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

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

**Susie Edwards, financial/circulation coordinator**  
(615) 371-2003,  
sedwards@tnbaptist.org

**Mary Nimmo, advertising/church pages coordinator**  
(615) 371-7929,  
mnimmo@tnbaptist.org

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

**Mitch Canter, church page design**  
(615) 371-7930,  
mcanter@tnbaptist.org

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

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

**Phone — (615) 371-2003**

**FAX — (615) 371-2080**

**Website — www.tnbaptist.org**

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## TBC evangelism efforts recognized at NAMB meeting

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — A record number of Atlanta Southern Baptist leaders were encouraged to "live with urgency" in order to win North America for Christ during the North American Mission Board's annual summer state leadership meeting in Atlanta.

During the sessions, NAMB's evangelization group honored the following state conventions for the largest percentage increase in the number of baptisms between 2005 and 2006: Alaska Baptist Convention, Florida Baptist Convention, Hawaii-Pacific Baptist Convention, Convention of Southern Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico, and Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention.

Recognized for an increase in the overall number of baptisms last year were the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Kentucky Baptist Convention, State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, and Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The meeting's 466 participants represented state and associational executives, missions directors, church planters, evangelism specialists, and missionaries from 42 state Baptist conventions, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

NAMB President Geoff Hammond urged participants to seize the divine moments God is giving Southern Baptists.

"What divine moment is God calling on you to seize?" Hammond asked the leaders. "I have to believe God has brought something to your mind this week. If we don't take it, it passes on by and maybe He uses someone else who is more obedient and more willing to seize that moment."

Attendees also heard from Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Sammy Gilbreath, who delivered the "urgency" theme in a most personal way.

Gilbreath is the 59-year-old director of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Convention in Montgomery. With no small amount of courage and faith, he faces each day with a large aneurysm near his heart's left ventricle that — if it ruptures — could kill him instantly at anytime. Heart surgeons say they can do nothing to repair his fatally defective heart, that he would not survive a heart transplant operation.

Yet, he still speaks some 350-400 times a year.

"To live with urgency, live like you're dying," Gilbreath said in his native Alabama drawl. "After all, all of us in this room are [dying]. No one is promised to have tomorrow."

"And if we're going to live with urgency by living like we're

dying, we must be passionate about the life we have left. If we don't have a sense of urgency about the King of kings and Lord of lords, we can't have passion about anything." □

## Ceremony closes record year at UU

Union University news office

JACKSON — Union University's graduation service on Aug. 3 closed a record year for the school.

Graduation from college is only the beginning of a lifetime of learning for Christians who have an obligation to make an impact upon their culture, said Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Land was the keynote speaker for the ceremony in which 262 Union students received degrees.

As part of the ceremony, Union presented an honorary doctor of humanities degree to Jim Moss, retiring president and CEO of West Tennessee Healthcare.

Union President David S. Dockery said the university faculty and trustees vote on awarding such a degree to someone who has demonstrated significant leadership and made considerable contributions to society.

Moss began as WTH president in 1986, when Jackson General was the only hospital in the WTH system. WTH now owns five hospitals and six clinics, with more than 5,000 employees and a budget of \$1.2 billion. Dockery noted that over the past 12 years, WTH has given or pledged \$6 million to Union.

Dockery also announced Land's induction into the university's Carl F.H. Henry Society of Fellows.

He described Land as "a person whose voice matters in our culture. He is a brilliant thinker," Dockery said.

The graduation marked an end to an academic year filled with highlights. Among them:

- a record fall enrollment of 3,156 students;
- the dedication of White Hall, a new \$20 million science building that will house the departments of biology and chemistry and the School of Nursing;
- more than \$94 million already pledged toward the goal of \$110 million for the Union 2010 capital campaign;
- the approval of new academic programs, including a Doctor of Pharmacy and Master of Social Work degrees;
- the second Baptist Identity Conference in February, which explored the theme "Conven-

tion, Cooperation, and Controversy" and addressed issues of importance in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"By any marker, or from almost any perspective, the 2006-07 academic year at Union University has been the very best year in the long and storied history of this institution," Dockery said.

"For God's ongoing blessings and favor to Union University, we are indeed most grateful." □

## Earthquake toll passes 400 in Peru

Baptist Press

LIMA, Peru — Missionaries Pam and Kevin Shearer were sitting down to dinner with their daughter when the Aug. 15 earthquake struck here and nearby regions.

"We went out in the backyard ... and it felt like the ground was moving in waves, like you were standing on a boat," Pam Shearer recounted. "We could hear neighbors just screaming and panicking and it lasted about two minutes — which seems like an eternity when everything is shaking."

News reports Aug. 16 from Lima indicated 437 were dead, 829 injured, and more than 80,000 affected by the earthquake during the early evening of Aug. 15.

All International Mission Board personnel serving in the affected areas have been accounted for.

IMB missionaries serving in the area planned to meet Aug. 16 in Lima to discuss possible relief efforts. Meanwhile, Southern Baptists are asked to pray for those affected by the quake. □

## Critics question homemaking program at SWBTS

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — A new undergraduate homemaking program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary "is raising eyebrows among some Southern Baptists," according to an Associated Press article circulated nationally Aug. 10.

The classes are part of a homemaking concentration for a bachelor of arts in humanities degree through The College at Southwestern, the Texas seminary's undergraduate school. Three-credit-hour courses in the concentration are General Homemaking, Biblical Model for the Home and Family, and The Value of a Child. Also required are seven credit hours in meal preparation and nutrition and seven hours in the design and sewing of clothing.

Students also must take 23 hours in biblical studies, two years of Greek and Latin, and do extensive reading in history's great philosophers, said Terri Stovall, Southwestern's

dean of women's studies. The homemaking class is part of "one of the most challenging, most well-rounded complete educations one can receive," she told Press Aug. 13.

The Associated Press cited only one critic of the homemaking program, Cole, who is in the process of leaving the pastorate at Parkview Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, to staff of Emmanuel Church in Enid, Okla.

The homemaking program is quite superfluous to the curriculum of theological education in Southern Baptist life," Cole wrote in a blog, according to the Associated Press. "It's another example of the Southern Baptist's love for some Southern Baptist western in particular, to return to what they believe is biblical gender roles."

Another critic was Southwestern news reporter Robert Partridge, who in early July. Robert Partridge, executive director of the Center for Ethics, which is funded by the Southern Baptist Convention's away Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, wrote in a column, "What is a Christian home?" about Christian home programs is that they are naive Christians."

Stovall, in the SWBTS release, noted that the program is biblically grounded in the apostle Paul's command to Titus to teach women how to be good homemakers and is "because of the low standard of family and home life in our contemporary culture." □

## FBC, Dallas, elect Jeffress as pastor

Baptist Press

DALLAS — First Baptist Church in Dallas elected Jeffress as its newest pastor Aug. 12 at the end of a service that filled the sanctuary to multiple overflow areas.

Jeffress — who is pastor of First Baptist Church in Falls, Texas — replaced Paul Brunson, who left the church in February 2006 to become pastor of First Baptist Church in Sonoma, Fla. Jeffress has been at FBC Dallas growing up.

More than 3,000 people gathered to hear Jeffress preach the conclusion of the search. They voted to call the 51-year-old pastor. They voted by a 90-10 margin. The pastoral search committee had recommended him. "I will pour my life into this church for the glory of God," Jeffress said, according to the *Dallas Morning News*.

The pastoral search committee looked at more than 100 individuals before selecting Jeffress, according to a release from the church.

## Sloan relishes challenges as C-N's interim ...

Continued from page 1

So that, it is imperative to move beyond the past to recognize there is a new day, we must move forward and move forward.

The interim leader said there are "a lot of issues that need to be resolved" at Carson-Newman.

Sloan has already made some decisions that have been popular and others he has the trust of the faculty recognizes there are times we have disagreed that we will disagree in the future. But as long as I am honest and forthright in what we are doing I won't lose that trust," he said.

That said, Sloan acknowledges that there are tensions among the C-N community who see his appointment as interim president as a challenge for the faculty who elected Netherton.

In response: "I am nobody's secretary. I am my own person." Sloan also is well aware that enrollment has declined over the past decade. In recent years, that decline is attributed to a large drop in freshmen class for one year. Those students have now graduated and Carson-Newman is anticipating its fourth

consecutive year of increases in incoming freshmen, Sloan said. He noted the college is working on programs which will entice students to the college. One of those is a dual enrollment opportunity with local high schools in which students can take C-N courses for college credit. C-N also is working with local community colleges to establish an easier transfer process to the college.

The college's professional programs also are boosting enrollment. For instance, the college has 100 more nursing students than it did five years ago and the number continues to increase, Sloan said.

As classes begin this week, Sloan said he is confident that the "overall head count" of students will be up this year.

**Improving relationships**  
A lifelong Baptist, Sloan recognizes and understands the tensions and distrust that has existed between the college and Baptists in East Tennessee as well as the entire Tennessee Baptist Convention in recent years.

He has begun efforts to improve relationships during the two months of his tenure, holding meetings with area pastors.

Though not an ordained minister, Sloan feels at ease with East Tennessee pastors.

"When I walk into a room of East Tennessee pastors, I have taught a third of

them," he estimated. "They know who I am."

Sloan also wants to reach out to the new pastors who have moved into the region who do not have C-N ties.

Plans are underway to form a Pastors' Advisory Council that would bring pastors (on a rotating basis) to the campus on occasion to talk with Sloan and other faculty and administrators.

And while the details are yet to be worked out, Sloan said that even pastors who have openly opposed the college in the past would be invited to serve on that council.

"The only way to get past some of the distrust that exists is to be open and honest," he stressed.

Sloan also hopes to get more students and faculty into East Tennessee churches and he is willing to go himself.

"I am not a preacher but I can tell the Carson-Newman story. I can also tell what we do for our students and what they are doing in good works for our Lord."

**Addresses concerns**  
As the annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention approaches in November, Sloan knows concerns may once again

be raised about the college. One concern that has been raised several times in recent years is the teaching of evolution by the biology faculty.

Sloan said Baptists need to understand that Carson-Newman is an accredited college by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

"In order to be a respected and academically honest science department, all scientific theories must be taught to our students," Sloan explained.

"Historically, it has always been done in a Christian spirit and with the acknowledgement and belief that God is in control."

Sloan stressed that the focus of the college "is teaching people thinking skills in the context of Christian support, encouragement, and openness, but we don't dictate what to think."

"We can share our stories as Christian teachers. And, hopefully, our lives convey the kinds of lives that reflect the principles that Christ lived by," Sloan said.

**C-N and the TBC**  
Ever since his appointment as interim president, Sloan has affirmed that the college and the convention need each other.

"I cannot foresee a day when Carson-Newman College will leave the TBC," he said.

But, he continued, the TBC may one day choose to leave Carson-Newman "if we are

unable and unwilling to acknowledge that there is much more that we agree on than we disagree on."

When asked what the two entities can agree on, Sloan responded: "Christ was born of a virgin. He walked on this earth, was crucified, and rose from the dead. It is by the life of Christ that we are saved by His grace."

Sloan said that "we sometimes forget we are all like Simon Peter who denied Christ three times."

"What we all have from Christ is His forgiveness for our sins."

**Legacy**  
Sloan is noncommittal when asked if he would like the "interim" tag removed from his title in the future.

"When people are thrust into leadership roles suddenly they sometimes don't realize there is a learning curve that has to be completed. I am not at that point in the curve," he said, referring to the fact he really does not know yet if he wants to pursue the presidency.

He does know what he would like to be remembered for, regardless of how long he serves.

"I hope people can say that, with God's help and the help of a lot of good people, that I brought about some peace and healing, both within the college community and the convention." □



SLOAN

## Church begins providing scholarships for children in Sierra ...

Continued from page 1

Recently Bert is minister of Woodmont. The conference center is important to the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone, named Bert Dyson, because of the churches "to continue to grow," he explained. He said that fellowship among Baptists in Sierra Leone is important because the nationals are "gregarious people by nature."

The Dysons were the first American Baptist missionaries to live in Sierra Leone.

Dyson noted that pastors had met in the conference center in Woodmont, although the roof leaked, the windows had been broken, and the heating wasn't working.

The Tennesseans worked closely with people from Sierra Leone. They didn't have a missionary to relate to. There were a few other Europeans in the area. European Protestant missionaries have assumed the location of the nearby Baptist Hospital. Many in the community suffer from black fly disease which blinds them if not treated. The missions team also hired men to help them because they desperately needed the

jobs. People in Sierra Leone often only make about \$5 a week when they can find jobs.

For Kearley and others on the team, the close relationship with the locals was a blessing.

The Americans and locals began sharing meals together. And the Americans made time to relate to the about 40 children who would gather

at the conference center after school in the afternoons.

Calvin Dunham, a team member from Woodmont, made the children a tire swing. Others gave out baseball caps and toys they had brought. The volunteers came up with a bowling game using empty plastic bottles and a ball.

Kearley got to know a sister and brother and even visited in their home. He and other members of the team felt God leading them to help these children, they said.

They naturally turned to Ahmed Konteh, of Nashville, who is a native of Lunsar, Sierra Leone, and accompanied the Tennesseans on the two trips.

He was thrilled to go. He had not been home since the civil war started.

He is the only Christian in his Muslim family. Konteh was sent to Tennessee when he was a young man by Baptists in Sierra Leone to study at Union University, Jackson. He planned to return to serve as a minister in his country.

Then the civil war broke out and the support from his country abruptly ended. Thankfully, Christians here helped him. He is a graduate of Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, and the University of Tennessee - Knoxville and is a manager for Kroger grocery stores.

One of the reasons Konteh is thankful to be in the states now is to obtain treatment for his son who has sickle cell anemia. Also his wife, Sylvia, is studying nursing at Belmont University, Nashville.

Konteh and Kearley, with help from others on the teams and the missions committee of Woodmont, developed the project to help children in Sierra Leone receive an education. In Sierra Leone each child must pay to attend school unless he or she attends a Muslim school. Public schools, Catholic schools, and Baptist

schools charge tuition. Konteh identified a Christian day school in the Lunsar area which cares for babies and preschoolers. Although not school age, these children either are orphans or their parents are blind or disabled, explained Keith Tobias, a team member from Woodmont.

Another needy group was identified. They are students of the elementary school of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Lunsar.

The project leaders chose to ask folks to provide a \$50 scholarship for one semester for a child. That amount provides tuition, two uniforms, shoes, and a few supplies.

The project has been named "Diamonds in the Rough."

Tobias noted some folks say poor people "get what they deserve, but that's not the case here. This is true poverty," he said. Tobias operates a Nashville insurance company.

Jamie Dunham, wife of Calvin Dunham and a leader of the project, said after two weeks of knowing about the project, Woodmont members have funded scholarships for 39 children for either one semester or the whole year.

"I know we're bombarded

with good causes but these kids don't have any hope if we don't help them," she said.

Dunham noted that the needed channel fell into place with help from Konteh. The funds will be distributed by the Cotton Tree Foundation, a non-profit organization benefiting education based in Freetown, which has strong ties to the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone. There are no administrative costs associated with the program, she added.

Also, information on children receiving the scholarships will be provided to each donor.

Kearley, a real estate investor and property manager, has received his report on Zechariah and Isha, whom he befriended in Lunsar and already has funded scholarships for.

Zechariah, 14, reported that he wants to become an attorney so he can hold the government accountable to the people, noted Kearley.

"I can't solve the problems of Sierra Leone but I can make an impact on one or two of these kids ... who can change their country over time," said Kearley.

For more information on the project, contact Woodmont Baptist at (615) 297-5303. □



KEARLEY

# Next May, Jesus to occupy throne in Paradise (Kanso

By Brent Thompson  
Baptist Press

PARADISE, Kan. — What in the world was a grown man doing in the middle of an empty field in Kansas? Alone on this sunny day last October, tears of praise to God were evident on his face over the thought of thousands of young people from across the country gathering there to focus on Jesus Christ not just as their Savior and friend but as their sovereign King on the eternal throne.

For Richard Ross, who teaches student ministries at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas, his journey to Paradise, Kan., started months before in his private, early morning devotions.

Morning after morning as he read Scripture and prayed, he said his mind's eye began seeing a mile-square field with a large dais, or platform for a throne, erected in the center. Around it were thousands of college and high school students. But Ross, a former youth minister in Tennessee, could not see anyone or anything actually visible on the dais. Young people of every race were worshiping, singing, contemplating, sharing Scripture all around, but only Jesus Christ was exalted among them.

"I am not very mystical; I don't live in the world of visions," Ross recounted. "For a few mornings, I thought God was giving me a little blessing ... allowing me to visualize what is very much the focus of my life, and that is calling a generation to intimacy with Christ and awakening the land to Him.

"But after awhile, I began to think, 'Wait a minute. What if this isn't just a morning blessing for me? ... What if I'm seeing something that will not just happen in glory someday, or not just a representation of what might happen to young people on earth? What if this really is something that is to be?'"

If this gathering was actually to take place, Ross envisioned it happening at the very center of the nation. "I suppose this is to symbolize the possibility that an awakening to Christ might begin there and move out to every corner of the country." When he consulted some geography resources, Ross saw that the center of the continental United States is near a little town in Kansas called Paradise.

With that discovery, he said he wept with a sense of realization that God may be urging him on to action. But he wanted to test his vision for the young people worshiping around the dais in the field near Paradise, so he shared it with 18 ethnically diverse Christian leaders in different parts of the country representing various groups focused on youth or collegiate ministries.

"I told them not to e-mail each other, not to communicate, just pray for two weeks," Ross said. After a couple of weeks, Ross said each one of the prayer partners thought the idea was "of God, not of human invention, and bears conversation with the body of Christ."

At Ross' invitation, each of the 18 prayer partners bought their own tickets for an impromptu daylong conference with Ross in Fort Worth, Texas, resulting in the launch of PARADISE, a spiritual movement that will physically of young people, their ministers, and parents on Sunday, May 25, 2008, during the Memorial Day weekend around a massive dais

in the middle of a one-square-mile field near Paradise, Kan. Its organizers and advocates think PARADISE has the potential to bring about a "Christ-awakening" among young people, the effects of which could reverberate for years to come.

David Bryant, president of Proclaim Hope and former chairman of America's National Prayer Committee, has agreed to chair the effort. Bryant, who lives in metro New York City, ministers among a wide range of churches and denominations, as he puts it, toward fostering "a nationwide Christ-awakening movement" through prayer and a focus on Christ as sovereign King.

"I have been into every part of the body of Christ, and yet," Bryant said, "I have never been a part of anything that is as pure in its exclusive focus on the exaltation of the Son of God the way PARADISE is."

The PARADISE mission statement is: "PARADISE is a journey to awaken students from every part of the body of Christ to the supremacy of God's Son, to call them to adore Him as King, and to inspire them to arise to bravely join Him in accelerating His kingdom purposes for this generation, converging in a national worship gathering, convened at the geographic center of the nation."

Bryant explained that the purity of PARADISE comes from what it isn't as much as what it is. "What is missing [from PARADISE] is we are not promoting programs, we are not promoting products, and we are not promoting personalities," he said. "We refuse to let that happen ... When the students get to the gathering in the field, they are not going to look at any person other than Christ Himself."

Noting that PARADISE won't be just a one-time event, Bryant described it as a "jour-

ney" that in some ways already has begun. "The three leading verbs in our mission statement are awake, adore, and arise. If any one of those is missing, you do not have a holistic, pure response," he said.

Youth, ministers, parents, or anyone else who wants to be involved begin by registering at [www.paradise08.com](http://www.paradise08.com) and paying a \$20 fee for access to various PARADISE resources. "There has never been a curriculum either on the Web or in published form that in any way duplicates these nine study guides," Bryant said. "The focus is on ... giving participants a larger vision of the supremacy of God's Son. I don't know of anything that has that as its only focus."

Although they can be downloaded and worked on paper, the study guides are designed for online use, Bryant said. There are study guides specifically for youth or collegiate ministries and volunteers in youth or collegiate outreach, or for parents to track along at the same time with their children.

Ross said funding for the PARADISE movement will be through the \$20 registration fees. "It is pretty obvious that there is just no fluff here," Ross said. "Every one of us preparing for the event is working volunteer."

Ross acknowledged that many participants will be from churches with ministers who stand on a platform and lead worship, and they might have difficulty imagining how thousands of people could gather and worship with no one moving the program along.

"I'm going to be standing out there with everyone else, worshipping beside my son, and my wife," Ross said. "And it's just Scripture, songs, quiet contemplation, personal prayer, group prayer, and worship. That's all it is." □



ROSS

## TBC youth leader supports mee in Paradise, Kan.

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD. — Shingleton, youth evangelist specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention is hopeful many Tennesseans will make the trip to Paradise, Kan., next May (see story on this page).

"As I prayerfully consider what I envision will happen at Paradise, I wonder how many Tennessee students will actually be involved in this epic gathering," Shingleton said.

He noted the drive from Nashville to Paradise is about 818 miles.

"Will Tennesseeans immediately write off this opportunity saying we live too far away that trip would just be expensive? I hope not."

"I honestly believe this unique gathering will be a significant catalyst bringing a fresh wave of revival to our nation."

"As the dad of teenagers, my family are making the road to Paradise and I can't see what God has in store for us as we focus 100 percent on lifting his name of Jesus Christ humbling ourselves before Him." □



SHINGL



**NATIONAL CERTIFICATION TRAINING, LEVELS 1 & 2**, for Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps was held July 24-27 at the Baptist Center, Brentwood, by Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union. The training is required for site coordinators of the ministry. Folks from about six states were trained. Tennesseans who earned their Level 1 certification included, first row, from left, Dawn Ferguson, Gallatin; Jenni Thorn, Jackson; Janice Carter, Jasper; Loyce Adkerson, Smyrna; Pat Parnham, Smyrna; Gay Friday, Gray; Ruth McNabb, Unicoi; and Tony Earl, Knoxville; second row, Andrea Tatum, Nashville; Cathey Pressley, Manchester; Amy Fayetteville; Loretta Matthews, Madison; Sandy Loudon, Paris; Dian Blank, Beech Bluff; Judy Luck, Athens; Gaynelle Russell, Greenback; Sharon Riceville; and Allison Leding, Whitwell; third row, Sue Bennett, Cleveland; Adams, Walland; Don Jones, Lafayette; Kenny Loudon, Paris; Holmes, Madison; John Key, Smyrna; John Davis, Huntsville; Chris Berkey, Smyrna; Tracey Gholson, Nashville.

# Are you leaving a missions legacy?



by Candy Phillips



**MEMBERS OF THE** family of Ruth Agee and Becky Agee DeWaal recently planted trees at Linden Valley Conference Center in memory of the two women who both had a passion for missions.

When I was a young adult a Christian song was "We Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love." If the words were changed a little, "They Will Know We Are Missions By Our Life," the song would describe the DeWaal family in Wilson County.

Recently members of that family gathered at Linden Valley Conference Center in Linden to remember Ruth Agee and Becky Agee DeWaal. Ruth was Becky's mother. Ruth died on her passion for missions to her daughter, Becky. They were members of First Baptist Church, Lebanon. Both of them served as leaders in the man's Missionary Union

in the church, the association, and the state.

A pair of weeping willow trees were planted on the grounds of Linden in memory of these women who demonstrated their love of missions. Brass plaques were also installed by Tennessee WMU

with the dates of service on the state level for each woman. Ruth served as Tennessee WMU promotion director in the central region from 1982-1984. Becky served in the same office from 2001 until her death in May, 2003.

A scholarship fund began in

2003 in Becky's memory. Last February, the Tennessee WMU Scholarship Committee approved a recommendation to award that scholarship to Becky's son, Christopher DeWaal. He will attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., this fall.

When the trees were planted in their memory, we celebrated the lives of Ruth and Becky and remembered how they loved God and served Him by living a missions lifestyle.

The next time you visit Linden Valley Conference Center look for the twin weeping willow trees planted near the riverwalk. Pause for a minute and remember these two women who left a missions legacy.

Ask yourself this question: "Will they know you love missions by your life?" □ — Phillips is executive director of Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union.

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

## Some things can't change

I know most Southern Baptists, including myself, at times think "change" is a four-letter word.

There are times when change is needed and even welcomed. We should not be opposed to change. After all, our lives change (for the better) after we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.

One thing that should never change for a Christian, Southern Baptist or not, is our attitude about sin. God hates sin. If He didn't He would not have sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins.

Why am I preaching? I read an editorial in *The Tennessean* last week chastising Southern Baptists in general for our attitude about homosexuality, so I have to throw in my two cents worth.

There were several opinion pieces in the Aug. 16 issue regarding the issue of homosexuality and the general views of Southern Baptists.

I have to respond to the following observations in *The Tennessean* editorial: "Instead of trying to make gay a condition to be rid of, why shouldn't an institution that espouses love and compassion look into its own heart, to see whether it is not the one that should change."

"The argument that the Bible condemns homosexuality is unconvincing. The books of the Bible are filled with passages that are open to interpretation on a variety of topics ..."

Yes, Christians must be filled with love and compassion as Jesus was. Christians, however, have never been given the responsibility by God to redefine sin.

And, while I agree there are many issues in the Bible open to interpretation, Leviticus 20:13 (in both the King James and Holman Standard versions) calls homosexuality an abomination. For the life of me, I don't see how God's Word can make it clearer than that.

Sometimes, Christians are guilty of "crossing the line" to judge and condemn the sinner. God didn't give us that role either. He will do that. God wants us to repent of our sins and to "go and sin no more." He also wants us to lead others to repent of their sins and turn their lives over to Christ.

As Christians, may we espouse love and compassion while refusing to "change" our attitudes about sin, no matter which one it is. □

# Was Paul more successful as a writer or evangelist?



By Woody Murray

After Paul had his conversion experience, he spoke boldly every opportunity.

There may never have been a more powerful speaker for the Word. But the Lord led him to be placed in prison. Paul probably struggled with why God wasn't permitting him to travel and tell the Good News. He reached many hundreds, maybe thousands, of people through his traveling evangelism.

Paul decided to make the most of his situation. He wrote letters instead. God inspired the letters, and now those letters comprise much of the New Testament. They have changed many millions of lives. Paul penned them. They change the lives of many millions more in the future.

What does this have to do with your church's ministry? Think about it. Is your church relying primarily on a Sunday message for evangelism or are you taking advantage of other opportunities to reach even larger numbers of people than those who simply attend your services each Sunday? Once he was imprisoned, Paul didn't have a choice about preaching or writing. You do.

There are so many ways to share your ministries and reach beyond the walls of your church.

For example, can your pastor write a regular devotional for your local daily or weekly newspaper? How about a community magazine? Even the smallest local newspaper or magazine has the potential to reach many hundreds of people who otherwise may not ever know about your church. One short devotional from your pastor might be just the message someone hurting needs to read. It may touch a heart, and that person may in turn visit your church and have his or her life changed for Christ.

Can you offer your weekly worship services on a local Christian, or possibly secular, radio station? Sometimes there are very small local radio stations, both AM and FM, that may not have very powerful signals, but still reach thousands of loyal listeners in your community. Occasionally, these stations are looking for programming on the weekends or at night. They may be willing to air your Sunday messages and expand your worship services well beyond the people who visit your church each Sunday. You also can let your members, particularly shut-ins, know that they can catch your Sunday worship on the radio when they can't attend.

How about television? Is there a local affiliate station, even a local limited access tel-

evision channel, in your area that might air your worship services at a reasonable investment? You could be surprised to find that your worship experience can be expanded beyond your greatest dreams ... but not beyond God's plans.

There really is no limit to what God can do with your church's ministries. You just need to take a first step and see where He will lead you. Begin picking up and reading through the free local newspapers and magazines you see at the supermarkets and drug stores. Spend a little time scanning the radio stations on your AM and FM dials, particularly at night and on the weekends. Use your TV remote control to check channels that might be available for covering your worship. Then take some time to visit the local newspaper offices or your local radio and television stations. Ask if there are any needs your church might fill. You may find that God has already been at work opening doors for you.

Be willing to consider options that have never crossed your mind. Survey your church membership and find out if any of them might work for, or know someone who works for, one of the local media outlets. Maybe the producer of your local radio station attends your church regularly. Also, ask if there might be a member of your church who owns some farmland near a major freeway or highly traveled road. Would that per-

son allow you to erect a sign for your church giving directions and possibly allowing a very brief ministry message? This kind of sign can reach so many people driving by each day and encourage them to attend your worship. Make sure you have a professional sign painter do the message and be certain of your local sign ordinances.

Another alternative to sharing your worship services is to offer a question and answer column or program ("Q&A") on Christianity, or religious issues of interest to your community. "Q&As" are popular and can help you address the specific spiritual needs present in your local ministry field.

Going back to my initial question, was Paul more successful as an evangelist or as a writer? We don't know how many people he reached preaching, but it's safe to say that his writing has brought many millions more to know the Lord.

How many new ways can you reach out beyond the walls of your Sunday worship services to touch the lost?

"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. □ — Murray is an independent church communications specialist with 30 years of experience. If you have a church communications question, e-mail him at [rwodmurray@comcast.net](mailto:rwodmurray@comcast.net), or call him at (615) 646-5725.

Special  
Calendar  
Issue

# Church Health Matters

"Building healthy churches empowered by the presence of God"



# September

Sunday 1	Monday 2	Tuesday 3	Wednesday 4	Thursday 5	Friday 6	Saturday 7
Sunday 2	Monday 3	Tuesday 4	Wednesday 5	Thursday 6	Friday 7	Saturday 8
	<b>Labor Day</b>			 First Baptist Church Whitwell		
Sunday 9	Monday 10	Tuesday 11	Wednesday 12	Thursday 13	Friday 14	Saturday 15
Week of Prayer for State Missions / Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions						
	Real Encounter - Connect, Freedom Hall, Johnson City			 First Baptist Church Minor Hill	Tennessee Prayer Retreat for Women, West Jackson Baptist Church	
Sunday 16	Monday 17	Tuesday 18	Wednesday 19	Thursday 20	Friday 21	Saturday 22
Week of Prayer (cont.)	Real Encounter - Connect, Rossvie High School, Clarksville				Men's Ministry Leadership Training, Baptist Center; 2007 New Work Pastors & Wives Retreat, Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center, New...	
Sunday 23	Monday 24	Tuesday 25	Wednesday 26	Thursday 27	Friday 28	Saturday 29
Sunday 30	Real Encounter - Connect, Chattanooga location TBA		"Dealing with the Changing Structure in the Family" Minister Support Training Conference Baptist Center, Brentwood	Planning and Building for New Church Facilities Conference, Baptist Center, Brentwood	ESLebration, Baptist Center, Brentwood; Kid's Choral Connection Pleasant Heights Baptist Church, Columbia	
	 Blue Springs Baptist Rutledge					Church Planting - The River Community (at The Gathering Place)

# October

Cooperative Program Emphasis Month



	Monday 1	Tuesday 2	Wednesday 3	Thursday 4	Friday 5	Saturday 6
	Real Encounter - Connect, Hardin County High School, Savannah				2007 Fall FOCUS Collegiate Conference, Forest Hills Baptist Church, Nashville	Tri-State Camp-O-Ree, Camp Cordova, Cordova
						Church Library Conference - Middle TN Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory Girls in Action / Children in Action JAM Tusculum Hills Baptist Church, Nashville Kid Fest Outdoor Festival for Families MTSU, Murfreesboro
Sunday 7	Monday 8	Tuesday 9	Wednesday 10	Thursday 11	Friday 12	Saturday 13
OCUS Collegiate Conference State Camp-O-Ree				Chaplains Retreat, Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center, Newport	New Work Pastors & Wives Retreat, Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center, Linden	Girls in Action / Children in Action JAM Manley Baptist Church, Morristown
				YMU - Youth Ministry University, Baptist Center, Brentwood		
Sunday 14	Monday 15	Tuesday 16	Wednesday 17	Thursday 18	Friday 19	Saturday 20
	Real Encounter - Connect, Civic Center, Springfield			Black Pastors Wives Retreat, Baptist Center, Brentwood		
World Hunger Day						Church Library Conference - East TN Seymour Baptist Church, Seymour Girls in Action / Children in Action JAM Union University, Jackson
Sunday 21	Monday 22	Tuesday 23	Wednesday 24	Thursday 25	Friday 26	Saturday 27
	Real Encounter - Connect, Murfreesboro location TBA					
Sunday 28	Monday 29	Tuesday 30	Wednesday 31			
			Happy Halloween			

For a complete listing of TN Missions & Ministries, visit [www.tnbaptist.org](http://www.tnbaptist.org).

## Two Rivers members voice dissent, pastor seeks peace

By Michael Foust  
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A faction within one of the more prominent churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, Two Rivers Baptist Church here, is seeking to oust Pastor Jerry Sutton over a series of allegations. However, Sutton says he is praying for reconciliation.

Sutton is a former SBC first vice president who finished third in the presidential election last year. He's also a former president of the Pastors Conference and the author of *The Baptist Reformation*, a history of the SBC's conservative resurgence.

The group has launched a petition seeking to gather enough signatures — which must be at least 10 percent of the membership — to hold a church meeting to vote on whether to remove Sutton, the *Tennessean* reported Aug. 15. A two-thirds vote would be required, church members told the newspaper. The Associated Press has also reported on the conflict.

"Is reconciliation possible? Sure it is," Sutton told Baptist Press. "My prayer every day is, 'Lord, would you help me to know how to relate to people rightly?' ... When you give your life to Jesus Christ, you lose forever the right to decide who you will and will not love."

Peggy Lewis, a church member who is part of the dissident group, would not say how many signatures already are on the petition. The group has 12 leaders and hundreds of supporters, she told the *Tennessean*.

"It breaks my heart because I love the church," Lewis said of the controversy, according to the newspaper. "I pray for him every day."

Sutton said he's not questioning the group's motivation.

"They love the church, and I know that for the most part their motive is to protect the church," he said. "... But going to the press has hurt the reputation of the church. Now, is it damaged irreparably? Of course not. But there's no biblical reason to take church conflict to the public."

The church had a meeting in July where the allegations were addressed.

The website the group launched has crashed and still was down as of Aug. 15. However, it previously had listed eight concerns: "steady decline in membership," "lack of accountability in finances," "poor stewardship of God's people," "authoritarian style church

management," "rapid turnover rate of church staff in the past 10 years," "lavish lifestyle and receptions," "questionable allegations," and "serious communication issues."

Some of the specific allegations have been made public. For instance, one involved a wedding reception for Sutton's daughter allegedly paid for by the church. Sutton, though, told BP the church paid for only half of the food, and only because staff members felt it was important to invite everyone in the church. Staff members wanted to help deflate the cost because of the large, open invitation list, Sutton said, adding that the budget and finance committee approved it.

"The consensus was, 'You're the pastor, you don't have a choice [who to invite]," Sutton said. "The follow-up question [by staff] was, 'What can we do to make that work?'" Once the reception's financing became controversial, Sutton said, a church member voluntarily reimbursed the church for the costs.

The petition to drive to remove Sutton began in July, the *Tennessean* said, after Sutton and other church leaders asked that church trustee Frank Harris be removed from membership. Although a majority voted for removal, some members called the vote invalid because church protocol for such votes wasn't followed. Harris had been critical of Sutton and questioned some of the expenditures. Sutton and other leaders said Harris had been divisive.

"Anyone who voiced opposition to leadership was alienated and lost any ministries they may have had in the church," Harris told AP. He also said he believes the church has gone from a "people-led church to a staff-run church."

The church has two services: a traditional one and a more contemporary one. Members of the group seeking Sutton's removal tend to be "older, long-term members" and attend the traditional service, the *Tennessean* reported.

Sutton said membership has "never been higher," although "attendance is off a little bit." The 2006 Annual Church Profile showed that Two Rivers had 6,829 members and an average of 1,573 primary worship service attendance. It also had 137 baptisms that year.

"Those are issues we're dealing with," he said of attendance. "We know that because of the demographics in the city, we're having to change some of our

ministries. And I suspect that some of the change is part of what is driving the conflict, quite honestly. The contemporary service is at the top of the list."

Two Rivers Baptist Church released a statement on its website on Aug. 15 which acknowledged the allegations.

According to the statement,

"the church's deacons and the human resource ministry team, both of which were elected by the church membership, met to discuss and consider written accusations distributed by the former member to people in the church regarding alleged past conduct of Dr. Sutton.

"After full review and discus-

sion it was unanimously determined by both the deacons and the human resource ministry team, that the senior pastor was not committed to any of the accusations as claimed, and that no basis whatsoever existed for charges against the senior pastor." □



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### Churches

South Harriman Baptist Church, Harriman, will

celebrate 100 years of worship and service on Sept. 9. The morning worship service will include a power point presentation of church history. A



**ETA OAKLEY** of New Middleton Baptist Church, Gordonsville, receives a plaque in recognition of her 90th birthday from pastor, Mark Stinnett. Still an active member, Oakley was a school teacher and was church organist for many years.

luncheon will follow. An afternoon service will feature music by all the former music ministers and a message by former pastor, Edsel West. For information, contact Randy Maxwell, pastor, at [brorandy@comcast.net](mailto:brorandy@comcast.net).

◆ **New Hope Baptist Church, Wartrace**, will hold homecoming services during its morning worship on Sept. 9. A potluck meal will follow the service. The Praise Team from First Baptist Church, Shelbyville, will be featured in the afternoon. For information, contact Roy Carter, pastor of New Hope Baptist, at (931) 857-9437 or Margaret Brandon, church secretary, at (931) 389-6846 or [brandon.margaret@gmail.com](mailto:brandon.margaret@gmail.com).



**THIS GROUP** from First Baptist Church, Lobelville, served in Lawson, Mo., July 29 - Aug. 3 to help construct a new church building for Lawson Baptist Church. They worked on suspended ceilings, laid ceramic tile, and installed electric wiring and heating and air conditioning systems. Serving were, from left, first row, Steve Clark; Ronnie Brewer, pastor, First Baptist, Lobelville; and Rob Bailey; back row, Chris Morton; Gill Burcham; Mike Gilliam of Lawson Baptist; Enis Carter; and Gary Hill.

Mississippi Baptist Minister to Host

# Alaska Cruise

And Pacific Northwest Vacation

June 6, 2008, join your Spiritual Director, Baptist Minister Billy Williams on this 15-day vacation including a 7-day Alaska Cruise with Holland America Line and a 7-day Pacific Northwest vacation with Your Man Tours. Devotions will be made available daily while on board ship and some days on land for those in the group who wish to participate. Rev. Williams, now retired, has served as a Baptist Minister for 48 years. For 23 years he was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Gautier, MS. He and his wife Rebecca have cruised Alaska inside passage three times before. Once in 2005 as a Man Tours Baptist Chaplain on this same vacation package and again in June 2007. They liked it so much they're going back in 2008! They look forward to returning as your spiritual director visiting the land of the midnight sun during the year's longest daylight hours; during the last two weeks of pristine Alaskan nighttime. Your group will fly into Seattle for a night before a scenic motor coach drive to Vancouver where you'll board the star liner Statendam. **Next, travel through a wondrous world 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; the Coeur d'Alene; Montana; two days at Yellowstone (Old Faithful) National Park, West Yellowstone, Grand Teton National Park; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; and in Utah: the Great Salt Lake, Mormon Tabernacle, and more. You'll fly home after a night in Salt Lake City. Prices for this 15-day vacation start at \$1998 (per person, double occupancy). Included is the 7-day deluxe Alaska cruise, port charges and taxes, lots of motor coach sightseeing throughout the Pacific Northwest, 7 nights hotels, transfers; and baggage handling. Add \$600 for round-trip airfare from Chattanooga, Nashville, Memphis or Knoxville. Add \$700 for round-trip airfare from Huntsville, AL.

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

For information, reservations, brochure, and Rev. Williams' letter call: **'YOUR MAN' TOURS**  
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**THIS TEAM FROM** McMinn-Meigs Baptist Association, based in Athens, served 11 days recently in Hungry Horse, Mont., to support the Tennessee/Montana Baptist Partnership. They served at Canyon Baptist Church renovating the church facility, which was a bar and casino. They also worked with the congregation which is made up of children and students only. Serving were, from left, Ray Luck, director of missions of the association; Judy Luck; Robert and Connie Lowery; Jim Burdett, pastor, Canyon Baptist; Mary Burdett, his wife; Rick and Jackie Ingram; Garry King, pastor, Mt. Harmony Baptist Church, Riceville; Shirley King, his wife; John Frye; and Larry and Kathy Fain.

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Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association

## Feeding unit aids mine rescue effort

Baptist Press

HUNTINGDON, Utah — As rescue workers drill a third hole in their nine-day search to locate six coal miners trapped 1,800 feet underground at Crandall Canyon Mine, Southern Baptist disaster relief workers are busy feeding the Utah miners' families and rescue personnel.

"Since we started last Saturday, we've prepared and served up to 750 meals a day," said Wade Gayler, disaster relief director for the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention.

Gayler said the American Red Cross has asked the Utah-Idaho Baptist team to continue meal service through Sunday, Aug. 19, at 500 meals a day. On Monday, the team will start supporting The Salvation Army with up to 550 meals a day for at least four more days.

Two Utah-Idaho feeding units and a support truck are on the scene in Huntington, Utah, a small coal-mining town of 2,100 located about 112 miles south of Salt Lake City.

Gayler said an average of 10-12 volunteers are needed to serve two meals each day. They are working out of a new church plant located at the former First Baptist Church of Huntington.

"The families of the missing coal miners are staying at Huntington Junior High School and meals are being trucked to them via Red Cross emergency response vehicles," Gayler said, adding that the families are being sequestered at the school to avoid the news media.

Because the family members are being isolated, Gayler said SBC disaster relief chaplains, on the scene, have not been able to counsel with them. Instead, chaplains are staying busy counseling the disaster relief workers.

In addition, 175 meals also are being prepared and delivered via helicopter to the Crandall Canyon Mine, where miners and rescue personnel are working around the clock at the drilling rig site near the accident, which occurred on Aug. 6.

Bob Murray, chief of Murray Energy Corp. — co-owner and operator of the Crandall Canyon Mine — told Associated Press a fourth hole would be drilled in the center of the mine if the third hole fails.

"After that, we are running out of possibilities," Murray said.

Gayler said depending on what happens, the disaster relief workers could be on hand in Huntington another two weeks. □

## Barna poll reveals surprising results

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Although surveys have indicated parents are frustrated with the corrupt culture in which they are trying to raise moral children,

researcher George Barna said he is surprised that the percentage of parents who are concerned about their children's spiritual development is not larger.

A recent poll by The Barna Group found four out of 10 Christian parents of children between the ages of 3 and 18 said they do not face any spiritual challenges in their life.

"Our studies show that the faith principles and practices that a child absorbs by age 13 boldly shapes their spirituality for the duration of their life," Barna said in a news release Aug. 6. "Parents have a greater impact on that process than anyone else."

Barna expected the study of exclusively Christian parents with young children to yield a broader emphasis on the chal-

lenges related to raising spiritually healthy offspring. He noted the need for parents to live out a vibrant, authentic faith in order for children to see a pattern worth following.

"Children rarely embrace spiritual principles and practices that their parents fail to demonstrate in their lifestyle," he said.

The study, Barna said, indicates that personal spiritual development is a secondary consideration for millions of Americans.

"Many of the same people who claim that their faith is very important to them and that they are absolutely committed to Christianity also say that they face no spiritual challenges in life," he said. "Many other adults are only vaguely aware of such challenges and do not put much

energy into addressing "Americans focus their consideration to be important matters; family is not one of them. Invariant spiritual change have seen — American less engaged in faith — helps to ex surging secularization culture," Barna added.

### CLASSIFIED

#### MINISTRY — PASTOR

Pastor sought for SBC West Tenn. Several churches in friendly area with good prospects for Conservative evangelism sought who loves the people, and His V respondents considering bivocational and reinary grads. Send two referral, resume w/pic of recently preached Middlefork Road Baptist Church, Attn: Chairman, Sea Mittee, TN 38352. Luray, TN 38352.

First Baptist Church Tenn., a SBC church, seeking a senior pastor. Resumes should be sent to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 305 Ingleside Ave., A 37303.

Loudon County Baptist Association is seeking a full-time pastor for the Iglesia B. Cruz in Lenoir City, TN. Interested persons should send resume to bob@lccba.com.

Lyons Creek Baptist Church is accepting resumes for full-time pastor. Send resumes to LCB Church, Straw Plains, TN 37861. If you would like to learn more about our church, please visit us at lyonscreekbaptist.org.

Highland Baptist Church, Tullahoma, Tenn., is seeking resumes for the position of pastor. Please e-mail resumes to dktatum@charter.net, P.O. Box 808 West Hickory, Tullahoma, TN 37388.

Clearview Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala. area, is seeking an experienced full-time pastor to be responsible for all aspects of ministry. For more information, please forward your resume to 5271 Old Springville Road, Clearview Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL 35126 or clearviewbaptist.com.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Colonial Heights Baptist Church bus for sale. Eagle bus, reconditioned inside a passenger, restroom, minimum wheels, etc. Call 239-6389 for information.

### CLASSIFIED

#### MINISTRY — ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Franklin Crossroads Baptist Church is a growing, strong evangelistic, mission-minded congregation that is helping to build the kingdom in exciting ways. Crossroads will soon have dual campuses and they are seeking an associate pastor. Send resumes to 4695 Hardinsburg Road, Cecilia, KY 42724 by August 27. Or e-mail resume to franklincrossroads@windstream.net. Visit our web page at franklincrossroads.org.

#### MINISTRY — POSITIONS

First Baptist Church of Lebanon is building a 21st century ministry team that focuses on preaching, pastoral care/counseling, spiritual development, music/worship, and evangelism/missions that encompasses all age groups. We are currently seeking resumes for two positions for ministers who have an interest and spiritual gifts related to music/worship ministry and youth ministry. Both positions will include at least one other major area of responsibility as well as general ministry duties. Please visit our website for more information at www.fbclebanon.org.

New Prospect Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C. (500 worship att.) is receiving resumes for a full-time minister to children and a full-time minister to students. Please mail to 2503 Whitehall Rd., Anderson, SC 29625 or e-mail to tonys2004@bellsouth.net.

#### MINISTRY — OTHER

Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Brentwood, Tenn., is seeking a campus ministry assistant. Candidate should be skilled in word processing, excel, organizational, and multi-tasking skills necessary. Full-time with excellent benefits. Contact Dr. Mike Womack, P.O. Box 519, Franklin, TN 37065, (615) 376-3190.

### CLASSIFIED

#### MINISTRY — CHILDREN

Ooltewah Baptist Church is seeking a preschool and children's director. To be considered for this position, please send resume to Ooltewah Baptist Church, P. O. Box 9, Ooltewah, TN 37363.

#### MINISTRY — STUDENT

Minister of students, 7th grade - college emphasis, full-time pay and benefits. Previous student ministry experience required. Send resumes to Kevin Harbin, Indian Springs Baptist Church, 325 Hill Road, Kingsport, TN 37664.

Seeking part-time youth minister. Prefer husband & wife. Send resume to Pleasant View Baptist Church, 1464 Lakeshore Road, Talbot, TN 37877.

Cinco Baptist Church seeks student pastor responsible for grades 7-12. Seminary graduate preferred. Send resume to Personnel Committee, Cinco Baptist Church, 26 Yacht Club Drive, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548.

First Baptist Church, Trussville, Ala., accepting resumes for full-time minister to middle school students. Mail or e-mail resumes to P.O. Box 27, Trussville, AL 35173 Attn: Middle School Search Team or youth@fbctrussville.org.

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## minister's corner

## in overwhelming odds

Note: This was written about a recent mission trip. Security issues, the name of the country is withheld.

by Adkisson

ward to explain the sheer joy of these believers in the midst of such overwhelming odds. It is also hard to convey to you their sense of mission in their community, their faithfulness, and God's evident and miraculous work.

First, much of this is in response to the many fears of these people. It is not unusual for them to spend many hours of the day for revival, protection, and healing. Their personal experience with spiritual warfare is the pale of our daily experience. Yet they will look at us as if we are the spiritual leaders. Instead, we have much to learn from them.

Secondly, we weakly understand God's Word when it states: "It is only through tribulation that tribulation brings about perseverance; and tribulation, proven character; and proven character, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:3-5).

Thirdly, we understand these principles far better as they are lived out patiently through daily experiences of rejection, persecution, and financial difficulty. They embrace persecution, and they are not discouraged by financial difficulties. They live thankfully for each day, knowing that the next one may be their last. We worry about what a neighbor will do to us because we are too religious. They embrace the scorn of the world and community to share the grace of Christ.

Finally, so many of our fellow Christians in other parts of the world, the Scriptures of suffering are not metaphors for a hard day in an air-conditioned office or the travails of a modern society. Instead these words speak to real experiences of persecution. Whether Korean Christian missionaries caught in the crossfire of Afghanistan or brothers and sisters who suffer daily persecution in China, India, and the Middle East, some fellow believers understand much better the words like:

*"Will you separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'For we are being put to death all day long; We were counted as sheep to be slaughtered.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loves us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).*

I do not wish for persecution or travail, but I do envy the faith and blessed service of my brothers and sisters in these lands. Truly they have learned how to find joy in all things, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4). □ — Adkisson is pastor of First Baptist Church, Cookeville.

## a way with words

## doctor

by Hugh X. Lewis

the higher callings known to the Doctor stands alone in the heart of God's own plan.

the search of knowledge doesn't end with the earning of degrees; it is time now to heal and mend the suffering of disease.

the more honor we bestow on them, the more they answer mankind's call; for their life is not their own, you know, it belongs to one and all.

Copyright by Hugh X. Lewis. Lewis, a Baptist layman, is a creator of Christian country music in Tennessee.

## When society abandons godly ways

By Trent Bullock

**Focal Passage:** II Kings 22:1-5; 23:2-4, 24, 26-27

**Introduction:** As we observe the conditions in our world today, we realize how desperately we need spiritual awakening and revival. Our focal passage considers how King Josiah attempted to make a difference in his day. The spiritual conditions in Judah were disheartening. The temple was in a state of disrepair and unused, the Scriptures had been lost, and idolatry filled the land. In the midst of these conditions, Josiah worked to bring about reform. If we want to make a difference in our communities, our nation, and the world, we would do well to follow his example.

**Choose to live your life for God (ch. 22:1-5)** — Josiah is described as one who "did what was right in the LORD's sight and walked in all the ways of his ancestor David." This description of Josiah is significant since he did not have very good role models to follow. Josiah's father, Amon, and his grandfather, Manasseh, were two of the wickedest kings to ever rule Judah and led the nation into idolatry and sin. Josiah was also the great-grandson of Hezekiah, one of the greatest kings of Judah who was godly. Josiah chose to follow the example of his great-grandfather Hezekiah and live his life for God, therefore, he became linked with David who was "a man after God's own heart." If we are to make a dif-

ference in our communities, our nation, and our world, we must begin by choosing to live our lives for God. We must make this choice despite all the evil that may be prevalent around us.

**Renew your passion for God's Word (ch. 23:2-3)** — One of the most significant events of Josiah's reign was his decision to repair the temple. During the restoration of the temple, Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the law. As Josiah heard the words of the law read to him, he came to realize how far the people were from the Lord. He called the people to gather in the temple, and he read the book of the law to them.

Afterwards, Josiah made a covenant "to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments, His decrees, and His statutes with all his mind and with all his heart, and to carry out the words of this covenant." All the people also agreed to the covenant. If we are to help change our society, we must not only choose to live for God, but we must also renew our passion for His Word. We must make His Word the standard for our belief and practice.

**Take appropriate actions to promote change (vv. 4, 24)** — After making his covenant to keep the law, Josiah knew that he must take appropriate actions to effect meaningful change and turn the nation back to God. He ordered the removal of every idolatrous article from the temple and had them burned. He also removed the medi-

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ums, spiritists, household idols, images, and all the detestable things throughout the land. As believers who are committed to live for God and live by His Word, we must also take appropriate actions to bring about change in our society. We must warn others of the dangers of modern day idolatry and deceptive cults. We must also be willing to take a stand on moral issues.

**Let God handle the judgment of society (vv. 26-27)** — In spite of Josiah's reforms, God still brought judgment upon the people and they suffered the consequences of their sin. God did delay his judgment, however, and Josiah died before His judgment fell upon the people. Since Josiah's reforms did not prevent God's judgment, some may question if they were worth it. The answer is that it is always right to do what is right even if you lose a battle along the way. We may not win every battle against abortion, gambling, or alcohol, but we must still attempt to do what is right and let God handle the judgment of society.

**Conclusion:** When society abandons God's ways, do not give up. Live for Him, point others to His Word, attempt to bring about change, and then let God handle the judgment. — Bullock is pastor of First Baptist Church, Halls.

## Worship appropriately

By Billie Friel

**Focal Passage:** Malachi 3:1-5, 8-10, 16-18

**Introduction.** God certainly did not intend the "worship wars" that are influencing Christianity at this time. Disagreements within congregations about worship styles have caused the dismissal of ministers, division of churches, and distraction from the main mission of the church. Because people around the globe demonstrate genuine worship in a multitude of styles, perhaps the focus on styles is misplaced. Malachi's emphasis is on worshipping God in ways He has revealed in His Word. God expects His people to worship Him appropriately.

**Worship with righteousness (vv. 1-5).** In answer to the people's question of "Where is the God of justice?" (Malachi 2:17), Malachi predicted the sudden, unannounced coming of the Lord. The Lord's coming is preceded by His messenger who will "prepare" His way. The New Testament identifies this messenger as John the Baptist (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2) — just as ancient messengers prepared the people for the king's coming, so John the Baptist's emphasis on repentance prepared the people for Jesus.

For Malachi, the coming of the Lord is for the purpose of cleansing and purification rather than destruction. Using the two well-known trades of gold refining and the cleansing of clothes, the prophet described how God would cleanse His people so "they may offer to the

Lord an offering in righteousness" that "will be pleasant to the Lord." Charles Spurgeon, the great English pastor, used to admonish his students that it "is more difficult to prepare the preacher than it is the sermon." When we have clean hearts (Psalms 51:10), our worship will be characterized by righteousness, and the Lord will delight in our relationship with Him and our fellow man (Psalms 51:17, 19).

**Worship with tithes (vv. 8-10).** The people claimed ignorance when the prophet delivered God's Word that they had gone away from His ordinances and had not kept them. The prophet picked a part of their spiritual deflection that was very visible and undeniable: they had "robbed" God. How is it possible to "rob God?" The people had been blessed by God and, when commanded to give tithes from God's blessings, had withheld what did not belong to them — this was constituted as robbery.

Do you remember the principles of stewardship? God owns it all, He gives it to us as stewards who must give an account. He asks for us to tithe as the beginning point for giving, and we use the rest for His glory and our good. A person who does not tithe is either ignorant of God's commands, disobedient of God's commands, or ungrateful of God's blessings. God challenges man to prove or try Him in the area of finances — when obedient from a righteous heart, God promises to bless and protect him.

We worship the Lord appropriately

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ly by obediently giving to Him our tithes to advance the work of His church. Hey, Tennessee Baptists! Imagine what God could do through the obedient hearts and tithes of the 2,555 churches and 830,235 members in our state!

**Worship with fear (vv. 16-18).** So, who are the true worshipers and what is the appropriate way to worship? Amidst the flippancy and hypocrisy of his day, the prophet called attention to a group of people who "feared the Lord and spoke to one another." The Bible speaks often and glowingly about the person who "fears the Lord" — this does not represent a phobia type fear, but one of loving respect and awe which leads to obedient service. These believers worship Him as the Lord Almighty and meet together to encourage and edify one another. God treasures those worshipers who fear and love Him with a holy love and will be compassionate to them on the day of His coming. As His "jewels" or treasured possession, these committed worshipers will receive their reward.

**Conclusion.** No style of worship is appropriate when people's hearts are not right with God. — Friel is pastor emeritus and staff evangelist of First Baptist Church, Mt. Juliet, and interim director of missions for Wilson County Baptist Association, based in Lebanon.

### Leaders

◆ Hermitage Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, called **Justin Lett** as minister to students on Aug. 19.

◆ Shelby Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville, has called **Charley Hodges** as associate youth minister. She previously served the church as a summer supply minister.

◆ Milton Baptist Church, Milton, held a luncheon Aug. 5 to honor church members **Clark and Omega Robinson**. Clark served as the church treasurer for 58 years, and Omega served as the Sun-

day School secretary for several years. They were also presented certificates for their many years of service to the church.

◆ The executive committee of the Watauga Baptist Association, Elizabethton, has called **Jack Roddy**, pastor of Siam Baptist Church, Elizabethton, for 23 years, as the director of missions. He will begin the position Sept. 1.



**RODDY**

### Churches

◆ **Miller's Cove Missionary Baptist Church, Wal-land**, will celebrate its 197th anniversary during morning worship on Sept. 23. Lunch will be served. For information, contact Velda Powell at (865) 982-6467.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Peytonsville**, will hold its fourth annual Bluegrass Music and Fun Festival Sept. 8 from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. In addition to music, activities include an antique car and tractor show, golf contest, and fishing rod casting contest. For more infor-

mation, call (615) 794-1970.

### Statewide Events

◆ Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union is holding a **Prayer Retreat for Women**

Sept. 14-15 at West Baptist Church in J. Early bird deadline for registration is Aug. 31. J. Kennedy Dean, national known speaker and author, is the featured guest. To learn more, visit the Tennessee website at [www.tnwmu.org](http://www.tnwmu.org).



**THESE MEMBERS OF** the first and second grade Sunday School classes of Zion Baptist Church, Brownsville, made stepping stones which were auctioned off by the church on Aug. 18 in a fundraiser for a mission trip to the Philippines. The Woman's Missionary Union held the event. Stepping stone makers were, from left, Cory and Cody Simpson, Kelsie Oliphant, Everett Wright, Sarah Castelaw, Anna Carraway, Noah Young, Whitley Williams, Allison Wright, Maggie Brooks, Shannon Jorgenson, Tritt Ellington, and Thomas Tritt.



**MEMBERS OF** Springdale Baptist Church, Tazewell, celebrated the 125th anniversary of the church July 29. Clayton Dunsmore, director of missions, Cumberland Gap Baptist Association, based in Harrogate, presented a plaque in recognition of the event to John Hatfield, pastor.



**MABEL SEXTON**, oldest member of Judson Baptist Church, Nashville, observed her 100th birthday on Aug. 4. Fellow members present were, from left, standing, Shirley Griffin, Hall, Dot Sipe, Johnnie Hall, and Charlie Griffin. Seated with her were her great-grandchildren.



**ESSIE OGELVIE**, seated, a charter member of First Church, Monteagle, was honored on her 90th birthday on Aug. 18 by the church. About 250 people attended the event. She served as Woman's Missionary Union president, church treasurer, and a Sunday School teacher. Her living children, standing behind her, are, from left, Tony Ogelvie, Linda Guess, Pam Gould, Stewart, Maybelle Barnes, and Milton Ogelvie. Four of her children are deceased.

## Two associations send disaster relief workers to Kansas, Mississippi



**DISASTER RELIEF VOLUNTEERS** from William Carey Baptist Association, based in Fayetteville, and Duck River Baptist Association, based in Tullahoma, worked July 12-20 in Neodesha, Kan., and July 29 - Aug. 4 in Gulfport, Miss. Five served in Kansas and 50 served in Mississippi. **IN PHOTO TO LEFT**, Dorothy Scott of First Baptist Church, Manchester, works on some new drywall in Gulfport. **IN PHOTO IN MIDDLE**, workers, from left, JoAnn Manning of Parkway Baptist

Church, Smyrna; Anna Crutcher of Prospect Baptist Church, Fayetteville; Cookie Baker of First Baptist Church, Manchester, remove water damaged drywall in a home in Kansas. **IN PHOTO TO RIGHT**, Dickey Crutcher, left, of Prospect Baptist Church, Fayetteville, and Roger Cothren of Kellys Creek Baptist Church, Ardmore, notch foundation supports in preparation for placing banding on a foundation in Mississippi.