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Website - www.tnbaptist.org

Publisher - Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board

Shared Ministries

Committee -
Wes Turner, chairman; William Oakley, vice chairman; Tom Bigham, Mark Conway, Nina Fletcher, Tim Frank, David Green, Kimberly Hammonds, Doug Jennings, Joey Johnson, Bert Jones, Tommy Lemmonds, Greg Long, Ed Porter, Linda Still, Edna Tidwell, Larry Triplett

Postmaster -

Periodical postage paid at Brentwood and at additional mailing office. (USPS 041-780) POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Baptist and Reflector*, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024.

Frequency of issue -

Published weekly except for the weeks of Christmas, New Year's, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day.



Printed on
recycled paper

IMB missionaries aid homeless families in Congo

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — Nearly three tons of rice and beans were distributed to more than 300 homeless families in the Congo by International Mission Board missionaries and church partners Nov. 11-14.

In recent weeks, 250,000 people in the African country have fled their homes, and many others have lost their lives in the wake of ongoing conflict. A total of more than 400,000 displaced people are believed to be living in and around the city of Goma on the country's eastern border.

"The people are pretty frustrated ... malnourished," said missionary Rusty Pugh, who helped with the relief effort through the Southern Baptist World Hunger Funds, including a project in May when 100 families received food.

"There is food that is available to buy, but the people don't have the money to buy [it] right now."

As of Oct. 31, the World Hunger Fund had distributed \$9.6 million this year to overseas relief projects.

Tensions in the Congo have continued to rise throughout the year since a peace agreement between the government and

the rebel leader Laurant Nkunda fell through. In August, fighting broke out near a few of the displacement camps. Some relief efforts were temporarily disrupted.

"[When fighting] got within four kilometers of Goma, the U.N. was forced to quit feeding people in different camps," Pugh said.

"The good news is things have calmed down [and] the U.N. is feeding again [and] they get food back into those camps," he added. "We were able to do something to carry some of them over until the U.N. came back in." □

Iowa Baptists thank DR workers

Baptist Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Familiar yellow Southern Baptist disaster relief shirts and hats were prominent at the 13th annual session of the Baptist Convention of Iowa Nov. 14-15 as messengers thanked more than 60 workers who were among those who responded to the state's widespread flooding during the past year.

Jimmy Barrentine, the convention's executive director, and Ty Berry, the evangelism and pastoral care team leader, presented pins and certificates to the volunteers and to churches that hosted them. Berry said a

total of 144 Iowans had served in disaster relief efforts in 2008.

Messengers approved a 2009 budget of \$1,744,068, up 2 percent from the current year. The budget includes anticipated Cooperative Program giving of \$566,442 from the convention's 100 churches and missions with a combined membership of 13,644. The allocation of CP gifts will continue at 80 percent for Iowa outreach and 20 percent for Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries.

Attendance at the annual meeting included 129 messengers from 51 churches as well as 30 guests. Barrentine and the convention staff presented recognition certificates to several churches for high achievement in missions giving and baptisms.

Dan Wiersema, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids, was elected president. □

Michigan Baptists cope with ailing economy

Baptist Press

GARDEN CITY, Mich. — Messengers to the 51st annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan here reduced their overall budget by more than \$100,000 in light of

the ailing auto industry, which has impacted their state particularly.

Merriman Roach Baptist Church hosted more than 330 messengers and guests for the meeting Oct. 28-30.

Ken Render, pastor of Lakeside Church in St. Clair Shores, was elected president and Bob Carpenter, pastor of Cedar Street Church in Holt, was elected first vice president.

Messengers adopted a 2009 budget of \$3,389,274, a decrease of \$102,664 from the current budget. Anticipated Cooperative Program giving by Michigan churches of \$1,612,764 will continue to be allocated 69.5 percent for in-state ministries and 30.5 percent for SBC national and international missions and ministries.

During the partnership report, Scotty Goldman, an associate in the global missions office at the Alabama Baptist State Convention, presented a gift of \$25,000 toward the general deficit brought on by the downturn in the Michigan economy. Alabama and Michigan are in the second year of their partnership.

Michigan Baptists also are in partnership with Niger, West Africa. This is the third year of that partnership, and missionaries from the region attended the meeting to thank the BSCM for its support. □

'Seepression' is in the wind ...

— Continued from page 1

Remember American ingenuity learned in the 1930s gave an edge to American servicemen during World War II. Meanwhile, connect kids to the sources. Savor the teaching time to surprise your youngsters — milk comes from cows rather than the cooler at Kroger. Further, this season may be preparation for an even more stressful era ahead.

Validate an old aborted word: need

Enter a store, grocery or otherwise, wander, muse, meditate, touch, examine products at various angles. This ambulatory selection process and the plethora of goods befuddles the brain. Behold eight brands, 24 varieties by style, comfort range, or scent of toilet tissue. The same avails be it laundry soap or spaghetti sauce. Confusion creeps in to compete with marketing and the conscious element of need surrenders to the yearning to satisfy want, and the cycle continues. A life only by need alone time looms ahead. Fair warning.

Honor personal limits

Go ahead. Adopt this double first cousin to need. Contrary to some economic planner huskers, credit will continue to play an essential role in finances in both families and corporate America. Sadly, apparently, only now in the limited availability and reduction of credit will many folk discover a harsh lesson — credit is not a license, and abuse of the privilege proves to be disastrous. My wife and I share one credit card with a mutually agreed upon limit. Each month we pay off all charges, having periodically reviewed the growing balance throughout the month. Such responsibility requires discipline, a trait to be learned, having no reserved spot in your gene pool. An even more threatening calamity may loom ahead for many people maxed out on credit cards who now have no recourse but

to adjust to cash living and credit card interest payments.

Live on the stuff called cash

Little pennies, round nickels, thin dimes, flat quarters, bulky half-dollars, and U.S. bills of various denomination possess buying power. Paying cash allows you to own your purchase. Ownership — at least second cousin to cleanliness which is next to Godliness.

We just may be on the brink of an exciting season of ownership with only a warranty for paperwork. As an owner, you use your item, play with it, break it, even loan it. Who cares? It's yours. In a cash climate you can learn to wait. So wait patiently, save up for a needy purchase, and expect real appreciation — a Dutch uncle to gratitude.

See beyond yourself

Okay, my personal parson side now kicks into the discussion. The current ongoing season of adjustment to the crisis points me directly to the reality I am His creation. Personal inalienable rights include caretaker of His creation. The assumptive-presumptive participation in enough and more for all and forever mindset has to go. We can no longer afford the popular American flaunting of plenty custom.

Our Tennessee Baptist churches must encounter the choice to be or not to be Christian as never before in our life time.

Sometime, out yonder, beyond the prevailing financial interruption folk will welcome better times with the question, "Who was there alongside with me through the era of hunger, lost job, loss of home, wonder for tomorrows, and sight of pain in the eyes of my family?" The local church that chose to come alongside in a Christ-like manner to aid these hurting folk will be the communities of faith that expand the meaning of salvation. This in no way means financial bailout by churches alone.

While financial assistance can be of great help, I speak more of church folk offering encouragement, a new sense of fellowship and community, and a sense of camaraderie to work together through the era. If the church succumbs to a "do it for you" attitude, we lend our efforts toward either crippling or paralyzing folk with good self-respect who need to know they are not alone in their struggles.

The Tennessee Baptist Convention One Servant Family staff hurt with our church folk and are seeking God's guidance to use their energies to be alongside our churches as they minister in shepherding the local communities. While we together know not what we may do, may we be together open to seek to know what our Heavenly Father wills us to do as we bear one another's burdens together.

Reviewing my own writing, I think my simple message is all about sensitivity to care enough to bear witness to my Father God who carries His people through, often in the strength and action of other persons. May God's blessings, whatever He chooses them to be, be ours to know through this time.

"Sometimes on the mount where the sun shines so bright,

God leads His dear children along;

Sometimes in the valley in the darkest of night,

God leads His dear children along.

Some thro' the waters, some thro' the flood,

Some thro' the fire, but all thro' the Blood;

Some thro' great sorrow, but God gives a song,

In the night season and all the day long' (G.A. Young, "God Leads Us Along," Kansas City: Lillenas Publishing Co., 1931). □

Cookeville churches deliver 3,435 meals to residents

By Connie Davis Bushey
Baptist and Reflector

COOKEVILLE — At least five churches here prepared and delivered about 3,435 meals to area residents Nov. 25.

The Thanksgiving meal delivery was held last year by Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville, with Baptists from a few other churches helping.

This year five Southern Baptist churches in Cookeville — Stevens Street Baptist; Washington Avenue Baptist; Poplar Grove Baptist Church; First Baptist Church; and The River Community — participated. Members of a few other churches also joined in, said Rick Lowhorn, minister of outreach and Christian development, Stevens Street Baptist.

About 300 volunteers made the project possible. Meals were delivered to homes, fire departments, an adult education facility, police stations, jails, Tennessee Technological University, an interstate rest area, an alternative school, the rescue mission, homeless people, and an elementary school.

Each facility was checked with prior to the delivery to ask permission and find out how many meals were needed. In most cases, only workers at the facilities could be fed because of regulations at each institution. But the workers were very glad for the meals and to be thought of, volunteers reported.

The names of residents who received meals were submitted by members of the participating churches. Others asked for the meals when learning of the ministry. Residents were informed by information which was hung on door handles and by advertisements in local newspapers.

The meals were prepared by volunteers at Stevens Street including Tennessee Disaster Relief volunteers

from the area. The DR team was led by Don Green of the church. Green also is DR director of Stone Baptist Association. Because of the large amount of food needed, pies and cooked turkeys were delivered by volunteers and reheated at the church.

A nutritionist at Stevens Street Baptist determined how long the meals would be safe. If a meal was not delivered within the time period, it was thrown away.

Accompanying the meals was a card which said the meal was provided "by the Lord Jesus Christ." The card also asked the question, "Is

Jesus the only way to God?" and listed three verses which included the answer.

Jimmy Arms, senior pastor, Stevens Street Baptist, said he and others at the church are "just like anybody. We can't think of something like this." But when God "invites us we want to respond. And we are excited to be involved."

Arms said he is glad Christians are learning how to be the church instead of just going to church because of the many needs people have.

The main purpose is for people "to get a touch from the Lord," said Arms. "I'd love to feed a lot more." □



TOM AND RUTH CROPPER of Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville, visit with Peter Johansen after delivering a meal to him.



BILL BILYEU, second from left, of Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville, welcomes staff of Dry Valley School, Cookeville, to enjoy the Thanksgiving dinner delivered to the staff members. The school is an alternative placement school.



CHERYL SAYLOR, left, administrative assistant, Stevens Street Baptist, gives directions to Kirsten Higgins, lower center, Smyrna Church of Christ, Cookeville, and Dallas Dyal, Stevens Street Baptist.



WORKING IN THE KITCHEN of Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville, are Peggy Carr, left, Stevens Street Baptist, and Pat Zachary, church hostess, Stevens Street.



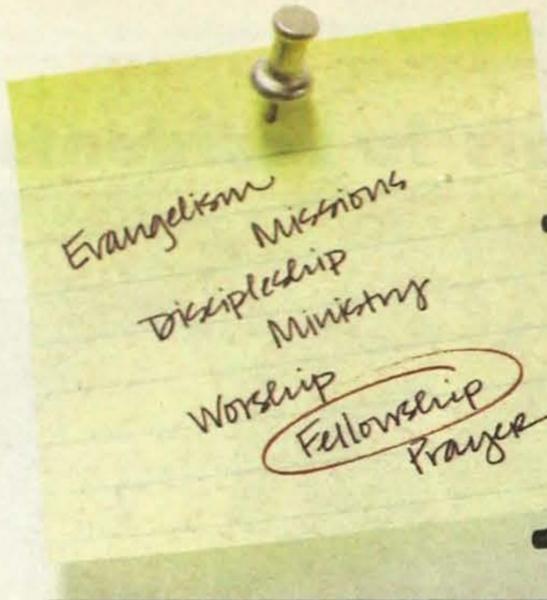
PREPARING THE meals to be delivered are Dee Furst, left, Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville; and James Medley, First Baptist Church, Cookeville.



BOBBY SEBASTIAN, senior pastor, Poplar Grove Baptist Church, Cookeville, helps Jaimie Martin, Stevens Street Baptist, pick up pies to go with the meals she will deliver.



DISASTER RELIEF WORKERS who helped prepare the meals on a DR cooking trailer are, from left, Bill Bilyeu, Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville; Richard and Glee Miller, Stevens Street Baptist; Don Green, Stevens Street Baptist and director of DR, Stone Baptist Association, Cookeville; Dick Saylor, First Community Church, Sparta; and David Wilson, Bear Cove Baptist Church, Sparta.



Church Health Matters

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

Fellowship Matters

How would you complete the following nursery rhymes?

- Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack...
- There was a woman who lived in a...She had so many children...
- Three blind mice, three blind mice...
- Itsy Bitsy Spider climbed up the...

Understanding depression will require you to understand the simple completed phrases of these nursery rhymes. Depression can also be understood by noticing some of the symptoms of the emotional struggle as well.

Weight gain or loss without the attempt to be on a weight program, sleeplessness or sleeping all the time, difficulty concentrating, irritability, hopelessness or helplessness, tearfulness most of the time, and the loss of interest in things that used to be fun are all symptoms that may suggest that a depressed mood needs to be considered.

There will always be candlesticks, hurdles, and other things to jump over.

- There will always be things to chase.
- There will always be those moments when you don't know what to do.
- And there will be times when you feel washed away.
- But remember the sun will come out and dry up all the rain, and you can climb up and out again.—Tony Rankin

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

Counseling and Family Ministries
Tony Rankin, Counseling and family specialist . . . (615) 371-8136
Jewell Burke, Administrative assistant(615) 371-2010

How **DEPRESSED** Are We?

Depression is more widespread in America than most people realize.

Consider these facts:

NEARLY 25% of all persons in America are experiencing some type of depressed mood or depression at any given point.

54 percent of all people believe depression is a personal weakness.

80% of depressed persons are not currently seeking treatment.

41 percent of depressed persons are too embarrassed to seek treatment.

Where Does Depression Come From?

Bloodline – There is some depression that is inherited by previous generations. It may be genetic or learned behavior.

Situational – Some depressed moods or “funks” are related to life circumstances that may involve poor choices, finances, uncontrollable events, and more life issues.

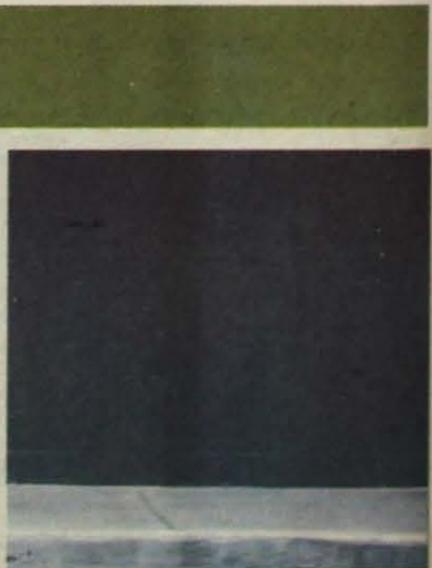
Loss – Loss of jobs, death of relatives, unrealized hopes and dreams, and loss of security have ways of causing depressed moods to surface.

Overwhelmed by expectations – Whether it's one's own expectations or those imposed by others, a sad or hopeless mood can result in a sense of helplessness.

Compassion fatigue – Persons in helping professions or individuals who give much of themselves often experience a depressed mood out of pure exhaustion.

What Can I Do About It?

1. Set some limits and boundaries with others.
2. Decrease the intensity.
Intensity does not equal productivity.
3. Take control of your life.
4. Talk to a close friend or a therapist.
5. Get some exercise.
6. Consider necessary counseling as a healthy thing to do or medication if it is recommended by a doctor.





Holidays Are *Emotional*

By Tony Rankin

Some therapists and counselors say that the holidays become difficult for certain persons and stressful for others "just because" its time for the holidays. Although there are some losses that make the holidays difficult, there are several other things to consider that may elicit emotions.

The schedule breaks of the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays allow us to change pace and slow down from our ordinary routines. Then we try to fill up our days that are intended for rest, relaxation, and family with shopping, over-doing, cleaning, over-eating, over-decorating, and trying to get to everybody's house and parties. Sometimes we even have to force ourselves to take unused vacation days so we don't lose them.

The holidays seem to invite most persons to try to impress others and family members with gifts that they don't need, and we can't afford.

What would happen if we spent the time we spend at malls and large shopping stores with our loved ones, talking to friends and relatives on the phone or through e-mail, or doing for persons that are needy? What type of satisfaction would we feel, and how much better would our families be as well as those who are less fortunate?

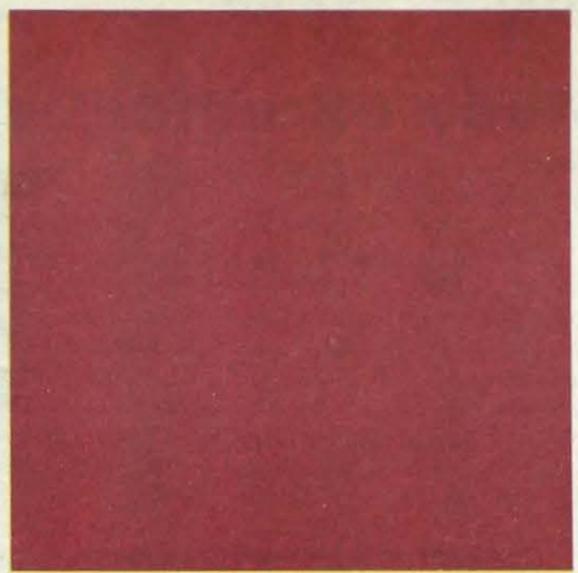
Holiday music elicits emotions that we rarely feel during the previous months. Caring lyrics and soothing music, the promises of spending time together and laughing, giving and loving, and familiar tunes and memorized lyrics from childhood help us experience pleasant moments and reflect on our meaningful past holidays.

The holidays remind us that the end of the year is approaching, that causes us to assess how well we have done during the year at our jobs, in our relationships, and in our attempts to improve our lives. Thanksgiving and Christmas push us toward making new resolutions for the upcoming year which almost always causes us to take a hard look at our losses, shortcomings, and deficiencies. The holidays make us consider new goals and plans that may not be completely obtainable.

Maybe there are plenty of reasons that cause us to be more emotional during this time of year. Perhaps that's not a bad thing either. Enjoy the season that causes us to be vulnerable.

Depression Affects All

- ❖ Everyone will be affected by depression-- the person him/herself, a family member, an employee, or a neighbor.
- ❖ The rate of depression in children and preschoolers is increasing.
- ❖ Depression will be the second largest killer after heart disease by 2020, and studies show depression is a contributory factor to fatal coronary disease.



How to Survive the Holiday Blues

By Tony Rankin

Here are some holiday survival tips:

- ❖ Realize the natural stresses of the holidays (Finances, hectic schedules, work deadlines, and relatives.)
- ❖ Understand the "realness" of the holidays.
- ❖ Prepare for selected memories and stabbing pains (Don't deny the past.)
- ❖ Be aware of the "poor pitiful me" syndrome.
- ❖ Be careful who you blame the "junk" on (That person is probably not around anymore.)
- ❖ Send cards to people that have helped you.
- ❖ Do something for somebody else (Bake cookies for the fire hall, prepare dinner for somebody less fortunate, help with a "Room at the Inn" program or the Salvation Army for the homeless.)
- ❖ Avoid the "old place" or the "same ole routine" (Buy new lights, hang a new ornament, and tell new stories in addition to sharing memories.)
- ❖ Get involved with others (Visit decorated holiday venues, do church activities with friends, drive around to see the lights, walk the malls, and attend local school programs.)
- ❖ Start new traditions (Plant a live tree, give a tree away, do for another family or person, read about and celebrate "Christmas Around the World," or celebrate for an entire week by opening a present every day for a week.)
- ❖ Receive counseling for your loss or struggle (It could be a gift from you to you.)



Study examines challenges found within small churches

By Mark Kelly
LifeWay news office

NASHVILLE — Most pastors of smaller-membership Southern Baptist churches see what God is calling their congregations to be and do and have laid the groundwork for accomplishing the mission, but their efforts to lead are frustrated by “turf” battles and a failure to clarify and evaluate plans.

According to a new study by LifeWay Research published in the November/December issue of *Facts & Trends* magazine, those pastors could see their congregations make progress by evaluating church ministries, organizing to reach their goals, and planning for the future. *Facts & Trends* is the official news magazine of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“The effectiveness of local church ministry often is jeopardized by poor organization,”

said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research. “Understanding God’s calling and the context of the church is important, but leadership requires knowing where you are, knowing where you need to go, and knowing how to get there. Most small church pastors actively pursue the first two but many struggle with the third.”

The study, which surveyed 350 pastors of congregations that average fewer than 100 in primary worship attendance, was conducted in March 2008. It found, among other things, that 67 percent of small church pastors are frustrated with how slowly progress is made at their church.

The inertia, however, isn’t for lack of trying. According to the study:

- Most pastors of small churches have assessed their church’s cultural context. Three-fourths have studied

their communities. Ninety percent have examined trends in their congregation. Seventy-one percent say they try to be actively involved in their community.

- Most pastors of small churches see what God is calling their church to be and do. Ninety-four percent say they clearly see the needs, hurts, and problems God is calling their church to address. Eight out of 10 have shared with the congregation a clear, compelling picture of what God is calling their church to look like several years from now.

The obstacles to missional progress, however, are familiar to every pastor. While two-thirds of the pastors surveyed indicated their church makes regular changes to improve their effectiveness, 49 percent said lay leaders in the congregation often resist change to protect their area of responsibility. A full one-third of them said

their church had experienced disruptive conflict in the past year.

“No doubt spiritual failures hold churches back more than leadership or administrative shortcomings,” McConnell said. “Discouraging baptism and membership trends in the Southern Baptist Convention show us that change is needed in many local congregations.

“But change requires leadership,” McConnell added. “LifeWay Research wanted to find out whether basic leadership activities are occurring in smaller Southern Baptist churches. While we found that many key activities are occurring, we were able to identify significant shortcomings in planning and process improvement.”

Many pastors of small churches candidly admitted they do not know how to lead their church where they need to go, McConnell noted.

Only 29 percent of small church pastors strongly agreed that they have a clear plan to accomplish the things God has called their church to do. Forty-four percent agreed (somewhat or strongly) that they often don’t understand why things they try don’t work. Thirty percent agreed that they are confused about where they should invest their own time and effort.

The problem is compounded by the fact that many churches fail to plan or even evaluate their current activities, the survey revealed. Although 70 percent of the pastors said the allocation of their church budget adequately funds current objectives, 40 percent agreed their

church rarely has time to step back and plan appropriately. While more than half of pastors — 57 percent — have written a vision or mission statement adopted by their church, two-thirds rarely change who is responsible for certain work or responsibilities. Leadership in fewer than 6 in 10 churches regularly evaluates methods and results of events and programs.

“The survey clearly indicates that smaller-membership churches need to stop and evaluate what they are doing and who is doing it,” McConnell said. “Leaders need to develop effective plans for carrying out the work God has called their churches to do.”

Leading a church requires both vision and administrative ability, McConnell noted. Many pastors, however, are much stronger in one area than the other.

“The apostle Paul in I Corinthians 12:28 taught that God places teachers in the church and also gives the gift of managing,” McConnell added. “But He never promised both those gifts would be in the same person.”

“Pastors who candidly assess their own strengths and weaknesses can surround themselves with leaders who have the talents that they lack,” he said.

“Each local church should seek out and utilize members gifted in organizing people and processes while still encouraging each other to desire the greater gifts of faith, hope, and love.” □

Cameron, Freeman to write lesson commentaries

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Two long-time Tennessee Baptist pastors will write commentaries for the winter Sunday School lessons.

Marvin Cameron, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kingsport, since 2001 will write the Bible Studies for Life curriculum.

A native of Knoxville, Cameron has served as pastor of three other Tennessee churches — First Baptist Church, Gatlinburg; West Hills Baptist Church, Knoxville; and Central Baptist Church, Fountain City, Knoxville.

Cameron is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, and holds the master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Cameron served as second



CAMERON



FREEMAN

vice president of the TBC in 1992-93 and has served on numerous convention committees. He is currently as trustee of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City.

He and his wife, Penny, have two sons, Chris and Tyler.

Roger P. Freeman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville, since 1993, will write *Explore the Bible* series.

A native of Memphis, Freeman formerly was pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans, La. He is a former pastor of Fosterville Baptist

Church, Fosterville, from 1969-71, and was youth minister at Whitehaven Baptist Church, Memphis in 1969.

Freeman is a graduate of Belmont University, Nashville; and holds the master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

He has served as president of both the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Louisiana Baptist Convention and has served on various committees at both the TBC and LBC levels as well as for the Southern Baptist Church Executive Board and is a current trustee of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Freeman and his wife, Priscilla, have four children: Melanie, David, Daniel, and Sarah. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — PASTOR
Cedar Hill Baptist Church, Cedar Hill, Tenn., is accepting resumes for a full-time pastor. Please send resume to the following, Bill Seeley, Chairman, P. O. Box 205, Cedar Hill, TN 37032 or cedarhillbaptist@gmail.com.

CLASSIFIED
MINISTRY — OTHER
Temple Baptist Church — pianist needed, office 847-5091 or music minister, (615) 517-0254.

MISCELLANEOUS
FOR SALE: 1990 28-passenger church bus. 5.9 cu. in. non-turbo diesel engine with Allison transmission. Large rear luggage area. Good condition with good tires. \$5,000. Phone: (931) 260-3564.



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To give a subscription, fill out the form below and send along with \$12 per gift subscription to *Baptist and Reflector*, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027. A gift card also will be sent to the recipient announcing your gift.

Name of giver _____
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Contact information (for questions) _____
Name of recipient _____
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City, State, Zip _____

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MINISTRY — CHILDREN
Full-time preschool/children's director — Bellevue Baptist Church of Nashville, Tenn., seeks a caring, experienced director for our preschool and children's ministries. Send resume to frontdesk@bellevuebaptist.com or Preschool/Children's Search Committee, Bellevue Baptist Church, 7400 Hwy. 70 S, Nashville, TN 37221.

Belmont Heights Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., is seeking a versatile part-time children's minister to guide and serve in ministry in an urban community. Our church is located on the campus of Belmont University. Resumes are to be sent to Belmont Heights Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 2100 Belmont Blvd., Nashville, TN 37212.

reflections

'Tis the season for Lottie Moon

By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Connie Davis Bushey, *Baptist and Reflector* news editor, recently wrote an excellent two-part series on Lottie Moon, who she was, and why her name lives on today, so I won't repeat what she has already written.

I will, however, encourage Tennessee Baptists to pray for international missions and to give what you can to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this year.

In tough economic times, all of us are having to stretch a dollar as far as possible. Let's continue to give sacrificially to fund international missions as we have since 1888 when that first offering of \$3,315 was collected, enough to send three women to China.

Since then, Southern Baptists have given \$3 billion to the Lottie Moon offering, including \$150,409,653 last year.

Your gifts to the Lottie Moon offering fund 5,541 missionaries (as of Nov. 11). Last year these missionaries helped establish 25,497 new churches and saw 609,968 people get baptized.

The latest statistics from the International Mission Board show there are 11,573 people groups worldwide representing 6.6 billion people. There are 6,508 unreached (less than 2 percent evangelical) representing 3.8 billion people. There are also 5,903 "Last Frontier" people groups (less than 2 percent evangelical and no active church planting) representing 1.6 billion people.

As you can tell, Southern Baptists and Christians of all denominations have a long way to go before we can say that we have completed the Great Commission.

God does not call everyone to be an international missionary, but He does call us to be a missionary where we are. If we are unable to go internationally, we can still pray for those who can go and give our offerings to help them share the gospel with people who may never hear the good news of Jesus Christ otherwise.

Pray for our international missionaries this Christmas season and pray about what you can give to support them through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Together we can make a difference! □

God's missionary heart

By Marvin Cameron

Focal Passage: Isaiah 49:1-6; 56:3-8; 66:18-23

Children ask the most difficult questions, don't they? How does the world turn? How does an airplane fly? How big is God? Such questions came from our sons when they were young fellows. The last question is the one which causes me to think the most. Just how big is God? And, in keeping with our text today, how big is God's heart?

I have a strong suspicion that God's heart is infinitely bigger than I can imagine. Needless to say, God's heart is infinitely larger than the heart of any human now living. How big is your heart? I don't mean as it would be measured by a cardiologist. But how big is your heart in a spiritual sense? How many people or groups of people can you and I truly love?

At the time of Isaiah's prophecy many people believed that God's heart was relatively small. God loved a certain group of people and did not love others. At least that was the common theology of the day. Isaiah refutes such a narrow understanding of God's love in our focal passages for this Sunday. Isaiah 49:6 reads in part: "I will also make you a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the

ends of the earth." Notice the total lack of geographical limitations for God's salvation. No place on earth is excluded. Once again we are forced to answer the question of the limits we place on God's salvation. Do my actions match my words in believing that God's salvation extends to the ends of the earth? Or am I comfortable knowing that some have not yet had the opportunity to hear the gospel?

The image of "a light for the nations" foreshadows the first chapter of John's gospel. John 1:4-5 reads as follows: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood." Later in that same gospel Jesus would say, "I am the light of the world." Notice what He did not say. He did not say "I am the light of (insert group name here)." Jesus did not limit those who could follow Him to any nationality or race. Instead, His life, death, and resurrection are available to all who will follow Him in faith.

The second focal passage of our lesson is found in Isaiah 56:3-8. Verse 7 includes these words: "... My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." How about your house of prayer? Is it open and inviting to all nations who wish to call upon the name of the Lord? Or is our house of prayer

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limited to those who were raised where we were raised? I remember vividly a time when my father was a bivocational pastor some decades ago. A kindly deacon came to him prior to a service and informed him that there were some African Americans sitting in the sanctuary. That was a first for that good fellowship. "What do we do?" the deacon asked my dad. I will never forget his answer: "They are here to worship God and that is what they shall do." I learned a powerful lesson in the 1960s that echoes in my mind today.

How big is God's heart? How about as big as the sky on a cloudless night? Or as big as the ocean when you are on a ship in the middle of it? Or as big as a child's dreams of the Milky Way?

God's heart is bigger than I can imagine as He seeks to be the salvation of all those who seek Him.

The more relevant question for us is this: "How big is my heart for God's people?" How does the size of my missionary heart compare to God's missionary heart? □ — Cameron is pastor of First Baptist Church, Kingsport.

When you started out

By Roger Freeman

Focal Passage: I Thessalonians 1:1-10; Acts 17:1-9

The theme of the Thessalonian letters is "How To Live Until Jesus Comes." The Holy Spirit beautifully combines the hope of the Second Coming with practical everyday Christian living in the Thessalonian letters.

The Second Coming of Christ is mentioned in every chapter of I Thessalonians. (See I Thessalonians 1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:16, and 5:2.)

D. L. Moody asked a skeptic, "Do you believe that Christ could return today?" The unbeliever said, "I think not." Moody responded, "Jesus said, In such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh," (Matthew 24:44). We should live every day as if Christ died yesterday, arose this morning, and will return before we go to bed tonight.

The Thessalonian Church was born in a spirit of revival and spiritual expectancy (see Acts 17:1-9). On the second missionary journey, the "Macedonian vision" came to Paul (see Acts 16:9-10). Paul and Silas went to Greece, bringing the gospel into Europe! The course of history was set, and the dominance of Western Civilization was established for the next 2,000 years. In Thessalonica, the gospel "turned the world upside down," (Acts 17:6).

Paul, Silas, and Timothy (I Thessalonians 1:1) jointly sent this letter of encouragement to

this "first-generation" Church. "Grace and peace" is the Holy Spirit's greeting through Paul in all his letters. "Grace" is God's Riches At Christ's Expense." Grace always must precede peace. There can be no peace without grace. Peace with God (Romans 5:1) will lead us to the "peace of God" (Philippians 4:6-8), all from the "God of peace" (Philippians 4:9). The Church is the continual recipient of Paul's prayers and a causing for thanksgiving (1:2).

The diligent believers were commended for three continual acts of ministry (1:3). Your work of faith; your labor of love; your endurance in hope.

Faith led to acts of love and good works because of the hope of His coming. This was a great serving and loving Church that all Churches should emulate. "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone."

Paul reminds them of their election (v. 4). God chose them in Christ. Election is grace traced to its earliest source. "Election" does not eliminate human responsibility but reminds us that "the initiative in salvation is always God's."

The Thessalonians started out as a "witnessing Church" to their lost world. They "followed" ("mimicked" in Greek) Paul and "sounded out" (echoed, rang) the gospel to all of Macedonia. They were "Acts 1:8 Christians" who took the gospel to their Jerusalem, their Judea and

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Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world.

Their conversion was a complete change of life. They turned from idols to "serve the living and true God" (1:9). They rejoiced in the blood of Christ shed on Calvary's cross to save them from Hell and the wrath of God to come (1:10b). Paul commends them for the admirable way they have started and encourages them to continue their faithfulness until Jesus returns (v. 10a).

Adrian Rogers told the story of a little boy who spent a summer vacation on his grandfather's farm. There was a large clock in the home that rang the chimes each hour. The little boy listened and counted the chimes at the midnight hour. He counted "11, 12 ... then 13 ... 14." He ran to his grandparents' bedroom and exclaimed, "Wake up! Wake up! It's later than it has ever been before!" That is true for the Church today. We need to wake up and serve Christ with all our hearts. It is later than it has ever been before.

Discussion/Application: What acts of "a labor of love" have you witnessed recently? What "labor of love" could you do for Christ and His kingdom this week? □ — Freeman is pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville.



WILKEY

**Retire from the choir?**

By Hugh X. Lewis

Choir practice takes a lot of time. There's not enough hours in the day. Truth of the matter is that I'm just far too busy anyway.

Of course the fellowship I'll miss, 'Cause these are some of my best friends. But then, I'm not bothered by this, I can still see them on weekends.

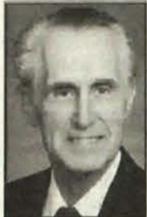
The Choir Director understands, I really have no other choice. My family makes such strong demands, And I'll just be one missing voice.

On, what's the use? I'll stay aboard, And when from this world I expire, I might receive as my reward A place in the Heavenly Choir. □

Lewis lives in Nashville and is available for speaking engagements for churches and senior adult groups across the state. He can be contacted at (615) 883-0086.

Deaths

◆ **Henry Chiles**, 85, pastor emeritus, Central Baptist Church, Bearden, Knoxville, died Nov. 20. Chiles served as pastor of the church from 1951-1972. He also served as director of missions, Northern Plains Convention (South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana) from 1972-1982. He was on the boards of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City; Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour; and the former East Tennessee Baptist Hospital, Knoxville. A graduate of Carson-Newman College, he also graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and received an honorary doctorate from Carson-Newman. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Bobbie Clark Chiles, a daughter and a son, four grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Henry and Bobbie Chiles Mission Endowment, c/o Central Baptist Church, Bearden, 6400 Deane Hill Dr., Knoxville, TN 37919.



CHILES

◆ **Bobby Mullins** has resigned as senior pastor, Central Baptist Church, Oak Ridge, to pursue new ministry opportunities. He was honored with a farewell reception by the church on Nov. 2. He is a member of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board. He may be contacted at BroBMullins@aol.com.

Leaders

◆ **Henry Chiles**, 85, pastor emeritus, Central Baptist Church, Bearden, Knoxville, died Nov. 20. Chiles served as pastor of the church from 1951-1972. He also served as director of missions, Northern Plains Convention (South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana) from 1972-1982. He was on the boards of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City; Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour; and the former East Tennessee Baptist Hospital, Knoxville. A graduate of Carson-Newman College, he also graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and received an honorary doctorate from Carson-Newman. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Bobbie Clark Chiles, a daughter and a son, four grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Henry and Bobbie Chiles Mission Endowment, c/o Central Baptist Church, Bearden, 6400 Deane Hill Dr., Knoxville, TN 37919.



CHRIS WARD, right, director of missions, Riverside Baptist Association, Livingston, presents a certificate from the Tennessee Baptist Convention to **Paul Winchester**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Celina, recognizing the 75th anniversary of the church recently. The church celebrated the anniversary during October and November during which members heard former pastors, Larry Brown, Damon Corley, Bill Ramsey, Doug Plumlee, and Ben Chapman.

◆ **Alanthus Hill Baptist Church**, Tazewell, has called **Henry Burggraf** of Sevier County as pastor.

◆ **Ernie King**, pastor of Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Obion, recently resigned.

◆ **Gary Fletcher** resigned as pastor of Riley Memorial Baptist Church, New Tazewell, effective Nov. 9.

◆ **Springview Baptist Church**, Maryville, called **Don Drawdy** as pastor effective Nov. 2.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Pinewood, has recently called **Jeff Jackson** as worship and youth leader.

◆ **Maranatha Baptist Church**, Humboldt, recently celebrated the 30th anniversary of service of pastor **James Abbitt**. He has served as pastor twice at the church.

◆ **Oak View Baptist Church**, Walland, recently called **Scott Huffstetler** as pastor.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Bon Aqua, recently recognized its retiring pastor **Tommy Clifton** and his wife **Joleen** for their many years of service to the church.

◆ **Mt. Harmony Baptist Church**, Niota, recently called **Don Bradford**, as pastor.

Churches

◆ **Riva Lake Baptist Church**, Winchester, will present its annual Live Nativity and Bethlehem Marketplace Dec. 12-13 from 6-8 p.m. For more information, call the church at (931) 967-0194.

◆ **Marble Hill Baptist Church**, Friendsville, held a 60th anniversary celebration Nov. 23.

Schools

◆ **Union University**, Jackson, will hold "A Union Christmas" Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the G.M. Savage Chapel. The event will include Christmas carols by



AS PART OF THE recognition by Oak Grove Baptist Church, Mount Carmel, of Pastor/Staff Appreciation Month, **Randy Pressnell**, left, senior pastor, recognized **Greer Ruble**, minister of education, for 10 years of service. The church gave Ruble the plaque shown and a gift. Ruble is retired from the staff of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.



ELECTED OFFICERS of Riverside Baptist Association, based in Livingston, during its recent annual meeting were, from left, **Angie Anderson**, Fellowship Baptist Church, clerk; **Mike Anderson**, pastor, Fellowship Baptist Church, vice moderator; **Charles Rice**, pastor, Allons Baptist Church, moderator; and **Donald Cobb**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Livingston, treasurer.

music groups of the university and Scripture reading.

Events

◆ **The Tennessee Baptist Historical Society**, which promotes Baptist history, recently launched a website at www.tnbapthis.wordpress.com. The society invites Tennessee Baptists to both visit it and consider joining the group. Society members receive annually a copy of the *Tennessee Baptist Journal*. See website for information.

Bible parable comes to life for youth of Cleveland church

By Marcia Knox
Baptist and Reflector

CLEVELAND — What started out as a scavenger hunt during a youth DiscipleNow weekend for Oct. 24-25 recreation activity at The Church at Grace Point here ended up as a life lesson from the parable of the talents, according to its youth pastor.

"The student ministry activity at Grace Point, made up of 54 students, four leaders, and some parents, started with \$200 and ended with \$2,000 dollars worth of baby supplies and \$246.88 in cash in one and one half hours," said Mickey Clark, Grace Point Church associate pastor of students.

"Yes, they brought back more money than they started with plus baby items including strollers, car seats, diapers, clothes, wipes, toys, changing table, bottles, etc."

The rules were simple. After dividing into four groups, made up of 6th through 12th graders, each group was to take a \$50

bill, and turn it into items off a given list for New Hope Pregnancy Center in Cleveland. The time limit was one hour and 30 minutes.

"I am not really sure how they did all of this," noted Clark. "They all became very creative and sacrificial in their efforts. Through local businesses, friends, and families, each group watched as God multiplied their money and supplies to amazing heights.

"The turning point for me was when the winning team, who got \$100 cash to go towards whatever they wanted during free time, decided they would rather donate the \$100 to New Hope.

"At that moment, I realized we had moved from a recreational activity to a ministry offering for New Hope."

Clark said the point of the recreation game was teaching the "Parable of the Talents."

"It was awesome to watch the students' eyes light up as I read Matthew 25:14-30, and they realized that that is exactly

what they had done that afternoon."

According to Clark, it became one of those "ah ha" moments when he read the Bible story and preached later that night. "It was neat to watch the students get to the understanding of what they could actually do if they worked together and had some goals."

The youth group surprised

the pregnancy center director by inviting her to the morning worship service on Oct. 26 and presented the gifts to her.

Yaunna Higgins, director of New Hope Pregnancy Care Center, a non-denominational pregnancy center, said, "As far as donations from youth groups to New Hope, it's rare. This was one of the largest donations that we have received from a

youth group."

"Grace Point Church has been very involved with New Hope since the church was begun. It's a new church.

"I thought it was remarkable for the size of the donation because in this day youth are very 'me' focused. It speaks well of them that the youth stand for the sanctity of human life and for unselfishness," Higgins said. □



AROUND 60 youth, leaders, and parents from the Church at Grace Point, Cleveland, took part in recent DiscipleNow weekend scavenger hunt for baby items that were donated to New Hope Pregnancy Care Center, Cleveland.