

BAPTISTS Today



Fallen
trees,
rising church

East Alabama congregation
builds *on faith* **page 4**

COLLEGE PRESIDENTS
TALK ABOUT *the STATE*
of HIGHER EDUCATION

page 30

"IGNORANCE IS THE
CURSE OF GOD,
KNOWLEDGE THE
WING WHEREWITH
WE FLY TO
HEAVEN."

Create a passion for missions in kids!



Your adults may be in a missions conference in the auditorium, but your kids are on a missions adventure in the other room! **GO! 5 mission adventures for kids** gathers your students into a "Great Commission Team" that will take five trips into the Bible to learn about missions.

Lesson titles include

- Telling the World: What a Great Commission
- Missionaries in the Old Testament
- Changed!
- What It Takes to Be a Missionary
- Pray around the World

Any ministry can use this program for a missions conference, Wednesday night summer programs, weekday Bible clubs, or any time children are gathered. Each lesson can be customized to meet your needs.



www.RegularBaptistPress.org

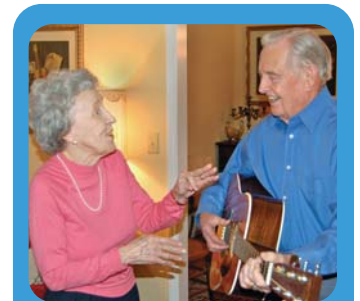
Regular Baptist Press
Building Lives by the Book



“To serve churches by providing a reliable source of unrestricted news coverage, thoughtful analysis, helpful resources and inspiring features focusing on issues of importance to Baptist Christians.”

BAPTISTS Today

An autonomous national Baptist news journal



Roy and Charlotte Smith celebrate monthly their late-in-life marriage.

37 |



Baptists and the Civil War

150 years ago

March 1861

8 |

By Bruce Gourley

Cover photo by John Pierce. Billie Small leads in prayer before breaking ground on the new church building rising in Heflin, Ala.

Story on page 4

John D. Pierce
Executive Editor
editor@baptiststoday.org

Jackie B. Riley
Managing Editor
jackie@baptiststoday.org

Julie Steele
Chief Operations Officer
jsteele@baptiststoday.org

Tony W. Cartledge
Contributing Editor
cartledge@baptiststoday.org

Bruce T. Gourley
Online Editor
gourley@baptiststoday.org

Vickie Frayne
Art Director

Jannie Lister
Office Assistant

Bob Freeman, Kim Hovis
Marketing/Development Associates

Walker Knight **Jack U. Harwell**
Publisher Emeritus Editor Emeritus

- Board of Directors**
- Gary F. Eubanks, Marietta, Ga. (chairman)
 - Kelly L. Belcher, Spartanburg, S.C. (vice chair)
 - Z. Allen Abbott, Peachtree City, Ga.
 - Jimmy R. Allen, Big Canoe, Ga.
 - Nannette Avery, Signal Mountain, Tenn.
 - Thomas E. Boland, Alpharetta, Ga.
 - Huey Bridgman, Columbus, Ga.
 - Mary Jane Cardwell, Waycross, Ga.
 - Robert Cates, Rome, Ga.
 - Jack Causey, Statesville, N.C.
 - Anthony D. Clevenger, Pensacola, Fla.
 - Kenny Crump, Ruston, La.
 - David Currie, San Angelo, Texas
 - James M. Dunn, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 - R. Kirby Godsey, Macon, Ga.
 - Ben Gross, Chattanooga, Tenn.
 - Leslie D. Hill, Lexington, Ky.
 - Michael M. Massar, Tyler, Texas
 - J. Thomas McAfee, Macon, Ga.
 - Michael G. Queen, Wilmington, N.C.
 - Lee Royal, Greensboro, N.C.
 - Mary Etta Sanders, Dalton, Ga.
 - Charles Schaible, Macon, Ga.
 - Macon Sheppard, Folly Beach, S.C.
 - Walter B. Shurden, Macon, Ga.
 - Charlotte Cook Smith, Raleigh, N.C.
 - David M. Smith, Houston, Texas
 - Leo Thorne, Valley Forge, Pa.
 - Sarah Timmerman, Cairo, Ga.
 - David Turner, Richmond, Va.
 - Clement H. White, St. Petersburg, Fla.
 - Winnie V. Williams, Seneca, S.C.

Baptists Today (ISSN 1072-7787) is published monthly by:

Baptists Today
P.O. Box 6318
Macon, GA 31208-6318

Subscription rates:
1 year, \$20 2 years, \$35
1 year groups of 25 or more, \$18
1 year groups of less than 25, \$20
1 year Canada, \$35
1 year foreign, \$50

Periodical postage paid at Macon, Ga. 31208 and additional mailing offices

POSTMASTER:
Send address corrections to:
Baptists Today
P.O. Box 6318
Macon, GA 31208-6318

(478) 301-5655
1-877-752-5658
www.baptiststoday.org

© 2011 *Baptists Today*.
All rights reserved.

PERSPECTIVES

- > Countering an ever-tarnishing public image.....7
By John Pierce
- > What’s next? Clergy considering change12
should ask good questions
By Bill Wilson
- > Remembering Reaves McCall15
By John Pierce
- > Bill Greenhaw was ‘truest of friends’.....15
By John Pierce
- > Shaped in the depths: Characteristics of good preachers.....16
By J. Daniel Day
- > Marriage and the ‘Times’23
By Bill Leonard
- > Revisiting hope25
By Peggy Haymes
- > KJV the only accurate English translation?.....28
By Melody Maxwell
- > King James and Baptists: Not a love story.....28
By Bruce Gourley

IN THE NEWS

- > Who are the Baptists — in Sweden?10
- > Christine Gregory, missions leader, dies14
- > Morris Ashcraft, who helped launch BTSR, dies14
- > Woman recounts bomb memories from Birmingham26
- > Former Navy chaplain advises churches27
on ministry to returning soldiers
- > Religious themes get star treatment at Sundance34
- > Researcher flips gospel records, finds civil rights songs.....38

FEATURES

- > College presidents talk about challenges30
and opportunities of higher education
By John Pierce
- > Roy J. Smith recalls changes in Baptist life35
By Tony W. Cartledge

IN EVERY ISSUE

Quotation Remarks	6	Classifieds	22
Editorial	7	In the Know	22
Media Shelf	11	Lighter Side	24
ChurchWorks!	18	Reblog	29
Bible Studies	19		



Fallen trees,

TAKING TURNS — Everyone who makes up Heritage Baptist Church in Heflin, Ala., got in on turning dirt where the congregation will erect its first building and make good use of fallen trees from a 2008 storm. Below, in contributed photos, pastor Les Jones totes some of the lumber that he, his father Houston, his son Dustan and others milled.

Rising church

East Alabama congregation building on faith



HEFLIN, Ala. — Turning lemons into lemonade, that’s easy. But turning the aftermath of a major storm into a first church building for a new congregation takes a bit more vision and work.

Houston and Betty Jones found a tree on their house and 30 more across their winding driveway on Mother’s Day in 2008 — preventing them from attending the Sunday activities of Heritage Baptist Church, where their son, Les Jones, is founding pastor. But church members — along with disaster relief volunteers from Williams First Baptist Church in the neighboring county — brought chainsaws and muscle to free the Joneses from captivity.

All that anyone could see on that day was a big mess.

Heritage started with Sunday evening

gatherings nearly nine years ago and grew into a small, but dedicated congregation that meets in a former high school. The church, affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, has created a positive ministry presence in the small east Alabama community of Heflin.

And that memorable stormy morning in 2008 is making a major contribution to the church’s future. Houston Jones, a retired accountant, set up a sawmill on his property. He described the venture as “a hobby that got out of hand.”

With the help of his son, grandson and others, Houston has been sawing up the fallen pines. Coupled with the congregation’s purchase of 10 acres and seasoned with a sense of divine destiny, the lumber led to a groundbreaking service on an unseasonably warm Sunday afternoon on Jan 30.



TREES AND MORE TREES — Some pines from the church's 10-acre site were added to the many downed trees to create enough lumber for constructing the congregation's first building.

"I've got 25,000 board feet ready to go for this building," said Houston after the prayers were lifted, words of encouragement shared and the ceremonial turning of the dirt was complete.

During the groundbreaking service, Heflin Mayor Anna Berry rose to express appreciation for how the young congregation had already contributed to the spiritual health and well-being of their community.

"We're a better community because of Heritage," said Mayor Berry, a member of the Episcopal Church of the Messiah that has been supportive of the young Baptist congregation.

In one sense, Heritage is a family affair. Dani Small Jones, a university music teacher and wife of the pastor, leads the church in multiple roles. Her parents, Dan and Billie Small, are active leaders. Dan, a former director of missions for the local Baptist

association, serves as associate pastor and leads the building committee.

However, the congregation is wide open to a variety of persons, said pastor Les Jones. "We have a loving congregation of people from diverse backgrounds who all agree that Christ is Lord and love is supreme and real Baptists are free," he affirmed.

During the groundbreaking service, CBF Coordinator for Congregational Life Bo Prosser urged the congregation to "keep doing the things you've been doing." And Alabama CBF Coordinator Ronnie Brewer assured them that volunteers from well-established

churches around the state are eager to lend a hand.

In addition to the stockpile of lumber, other gifts are coming from within the congregation. Member Kim Waites will create stained-glass windows for the new building.



Pastor Les Jones

"The story is long and detailed, but suffice it to say that Heritage has been blessed and proven to be of the Lord and is here for 'the long haul,'" said Les Jones, who returned to his hometown after a 25-year absence to lead in the founding of this new congregation. **BT**



Houston Jones (left) visits with his brother, Joe Jones of Huntsville, prior to the Jan. 30 dedication service. Houston, a retired accountant, calls his sawmill operation "a hobby that got out of hand." Stained-glass windows for the new building will be created by church member Kim Waites — who added this touch of color to the old school where the congregation currently meets.

Quotation

“ remarks ”

“Mr. Garisto, you’re not Mr. Rogers. In our culture we tell children, ‘Do not talk to strangers.’”

—Judge Jeannine Turgeon of Dauphin, Penn., to street preacher Stephen Garisto who was taken to court by a local school district for proselytizing children at a bus stop (RNS)

“We thought attending meetings made us good Christians.”

—Marion Aldridge, coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina, on growing up as a Baptist in the South (The Fellowship Blog)

“We did sever ties in 2007, but many of us never dreamed that the school would walk away so rapidly from their Christian heritage and roots.”

—Randy Davis, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, responding to Belmont University adding sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination policy (Baptist Press)

“I am grateful to the Belmont board for recognizing that being gay and being Christian are not mutually exclusive. This is a landmark day.”

—Former soccer coach Lisa Howe on the Nashville-based university’s nondiscrimination policy (NBC Sports)

“Some congregations live to keep their clergy anxious, under control, risk-averse and weak. This undermines what congregations actually need — namely, entrepreneurial clergy who imagine a future into being, thrive on risks, learn from failure, and keep pressing onward.”

—Religion News Service columnist and Episcopal priest Tom Ehrlich

“Attention is what churches get when their stories deal not with Incarnation, Trinity, Resurrection, or Atonement, but with finances or sex.”

—Longtime religious history professor and author Martin E. Marty (Sightings)

“We are blaming teenagers for behavior that parents are modeling.”

—Sherry Turkle, MIT professor and author of *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, on the overuse of communication technology such as constant texting (NPR)

“Lord, give me patience as I watch Malia go to her first dance, where there will be boys. Lord, have that skirt get longer as she travels to that dance.”

—President Obama joking at the National Prayer Breakfast about how his prayer life has changed as his older daughter matures (RNS)

“I also would have steered clear of politics. I’m grateful for the opportunities God gave me to minister to people in high places; people in power have spiritual and personal needs like everyone else, and often they have no one to talk to. But looking back, I know I sometimes crossed the line, and I wouldn’t do that now.”

—Aging evangelist Billy Graham, responding to e-mailed questions from Christianity Today (RNS)

“I liked the parts where some character was once this, but he ended up being that. Like he’d be dissing Jesus, and then he ends up being a saint. That was cool.”

—Rapper Lil Wayne, telling Rolling Stone about how he read the Bible during his recently completed prison sentence (RNS)

“Baptists have been victimized by such religious discrimination in the past. We should always remember that if we allow the government to discriminate against one religion today, they can discriminate against any or all religions tomorrow.”

—SBC leader Richard Land, who withdrew from an interfaith group that assists Muslim communities facing opposition to legally building and relocating meeting space after other Southern Baptists disapproved of his involvement (Baptist Press)

“I apologize in the name of the church because we allowed some of these things to continue. This is sinful. Racism is sinful.”

—Archbishop Gregory Aymond of New Orleans upon unveiling a new online database containing records of baptisms, marriages and deaths in colonial New Orleans, including those of African slaves (RNS)

“The level and frequency of criticisms toward pastors and other leaders has increased significantly in the past several years. I call this resurgence in criticisms ‘the Great Distraction’ because it often causes leaders to lose focus on leading their churches in the Great Commission.”

—Thom S. Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (Baptist Press)

editorial

Countering an ever-tarnishing public image

By John Pierce

Concern over the negative image of Christians in general and Baptists in particular has been expressed in recent years. Some evidence of that problem has come from marketing studies or other surveys.

But based on anecdotal responses that have come my way recently, it seems that the tarnished image some have warned us about may be worse than many have thought.

Friends of my youth, with whom I've reconnected recently, tell me of their negative experiences with Baptists — and of their pleasant surprise to learn that not all Baptists are like the ones they encountered. As one put it: “Honestly, my experience with Baptists has been quite different than your point of view.”

In a letter to the editor of a secular newspaper, a man with no expressed hostility raised some good questions in response to aggressive church leaders who showed little regard for the diverse faith practices in their community and sought favoritism of their religious perspectives.

He wanted to know why they push for government-sponsored prayers at public events — with the argument that “no one is forcing you to pray” — but fight against legal same-sex unions without the acknowledgment that no one is forcing you into such a relationship.

Getting a straight answer to why some parts of the Bible they deem inerrant and authoritative are amplified while others are ignored is impossible, the letter writer rightly noted. For example, he asked: “If you work on your Sabbath or patronize places where others are working on your Sabbath ... are you not violating the same ‘God’s word’ that you judge others to be doing?”

In essence, he wanted to know why

these church leaders were so aggressive in seeking government sanction for selective parts of their professed faith while letting other aspects of biblical teaching slide.

That’s a fair question. Our image would be enhanced by a little honesty — like an admission that our own applications of so-called Christian faith and practices are woefully inconsistent.

We should take note of the fact that it is highly uncommon to hear someone speak ill of Jesus. But constantly, it seems, there are strong, negative — and often well-deserved — reactions to those individuals and groups who claim to follow the Christ.



Why is institutionalized Christianity so readily dismissed by good, honest, inquiring people? Who is to blame?

A recent online discussion focused on an encounter some committed church persons had with a street preacher outside a professional football game. He was denouncing attendance at sporting events along with a wide variety of activities as evidence of hellish living.

One poster commented: “He gives Christians a bad name.”

Probably not. My guess is that very few, if any, passersby took the pigskin preacher seriously or equated his irrational ranting with the Christian message.

The real tarnishing of the Christian brand comes from those of us who are taken seriously as being representative of the faith — but come up short. We talk about sacrifice but put most of our time and energy into personal gain.

We emphasize the grace we have received but are stingy in offering grace to

others. Love is the attribute of God that we emphasize when speaking of our faith, but our attitude toward many others can be anything but loving.

It’s not the street preacher who is the problem; it’s us.

And for all the wonderful contributions that local congregations make to their communities and beyond, conflict and condemnation are often the defining marks. Those outside our stained-glass enclaves rightly wonder why diverse coworkers, civic group members and government officials seem to function more respectfully of one another than the gathered Baptists down the road who claim a common bond of faith.

The sad irony is that those who are always harping on the “problems” in a church are usually, well, the problems in the church. They like to wreck the house and then wonder aloud — often very loud — why people don’t want to come over.

Likewise, some denominational groups do their part to create a public image of intolerance and ignorance. Proclamations and resolutions coming out of annual gatherings tend to accomplish little other than adding to an existing image of exclusion.

I’m probably not the only one whose coffee shop conversations often turn into explanations of not being “that kind of Baptist.”

All of this seems to come down to a tried-and-true idea that one should get his or her own house in order before trying to tell others how to do so. Maybe Baptists — and other Christian individuals and groups that seem quick to speak a definitive opinion on every issue that arises — might learn the disciplines of patience, listening and earning the right to speak in love and with trust.

The polishing needs to start soon. **BT**

The sad irony is that those who are always harping on the “problems” in a church are usually, well, the problems in the church.

Baptists AND THE CIVIL WAR

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

March arrives with Jefferson Davis, former U. S. Senator from Mississippi, presiding over the Confederate States of America. Currently comprised of Deep South states only, the Confederacy hopes to attract some of the peripheral, or Border, states.

Virginia, home to much Union sentiment, is undecided regarding secession. Tennessee's ultimate position is far from certain. Arkansas and North Carolina have not yet rallied to the secession cause.

In Texas, the last state to secede at this point, the governor — Sam Houston, a Baptist — is dismissed this month from the governorship for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America.

The Confederate States are united in declaring that slavery is the reason for the formation of their Confederacy. The CSA Constitution expressly invokes the favor of "Almighty God," while Georgia — under the leadership of a Southern Baptist governor, Joseph E. Brown — has declared itself a "Christian nation."

Basil Manly Sr., a large slaveholder, a leading voice in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention and a founder of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has established himself as the chaplain of the Confederacy. Having delivered the prayer at the inauguration of Jefferson Davis, Manly now relies on his Calvinist theology to assure fellow Southern Baptists that God's hand guides the new southern nation.

Indeed, many Baptist pulpits and newspapers in the South pointedly appropriate God and the Bible in the fight to preserve African slavery.

Sitting quietly in church balconies, slaves say nothing that their masters might overhear, but at night in their crude cabins express their anxieties to one another. Few can read, but many clutch to the belief that the biblical God of deliverance is on their side and dream of a day of redemption.

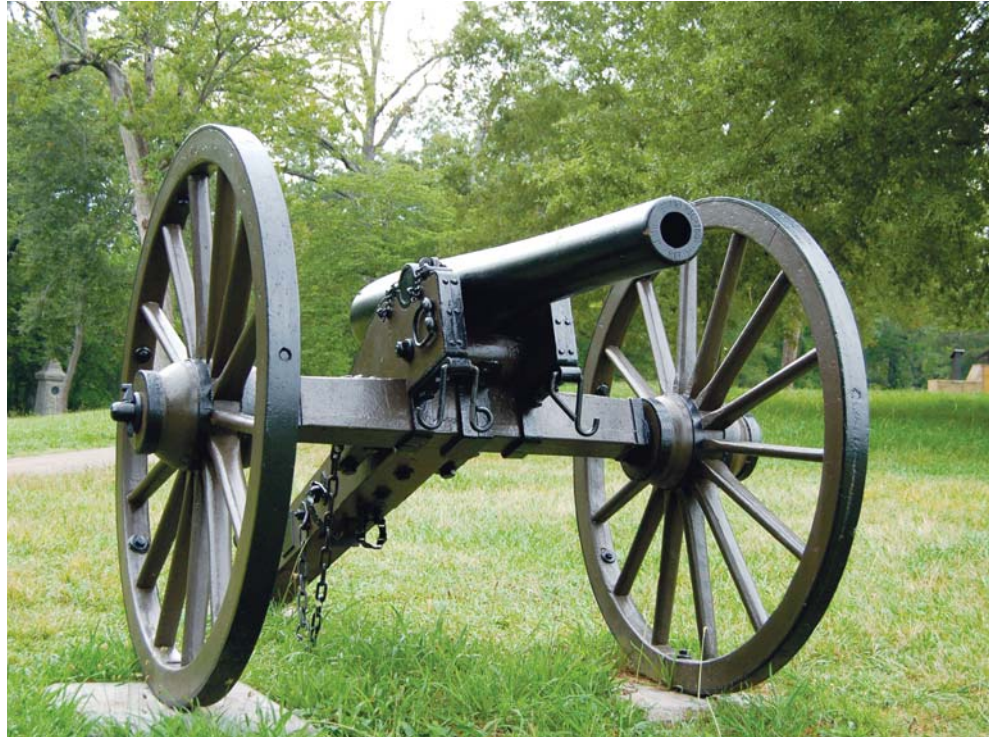


Photo by John Pierce

150 YEARS AGO

March 1861

When Abraham Lincoln's inauguration as the 16th U.S. president takes place on March 4, many white southerners express open contempt toward the president and the United States. Lincoln's agenda, they are certain, is the abolishment of slavery.

Lincoln comes from a Baptist background, having grown up in a northern Primitive Baptist family. Yet many Baptists of the South despise him.

Mary Beckley Bristow, a member of Sardis Baptist Church in Union, Ky., sums up the feelings of many southern Baptists as she comments on Lincoln's inauguration in her diary:

"[Lincoln] has it in his power (for us poor mortals to look at the matter) to do much of good or evil, and if we judge him by the silly, foolish speeches he made on his route [to his inauguration] and the pitiful,

cowardly manner in which he approached the Capitol, slipping there in disguise, we have but little reason to hope for good. I would defy a 'Philadelphia lawyer' to guess at what his intended policy will be from his inaugural address, whether he will give us peace by acknowledging the independence of those States that have seceded, now known as the 'Southern Confederacy,' or not, as he ought to do, we can give no idea. For my own part I believe he does not intend it. I believe him to be one of those deceitful, hard-headed persons who would overturn a world (if they could do it without personal detriment) to accomplish their fanatical bigotry. I imagine Lincoln to be such a man as the witch burners of Salem, Massachusetts, without Cotton Mather's sense to go on it, but none the less dangerous because of being feeble-minded. May the Lord, if consistent with his will, save our country from a civil war."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This series focuses on the Baptist experience during the American Civil War as it unfolded 150 years ago. For a day-by-day journal along with references to source material, visit www.civilwarbaptists.com.

Georgia Baptists' *Christian Index* (on March 13) also chimes in regarding Lincoln's inauguration:

"Last week Lincoln was inaugurated, not as a President of a free people, but like a despot."

During the war, Baptists both North and South will lay claim to the mantle of "freedom." For many northern Baptists, the goal of the war is to free African slaves. At the same time, many white Baptists in the South insist that freedom is reserved for the white race.

The editor of the *Christian Index* (on March 20) thus explains the rights of white southerners:

"... we have declared allegiance, and which we look upon as our own of RIGHT — a heritage from the God of nations to a people that knows its rights and liberties, and knowing, dares to maintain them."

Meanwhile, in Virginia, Lincoln's inaugural speech tilts public momentum toward secession, and as the month progresses, disunion seems ever more likely. On March 16, the *Richmond Times Dispatch* relates:

"The secession flag raised recently by the young ladies of the Baptist Female Institute, and which was taken down by the Professor in charge, was again set up yesterday by the determined young Misses, who seem resolved to show their position on the question of Southern Rights."

As the month draws to a close and the verbal sparring intensifies, the Confederate states prepare for warfare, while Virginia edges closer to joining them. In the North, Lincoln makes war preparations, but bides his time, not wanting to be seen as the aggressor.

Politically, he works to keep the Border States in the Union. Yet the ultimate failure of politics is all too visible, and the language of Providence and God's Will echoes throughout the fractured nation. **BT**

—Bruce T. Gourley holds a Ph.D. in history from Auburn University. He is online editor for *Baptists Today* and executive director of the *Baptist History & Heritage Society*. His book, *Diverging Loyalties: Baptists in Middle Georgia During the Civil War*, is being published by Mercer University Press.

Come celebrate 20 years of fellowship

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship 
20th Anniversary General Assembly
June 22-25 in Tampa, Florida

Learn more and register for free:
www.thefellowship.info/assembly or (800) 352-8741

*God's mission, your passion:
Celebrating our 20-year journey toward faithfulness*

Highlights include:



CBF 20th Anniversary
Dinner Party, Wed., June 22



Inspiring Evening Worship,
Thurs. and Fri., June 23-24



Praying the Prayer of
Francis Retreat, June 20-22



Essentials Conference,
Fri. and Sat., June 24-25



Missions Commissioning
Service, Thurs., June 23



Golf with Fellowship Baptists
Tues., June 22



Practical Ministry Workshops,
Thurs. and Fri., June 23-24



Leadership Institute on
Preaching, Wed., June 22



Tampa Sessions for College
Students, June 20-25

Plus: Ministry Resource Fair, Children's and Youth Assemblies,
Auxiliary Events with CBF partners, music by Ken Medema and
featured speakers Pam Durso, Molly Marshall and Kyle Reese

Who are **the Baptists**

— in Sweden?

Baptist work has existed in Sweden since September 1848, when a Swedish sailor named Fredrik Olaus Nilsson baptized believers in the sea, led them in a celebration of the Lord's Supper, and guided the formation of the first Baptist church on Swedish soil.

Nilsson himself was a relatively new Baptist, reportedly having been converted during a storm off Cape Hatteras, then being nurtured in the faith at the Mariner's Baptist Church in New York. Sent as a missionary to Sweden by the New York Tract Society, he distributed thousands of Bibles in his homeland.

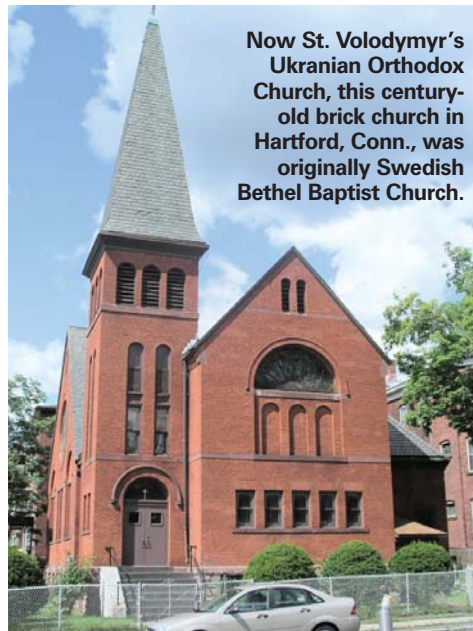
In 1847 he traveled to Germany to be baptized in the River Elbe by evangelist and church-planter Johann Oncken.

Nilsson's work was in violation of Swedish law, which recognized only the Lutheran State Church. As a result, Nilsson and his fellow Baptists were persecuted severely. Many were arrested, and Nilsson was expelled from the country in 1850.

He led a group of 21 immigrants to America in 1853, where he joined forces with convert Gustaf Palmquist, who had arrived the previous year and established a church in Rock Island, Ill. Nilsson and other Swedish Baptists traveled widely, founding churches across the upper Midwest.

Their efforts led to the formation of the Swedish Baptist General Conference in 1879. As more of the churches became English-speaking, "Swedish" was dropped from the denomination's name in 1945, and it became known as the Baptist General Conference in America. In 2008, the group adopted the name Converge Worldwide.

Despite ongoing persecution, Baptist work in Sweden persisted. By 1860, more than 120 churches had been established. In 1857, Anders Wiberg, who had been working in



Now St. Volodymyr's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, this century-old brick church in Hartford, Conn., was originally Swedish Bethel Baptist Church.

America, returned to Sweden and led in the formation of the Baptist General Conference of Sweden.

A former Lutheran, Wiberg had published *Who Is To Be Baptized and What Is Baptism?* in 1852, the first book in Sweden that advocated believer's baptism.

After another trip to America, Wiberg returned in 1866 with sufficient financial support to establish a church center and a seminary. By the end of the century, Baptist work had spread throughout the country, with more than 500 churches established.

What is now called the Baptist Union of Sweden (BUS), with about 17,500 members in 214 local churches, is the oldest non-Lutheran denomination in Sweden. As in other coun-

tries, however, Swedish Baptists have often divided.

The first split occurred in 1872, giving rise to the Free Baptist Fellowship. Beginning in 1913, a Pentecostal "New Movement" left the BUS. In the 1930s, a charismatic movement beginning in the Filadelfia church in Örebro led to further schism.

In 1997, the Free Baptist Union, the Holiness Union, and the Örebro Mission united to form the Evangelical Free Church (*Evangeliska frikyrkan*) in Sweden, operating internationally under the name InterAct. According to its website (<http://www.efk.se/>), the Evangelical Free Church claims 31,000 members in 300 congregations, who are committed to the belief that "growing churches bring the whole gospel to the whole person throughout the whole world."

The BUS is a member of the Baptist World Alliance, and is active in ecumenical bodies such as the Christian Council of Sweden and the Swedish Mission Council. The BUS has particularly close ties with the Swedish Mission Covenant Church and the Methodist Church of Sweden.

The three denominations jointly support theological education through the Stockholm School of Theology, and their youth organizations work together through a federation called "equumenia." Leaders from the three conferences have signed a letter of intent to work toward a possible merger, possibly within two years.

According to a statement on the BUS website (www.baptist.se), "The vision for the Baptist Union of Sweden is to search for the will of God in our lives and with the help of the Holy Spirit depart from the forces that exploit and tear human beings down and destroy the earth, and live so everybody will find a personal relation with God through Jesus Christ." **BT**

Baptists Today is pleased to announce a three-year pledge from

ROY J. AND CHARLOTTE COOK SMITH OF WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

to create and fulfill the mission of the **Global Baptist Initiative** that will fund the news journal's representation in and coverage of the worldwide Baptist family through the North American Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist World Alliance by Contributing Editor Tony W. Cartledge

For information on other important giving/naming opportunities, call *Baptists Today* at 1-877-752-5658.

Editor's note: This is the sixth in a series of articles introducing readers to member groups of the global Baptist family.

'Ex-Christian' author explores reasons for leaving faith

Drew Dyck didn't lose the Christian faith of his childhood when he became an adult, but he noticed that lots of others did. An editor of online publications for *Christianity Today*, he talked to some of those who have left the faith for his recent book, *Generation Ex-Christian: Why Young Adults Are Leaving the Faith ... and How to Bring Them Back*.

Q: What prompted you to write about ex-Christians?

A: My friends began leaving the faith. The first was a friend from high school. We had grown up in the church; both of our fathers were pastors. A few years after high school he informed me that he was no longer a Christian. That got my attention. As I moved through my 20s, I witnessed other friends "de-convert." I realized that these experiences were not unique.

Q: Are a lot of young people really leaving the faith? Won't they just come back when they're older?

A: The answer to the first question is "yes." In the 2009 American Religious Identification Survey, 18- to 29-year-olds were found to be the least religious age group: 22 percent claimed "no religion." That was up 11 percent from 1990.

Whether or not they will return is where the scholarly consensus breaks down. Some view the exodus from the church as a hiatus, a matter of young Americans "slapping the snooze" on Sunday mornings. They see the trend as a reversible life-phase phenomenon. I'm not so sure.

Q: What's the main reason they give for leaving?

A: Most cited intellectual doubts, but there's often more to the story. One young woman had attended a prominent Christian college, where she'd suffered a mental breakdown after feeling ostracized by the community and betrayed by Christian friends.

But it was only in subsequent years

that she constructed her elaborate system of doubt. Her intellectual doubts may have prevented her from returning to Christianity, but they were almost certainly not the reason she left in the first place. My challenge was to watch for those underlying experiences that often push people from the faith. It sounds more credible to say you left on intellectual grounds. But more often, the head follows the heart.



Drew Dyck

Q: What interesting things did you learn during the interviews?

A: I encountered some surprising signs of spiritual life. In the interviews, I asked the ex-Christians whether they ever still prayed. Most still did pray.

They were angry, conflicted prayers, but beautiful in their honesty and desperation: "God, where are you? Can you hear me? Do you exist? Do you even care about me? I miss you."

Q: You have some interesting categories of unbelievers in your book. Can you explain what these terms mean?

A: No two "leavers" are exactly the same, but some patterns did emerge.

Postmodern leavers reject Christianity because of its exclusive truth claims and moral absolutes. For them, Christian faith is just too narrow.

"Recoilers" leave because they were hurt in the church. They suffered some form of abuse at the hands of someone they saw as a spiritual authority. God was guilty by association.

"Modernists" completely reject supernatural claims. God is a delusion. Any truth beyond science is dismissed as superstition.

"Neo-pagans" refers to those who left for earth-based religions such as Wicca. Not all actually cast spells or participate in

pagan rituals, but they deny a transcendent God, and see earth as the locus of true spirituality.

"Spiritual Rebels" flee the faith to indulge in behavior that conflicted with their faith. They also value autonomy and don't want anyone — especially a superintending deity — telling them what to do.

"Drifters" do not suffer intellectual crises or consciously leave the faith; they simply drift away. Over time God becomes less and less important until one day no longer part of their lives.

Q: What role does contemporary American culture play?

A: A lot of Christians fear the corrupting influence of "the world," but when it comes to the spiritual plights of young people, what happens inside the church matters most. Even for those lured away by alternative spiritualities such as Wicca, their "de-conversions" were precipitated by what happened inside rather than outside the church. In other words, it was more push than pull.

Q: You're a part of the generation you're writing about. What is different about those such as yourself who didn't leave?

A: Young people who have meaningful relationships with older Christians are much more likely to retain their faith into adulthood. I had those connections, and have no doubt they were instrumental in my life. I also sought out the intellectual resources to understand and defend my faith. But I don't give myself too much credit.

The difference between me and my friends who I now describe as "ex-Christians" may be a matter of degree, rather than kind. We all have the tendency to stray. But God, in his mercy, keeps drawing me back. **BT**

—Greg Richter writes for *The Birmingham News in Birmingham, Ala.*

"A lot of Christians fear the corrupting influence of 'the world,' but when it comes to the spiritual plights of young people, what happens inside the church matters most."

What's next?

Clergy considering change should ask good questions

It is a regular conversation most ministers have internally: "Should I leave?" Some days it is a question of leaving a specific church; some days it is a question of leaving the ministry for another vocation.

Always, it is a complicated, emotional and powerful conversation.

I almost left vocational ministry once. I decided to stay, and I have not regretted that decision. But I remember the intense discomfort and feelings of anxiety about the future that accompanied that season of my life.

Thoughts of leaving are not uncommon for ministers, especially during a rough patch. How do you make such a big decision?

My friend Chip Bishop made a successful change from pastor to stockbroker a decade ago. He calls his reasons for leaving after 20 years in full-time ministry "complex." They relate primarily to denominational issues and family time. Surprisingly, Chip is still a member of the church he once served.

"I was going toward something," he said, "There was no sense of running away."

In his current position, Chip uses skills gained as a pastor and even visits clients in the hospital. The decision to change was one he processed for three long years. It was a slow, thoughtful process. He has no regrets.

When considering such a transition, take it slow. Transitions are rarely easy, and good transitions seldom result when we are reactive. Being proactive about any move will require vast amounts of emotional, spiritual and physical energy.

As clergy, we often have 20/20 vision about others' career decisions and 20/200 vision about our own. Anyone considering a change in location or vocation should take a good look in three directions: "upward" for

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the third article in a yearlong series titled "Transitions: Helping churches and church leaders in changing times," provided through a partnership between *Baptists Today* and the Winston-Salem, N.C.-based Center for Congregational Health (www.healthychurch.org).

God's call, inward at your own gifts and abilities, and outward toward other career prospects. There are numerous tools and approaches to discerning God's will. Both mystery and realism should be a part of the multi-modal process.

Looking Up — Revisiting your call

Passion is a key part of call. Sometimes clergy, caught in the day-to-day humdrum, can forget what attracted them to ministry in the first place. Money and status can put blinders on passion. If wealth, logistics or proximity to family drive the vocational discussion, chances are you are moving away from your call. While these factors are important, your call to ministry is more than these drivers.

When considering a transition of any sort — especially a career change — a personal coach is invaluable. A trained coach can guide you through the process of revisiting your passion and discovering ways to serve that draw on personal strengths.

Call is dynamic and contextual; it is likely to shift during your life journey. Once you articulate your God-given mission for your life, all other decisions can be filtered through that vision.

Looking Inward — Getting reacquainted with yourself

Self-understanding, as well as faithfulness, is part of discerning God's call. An objective friend or trained coach can be invaluable for helping you understand your abilities. There are numerous assessment tools to help

you discover or rediscover your strengths and weaknesses.

Talking with people who know you in various ways is helpful as well. If such feedback supports your sense of God's call, that is an indication you are on the right track.

Besides assessing personal abilities, it is useful to answer questions about your life outside of work. If you are feeling a need for change, ask yourself what else is happening that might influence your thoughts and emotions.

Are you depressed? What losses have occurred in your circle of friends and family over the last year? How does your age impact the way you see your ministry? Has your ministry changed in a way that causes more anxiety and stress than it did when you entered this field? Life is complicated. Sometimes seeking personal therapy is a helpful alternative to moving.

Looking Outward — Discovering your possibilities

Before making any change, it is wise to take a hard look at that more attractive church or career. It is our cultural tradition to move toward more money and power, but that is not always a good indicator of fit. Many ministers have arrived at a bigger and better-paying position only to discover that the difficult issues that plagued them previously have also made the trip.

One thing I sometimes see in clergy is mid-career angst based on changing church size or church context. Growth, decline, turnaround or maintenance describe scenarios that may or may not still engage your strengths and abilities.

Making good decisions requires assessing the situation realistically. You need to ask good questions such as: Why is this attractive to me? Why now? Is this one of those predictable ministerial crisis seasons (year 2, 7, 11, etc.) that may reward me if I buckle down and endure? Is there more to learn in this position? What do I want to experience somewhere else that I cannot get here?

It is also helpful to do a force-field



analysis by listing the attractive as well as debilitating parts of your job. Can the debilitating things be changed? Is it just one staff member who is making things tough? Is it too many committee meetings? Will the debt issue be resolved over time?

Another key question: Is this about moving toward something or moving away from something? Unless it is an unhealthy situation for you or your family and there are congregational problems that cannot be solved, moving away may be a mistake. Cutting and running usually leaves regrets.

Part of the process of looking outward when considering a career change is asking someone in that vocation what it is like. Ask what energizes them about the job. What drains them? Try to get first-hand experience before you make a transition. If you are considering moving to another church or ministry, look closely there, too. No church is as solid as it may appear. It is easy to fall victim to “the grass is greener” thinking.

When it's time to go

After considering all those questions — preferably with someone who can be objective and honest with you — it may be time for a change. Sometimes change is better for a minister and for the church. If an environment is toxic for you and your family, with no relief in sight, it is time to leave. Unrelenting misery and call do not go together. This is where a coach or trusted friend can see clearly what you may not.

Other times, while the environment may not be toxic, God is simply calling you to serve in another field. By asking the right questions, looking upward, inward and outward, like Chip, you may discern that God is calling you to minister elsewhere.

One final word: When it is time to go, it is important to leave well. Your leaving in a healthy way enables the congregation to welcome your successor, and allows you needed closure to this chapter in your life.

I wish that congregations and clergy would do needed exit interviews and come to a place of blessing one another. Far too often, we give in to the temptation to say hurtful things to or about one another. We do harm to the kingdom when we allow such impulses to drive our behavior. Healthy closure requires genuine effort and maturity.

Remember, ministry is life-long and important, whether in a paid capacity or not. Thank God daily for the divine call upon

your life. Then strive to be a reconciling and redemptive presence, even in transition. **BT**

To learn more about Chip Bishop's transition out of vocational ministry as well as other stories of transition, and to share your own story, go to www.healthychurch.org/threshold.

—Bill Wilson is president of the Center for Congregational Health based in Winston-Salem, N.C. Chris Gambill, senior consultant and manager of congregational health services, contributed to this article.

Link BaptistsToday.org to your church's home page

Enhance your church's web site by providing easy access to daily news and reflections. It's free. It's simple. Visit the link below and follow the directions.



www.baptiststoday.org/baptistlinks

New VBS resource from CBF!

Where will Vacation Bible School take your church this summer?

Get ready for a life-changing field trip of faith with the newest children's resource from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Inspired by the rural poverty ministry of Together for Hope, *Finding Hope: A Field Trip of Faith* shares the Biblical concept of hope in fun and meaningful ways while leading children on a missional field trip to five of the poorest communities in the United States.

Sold as a downloadable PDF, *Finding Hope: A Field Trip of Faith* is a user-friendly and cost effective VBS resource. For just \$99.95 you receive everything needed for a successful experience, including daily lesson plans and activities for preschoolers and children, logos and clip art, worship plans and skits, and teaching guide.

View a sample or pre-order online at www.thefellowship.info/vbs or call (888) 801-4223.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Christine Gregory, missions leader, dies

By Robert Dilday
Religious Herald

DANVILLE, Va. (ABP) — Christine Gregory, a Virginia missions leader who broke barriers to women in Baptist leadership roles, died Jan. 22 in Danville, Va., at age 89.

Gregory was elected first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1981, the first woman to fill one of the SBC's top elected positions, and in 1982 became the first woman to serve as president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

In the 1970s, she was president of the SBC's Woman's Missionary Union and of WMU's Virginia affiliate, roles that placed her at the heart of Baptist administrative life and catapulted her into leadership roles previously held only by men.

Her long list of involvements included service as a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance and a trustee of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. In 1985, Gregory was named to the

SBC Peace Committee, an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to resolve theological conflicts between conservatives and moderates in the convention. She was one of two women added just before approval of the 22-member committee — originally consisting only of men.

"My and Jodi Chapman's [then of Wichita Falls Texas] relationship to the Peace Committee from the day of its approval by the Southern Baptist Convention was different to that of the other 20 members," Gregory later told the *Religious Herald*, the Virginia Baptist newspaper. "We were on it because of pressure put upon the men who were selecting the makeup of the committee to put women on it."

Her involvement on the committee "caused me more pain than any experience in my Christian pilgrimage," she said.



Christine Gregory

"I was perceived to be a liberal because I am a Virginian, have been closely associated with an agency of the convention and do not tell other people what God is saying to them."

After moving to Danville in 1948, Gregory quickly became involved in WMU, and served as president for the congregation and the local Baptist association. Biographer Catherine Allen wrote that Gregory was unsettled by the illiteracy, racial prejudice, poverty and plight of migrant farm workers she found in Southside Virginia.

Wide reading and a family vacation to an American Baptist conference center in Green Lake, Wisc., where she was introduced to a more activist social ministry than she had experienced among Southern Baptists, inspired her to incorporate new concepts in WMU's local ministries. Her growing awareness of Christian social concerns coincided with similar changes among state and national WMU leadership.

A memorial service was held Jan. 30 at First Baptist Church in Danville. **BT**

Morris Ashcraft, who helped launch Richmond seminary, dies

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

EVANSTON, Ill. — Morris Ashcraft, a longtime seminary professor and administrator who after retiring helped establish a free-standing seminary for moderates disenfranchised by the rightward swing in the Southern Baptist Convention, died Jan. 29 after a long illness. He was 88.

An Arkansas native, Ashcraft taught five years at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and 22 years at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary before moving to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as a professor and dean in 1981.

Seven years later he resigned his deanship, along with seminary President Randall Lolley and six other administrators, to protest policies adopted by a new conservative majority on the board of trustees intended to ensure the hiring of only professors who affirmed biblical inerrancy.

"It is my belief that too many leaders in the SBC have capitulated to the pressure and agreed with it," Ashcraft said in a statement on Nov. 17, 1987. Ashcraft said his intention in resigning was to say "a clear 'No'" to a movement started in 1979 to purge so-called liberals from the denomination's institutions.

"I will not be party to some of the actions now taking place and injuring persons, nor will I hold the coats of those who do," he concluded.

In 1984 Ashcraft told a group of Baptist educators that Southern Baptist college and seminary degrees offered "ideal preparation" for ministry in Southern Baptist churches. Concerned about the impact of changes at Southeastern Seminary on pulpits in the Carolinas and



Morris Ashcraft

Virginia, the Alliance of Baptists, a group formed out of the SBC controversy in 1987, decided in 1989 to launch an alternative seminary.

A board of trustees turned to Ashcraft to serve as acting president of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, which opened in the fall of 1991. Tasked primarily with raising start-up funds and processing documents needed to get the school accredited, Ashcraft held the post for one year, until the election of the school's first permanent president. Today BTSR is one of 15 theology schools in partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Late in life he moved to Evanston, Ill., because of illness and died with his wife of nearly 66 years, Bernice, at his side.

Funeral services were held Feb. 5 at First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C., where Ashcraft was a member for nearly 30 years. He was buried at Seminary Cemetery in Wake Forest, N.C. **BT**

"I will not be party to some of the actions now taking place and injuring persons, nor will I hold the coats of those who do."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Two of *Baptists Today's* most faithful and generous supporters died recently. These tributes first appeared at www.baptiststoday.org.

Remembering Reaves McCall

Sometimes what we hear or read takes us back to a specific time and place. Learning that Reaves McCall had died Jan. 21 took me back a few years to Mr. B's Seafood on the outskirts of Hartsville, S.C.

My colleague Keithen Tucker and I had driven to this lovely little town to meet Reaves for lunch. From the moment we sat down I could tell that Reaves was the kind of person everyone enjoys encountering in life.

His gifts and interests were many — a faithful Christian, respected architect, model citizen, curious historian and collector of art.

And he was unconfused about what it meant to be a Baptist. As a result, he generously supported the mission of *Baptists Today* as an independent news journal rooted in freedom of the press and historic Baptist principles.

We talked about small town life, the changing Baptist landscape and whatever else surfaced between bites. He was a kindred spirit. Afterward, we visited with Reaves' twin brother, Roy, who exhibits the same attributes and is a generous supporter as well.

So following Reaves' death I returned to Hartsville to pay my respects and to offer words of sympathy and appreciation to Roy and his wife, Margaret. It didn't take long to see that my high opinion of the McCalls was widely shared.

Turning onto West Home Avenue, I encountered an unusual traffic jam in Hartsville. A police officer was directing cars and pedestrians toward the funeral home.

Person after person shook my hand and offered words of affirmation about Reaves. "He was a true Southern gentleman," one said. Another added: "No one is appreciated around here more than Reaves."

The places where Reaves made his mark are too many to list. At West Hartsville Baptist Church he served as a Sunday school teacher, deacon and organist. Civic engagements were significant as well.

Last October, when the McCall brothers celebrated their 80th birthday, the Hartsville Museum revealed its W. Reaves McCall Gallery. At the dedication, the town's mayor was reported as saying: "Reaves has done more for this city probably than any person who wasn't paid to do it."

Reaves McCall made the most out of his fourscore years and left an influence that will long linger. That is a good way to go about it. **BT**



Reaves McCall

Bill Greenhaw was 'truest of friends'

A chair was folded and leaned against the table Wednesday evening, Jan. 26, at Vineville Baptist Church in Macon, Ga. It was the seat that Bill Greenhaw — who died the night before — had long occupied with friends during the weekly fellowship meal.

Although a quiet and unassuming man, his absence is being felt. The spot on a front pew where he sat during the church's early worship service is unfilled too. And the bench where he faithfully played the organ each Sunday at Centenary United Methodist Church is vacant as well.

His pastor Tripp Martin, during the Jan. 28 memorial service, described Bill as "the truest of friends." The gathered crowd nodded in agreement.

A dedicated educator, Bill influenced a whole generation as a teacher, counselor and principal. And in retirement, he became a strong advocate for next-generation educators.

At Vineville Baptist, Bill served as a deacon and as director of the media library from 1989 to 2006. A plaque reveals that the congregation named the room in his honor: "The William B. Greenhaw Jr. Media Library." In his usual whispered voice and childlike grin, he told me more than once that the first plaque — which he had at home — was replaced due to a misspelled word.

When I met Bill for lunch many years ago and asked him to join the Board of Directors at *Baptists Today* news journal, he suggested having nothing to offer. But I knew better. He was a wise man whose counsel came quietly. After serving six years on the Board, he told friends how eager he was to return. So after the one-year required absence, he was back until his death.

Only once in the more than 10 years of knowing this kind, gentle man did I see him come unraveled. He had driven to a Board meeting in Atlanta and was completely confounded by the traffic and directions. The next week I announced to our staff that Bill never was to travel alone to another out-of-town meeting. That policy worked well in that Bill was more at ease and our staff and other directors enjoyed the travel time spent with him.

Bill was a good reminder that the loudest voices do not always deserve the closest listening. For those wise enough to pay close attention, Bill was a constant source of insight, encouragement and hope.

As his pastor also said, Bill had a "thoughtful faith." He was unmoved by narrow fundamentalism and quick to spot those who used religious language to mask selfish motives. He provided real support — money — to organizations that foster the historic Baptist freedoms he held dear.

There are empty seats because Bill is gone. But there are full hearts because he came our way. **BT**



Bill Greenhaw



Shaped in the depths

Considering the characteristics of good preachers

A reader of sermons can likely identify a good sermon upon reading it. Even after making allowances for the subjective preferences of every sermon consumer, there remain some objective characteristics of this genre that enable a sermon to be awarded the distinction of being “good.” But can the same be said for preachers themselves?

This question is more difficult to answer because good preachers are as different in their personalities and styles as good administrators or good athletes. Nonetheless, there are some characteristics that are unfailingly present in preachers who may be described as being “good.”

A Good Listener

Although preachers make their way by their speaking, their words are only as effective as is their listening.

Good preachers *listen to God* above all. Prayer for them is not a sermon subject; it is their native land — and the Bible’s cadences and phrases as familiar as a mother’s voice.

Good preachers also *listen to life*, to their own life and to the lives of those about them. They strive to hear what life is saying — and this becomes the stuff of their sermons.

They *listen to the times*, to the news and nonsense that form the context for our lives — and this becomes the backdrop of their

sermons.

And, as part of all this listening, they *listen to the speech of the day*, learning from its idioms, neo-logisms and patterns how to speak effectively to their hearers.

A Curious Soul

There is a direct correlation between the curiosity quotient of preachers and the desire listeners have to listen to their sermons. If a preacher is not known to turn over rocks, push edges, or dare to ask “Why?” or “How

can this be?” the result will certainly be listeners who are resigned to enduring the predictable mouthings of yesteryear’s stuff.

Of course, a very real part of the preacher’s assignment is to convey ancient truth into today’s consciousness, but this must be done by way of thoughtfully juxtaposing present-day questions to bequeathed texts and truths.

Blessed is the congregation whose preacher is a curious soul, eager to explore territory beyond the biblical/theological and to discern connections that will integrate life’s totality. This is the preaching that stirs interest, and this is the preacher whose work may be called good.

A Reluctant Spokesperson

Good preachers are neither egotistical big-talkers nor intimidated silent Sams — they are reluctant spokespersons. The reluctance component of this is related to the first named characteristic of being a good listener, but it is more.

As John Killinger once wrote, “Probably the only persons who should preach are those who are sure they shouldn’t.”

Good preachers are persons who are aware of their inadequacies and partial understandings and who, awed by the task, shrink back from proffering their word as being God’s word. They are the meditative ponderers, not the glibly garrulous.

Nonetheless, compelled by God, they summon the courage to stand and to speak what they have seen and heard in the quiet hour. Like their Lord, they do not necessarily cry aloud or scream on street corners but their confident, courageous word is released to do its bidding, and because that word was shaped in the depths it calls unto the deeps. And because of its origin the preacher stands by it.

A Faithful Imaginer

The imagination spoken of here is an ocean span away from the knack some preachers have of lighting upon a cutesy title to the sermon or of devising a clever acrostic for its arrangement.

Imagination here instead refers to perceiving the future of the text or truth at hand. It refers to the preacher’s ability to see the new worlds and wide horizons that beckon hearers to reinvest themselves in impossible causes.

Faithful imagining means lifting the low lid of “reality” as culturally defined and pointing to a higher, holier “reality” open to faith’s appropriation. It is painting before the imagination of listeners a vision alluring enough to spawn hope, elicit joy — and summon the church to repentance and labor.

This transforms preaching from the numbing recital of duty to the heartening revelation of the good, the true and the beautiful — in short, the eternal. The faithful imaginer is an eschatological preacher even when the text is from Leviticus.

A Disciplined Worker

It is a sad misstatement to say that good preachers are born, not taught. Not only does this slogan quench the spirit of some who are more aware of their lack than of their potential, but it also encourages slovenliness within the “born” preacher that is perilous.

Regardless of one’s assessment of his or her gifts for the task of preaching, the fact is that good preachers are the product of disciplined work as much as of native ability.

The best of good preachers testify to this.

They will speak of disciplined study, of week after week and year after year probing the great themes of human existence as well as of biblical texts and Christian theology.

They speak of the “sweet torture” of hard labor over sermons whose truth resists sermonic capture. They speak of the discipline of managing time in the compressed, chaotic week of the preacher who is also pastor and family member.

Their good preaching is the fruit of disciplined work habits, not just spiritual anointing.

A Believer in Preaching

Good preachers dare to believe that the spoken word still has generative and redemptive power. They believe in preaching.

Against a culture that continues to denigrate their trade, good preachers prize “the folly of preaching.” Their love affair with words is scandalous and their commitment to the word fitly spoken is a shocking contrast to those whose communication skills have dwindled to grunts and “uhms” and thumb-punched texted symbols.

Good preachers hear music and beauty

flowing through language — and they sense its power, persuaded that prayer-born words can slip through impenetrable walls, setting both captive and jailer free. Through flimsy, mortal words they hear the trumpet song of God’s Word and perceive the nearby rustlings of a kingdom too long deferred.

Good preachers dare to believe that preaching remains a chosen vessel of God, effecting God’s purposes in human history.

An Experiential Advocate

Good preachers know from their heart the One whose gospel they proclaim. Theirs is no mental infatuation with Christian thought, though they are well-versed in it.

They are not content simply to convey ideas; they seek to evoke encounter with the Living One. Their loyalty is not an institutional one, though they value the rocks and quarries from whence they were hewn.

As fine and helpful as such traditions and programs may be, good preachers understand that their foundation is none other than the living God revealed in the face of Jesus and known by the ever-present ministry of the Holy Spirit. This God they have, by God’s grace, come to know is greater than all theological systems or ecclesiastical traditions.

Good preachers therefore live and move and have their being in reverential heart knowledge of this Holy One — and lobby for this way of life with every sermonic sentence. And, ultimately, it is this characteristic alone that rescues them from being simply windy peddlers of just another weary philosophy.

Although this list names only seven characteristics, others could easily be added — this is not an exhaustive, perfect list. The fact, for instance, that good preachers genuinely love the people to whom they preach is a serious omission.

But it would border on the impossible to exemplify many of these characteristics without such love. And where love is present, a multitude of preaching (and listening) sins are covered. **BT**

—*J. Daniel Day is associate professor of Christian preaching and worship at Campbell University Divinity School in Buies Creek, N.C., and former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Raleigh.*



2011 ChurchWorks!

Good ideas for effective ministry

Brought to you
this month
by Mandy Hudson



Support groups for parents with problem adult children

A quick study of the announcements in any Sunday bulletin at most Baptist churches will reveal a score of well-niched church programs and support services — single parenting, divorce recovery, addiction recovery, etc. Most churches pride themselves on the variety of programs offered to help individuals navigate different life circumstances, especially groups that have been under-ministered to in the past. A surprisingly large demographic is missing in most churches, however: support for parents with problem adult children.

The Prodigal Group at Woodmont Baptist Church in Florence, Ala., meets on a weekly basis in the church's basement. It is a nondenominational outreach to the community and has been a tremendous help to those dealing with conflict or dysfunction in the lives of grown children.

"How many times do we as parents feel like we're at the end of our rope, and with each event we're just unraveling?" asks one Prodigal member gathered for a Thursday night meeting. "We quit going to counseling because this was better," one couple jokes.

The Prodigal Group started two years ago as a result of prayer requests. Co-founder Paul McCrite says he and other parents found themselves continually praying for problems in the lives of each other's grown children and decided to form a support group for those in the same situation. He then contacted Pirkle, a church member and former director of a mental health facility, to see if he would help with the group.

"People come and go on an as-needed basis," Pirkle says. "Some only come one time; some come pretty much every week." Although the group meets at the church, most attendees are from throughout the community, he says, and not necessarily members of Woodmont.

Resources:

Codependent No More
The Power of Praying for Your Adult Children
The Enabler
Setting Boundaries with Your Adult Children
Tommy Pirkle (thopir@gmail.com)
Paul McCrite (salt25@comcast.net)

The agenda of the meeting differs from week to week. Sometimes attendees simply swap stories. Other times they discuss a book or video series, such as *Boundaries* by Henry Clark and John Townsend.

In *Boundaries*, the authors offer professional advice for dealing with dysfunctional situations. Sample chapters include: signs of a lack of boundaries, resolution of boundary problems with family, boundaries with your children, and how to measure success with boundaries

Clark and Townsend also address several common boundary myths, such as these: If I set boundaries, I'm being selfish; boundaries are a sign of disobedience (or a lack of responsibility); if I set boundaries, I will hurt others; boundaries cause feelings of guilt; boundaries are permanent, and I'm afraid of burning my bridges.

The discussion at a sample Prodigal meeting ranges from eating disorders to gambling to alcohol and drugs to sexual addictions.

"If I've learned anything from this group, it's how to be hard-hearted," says one woman. "The hardest thing for me was to let go and let God," says another. "We do not sweat the small stuff anymore," adds a male attendee.

Other topics discussed include when to speak out and when to be silent, learning not to facilitate or enable, how to handle situations involving grandchildren, what to do when children cover for their addicted parents, how to make decisions and put them in writing, signs

of progress to watch for, what to do when a grown child has cut off communication, and the question at the forefront of everyone's mind, "How do you show tough love, but still let them know you're there for them?"

"How did you overcome the fear that something would happen if you didn't intercede?" one man asks. One woman tells the story of a son hooked on painkillers. "Am I going to go through this every six to eight months?" she asks, tearfully. "The road to recovery is sometimes relapse," offers one group member, a former nurse. "We've had the yo-yo effect with our daughter. Each time is a little longer that she's sober."

The group's attendees cover a variety of occupations, including Pirkle, a facility director, and two former nurses. While having professionals involved is desirable, it is certainly not required, note Pirkle and McCrite.

"Self-help groups really do work," says Pirkle. "Unless you've been through [a situation], you don't know how it feels."

To start a "prodigal" group of your own, Pirkle offers the following tips:

- Limit the group to one hour once a week, but allow attendees to remain after the group to continue personal discussions.
- Do not require attendance at every meeting. "Some come every week. Some simply come as a crisis demands," Pirkle says. He and McCrite estimate about a dozen or so attend their meeting each week, with about 50 individuals who have cycled through the program thus far.
- Establish a confidentiality policy. "Everything discussed in this room stays in this room," says McCrite, firmly. "We don't repeat anything that has been shared."
- Open the group to Christians outside of the church or to the unchurched in the community. **BT**

ChurchWorks! is provided by the Congregational Life office of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in partnership with *Baptists Today* and for those dedicated lay leaders working in the educational ministries of local churches. This month's page was written by Mandy Hudson, a freelance writer living in Nashville, Tenn. More ministry resources are available at www.thefellowship.info/News/subscribe and www.thefellowship.info/Resources/Church-Resources/Baptists-Today-resource-page.

2011 Bible Studies

These lessons follow the adult Formations studies from Smyth & Helwys Publishing www.helwys.com

April 3, 2011

Rescued from darkness

Colossians 1:9-14

I became a “Dant” midway through my elementary school experience. It was an oddity then — and now — to be adopted at such an old age. Unlike infant adoptions, I was accustomed to a particular family — a particular way of life — prior to my introduction to a new family.

My biological father lived the life of an aspiring musician, and my mother lived the life of a teenage-groupie-turned-wife of an aspiring musician. What seemed abnormal — downright detrimental — to the child protective agencies in the area, seemed quite natural to me. Being a latchkey kid deep into the night, living on cereal and peanut butter sandwiches, becoming accustomed to the smell of alcohol on a parent’s breath, traveling from small town bar to small town bar every weekend and missing multiple days of school to sit in a recording studio ... well, like I said, it felt normal to me.

My biological parents died years ago. I was reunited with my mom just months before her early death. At my mother’s bedside, she lifted a finger and touched my adult cheek. She mustered a smile and contritely, yet confidently said, “I’m glad you were adopted. You would have never amounted to much if you had stayed with me. You probably would not have survived.” As an adult, I understood what she was saying. I understood the darkness from which I had emerged. For years, however, it had just felt normal.

“He has rescued us from the power of darkness...”

Prior to adulthood, I never considered my former life a life of darkness; but few of us ever do. We tend to consider ourselves “pretty good people” regardless of the visible or invisible textures of our lives. I have never preached a funeral where the deceased was described (by

family and friend) in anything but glowing terms. Even the sketchiest scoundrels would “give you the shirt off their backs” according to those closest to them.

In days past, fiery evangelists reminded us of the words of Isaiah, “...our righteousness is like filthy rags...” and the words of the Apostle Paul, “...all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God...” But in recent years, a more savvy and civil message tones down the idea of our emergence from darkness.

Blindness may be the most extreme form of darkness. Being oblivious to our distance from God, as a result of self-justification and rationalization in our life, is a form of blindness. Before we can enter, enjoy and fully engage the kingdom-life to which God has called us, we must consider and confess the darkness that has been a part of our lives in days past.

“...and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son...”

I’ve never been enamored by “how to” books or “how to” sermons. Anyone who claims to know 10 simple steps or five easy secrets or even seven effective habits will rarely garner my attention. I’ve always felt that life — and certainly life in God’s kingdom — is a bit more complex than that.

I am enamored, however, with people’s prayers. Listening to the heartfelt praises and petitions of my fellow believers has always inspired me. My prayers have been shaped by the prayers of others. My living has been shaped by the prayers of others.

In these verses, Paul does not attempt to give a didactic description of what it means to live in the kingdom of God’s beloved son. What Paul does, however, is share the content of his prayers. These prayers, in verses 9-12, provide a beautiful description of God’s kingdom life. When transferred into this kingdom, we are to seek the knowledge of God’s will, gain spiritual wisdom and understanding, lead lives worthy of the Lord, bear fruit, be strong,

LESSONS FOR:
Sunday, April 3-24, 2011

Written by Jim Dant, pastor
of Highland Hills Baptist
Church in Macon, Ga.



be prepared to endure any circumstance with patience, live thankful lives, and share in the inheritance of God. These prayers, on behalf of God’s people, set a course for our living — out of darkness and into life.

Reflect: In what ways did “darkness” manifest itself in your past? How have you emulated the content of Paul’s prayers in your kingdom living?

April 10, 2011

Reconciled through Christ’s death

Colossians 1:21-23

Years ago a friend and I decided to ride our motorcycles to each of the state parks in Georgia. One beautiful Saturday morning I began my preparations for one such adventure. I opened the garage door, rolled my bike onto the driveway, started the bike (allowing it to warm up a bit), re-entered the garage, put on my riding boots, jacket and helmet. Up until this point, all was quite routine — at least until I put on the helmet. As the padded protective orb settled onto my head, something inside the helmet was anything but settled. Claws and teeth were hitting my scalp while hisses and squeals were filling my ears. Quickly lifting the helmet from my head, I watched a chipmunk jump and run. He was estranged and hostile!

In today’s verses, Paul is discussing what we might call “conversion.” It goes by many other names: saved, born again, redeemed — or as Paul states — reconciled to God. Prior to this event or experience, however, we are described as estranged and hostile.

Estranged carries the feeling of one who is a foreigner. While foreigners may have much in common with others in a particular place or region, there is still a sense in which they do not belong. Being hostile carries the



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship provides these Bible study resources to church leaders through this supplement to *Baptists Today*. For more information on how CBF is “serving Christians and churches as they discover their God-given mission,” visit www.thefellowship.info or call 1-800-352-8741



discomfort a bit further. The one who is estranged does not trust the other. It is assumed the other will at worst do them harm and at best give them no attention.

I do not find it odd that my chipmunk friend was estranged and hostile. While we shared certain characteristics as mammals — living things in God’s created world — the chipmunk was a foreigner in the realm of motorcycle helmets. I also understood its hostility. The chipmunk had no reason to believe that I would help it or avoid harming it.

Prior to our conversions, we were estranged and hostile toward God. This does not mean we were militant, distant creatures. Rather, even though we are created in God’s image, we still sensed a stark difference in ourselves and God. Even though we share much as a human race, we sensed a difference between ourselves and persons of faith. Our hostility had little to do with attacking God, but it had everything to do with not trusting God. Conversion for us was a reconciling moment. It was embracing the knowledge that we are God’s children and that God is “for us.” This conversion, or reconciliation as Paul calls it, is not the end of our faith journey, however. It is only the beginning.

Many monastic communities are governed by *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Inherent in *The Rule* are two guiding principles: stability and conversion. These two principles, while seemingly contradictory, are to be daily attended by the brothers in the monastery. Stability generally addresses the commitment to one’s place and one’s vows. Movement from one monastery or one community of faith to another is not encouraged; it is highly discouraged. Taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience is not a matter upon which one wavers. Within this stability, however, the person of faith is to be converted — changed — daily. One never “arrives” with regard to faith. One never possesses a complete portion of God’s knowledge and will. We are always gracefully working toward a richer communion with God and one another.

While Paul does not explain how conversion occurs, it is clear that there are particular results. Through Christ’s work, we have been made holy, blameless and irreproachable. If your life is like mine, however, the challenge of living into those realities is a difficult one. Holy typically refers to “being set apart for a purpose.” Blameless means “without moral guilt.” Irreproachable denotes “one against whom no valid accusations can be made.” The

eternal work that Christ has done to present me in this condition before God does not relieve me of the work I must do to live this way with my family, friends, faith community and world. I must be daily converted.

Sitting in a seminary class one day, I heard a fellow student ask our professor, “How can I get closer to God? Should I pray more? Read my Bible more often? Fast?” Our professor looked over his reading glasses and responded, “If you want to get closer to God, choose one area of your life where you know you struggle — an area of your life that you do not feel you have completely surrendered to God — and give serious attention to it. Tackling the sin in your life will always move you closer to God.”

Reflect: Recall and describe what you might identify as your conversion experience. How have you been converted daily since then?

April 17, 2011

Rejoicing in sufferings

Colossians 1:24-29

The problem of suffering has plagued every generation. The idea that life should be void of suffering seems embedded in our DNA. We continue to question pain, and yet, cognitively understand its place in human existence. Emotionally we question the existence of disease. At the same time, we know that every human must die of something. We in turn question the darkness of death, while simultaneously affirming that everyone has to die. The questions we ask then — about pain, suffering and death — have little to do with their inevitability in our existence. Rather, we are more concerned with their meaning ... or our ability to affix meaning to them.

The Apostle Paul, on more than one occasion, assigned his suffering to his union with Christ. In Paul’s logic, if Christ resides in us and Christ is a suffering Messiah, then we too will suffer with him. In fact, Paul pressed the matter so far as to say that our suffering “completes” in some measure the work of Christ. This in no way demeans the sufficiency of Christ’s work on our behalf, but it does take seriously the work of Christ in the world through his present-day body — the church.

I’ve had numerous conversations with a particular missionary over the past year. She has served the cause of Christ through the ministry of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship for sev-

eral years. I’m intrigued — even mesmerized — by her stories. She has given up the security of her home to reside in a foreign country. She has not had the opportunity to marry, have children and enjoy what we deem a typical family life. Because of her message — and at times her gender — she has been rejected by some of the people to whom she is called to minister. She has often felt tension between other missionaries in the area as they attempt to work together. She has sacrificed her own food and resources to meet the needs of others. She has known exhaustion, elation and every visceral possibility in between. I often think of her as an embodiment of Christ to the people she serves. All that she experiences — the loneliness, the rejection, the tension, the joy, the sacrifice — these unite her with the person and work of Christ.

It may seem like shallow consolation to some, but the sufferings we bear in this world and in our work truly reflect who and whose we are. We serve a God who did not shy away from the most difficult moments of life. God did not incarnate the divine self into a body immune to pain and death. God, in Christ, met life and death head on. When we live with that kind of courage — laying our entitlement mentality aside — we unite our lives with Christ’s mission.

Paul identifies the mystery of the ages as “...Christ in us, the hope of glory...” The suffering of the saints is a loud proclamation of hope. Everyone suffers. The children of God suffer with purpose and hope.

Jo Anna Douglas was a member of my childhood church. In the eyes and mind of an elementary school student, she was a mysterious creature. She was the first bedridden person I had ever known. According to my parents, she had contracted a disease as a child that had left her lower limbs lifeless. From the time she was a teenager until her “old age,” she had been confined to her bed. I had contact with Ms. Jo Anna once a week; I mowed her yard on Saturdays. After mowing the yard, I would make my way to her bedside. She would always hand me two things: a five-dollar bill and a cassette tape. The five-dollar bill was mine for mowing her lawn. The cassette tape was to be delivered to the senior adult ladies Sunday school class at our church. From her bed she had taught this class of ladies for years. She proclaimed the mystery of the faith. She suffered, but there was purpose and hope in her suffering.

To look at the life — and particularly the



death — of Jesus, one might only see the suffering. For those with eyes of faith, however, we see great hope. We listen to his words from the cross and hear sins forgiven, families cared for, and God's sovereignty affirmed. I saw the same things in Ms. Jo Anna Douglas' life. I trust that same mystery will be proclaimed to the world through our sufferings.

April 24, 2011

Raised with Him through faith

Colossians 2:8-15

When I was a child we used “cootie catchers.” The origami fortune-telling machine kept us entertained for years. The multiple folds on the square sheet of paper had four different colors printed on the outside, a series of numbers on the interior folds and four possible “fortune telling” answers on the deepest folds: yes, no, maybe, ask again later. We brought to the cootie catcher all of the momentous questions that plague a seventh grader: Does Jackie McLemore like me? Will I grow up and be an astronaut? Are we going to have a pop quiz in math today? We never performed any scientific analysis on the accuracy of the cootie catcher, but my anecdotal experience told me it wasn't very reliable — especially in the area of pop quizzes and Jackie McLemore.

As we got older, the cootie catcher was replaced with the Magic 8 Ball, the daily horoscope in our newspaper and the occasional Ouija Board. Again, I've got no scientific evidence to back me up, but I continue to question the reliability of each of these tools.

The first-century world wasn't that different from ours. People struggled with decisions and life direction. Opinions abounded with regard to where reliable direction might be found. A multitude of religious and secular voices pressed for the attention of the populace. It was into this culture and context that the relatively quiet voice of Christ was raised. In comparison to the governments and religions of the day, Jesus was a quiet Lord.

Today there are multiple voices vying for influence in our lives. They are as innocent as family traditions and as strange and sensual as the imaginations of television producers and pseudo-religious leaders. They appeal to the temporal desires of their constituents — like a cootie catcher appeals to the elementary

concerns of a child. They are not adequate for the shaping of a life.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the early Christians to avoid being captivated by the high-decibel diversity of their day. The human traditions and elementary spirits of the universe were/are no competition for the adequacy of Christ.

Paul pulled no punches in his praise of Christ. He claimed that the “...whole fullness of the diety...” dwells in Christ. And, we “...come to fullness in him.” There is nothing in our present or eternal existence that is not held in the person of Christ. Why would we need to search elsewhere?

Paul very astutely used both the images of circumcision and baptism to illustrate this fact. In both these rituals, he pointed to their fulfillment in Christ. In Christ, the heart is circumcised and in baptism the complete story of Christ is told. For those first-century Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile in their faith origins, Christ was presented as the fullness and fulfillment of their journeys.

The adequacy of Christ is an important message for our day. The world is getting smaller and smaller. We daily rub shoulders with persons of other faiths and other religious

perspectives. A large portion of our nation's population claims to be “spiritual” but not religious. As these neighbors and friends face the challenges of life, the inadequacy of an internet-informed faith will be vividly evident.

A couple of years ago I found myself in the private room of a hospice care center. A member of our church had asked me to visit one of her neighbors who was unchurched and rapidly moving toward the final days of life. I walked into the room, introduced myself and quickly surveyed the surroundings. All of the typical furnishings were there. Atop the bedside table was a stack of magazines: *People*, *Us*, and a host of other media-centered publications. I thought to myself, “There's not an ounce of substantive material in any of those magazines.” I sat beside my new acquaintance and listened to his story. I attentively opened my ears and heart to his fears. I finally asked him what he needed. He said, “I just need some hope.”

We spent the next few days talking about the hope I had found in Christ. It was a hope that addressed both the present and eternal concerns of my life. In him, all the fullness of the deity and all the fullness of my life comfortably dwelt. Christ is sufficient. **BT**

LOOKING AHEAD

Baptists Today will feature a SPOTLIGHT section in each monthly issue with targeted, discounted advertising and creative writing opportunities.

April children
May theological education
June curriculum, books, study materials
July stewardship, finances, capital campaigns
August colleges, universities
September music
October church products
November gifts
December technology

For deadlines, special advertising offers and other details, contact Managing Editor Jackie Riley at jackie@baptiststoday.org.

For writing inquiries and submissions, contact Executive Editor John Pierce at editor@baptiststoday.org.

in the know

Keeping up with people, places, and events

Steve Ayers is associate minister of First Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C. Previously he served as minister of students at The Memorial Baptist Church in Greenville, N.C.

Jan Ballard is the new archivist for the American Baptist Historical Society. Previously Ballard served as executive director of the Jacobsburg Historical Society in Nazareth, Penn.

Todd Blake is pastor of Madison Heights (Va.) Baptist Church, coming from the pastorate of Mount Pisgah Baptist church in Fayetteville, N.C.

Ken Evans is pastor of the First Baptist Church of King, N.C.

Ron and Louise Glover are children's ministry coordinators, and **Sally Williams** is adult ministry coordinator at Wingate (N.C.) Baptist Church.

Sarah Holik, coordinator of children's ministries and director of preschool at First Baptist Church in Fitzgerald, Ga., was ordained to the ministry by Parkway Baptist Church in Duluth, Ga., on Jan. 23.

Robin Lunn, a church development coach and consultant and former pastor of churches in New Hampshire and Vermont, has been named executive director of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. She has been a member of the association's board since 2000 and chair since June 2009.

Randy Sherron is pastor of Ridge Road Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C. He has served churches in Asheboro, Sylva, Morehead City and Cary, all in North Carolina.

David R. Smith has resigned after 13 years as president of Georgia Baptist Convention-affiliated Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Ga. He will join the faculty of Dallas Baptist University on April 1 to chair a master's degree program in Christian studies.

Christopher Turner, a recent graduate of Campbell University Divinity School, is pastor of Neill's Creek Baptist Church in Angier, N.C. **BT**

NOW AVAILABLE! Expanded classified ads

5 lines of text | \$50 per month

Ad orders and payment due
March 1 for April issue

Contact:

Jackie Riley, Managing Editor
jackie@baptiststoday.org

(877) 752-5658 / (478) 301-5655

Your ad could look like this



Beach House for Rent

Water Lily Cottage, St. Simons Island, Ga.
3 bedrooms / 3 baths. / Sleeps 10
3-night minimum
www.gacoastrealty.com / (800) 638-1144

Audio-visual design/service • baptisteries • books • bookstores • buses • camps • choir robes • Christian Year resources • Christmas ornaments • Communion sets • concessions • construction • education resources • entertainment • furniture • hymnals • insurance • interior design • investments • landscaping • musical instruments • pipe organ builders • retirement homes • retreat centers • stained glass • steeples • stewardship resources • tours • travel agencies • vacation rentals • website design/service

Community Missionary Richmond Baptist Association

- Lead urban ministry center in South Richmond
- Social ministry background and ability to speak Spanish preferred

Résumés:

office@rbaonline.org
3111 Moss Side Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Minister of Music

Information:
Rev. Keith Alderman, pastor
First Baptist Church
Baxley, Ga.
(912) 367-2738

GIFTS TO *Baptists Today*

HAVE BEEN RECEIVED
IN MEMORY OF ...

Cindy Gilbert
From Woodie and Winnie Williams

Bill Greenhaw
From Bill and Sara Powell

Are you under 40 with something on your mind?

The newly updated *Baptists Today* web site has a blog spot just for you.

Seeking younger voices

Devotional, personal reflections or issue-oriented opinion pieces on a variety of subjects — as long as they are well written, relevant and free of slander — are welcomed inclusions.

These submissions can be never-before published, previously published with the writer retaining first rights, or something posted on a personal blog site. Just tell us if/where it's shown up before.

While the only remuneration is the glory of being published online or perhaps gaining a little traffic to a personal blog site, please send your submissions to editor@baptiststoday.org.

**Go ahead.
Express yourself!**

guest commentary

Marriage and the 'Times'

By Bill Leonard

For a study of religious and cultural trends in American life, consider reading the wedding announcements in the "Sunday Styles" section of the *New York Times* for at least a year. New York weddings may represent an anomaly when compared to similar events in the American South, but their implications are being felt nationwide.

The newspaper stories share a basic format: names, ages, location of the wedding, officiants, education, parental backgrounds, even previous marriages. Some include details of how the couple met or a historical lineage. "The bride is a descendent of President Ulysses Simpson Grant," for example, or "The bridegroom's grandfather was the business partner of Andrew Carnegie."

More recently, however, the *Times* wedding pages increasingly offer insights into the changing nature of marriage and the role of religion in it all.

While many couples still choose "church" weddings, alternative locations are proliferating on beaches and mountainsides, or in private gardens, family homes, hotels and other "event spaces." A substantial number occur at the "District Court" presided over by a judge or justice of the peace. Some transport the entire party to another country.

The definition of "clergy" reflects substantial diversity. There are assorted Jewish rabbis, Hindu or Catholic priests, Muslim imams and Buddhist or Protestant ministers, as well as a growing number of "family friends" who secure ministerial credentials "for the occasion."

Many an officiant becomes "a Universal Life minister for the event." The Jan. 30 *Times* reports that a "minister of the Universal Brotherhood Movement" presided at a recent ceremony, adding: "Next Saturday, the bridegroom's father will lead a spiritual ceremony incorporating Chinese wedding traditions before family and friends

on the beach ... in Punta de Mita, Mexico."

At many weddings, clergy from distinct religions share liturgical responsibilities. Others conduct entirely separate rites in celebrations that reflect diverse religious traditions or personal spiritual explorations.

One recent article noted that the couple was married by a justice of the peace, shortly after "a friend of the bride's family led a ceremony that incorporated Jewish and Christian traditions." Another observed that "a Roman Catholic priest performed the ceremony" with a rabbi "taking part."

These wedding announcements are not trivial. They reflect concrete changes, long present but increasingly normative in American life and culture.

Indeed, a front page story in the Jan. 30 *Times* reported that "one in seven new marriages is between spouses of different races or ethnicities" as indicated by 2008-2009 census data.

While multiracial marriages are certainly nothing new, the strength of the statistics is evident in the growing presence of "mixed-race" children born of those relationships. The article notes: "The crop of students moving through college now includes the largest group of mixed-race people ever to come of age in the United States, and they are only the vanguard." It suggests that many of these young people are "rejecting the color lines that have defined Americans for generations in favor of a much more fluid sense of identity."

In short, while religious Americans continue to divide over issues related to same-sex marriage, a substantial number of persons have redefined marriage altogether with implications for issues of race, culture, family life, faith traditions and religious pluralism. Still other studies indicate that many couples have rejected marriage

entirely, choosing to live together "without benefit of clergy" or any other "official" arrangement.

What does this mean for the church now and in the future?

First, multiracial, multicultural marriages are extending interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism directly into American families, creating consternation, celebration and negotiation all at the grassroots level.

Second, these developments may compel churches to consistently revisit a theology of Christian marriage, offering instruction, setting boundaries and discerning how they might "welcome the stranger" who stands at a Christian altar but remains committed to a non-Christian faith.

Third, ministers should decide what they can and cannot do in representing Christ in ceremonies that may have multiple religious and secular implications. For example, a small but determined group of Protestant ministers has decided no longer to sign marriage licenses as de facto justices of the peace. They preside at marital worship celebrations while leaving the "legal" side to the government.

Fourth, communities of faith might ask how they will nurture children reared in multiple-faith traditions, traditions that may complement and contradict each other all at once.

Finally, all faith communities must confront the challenges posed by ministry to unmarried couples, multicultural couples and multifaith couples, all in a society where one of every two marriages ends in divorce.

Responding to those challenges will take a long, long time, especially since we have only just begun. **BT**

—Bill J. Leonard is a professor of church history at the Wake Forest University School of Divinity. This column was distributed by Associated Baptist Press.



the lighter side

1.6 billion served

By Brett Younger

What would you say if the bellhop knocked on your door and asked, “Would you mind sharing your room?” In 1898, John Nicholson was asked to share his room in Boscobel, Wis., with Samuel Hill. Rather than ask, “Why the Sam Hill should I?” Jack and Sam became fast friends and started the Gideons.

Since these two strangers met that night, the Gideons have given away more than 1.6 billion Bibles — more than a million copies every five days. One Sunday night each year the churches in which I grew up had a Gideon speaker, as in “He was better than last year’s Gideon.” There is an urban legend that people leave money in Gideon Bibles, but I never found (or left) any. While John and Sam’s venture has been wildly successful, the name still puzzles me.



I write half of the *Formations Commentary for Adult Bible Study*. Writers are at the mercy of editors. I hope to be asked to write on King David, the Beatitudes or the church in Acts. Right now I am working, slowly, on 8,000 words about Gideon.

Did my editor, John or Sam, consider other possibilities? How carefully did they

read the story? Gideon is making wine while hiding from the Midianites when an angel shows up.

Gideon complains, “The Midianites need to go back to Midian.”

The angel replies, “Funny you should mention that.”

Gideon whines, “I’m just a little guy.”

In less than two chapters the writer of Judges says that Gideon is afraid seven times. Gideon keeps asking for peculiar signs — wet wool on dry grass, dry wool on wet grass — until he gets forced into some exciting adventures.

He attacks the Midianites with torches and trumpets, which probably did not inspire confidence in his troops, but the torch on the front of Gideon Bibles looks great. Gideon attacks his own people when they refuse to lend a hand. In a scene that makes Gideon seem like Edward G. Robinson leading the revelry at the foot of Mount Sinai in *The Ten Commandments*, Gideon collects everyone’s gold to make an idol. Gideon turns down the chance to be king, but then names one of his 70 — count ’em, 70 — sons (whose mother was a concubine) “Abimelech,” which means “My father is king.” Maybe he ran out of names.

Which part of Gideon’s story screams, “We need to stamp this guy’s name on the cover of 1.6 billion Bibles”? This is one of those rare instances when a committee would

have been helpful.

John and Sam, giving away Bibles is a fine idea, but we don’t need to call them all Gideon Bibles. We could have Noah Bibles that are waterproof.

Rahab Bibles would include red ribbons.

David Bibles belong to someone else, but you take one even though you already have lots of Bibles of your own.

Solomon Bibles have been cut in half.

Paul Bibles are for travelers.

Lydia Bibles are purple.

What about a Thomas Bible for people who aren’t sure they want to read it?

Were it not for the Gideons, popular culture would be impoverished.

The Beatles sang, “Rocky Raccoon checked in to his room only to find Gideon’s Bible.”

In *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*, Marilyn Monroe’s character croons, “I’ll be with my diary and that book by Mr. Gideon.”

In *Guys and Dolls*, Sky Masterson mentions that the only two things that have been in every hotel room in the country are “Sky Masterson and the Gideon Bible.”

In *Mission Impossible*, Ethan Hunt figures out the identity of a corrupt agent when he notices that the Gideon Bible in his team’s safe house is from a hotel in a certain city. When this clue is revealed to the agent, he remarks, “They stamped it, didn’t they? Those (expletive deleted) Gideons.”

In what has to be every Gideon’s favorite episode of *Cheers*, Sam Malone takes a woman to a hotel, then assumes the Gideon Bible in the nightstand is a sign from God that Sam shouldn’t sleep with her — which, of course, it was.

Sam Hill would have laughed. **BT**





tell us
what you
think!

Please visit www.baptiststoday.org/survey and complete the online survey. Your input will help shape the future of *Baptists Today*. Thanks!

—Brett Younger is associate professor of preaching at Mercer University’s McAfee School of Theology.

guest commentary

Revisiting hope

As if it's the most natural thing in the world

By Peggy Haymes

Cleaning out some files the other day I came across a clipping from this publication. It was a column I'd written after the first meeting of what would become the Coordinating Council of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, although we didn't have any of those names yet.

I spoke of the feeling that many of us at that meeting shared, the feeling that we'd been entrusted with hope.

Work, school and assorted family demands kept me away from CBF General Assemblies for a number of years until I returned this past year in Charlotte. I made new friends and reconnected with an awful lot of old friends — classmates, professors and colleagues.

But there was more than memory there. I stood back and saw hope fulfilled.

In fact, someone took a picture that captured the realizing of hopes that I barely dared hope 20 years ago.

Someone somewhere has the picture. I'm in it, along with Dorisanne Cooper, who followed me as associate minister at College Park Baptist Church in Greensboro, N.C. Dorisanne left us to become pastor of the Lakeshore Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, where she still serves.

Standing along with us is Jennifer Ingold Asbill, who grew up in College Park. I was her minister when she was a child, and

Dorisanne became her minister when she was a youth.

Jennifer never knew a time when there wasn't a woman serving in ministry at her church. Now Jennifer herself serves the people of Zebulon Baptist Church in Zebulon, N.C., as their pastor for discipleship.

Now this may seem like nothing special to you, but when I stepped back and thought about it, it nearly took my breath away. Three generations of women ministers, standing there as if it's the most natural thing in the world.



One colleague told me how moving it was to see a table full of women signing books that contained their sermons. Who thought we'd see such a day?

For me, the most moving time was

standing there with my arms around these two women, both of whom I am pleased to call colleague and friend, and whose journeys I've been blessed to share. Three generations of women ministers, standing there as if it's the most natural thing in the world.

Once upon a time there was a woman on that

church personnel committee who said, "We say we support women in ministry. Maybe we should put our money where our mouth is." That woman, Dot Whedbee, didn't know she was opening a door that all three of us would walk through in one way or another.

We still have a long way to go. I know that. Women still bump up against closed doors and ecclesiastical glass ceilings. But I

know somewhere there's some person on a personnel committee or a pastor search committee who's raising a question about call and conviction. And in that moment, a door opens.

Three generations of women ministers, standing there as if it's the most natural thing in the world. Who could have hoped for such a thing?

—Peggy Haymes is a writer, counselor and minister in Winston-Salem, N.C. She is the author of *Didn't See it Coming: How I Faced Bouncing Off a Buick and Other Assorted Stuff and Heart Prayers 2*.



What should I read between monthly issues of *Baptists Today*?

Daily religious news from around the world, book reviews, editors' blogs and much more can be found at www.baptiststoday.org.

A: *Baptists Today* online of course! Every day.

Don't miss the latest feature, **Weaver's Weekly Wrap-up**, in which popular blogger and Baylor university doctoral student Aaron Weaver analyzes the latest Baptist news.

IN PRINT - ONLINE - ON TARGET
www.baptiststoday.org

*Woman recounts
bomb memories
from Birmingham*

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. —

Carolyn McKinstry pointed to a doorway in the balcony of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and memories started rushing back — good ones.

“I used to run all over this place as a little kid,” she said. “That was my hiding place.”

McKinstry also has some difficult memories, like Sept. 15, 1963, when a bomb exploded at the church and killed four of her close friends minutes after she had spoken to them in the girls’ restroom. The church was targeted by the Ku Klux Klan after it had been a meeting place for marches organized by civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr. and Fred Shuttlesworth.

McKinstry also recalled another bombing that touched her personally, in April 1964. A bomb targeted at her neighbor’s house exploded across the street from McKinstry’s childhood home. The explosion awakened her at about 3 a.m., shattered her bedroom window and knocked her two brothers out of their beds.

The neighbors had socialized with whites, violating segregation laws, and the Klan was sending a message, McKinstry said. “They were trying to scare people.”

Another neighbor, Maurice Ryles, was targeted with a package of dynamite outside his house that was discovered before it exploded.

“We were terrorized our whole existence growing up,” McKinstry said. “Bombing was so routine back then.”

Those events and images have haunted and inspired her, as she recounts in a new book, *While the World Watched*, published by Tyndale House.

“It’s a powerful book,” said Denise

On Sixteenth Street



Carolyn McKinstry has written a new book about her childhood at Alabama’s historic Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, which was bombed by the Ku Klux Klan in 1963. Religion News Service photo by Beverly Taylor of *The Birmingham News*.

George, McKinstry’s co-author. “She marched in the children’s march. She was right in the middle of all of it. Had she not walked out of the restroom when she did, she would have been one of the girls killed.”

McKinstry, 63, has been a part of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church since she was two years old, and continues to do volunteer work, including giving tours. Shortly after finishing the book, she was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2010. She recently completed chemotherapy treatments.

McKinstry, a graduate of Fisk University, returned to school in recent years to graduate from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in 2007 with a master of divinity degree. She wanted to spread a message of love that she hoped could help counteract

hatred based on racial prejudice.

“When I look at how we treat each other, I wonder, ‘How does this happen?’” McKinstry said. “We were all reading the same Bible.”

She wonders why some of the most belligerent segregationists giving orders to use police dogs and fire hoses against marchers, including police commissioner Eugene “Bull” Connor, saw no conflict with their roles as church deacons and Sunday school teachers.

“When people tell you that you can’t do something because your skin is brown or black, you recognize that this is not how God intended it to be,” McKinstry said. “Segregation laws addressed every aspect of how blacks and whites could interact — no playing checkers together, no playing dominoes, no baseball, no football, no eating together, no socializing.”

Public schools, buses and water fountains were segregated by race. Those who violated those laws were at risk of police arrest and Klan bombings. “Somebody could be put in jail and fined just for socializing,” McKinstry said.

King and Shuttlesworth had the courage to stand up and point out that was wrong, she said. Others stood by and watched injustice, taking no action, she said.

“It’s time to stop watching,” McKinstry said. “Everybody’s afraid. When it comes time to act, where is the courage?”

That’s a message she has tried to spread in person to visitors at the church, and in the new book, she said.

“God just tacked something on my heart I couldn’t get rid of,” McKinstry said.

—Greg Garrison writes for *The Birmingham News in Birmingham, Ala.*

“I wonder, ‘How does this happen?’ ... We were all reading the same Bible.”

Welcome home!

Former Navy chaplain advises churches on ministry to returning soldiers

Some 2 million Americans have served overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Now, thousands are coming home each month and trying, sometimes with difficulty, to settle back into civilian life.

Churches are uniquely positioned to help returning veterans adjust and find meaning in their lives away from the battlefield, according to David A. Thompson, a retired Navy chaplain and co-author of the 2009 book, *Beyond the Yellow Ribbon: Ministering to Returning Combat Veterans*.



David Thompson

For two years, he worked as a military family life consultant, helping 8,000 soldiers and their families handle the transition back to civilian life. He says churches need to recognize what they have to offer and rise to the occasion.

Q: Where do congregations have something distinctive to offer to veterans who are just now returning home?

A: It really comes down to meaning-making and wrapping people into a community and a brotherhood. Those are the two pieces that veterans long for.

Q: Why?

A: Soldiers have been in an experience of being intensely bonded together. They come back to the civilian life, and they feel like they've lost their place in life, their community, their brothers and sisters in arms. All of a sudden they're back in a very individualistic society. There's not the same level of care and commitment to one another. That's a real big missing piece.

Q: What else do they crave?

A: They want to be doing something meaningful with their lives. I had one soldier come back and he said to me, "I'm back in a job at Best Buy. I'm selling big screen TVs to people

who really don't need them. Less than a year ago, 20 people depended on me for their lives. I was involved in doing things to help stop violence. I feel like I'm just wasting my life."

Q: Where is our society not doing enough?

A: We're asking them to come back sometimes to stuff that's pretty boring and pretty deadening. We're not challenging them. We're not saying to them, "Have you thought of the Peace Corps? Have you thought of doing something for the cause of justice?" There are a lot of things we could hook them into.

Q: How can churches help veterans who face these kinds of struggles?

A: We could elevate people to capture a vision of doing something that's meaningful. Then we could assist them in the transition by connecting them with training or with people engaged in certain kinds of work. In that, you become part of a band of brothers working for a great cause.

Q: Why are these circumstances largely unaddressed by organizations that exist to serve veterans?

A: Sometimes we, in our medical model, are zeroing in on all the people who need a hospital, or who need serious mental health interventions, which probably is about 20 percent of the veterans who are coming home. But 80 percent are this other kind of veteran, who really needs to end up getting a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.

Q: What do returning veterans have to offer congregations?

A: They've had a lot of responsibility in the armed forces. They show up on time, they're terribly loyal, they don't quit easily. Many of our churches grew as World War II veterans became part of those churches. Many of the churches we have today are standing because of that group that came back and is now in their 80s and 90s. Why not do that with this group?

Q: How can churches reach out to veterans?

A: The welcome mat has to be out in a way that's saying more than, "Come and receive some help for basic needs." It really needs to be a reciprocal relationship where veterans are giving something to the church, and the church is giving something to them. Then it's a community.

Q: How do churches learn to create environments where people make significant sacrifices together for great causes?

A: I'd probably start with a small group of people — not just military people, but people in general who are struggling with the deadness of life that doesn't have a lot of meaning and who are frustrated. I'd build a mini-community within the church community of people who want to explore options under this idea of meaning-making and community-building. That might lead to mentoring relationships. And we'd see where that goes. **BT**

In your
own
words

"We found the online ad to be very helpful in reaching out regarding our opening ... [W]e ended up selecting one of the candidates who sent us her cover letter and résumé based on the ad."

ST. ANDREWS BAPTIST CHURCH
COLUMBIA, S.C.

The King James Version at 400

A CLOSER LOOK

The only accurate English translation?

By Melody Maxwell

As of 2011, the bestselling King James Version of the Bible has shaped the language and imagination of the English-speaking world for exactly four centuries. Many 21st-century Christians, however, have exchanged the book's *thees* and *thous* for newer translations that convey the sacred text in a more contemporary idiom.

But among a minority of fundamentalist Christians — including some Baptists — the King James Version is much more than an antiquated translation: it is the only acceptable version of the Bible in the English language.

As the New Jersey-based Dean Burgon Society declares, “The God-honored Authorized King James Bible has been, and continues to be, the only accurate English translation of the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and preserved original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of God for the English-speaking people.”

To the majority of biblical scholars, such a claim is baseless — but “King James only” advocates believe strongly that the purity of their holy text is at stake. The Dean Burgon Society’s summer conference, for example, is slated to include workshops on topics such as “Assaults on the King James Bible” and “Acceptance of the KJB as Supreme.”

How do these “King James only” believers reach their conclusions? It’s a debate that unites fiery fundamentalist passion with arcane biblical scholarship. While positions vary, a typical “King James only” stance is that the King James Version (especially the New Testament) was translated from inerrant Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic texts, while later English versions are based on inferior manuscripts.

Take the fifth chapter of 1 John, for example. The King James Version of the Bible includes verse 7: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the

Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” However, the New International Version, first published in the 1970s, does not include a similar sentence in its main text. Instead, a footnote informs the reader of this alternate reading, which editors explain was “not found in any Greek manuscript before the 14th century.”

Gail Riplinger, a leading advocate of the “King James only” movement, warns that “the new versions have entirely removed the most powerful Scripture identifying the Trinity” of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

But defenders of the New International Version and other recent translations argue that scholars should give more weight to the most ancient Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic texts, which were transcribed closest in time to the original manuscripts of the Bible — and which were largely discovered after the King James Version was translated in 1611.

How do these scholars account for the Trinitarian version of 1 John 5? Daniel Wallace, professor of New Testament Studies at the evangelical Dallas Theological Seminary, maintains, “The reading seems to have arisen in a fourth century Latin homily in which the [original] text was allegorized to refer to members of the Trinity.”

Is this explanation heresy or history? With no extant copies of the original biblical manuscripts, it’s hard to be absolutely sure. At least one group of believers, however, is certain that the Trinitarian reading is accurate — and that the King James Version is the only authentic English Bible translation.

Professor Wallace is almost as sure of something else: “If the King James translators knew that this would be the result 400 years after the completion of their work, they’d be writhing in their graves.” **BT**

—Melody Maxwell, a freelance writer in Birmingham, Ala., holds a Ph.D. in religion from the International Baptist Theological Seminary.

King James and Baptists: Not a love story

By Bruce Gourley

The 400th anniversary of the King James Bible follows closely on the heels of the 400th anniversary of Baptists, celebrated a mere two years ago. So, was there a connection between Baptists and King James I those four centuries ago?

Indeed. And the connection may surprise most Baptists today.

In brief, Baptists were birthed advocating separation of church and state, a heretical concept that enraged King James. Before Baptists appeared, the King thought he had put together an excellent plan for preventing heresy and ensuring church-state union.

The plan was called the Authorized Bible (later known as the King James Bible). By controlling the Bible his subjects used, the King could control his subjects.

The upstart Baptists, however, proved to be a burr on the seat of the King’s throne. One year after the Authorized (King James) Bible debuted, Baptist co-founder Thomas Helwys, a vocal advocate of the separation of church and state, openly scolded James.

“The King is a mortal man, and not God, therefore he hath no power over the mortal soul of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them and to set spiritual Lords over them,” said Helwys, in part.

For his treason, Helwys was cast into Newgate Prison where King James held him until Helwys died about four years later, becoming a Baptist martyr for his unwavering commitment to the separation of church and state.

James’ hatred for Baptists continued, and he sought to “harrow out of England” the troublesome heretics. Although never fully realized, his crusade against Baptists did result in severe persecution of the sect throughout England.

Ironically, the Bible that was intended by a hater of Baptists to be a weapon against heretics such as Baptists is today considered, by some Baptists, as the only true translation of scripture. **BT**

—This article first appeared in the “Baptists Yesterday” blog at www.baptiststoday.org.

Where do military chaplains come from?

By John Pierce

Posted Feb. 2, 2011

www.baptiststoday.org/johndpierce-blog

During the recent debates on the military's Don't Ask/Don't Tell policy, I was surprised at the strong opposition to repeal from some chaplain groups. Their perspective — including predictions of widespread departure — didn't jibe with what people in the larger chaplaincy community seem to hold.

However, recent reporting by Religion News Service shed some light on the subject.

According to one news report, which originated with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Air Force data show that the most popular training program for military chaplaincy is Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, a part of the late Jerry Falwell's fundamentalist empire.

Some within the military have raised questions about the quality of Liberty's

program, the story noted. Liberty, while accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), does not have its seminary accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the national accreditation agency for graduate-level seminaries.

That's acceptable, because the Department of Defense requires only that seminaries training chaplain candidates be listed with the American Council on Education, which is not an accrediting body.

Liberty's chaplaincy training is led by retired Air Force chaplain Charles Davidson, who launched the program in 2007. More than 1,000 students have enrolled in the Master of Divinity degree program that is offered online and requires just 72 credit hours (a minimum allowed by the Armed Forces Chaplain Board). Most seminaries require 90 hours for a three-year degree.

According to the report, Liberty has

its own military endorsement arm, Liberty Baptist Fellowship, also led by Davidson. He was reported as saying: "Praise the Lord, 10 or 15 years from now we could have 600, 700, 800 evangelical chaplains sprinkled throughout the military who are Liberty graduates."

Not everyone is rejoicing, however. Liberty's churning out of military chaplains paired with Department of Defense data showing that the nation's corps of chaplains already leans heavily toward evangelicals has caused some alarm.

In one response, the United Church of Christ-related Eden Theological Seminary is launching its own military chaplain-training program.

However, it would be a shame if the corps of chaplains becomes its own ideological and theological battlefield. Such needed service to military personnel is too important to be anything less than the best regardless of the individual chaplain's training and faith tradition. **BT**

The art of self-formation

By Tony W. Cartledge

Posted Jan. 24, 2011

www.baptiststoday.org/cartledge-blog

I've always liked the art of Norman Rockwell, whose work illustrated much of the 20th century, often on magazine covers. Art critics typically dismissed Rockwell as a commercial hack rather than a true artist, but common folk who think a painting should look like something recognizable found in him an artist to whom they could relate.

His glimpses of Americana, whether found on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* or the front of a cereal box, were almost invariably heart-warming.

One of my favorite Rockwell paintings has always been his triple self-portrait, a painting that was motivated not by vanity but by a commission from the *Post*. It's reminiscent of an earlier portrait he did of himself, viewed from behind, but facing a blank canvas while



looking harried and scratching his head because he had a deadline to meet and no ideas about what to paint.

Rockwell's painting, which pays

tribute to other artists whose self-portraits are tacked to the top right corner of the canvas, is a reminder to me that we all have multiple dimensions. In the portrait we see the "real" artist at work on his stool, a reflected image of the artist in the mirror, and a grayscale painting of himself on the canvas.

I doubt that Rockwell would assign any deep mystical meaning to the portrait — I suspect he just thought it would be a cute idea — but it reminds me that we all have physical, emotional and spiritual aspects to our being.

In another way, the painting might suggest how we can think of our real self at work in the chair, the self that others see in the mirror, and the self we'd like to be still forming on the canvas.

It's a helpful reminder, I think, that none of us comes into the world completely formed: the person we turn out to be is shaped in various ways throughout our lives, not only by the circumstances of our birth and family, but also by our own efforts at physical, emotional and spiritual formation.

Happy painting... **BT**

Stegall Hall, Wingate University

*College presidents
talk about state of
higher education*



Challenges *and* Opportunities

Presidents of colleges and universities with Baptist identities face many of the same challenges of all other institutions of higher learning — along with some unique ones.

Mercer University President Bill Underwood has spoken of the “arms race of facilities” that has resulted in the demand for exceptional recreational and residential offerings to attract students. They come at a high price tag, however, when affordability is a concern for many families.

Gardner-Webb University President Frank Bonner, in a recent interview, said technology is changing higher education so dramatically and quickly that he is considering a staff person with the sole assignment of addressing innovation.

Such comments led to posing questions about these and other issues regarding higher education to leaders on several Baptist-related campuses.

BT: What do you see as the biggest challenges to your college or university’s mission — affordability, competition, others — and how are you responding to these challenges?

JAMES “JAY” MOSELEY, Franklin College, Franklin, Ind.: “Affordability will remain a challenge.”

DAN LUNSFORD, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N.C.: “A big challenge is competition from other higher education institutions, especially public and for-profit, primarily

based on cost (‘sticker price’) as compared to the private institutions. The continuing economic climate and its resulting demand for more financial aid from families, when the institution has been impacted by investment losses and reduced donations, has been and continues to be a major challenge.”

BILL ELLIS, Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Texas: “Affordability. Historically, the majority of students who are attracted to Howard Payne University are interested in service fields, such as education and ministry, so our graduates, while extremely loyal, do not have resources to sustain the university financially through their gifts. Therefore, we are looking beyond our graduates to individuals who love and desire to support Christian education, such as HPU

provides. We are also looking at expanding our curriculum in business and other areas of professional study, but building the university's endowment is essential for the long-term economic stability."

JERRY MCGEE, Wingate University, Wingate, N.C.: "The greatest challenge to any institution is to remain relevant. As the world changes around us, our institution must be willing to change as well. We have to assure that we are producing well-educated graduates who are prepared to meet the needs of our communities. As an example, it's important to periodically review all academic programs to assure that they are up-to-date and that graduates of those programs are still needed in today's world. We must be willing to eliminate programs which are no longer relevant and consider adding new programs that are in tune with the jobs of the future."

ANDY WESTMORELAND, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.: "The question of adequate resources is always a challenge, but that seems to be true in all facets of education. We are constantly seeking to improve the quality of our programs, and that has an impact on our pricing. We seek to maintain affordability through building a stronger base for endowed scholarships. I grew up in a family that couldn't have afforded to send me to a private college without significant aid, so this problem is close to my heart. As for 'competition,' I suppose that I don't worry about that very much. We have what are called 'crossover applications' with many other Baptist-related universities, but I don't view that as a challenge. Instead, we have great relationships with our colleagues at the other institutions."

MICHAEL CARTER, Campbellsville University, Campbellsville, Ky.: "Campbellsville University and other similar Christian institutions face numerous challenges including affordability, competition from different sectors of higher education, remaining true to our mission, and increasing endowment and raising sufficient funds. Each challenge is on the agenda daily ... and demands the attention of the president and other members of the senior leadership team. Affordability is certainly an issue for the entire higher education community, and universities such as Campbellsville obviously do not receive direct public subsidies. Consequently, our Board of Trustees and administration

work tirelessly to find a balance between generating enough revenue to operate while keeping tuition and fees as reasonable as possible. Private institutions provide millions of dollars of institutional financial aid to enable lower and moderate-income students to be able to attend. More than 90 percent of our students receive financial aid of various types; around 50 percent are first-generation college students; a majority of our students come from Appalachia and south central Kentucky, which are among the lowest educational attainment regions in the nation; and more than 20 percent of our full-time undergraduate students are minority. We face competition from numerous sectors — public universities with lower tuition rates and operational subsidies from public funding, for-profit entities who are omnipresent and aggressive, out-of-state schools who do not necessarily meet the same accrediting standards as those institutions like CU who are part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and a number of very fine private nonprofit institutions competing for students. One challenge that regularly arises is that of assuring that everything we do at Campbellsville University relates back to the basic institutional mission and mission statement."

CHRIS WHITE, Chowan University, Murfreesboro, N.C.: "The biggest challenge is adhering to the university's mission. Chowan University is experiencing unprecedented growth, and with this is the temptation to launch out in areas not integral to the core mission. We cannot be all things to all people and continue to be successful."

REX HORNE, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.: "While we certainly face financial challenges, our biggest challenge is letting people know the incredible opportunity and education available at Ouachita. We are recognized by our peers and are consistently highly ranked by such prestigious magazines as *U.S. News & World Report* and *Forbes*."

LANNY HALL, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas: "One of the greatest challenges we face today is how to keep higher education affordable. Hardin-Simmons has long been a leader in being sensitive to students and parents struggling to 'make the math work' as they manage the payment side of the tuition

"(For-profit institutions) lead the naïve to waste their Pell Grant dollars."



Jay Moseley

The continuing economic climate and its resulting demand for more financial aid from families ... continues to be a major challenge."



Dan Lunsford

"HPU will continue to work to improve our facilities but not at the expense of quality programs and faculty."



Bill Ellis

"The greatest challenge to any institution is to remain relevant."



Jerry McGee

"Our philosophy regarding residential housing is that we're not offering membership in a country club."



Andy Westmoreland

equation. Since 1993, HSU has made a commitment to each entering class to guarantee to them that their tuition rate will not increase as long as the students remain enrolled full-time in consecutive fall and spring semesters and make satisfactory progress toward their degree. Students love it and have an incentive to remain 'on track' in their degree plan. Parents love it because they do not have to 'shoot at a moving target' when it comes to tuition each year. Additionally, HSU continues to add scholarship funds each year to help ease the burden of students' paying for their education. As for the tuition guarantee, HSU is one of only nine private institutions to do this in the nation."

BT: Are for-profit institutions having an impact on higher education? If so, how?

MOSELEY: "They lead the naïve to waste their Pell Grant dollars."

LUNSFORD: "Yes. The for-profits have been spending large amounts on marketing and on-line programs with an emphasis on

access and affordability. With a reluctance to talk 'negatively' about a competitor on issues of student success, high student debt load and lack of a 'personal touch,' we find it is difficult to negate the impact."

ELLIS: "Yes. They are not direct competitors with HPU for students. Because we are primarily a traditional residential campus, we serve different segments of the population from the for-profits. However, since some for-profits have exploited the federal student loan system and are essentially diploma mills, the government is moving to bring more federal regulation into higher education. I believe it is safe to say that increased federal regulation may have dire consequences for private, church-related institutions."

MCGEE: "Not yet in the region in which Wingate University operates. One alarming trend is seeing for-profit institutions 'buying' small institutions which are struggling as non-profits."

WESTMORELAND: "For the moment, the greatest impact on higher education appears to be a wave of paranoia. Whenever the *Chronicle of Higher Education* prints an article about the for-profit sector, the online postings from academe are incendiary. I think that the rise of the for-profit institutions is causing us to look more seriously at some of our costs and the ways in which we deliver education. That's not such a bad thing."

CARTER: "There is no doubt that for-profit educational institutions are impacting higher education. At the federal and state levels, there is increasing scrutiny of higher education in general and the for-profit sector in particular. We all agree on the need for greater transparency and accountability for all sectors of higher education. Some of the statistics we are hearing on retention and graduation rates for students in the for-profit sector are very stark — i.e., retention and graduation rates are very low. The for-profit sector has mastered the art of student recruitment, appealing marketing, and flexibility of scheduling and means of instruction. We are all reading about the negatives that students have encountered in some instances, and federal and state regulators are rightfully examining such reports. There is justifiable concern about the quality of the educational experience, and the situation reminds us all

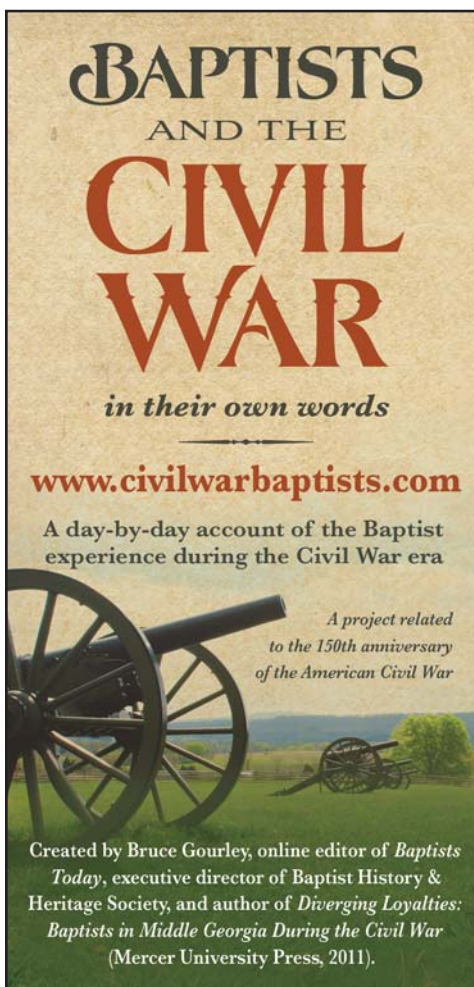
of the importance of serving the interests of students. That is why we are here — to serve students and their educational needs. In the case of Campbellsville and similar institutions, our goal is to help prepare our students for lives of service in their chosen profession."

WHITE: "For-profit educational institutions are changing the marketplace. However, I am convinced there will always be a place for traditional campuses. To date, Chowan University has experienced no discernible impact from the for-profits."

HORNE: "I don't give a lot of thought to this, but I am sure they are having some level of impact. They advertise a lot and sell the 'price' of attending while Ouachita, with a very good price, is most interested in highlighting the value we offer our students."

HALL: "In many ways, the for-profits are adversely impacting higher education. Many of these entities rely heavily on adjuncts/part-time faculty as their front-line teachers. Often they do not provide as much opportunity for student interaction with faculty outside of the classroom setting. For-profits consume an unusually large proportion of available governmental funding for scholarships and grants. As the for-profits consume more than their fair share, private and public non-profit universities may be 'squeezed' in the financial aid area. In this time of limited public resources for financial aid, more attention should be focused on how funds are being spent in the for-profit sector. The 'public good' needs to be re-examined. In many cases, for-profits tend to offer degrees that focus on preparing a person technically for a particular position, perhaps devaluing the concept of a liberal arts degree program found in many public and private non-profit institutions. The value of a liberal arts education for a world facing increasingly complex problems that cut across disciplines should not be underestimated."

BT: One university president has spoken about the "arms race of facilities" by colleges and universities. Are extraordinary recreational and residential buildings necessary now to attract students? Is the funding of these major buildings consuming lots of time and money?



MOSELEY: “Not really.”

LUNSFORD: “The demand for ‘high-end’ recreational facilities and technology has been more of an impact than residential buildings, though the condition of residence halls remains an issue. In the difficult climate for fundraising and the high cost of borrowing, plus lenders placing more requirements on the borrower, there are problems. The process of financing these projects is very time-consuming and expensive.”

ELLIS: “Certainly our students have very different expectations for facilities than those students who attended our colleges when most of our dorms were built. Studies show that facilities are one of the top concerns for prospective students and parents. Thus, there are pressures on colleges to improve housing and recreational facilities — the ‘arms race.’ However, it is also clear through numerous examples that when universities with enrollment and financial difficulties assume sizeable debt to make their facilities more attractive, it does not bring the desired results. It remains true that the quality of the educational programs is of utmost importance in attracting students, and new dorms and workout facilities will not make up for questionable academic quality. HPU will continue to work to improve our facilities, but not at the expense of quality programs and faculty.”

MCGEE: “The short answer is yes. At Wingate University we work very hard to build appropriate new facilities and to take care of our existing buildings. However, a few universities seem to think the college experience is about luxurious facilities rather than getting a meaningful education. It’s frightening to watch some small private universities borrow in excess of \$100 million and then use those funds to build luxurious accommodations and buildings that seem so out of place on a university campus.”

WESTMORELAND: “Our facilities, although many of them are older, are in pretty good shape, so we are avoiding some aspects of the ‘arms race’ that you reference. For instance, our philosophy regarding residential housing is that we’re not offering membership in a country club. We want our residence halls and apartments to be clean,

safe, affordable, and near our academic facilities, but they are not resort-quality. However, we are having to build additional residence halls in order to accommodate enrollment growth.”

CARTER: “Colleges and universities are expected, in today’s environment, to provide and maintain attractive and state-of-the-art facilities. Higher education is costly and is a major investment by the students and their families. In addition to providing academic facilities that provide technology and a positive learning atmosphere, students expect residential facilities that are comfortable as well as resources for wellness, student life and activities, and recreation. Fundraising is indeed a major task and among the primary responsibilities of today’s college and university president. There are people of means who are willing to invest in Christian higher education and who have an understanding of the importance of having nice facilities.”

WHITE: “Extraordinary recreational and residential buildings are wonderful and helpful. However, I do not consider them mandatory. What is mandatory is a competent and caring faculty and staff.”

HORNE: “The demand for top facilities is a given. It is an important part of recruiting. It is something expected and appreciated by students and families alike. The truth is that we have existed with buildings that have far exceeded the age expectation for usefulness. However, we also have invested in several state-of-the-art residence halls and other facilities the past few years for the benefit of our students.”

HALL: “Students are very much aware of facilities available to them at universities. They want all the latest ‘bells and whistles’ when it comes to facilities. In the past year, Hardin-Simmons has renovated and expanded its fitness center in response to student feedback. Further, HSU has made significant changes in its cafeteria and snack bar, as we responded to what we have learned in campus focus groups. Renovation of residence halls is a constant. The competition for students is very intense, and keeping up-to-date facilities is a must in the higher education marketplace today. This requires careful planning, the ability to be nimble and the investment of large sums of money.” **BT**

We cannot be all things to all people and continue to be successful.”



Chris White

“The value of a liberal arts education for a world facing increasingly complex problems that cut across disciplines should not be underestimated.”



Lanny Hall

“Fundraising is indeed a major task and among the primary responsibilities of today’s college and university president.”



Michael Carter

“The demand for top facilities is a given. It is an important part of recruiting.”



Rex Horne

COMING IN APRIL

Part two, beginning with: How do you use terms such as “Baptist,” “Christian” or “faith-based” to define your school? And do you have to redefine them since they carry pejorative meanings?

Religious themes get star treatment at Sundance

Celebrity sightings and up-and-coming indie flicks are a given at the annual Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, but this year's event drew attention to something else: faith on film.

A small but noticeable number of films at Sundance tackle issues of religion, spirituality and faith. Out of 120 Sundance features at the late January festival, 12 are overt stories about religion, or chronicle protagonists largely defined by faith, said John Nein, senior programmer for the festival.

"There are definitely more films (exploring spirituality) that ended up in the program this year than in years past," he said, noting

an uptick in the number of submissions that touch on religious themes.

Christianity is a central theme in most of the films, from the star-studded satire *Salvation Boulevard*, featuring Pierce Brosnan as a popular preacher who frames a born-again Christian follower for a crime, to the riveting documentary *The Redemption of General Butt Naked*, about a Liberian warlord-turned-preacher facing the loved ones of people he killed.

The Italian film *Lost Kisses* centers around a Sicilian community's reaction to a 13-year-old girl who may perform miracles. Two films explore Christianity and Islam, with *Kinyarwanda* set during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the documentary *Position Among The Stars* tracing the lives of an impoverished family in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Japanese *Abraxas* focuses on a depressed Zen monk who reconnects with punk rock, while the bizarre American comedy *The Catechism Cataclysm* centers on a priest who loves heavy metal music.

Three American narrative features — *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, Kevin Smith's horror film *Red State* and Vera Farmiga's directorial debut *Higher Ground* — are concerned with cults and religious sects on the fringe.

Religion, of course, isn't totally new territory for Sundance — previous fest fare included *Saved!*, *Jesus Camp* and *Shape of the Moon*, a precursor to this year's *Position Among The Stars*.

Most Sundance religious fare tended to be satirical or derisive — with *Saved!* a prime example — said Dick Staub, author of *The Culturally Savvy Christian* and a columnist for Religion News Service, who has participated in the Windrider Film Forums around Sundance that bring together directors and audiences to talk about faith on film.

William L. Blizek, founding editor of the *Journal of Religion and Film* and professor of philosophy and religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, said religion may have a higher profile at Sundance this year because "religion has become a much more visible part of our culture."

With more openness toward religion, there is more freedom to make movies about it, some Sundance filmmakers said. **BT**

M C A F E E S C H O O L O F T H E O L O G Y

 CENTER FOR
TEACHING CHURCHES
M E R C E R U N I V E R S I T Y

INAUGURAL CONVOCATION

FEATURING
DR. FRED CRADDOCK

APRIL 12, 2011 • 10:45 A.M.

DAY HALL • CECIL B. DAY CAMPUS • ATLANTA

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT DR. RON GRIZZLE
AT (678) 547-6479 OR GRIZZLE_RH@MERCER.EDU

ALSO TO BE FEATURED IN THE DAY'S EVENTS

The Mercer University Singers

Dr. William G. Wilson of the Center
for Congregational Health, Winston-Salem, NC

Dr. John Pierce of *Baptists Today*

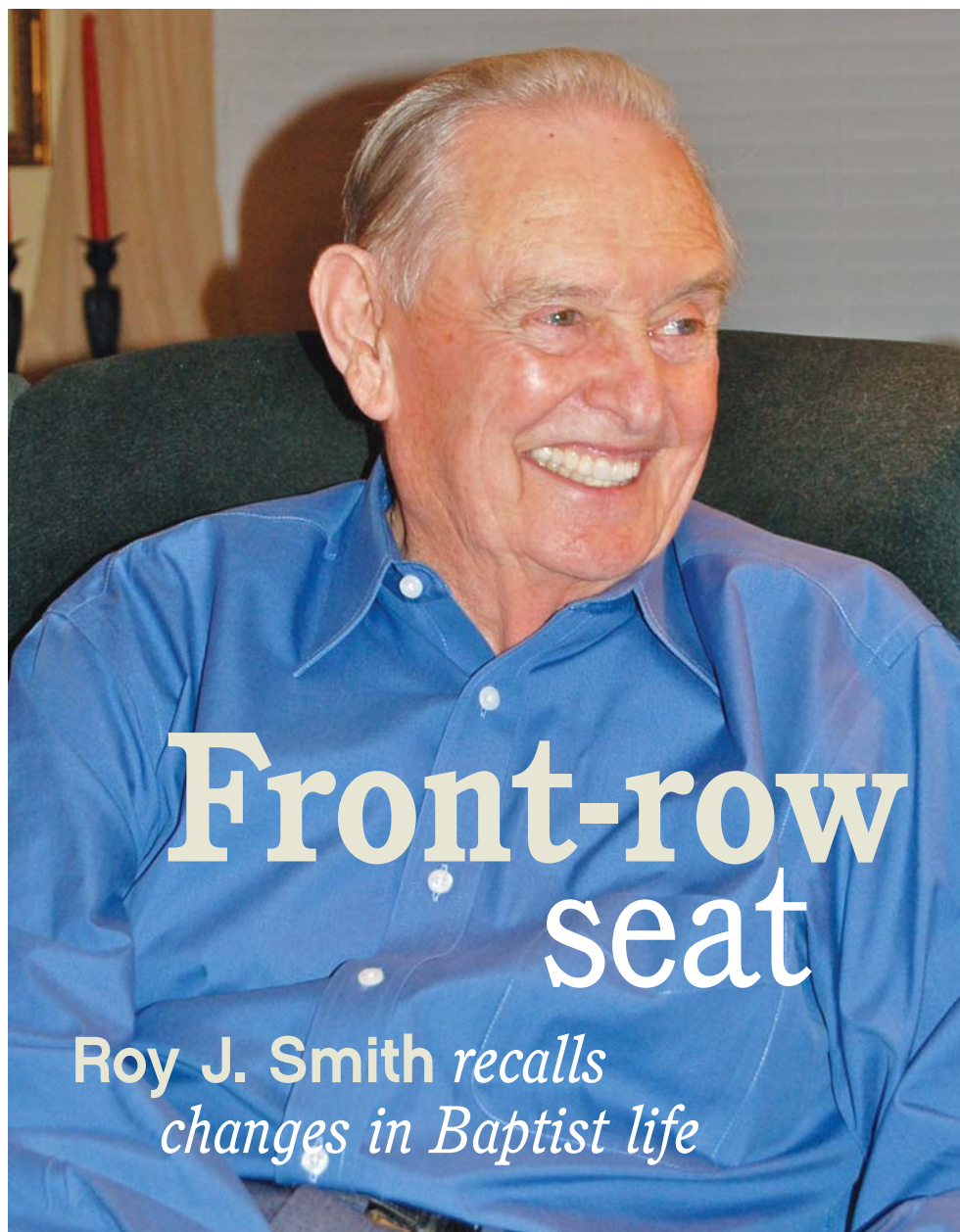
Dr. Allen Abbott of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board

Dr. Allen Walworth of Generis

Dr. Terry Hamrick of CBF

The Reverends Frank Broome and Laura Wheeler of Georgia CBF

Dr. John Adams of the Pastoral Institute, Columbus, GA



Front-row seat

Roy J. Smith recalls changes in Baptist life

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — “It was probably the most violent eruption I have ever seen at a Southern Baptist Convention.”

That’s how Roy J. Smith, former executive director of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC), recalls the 1962 annual meeting, which he saw as the first obvious sign that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was changing course. A furor had begun in July 1961 when Ralph Elliott, a professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, published *The Message of Genesis* through Broadman Press, the publishing arm of the SBC’s Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources).

Elliott used historical-critical methods of interpretation, questioned Mosaic authorship, and took other positions that biblical literalists

found distasteful. At the 1962 annual meeting of the SBC, Smith recalls, bellicose messengers “called him (Elliott) a heretic and tried to fire him.”

When told that Elliott could only be dismissed by the school’s trustees, they voted to ask the trustees to do so, and called on the Sunday School Board to withdraw the book.

Elliott was later dismissed, not for his theological views, but for insubordination when he ignored administrative orders not to republish the book after the Sunday School Board withdrew it from publication.

Smith, an active Baptist minister for more than 50 years, held a number of positions that gave him a front-row seat to observe the changes in Southern Baptist life. After completing Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary as one of its first graduates, he served as a pastor for nine years, the last six of

those at the historic Jersey Baptist Church near Lexington, N.C.

“I was the luckiest pastor in North Carolina,” Smith said, recalling a church that had just celebrated its bicentennial but “was ready to explode.”

Smith devised and implemented a five-year plan and the church worked it to perfection, he said. As a result, Jersey was named “Church of the Year” in the BSCNC for 1962, and Smith was named “Rural Pastor of the Year” by Emory University and *The Progressive Farmer* magazine.

Smith was rewarded with a month of special studies at Emory University in Atlanta, which he remembers as “a tremendous experience” during which he also first saw a television set.

That same year, Smith was invited to join the Baptist State Convention as director of a newly formed “Town and Country Department” to service churches in rural areas. He remained in that role until 1978, when executive director Cecil Ray tapped him to become associate executive director. After Ray retired in 1983, Smith served briefly as interim leader before being elected in 1984 as executive director, a position he held until his retirement in 1997.

The first SBC annual meeting Smith attended was in 1954, in St. Louis. “In those days the meeting began on Monday night and went through Saturday noon,” he said. “Those were the days when the Southern Baptist Convention was really like a big family gathering.”

“Everything was going great guns in Southern Baptist life,” Smith recalled, including the “Million more in ’54” campaign. “It was less than a decade following completion of World War II,” Smith said, “and there was almost a spirit of euphoria in churches.”

That confident spirit led to “The 30,000 Movement,” a push to start new churches that originated with Caspar C. Warren, who was pastor of First Baptist in Charlotte and president of the SBC in 1957 when he challenged Southern Baptists to establish 30,000 new churches before the 150th anniversary of the Triennial Convention, the predecessor of the SBC, in 1964.

“There was a great push to organize SBC churches all over the U.S.,” said Smith, “especially in the West.” At the time, “the Convention had tremendous organizational structures, the six seminaries were shining stars of Southern Baptist life, and practically every leader was a graduate of one of them.”

“Those were the glory days of our denomination,” Smith said. “I really believe that.”

While the Elliott controversy brought the first big sign of trouble in 1961-62, the Book of Genesis also played into the next major conflict, when messengers demanded the recall of British Baptist scholar G. Henton Davies’ commentary on Genesis in Volume One of the Broadman Bible Commentary, published in 1969.

Davies’ work garnered quick criticism, and messengers at the 1970 annual meeting in Denver reacted with hostility, voting to require the Sunday School Board to recall the book. The Board did so, calling on Clyde T. Francisco of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to write a replacement commentary on Genesis to be included in a revised version of the volume.

Ironically, the Convention’s westward growth during its “glory days” may have contributed to the conflicts that later divided it. “Probably a lot of it happened because we had this big push of going west,” Smith said. “Before then, the people on the other side of the Mississippi didn’t know what people in the East were doing and vice versa, but then more communication opened up, and we discovered that there were many differences between us.”

Differences in understanding the nature of the Bible influenced Paul Pressler, a Texas judge, and Paige Patterson, then at Criswell Bible College, to implement a strategy designed to gain control of the SBC. Smith recalled that Pressler had been one of the most vocal critics of Elliott’s book — and that the SBC’s institutional leaders did not take the conservative challenge seriously until it was too late.

“I heard the presidents (of the institutions) — five of them — say ‘There’s no way in the world they can take over.’ It seemed so preposterous, they didn’t think they could do it.”

The institutions were strong, and always had prime spots on the Convention program. Smith remembered Baker James Cauthen’s annual report from the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) as being so challenging that “I’d always want to volunteer for missions.”

“But we all know that began to change in 1979,” Smith said, speaking of the year when the Pressler-Patterson plan went into effect, electing Memphis pastor Adrian Rogers for the express purpose of turning the Convention in a more conservative direction by naming committees that would reshape the institutions’ trustee boards.

“Probably the first time I thought there was no hope of maintaining anything like the status quo we had maintained through our history was the (1988) convention in San Antonio,” Smith said. At that meeting, resolutions were passed criticizing traditional Baptist interpretations of soul competency and the priesthood of the believer, while affirming a more authoritative role of the pastor.

“It became evident that no matter what the moderates did, the other side could always publicize more and get more people there,” Smith said. “And they had enough trustees at that point to begin to change the leadership.”

In Smith’s view, however, “The denomination as we knew it really became unraveled in 1995 when the Executive Committee voted to reorganize the convention” by eliminating several Commissions and reformulating the Convention’s mission boards. The Home Mission Board became the North American Mission Board, taking on responsibilities previously handled by the Brotherhood Commission and the Radio & TV Commission.

The Foreign Mission Board became the International Mission Board, with an announced intention to switch its attention to evangelizing new “people groups.”

Commissions were controlled by boards that were not directly elected by the Convention, Smith said, so they were harder to take over. “That’s why they wanted to get rid of them,” he said, “because they couldn’t control them.”

“That was the biggest blow to the way we had always done things,” Smith said. “That changed literally the nature of our Convention in ways it had not been before.”

Smith was a member of the committee that recommended those changes, but did not approve of them. He described himself and another member as “token state executives” who “had no influence whatsoever” on the committee.

Smith did manage to salvage one thing. When Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) refused to promise that they would provide literature to Southern Baptist churches only, the reorganization committee left the autonomous auxiliary off the Convention’s organizational chart and assigned WMU’s work to other groups.

Women’s work was relegated to the Sunday School Board and missions promotion to the two mission boards. Before the measure came to messengers during the 1995 SBC meeting in Atlanta, Smith contacted then-

president Jim Henry and asked to make a motion that WMU be reinstated on the organizational chart. With a second from John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church in Houston, the motion passed easily on a show of ballots.

“I don’t remember seeing anyone vote against it,” Smith said. “That’s how we got WMU back on the program.”

Smith observed that much of what leaders of the takeover movement predicted did not happen: despite the Convention’s more theologically conservative direction, baptisms fell rather than increasing. Contributions to the Cooperative Program did not show dramatic improvement.

Smith acknowledged that the SBC is not the only denomination seeing its influence wane. Fewer and fewer people care about denominational matters, he noted, as evidenced by decreased attendance at Convention meetings, both state and national.

Citing agreement with Baptist historian Bill Leonard, Smith said: “I believe probably in the future we will find more and more churches that will affiliate with associations of like-minded churches that may be across state lines, or fellowships such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) that don’t seek power or authority over churches. Churches will belong to organizations where they can move in and out.”

Smith was still executive director of the BSCNC when CBF was formed in the early 1990s, and actively supported a move to develop an alternate budget through which churches could send money to CBF. He attended the first meeting of the North Carolina chapter of CBF, and both he and his wife, Charlotte, remain active supporters of CBF and CBFNC. They are members of First Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, which has cut ties with the SBC and BSCNC, aligning with CBF and CBFNC.

Although he officially retired in 1997, Smith continues to preach regularly in churches, including nine Sundays in a row last fall. An avid guitarist and vocalist, Smith also performs regularly with the “Hanging Dog String Band” and the “Far Out Four Quartet,” a group of four retired directors of missions who once served in the westernmost counties of North Carolina. He and Charlotte also regularly speak or entertain at events for senior adults, where they are warmly received as models of what cooperative Baptists should be, reminders of glory days gone by. **BT**

When Roy Smith first met Charlotte Cook it was late 1956, and she was the youngest member of the pastor-search committee that had come from Jersey Baptist Church in Lexington, N.C., to interview Smith, who was then pastor of Union Hope Baptist Church in Zebulon, N.C.

Both were happily married. Roy's wife Doris actively supported his ministry efforts; Charlotte and her husband Robert were both active members at Jersey Baptist.

The search committee was so impressed with their initial interview that they returned to Roy's home within an hour and, without ever hearing him from the pulpit, invited him to come and preach in view of a call. Smith became pastor and remained at Jersey for six years before entering denominational work.

"I can honestly say that was a Camelot experience," he said, an experience that led to a fast friendship between the Smiths and the Cooks, who remained close long after Smith accepted a position with the North Carolina Baptist State Convention.

Even during his time as executive director, the Smiths and Cooks would often meet for lunch on the day after the annual Baptist State Convention meeting. Shortly after the 1997 meeting, however, Robert Cook became ill and died.

He and Charlotte had been married for 46 years. Roy had a part in the funeral. Just over four years later, in January 2002, Roy's wife Doris also died, leaving him a widower after 52 years of marriage.

"Fast forward to 2004," Roy remembers. "I had lost Doris and been through all the grief process, and I decided I would call Charlotte and ask her to lunch."

He called on a Sunday and asked her for a lunch date the next day, but she replied that she'd be out of town. He asked for Tuesday, and she demurred again. When he persisted and asked for a lunch on Wednesday, she finally agreed, but without obvious enthusiasm, saying "If you want to."

Roy made the trip from Raleigh to her



Red Carnations

A love story for the ages

home in Lexington and surprised Charlotte by appearing at the appointed hour with a big bowl of red and white carnations — and a speech.

"The white carnations represent the past," he said, "and we can't do anything about that." But "the red carnations represent joy and happiness and that there can be a good future," he said.

Then he put his hand on her shoulder and kissed her. Charlotte wasn't expecting that. "Before that day, he would barely shake my hand," she said.

Roy acknowledged that, as a minister, he'd always "had a phobia" about being seen alone with any woman other than his wife, never wanting to suggest any impropriety.

Then in his 70s, however, Roy didn't want to waste any more time, and Charlotte enjoyed his company. They began a whirlwind romance, dating twice each week, then three times. Their adult children didn't know what to think.

Friends accused them of acting like teenagers. Charlotte's son thought they might need counseling.

One day Roy showed up with his guitar and claimed that he had written a song while on the way. When he sang it for Charlotte, it was a musical proposal.

She said yes. They were married in August 2004, and remain happily in love.

Roy celebrates their anniversary monthly, rather than yearly, doing something special on the 14th of every month. "I knew we'd never make 50 years," he said, "so we have to celebrate more often."

Now 81, Roy brags that he is "much older" than Charlotte — by 13 days. He had quadruple bypass surgery in the summer of 2010 and still has some associated problems with his legs, but he and Charlotte are otherwise healthy and remain active residents at the Brookridge campus of Baptist Retirement Homes in Winston-Salem, where they live in an independent housing unit.

Whether enjoying life at home, supporting Baptist causes, or traveling the state and performing "Jackson" in the guise of Johnny Cash and June Carter, Roy and Charlotte continue to inspire others with their remarkable love story for the ages. **BT**

Researcher flips gospel records, finds civil rights songs

WACO, Texas (ABP) — A Baylor University professor says a surprisingly large number of lesser-known “B” sides on vintage records of gospel songs championed civil rights, suggesting Christian artists were interested in bettering the here and now as well as proclaiming hope for the hereafter.

The recent discovery “tells us that the gospel community was much more involved in the civil rights movement than we previously thought — outside of Mahalia Jackson and Dorothy Love Coates, who we knew were very involved,” said Robert Darden, an associate professor of journalism at Baylor and a former gospel editor for *Billboard* magazine.

In 2005, Darden began a search-and-rescue mission for gospel music on old 78s, 45s and LPs and in various taped formats to be preserved digitally and cataloged at Baylor. Darden — author of *People Get Ready! A New History of Black Gospel Music* — was concerned that while contemporary gospel was thriving, early gospel by lesser-known artists during the 1940s to the 1970s — the

“Golden Age of Gospel Music” — might be lost forever. He now oversees Baylor’s Black Gospel Music Restoration Project.

“The reason we haven’t known about the ‘B’ sides before is that more than a third of what we’ve received is not in the lone book that tries to catalog all gospel music,” Darden said. “When we’ve known about a song, it is almost always the hit or ‘A’ side.”

The songs related to civil rights may have escaped notice because few scholars are studying gospel music’s impact on that issue, as well as the fact many of the artists are lesser known or even unknown, other than by a small circle of friends, family members and church members, he said.

The spirited “Where is Freedom?” by The Friendly Four begins with a rousing appeal: “Here’s a freedom song for all you freedom fighters out there everywhere. And

when you sing, remember the wonderful ones who lost their dedicated lives for this precious purpose and won’t be allowed to see it through. Now sing — Sing, every one of you!”

The lyrics speak of civil rights marches and demonstrations in Atlanta, Tennessee, Birmingham and Chicago, of violence and snapping police dogs, of integration and equal rights.

The All-Star Gospel Singers recorded “I Believe Martin Luther King Made It Home.” And the somber “Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King” by Franklin Fondel speaks of the civil rights leader whose “voice was his weapon that opened barred doors.... He’s free now forever, like all men should be, regardless of color, religion or creed.”

One of the well-known individuals who sang of civil rights was Della Reese, a gospel singer before she became a pop singer and star of TV’s *Touched by an Angel*. She sang “Simple Song of Freedom.”

For more information about the project, visit www.baylor.edu/lib/gospel. **BT**



Robert Darden

Opening New Worlds 2011

Church, Teacher & Parent Disabilities Ministries Conference

April 1 & 2

First Baptist Church
Tucker, GA

Don't miss the 2011 Opening New Worlds Conference hosted this year at First Baptist Church of Tucker. DDM tailor-makes this conference for churches, teachers and parents to gain insight into special needs ministry, decision-making, innovative training and so much more.

Visit www.DDMGA.org for information on registration, church rates, sponsorships ... OR email/phone DDM ...

EMAIL: OpeningNewWorlds@DDMGA.org
PHONE: 1-888-340-5820

Developmental
Disabilities
Ministries

I want to subscribe today

Please fill out this form and return it to *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318, or call 1-877-752-5658.

I have enclosed a check in the amount of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Church _____

print subscription

1 year \$20; 2 years \$35

online subscription

1 year \$15; 2 years \$25

Baptists Today will present its annual Judson-Rice Award to

Dr. W. Randall Lolley



THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2011

A Dinner Event beginning at 6:00 P.M.

The First Baptist Church

Raleigh, North Carolina

Everyone is welcome.

Reservations (\$25 per person) by credit card can be made by calling 1-877-752-5658 or online at www.baptiststoday.org.

Reservations by check may be sent to:
Baptists Today, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318.

Sponsorships (\$500 by individuals or \$1,000 by churches/organizations) in honor of Dr. Lolley may be sent as gifts to *Baptists Today*. Sponsors whose gifts are received by March 18 will be listed in the Judson-Rice Dinner program.

The Judson-Rice Award has been presented annually since 2000 by the Board of Directors of Baptists Today and the news journal's supporters who form the Judson-Rice Society. The award, named for pioneer Baptist leaders Ann Hasseltine and Adoniram Judson, and Luther Rice, recognizes an outstanding Baptist leader who has demonstrated exceptional leadership with integrity.

FIVE GOOD WAYS to support *Baptists Today*

1

Subscribe for a friend or two, and we'll get the subscriptions going right away.

2

Make a three-year pledge to the Keystone Fund to support the ongoing ministry of *Baptists Today*, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

3

Make a gift of \$450 or more to create a group subscription for your church or another congregation.

4

Encourage your church to include the First Freedoms Project that equally supports three First Amendment-focused national ministries — Associated Baptist Press, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty and *Baptists Today* news journal — in the annual budget.

5

Consider making *Baptists Today* a part of your estate planning to ensure an autonomous and unrestricted news voice continues into the future.

FOR INFORMATION on doing any or all of the above, contact Julie Steele at 478-301-5655 or jsteele@baptiststoday.org.

BAPTISTS Today

P.O. Box 6318
Macon, GA 31208-6318

What do these churches have in common?

Through group subscriptions to Baptists Today, they keep up with the latest issues facing Baptists.

Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C. • Bayshore Baptist Church, Tampa, Fla. • Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C. • Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La. • Brunswick Islands Baptist Church, Supply, N.C. • Chadbourn Baptist Church, Chadbourn, N.C. • Church in the Meadows, Lakeland, Fla. • College Park Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla. • Covenant Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C. • Crozet Baptist Church, Crozet, Va. • Cullowhee Baptist Church, Cullowhee, N.C. • Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga. • Emerywood Baptist Church, High Point, N.C. • Fellowship Baptist Church, Fitzgerald, Ga. • Fernwood Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C. • First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas • First Baptist Church, Ahsoskie, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C. • First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Bladenboro, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau, Mo. • First Baptist Church, Carolina Beach, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tenn. • First Baptist Church, Clemson, S.C. • First Baptist Church, Columbus, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Commerce, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Conway, S.C. • First Baptist Church, Dalton, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Forest City, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Fort Myers, Fla. • First Baptist Church, Frankfort, Ky. • First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Fla. • First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C. • First Baptist Church, Greenwood, S.C. • First Baptist Church, Griffin, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Hawkinsville, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala. • First Baptist Church, Jasper, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Lexington, N.C. • First Baptist Church, London, Ky. • First Baptist Church, Lumberton, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Macon, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Madison, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Marion, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Mocksville, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Morganton, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Morrow, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Mount Olive, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tenn. • First Baptist Church, Orangeburg, S.C. • First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla. • First Baptist Church, Rome, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Rutherfordton, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Sanford, N.C. • First Baptist

Church, Savannah, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Spruce Pine, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Sulphur Springs, Texas • First Baptist Church, Tifton, Ga. • First Baptist Church, Wilmington, N.C. • First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C. • Franklin Baptist Church, Franklin, Va. • Grace Fellowship Baptist Church, Meridian, Miss. • Haddock Baptist Church, Haddock, Ga. • Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla. • Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon, Ga. • Highland Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas • Holmeswood Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo. • HomeStar Fellowship, Raleigh, N.C. • Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Ga. • Kathwood Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C. • Knollwood Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C. • Lakeside Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, N.C. • Lakeview Baptist Church, Camden, S.C. • Lexington Avenue Baptist Church, Danville, Ky. • Lystra Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, N.C. • Maranatha Baptist Church, Plains, Ga. • Millbrook Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C. • Mount Zion Baptist Church, Macon, Ga. • National Heights Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga. • Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss. • North Stuart Baptist Church, Stuart, Fla. • Oakmont Baptist Church, Greenville, N.C. • Providence Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C. • Providence Baptist Church, Hendersonville, N.C. • Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C. • Reynoldson Baptist Church, Gates, N.C. • Rock Falls Baptist Church, Orrick, Mo. • Rolling Hills Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ark. • Rolesville Baptist Church, Rolesville, N.C. • Second Baptist Church, Liberty, Mo. • Second Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn. • Second Baptist Church, Richmond, Va. • Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga. • Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala. • Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Stone Mountain, Ga. • St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky. • Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ga. • Trinity Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn. • Trinity Baptist Church, Moultrie, Ga. • University Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La. • Vineville Baptist Church, Macon, Ga. • Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham, N.C. • Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga. • Wingate Baptist Church, Wingate, N.C. • Winter Park Baptist Church, Wilmington, N.C. • Woodmont Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn. • Yates Baptist Church, Durham, N.C. • Youngsville Baptist Church, Youngsville, N.C. • Zebulon Baptist Church, Zebulon, N.C.

For as little as
\$450 a year
your church can be
*better informed, too!**

** (Minimum 25 subscriptions at \$18 each). Just send a list of names and addresses, along with a check, to: Baptists Today, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318. (For more information, call toll-free 1-877-752-5658.)*