Walker Armstrong."

"I began to read the article, and tears began to flow down my face. I could not believe what I was reading. Annie Walker Armstrong was my biological cousin," Nordloh recounted.

After further tracing the family tree, Nordloh discovered that her great-great-great-great-grandfather, Henry Sater of Baltimore, Md. — the man who founded the first Baptist church in Maryland — actual Armstrong's great-great-grandfather. All their births were separated by about 100 years — Armstrong was born on July 11, 1850 and Nordloh on Oct. 17, 1947 — the two women share a biological tie.

At the time of her discovery, the Nordlohs were staying in a towable RV on her brother Les's property in Good Hope, Ga. She printed the article and went to her brother's home to show it with him.

"I said, 'Les, you know I have been working on our family history. I want you to read some of it. I didn't tell him anything,'" Nordloh said. "He just stared at the article, and then he looked at me and said, 'What a blessing.'"

"This was amazing," Nordloh said. "I discovered a Southern Baptist. My great-great-great-great-grandfather was a Southern Baptist. My brother was a Southern Baptist pastor for more than 40 years and he, too, had been a home mission retired director of missions, and a former member of the evangelism department of the Home Mission Board. All my ancestors were then the Home Mission Board. All my ancestors, the Annie Armstrong emphasis was around. We always gave to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering." □

them. The website released a list of the Top 30 Brightest Shining Light organizations for 2006, which are ministry groups that Leonard deems trustworthy with handling money. Among them are Answers in Genesis, Crown Financial Ministries, and the Family Research Council. □

Nevada governor opposes lottery

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — In a rare alliance, the Democratic governor of Nevada, Jim Gibbons, is siding with Republicans in opposing a lottery in his state, but for a different reason.

Gibbons is against the proposed constitutional amendment allowing for a lottery because he fears it would compete with the state's famous gambling industry, the Associated Press said March 27.

"I respect recent efforts by some legislators to explore options for new revenue to the state; however, I do not believe it is a proper function of Nevada government to operate a lottery, nor do I think that the state should be in competition with its largest industry," Gibbons said in a statement, according to the *Nevada Appeal*.

Nearly every session of the Nevada legislature has dealt with a lottery proposal as a way to raise money for education, the *Appeal* said, but while it has passed the House, the proposal has yet to make it through the Senate and onto the ballot.

Gibbons said studies show that lotteries fail to promote economic development.

"Elsewhere, lotteries have proven to be costly and bureaucratic, something I do not believe our citizens want more of in Nevada," he said.

"I will not, therefore, support any legislation that includes the establishment of a lottery in Nevada." □

Union banquet to offer 'inside look'

Union University news office

JACKSON — Former White House Chiefs of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr. and Leon E. Panetta will be the keynote speakers for Union University's 11th annual Scholarship Banquet at Jackson's Carl Perkins Civic Center on Tuesday, Oct. 23.

Card served as chief of staff for President George W. Bush from 2000-2006. Panetta served as White House chief of staff from 1994-1997 for President Bill Clinton.

"This will be the first time two speakers have addressed our scholarship banquet audience," Union President David S. Dockery said. "Both of these men are exceptional leaders. Each has a long history of government service, and together they have much to offer us regarding the inner workings of the White House on a daily basis, as well as in times of crisis."

Union's Board of Presidential Associates issues keynote invitations each year for the purpose of funding student scholarships. The previous 10 events generated a total of about \$4 million. Once again this year, table sponsorships begin at \$1,000 and individual seats are available at \$125.

Sponsorship opportunities are available at all levels. Ticket information, including table sponsorships and special balcony seating, is available at the Union's office of university relations at (731) 661-5050.

NH house passes civil unions bill

Baptist Press

CONCORD, N.H. — Hampshire House easily passed a bill April 4 that would allow civil unions and make it easier to grant the sixth one-nation State the sixth one-nation to grant homosexual couples legal benefits of marriage.

The bill, H.B. 457, passed the House 243-129, and now goes to the Senate. Both chambers are controlled by Democrats. Democratic Gov. John Lynch has said if he would support the bill according to the *Manchester Union Leader*, expressed concern about how the bill would interact with other laws.

"I think it's more correct than some may think, of what the impact is of other statutes which place," he said.

Lynch added, according to the *Union Leader*, "I will sign on [the bill] once I have my mind on it."

Civil unions are legal in Vermont, Connecticut, and New Jersey. California has similar laws but calls them partnerships. Massachusetts remains the only state where "gay marriage" is legal.

The vote largely went along party lines, but 27 Republicans voted for it and six Democrats voted against it, the newspaper reported. □

LifeWay research explores why adults switch churches

Libby Lovelace
LifeWay news service

KANSAS CITY — The latest findings from the LifeWay Research area of LifeWay Christian Resources give the top 10 reasons adults switch churches. This study builds on LifeWay Research's 2006 study of the formerly churched, which explored the reasons adults stop going to church. The current findings explain why people leave churches and how these reasons differ from those in which the individual does not leave church attendance at all.

Church switchers are defined as Protestant Americans who did not attend more than one church regularly as an adult. There are two types of people who slip out through the door of the church," said Matt McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research. The group is probably leaving church permanently, and the other group is going to find a new church."

To understand why adults choose to change churches, 415 "mover" church switchers — who changed churches for reasons other than changes to their residential location — were surveyed in December 2006. The study results indicate that overall, those who change churches for reasons other than being drawn to another church are more likely fleeing their previous church rather than being drawn to another. Eighty-eight percent of study participants said the greatest factor on their decision to switch churches was "my desire to leave my previous church." The other 42 percent left because of the desire to join their current church.

Not meeting needs

The top two specific reasons people leave their church have to do with their needs not being fulfilled by their previous church.

Of all reasons churchgoers choose to leave their previous church, the No. 1 specific reason is because the "church was not helping me to develop spiritually." Twenty-eight percent of non-mover church switchers indicated this as the reason.

Another 20 percent of respondents said they left because they "did not feel engaged or involved in meaningful church work."

Disenchantment

Another common element among church switchers is disenchantment with church members. Eighteen percent of respondents indicated "church members were judgmental of others," as a specific reason for switching.

Other member-related reasons for switching are "members seemed hypocritical" (15 percent), "church didn't seem to be a place where God was at work" (14 percent), and "church was run by a clique that discouraged involvement" (14 percent).

Disenchantment with the pastor is also a common reason churchgoers switch. Sixteen percent cite the "pastor was not a good preacher" as a specific reason for leaving their previous church. Also in the top 10 are the following: "pastor was judgmental of others" (14 percent) and "pastor seemed hypocritical" (13 percent).

Unwelcome changes

Sixteen percent of survey respondents said too many changes in general drove them to switch churches.

One respondent said, "The pastor of my previous church left and the new pastor was radically different, and the music switched from traditional to rock music."

According to McConnell, "These church switchers leave because they are unhappy with changes in the overall direction of the church. Respondents had the opportunity to select specific changes they did not like, such as worship style, teachings, or a staff member leaving, but the largest proportion selected too many changes in general — the culmination of many changes in the previous church they did not like."

Different from formerly churched

Church switchers' disenchantment and disappointment with their previous church's failure to meet their needs differ from those who do not return to church.

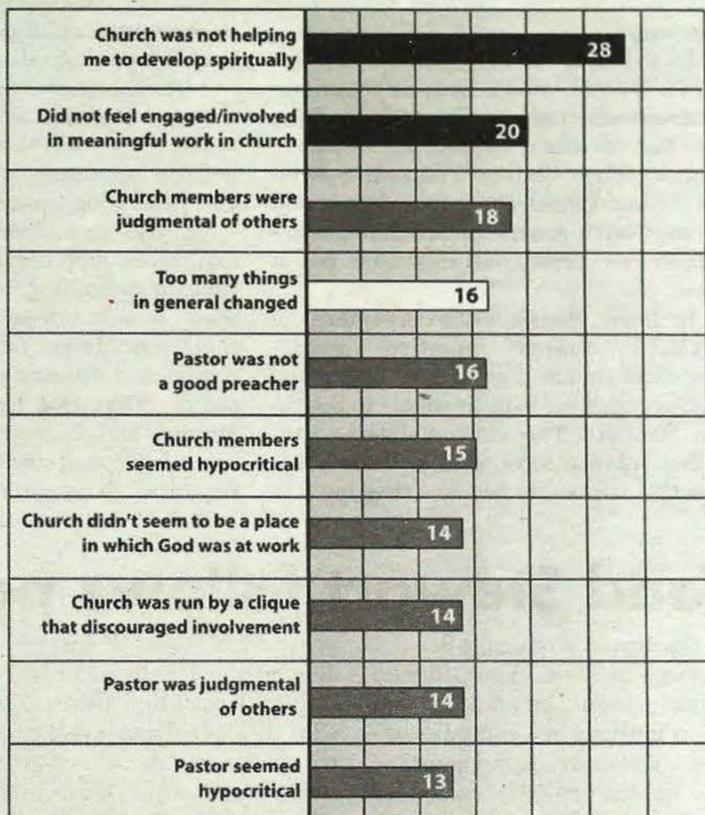
The prior LifeWay Research study of formerly churched adults indicated that the primary reasons given for leaving the church are changes in life situation. While 59 percent of the formerly churched cite this category of reasons, only 21 percent of church switchers leave their previous church because of life changes (excluding moving).

Implications for church leaders

Brad Waggoner, LifeWay's vice president of research and ministry development, expounds on the church switcher study in a companion article (available at www.lifewayresearch.com) and offers suggestions for church leaders who desire to build stronger, healthier churches.

"Of all of the reasons for leaving the church, the top two are 'the church was not helping

Top 10 reasons for leaving previous church Among American Protestants



Note: Because respondents could check "all reasons that apply," the total answers sum more than 100%.

Category:

- Church not fulfilling needs
- Disenchanted with pastor/church
- Changes within previous church

LifeWay RESEARCH
www.lifewayresearch.com

me to grow spiritually,' and 'I did not feel engaged/involved in meaningful work in the church,'" Waggoner writes.

"These are actually very encouraging findings. The fact that the majority of church switchers express a desire to grow spiritually and become active in service should strike a chord of optimism for leaders.

"[T]he most helpful response any leader can make to this study is to allow these findings to fuel the desire to disciple and involve every church member," he writes in the article. "With few exceptions, a pastor who possesses solid leadership skills and a passion to disciple and involve others will see this happen in the church." □

Golf ministry creates opportunities for Christian witness

Chris Turner
LifeWay news service

KANSAS CITY — Scott Lehman wanted out to the first tee to meet his business partner. Several hours and 18 holes of golf later, Lehman had become a spiritual adviser to his newfound friend. By the time we got to the back nine, he was sharing with me about his struggling marriage and finances," Lehman said. "He was telling me my story from 10 years ago. I was able to relate with him what it was that Jesus has done in my life since I've met him."



LEHMAN

Lehman hopes that encounter will be repeated thousands of times a year for others to come. Lehman established In His Grip Golf Association to teach people how to intentionally use golf as a way to share the gospel. Opportunities abound to turn fairways into ministry fields, Lehman noted

in a recent interview for Inside LifeWay (www.lifeway.com/insidelifeway), the official news podcast of LifeWay Christian Resources.

Lehman pointed out, for example, that:

- There are more than 60 million golfers worldwide.
- There are more than 30 million golfers in the United States — 20 million males, making golf one of today's most popular sports.
- Americans spend more than \$600 million per year on golf balls alone.
- There are more than 15,000 golf courses in North America.
- Nearly 600 million rounds of golf are played each year.

"We see guys standing on the first tee on Sunday morning as we drive by and we've been cursing the darkness [condemning them for not being in church]," said John Jaye, former associate pastor of administration and recreation at First Baptist Church in Jasper, Ala., and now a full-time volunteer working with Lehman. "[However] we haven't done anything to shine a light into that dark-

ness. That's what we see in His Grip doing — trying to shine a light into that area. Not all those guys are bad guys; they just need to know the Lord."

Jaye told the podcast audience he held an annual golf tournament while serving as minister of recreation at his church, but after hearing Lehman discuss his vision for In His Grip, the church placed an emphasis on using the annual tournament as an evangelistic opportunity.

"We went from 50 to more than 120 participating," Jaye said. "I remember one guy who started bringing his family to church after that and his 16-year-old son accepted Christ. For too long we've told [people] you need to come and join us in church, which is good, but we need to go to where they are."

Lehman said his life verse is Proverbs 3:5-6. "I leaned on my own understanding for the first 35 years of my life and it wasn't good enough," he said. "I've been blessed to have been exposed to the little devotional book called *In His Grip*. I brought it home and actually had to ask my wife if there was

a Bible in the house. God used the golf analogies to draw me to Himself."

Lehman believed that combining the wisdom of Scripture with insights from golf could yield a useful evangelistic tool for an individual's or church's ministry. Thus, *The Golfer's Bible*, a collaboration between Lehman and LifeWay's B&H Publishing Group, made its debut the last week of March. Devotionals centered around golf are sprinkled throughout the Bible.

"A lot of golfers won't connect with church language but they do understand being in the rough or in the woods or in a bunker," Lehman said.

"We all want to be on the fairway, so when you start talking about living for the Lord and trusting Him and 'living in the fairway,' that's an immediate connection with anybody who has played golf."

In His Grip Golf Association will host a number of training events across the country, including leading two Pastor's Masters Golf Retreats at LifeWay Ridgecrest (N.C.) and LifeWay Glorietta (N.M.) conference centers. □

Baptisms reflect healthy new churches, says NAMB study

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Which of the three "Bs" are the best benchmarks on which to judge the health of a Southern Baptist church — buildings, budgets, or baptisms?

Baptisms is the best indicator, according to a new study, because baptisms measure where churches are reaching the lost — not just moving believers around. The "Church Planting Survivability and Health Study" was conducted by the North American Mission Board's Center for Missional Research based here.

Richard Harris, vice president of NAMB's church planting group, described church planting as "one of the best evangelistic tools available to Southern Baptists. The study validates that church plants have some of the most effective ministries because they have to

be contextual to the culture without compromising the message if they are to survive."

The research — based on more than 500 completed telephone interviews sampled from 1,000 church plants from 12 denominations and networks — indicates that flourishing new church plants with a higher-than-average number of baptisms during their first four years of existence, share several common traits: evangelistic emphasis, effective ministries, and expanding leadership.

"In the area of missions and evangelism, these new church plants recognize that the community will not connect with their church unless they connect with their community," said Ed Stetzer, missiologist and director of NAMB's research center. "They look for needs in the community and find ways to meet those needs," through food banks, emergency shelters, drug and alcohol recovery

opportunities, and other ministries, Stetzer said.

Among other characteristics of high-baptism church plants:

- They start at least one "daughter" church within three years of their original church plant, he said.

- They have a proactive plan for stewardship development.

"This basic aspect of the Christian life is nurtured, not neglected by the new church plant," Stetzer said. "Church plants that consistently grow their members and challenge them in the area of stewardship grow toward financial self-sufficiency and do so at a faster rate."

- They sponsor more events and ministries, such as block parties, midweek children's programs and special children's events, including Easter Egg hunts, fall festivals, Vacation Bible Schools, and sports.

- Via direct mail or other means have a strategy to promote and publicize their programs, events, and ministries. "They don't hide their lamps under a bush," Stetzer said.

- They place a top priority on training and development of their members and staff and they conduct member training classes for all church members.

Stetzer emphasized that many common among new church plants are higher-than-average baptisms and even in plants with a marked, higher-than-average church attendance.

"Church plants — even effective ones — aren't all the same," Stetzer said. "Some of those surveyed are strong in some particular factors than others. The majority of church plants with higher-than-average baptisms and church attendance showed all of these factors common." □

Todd Stewart follows passion for folks in 'center ...

— Continued from page 1
services held at Vine Middle School. Soon the church will begin meeting in a rented storefront. The active participants of Mosaic are called "volunteer staff" rather than members so they will understand the church's commitment to ministry, explained Stewart.

Stewart and Taylor were helped by the Tennessee Baptist Convention's training for church planters. The TBC provides funding to Mosaic. The church also is helped by Grace Baptist, its primary partner. Stewart's father, Ron, is pastor as well as president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Additionally three African-American churches and two other Anglo churches serve as partners with Mosaic.

The congregation has been meeting for a year and has drawn Asians, African Americans, Hispanics, and Caucasians, described Stewart.

"It's just been an incredible journey. It's been a whirlwind since we launched."

The volunteer staff members of Mosaic aren't serving "people solely so others will become Christians. They are serving people," he explained. Obviously, the ultimate motive is for every person to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, but to have that as an ulterior motive can create a barrier to being in relationship with others, he added.

"It's not about who they are. It's about who we are."

Ministry at school

One way members of Mosaic Community minister is through the Partners in Education program of Knox County Public Schools at Vine Middle School.

The relationship seemed natural because the church has been meeting in the school. The partnership has become a wonderful ministry, added Stewart.

He had heard of the ministry

program of Tony Evans, president of the Urban Alternative, Dallas, Texas, and pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas. He recommends a suburban church and an urban church adopt an urban public school.

Then Stewart learned the county school system had the Partners in Education program already in operation. Mosaic registered for the program. Mosaic is joined by Grace Baptist Church in the partnership.

Stewart hopes more churches will become involved with public schools. Knox County has 78 public schools but only 34 churches are involved in the Partners in Education program, said Stewart. Of those, only nine are Southern Baptist. This is true though the Knox County Baptist Association counts 156 churches as members.

Vine Middle School is a good place for ministry, noted Stewart. About 90 percent of the students participate in the government-provided free lunch program.

The partnership with Mosaic and Grace has really helped the school's staff, students, and their families, said LaRoyce Beatty, principal. Beatty also is a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Knoxville. The churches have taken the partnership "to a whole new level," she said.

Mosaic and Grace regularly give birthday gifts to teachers and staff members. At Christmas they adopted 300 students of Vine Middle School and presented them and their families with gifts.

The two churches are in the process of adopting 15 students of Vine Middle and their families for the school year. Volunteers involved are counseled not to emphasize giving or fixing situations, but building relationships, said Stewart.

The churches held a basketball competition in which the

team of Grace Christian Academy of Grace Baptist Church played Vine Middle School. While Vine Middle won both games, new opportunities for ministry were developed, said Stewart.

Other opportunities to minister include serving as chaperones for school trips and providing speakers for classes.

"Our ultimate goal is to see community transformation, and we believe that can best come through Jesus Christ, servanthood, and education."

Personal experiences

Stewart said he became exposed to multicultural environments through playing basketball in Ohio and Kentucky. He was a coach at Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky.

So it's not unusual that Stewart and his wife, Kristi, have unofficially adopted Adrian Wannamaker, 17, who is African American. The Stewarts also have three other children — Trey, 12; Kendra, 10; and Karis, 8. Todd met Adrian when he first started his ministry in Austin Homes. Adrian now attends Grace Christian Academy and excels in academics, football, and basketball.

The relationship "is just a God thing," said Stewart, as is Adrian who has made difficult but good choices all of his life without the same kind of help that most youngsters receive.

Adrian's life "just shows that God has His hand on some people," said Stewart.

Transformation

Stewart hopes to lead other Baptists and Christians to become involved in center cities. He believes it is one of the most unreached missions fields.

His approach has been developed over the years and includes a new focus among evangelicals for churches to become externally-focused and a new emphasis on community



TODD STEWART, pastor, Mosaic Community Church, Knoxville, visits with **LaRoyce Beatty**, principal of Vine Middle School, center city of Knoxville. Beatty also is a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Knoxville.

transformation, he explained.

Trust is the issue, Stewart explained, for both white and black communities. The white community needs to move beyond finding needs they think should be "fixed" without listening to the community to discover what they say they need, he said.

No longer does he recommend churches only go into needy neighborhoods and hold block parties or distribute tracts and then leave. A better approach is to work in the community and to discover assets as well as needs. He also recommends working with on-going ministries. Yet, relationships should be the focus, Stewart said.

Ultimately, needs can lead to long-term relationships, he added. For instance, a woman he visited asked him to repair her house. Stewart told her he didn't have any way to help her but if God sent someone to him who could help, he would send

them to her. A week later she received a call from a group who was willing to do some repair to help so. The group helped the woman. Now she is a part of Mosaic Community.

Mosaic also is developing a Freedom Center, which will offer care for pastors and their wives, referrals for people with addiction issues, and training on emotional healing for churches.

"The African American community has truly been a blessing to me," said Stewart. He added he's glad to "belong here. That's where my heart is."

He hopes to help churches become effective in the center city and "appropriate the faith in a practical way."

"This is my life," said Stewart. "I go to bed thinking about this. I wake up thinking about this."

Stewart may be contacted at todd@mosaicknoxville.com or (865) 385-7708. □

The case of minister sexual abuse is too many

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umnist



By Frank Page

Several days ago, I was viewed by ABC's "20/20" for an upcoming program titled, "Preacher Predators." At the request of ABC, I agreed to this invitation as to provide some kind of assistance to a program which will be overwhelmingly positive.

There has been a great deal of attention given to this subject in recent days. As I said to the reporter, we are willing and able to discuss this issue because even one instance of sexual abuse by a minister is too much. While I do not believe the problem is systemic and on a large scale, there have been several reported cases of abuse by trusted members of staff in churches. Let me help set the matters clear for you.

Some persons have accused Southern Baptists of ignoring the issue and hiding behind our autonomy. Let me clearly state that I believe in the autonomy of the local church as a biblical mandate. We are not hiding anything, except the truth. In fact, the local church is

where accountability must be enforced. I call upon every local church to develop written policy guidelines for the care of children and youth. I call upon every church to have a system or policy in place to deal with any accusations made. We must protect children and youth, and the integrity of staff members.

I ask that all of our churches require background checks (on national and state levels) as well as thorough reference checks for all staff. The local church is where accountability must be enforced. As I said to one person, for years the press has complained that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church has enabled the hiding of sexual predators. Now, they are stating that the lack of our hierarchy is helping hide sexual predators. The truth is that people can abuse any system. There are people who seek out positions in the church where the trust level can be so high that they can then be involved in horrible actions.

I also call upon all local churches to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law anyone who would take advantage of

the trust and love of precious children and students. Simply put, there is no place in the church for persons who would take advantage of these relationships.

I also call on local churches to take advantage of the multiple numbers of resources that are available on the SBC web-

site, as well as through LifeWay Christian Resources, to help safeguard our children and youth through appropriate policies and educational resources. There are many items available to help. Please use them.

Let me also share one other word of clarification. There are many people in the news media speaking about this issue. I am thankful that any attention to this issue brings a heightened level of awareness on the part of our churches and people. However, please realize that there are groups who claim to be one thing when in reality they are another. It would be great if the many groups who are claiming to be groups of advocacy and encouragement in ministry were that which they claim. Please be aware that there are groups that are nothing more than opportunistic persons who are seeking to raise opportunities for personal gain.

As stated earlier, even one instance of sexual molestation is one too many. Let us be people of integrity. Let us be people of such a trustworthy nature as to bring glory to God.

Let us be men and women of the gospel who provide an atmosphere where trust will not be abused. Let us provide churches where there is an environment of encouragement, instruction, and spiritual enlightenment.

Let us be men and women of the gospel who provide an atmosphere where trust will not be abused. Let us provide churches where there is an environment of encouragement, instruction, and spiritual enlightenment.

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Disturbing trend or great opportunity?

It may never be proven, but I am convinced that there must be a "worry" gene. My grandmother was probably one of the best worriers of all time. Mom would worry because she didn't have anything to worry about.

Unfortunately, I inherited some of that trait, although hopefully not to that extent. And, as I have read and studied the Bible over the years I know that Jesus admonishes us not to worry.

One of my favorite verses is: "Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34). How true!

I have tried to heed that instruction over the years and even my wife admits I don't worry nearly as much as I used to.

On page 8 of this issue is a story about a disturbing trend that could cause those of us in the newspaper business to worry, but I have decided to look upon it instead as a great opportunity.

The story details how many major secular newspapers are discontinuing their religion sections. There is a fear that only the most "sensational" religion stories will get "front-page" coverage while other good religion stories will be regulated to a "faith" page once a week or not used at all.

There are some who disagree and predict religion stories that merit coverage will still receive it.

As a journalist it bothers me that secular papers are cutting back on religion news, but as a Christian journalist I see how faith-based publications such as Baptist papers can benefit.

I believe strongly that God's story needs to be told and publications such as the *Baptist and Reflector* will continue to tell those stories.

Religious publications face the same economic pressures as the daily papers. I realize that in the future we may rely more on the Internet to distribute the paper, but I don't think the print publication is ready to become extinct just yet. Too many people still love the feel of the newspaper in their hands, turning pages, and leisurely reading the stories that grab their attention.

I encourage those of you who read the *B&R* faithfully each week to encourage your friends and fellow church members who do not receive the paper to subscribe. Encourage your churches to send the paper to church leadership. Be an advocate for us.

The loss of religion sections in major daily papers is a disturbing trend, but it also provides a great opportunity for Baptist papers to fill the void. May we be found faithful as we share what God is doing in Tennessee and around the world. ☐

Design church slogans for the people you want to reach

uch-
ints



By Woody Murray

There are some current slogans from churches across the country:

- "No Know Him and to Make Known"
- "Proclaiming Christ"
- "We're All About People"
- "Where Grace Happens and Disciples Grow"
- "Loving God ... Loving People"
- "Making Known God's Man-Wisdom"
- "We Are the Family Church"

Your church is like most churches, you have a slogan or message similar to the above. It is a key touchpoint for your church. You, and your leaders in your church, have labored many hours, even days together, trying to decide on just the right message to communicate to your community.

How do you use that slogan painstakingly selected in the Yellow Pages ad, on your church's brochure, in the Sun-bulletin, and your weekly

newsletter. It may even be on signs around your church. But is your slogan really conveying the key message you need to send out today? Is it effectively reaching the lost in your community and encouraging them to visit your church?

Your church slogan can be a tremendous asset to your ministry. Or, the slogan may make no impact at all. More importantly, it can also communicate a message that "turns off" people to your church. How is that possible? Your slogan likely was created or endorsed by church members who have been Christians most of their lives. You, and they, may be too close to your church to be objective about the slogan. Did you ever ask folks who don't attend your church what your slogan means to them? You might be surprised by their answers.

Look back at the slogans above. They all have one fault in common: they talk about — perhaps even brag about — the church and its members. Not one really addresses the concerns and needs of the lost person. Notice how many say "We" instead of "You." One slogan says "Proclaiming Christ." Okay, that's what this church

does ... I hope that is what every church does. It should be the basic requirement to be a church. It's a pretty bland slogan. Even worse, if I have no church background or Christian upbringing, what would "Proclaiming Christ" mean to me? It's what you do at your church, but what's in it for me? Remember, this is a "Me" generation!

How about "Where Grace Happens and Disciples Grow?" If I've never had any relationship with the Lord, "grace" and "disciples" are not terms in my everyday vocabulary. This message is sailing right over the heads of the people we most want to reach.

Your slogan and all of your church messages have to clearly address the needs of people with little or no understanding of the Christian faith and its terminology. The Lord is tugging at their hearts, and you can help them know how to respond through your church's slogan and key messages.

Now consider the impact of these currently used church slogans or themes:

- "A Place for You."
- "Discover Meaning Downtown."
- "Feel God's Love."

"Tired of Enduring Life. Start Enjoying Life."

- "Come Celebrate with Us."
- "We're Here for You."
- "Church Like You Always Knew It Could Be."

These church slogans speak to the seeker — the one with needs who desires Christ but may not fully understand where to turn. These messages are much more inviting. The word "You" is either included or implied in every slogan.

Take a closer look right now at your church slogan. Are you talking to the people you want to reach — or to your own church members?

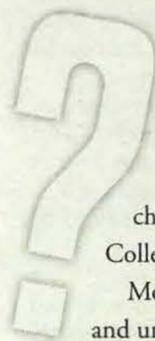
Strengthen your slogan, and every communication touch-point, to draw people to your church.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). ☐ — Touch-Points is a new column in the *B&R*. Murray is an independent church communications specialist with 30 years of experience. If you have a church communications question for Murray, e-mail him at rwoodymurray@comcast.net, or call him at (615) 646-5725.



Church Health Matters

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



Baptist Collegiate Ministry Matters?

This edition of "Church Health Matters" highlights the church health function of ministry through the TBC Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM).

More than 30 Baptist Collegiate Ministries exist on college and university campuses in Tennessee. To learn more about how your students can get involved in BCM, visit www.tnbcmm.org or contact your local BCM campus minister. They are:

- Austin Peay State University, Jim Alexander, (931) 647-6940
- Baptist College of Health Sciences, Karen Smith, (901) 572-2475
- Belmont University, Christy Ridings, (615) 460-4619
- Carson-Newman College, Nenette Measels, (865) 471-3437
- Cleveland State Community College, Denise Roebuck, (423) 284-6183
- Cumberland University, Ken Tramel, (615) 453-6845
- Dyersburg State Community College, Stan Cavness, (731) 285-3750
- East Tennessee State University, Eric Hogstrom, (423) 928-8318
- Fisk University, Roosevelt Walker, (615) 329-1103
- Jackson State Community College, Alan Teel, (731) 424-6065
- Lee University, Denise Roebuck, 423-284-6183
- Lincoln Memorial University, Damon Billings, (423) 869-2562
- Maryville College, Steve Hixson, (865) 216-1978
- Middle Tennessee State University, Amber Vaden (615) 893-5035
- Motlow State Community College, Charles Nored, (931) 455-1536
- Pellissippi State Technical Community College, Steve Hixson, (865) 216-1978
- Roane State Community College, Becky Works, (865) 354-2448
- Tennessee State University, Roosevelt Walker, (615) 329-1103
- Tennessee Technological University, Joe Wiles, (931) 526-4282
- Tennessee Wesleyan College, Ric Wilson, (423) 745-8782
- Union University, Todd Brady, (731) 661-5062
- University of Memphis, Jeff Jones, (901) 458-7589
- University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, Steve Roper, (423) 266-5121
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Bob Hall and Betsy Ingle, (865) 546-8272
- University of Tennessee, Martin, Morgan Owen, (731) 587-9063
- University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis Ron Hawkins, (901) 525-8889
- University of the South, Randall Taylor, (931) 598-1250
- Vanderbilt University, Scott Allen, (615) 343-4459
- Volunteer State Community College, Cindy Chanin, (615) 230-3527
- Walters State Community College, Damon Billings, (423) 587-1980

TBC Baptist Collegiate Ministry provides outreach to colleges and universities across our state. Included below is the contact information for members of your state missionary staff that are available to help your church in providing opportunities for students to serve in missions.

- **Bill Choate**.....(615) 371-2057
State Collegiate director
- **Stacy Murphree**.....(615) 371-2056
Collegiate Program specialist

College Is a Leadership Laboratory By Bill

Look around the worship service at your church on this coming Sunday. Then ask yourself this question, "Ten years from now, who will lead our church?"

Who will make wise decisions, teach, contribute tithes and offerings, and lead out in missions, evangelism, and community outreach? Who will be the deacons? Who will be the pastor?

It is a question every church must continually ask. Leaders don't just happen. They must be called and trained. Leaders must be prepared to lead well.

Each year college freshmen across the United States are asked what they intend to study while in college. In this year's entering class, one-third of one percent stated their intent to study theology or religion. Of every 1,000 American college students, three will major in religion or theology.

Does that mean college students are not going to be prepared to lead our churches when they graduate?

Although we need to be preparing some students for vocational ministry, students don't have to major in religion to be preparing for church leadership. College can still be a time when young adults prepare to lead tomorrow's church. They step up to lead student organizations, discover how to have influence among their peers, find out how the real world operates, and learn about cultures outside their own upbringing. They can discover that the world needs the Jesus they already know and that they can have an impact on that world. It can be a time of exercising gifts and discovering callings.

While I was a college student, my home church asked me to serve on the Building and Grounds Committee. I have no idea what those dear people thought I might contribute. During my time of service, the church made some changes in the facilities and bought a new bus. The members were kind enough to make me feel part of that process. I did not supply much leadership to the committee, but I learned a great deal about how church operates, how people work together, and how decisions get made.

I still use some of the skills I learned in

that first committee assignment. It's a small thing, but that a church involves year-old in meaningful church leadership. Churches must step out in faith, looking for creative ways to involve college students in the life of the church.

Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) college campuses shaping students into leaders for the church. Wayne Tennessee Baptist Convention Church Planting Team leader, said he is influenced by the summer he spent in Southern Minnesota as a BCM student missionary working with church planters who had a passion to make a kingdom impact in their communities.

BCM seeks to open the eyes of college students to the need for the gospel. BCM leadership invested in us to understand what taking the Good News to the disenfranchised looked like," said Odom. "It was through BCM and my involvement that God opened my eyes to doing what it takes to tell His story among all people."

Dave Odom is the associate pastor at Third Baptist Church and Single Adults at Third Baptist Church, Murfreesboro. He is quick to share what shaped him for ministry. "The love and passion I have for college students came from my leadership experience with BCM during college," said Odom.

BCM relies on college students for the ministry's leadership. Odom learned from his first experience with BCM. "My first, simple role as leader of intramural sports taught me that though I felt unworthy, God could use me," he added. "It was a blessing. That was my first ministry experience. It's where I got my calling." Odom went on to become a campus president, go on multiple mission trips, and even live in his campus' BCM building.

The local church and the kingdom are in need called, prepared, experienced leaders. As the world changes, we need young kingdom leaders who can speak to a changing world, who know and understand the world outside the church. Both churches and BCM must continue to prepare leaders for the future.

Thanks for Baptist Collegiate Ministry Leadership Lessons

By Candace Ditsch

When I look back over my experience in Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM), I see so many positive, life-changing experiences that it continues to impact my life.

I started attending BCM events during my first few weeks at school after a friend from camp brought me there before a football game. In addition to some free ice cream, I found experiences that have stayed with me for the remainder of my life.

To begin, the people there were fantastic. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, and people from all stages of faith (or no faith) were welcome. I practice those same friendly, positive greetings with our visitors now in Sunday School that I saw at the BCM. That acceptance was so important to an intimidated freshman. But the lessons learned in how to say hello and make someone feel comfortable are still applicable to the 20 and 30-year olds I meet today. Continuing with that welcoming spirit, inquiries about the faith, and how to live it out were well received. Whether it was the student Bible study leader, a guest speaker at Thursday night worship, or our campus minister, I found my questions about how to live a real Christian life were answered in positive and genuine ways. Just being in an environment where I was free to ask how to live out my faith, made it easier to try to improve my walk with the Lord. Some of the things that I learned during those years are still with me today as I try to be a believer in today's society.

Finally, one of the most meaningful invitations I received was

a "welcome" to the Leadership Council. At the time, I was just so glad to be given the opportunity to lead the upper class Bible study group; I had no idea how much I would learn from the experience for my future. It taught me lesson preparation and how to find various verses that were appropriate. It taught me the joy of teaching and expressing something that I believe to be important, and then having others gain an understanding of that topic. It taught me presentation skills; my campus minister advised me on how to handle difficult questions and how to speak with a large audience. Today, I do training for business corporations (and some teaching of my Sunday School class on occasion), and I am truly grateful for the things I learned that year while leading that Monday night study.

To summarize, I feel I would not be the teacher, trainer, or leader I am today without the above experiences, and am thankful to both God and the people who were there at the BCM for their support, faith in me, and real Christian examples.

I thank you as well, those that are supporting campus ministry activities today whether by prayer, service, support, or simply spreading the word about what is happening on today's college campuses. By your work, you are providing a means for someone else's life to be blessed by the activities and services provided by the BCM at their school.

(Candace Ditsch of Irving, Texas, was a member of the Vanderbilt University BCM, Nashville, from 1995-1999.)

Summer Mission Assignments Lead to Church Leaders

By Stacy Murphree

This summer 75 college students will serve in missions through the Tennessee Baptist Collegiate Missions program. These students will serve in a variety of ways including teaching, construction work, youth and children's ministry, sports ministry, relationship building, and church planting activities.

Specific ministries include:

- Seven students will work with new church plants in the Portland, Maine, area and along the Canadian border. This is an area of the country where on average nine out of every 10 individuals are un-churched.
- In northeast Thailand, two students will minister to high school and college students and work alongside of career missions personnel beginning a church for these students.
- Four students will serve in Peru and three will serve in the Philippines working in different villages to discover where there is an interest to begin Bible studies among locals and work to establish house churches.
- A University of Memphis student will serve with Graffiti Ministries in New York City to lead educational and sports programs and assist with a new church plant in South Bronx.
- Students will serve on the Tennessee Travel Teams serving local churches in the areas of youth ministry, Vacation Bible School, worship, preaching, and outreach.

For information about these and other students serving in the BCM missions program, visit www.lightmessengers.org.



Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Baptist Collegiate Ministries students worked in church plant missions during March 2007 on the streets of New York City. Conducting a neighborhood study and prayer walk to assist the church plant are: from left, Carrie Smith, Amber Vaden, MTSU BCM minister, Jessica Riley, and Kristen Wilkerson.

Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

April 14	Bible Fun Field Day, Wallace Memorial Baptist Church, Knoxville
April 14	Xtreme Bible Challenge - West Tennessee, Union University, Jackson
April 16-18	Transitional Interim Pastor Training (TIP), Old English Inn, Jackson
April 21	Apologetics and Interfaith Evangelism Workshop, Wilson County Baptist Association, Lebanon
April 21-22	RA Wilderness Challenge, Camp Boxwell, Gallatin
April 21	Regional Disaster Relief Training, First Baptist Church, Milan
April 23-24	Church Administration Conference, Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood

For information visit the TBC website at www.tnbaptist.org.

Not just for Sunday anymore: papers rethink religious sections

By Hannah Elliott
Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK — On March 24, the *Dallas Morning News* received the Religion Communicators Council award for the nation's best religion section. It was the 10th time in 11 years the *News* had won. Unfortunately for the *News*, there's no chance of an 11th title.

In January the newspaper discontinued the section, citing economic concerns.

It isn't the only publication deciding to drop sections devoted to religion. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* recently combined religion with its "living" pages, while *U.S. News and World Report* and the *Wichita (Kan.) Eagle* have cut religion editors and downsized the beat altogether.

It's not immediately known how many religion reporters and editors have lost their jobs. But the religion cutbacks match an industry-wide trend of declining newspaper circulations and increased layoffs. According to the Annual Report on American Journalism, there was a net loss of 600 full-time professional employees at daily newspapers in 2005. And early indications are that 2006 may have been twice as bad.

Christian scholar Martin Marty, a 50-year columnist for *The Christian Century* magazine, has written about the "dire" economic situation of newspapers, magazines, and

other print media. In an essay titled "The Decline of Print News," Marty wrote that the "religion and faith-and-values sections are dying not because there is not enough to report on in 'religion.' Religion has seldom been so newsworthy or comment-inducing as it has become in recent decades."

It's a lack of advertising and the perception that religion sections are "fluff" that often make them the first casualties of cutbacks.

Some experts believe the decline in newspaper circulation is directly related to the growth of online editions and blogs. Convenience and the ability to sift news in a topic-specific medium have caused previously devoted print subscribers to substitute the Internet for their daily paper. And when you lose print readers, you lose the seed money that funds special sections.

Brad Owens, a journalism professor at Baylor University, described the current status of print media as in a transition rather than a decline. He teaches students "multiple models" of media in order to help them anticipate how the market for professional journalism will change.

Now more than ever, religion tends to be a topic especially covered on the Internet, he said.

"I think religion is a type [of news] where special websites and blogs kind of feed people's interest more than the traditional model of journalism

would," Owens said. "People of faith are heavy, heavy users of the Internet."

A negative side of that specialization is that users generally visit the web looking for specific information. That means they may miss more of the subtler or peripheral news they would get in a religion section. Owens doesn't necessarily lament the demise of the religion section, but he did cite potential side effects.

"[W]hen you use the web for information, you tend not to be surprised very much," Owens said. "You tend to see only things you're looking for. When I go on the web, I go there for what I need, and I don't get as many surprises."

Richard Oppel, editor of the *Austin American-Statesman*, said termination of a religion section is not the tragedy it's made out to be. The *Statesman* covers faith-based news throughout its pages and includes a "faith page" inside the features section on Saturdays.

"I never believed in religion 'sections,'" Oppel said via e-mail. "They were a showy response to an obvious reader interest when newspapers were in their salad days. But they were dependent on advertising, and advertising can be thin in that sector. Also, if you are slave to a section, then you deprive the front page of some great stuff."

In fact, the absence of a strictly "religious" section means faith-based stories must

appear throughout all news — a distribution that more closely reflects real life. Like preachers often say, faith isn't just for Sundays.

Debra Mason, Religion Newswriters Association executive director, echoed the sentiment. In an RNA newsletter, she wrote: "[H]undreds of daily newspapers do not and never have had religion sections. Instead, religion news is integrated throughout the paper. We should not confuse religion sections with religion news as a whole."

The Dallas Morning News has taken the proliferation of faith-based stories to heart. The Jan. 13 cover story in the local section discussed Jewish history in Texas. The newspaper's religion blog and newsletter continue to grow in popularity.

A potential problem of integrating religious news throughout the paper is that, by default, it could mean only the sensational faith-based stories are covered. And with front-page stories devoted to televangelist scandals and terrorism, some worry that heartwarming features usually reserved for inside pages of the paper will disappear entirely.

Oppel doesn't share that concern. In his opinion, front-page news doesn't have to be sensational.

"The rise of Muslims in Austin, trends toward non-denominational suburban churches, and the difficulty of recruit-

ing celibate candidates for priesthood all are important issues worthy of the front page," he said.

Oppel said he most definitely believes print newspapers continue to thrive, even 20 or 30 years from now. And he'd rather be in the news business than the magazine business.

Indeed, some magazines declined sharply in circulation while others continued to grow. In contrast, Oppel pointed out that newspapers have increased circulation on several platforms. For instance, the *Statesman* reduces its primary website (statesman.com), the entertainment-based *austin360* and seven Austin-area weekly newspapers, the *Spanish Shore* and *Glossy* for the luxury market.

"We're very healthy and intend to stay that way," Oppel said. "Paid circulation is declining. But tell me when magazines, radio, and TV ever paid circulation. Readership of newspapers — in print and online — is increasing."

The bottom line, according to most in the know, is that religion coverage in general is disappearing, and that's a matter of concern. Owens, for one, is optimistic.

"I'd be more worried if religion beat reporters go away," he said. "I'd hate to see any reporter confined to just one beat." □

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Jackson church has smooth transition; two former ...

Continued from page 1
 Jett said he discussed the transition process with Englewood's deacons before "Ben" Mandrell took the equation." The past TBC president noted that many churches long-term pastorates have a long time when the church has conflict. "That is normal," he said. The transition concept is far easier for the church," Jett

After prayer and meeting with deacons and committees in the church, Englewood's leadership felt that God's plan was to find their next pastor among the existing staff.

Mandrell was a natural choice. Soon after he began serving at the church full time, Mandrell began preaching the Sunday evening services each week.

In July of last year Mandrell was called as senior pastor-elect.

Working with the transition committee the decision was made to allow Mandrell to become the senior pastor at

a "gradual" pace.

He began to take on more responsibilities as Jett fulfilled his duties as president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Last fall Mandrell took over responsibilities for supervision of staff and he and Jett shared pulpit responsibilities.

In December Mandrell began to preach in the majority of the morning services.

"I think the transition process has been helpful for the church," Jett said.

As he steps down as pastor, Jett is ready to pass the mantle on to Mandrell and he expects the new pastor to be the leader of the church.

"It is important for him to establish full leadership of the church. You have to know who the leader is. That has been clear throughout (the process)," Jett said.

The new pastor is ready for the challenge and he is grateful for the contributions of both

Jett and Williams.

"One of the great blessings is that these two men have built such a great bank of trust with the congregation," Mandrell noted.

In the years he has worked with both Jett and Williams, Mandrell recalled that the discussion always centered on "what is best for the church."

Mandrell noted that in Jett's last sermon, his mentor brought a message on unity, using I Corinthians as his text.

After the message, the three men all took part in serving the Lord's Supper.

"It was a captivating picture of unity that was being modeled among the leadership," Mandrell shared.

He is excited about continuing the relationship with the two former pastors serving on staff.

Williams, a long-time pastor in Tennessee and other states, and former Union University staff member, was named pastor emeritus of the church in 2003 and began working on the staff primarily in the areas of senior adult and deacon ministry.

Jett said he had no qualms about calling his predecessor to serve with him on the staff. "We felt he was a special fit for us," Jett said.

Jett said that one thing that has bothered him is the jealousy he has seen among some ministers. "There is no place for that in ministry. It is not about individuals, but it is all about the work of the kingdom in the local church," he insisted. "I am thankful that we could work together."

Williams agreed, noting, "It has been good for us."

Both Williams and Jett say that while other churches may have had two former pastors serving on staff at the same time, it is very unusual.

"It might not work in some places," admitted Jett, who said he planned to keep "a very low profile" in the beginning.

Williams agreed that it might not work in some places but feels it will work at Englewood because of the "trust factor between the senior pastor and the two former pastors. It can be very effective," he predicted.

Mandrell noted that rather than have a job description and have the men "fit into those" the decision was made to "fit into the strengths of the men."

Both are great in dealing with sensitive issues, Mandrell said. The new pastor also noted that Jett has always enjoyed "knocking on doors and inviting people to church. He will continue to do that." The recently retired pastor also will continue to lead the Wednesday evening Bible study, Mandrell added.

Williams will continue to work with senior adults and with the deacon ministry, Mandrell said, but added that "both will do whatever needs to get done."

Mandrell is confident having the two pastors on his staff will work because they have always had the freedom to speak frankly with each other.

"I am so blessed to serve alongside these two men and with this church. I feel like I am living a dream," Mandrell said. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — OTHER

Human Resources Office of Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention announces that applications are accepted for the position of Graphic Designer in the Adult Ministries Group. Please contact the Human Resources Office, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024, (615) 371-2013 for more information. General information about this position is available on our website at tnbaptist.org. Interested persons must submit an application to be considered for a position.

◆◆◆◆
 Haysburg Baptist Church, Hays, MO seeks a full-time pastor of Haysburg Day School, a weekday education program for ages eight weeks through kindergarten. Resumes should be sent to Carol Williams, 3801 Cliff Gookin Blvd., Tupelo, MS 38801 or e-mail cwilliams@haysburgonline.org.

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — OTHER

Organist needed. 8:30 a.m. service only, First Baptist Church, Tullahoma. Call Dave Watts, (615) 455-5461.

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APOLOGETICS AND INTERFAITH EVANGELISM WORKSHOP, ISLAM

There will be an Apologetics and Interfaith Evangelism Workshop at the Wilson County Baptist Association on Saturday April 21, from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The topic of this workshop will focus on "THE TRUTH ABOUT ISLAM, A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE." The workshop will be led by Rob Bowman, Manager, Apologetics and Interfaith Evangelism, North American Mission Board, SBC. There is a \$15.00 registration fee for this workshop. The deadline for registration is April 16th, 2007. Materials will be provided during the workshop as well as breaks and lunch on Saturday. Those who attend all the sessions and complete the assignments will be certified by the North American Mission Board to lead awareness conferences in local churches. To register, please contact the Wilson County Baptist Association at 615-444-8820. Information on this workshop can also be found on the TBC web site at www.tnbaptist.org/events.

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SBC CP gifts rise 1.6 percent

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are 1.63 percent ahead of the same time frame in 2006, according to a news release from Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

As of March 31, the year-to-date total of \$102,076,645.12 for Cooperative Program (CP) missions is \$1,632,454.07 ahead of the \$100,444,191.05 received at the same point in 2006.

For the month, receipts of \$14,991,093.27 were 18.21 percent, or \$3,336,944.60, below the \$18,328,037.87 received in March 2006. Designated giving

of \$117,390,555.15 for the same year-to-date period is 2.17 percent, or \$2,489,202.56, above gifts of \$114,901,352.59 received at this point last year.

The \$23,923,724.41 in designated gifts received last month is \$11,243,313.61 below the \$35,167,038.02 received in March 2006, a decrease of 31.97 percent.

For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$102,076,645.12 is 104.19 percent of the \$97,974,211.28 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. □

Non-Christians cite belief in resurrection

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — It may surprise many, but 75 percent of the Americans who say they are not born again Christians still believe the biblical account of Jesus literally coming back to life in His physical body, according to recent research by the North American Mission Board's Center for Missional Research.

A less surprising result of the study is that nearly 100 percent of those identifying themselves

as born again Christians believe in the resurrection of Jesus.

"It really stunned us to learn that 75 percent of those Americans claiming not to be born again still believe in the resurrection," said Phillip Connor, research missiology manager for the Center for Missional Research. The CMR data was collected from a random sample of 1,204 adults across the United States. The interviews were conducted by the polling firm of

Zogby International on behalf of the NAMB center.

"It also surprised us to learn that 75 percent of those who rarely enter the church doors, and 50 percent of those who never enter the church, nevertheless still believe in the literal resurrection of Christ," said Connor. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — MUSIC

Sunnyside Baptist Church, Kingsport, Tenn., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Candidate should have a degree in music education and a minimum of five years of full-time experience. The minister of music will lead a music program, in addition to responsibility for adult and children's choirs. Applicants will undergo a background check, background screening, and will participate in a personal and theological counseling. Interested applicants may submit resume to Personnel Committee, 406 Cook Road, Kingsport, TN 37629.

Bivocational music minister needed. Send resume to Grove Baptist Church, P.O. Box 337, New Market, TN 37132.

Vibrant and growing Baptist Church of 1,200 members, located in a fast-growing market in the Southeast, seeks a dynamic worship leader and music director for blended music services and fully developed choral and instrumental ministry. Proven experience along with bachelor of music seminary degree required. Candidate should be able to demonstrate success in leading, growing, and organizing a multigenerational music program as well as pursuing other productions, and additional avenues. Send resume and cover letter via email to fforwood@fbcmatthews.org.

Falling Water Baptist Church seeking a part-time minister to lead blended worship services and our choir. Please send resumes to Search Committee, Falling Water Baptist Church, 523 Roberts Mill Road, TN 37343. You may also contact office@fallingwaterbaptist.org.

MINISTRY — POSITION

New Prospect Baptist Church, Anderson, SC (500 worshipers) is receiving resumes for a full-time minister to children. Please mail to 2503 W. Rd., Anderson, SC 29505 or mail to tonys2004@bell.net.

MISCELLANEOUS

Grace Baptist Church, Springfield would like to buy a used accessible van. Call (615) 235-3533 or (615) 384-4731.

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Atwood, Tenn., is now accepting resumes for the position of full-time pastor. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, P. O. Box 40, Atwood, TN 38220, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

Tom's Creek Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resume to Dwayne Cotham, 35 Pineview Rd., Linden, TN 37096.

Erlanger Church, Erlanger, Ky. (Northern Ky. Baptist Assoc.) seeking full-time pastor. Replies treated with confidence. Contact Arnold Caddell, 2221 Beil Rd., Burlington, KY 41005, phone (859) 586-7760, e-mail: acaddell@fuse.net.

MINISTRY — MINISTER OF EDUCATION/ADMINISTRATION

"Man of God Required" to become the new minister of education and administration at Leewood East Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn. For more information, e-mail Jeff Herndon at jherndon77@yahoo.com.

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

Bon Air Baptist Church, a growing, 2,700-member congregation near Richmond, VA, seeks a dynamic and creative individual to lead its children's ministry. This person will be responsible for maintaining and enhancing a program of Christian education, outreach, and worship for preschoolers, children, their parents, and leaders. Candidates should have a successful record in this field, knowledge of the latest trends, understand the multi-site concept, and have a passion for sharing God's love with children and families. Qualified candidates can submit a cover letter and resume to searchteam@bonairbaptist.org and visit www.bonairbaptist.org for a job description.

MINISTRY — COMBO

Minister of youth and music, a conservative SBC church, is seeking an experienced person to fill this dual ministry position. Send resumes to Carpenter Street Baptist Church, 501 E. Carpenter St., Moberly, MO 65270, or e-mail to carpbcpastor@yahoo.com.

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CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — STUDENT

Needed! First Baptist, Big Sandy, Tenn., is in need of a bivocational youth minister for a growing youth department. Please send resume to 13510 Hwy. 69A, Big Sandy, TN 38221.

Unaka Ave. Baptist seeks part-time student director. Please send resume/inquiry to 1213 E. Unaka Ave., Johnson City, TN 37601 or Thomas@StoriesThatTell.com.

New Hope Baptist Church, Dyer, Tenn., is searching for a bivocational minister of students. If you are interested or know of someone who is, please contact pastor John Fields at (731) 414-4566 or chairman Joey Hays at (731) 643-7427 or you may send resume to New Hope Baptist Church, 876 North Main St., Dyer, TN 38330.

First Baptist Church, Decaturville, Tenn., is currently seeking a part-time youth minister. The candidate must be a minimum of 21 years old. If interested, send a resume to Attn: Youth Minister Search Committee, P. O. Box 296, Decaturville, TN 38329 or e-mail your resume to firstbaptistdeaturville@tds.net. For more information please call the church at (731) 852-4611. Go to <http://dfb.faithsite.com> to see more about the church.

Erin Baptist Church seeks part-time youth minister, (931) 289-3439, P. O. Box 410, Erin, TN 37061.

North Carolina Baptist Minister to Host

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15 Days from \$1399*

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.

Next, travel through a wondrous maze of forested island and glacier carved fjords, past charming coastal villages, migrating whales and calving glaciers to Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and spectacular Glacier Bay.

After the cruise you'll start a six-night motor coach tour with daily sightseeing visiting British Columbia; the Cascade Mountains; Washington; the Grand Coulee Dam; Lake Coeur d'Alene; Montana; Yellowstone (Old Faithful) and Grand Teton National Parks; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; and in Utah: the Great Salt Lake, Mormon Tabernacle, and more. You'll fly home after a night in Salt Lake City. *Prices for this 15-day vacation start at only \$1399 (per person, double occupancy) plus \$349 port charges, taxes, services, government fees and the new Alaska state visitors tax. Add \$600 airfare from Nashville, Knoxville, Memphis or Chattanooga, TN. \$100 deposits are now due.

Friends and family are welcome.

For information, reservations, brochure, and Dr. Freeman's letter call:

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minister's corner

God's refining process

Mike Young

In Malachi 3:3 God is pictured by the prophet sitting by the fire as a refiner and purifier of silver. Few silversmiths exist today as virtually all silver is mined and purified in industrial sites in faraway places like Colorado.

In the past, silversmiths would hold the silver in an appropriate vessel over the middle of the flames to melt away the impurities. I am told the silversmith keeps his eye on the silver every moment that it is being refined. How did he know that it was ready to be removed from the fire? He knew that it was fully refined when he saw his image in it.

The same is happening in your life and mine as we go through God's refining process in this life. God's plan is to see His image in each of us as Christians.

Even though it is not always pleasant, I am glad that God is willing to watch me carefully as I feel the heat of the refining process. One day I will be fully fit for the kingdom when He sees His image in me and takes me home to be with Him.

Be glad this day that God is not through with you. I am glad that He is not through with me. Thank you for the Refiner's fire! □ — Young is director of missions for Tennessee Valley Baptist Association, based in Norton.

a way with words

God is making house calls

Hugh X. Lewis

God is making house calls. You can't come to Him. He is on duty all hours of the day; He gets about appointments because there's no need for them.

What you have to do is kneel and pray. Thank Him up, He's in your Bible pages. He is listed under healing, sick, and lame; He has been in practice all throughout the ages. The Great Physician heals — just call His name.

God is making house calls, and you don't have to wait. He is your greatest hope — the only way. He knows your every burden and He heals both small and great — what you have to do is kneel and pray.

Copyright by Hugh X. Lewis. Lewis, a Baptist layman, is a laureate of Christian country music in Tennessee. He has written more than 250 songs and is featured daily on Southern gospel radio stations throughout the country. He is available to speak to church and senior adult groups. For more information, call (615) 883-0086.



Funding missions in Tennessee and around the world.

Humble service

By Dean Sisk

Focal Passage: John 13:1, 3-10a, 12-17

In 2006, a man from New York named Jose Luis Espinal was allowed to legally change his name to Jesus Christ. Expressing his delight in the judge's decision, Espinal told reporters that he had been seeking the name change for about a year, because "I am the person that is that name."

Surely Jose Luis Espinal is delusional, as he has not only legally changed his name to Jesus Christ, but that he also actually believes that he is Jesus Christ! Some would contend that Espinal is possessed by "delusions of grandeur." The first followers of Jesus Christ (the real Jesus Christ) had that same problem. For three years, He had led His disciples by word and example, and His example was that of humble servanthood. So were His words, as in Matthew 23:11, "The greatest among you will be your servant."

But old habits and attitudes die hard, and as the clock was ticking down to the very moment when their Master would be betrayed, arrested, tried, and crucified, these men were stubbornly clinging to their vanity, their desire for prominence and power, their "delusions of grandeur." As the concept of humble servanthood was crucial for effective kingdom work, Jesus

again used divine words and vivid example to stress this to these men.

I find it striking here that Jesus is consumed with concern in the Upper Room — not for Himself, though He saw with the realization that only comes by way of divine omniscience that He would soon be brutalized by man and abandoned by God — but for these 12 men (yes, He loved Judas too, though He knew full well that he would betray Him). But He was serenely confident, for He knew "that He had come from God, and that He was going back to God" (v. 3b). This assurance was "the joy that lay before Him" (Hebrews 12:2) that enabled Him to endure the ferocity of the cross.

The disciples were not about to wash each other's feet. After all, Luke tells us that "a dispute also arose among them about who should be considered the greatest" (Luke 22:24). Foot-washing was done by the lowliest of household servants, not by those who would inherit the kingdom! And so Jesus had to teach them by taking that role upon Himself: the King of kings washing the filthy feet of filthy sinners!

This unexpected action shocked and upset the disciples. They were surely thinking what only Peter expressed verbally, when he once again (as at Caesarea Philippi, Matthew 16) assumes the brazen role of rebuking the Lord! But

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Peter's heart, thankfully, was even bigger than his mouth, so when Jesus reminded him that cleansing was essential for having a true relationship with Him, Peter asked for a bath! Jesus' gentle response to Peter in verse 10 serves to remind us that salvation (a "bath") is a one-time experience, while sanctification (foot-washing) is an ongoing need (I John 1:9).

As Jesus finished washing the disciples' feet, He graciously explained its application to their lives, as well as ours today. He basically exhorts them to do for one another what He had just been willing to do for them. While the ritual of foot-washing that some churches practice today is certainly not wrong, it is also not to be seen as a church ordinance. Rather, the command from our Lord is that we willingly humble ourselves by ministering to one another. That, in direct contradiction to the world's philosophy, is the only pathway to genuine greatness.

No, Jose Luis Espinal is not Jesus Christ, not by a long shot! But no one is more like Jesus than the one who is willing to serve others in true humility. Do others, then, see Jesus in you? □ — Sisk is pastor of Belle Aire Baptist Church, Murfreesboro.

Prepare for suffering

By Tim West

Focal Passage: 1 Peter 3:13-4:6

Introduction: Thus far, Peter has taken us on quite a journey. Now, we venture onto the road of Christian suffering. So, let us travel this road arm in arm. This passage brings several words to mind:

The first word is disarm. We are told to "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking" (2:1). Peter plainly states, "... the Lord is against them that do evil" (3:12). We must "be followers of that which is good" (v. 13). In our journey, we are often tempted to engage in conventional (carnal) warfare. It is essential to remember the Christian's goal is reconciliation, not retaliation.

Disarm does not mean defenseless. Peter says, "...do not be afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (v. 14). How do you fight fear? Peter writes, "... pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1:17). You fight fear with fear! In other words, 3:14 will not work for you unless 1:17 works in you. Fear (respect) God and do not fear evildoers.

The second word is re-arm. Conventional warfare will not achieve spiritual success. It has been said, "Do not fight fire with fire." Do not fear; you can defend yourself. You can defend yourself without being defensive. "But sanc-

tify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (v. 15). Do not walk around with a chip on your shoulder! Be gentle and kind. Arm yourself with the "armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13).

The third word is harm. Peter asks, "And who is he that will harm you ..." (v. 13)? I have "good news" and "bad news." The bad news is Christians will suffer. The good news is Christian suffering is not bad. Jesus is our example, "For Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for unjust, that he might bring us to God ..." (v. 18). "Forasmuch, then, as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind ..." (4:1). Yes, when you put on the mind of Christ, evildoers will think you are strange and speak evil of you (v. 4). What else can they do to you? Jesus says, "And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

The final word is alarm. Please read I Peter 3:19-20, 4:6. These verses seem to cause much alarm. Before we proceed, you must know, I reserve the right to be wrong.

First, let us look at 3:19-20. Hebrews 4, speaking of Moses and the fathers in the wilderness, says,

Sunday School Lesson Explore the Bible April 15

"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them ..." (v. 2). Peter calls Noah a "preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5). I offer the following suggestions: (1) The gospel was preached through Noah by the Holy Spirit; (2) when Noah preached the gospel, his audience was alive, but lost; (3) Peter refers to those same people as "spirits in prison," because they rejected the gospel; and (4) Peter uses this illustration to encourage his audience to be patient in midst of persecution. Remain committed to the "will of God" (4:2).

My first thought concerning 4:6 is this might answer the question concerning those people who have died without hearing the gospel. My second thought is the resurrection event recorded in Matthew 27:52-53, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that slept were raised, and came out of the graves after his resurrection ..."

Conclusion. These verses have attracted much attention, and many suggestions have been offered. In the worst-case scenario, I can be wrong; in the best-case scenario, I might be right. To God be the glory! □ — West is pastor of Hornsby Baptist Church, Hornsby.

Leaders

◆ ClearView Baptist Church, Franklin, has called **Mark Marshall** as senior pastor effective May 1. He has been interim pastor of the 2,000-member church



MARSHALL

since September 2006. Marshall, 44, currently serves as director of leadership training and enrichment events at LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville. Earlier, he served as pastor of a church near Atlanta, Ga. Marshall holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and a bachelor of science degree from Georgia State University, Atlanta.

◆ Delano Baptist Church, Delano, honored **Harold Curtis**, pastor, with a Pastor Appreciation Day on March 4 for his 12 years of service.

◆ Crossroads Baptist Church, Benton, held an ordination service for **Richard Mason**, pastor, on Feb. 28.

◆ Eastwood Baptist Church, Knoxville, has called **Ted Ingram** as interim pastor.

◆ First Baptist Church, White Pine, has called **Brian Osborne** as pastor.

◆ East Side Baptist Church, Elizabethton, has called **Bob Polk** as interim pastor.

◆ Bakers Gap Baptist

Church, Mountain City, has called **Dennis Peterson** as pastor.

◆ **Lynn Hartsell** has resigned as pastor of Cherokee Baptist Church, Jonesborough.

◆ Solomon's Temple Missionary Baptist Church, Kingsport, has called **Emery Ramey** as pastor.

◆ **Jack Howell** has resigned as minister of education of University Parkway Baptist Church, Johnson City.

◆ **Kyle Wishert** resigned Feb. 14 as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, West Point. Olive Hill Baptist Church, Olivehill, has called him as pastor.

◆ Piney Baptist Church, Hohenwald, has called **Jamie English Sr.**, as associate pastor.

◆ Oakwood Baptist Church, Milan, has called **Andy King** as interim pastor.

◆ First Baptist Church, Rutherford, has called **Kasey Harris** as minister of music and **Brian Hinten** as minister of youth.

◆ Turkey Creek Baptist Church, Savannah, called **Eric Jones** as pastor effective March 4. **Wayne King** was interim pastor.

◆ Malesus Baptist Church, Jackson, has called **Ken Story** as pastor effective April 1. He has been pastor of First Baptist Church, Counce, and Germantown Baptist Church, Germantown.

◆ **Philip Dougan** has been called as interim pastor of



LEADERS OF MOUNT CALVARY Baptist Church, Gallatin, break ground for a new building which will be twice the size of the present building. It will include an auditorium, fellowship hall, classrooms. The leaders are, from left, **Webb Stafford**; **Ricky Shehane**; **Forrest Creekmore**, pastor; **J. C. Lewis**, former director of missions, **Bledsoe Baptist Association**; **Harlin Wims**; and **Terry**

Shellsford Baptist Church, McMinnville. Dougan was formerly interim pastor, First Baptist Church, Smithville, and has served as pastor of Gath Baptist Church, McMinnville, and First Baptist Church, Smartt.

land and building goal.

◆ **Northeast Baptist Church, Clarksville**, will celebrate its 30th anniversary on April 22. **Jamie Work** will speak. For more information, call (931) 647-8517 or (931) 648-1831.

Churches

◆ **Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Bethel Springs**, will hold revival services April 22-25. **Q. T. Curtis** of Mobile, Ala., will speak. **David Hudson** of Lascassas will lead the music.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Livingston**, will ordain six new deacons on April 15. They are **Greg Arnold**, **Troy Human**, **Mark Langenberg**, **Phil Marshall**, **Phillip McCormick**, and **Anthony White**. These men were elected along with two other new deacons, who were previously ordained.

◆ **Turkey Creek Baptist Church, Savannah**, will hold revival services April 22-25. **James Young**, pastor of Ramer Baptist Church, Ramer, will speak.

◆ **Bridges of Hope Fellowship Mission Church, McMinnville**, held Miracle Sunday on March 18. It surpassed two of its three goals that day. According to **DeWayne Howard**, pastor, 96 people attended worship that day, one person received Christ, and \$5,348 was raised towards the

Associations

◆ The disaster relief mass feeding team of **Cumberland Gap Baptist Association**, Harrogate, involving six volunteers worked April 4-5 at First

Baptist Church, New Tazewell, where they cooked 275 meals for storm victims. Some victims took refuge in a Red Cross shelter at Tazewell/New Tazewell Elementary School. The residents mainly came from the mobile home park which was damaged by severe thunderstorms on April 3, according to **Joe Martin**, disaster relief coordinator. A Red Cross Emergency response vehicle delivered meals to the school at the mobile home park.



MEMBERS OF Eastanallee Baptist Church, Riceville, walk from its old building across a road to its new on March 25. Then they experienced worship in their new sanctuary for the first time. The "crossover" was led by Mickey Basham Sr., pastor, and Oran Creasman, pastor emeritus.



GIRLS IN ACTION and their leaders of Siam Baptist Church, Elizabethton, stand with a lamb and its owners at the church on March 25. The group was promoting its project to benefit Croatia. Most, a ministry of the Woman's Missionary Union which provides farm animals to needy families in Croatia. The group raised \$141 during March for the ministry. From left are **Sue Anderson, **Madison Hammitt**, **Miranda Anderson**, **Abby Emswiler**, **Laurel Singleton**, **Olivia Cable**, **Judy Bailey**, and **Carlee Cable**.**



A GROUP FROM CUMBERLAND GAP Baptist Association stands with residents and leaders of the Morgan County area of Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. The association delivered three pick-up truck loads of food to Knoxville which was picked up by the TBCH group. The association group included **Kenny Clark, pastor, **Oak Grove Baptist Church, Harrogate**; **Billy Cunningham** and **Paul Brock** of **Indian Creek Baptist Church, Harrogate**; and **Frances and Clayton Dunsmore**. **Dunsmore** is director of missions of the association.**