

# Baptist & Reflector

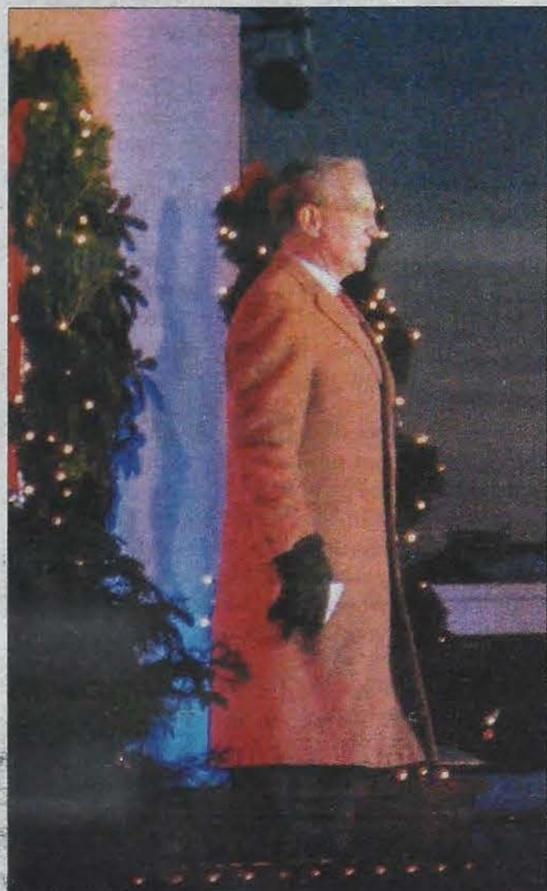
Statewide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

Vol. 173 / No. 46; Dec. 12, 2007

## Lighting of national Christmas tree

### Freeman prays 'in the name of Jesus' in D.C. ceremony



**ROGER FREEMAN**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville, prepares to pray during the lighting of the national Christmas tree last week in Washington, D.C.

By Lonnie Wilkey  
*Baptist and Reflector*

CLARKSVILLE — Early in his life, Roger Freeman made a promise that he would never deny God's name.

So, when he was first approached by the National Park Service about praying at the lighting of the national Christmas tree on Dec. 6, Freeman, pastor of First Baptist Church here and a past president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, said he would have to be able to pray in the name of Jesus.

Officials from the park service told him to write out a prayer and send it to them, Freeman recalled, noting the process began in September.

Freeman worked for about half a day on a prayer that had to be delivered in one minute.

He penned the following words and sent it in for review:

"Holy Father, thank you for this season of brotherhood and hope for all humanity. We celebrate the beauty of your creation and the light you give, even in the lighting of our

national Christmas tree. We rejoice in the happiness of people who care for one another and share love for every person.

"Bless all our military who serve to protect us and to honor our country. Encourage and strengthen each military family member who bears the extra burden of sacrifice. Guide and bless our president, Mrs. Bush and their family, and all our nation's leaders. May your love be felt in all the nations of the world.

"Thank you for the timeless announcement of this season which is given to all peoples, 'peace on earth, good will to all.' May this promise unite all your children. In the name of Jesus, who gave us the first Christmas. Amen."

"I didn't really expect to hear from them," Freeman admitted.

But three days later he was notified that he was approved to deliver the prayer he submitted.

Freeman was nominated to deliver the prayer by Amy Spiceland Scofield, who was a teenager at FBC when Freeman went there as pastor 14 and one-half years ago.

Scofield now works with the National Park Service.

Freeman said her remembrance of him is a reminder that "when you

preach to teenagers you do not know what they will do with their influence in the years ahead.

"She loved her church and her pastor and she did such a good job that when she suggested a name, they listened," Freeman said.

To Freeman's knowledge he is the first Baptist pastor to deliver the invocation at the ceremony in recent years. — See Freeman, page 2



**ROGER FREEMAN**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville, and his wife, Priscilla, enjoyed a visit to the White House during a reception following the lighting of the national Christmas tree on Dec. 6.

## TBC CP gifts start year under budget

*Baptist and Reflector*

BRENTWOOD — Tennessee Baptist Convention churches began the 2007-08 fiscal year by contributing \$3,164,776 through the Cooperative Program.

The total is \$266,426 or 7.8 percent below what was given in November a year ago.

The amount also is \$43,557 or 1.4 percent below the budget need of \$3,431,212.

Tennessee Baptists adopted a budget of \$38,500,000 during the annual meeting held Nov. 13-14 in Kingsport.

"We are confident Tennessee Baptists will give generously and sacrificially to meet missions and ministry needs in our state and around the world," said James Porch, executive director-treasurer of the TBC. □

## Consider media's influence on children: Hulsey

*Baptist and Reflector*

BRENTWOOD — With all the controversy swirling around the release of the movie "The Golden Compass" (see story on page 3), Vicki Hulsey believes this is a good time for parents to take a hard look at the influence of media on their children.

And it is especially important because of the holiday season as parents consider DVD, CD, and video game purchases as gifts for their children, she added.

"The media is a huge issue for families today," said Hulsey, childhood education specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

"Today's children are no longer learning about life through relationships with family, teachers, and church, but from watching someone else's version of life through media influences like TV, movies, and video games," she said.

She observed that the amount of

time children spend in front of the TV "outweighs the amount of time they spend in play and interaction with others.

"Research has been done that shows children with TVs in their bedrooms are at a greater risk of becoming obese and do not do as well in school," she added.

Hulsey offered several tips for parents to consider regarding children and the media.

(1) Limit the amount of time children spend watching television, playing video games, and using the computer.

(2) Carefully monitor content.

(3) Record TV programs or go to movies and preview the show alone before allowing children to watch.

(4) Rent video games to check for appropriateness before purchasing.

(5) Listen to and/or read the lyrics of all CDs before giving to children.

(6) Set clear guidelines and enforce them.

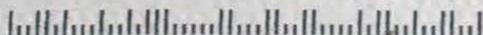
(7) Refrain from allowing a children's bedroom to become a multimedia center. Keep TVs, video games, computers, CD players, and telephones in the family room.

"Today's parents are often faced with the choice of buying media that helps their child to fit in, or following God's standards as outlined in the Bible," she noted.

"Deuteronomy 6:6-9 is clear that parents have the primary responsibility to teach their children about God and His commands. Parents must realize that every choice they make has an impact on the moral and spiritual development of their children."

Hulsey encouraged parents to check out gifts before purchasing them this holiday and not to give in to pressure to purchase items they deem not appropriate. □ — Lonnie Wilkey

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## Growing number of hotels opt out of Gideon Bibles

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Each Bible placed in a hotel room has the potential to reach up to 2,300 people in its estimated six-year life span, and about 25 percent of travelers read the Bibles in their hotel rooms, according to The Gideons International, a group that has been placing Bibles in hotel rooms since 1908.

The Gideons say they receive testimonies almost daily of lives changed, because of the Bibles they've placed, including one man who planned to commit suicide on Christmas Eve. The man said he threw the Bible onto the hotel room floor, and it fell open to John 14 where Jesus says He gives peace. Now the man is a pastor and his family has been restored.

But a growing number of hotels are opting not to allow the placement of Gideon Bibles, according to an article in *Newsweek* magazine.

"In the rooms of Manhattan's trendy Soho Grand Hotel guests can enjoy an eclectic selection of underground music, iPod docking stations, flat-screen TVs, and even the living company of a complimentary goldfish. But, alas, the Word of God is nowhere to be found," the article begins.

Such hotels say society is evolving and a younger, hipper generation has no interest in the Bible. They also say they would have to cater to a variety of belief systems and could not single out Christianity.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, noted the tragedy that awaits if people aren't given the chance to encounter God's Word when they find themselves troubled in a hotel room.

"Are they now to look for sal-

## Avoid common mistakes, Landrith urges

LifeWay news office

NASHVILLE — David Landrith, pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, was the only pastor invited to speak during a general session at the Women's Ministry National Leadership Forum held here Nov. 13-15.

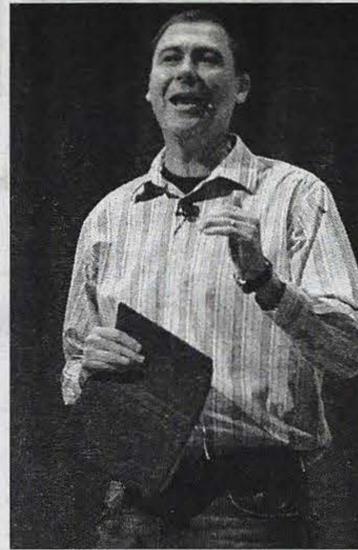
The event drew more than 800 local church women's ministry leaders.

Landrith spoke from a pastor's perspective, offering the most common mistakes of women's ministry leaders.

- Do not let your public ministry substitute for private devotion. "What is most important is who you are on the inside," Landrith said. "Don't get so busy doing for God that you neglect being in the presence of God."

- Have accountability. Landrith cautioned leaders that people in ministry are not immune to crashing and burning. "Be paranoid about blowing it," he said. "Be paranoid about making a mistake in your ministry. It's pride if you think you will 'never do that' or 'that will never happen to me.' Have someone in your life who can speak boldly to you."

- Do not take an adversarial stance with your pastor or church staff. Acknowledging the stresses that pastors face, Landrith asked the women's ministry leaders, "What are you doing to help your pastor?



**DAVID LANDRITH, pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville, recently spoke to more than 800 women's ministry leaders at a conference in Nashville.**

Are you willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, pray for him, and make sure your women's ministry isn't adding stress to his life?" He also encouraged the women to be "team players" with other church staff, offering help with other ministries.

- Do not choose to die on every hill. Citing examples of church disagreements, including green versus red choir robes, Landrith cautioned conference attendees not to be drama queens. "If you want to have it your way all of the time, you won't be effective. There are some hills you will

have to die on," he said. "But there are days when you can give up some ground."

- Do not focus on programs instead of people. According to Landrith, every program has a season and a shelf life. He warned against fighting to keep a program after it is no longer effective. "When your horse dies, dismount," he said. "If your focus is on 'We've always done it this way,' you are going to mess up."

- Do not have a lack of vision. Landrith defined vision as "seeing things not as they are, but how they could be or should be." He encouraged leaders to cultivate vision by spending time with God and seeing what others are doing. Then cast that vision, share it with others, and re-cast it again by breathing new life into it.

- Do not lack flexibility. "God delights in pushing us out of our comfort zones so we learn to trust Him and be flexible," Landrith said. "The real challenge is to maintain the posture of 'God, you tell us where to go, and we will follow you.'"

- Don't give up too soon. Speaking to women in the audience on the verge of abandoning their leadership roles, Landrith said, "Anything worth doing is going to have costs. Keep pushing forward and follow God until He releases you from what you are doing." □

vation and solace from an iPod docking station or a goldfish?" Mohler wrote on his blog at albertmohler.com.

"... This development is another reminder that we are living in a time of tremendous cultural and moral change. The absence of Gideon Bibles from

an increasing number of hotel rooms tells us something about the secularization, sexualization, and extreme sensitivities of our age," Mohler said.

"It also tells us that there will be no Bibles available in those hotel rooms when travelers need them, and that is a

tragedy by any measure," he added.

"Think of this the next time you are in a hotel room. Check the bedside table for a Gideon Bible. When you find one, thank the hotel management. And, when you have the opportunity, thank the Gideons." □

## Freeman prays 'in the name of Jesus' at D.C. ...

— Continued from page 1

Freeman admitted to being nervous about praying at the national ceremony. "It was the first time I ever practiced a prayer. I said it over and over," he laughed.

He recalled that he was nervous as he advanced toward the platform, "but once I went out there the Lord took over and the fear went away."

A highlight of the occasion was the opportunity to stand with President Bush on the platform as the band played "Hail to the Chief."

"At that moment I realized I was representing the Lord who was over all authority, all kings, all nations," Freeman said. "I shed a tear after I realized God allowed me to have a part in that."

Freeman also was impressed that President Bush began his remarks, "Tonight we celebrate the good news that in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago a Savior was born."

"That was commendable," Freeman said. Freeman still is not quite sure why he was selected. He thinks part of the reason is that he hails from a military town (Fort

Campbell), and he was honored to have represented Fort Campbell, the city of Clarksville, and his church.

"It wasn't about me. It was about the city and First Baptist Church," he stressed.

Freeman also believes very strongly that he was chosen because God wanted His name honored at the Capitol.

"God gave me favor for some reason. I'm thankful to God for the privilege. It was an incredible blessing," Freeman said.

While he considers the experience to be a blessing and honor, he is adamant that the greatest honor he has is to be the pastor of a Baptist church. "When all is said and done, strong churches and strong families make a strong nation."

"My only ambition is to please the Lord Jesus and to be the pastor of a Baptist church."

Freeman was accompanied on the trip by his wife Priscilla and daughter Sarah.

President Calvin Coolidge started the national Christmas tree tradition in 1923 with the lighting of a 60-foot-tall "Community Christmas Tree."

In 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt

and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill lit the tree together, but the next three years the ceremony took a hiatus due to a war-imposed blackout. In 1963 the assassination of President John F. Kennedy launched a 30-day period of national mourning, delaying the lighting of the tree until Dec. 22.

The current tree is a 40-foot-tall Colorado blue spruce that was planted in 1978. It was brought to Washington from York, Pa. The ceremony takes place in an area known as the Ellipse, south of the White House.

"I just always thought it was a terrific ceremony that recognized Christmas as a national holiday as well as a Christian holiday and felt like it was the beginning of the Christmas season in America," Freeman said before actually participating in the event.

Performing at this year's ceremony were country music artist Sara Evans, classical artist Holly Stell, singer/actor Julian Ivey, the St. Albans and National Cathedral Schools Choir, and the United States Air Force Band. □ — Michael Foust of Baptist Press contributed to this report.

## Jackson congregation comes to aid of fellow church member

By Tyrone Tony Reed Jr.  
The Jackson Sun

JACKSON — Edward McCallister, 55, of Madison County, was one of the happiest and most thankful men in the county on a late October Saturday as he saw the love of God in the hearts of his fellow church members while they built his family a new home.

Before the members of Woodland Baptist Church, here where he attends church, and others got involved in the project, McCallister and his family lived in a one-room house. Now, he's looking forward to living in a brand-new home built from the ground up.

"Words can't even begin to tell you how much it means to me and my wife," McCallister said. "We appreciate all the work that has been done, the donations, and the work that has been done. It's been such a blessing."

McCallister added, "A lot of days, I get up and I can't believe there's a house sitting here that's going to us. It's going to be a great blessing to us."

J.B. Lane of Jackson said the

McCallister family was in "a bad need" of a house and the church decided to help them out.

"We've done projects similar to this in other places in the United States and across the world, but this is the first time we've done one in our hometown," Lane said. "It's a shame that it is non-typical, in that we have a lot of needs around us."

Lane added, "It's really all about God's people doing what He has called them to do. It's just a simple act of obedience. It's made almost extraordinary, because of the lack of doing it."

Lane said the project began

and reaching out through that. We do these things not only because it makes us feel good, and not only because it's better to give than to receive. But because God has called us to do that, and it's an act of obedience."

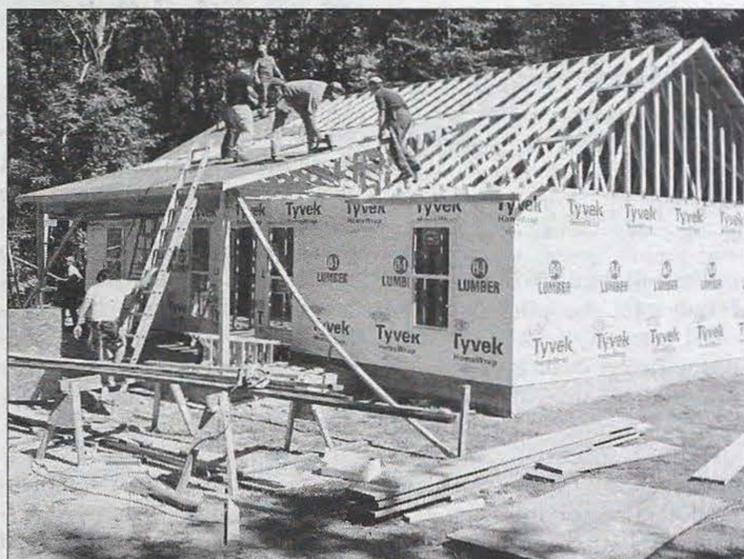
Lane added, "So more than anything, we do it to please Him. We need to be about pleasing our God and not just about seeking benefits for ourselves."

Maurice Hays, 63, pastor of Woodland Baptist Church, said the vision of the house started with the McCallisters, who had planned to build their own new

home. But after medical issues dwindled their money and ability to do the work, members of the church stepped forward to make their vision a reality.

"Some of our men saw their need," Hays said. "We sent a team to Africa last year and spent about \$10,000 building a church. Some of our men said, 'If we can do that over there, why can't we help people in need here in our own community?'"

Hays said shortly after the project began, he has enjoyed



MEMBERS OF Woodland Baptist Church, Jackson, build a home for fellow church member Edward McCallister.

seeing the community's support.

"It has really just been unbelievable, the support that we've had: not only from our church, but many businesses in Jackson have fallen in to help us," Hays said. "We've had people from other churches to come and help do some of the strategic work, plumbing, and other things that needed to be done. It's just been a God thing from the beginning."

Travis Clenney, 62, McCallister's friend of 20 years, said he is also McCallister's neighbor and is happy to be able to

help out his friend.

"I think it's a wonderful thing," Clenney said. "As a church, we are close, but this has brought us closer together. There is a certain amount of pride, you feel when you help somebody to build something like this. I think I'm as proud of it as the McCallisters will be."

Clenney added, "It's a comfortable home, and we feel like it's put together really well. It'll last for a very long time, and I would even love to have one like it myself." □ — Reprinted with permission of *The Jackson Sun*.

## 'The Golden Compass' movie opens amid controversy

By Michael Foust  
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — It's a fantasy universe where witches are good, the church is bad, and at the end of it all, God dies.

It's the world of author Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy, and on Dec. 7 a movie, based on the first book in that series, "The Golden Compass," hit theaters. For weeks now, the movie has been the focus of e-mails from concerned Christians, curious if what they heard about it is true. In this instance — as even the truth-or-fiction website Snopes.com affirms — the rumors mostly are fact.

Pullman himself is not sure whether he's an atheist or an agnostic, but his own words leave little doubt that he has a strong distaste for Christianity — at least Christianity as he sees it.

The entire series has been dubbed the "anti-Narnia," with Pullman regularly expressing disdain for C.S. Lewis' fictional world and even once calling it "propaganda in the service of a life-hating ideology." He has sought to write a completely different fictional tale, and he has succeeded. He said in a 2001 interview, "I'm trying to undermine the basis of Christian belief," and two years later told another newspaper, "My books are about killing God."

Pullman has been more toned down in recent interviews, perhaps because New Line Cinema has invested more than \$150 million in the first installment. Because it needs to be successful, if the final two books are to make it to the big screen.

Launched in 1995, the book series has

been wildly popular across the Atlantic and won several awards in the United Kingdom. In the U.S., Al Roker of NBC's "Today Show" recently even made *The Golden Compass* part of his children's book club. And, children are reading it: during an interview with Roker, Pullman took videotaped questions from children about the *The Golden Compass*. He also took questions on the show's website, where one boy, an 8 year old in Virginia, said he was reading the book with his class. It is being sold nationwide in schools through Scholastic, which also is selling the other two books and claims the *The Golden Compass* is appropriate for grades four and up.

The movie itself focuses on a 12-year-old girl named Lyra and her daemon (pronounced "demon") — her soul in the form of a talking animal. Everyone in her world, in fact, has a daemon, which could range from a monkey to a lion. Early in the movie her friend Roger is kidnapped, and she sets out to find him.

The movie — rated PG-13 — reportedly avoids using the word "church" and instead calls it the "Magisterium," a Roman Catholic term. Additionally, in the second and third books "God" is regularly called the "Authority." The book and movie gets its name from a golden device that can, according to the books, determine truth itself.

In fact, the most anti-religious elements are found not in the first book but in the latter two. Movie director Chris Weitz has said some of the more controversial ideas have been removed from *The Golden Compass* to make it more palatable for the public. Weitz said his goal is to make sure controversial scenes

and dialogue — critical to the plot — are included in any future movies.

"The whole point, to me, of ensuring that *The Golden Compass* is a financial success is so that we have a solid foundation on which to deliver a faithful, more literal adaptation of the second and third books," he said Nov. 14 on an MTV movie blog.

If that's the case, then the next two movies could be even more controversial. For instance:

- In the second book in the trilogy, *The Subtle Knife*, one of the main characters, Will, is told he possesses "the one weapon in all the universes" — a magical knife — that can "defeat the tyrant." That tyrant, he is told, is "The Authority God."

- In *The Amber Spyglass*, the third and final book of the series, Will is told — by two fallen, homosexual angels, no less — that "The Authority" has many names, "God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty." These were names God "gave Himself" even though "He was never the creator." Instead, Will is told, the Authority simply was the first angel formed out of "Dust," and thereafter God proceeded to tell "those who came after Him that He had created them."

One of Pullman's apparent themes is that science and reason trump faith.

"I don't think it's a reach to say that faith and enjoyment are antithetical in Pullman's worldview," Adam Holz, associate editor of Focus on the Family's *Plugged In*, told Baptist Press. "He seems to say that it's impossible to have a life of joy, of pleasure, and be a member of the church."

Pullman himself has said his books

have Christian themes, because that was his world as a child — his father was an Anglican clergyman. If he had grown up as a Jew, he has said, his books likely would have had Jewish themes. His biggest contentions with Christianity specifically and religion in general are the atrocities committed over the centuries in God's name. That theme seems to have made it into the movie; the narrator in the trailer says the world of *The Golden Compass* "is dominated by the Magisterium, which seeks to control all humanity."

"[I]f there is a God and He is as the Christians describe Him, then He deserves to be put down and rebelled against," Pullman told the *Telegraph* newspaper in 2002. "As you look back over the history of the Christian church, it's a record of terrible infamy and cruelty and persecution and tyranny. How they have the bloody nerve to go on [the BBC's] 'Thought for the Day' and tell us all to be good, when given the slightest chance, they'd be hanging the rest of us, flogging the homosexuals, and persecuting the witches."

Holz said he's concerned about the books' impact on children.

"Not only has the story got a deeply anti-Christian component to it, but [Pullman is] aiming that story at children, who may not have the discernment to notice or understand the message he's delivering," Holz said. "I think Christians need to be aware of where he is coming from. Even if they tone down the anti-church references in all the movies, we're concerned that it's still going to lead people back to the books, because it's going to make people curious." □

## When looking for a definition of 'integrity,' try the Bible

words from  
the Word



By Johnnie C. Godwin

On a flight from Nashville to Pittsburgh, our pilot used the word integrity in a way I had never heard before, but one I understood immediately. We had had a rough take-off but a smooth flight. As we approached Pittsburgh, the pilot said on the intercom, "I'm not sure whether you know what happened as we left Nashville. A front tire blew, and we don't know whether the landing gear has integrity or not. We're going to circle Pittsburgh to use up fuel. The flight attendants will instruct you how to get in a crash landing position before we land."

We passengers were all shocked and anxious about our immediate future. I understood the pilot was telling us that the landing gear might fold up instead of hold up when we touched down. The question of integrity was whether the landing gear would fulfill the purpose for which it was designed or would buckle under the circumstances. I supposed an instrument panel light gave the integrity warning.

### What it means to have integrity

Who wants to know what integrity means? Well, a lot of folks do. Each month, *Merriam-Webster* lists the top 20 words folks look up on M-W's online dictionary. Integrity appears every time and almost always in the top 10 words looked up. Why? Perhaps because the lack of integrity is so widespread and reported that people want to know exactly what is missing or lost.

Integrity came into English before A.D. 1400 from Latin and French to mean wholeness, entirety, completeness, soundness, purity, and an unimpaired or uncorrupted condition. Integrity was first recorded to mean honesty or uprightness in 1548. Today, integrity most often refers to sticking to principles without hypocrisy: a match between outward appearance and inner being. When we are not double-minded or hypocritical, our walk matches our talk; and people can trust us to have integrity. Or in the airplane landing gear sense, integrity is when we can count on a person or thing to dependably match what they were designed to do.

### Biblical snapshots of integrity

The King James Version of the Bible translates Hebrew words for integrity only about

16 times in the Old Testament and not at all in the New Testament from the Greek words. Contemporary translations of the New Testament do use the word integrity in Titus 2:7: "Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching" (NLT). Pastors are to "set an example of good works ... with integrity" (Holman CSB). But the New Testament repeatedly hammers the truth that Christian leaders and followers are to be sound, uncorrupted, blameless, consistent, not hypocritical; complete and undivided with purity. A study of Old Testament uses of integrity show a match with the New Testament regardless of what English words are used for the principle.

### Lapses of integrity

As a young preacher, I used to say, "Everybody is a hypocrite, just in different ways and at different times." Folks probably didn't understand that I was just confirming the biblical teaching that no one is perfect, sinless, and blameless; so I don't say that much anymore. But it's still true (see I John 1:8-9; 3:6-9).

In other words, lapses in integrity occur in all of us. Peter was the Prince of the Apostles, but his lapses in integrity were monumental. Noah, Abraham, Job, David, and Jacob are all designated as persons of integrity. None was sinless, but all were forgiven for lapses in integrity — even Jacob, the deceiver.

One pastor friend of mine pastored a large church that had many ministers and other staff members. Over a generation of his pastoring of that church, a variety of immoralities and deviations from integrity occurred. The pastor was human and therefore wasn't perfect, but he was a man of integrity and also a sense of humor that endured. So when someone would bring up the variety of deviations and dismissals, he would reply with a bit of grin and chagrin, "Yes, I've had a little bit of everything on my staff except murder; and I've thought of that."

In my life, I've known thousands of ministers; but I don't personally know any one of them who entered the ministry with a lack of integrity or for the wrong motive. On the other hand, I've seen and been a part of lapses in integrity in the lives of multitudes of ministers. And I'm speaking only of lapses of integrity that have come to light — not those still hidden from everyone but God.

### Loss of integrity

But there is a difference between lapses of integrity and loss of integrity. A lapse is recoverable with confession and repentance. Peter's life

illustrated that. David's life illustrated it. When lapses of integrity occur, there is the potential for recovery even though one's reputation may always have the stain of that lapse on it. It would take a book to identify all the whys and wherefores of lapses and losses of integrity. However, the nutshell about aberrations in integrity is this: people tend to edge into them, yield, and sin — over the long haul of life or even the short haul.

As I said and as the Bible shows, lapses in integrity are recoverable. God forgives repentant sinners. Sometimes congregations even follow God's model and forgive the truly repentant. Ongoing loss of integrity is when sin enters a life and there is no admission, confession, or repentance of that sin. It may be a Judas kind of remorse over getting caught and exposed rather than a true, godly repentance that is a change of mind, heart, and attitude. Judas' kind of repentance led him to commit suicide. Peter's kind of repentance led him to preach the sermon at Pentecost after reconciliation with our Lord.

### Building confidence after lapses of integrity

Unfaithfulness is a wound that's hard to heal and takes time. Repeated unfaithfulness is even worse. Hosea and his wife Gomer could testify about that. Interestingly, the name Gomer meant "complete," which is what integrity is sup-

posed to mean. God compared Israel's unfaithfulness to Him with Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea. But because of love and true repentance, there is the potential to build a new and restored confidence in one's integrity and faithfulness. God has that kind of love. Hosea was to have it. You and I are to have that kind of love.

The other side of the coin is that lapses and losses of integrity are to be dealt with as a part of the discipline in a church. This fact is true whether it's referring to pastor and staff or the members themselves. Forty-five years ago, my first published article was titled "Whatever Happened to Church Discipline?" Today, you and I could answer that it went by the wayside as churches got more molded into society than vice versa. God is the same, though; and we're still accountable for the seriousness of sin and dealing with it. That call for renewed integrity is God's message for each of us. It's especially true for pastors, who are to be models of integrity who match what they preach.

I suppose only God and the guilty know whether there's a lapse or a loss of integrity. While both formative and corrective discipline are a church's responsibility under God, it's also good to practice the right attitudes in these matters. It's good to give the benefit of a doubt when there is uncertainty. It's good to be

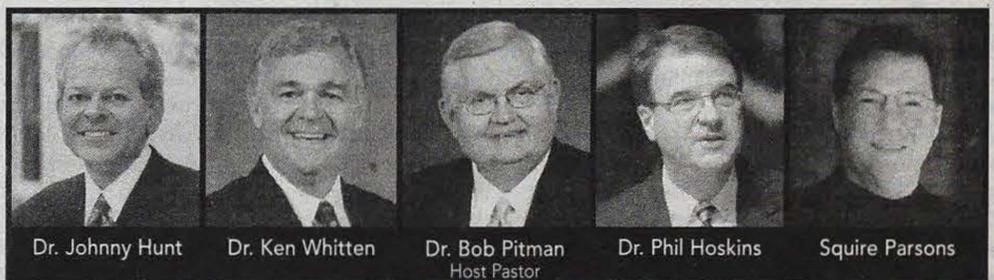
redemptive rather than destructive. It's good to put the unity and the welfare of the church above one or more whose lapses of integrity might harm or divide the church. In short, it's good to be Christ-like in how we treat each other in the church.

### Welcome home

One of our favorite stories in all the Bible is the return of the prodigal son to the Father. He confessed he had sinned against God and his Father. He knew he was no longer worthy to be called a son, but the Father exercised only loving forgiveness for the repentant son. That's a great way to end a story or a column on integrity. But the story didn't end there. The story concluded with the other prodigal in the family: the elder brother who had never left home, but never was really at home, because he lacked love, forgiveness, and their place in the integrity and wholeness required of each person. I'm the eldest of the siblings in my family, but I always pray and try to be the prodigal returned home. I pray that you and I will live in such a way that our integrity will be intact, and the Father will say, "Welcome home!"

Oh, about the landing gear? It held. The passengers applauded upon the rough but safe landing. And the pilot, in effect, said, "Welcome home!" □  
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**Response**

A response to a Letter to the Editor, entitled "Motivation," which appeared in the Nov. 7 issue, is beyond overdue. The letter outlined the motivation behind an amendment that required a reporting to the convention of whether a potential committee appointee subscribed to the 2000 BFM.

The motivation was, first, that most SBC churches and pastors neither know nor believe the teaching of Scripture; second, most elected leaders of the TBC pay no attention to the Scripture; third, most members of the Executive Board and Committee on Committees do not accept the teaching of the Scriptures; and finally, the only way to find out what is in the hearts, and the only way to find out if what they believe is acceptable, is to require these spiritual derelicts to signal agreement with the 2000 BFM.

I do not know all the ministers and laymen who serve our convention. Perhaps the author of this referenced letter does. I can't speak for all these men and women. But, I promise I do not believe spiritually unfit men and women serve our Tennessee churches.

I believe Tennessee Baptists are spiritually strong and biblically literate and competent. The Holy Spirit has not been replaced by a human document.

The Bible doesn't need a codicil, and I believe it is in the pulpit of every Tennessee Baptist church, and in the hands of Tennessee Baptist church members.

I frankly believe it is time to get "back to the Bible."

*Sam Creed, pastor  
FBC, Ashland City*

**Refreshing**

As a new pastor to Tennessee, I did not know exactly what to expect when I attended the Tennessee Baptist Convention that was held this year in Kingsport. It was refreshing for me to see that every candidate that was up for election in the convention was required to answer whether or not they affirmed the year 2000 revision of the Baptist Faith and Message. It also came as no surprise to me that some stood in opposition to this question concerning the BFM 2000. There were two separate motions made to change that question; both portraying the question itself as a "litmus test" for being able to be an officer in the convention or even a Baptist in Tennessee. In reality, what this question actually provided was a guideline for messengers like me to know where a candidate stands on the crucial issue of the BFM 2000.

Some would say that this controversy is simply a fight over words, but it is rather a fight for God's Word, the Bible. This becomes very clear when one examines the revisions that were made between the 1963 version and the 2000 version of the Baptist Faith and Message. The focal point of this controversy is found in the very first article of the BFM 2000, concerning the Scriptures. When comparing the BFM 1963 and BFM 2000, it is easy to see that the BFM 2000 more clearly states what the majority of Baptists believe about the nature of God's Word. For example, the BFM 1963 says, "The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man." This statement was

changed in the BFM 2000 to say, "The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man." On the surface, the change appears to be insignificant, but by saying that the Bible "is God's revelation" rather than "the record of God's revelation," the BFM 2000 is confronting the view that the Bible contains the Word of God rather than that it is entirely the Word of God. In making this change, the BFM 2000 is clarifying and affirming that the entire Bible is God's revealed Word in a much better way than the BFM 1963.

The BFM 1963 does make an excellent statement concerning Scripture, saying, "It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." The BFM 2000 added a new, and logical conclusion to that statement, saying, "Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy." This is a simple statement of belief in the inerrancy and infallibility of the entire Bible. Simply put, because the Bible is perfect, inspired by God, and free of error, all of the Bible is true and worthy of being trusted. But this small addition to the BFM has been one of its most attacked portions. That is because many of those who will not affirm the BFM 2000 are affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The CBF openly opposes the current leadership and policies of the Southern Baptist Convention, especially the adoption of the BFM 2000. That is because the BFM 2000 stands in direct opposition to their view of Scripture. The official website of the CBF says, "We want to be biblical — especially in our view of

the Bible. That means we dare not claim less for the Bible than the Bible claims for itself. The Bible neither claims nor reveals inerrancy as a Christian teaching." Despite this assertion by the CBF, the Bible repeatedly claims inerrancy for itself in both the Old and New Testament (see Psalm 12:6-7; II Timothy 3:16).

There is also one more point of contention in comparing what the BFM 1963 and what the BFM 2000 have to say about Scripture. The BFM 1963 rather vaguely says, "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ." On the other hand, the BFM 2000 has changed that statement to say, "All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation." This revision in the BFM 2000 better reflects what Jesus Himself said concerning the point of Scripture: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39, NKJV). But inexplicably, there were those who said from the floor of the convention that the BFM 2000 has taken Jesus out of His position of pre-eminence in the Baptist Faith and Message. On the contrary, the BFM 2000 has only made the position of Jesus more prominent there.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I am glad that it can be known where the potential leadership of the TBC stands on this crucial issue concerning the BFM 2000. Although there are many areas of dispute over the revisions and additions that were made in the BFM 2000, the most important one by far is the area of Scripture. If a candidate could not affirm the BFM 2000 for at least its stronger stance on Scripture, I would personally never vote for that person to be in a position of leadership within the Tennessee Baptist Convention. I am sure that many would call this a divisive position, but it is rather a position that I have witnessed a large majority of Tennessee Baptists to be strongly united over. As Baptists, we can only stand together and be effective for the

glory of God, when we stand in agreement on God's Word.

*Jonathan Witt, pastor  
FBC, McEwen*

**Younger leaders**

Regarding the article in the Nov. 21 issue, TBC President Ron Stewart stated that younger generations need to provide more leadership opportunities at the state level to young pastors. Stewart said that the older generations are resisting their influence and are unwilling to let go of leadership to share it with the next generation. Amen.

This is not only a TBC problem but a problem that is rampant within our associations and our churches. At many associational meetings I can find only a literal handful of people younger than myself (47 years old). Most in attendance are 55 and over.

The leadership in many of our churches is of the same ratio.

We then wonder why associations are struggling, and our churches drying up. Hello! Wake up call. As long as we continue to spend our time, money, and effort on maintaining the status quo, we will one day wake up and discover there is no longer a status quo to maintain.

The Apostle Paul did not spend all his time saying, "it is my church, I am in charge." Instead his attitude was, "it is the Lord's church, Timothy let me train you to carry on after me."

Although current leadership may think the convention, the association, and the local church are in good hands at the moment, where will we all be in 25 years if Jesus tarries?

*Al Cusick  
Sevierville*

**Didn't go**

I had my hotel reservation made. I had my plans set. I was looking forward to attending a meeting that I had hoped would aim at glorifying Christ, bind believers together in His cause, and be a period of encouragement. After all, we pastoral types can get discouraged from time to time so we get sort of excited about the possibility of attending a Convention meeting that will lift us up.

But did not go because, alongside news reports that Baptists at the TBC would be bickering over Belmont (and the lawsuit entered into by segments of the TBC leadership); there would also be bickering over the appointment of committee members who may not wish to sign on board with the Baptist Faith and Message of 2000.

The annual meeting used to be about Christ, but now its about power. And I have no interest in power aside from the power of the Spirit to live the Christian life. So I didn't go. I'm not going to participate in fussin', fightin', and feudin' under the guise of power play.

When the annual meeting returns to being an event whose only purpose is to exalt the Lord and encourage the denomination, I'll go back. Until then, I'm not wasting my time, our church's money, or energy on it.

*Jim West  
Petros*

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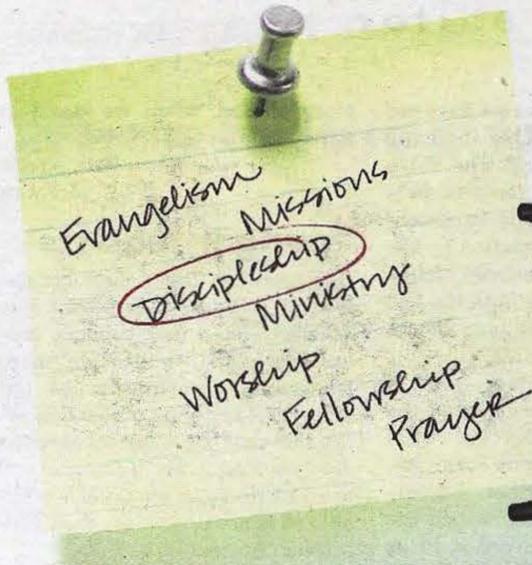
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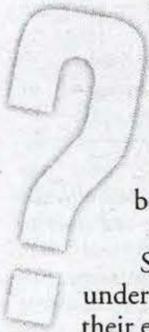
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Do you want to know the best kept secret in Tennessee? This secret has been around for nearly 56 years.

Seminary Extension, based in Nashville, was established in 1951 to offer undergraduate-level distance education to all Southern Baptists regardless of their educational backgrounds. Seminary extension exists for students to expand their learning.

The word seminary pictures a "school, especially a theological school for the training of priests, ministers, or rabbis, and a place or environment in which something is developed or nurtured." As the Tennessee Baptist Convention Theological Education/Seminary Extension specialist, I'm convinced that the development and nurturing of leaders is a critical component of discipleship.

Seminary Extension classes are not just for ministers or those preparing for ministry, the courses are also helpful to laypeople, particularly Sunday School teachers, deacons and others who serve in leadership roles. More than two-thirds of the current students enrolled in Seminary Extension classes are laypeople.

In Tennessee, there are 29 Seminary Extension centers, located across the span of our state. A Seminary Extension center is a locally sponsored program offering theological education and ministry training to persons in ministry within the context of their own community.

Ministers and lay people can further their education through several extension centers in Tennessee. With Seminary Extension centers scattered across every region of the state, most Tennessee Baptists have an opportunity to take seminary classes within hours of their home.

The Tennessee Baptist Convention is blessed to be geographically positioned 10 miles away from the Southern Baptist Convention Seminary Extension Office, Nashville. Because of that relationship, we have been able to have one of the nation's best Hispanic Seminary Extension programs and the only state convention, which offers a certificate in bivocational ministries studies.

Tennessee Baptists through their gifts to the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions have supported the efforts of Seminary Extension. As a result of those generous gifts, individuals, and associations are able to equip and empower leaders to impact the harvest. These certified centers have touched 224 students in 2007.

The Seminary Extension ministry exists to better equip ministerial and lay leadership that will lead healthy churches by promoting and equipping the entire church to fulfill the Great Commission. Because of the faithful focus of pastors, laypeople, associational missionaries, professors, and students, Seminary Extension has made an impact.

Please commit to spread the word to everyone that it's time to break the secret, and tell the story of Seminary Extension in Tennessee.

Included below is the contact information for members of your state missionary staff that are available to help you and your church on any area related to Seminary Extension.

- Willie McLauren, Seminary Extension.....(615) 371-2011
- Ray Gilder, Certificate Bivocational Ministry.....(615) 371-7907
- Chuy Avila, Hispanic Seminary Extension.....(615) 371-7913

## What Are the Benefits of Seminary Extension?

By Dennis Pulley



My first experience with Seminary Extension was when I was 16 years of age. My pastor, Robert C. Fuson Jr., invited me to take a class on sermon preparation that he was teaching through Seminary Extension.

At that time, it never dawned on me that I would give my life to teaching men and women through the ministry of Seminary Extension. Space will not permit me to share the wonderful moments and enjoyable people that I have experienced through this little known ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention.

For the most part, my involvement in Seminary Extension has been through the local association. Observation and participation in this venture taught me the benefits of this ministry to the local association.

Consider some of the benefits, advantages, and blessings of the ministry of Seminary Extension to a local association.

1. Seminary Extension offers college-level instruction to ministers who can not relocate to a seminary or who do not have the funds for ministerial training. A selection of classes in Bible, history, theology, pastoral ministry, and education offers valuable training for the ministry. Written by people of experience and training, each class helps the student acquire valuable information and basic principles for fulfilling the call to ministry.
2. Lay people, who desire to experience an in-depth study of the Scripture for their own spiritual maturity, will benefit from Seminary Extension. Likewise, they will find that some of the courses will help them develop greater skills for ministry. As a result, they will become better equipped leaders in the local church.
3. An individual can earn a bachelor of arts in religious studies or the bachelor of ministry degree through Seminary Extension and Judson College, a Baptist college in Marion, Ala. Judson will accept up to 30 hours of work from Seminary Extension while the remaining hours are completed on-line through the college. Currently, one of our students is pursuing this course of study.

4. Through the years, I have noticed that those who take classes in Seminary Extension develop fellowship and relationships, which continue to grow year after year. In our classes a warmth, fellowship, and camaraderie serve to bond Christians who serve the Lord. These relationships continue outside the class. They are sustained through prayer and mutual encouragement.

5. Classes are rather inexpensive. I do not know where anyone can take a three-hour college level course for a \$20 registration fee plus the costs of text books. Through the graciousness of Darrell Gwaltney, dean of the school of religion at Belmont University, Nashville, money is given to offset the cost of this ministry. Full cost for courses range from \$150-\$260 dollars. This is significantly lower than what one would pay at a university.

6. As the teacher and director of the center, I have had the opportunity to make significant investments in the lives of men and women. It has been my joy to witness lay people who responded to the call to ministry through these classes. Today, one of these students is a chaplain at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis. The opportunity to develop close friendships with lay people has enhanced my work as an association missionary to the churches that I have been called to serve. Thus, this ministry has afforded me another avenue of multiplying ministry. The investments in the lives of people through the extension centers will yield eternal dividends.

Having been associated with Seminary Extension for 45 years, I am more excited about its potential in the association than at any time in my ministry. This year, God has opened the door for us to add classes in Spanish. Future plans call for us to add a class in Korean. Only God knows the doors He will open in the future.

Nationally the vision for this ministry is filled with spiritual energy and great expectations. New courses will be added, new partnerships will be forged, and ethnic groups will be included in future planning.

If you are not involved in this ministry, you are missing a great opportunity to empower your pastors and lay people for training for a greater ministry. The relationships that you make will be another context from which you can find fulfillment and joy. The spiritual dividends on investment of this ministry will both bless your life and your association.

*(Pulley is the director of missions for the Cumberland Baptist Association, Clarksville.)*

## Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Jan. 10         | Middle Tennessee Minister of Missions Meeting, First Baptist Church, Hendersonville |
| Jan. 11-12      | Great Commission Prayer Conference, First Baptist Church, Gallatin                  |
| Jan. 25-26      | Youth Project 2008, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City                           |
| Jan. 28         | Developing an Inviting Sunday School Conference, Statewide                          |
| Jan. 29         | Church Planting - Is It For Me?, Baptist Center, Brentwood                          |
| Jan. 31         | Associational Secretaries Celebration, Baptist Center, Brentwood                    |
| Jan. 31- Feb. 2 | Youth Ministry Conclave, Convention Center, Chattanooga                             |

For more information, please visit [www.tnbaptist.org](http://www.tnbaptist.org).

## A Testimony for Seminary Extension

By Bruce Kennedy

We had been serving for several years at our home church, Spring Creek Baptist Church in Clarksville.

I was the part-time music director. My wife Robin was children's church leader.



We taught Sunday School to high school students. We realized that we could benefit from some additional Bible training. We began to look at our options on additional Biblical training. After we graduated from law school, I began to practice law, and Robin continued to teach at the elementary school level. We were working full-time and busy in our home church. Finding additional training that would fit our schedules would be a challenge at best.

We began looking at some correspondence and internet type schools. Robin and I enjoy the classroom environment. Our church secretary Joan Hair announced in a Wednesday night service that the Cumberland Baptist Association, Clarksville, would be starting a Seminary Extension program. This sparked our interest. The class would be led by our director of missions Wesley Pitts.

We enrolled in Seminary Extension and attended every fall and spring semester for the next three and a half years. We only needed two classes to get our biblical diplomas when our daughter Lauren came along and then two years later our daughter Leah was born. Seminary Extension studies had to be put on hold. When our youngest daughter was six, we had the chance to go back and finish those two classes. By this time Pitts had moved to the Long Run Baptist Association in Louisville, Ky., and our director of missions was Dennis Pulley. We finished our studies and received our diplomas under Pulley's leadership.

We are like lots of folks. We are ordinary, regular busy people, trying to do our best in an effort to honor the Lord Jesus Christ with our lives. Seminary Extension helped us to improve our ministry skills and allowed us to get some additional scriptural training, which was what we really wanted.

Not only was it a great time of biblical learning, it was also a lot of fun. Our Seminary Extension program was an "On Campus" program. We had the privilege to interact with other students, who shared our faith and understood the challenges of being involved in ministry in the local church. It was a great place to hear what sister churches were doing and to fellowship with other Christians on a regular basis outside of our church family. That kind of classroom interaction and fellowship does not happen via correspondence or internet.

I highly recommend Seminary Extension to anyone who wants to further their biblical training. Seminary Extension is a great way to help the local church by increasing the biblical education of its members.

The training we received from Seminary Extension has been very useful personally and ministerially. Anyone at any level of ministry work, can benefit from Seminary Extension. Seminary Extension is one of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's best kept secrets.

*(Kennedy is an attorney in Clarksville where he and his wife are involved in the music ministry at The Planting, a church plant.)*

# At the age of 80, Bill Cox has many reasons to 'celebrate'

By Lonnie Wilkey  
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Bill Cox set a goal a few years ago to record another CD if he made it to the age of 80.

Cox did so and he kept the promise he made to himself by recording this fourth Christian CD.

Looking for a title, Cox settled on "Celebrate," which is quite fitting for the occasion.

Cox noted that in 2007 he celebrated his 80th birthday, his 62nd year in the ministry, his 73rd year as a Christian, and 59 years of marriage to his wife, Catherine, who is also his accompanist on his CD.

Cox, who is retired from the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources) is well known across Middle Tennessee especially. He has served numerous churches in the area as interim minister of music and has sung in many other churches for revivals and special occasions.

Cox is now the minister of music at Triune Baptist Church, Arrington, and his wife is the organist.

He also is asked to sing at numerous senior adult events throughout the area.

Music has been an important part of Cox's entire life and ministry and he is grateful that the Lord "has left me with my voice."

Though he does have asthma, it has not hindered his

ability to sing. "When I get up to sing, God gives me everything I need. I know it is Him and not me."

He also is thrilled that his lifelong partner, Catherine, is able to join him in his music ministry. "Music has been very special to us," he maintained.

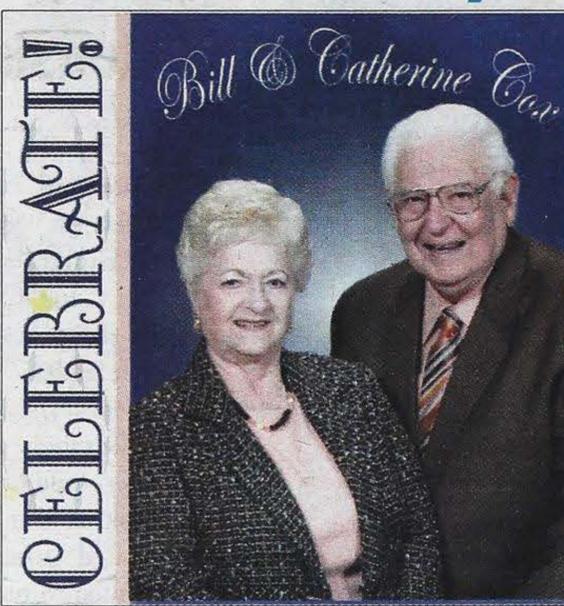
Cox's latest CD was recorded by GraceWorks Studio, which is operated by Corryton Baptist Church in Corryton (near Knoxville).

Cox learned of GraceWorks through an advertisement in the *Baptist and Reflector* and he has nothing but praise for the studio which handled everything from the recording to the artwork on his CDs.

His CD also includes piano solos by his wife.

"One of the greatest blessings God has given me is my precious wife," Cox said.

"It is such a joy in quiet times to just listen as she sits at the piano and begins to play," Cox said, noting his wife began as a church pianist at the age of 9 at Galilee Baptist Church near El Dorado, Ark.



"She plays from her heart," he said of his wife.

During the process, however, the two decided that Catherine would also record a CD of piano music only, "Ivory Celebration," her first solo effort.

Cox said the couple were able to record both CDs in three days earlier this summer.

Cox's "Celebration" CD includes songs which have very special meaning to him.

"All of the songs were picked for some particular reason with respect to my ministry and service over the years," Cox said.

His first selection, "God Did a Wonderful Thing for Me" expresses how he felt the day he accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of his life.

"I will never forget that day 73 years ago in Sunday School. We sang 'Love Lifted Me' (which is also on the CD) and my teacher told me that Jesus

wanted to save me," he recalled, adding that he accepted Christ that very morning.

While in college, Cox felt led to the ministry. "These 62 years have and continue to be precious," Cox said. Cox recorded the song "The Longer I Serve Him" to sum up his feelings about his love for the Lord and the opportunities he

still has to minister in His name.

The CD includes many time-honored popular hymns such as "When Morning Comes," "Just a Closer Walk With Thee," "The Old Rugged Cross," and "Just Over in Glory Land."

The final song is the one Cox is perhaps best known for — "The King is Coming."

"I have sung that song for 30 years and get numerous requests for it," Cox related, adding that it is the only song that he has repeated on his four CDs.

"The powerful truth of this song has been an effective message for me to sing over the years," he observed.

As he is now well into his 81st year (his birthday was in May), Cox has no plans to quit singing. "God has been good to us," he affirmed. "And we thank the Lord over and over for what He has done for us."

For information about Cox's CDs, contact him at (615) 599-0599. □

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**Come Learn From Dr. Roy Fish**

Noted author, professor and evangelist Dr. Roy Fish will be teaching a week-long course on evangelism Jan. 14-18 at the Harvest Institute for Biblical Studies. This course will be available for both credit and audit.

Dr. Fish is just one of the many distinguished professors who will be teaching courses this spring at the Harvest Institute for Biblical Studies in Knoxville. Course offerings for the spring include:

Course	Time
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Doctrine of the Bible	Mon., 11:30-2:30 p.m.
Apologetics, Science & the Bible	Mon., 3-6 p.m.
Old Testament Survey II	Mon., 7-10 p.m.
English Composition II	Tues., 6-9 p.m.
Biblical Backgrounds I	Jan. 7-11, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Evangelism	Jan. 14-18, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Field Study: Israel	March 12-21

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# Union trustees approve campus expansion at Germantown

By Tim Ellsworth  
Union University news office

JACKSON — The past year saw a record number of donors and gifts to Union University, Union President David S. Dockery told trustees Nov. 30.

In his annual report to the Union board, Dockery said 4,784 donors had given \$13.2

million to the university. During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, Union received 92 gifts of \$10,000 or more, compared to about 40 such gifts a decade ago. Union received 18 gifts of \$100,000 or more, compared to five such gifts a decade ago.

The university also received three gifts of \$1 million or more.

Ten years ago, the university had no gifts that large.

In addition to receiving Dockery's report, Union trustees empowered the Germantown campus committee to move forward with expansion plans for that campus. The expansion will be named in honor of Carl Grant, who recently gave the university

\$2.5 million for that project.

Trustees also gave final approval for the launch of a university debate team in 2008 and approved the hiring of Webster Drake as the debate team coach.

Drake, who will serve as associate professor of communication arts, comes to Union from Mississippi College. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy degree from Louisiana State University and his Master of Arts degree from the University of North Texas.

In other matters, Union University Athletic Director David Blackstock announced to trustees his plans to retire at the end of the spring 2008 semester.

Blackstock has served as Union's athletic director for 34 years. He amassed 874 wins in his career in three sports pro-

grams — women's basketball, baseball, and softball — including the 1998 NAIA Women's Basketball National Championship.

"David Blackstock is a champion," Dockery said. "For 34 years he has led Union University athletics to national prominence among colleges and smaller universities in this country."

"The university administration and trustees salute his years of leadership and wish him every blessing in the days to come."

To honor Blackstock, trustees voted to name the court in Fred Delay Gymnasium the David Blackstock Court.

Dockery will name a search committee consisting of administrators, faculty, and staff who will conduct a national search for Blackstock's replacement. □



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MATTHEW 25:21

*“I want nothing extra — just to pay my bills and live with dignity in my remaining days.”*

— NORMA FRIEND

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SERVING SOUTHERN BAPTIST RETIRED SERVANTS FOR 90 YEARS

## CLASSIFIED

### MINISTRY — OTHER

The King's Academy in Seymour, Tenn., has a full-time resident life staff girl's dorm live-in position. Involves weekdays and weekends. Qualifications: bachelor's degree, Christian commitment, strong interpersonal skills. Starting date — Jan. 6, 2008. Contact: Ellen Chèzik, (865) 573-8321 or [echezik@thekingsacademy.net](mailto:echezik@thekingsacademy.net).



Appalachian Outreach is a poverty relief ministry serving families in East Tennessee. We provide food, clothing, educational programs, furniture ministry, shelter (Samaritan House), and home repairs. AO is in need of replacing a few of our vans that have an excessive amount of miles and are costing a considerable amount to maintain. We are asking if any churches could please donate a 15-passenger van that could be used in our home repair ministry. Our contact information is as follows: Jean-Ann Washam, 865-475-5611, [aoutreach@cn.edu](mailto:aoutreach@cn.edu).



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## SBC CP gifts up over last year

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are 6.77 percent ahead of the same time frame in 2006, according to SBC Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman.

As of Nov. 30, the year-to-date

total of \$33,237,987.16 for Cooperative Program (CP) missions is \$2,108,096.13 ahead of the \$31,129,891.03 received at the same point in 2006. For the month, receipts of \$18,458,100.40 were 17.04 percent, or \$2,687,164.92, above the \$15,770,935.48 received in November 2006.

Designated giving of \$6,786,446.30 for the same year-

to-date period is 2.10 percent, or \$139,367.87, above gifts of \$6,647,078.43 received at this point last year. The \$3,724,109.32 in designated gifts received last month is \$34,098.38 below the \$3,758,207.70 received in November 2006, a decrease of 0.91 percent.

Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International

Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions, Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund, and other special gifts.

For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$33,237,987.16 is 99.41 percent of the \$33,433,589.38 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The SBC oper-

ates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year.

State and regional conventions retain a portion of church contributions to the SBC Cooperative Program to support work in their respective areas and forward a percentage to Southern Baptist national and international causes. The percentage of distribution is at the discretion of each state convention. □

### CLASSIFIED

#### MINISTRY — STUDENT

South Gate Baptist Church is accepting resumes for the position of student minister (part-time staff position). We are looking for a person (or married couple) who is outgoing, enthusiastic about ministry and possesses a solid theological foundation. Please mail resumes to Youth Minister Search Team, 3254 Murfreesboro Rd., Antioch, TN 37013 or e-mail to [sgate01@tds.net](mailto:sgate01@tds.net). For full job description see [www.southgatebaptistchurch.com](http://www.southgatebaptistchurch.com).

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First Baptist Church, Ridgely, Tenn., is seeking a full-time minister to students responsible for working with our children and youth. Paid ministry experience is preferred and a definite calling to this ministry. Our church shows great potential for growth in this area of our church's ministry. We ask that you prayerfully consider this ministry and send your resume, along with a brief explanation of your calling and philosophy of ministry to FBC, Ridgely, Attn: Andrew McIntosh, 300 South Main Street, Ridgely, TN 38080. E-mail: [fbcridgely@hotmail.com](mailto:fbcridgely@hotmail.com) or phone (731) 264-5972.

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Full-time student minister needed. Please send resume to Parkway Baptist Church, Personnel Committee, 50 N. Parkway Street, Hernando, MS 38632.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

For Sale: 19 church pews, natural color, padded seats, 10 foot long. Good condition. \$1,000.00 Call (731) 642-3856 or (731) 644-0318.

#### MINISTRY — MUSIC

Full-time minister of worship, Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, Ala., seeking God's man to lead our worship ministry to the next level. We are a progressive, growing church that has doubled in the past 7 years. Our worship style is celebrative, choir-driven, with praise band support. Looking for a team player with excellent people and administrative skills, a passionate heart for God, and a commitment to being daily "on mission" with the gospel. Send resumes to Wayne Woods, 2018 Hinton Dr., Oxford, AL 36203, or e-mail [wayne@connect2grace.com](mailto:wayne@connect2grace.com).

### CLASSIFIED

#### MINISTRY — PASTOR

Senior pastor for Signal Mountain Baptist Church ([www.signalmtnbaptist.org](http://www.signalmtnbaptist.org)), Signal Mountain, Tenn., is accepting resumes for a full-time energetic spiritual leader until December 31. Please apply online or send resume to Pastor Search Committee, Signal Mountain Baptist Church, c/o Rob Philyaw, 101 Palisades Dr., Signal Mountain, TN 37377.

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French Broad Baptist Church, Dandridge, Tenn., is seeking a bivocational pastor. We are a small congregation of approximately 70 in AM worship. Interested parties should send resumes to the following address, French Broad Baptist Church, P. O. Box 1577, Dandridge, TN 37725. Our website is [www.frenchbroadbaptistchurch.org](http://www.frenchbroadbaptistchurch.org).

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First Baptist Church in Henderson, Tenn., is currently seeking and accepting applications for a full-time pastor. Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, Attn: Pulpit Search Committee, 504 East Main Street, Henderson, TN 38340.

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Forest Hill Baptist Church in Germantown, Tenn., is seeking a senior pastor. Resumes may be e-mailed to [webmaster@foresthilbc.org](mailto:webmaster@foresthilbc.org) or mailed to Pastor Search Team, Forest Hill Baptist Church, 3645 Forest Hill Irene Road, Germantown, TN 38138.

#### MINISTRY — MUSIC

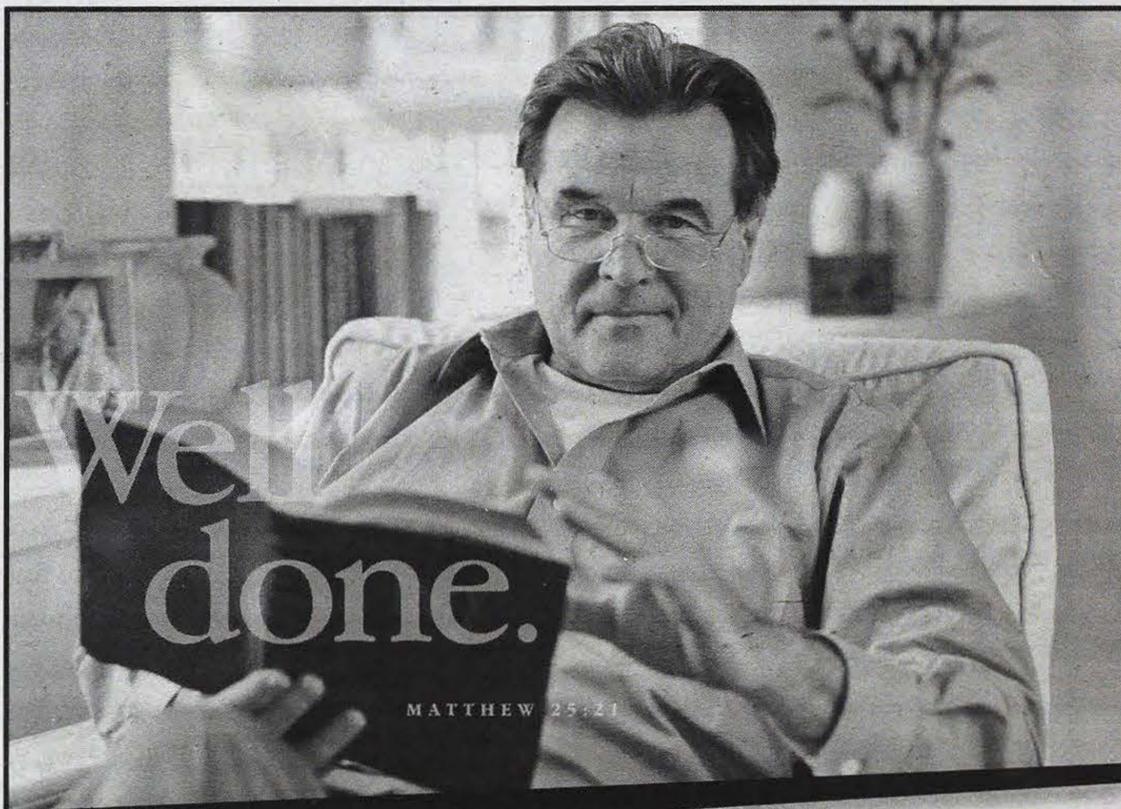
Hillhurst Baptist Church is seeking a part-time minister of music to be available for Sunday AM and PM worship services and Wednesday evening service with choir rehearsal. Call Sandy Miller at (615) 859-6963 or e-mail [schtchriz@aol.com](mailto:schtchriz@aol.com).

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Bells Campground Baptist Church, Powell, Tenn., is accepting resumes for the position of part-time director of music. Mail resume to Personnel Committee, 7816 Bells Campground Rd., Powell, TN 37849.

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Balmoral Baptist Church, Memphis, is seeking a part-time worship leader. Send resumes to the Music Minister Search Committee, Balmoral Baptist Church, 2676 Kirby Rd., Memphis, TN 38119, or e-mail to [balmoralchurch@bellsouth.net](mailto:balmoralchurch@bellsouth.net).



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## reflections

## Where have you gone Barney Fife?

By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

One of my favorite episodes of "The Andy Griffith Show" is where the Taylor clan along with Barney Fife are attending church when the visiting preacher from New York is in town.

Upon leaving the service, Barney, as only he could do it, says to the preacher, "That's something you can't say too much about — sin."

How times have changed. Instead of wholesome programming based on Christian values, television and movies today portray sin in a positive light. You seldom see religion portrayed at all in most television shows or movies, unless it is in a negative light. There are some exceptions, but they are far too few.

Instead of good, family-oriented television shows, we are bombarded with programming filled with profanity, sexual innuendos, extreme violence, homosexuality as a normal lifestyle, and the list goes on. That means it is more important than ever for parents and grandparents to monitor the programming their kids and grandkids watch on TV and movies.

On page three of this issue is a story about a recently-released movie entitled "The Golden Compass." Read this article carefully. Check it out even further on the Internet.

Parents taking just a casual glance at the previews might think it is a movie fitting for their children. Apparently it is not. The new movie, based on the first of three books in the series, has an anti-Christian and anti-God theme.

The author of the books, Philip Pullman, has openly admitted that he "is trying to undermine the basis of Christian belief" and that his books are "about killing God."

Don't know about you, but if I had young children (or older ones for that matter), that movie would not be on the "have to see" list. In fact, it would be banned.

Unfortunately, there are many movies and television shows our kids see that they should not. We must know what they are watching. Children, especially, are easily influenced. Don't take a chance that a glitzy movie geared toward children could turn them from God.

Some argue that Pullman has every right to author those books and the filmmakers can produce the movie. No argument there. They do. We also have the right not to buy the books or go to the movie. Let's exercise that right.

Where's good ole "Barn" when we need him? □

## a way with words

## Grandpa

By Hugh X. Lewis

In younger days my favorite place  
Was on my grandpa's lap;  
No worries then, no hectic pace  
And no generation gap.

Gentle, kind, an oh so wise,  
This is my grandpa's way.  
The love that I see in his eyes,  
It still helps me to this day.

Sometimes I'd crawl back on his knee  
Tho' it might not look so good,  
But just the same it comforts me  
In just knowing that I could. □

Copyright by Hugh X. Lewis. Lewis, a Baptist layman, is poet laureate of Christian country music in Tennessee. He is available to speak to church and senior adult groups. For more information, call (615) 883-0086.

## Being changed by the Savior

By Tony Latham

**Focal Passage: Luke 1:26-31, 34-35, 38, 46-50**

My father accepted Jesus at age 82. From his conversion to his death at age 85, I witnessed the changing power of Jesus at work in him. For the first time in his life he began reading the Bible and he underlined as he read. Change! We talked of spiritual things. Change! He shared that the biggest regret of his life was not going to church with his family. Change! When I was growing up he did not allow prayer before meals, but he changed and prayer was welcomed at all times. He was not pleased when I studied for the ministry. Though he later came to accept my ministry, he did not affirm it. But after receiving Jesus he was full of affirmation. Change! And best of all when dad passed from this life, he met the Author of Life and all change was complete (1 John 3:2).

This week's lesson describes the change God brought to the life of Mary when she became the mother of Jesus. Metaphorically speaking, when we allow Jesus "to be born" in our hearts, we will be changed by His presence. The Christmas story is about change.

**Change by God's decision (vv. 26-31).** The historical details of the birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary will never be repeated. The change that belongs to that story

keeps on happening as God works in lives today. It was God's decision to send Jesus ("God Saves") through Mary. Luke's constant reference to "an angel of the Lord" and to the Holy Spirit is evidence that God was involved in every part of the story (vv. 11, 13, 15, 19, 26, 28, 30, 35, 41, 67). Is your life being changed by God's decision or by your own decisions?

**Change by God's deed (vv. 34-35).** Zechariah wanted a sign to prove the announcement of the angel Gabriel (v. 18). Mary believed his message, only expressing curiosity concerning how God would do what he announced, since she was a virgin. The power of God is the active force of change. Change is His deed. While only Mary's child would be called the Son of God, all change in our life that shapes us more like Christ is God's work in us. It is the power of God's Spirit that brings the change that is pleasing to God.

**Change by God's design (v. 28).** Mary was fully submissive to God. She yielded to His design for her life. She was God's "slave" in that she relinquished control of her life into God's hands. Change was for her, "not my will but thy will be done." In what ways does the Christmas message lead you to place the design of your life into God's hands? In what ways do we often try to design our own lives?

**Sunday School Lesson**  
**Bible Studies for Life**  
**Dec. 16**

**Change by God's delight (vv. 46-50).** In our world there is paradoxical truth to the saying, "The one constant is change." If change is inevitable, isn't it a great idea to place all change into God's hands? God's delight is to change us so that we become all that we can be in Christ (II Corinthians 3:18). Mary yielded to God's control. Her humility before God was an emptying that allowed God to do what He would with her.

We are too often a people who believe we must be in charge of our own lives. Life is about me. I can "pull myself up by my own bootstraps."

This is a statement against humility before God. We are ruining our families, our government, our educational institutions, our churches, our economy, our morals, and our lives because we refuse to believe that God changes us in delight, and that when we see what God does with us we will rejoice, as Mary rejoiced. — Latham is pastor of Howse Baptist Church, Atwood.



WILKEY



LATHAM

## Aspire to walk with God

By Mike Dawson

**Focal Passage: Genesis 6:9-18; 22**

Our studies from Genesis are "all A's" so far: **Affirm** God's good plan — Genesis 1-2; **Admit** your sin problem — Genesis 3-4; and now, **Aspire** to walk with God — ch. 5-8.

"And Enoch walked with God; and he was not for God took him" (ch. 5:24). The writer of Hebrews explains: "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death" (Hebrews 11:5). I love the old story of a little boy who was asked to tell about Enoch. "Well," he said, "Enoch and God walked together every day. It started getting dark one day and God said, 'Enoch, we're closer to My house than we are to yours. Why don't you just come on home with Me?'"

Wouldn't it be great to begin walking with the Lord — then walk so closely with Him every day that we just walk right into Heaven one day?

"Walking with God" is being in step with Him. I played trumpet in my high school band, and I remember trying to march in step. I was in the 8th grade when I marched for the first time — in the big Christmas parade in my hometown, Columbus, GA. I was told that if I ever got out of step, all I'd need to do was skip, and I'd be back in step. I tried; in fact I skipped all over Columbus that day, and never

could get in step! Some people go through life "skipping," trying to get in step with God. Enoch knew how to walk with God.

So did **Noah**. He walked "out of step" with the entire world around him and in step with God. Today's larger study passage includes Enoch and others in the godly line of Seth in Genesis 5; our focal passage (Genesis 6) now presents Noah, his family, and the famous ark.

Noah — through Shem, Ham, and Japheth — originated three worlds (the basic three strands of humanity) after the flood. He also lived in three worlds. The **lost** world of Noah is portrayed in chapter 6:1-7. Like Paul's description in Romans 2:20-32 (and like our world today), his was a polluted, perverted world. When the people of God marry the people of this world (ch.



DAWSON

6:1-4), their children are "mighty" ... mighty bad!

The **safe** world of Noah is shown in Genesis 6:8-8:14. The huge ship that God instructed Noah to build was an ark of safety for Noah's family and the various animals. God provides safety to those who board the old "T&O — Trust & Obey" — before the coming of His judgment-flood. Our Ark

**Sunday School Lesson**  
**Explore the Bible**  
**Dec. 16**

of Safety is the Lord Jesus Christ, and if we've trusted and obeyed Him as Savior and Lord, we are saved and safe forever.

(You know, don't you, that Noah affixed eight wooden pegs to the outside of the ark; there he and Mrs. Noah, their three sons and their wives "hung on" until the flood was over. I hope you don't know that, because it certainly isn't true! No, God invited Noah and his family into the ark and then He shut the door. Noah's family was safe and secure inside that ark — just as we are secure forever in Christ! Thank God, salvation is not us holding on; it's our Savior holding us, "kept by the power of God through faith" — I Peter 1:5! We can fall down, inside the Ark, but we don't fall from grace, we fall on grace.)

The **new** world of Noah will be studied in our December 30 lesson, beginning in Genesis 8:15, where Noah and his family and the animals depart the ark and start everything fresh. This will remind us that we who are in Christ are new creations ... and also that there's a whole new world coming one day. Even so, come Lord Jesus! — Dawson is pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Columbia.

**Events**

◆ **Mid-South Royal Ambassadors**, based in the Memphis area, will hold its RA Family Night with the Grizzlies Jan. 18 at the FedEx

Forum, Memphis. RA Family Night events include: RAs and Challengers groups' names on the FedEx video board, discounted ticket prices, RA color guard performance, pre-game

shootout with Grizzlies players; NBA basketball game with the Memphis Grizzlies vs. Seattle SuperSonics; and post-game concert featuring "Building 429." For reservations and tickets, e-mail Mike Freeman at [m\\_freeman1@comcast.net](mailto:m_freeman1@comcast.net).



**MEMBERS AND PARTNERS** of Dixie Lee Baptist Church, Lenoir City, break ground for a new worship center on Nov. 11 at the site of the new facility. The members represented four generations of the congregation. From left are Hunter Shoemaker; Kari Burda; Pon Walker; Rod Gossage; Ada Oleson; Ed Spraker; Ella Wilkerson; Leah Resseguie; David Abston; Sam Smith, businessman; and Damon Falconnier, businessman.



**MILDRED MCCOMMON AUSTIN**, left of center, of Madison Baptist Church, Jackson, stands with family and Joe Billy Austin, to her right, her husband, on Mildred Austin Day on Dec. 2. On that day she was honored on retirement after 43 years of service as church treasurer. A potluck was held also. Austin stands with, from left, first row, Evelyn Butler, Bob Allen, Joan Allen, Mildred Austin, Joe Billy Austin, Andrea Winchester, Anna Claire Winchester, and Lee and Carson Winchester; top row, Josh Allen, Abbie and Edith Ann Allen, Bethany and Reed Cooper, and Barry Cooper.



**PARTICIPANTS OF THE** Sylvia Baptist Sisterhood Retreat pause during the recent event held at LindenValley Baptist Conference Center, Linden. Most of the women are members of Sylvia Baptist Church, Dickson. Others are members of other churches in Truett Baptist Association, based in Dover.

**Leaders**

Deadline for checks is Jan. 15.

◆ **Phillip Barnett**, pastor of Haywood Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, resigned Nov. 25 to become pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Nicholasville, Ky., a new church. The church called **Archer Thorpe**, church strategist specialist, Tennessee Baptist Convention, as interim pastor effective Dec. 1.

In addition, the church called **Jeff Thompson** of Nashville as interim youth minister effective Dec. 1.

◆ **Robert F. Brown**, senior pastor of Broadway Baptist Church, Maryville, resigned Nov. 18 after more than 13 years of service. He has been called as senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Dandridge.

◆ Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Spring City, honored **Claude Pendergrass** for his 11 years of service to the church as pastor recently during Pastor Appreciation Week.

◆ Avondale Baptist Church, Humboldt, has called **Randy Boals** as pastor.

**Churches**

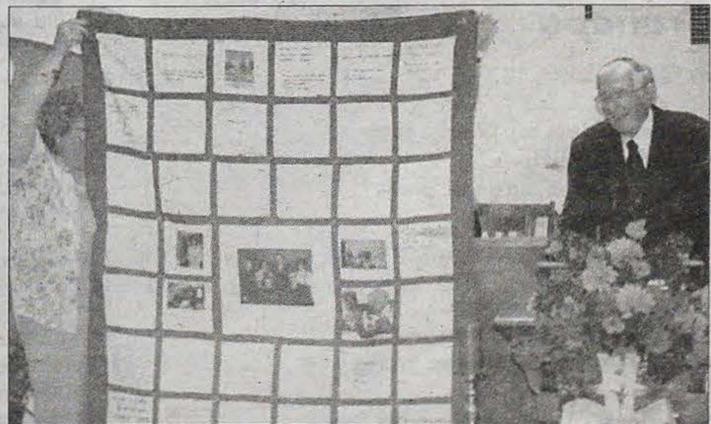
◆ **Midland Baptist Church, Bell Buckle**, will present its Children/Youth Special Christmas Program Dec. 16. A reception will follow the performance. The Adult Choir Christmas Music will be presented during the morning worship service on Dec. 23. In addition, the church has called **Danny Keever** as pastor effective Feb. 3. For information, contact the church at (615) 233-5424.



**COREY NOONER**, 18, a member of Corinth Baptist Church, Sharon, recently reached the mark of 16 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School.



**ROGER WEBB**, left, outgoing moderator of Sequatchie Valley Baptist Association, based in Whitwell, presents the gavel to **Bill Wolfe**, incoming moderator, during the annual meeting held recently. Webb is pastor of Baptist Hill Baptist Church, Jasper, and Wolfe is pastor of Lee Station Baptist Church, Pikeville.



**PATSY BARKER**, left, Woman's Missionary Union president of Hornbeak Baptist Church, Hornbeak, presents a quilt made by families of the church to **Ernest Mayo**, pastor, on Pastor Appreciation Day held recently. Muslin blocks were given to each family of the church to decorate. Some wrote messages, Bible verses, or just their names. Then a photo of the pastor and his family was placed on a block for the center, and the pieces were put together, reported June Bennett, project chairman and WMU member.