Facts & Trends



Max Lucado and LifeWay offer '3:16: The Church Experience' to the world

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007

News and information for ministry from LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention

LifeWay®
Biblical Solutions for Life

Contents

Volume 53 • Number 6
November/December 2007

Commentary

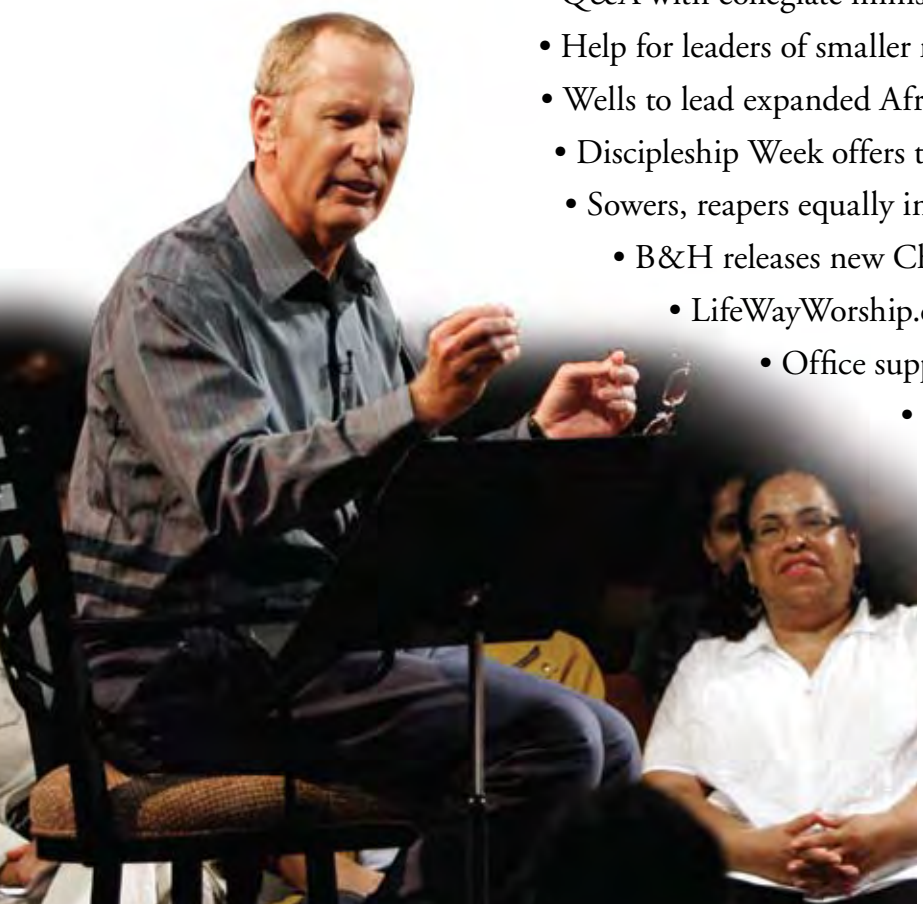
• From my perspective: Kingdom-teaching parents 4
• Survey: Reasons young adults leave church, come back 6
• Parents and churches can help teens stay in church 11

Articles

• Max Lucado and LifeWay offer the world John 3:16 resource 13
• Game Day Central brings out Houston church heroes 18
• VBS photo contest winner 21
• Special needs community: serving and being served 22
• Couple with special needs child committed to family 26
• God answers father's prayer to give his special daughter joy 27
• 2008 VBS offers special education options 29
• Q&A with collegiate ministries leader Linda Osborne 30
• Help for leaders of smaller membership churches 33
• Wells to lead expanded African-American ministry 35
• Discipleship Week offers tools to attendees 36
• Sowers, reapers equally important 38
• B&H releases new Chapman book 41
• LifeWayWorship.com on track 42
• Office supply savings available 43
• Founders Ministries at Ridgecrest 44

Resources

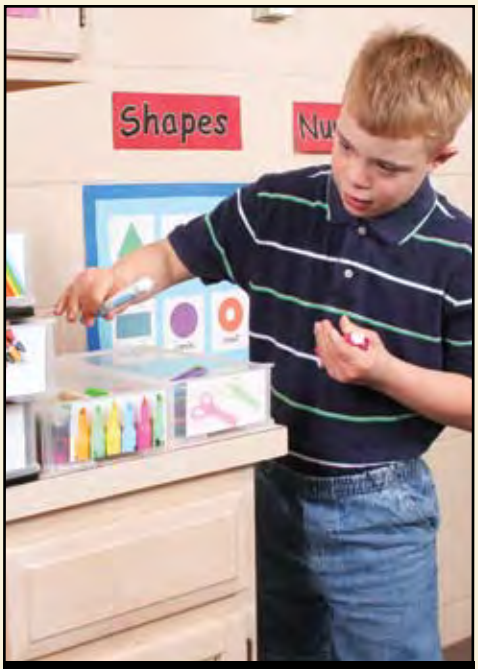
For you from LifeWay 46
Facts & Trends Online features 54



Cover: *Max Lucado stands in front of the Unisphere at Flushing Meadows in New York where LifeWay is filming a segment for 3:16: The Church Experience.* ***Inset:*** *Max Lucado teaches 3:16 at Crossroads Tabernacle in the Bronx. Photos by Kent Harville*

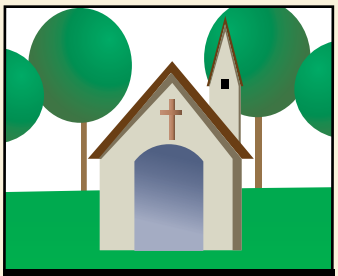
LifeWay®
Biblical Solutions for Life


Game Day Central at The Met • 18-21



Special education • 22-29


Discipleship Week• 36-39


Smaller churches• 33-34



Chapman book • 41


Collegiate Ministry • 30

How to get *Facts & Trends* absolutely free:

Write us: Facts & Trends
One LifeWay Plaza
Nashville, TN 37234-0192

Phone us: (615) 251-3698

E-mail us: facts&trends@lifeway.com

Phone numbers, Web addresses and content referenced in articles were verified at the time of printing.

Our purpose

To support you in ministry by connecting you with LifeWay's "Biblical Solutions for Life." To help you carry out your calling more effectively as you read news and feature stories, information about trends that impact the church, ministry tips and an introduction to new LifeWay products. Whether you're a pastor, church staff member or lay leader, you'll find ways to enhance your ministry.

Our format

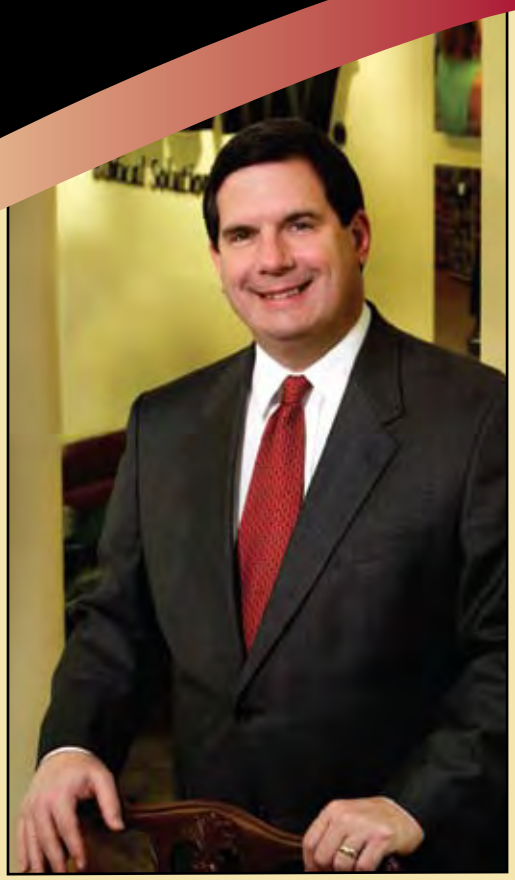
Facts & Trends is published six times a year by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. *Facts & Trends* is a free publication.

Our people

Polly House, editor; Katie Shull, graphic designer; Kelly Davis Shrout, Brooklyn Noel, Jenny Rice, Chris Turner, writers; Kent Harville, visuals specialist; Shirley Richardson, Web editor; Russ Rankin, editor in chief; Rob Phillips, director, communications department.

From my perspective





Thom S. Rainer, president and CEO, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention

Wanted: Kingdom-teaching parents

Nowhere in Scripture are churches commanded to fill the role of parents in the raising of children.

That may seem like an obvious statement but the expectation that churches "teach a youth about the way he should go" has so permeated our thinking as evangelicals that it has become a default setting for parents and, unfortunately, accepted by too many ministers. The result is that the majority of kids who say they regularly attend church during their teen years drop out of church by the time they are 22, many never to return. (See article beginning on page 6.)

Is it that we are losing a culture war? I don't believe so. Culture is becoming coarser and kids are bombarded from all sides with every type of evil. But, when we blame the ills of our children on the culture around us we are in effect saying that culture trumps the promises of God and has more lasting influence than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Look again at Proverbs 22:6 – "Teach a youth about the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (HCSB). I know parents who are desperately holding God accountable to this. They have invested or are investing themselves spiritually in the nurturing of their children. Since no one can see the future, the only hope they have that their children will not forsake the instruction of God is to trust "that He who started a good work in [them] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6, HCSB). That's not to say there won't be some rough spots in the road of life, but there is the promise of a definite destination.

More significant than forfeiting the promise of God to a pervasive culture is cutting the heart out of the power of the gospel. No measure of violence, mental illness, sex-saturated television, corporate corruption, infidelity, self-centeredness – nothing – is greater than the power of the resurrected Christ. Jesus has authority over it all, and to consider that

Subscribe

LifeWay President Thom S. Rainer writes LifeWay@Heart, an occasional e-mail message addressing trends and ministry ideas. Add your name to the LifeWay@Heart mailing list by going to www.lifeway.com/form_heart.asp. On the form, type in your e-mail address and name, then click the "Join List" button.



culture has a greater influence calls into question His Lordship. This is what parents must teach their children from the time they come out of the womb. It is interesting that Proverbs 22:6 was written in the context of a Hebrew culture where boys and girls were probably considered adults by age 14-15. My three sons – all in their 20s and starting families of their own – still come to me for spiritual counsel. Their experiences in adulthood are new and challenging, but their issues will be manageable because of the proper spiritual perspective and foundation we instilled in our boys at a young age. It is critical for parents to aggressively disciple their children while their hearts are tender and open to the gospel.

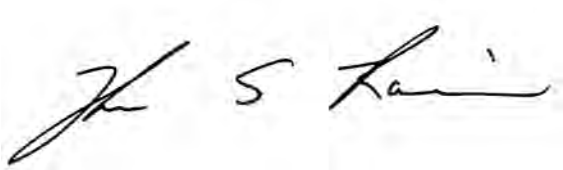
"Teach a youth about the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

— Proverbs 22:6 (HCSB)

Too many parents are abdicating their roles in the spiritual instruction of their children to the church. Unfortunately, the American evangelical church is generally struggling to find its way, having itself been too often captivated by popular culture. We've drifted from solid biblical exegesis in order to connect with culture. We've allowed the Bible to be compromised to fit cultural categories instead of standing firm on the Truth while helping culture fit into biblical categories.

Earlier this year LifeWay Research released a different study that addressed teens' confused views of eternity. That study reported that a high percentage of teens did not understand the exclusivity of Jesus Christ. If we as Christians are going to see our young people rise above culture, embrace the gospel and live godly lives, parents must live the biblical instruction their children need and the church must support that effort by being an example of a Kingdom-minded community.

In His service,



We recommend

- *30 Days: Turning the Hearts of Parents and Teenagers Toward Each Other* by Richard Ross and Gus Reyes
- *Transforming Student Ministry: Research Calling for Change*
- *Impact: Student Ministry That Will Transform a Generation* by Steve Patty

These and other resources are available through customer service at www.lifeway.com and (800) 458-2772 and from LifeWay Christian Stores at www.lifewaystores.com and (800) 233-1123.

LifeWay Research uncovers reasons

Young adults drop out of church

by LifeWay Research staff

A new study from LifeWay Research reveals that more than two-thirds of young adults who attend a Protestant church for at least a year in high school will stop attending church regularly for at least a year between the ages of 18 and 22.

As young people transition from high school into the workforce or college, they are faced with many choices – including whether to continue attending church. Although this decision is a source of concern for parents and church leaders, discussion of the reasons young adults choose the direction they do has largely been speculative.



"Lots of alarming numbers have been tossed around regarding church dropouts," said Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research. "We wanted to get at the real situation with clear research – and there is some bad news here, no question. But, there are also some important solutions to be found in the research. When we know why people drop out, we can address how to help better connect them."

To uncover the reasons young people leave church, LifeWay Research conducted a survey in April and May 2007 of more than 1,000 adults ages 18-30. All indicated that they had attended a Protestant church regularly for at least one year in high school.

Should I stay or should I go?

According to the study, 70 percent of young adults ages 23-30 stopped attending church regularly for at least a year between ages 18-22.

In most cases, the decision to leave was not planned far in advance. Only 20 percent of these "church dropouts" agree that while they were attending church regularly in high school they "planned on taking a break from church once [they] finished high school."

Among those who planned to leave, few told anyone. One reflected, "I just told my parents I didn't like it," rather than sharing an intention to actually leave. Another said, "I kept my feelings secret for fear of losing my friends."

Why do most young people leave?

Life changes or life situations cause young people to leave the church. In fact, 97 percent of dropouts list one or more specific life-change issue as a reason they left church.

Six of the top 10 reasons church dropouts leave relate to life changes. The most frequent reason for leaving church is, in fact, a self-imposed change: "I simply wanted a break from church" (27 percent).

The paths toward college and the workforce are also strong reasons for young people to leave church: "I moved to college and stopped attending church" (25 percent) and "work responsibilities prevented me from attending" (23 percent).

In addition to moving to college, others simply "moved too far away from the church to continue attending" (22 percent) and, it can be assumed, did not find a closer church.

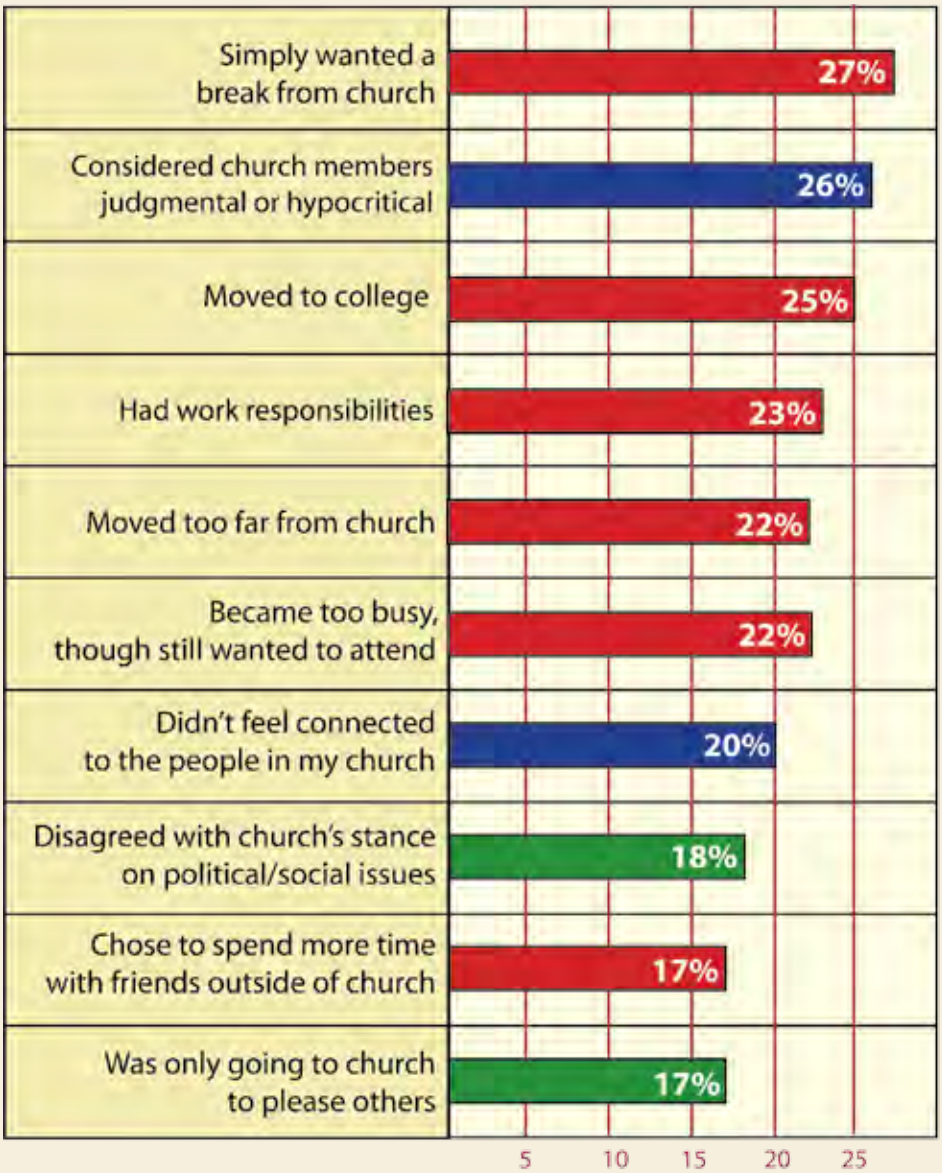
> "Relationships are often the glue that keeps people in church or serves as the attraction to begin attending again following a period of absenteeism."
>
> *– Brad Waggoner*

A previous LifeWay Research study of church switchers confirmed that a residential move is the most frequent reason adults switch churches. "A move beyond your local community breaks the existing ties to a local church," said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research. "It requires intentional effort to search for a new church. That may not occur immediately, even for those interested in church."

How young people use their time and the relationships they choose can also lead them away from church. Twenty-two percent "became too busy, though still wanted to attend," and 17 percent "chose to spend more time with friends outside the church."

"In our three studies related to church attendance practices – The Formerly Churched, Church Switchers and now the Teenage Dropout study – one thing is abundantly clear," stated Brad Waggoner, vice president of research and ministry development at LifeWay. "Relationships are often the glue that keeps people in church or serves as the attraction to begin attending again following a period of absenteeism.

Top 10 reasons young adults drop out of church



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

Many people are deeply influenced by friends and loved ones."

Waggoner advised, "Church leaders should passionately and consistently challenge church members to maximize their influence with youth and young adults. Frequent and intentional contact can either prevent or counteract the tendency of some to drop out of church."

Fifty-eight percent of church dropouts selected at least one church or pastor-related reason for leaving church. Most common was "church members seemed judgmental or hypocritical" (26 percent). Another 20 percent "didn't feel connected to the people in my church."

The final category of reasons, "religious, ethical or political beliefs," contributed to the departure of 52 percent of church dropouts.

Two reasons for leaving reflect this category: "I disagreed with the church's stance on political or social issues" (18 percent) and "I was only going to church to please others" (17 percent).

"Clearly the reasons young people leave are a reflection both of their past experience in church and the new opportunities they have as young adults," McConnell summarized. "To remain in church, a person must have experienced the value of the teaching and relationships at church and see the relevance for the next phase of life."

Why do some young people stay?

Although they only represent 30 percent of those who attended a Protestant church for at least a year in high school, those who stay in church through ages 18-22 see the relevance, benefits and purpose of the church now and for their future.

The two most frequent reasons young people stay in church relate to the relevance of church: "Church was a vital part of my relationship with God" (65 percent) and "I wanted the church to help guide my decisions in everyday life" (58 percent).

Half of those who stayed in church recognize benefits and say, "I felt that church was helping me become a better person" (50 percent).

Forty-two percent remained because they were "committed to the purpose and work of the church."

"The vitality and everyday relevance these young people experienced in church is a stark contrast to church dropouts who wanted a break from church and felt unconnected," McConnell said.

Already returning

Many of those who drop out eventually do return. Among church dropouts who are now ages 23-30, 35 percent currently attend church twice a month or more. Another 30 percent attend church more sporadically. Thus, about two-thirds of those who leave do return at some level.

This return to church after being gone for at least a year is primarily the result of encouragement from others. The most common reason being "my parents or family members encouraged me to attend" (39 percent). Twenty-one percent attribute their return to "my friends or acquaintances encouraged me to attend." Combined, 50 percent of those who return were influenced by either family or friends.

Young adults also return to church when they feel the desire personally or sense God calling them back: "I simply felt the desire to return" (34 percent) and "I felt God was calling me to return to the church" (28 percent).

> "There is no easy way to say it, but it must be said. Parents and churches are not passing on a robust Christian faith and an accompanying commitment to the church."
>
> *– Ed Stetzer*

Women are more likely than men to feel "the desire to return" (41 percent vs. 22 percent) and to feel "God was calling me to return to church" (34 percent vs. 18 percent).

In contrast to the life changes that drove many away, life events also bring young adults back to church.

Twenty-four percent return to church because "I had children and felt it was time for them to start attending." This reason is significantly more common for women than men (31 percent vs. 13 percent). Twenty percent "got married and wanted to attend with my spouse."

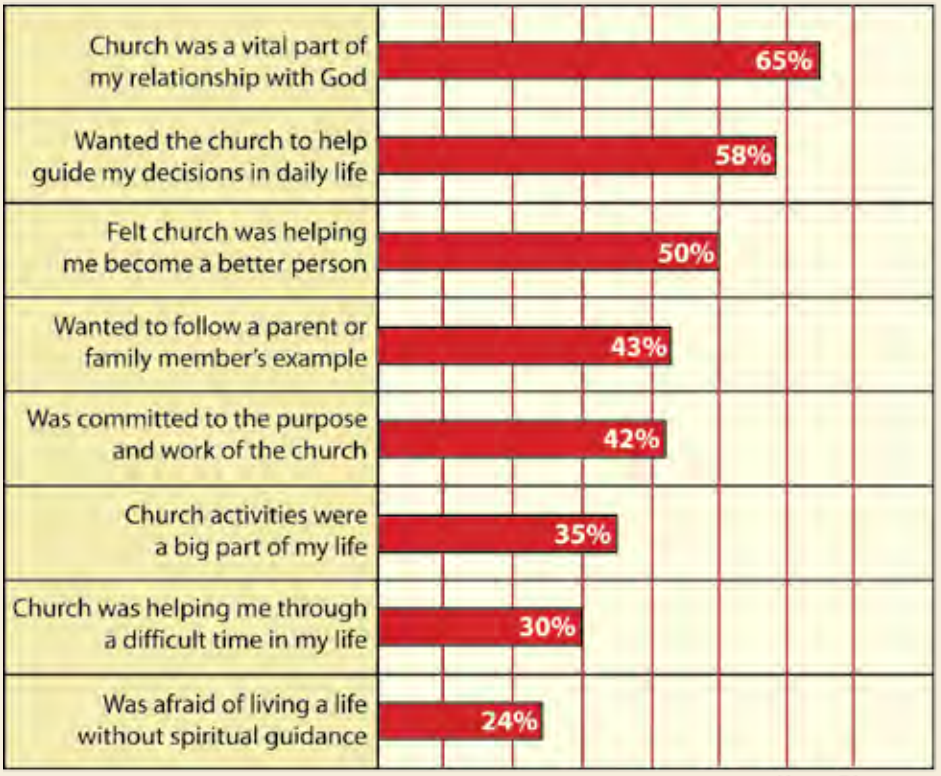
Turnover among attendees

Attendance patterns among teenagers and young adults reveal that each year many move in and out of consistent church attendance. They were asked to indicate at which ages they attended church at least twice a month beginning with "under 14" through their current age.

Facts & Trends Online

- *Ed Stetzer and Scott McConnell discuss the research with leaders who serve in student and collegiate ministry in a podcast at www.lifeway.com/insidelifeway. Inside LifeWay is LifeWay's official news podcast. Read more about what these findings mean for church leaders by going online to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends and www.edstetzer.com.*

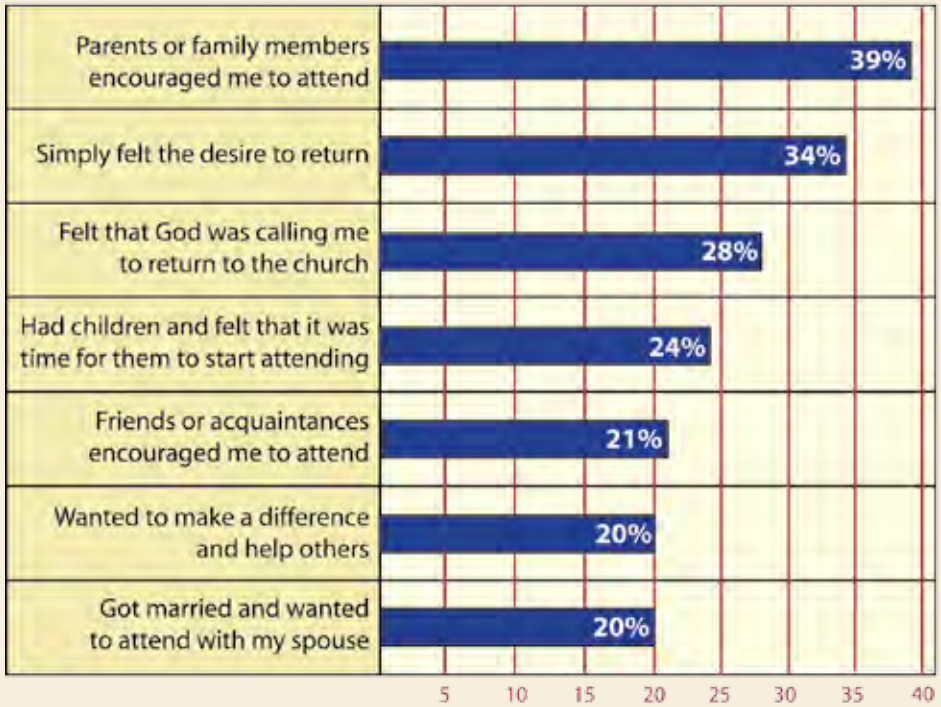
Reasons young adults continue to attend church



Percentage of 18 -22 year-olds who continued attending church

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

Reasons young adult dropouts return to church later in life



Percentage among young adults who returned to church after dropping out between ages 18-22

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

Two out of three indicate they attended at the four youngest ages tested: under 14 (70 percent), age 14 (66 percent), age 15 (68 percent), and age 16 (68 percent). However, each year some began attending while others stopped attending twice a month. In fact, only 53 percent indicate they attended at all of these ages. This low level of loyalty through age 16 is a precursor to the declines that follow.

The percent attending twice a month drops sharply at ages 17, 18 and 19, with only 31 percent attending at age 19. Attendance remains low through age 22, and then slowly begins to climb.

"When, by God's grace, young people see the church as essential in their lives and choose to continue attending, their loyalty remains strong," McConnell said. Among young adults ages 23-30 that stayed in church during ages 18-22, only 6 percent do not currently attend church.

Stetzer noted, "There is no easy way to say it, but it must be said. Parents and churches are not passing on a robust Christian faith and an accompanying commitment to the church. We can take some solace in the fact that many do eventually return. But, Christian parents and churches need to ask the hard question, 'What is it about our faith commitment that does not find root in the lives of our children?'" ■

Parents, churches can help teens stay in church

by Mark Kelly

Parents and churches together can help their teenagers decide to stay in church as young adults.

Despite appearances, teens do want guidance when it comes to the decisions they face in everyday life, and parents and churches that meet those needs make it more likely those teens will stay in church as young adults, according to a LifeWay Research study.

Proven value

Two-thirds of the teens who stay in church as young adults describe the church as "a vital part of my relationship with God" – demonstrating the importance of each teen having a vital relationship with God, as well as the importance of church attendance, said Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research.

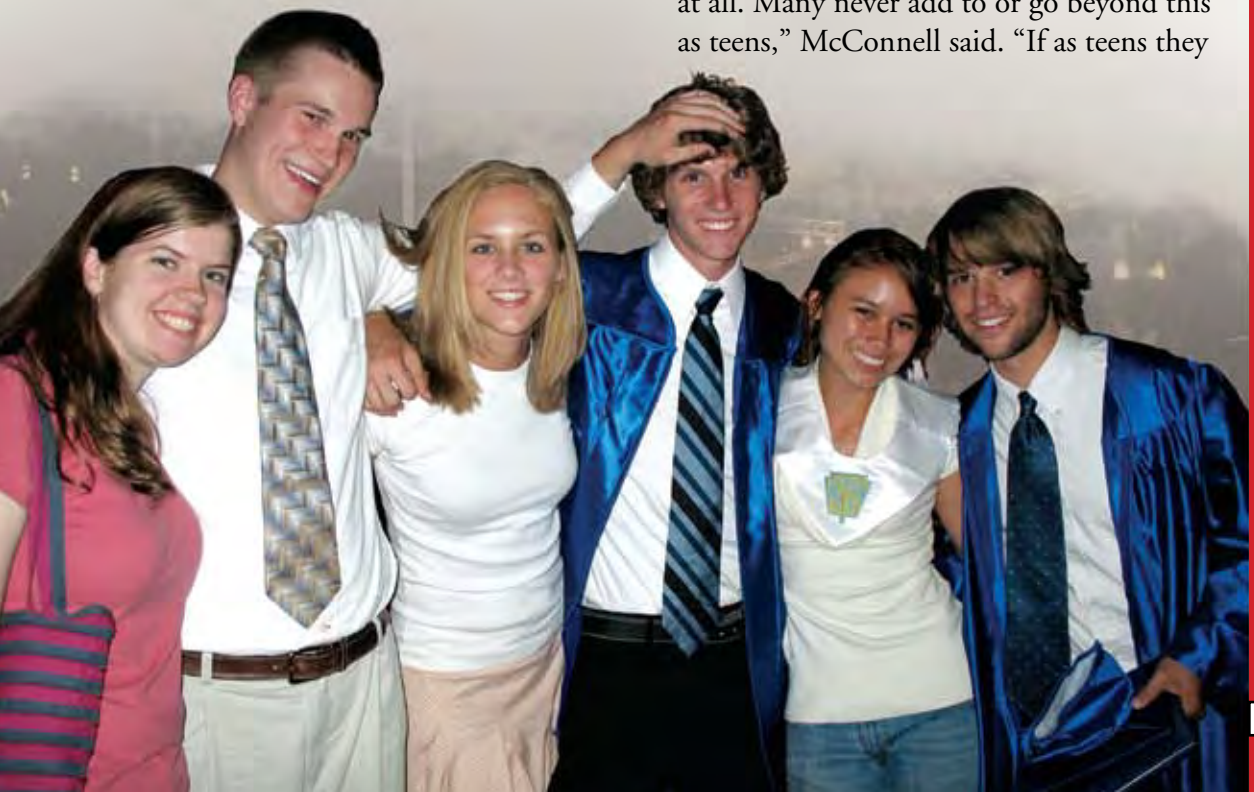
"Teens are looking for a church that teaches them how to live life," Stetzer said. "As they enter young adulthood, church involvement that has made a difference in their lives gives them a powerful reason to keep attending."

Only 10 percent of those who continued attending church did so to please others. Young adults whose faith truly became integrated into their life as teens are much more likely to stay in church. "If church did not prove its value during their teen years, young adults won't want to attend – and won't attend," said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research.

Relevant preaching

Teens who find their pastor's sermons relevant to everyday life also are more likely to keep attending as young adults. More of those who stayed in church – by a margin of 63 percent to 42 percent – agreed their pastors' sermons were relevant. A similar margin said the worship style of the church they attended as teens was appealing to them.

"Attending worship is the basic level of involvement for most who attend church at all. Many never add to or go beyond this as teens," McConnell said. "If as teens they



can't relate to the sermons at their church or don't enjoy the worship style, then as young adults they can easily fall away from their only connection to the church."

Investing time

Teens who had at least one adult from church make a significant time investment in their lives also were more likely to keep attending church. More of those who stayed in church – by a margin of 46 percent to 28 percent – said five or more adults at church had invested time with them personally and spiritually.

"When adults pour their lives into young adults, both are better for it," Stetzer said.

"Anybody wondering if they can make a difference can stop wondering," McConnell noted. "One Sunday school teacher, one chaperone, one discussion leader, one person at church who clearly cares can impact the course of a teen's spiritual journey."

"When adults pour their lives into young adults, both are better for it."

– Ed Stetzer

Family matters

Teens who, at age 17, have parents who are authentic examples of Christian faith – proactive and consistent in living out their faith – also are more likely to keep attending as young adults. Across the board, 20 percent more of those who stayed indicated they had parents or family members who discussed spiritual things, gave them spiritual guidance and prayed together.

"Despite the conflicts that often occur during these years, it is difficult to understate the impact of a solid family involved in the faith community on the future involvement of teens," Stetzer observed. "And that isn't something that can be faked."

Students are experts at noticing inconsistencies between what parents say and do, McConnell added.

"Simply attending church is a positive influence toward the teen continuing as a young adult," he said. "However, any sign that parents have second thoughts is a negative influence. These seeds of doubt include only one parent attending, parents not agreeing on a denomination, and a gap between beliefs at church and life in the home."

Of course, many factors in a teen's life are beyond the control of both parents and church leaders, McConnell noted.

"Whether teens are bombarded with positive or negative influences about church, they all make their own decisions about whether to continue or stop attending," he said. "This study shows the benefit of parents and church members faithfully doing their part, but in the final analysis, we must leave it in the hands of God to work in their lives." ■



Max Lucado & LifeWay offer 3:16 to the world

story by Polly House
photography by Kent Harville



Walking the streets of New York is like taking a tour around the world. Every nation, every language group, every ethnic and religious background is represented. Noise is ever present. Even in the throng of people hustling back and forth, it is still easy to feel very much alone … to feel like just a plain, ordinary "whoever." So many people, but so much loneliness.

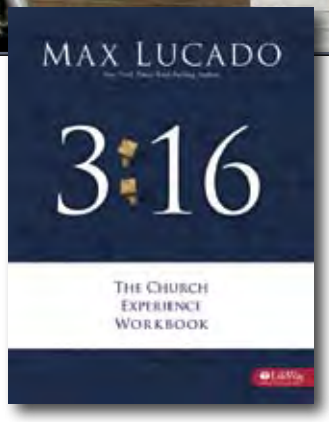
That's the reason Max Lucado went to New York to film the video for his new LifeWay-produced resource, *3:16: The Church Experience,* to be released in December.

The resource accompanies his book, *3:16: The Numbers of Hope*, released by Thomas Nelson Publishers on Sept. 11 of this year. It debuted at No. 12 on the New York Times [hardcover advice] bestseller list.

(continued on next page)







Above left and right: *Max Lucado and the LifeWay film crew pray before filming begins on the Brooklyn Bridge. Special city-issued permits were required for filming at New York City locations.*

Next page: *Max Lucado taught 3:16: The Church Experience at Crossroads Tabernacle in the Bronx. The church's pastor, Joe Cortese, described the multicultural church members as 'loving much, because they have been forgiven much.'*

The title, *3:16*, stands in contrast to its release date, 9/11. "While 9/11 represent the numbers of despair, 3:16 are the numbers of hope," Lucado said.

The *3:16* resources refer, of course, to John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

The book has a first-run printing of one million copies, almost unheard of for a Christian nonfiction title. It is currently licensed for publication in 14 languages – English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Swedish, Dutch, Korean, Japanese, Afrikaans, Danish, Finnish, Romanian, and both simplified and complex Chinese – a stunning pre-publication figure.

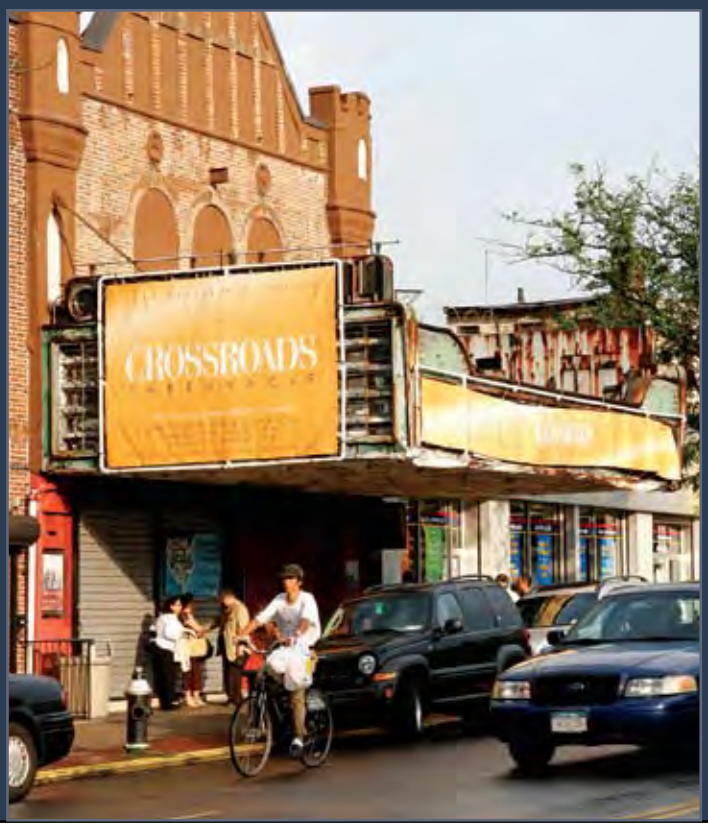
Christianity Today called Lucado, pastor of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, a preacher who writes and a writer who preaches. Since 1985, he has written more than 60 titles for readers of all ages.

Lucado said that John 3:16 has always struck him as the most inclusive verse in the Bible.

"It's easy to understand," he said. "There's no context or history needed. It's simple and clear. You really can't get more inclusive than 'the world' and 'whoever.' The word 'whoever' rolls out the welcome mat into the entrance of God's heart. 'Whoever' throws open God's front door. Everyone is a 'whoever!'"

Lucado spoke to a cross-section of New Yorkers during the taping of *3:16* at Crossroads Tabernacle in the Bronx. The church has an evangelistic outreach to everyone who comes near.

** Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.*





"Some people have tried to make salvation restrictive, but Jesus contradicted that when He said 'whoever,'" he said. "'Whoever' can come however they are. It's good to be 'whoever.'"

Calling himself a "whoever," he shared a personal anecdote: "Strawberry cake is my favorite food and my wife makes the best strawberry cake in the world. If I come home and she has made a cake, I smell it as soon as I open the door. I'll hurry to the kitchen and ask who the cake is for. Sometimes she says it's for a neighbor or for someone's birthday. But, sometimes, she'll say, 'Oh, whoever,' and I get all excited, because I know that 'whoever' is me!"

The taping of the *3:16* resource was the first time Lucado has worked in front of a live audience for one of his studies. "I'm used to working in front of my congregation, but never for this kind of taping."

He called the energy he received from the crowd at Crossroads Tabernacle "electric." Some in the congregation had come from rough backgrounds that had included drugs, prostitution and jail time. They understood the amazing gift of God's salvation. They spoke back to Lucado with heartfelt amens and yeses.

He had them do a simple exercise that many pastors do. "Let's say the verse together," he said, "and when we get to the words 'whoever' and 'the world' you say your own name."

This was a new concept for many in the audience. Joy and pride shone on their faces when "Joe," "Maria," "Henry," "LaDonna" and other names were substituted.

"When you put your own name in that verse," Lucado said, "you come to realize you are someone very special."

Filming for the opening and closing segments of the study was done all around New York by LifeWay's film crew, headed by Rick Simms. Locations included the Brooklyn Bridge, Central Park, Flushing Meadows and a rooftop in Queens.

Lucado said he never had worked on video shoot as extensive as *3:16*. "Up to now, it's mostly been pretty solitary, but John 3:16 is not a verse to do alone. I love working with this great crew of Christian

Facts & Trends Online

- *Listen to an Inside LifeWay podcast with Max Lucado.*
- *View a slideshow on the taping of 3:16: The Church Experience in New York, accompanied by "Out of Ashes" from 3:16 The Numbers of Hope, the new church musical companion piece from LifeWay.*

Go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends to view Facts&Trends Online.





men. I have worked with lot of crews before who weren't Christian, and that's good too because they get to hear the message of Christ, but it has been good to work in this spiritual atmosphere of prayer."

"LifeWay is partnering with Thomas Nelson Publishers to deepen the impact of this gospel message and to help bring revival to Christians around the world," said Sam House, who is serving as LifeWay's *3:16* project coordinator.

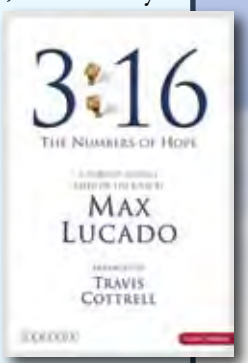
"Thomas Nelson can reach the general Christian and secular markets, but Max Lucado said he wanted this message to reach churches and LifeWay is the publisher that can do that the best," House said.

"We've put together *3:16: The Church Experience* kit to provide church leaders with a rich cafeteria style opportunity to choose from all the *3:16* resources available to tailor a study to fit their own churches and communities," House added. "Like Max said, John 3:16 is a verse for everybody. It's a personal verse. We want every church to make it personal for their people and the people they will reach with the message." ■

Facing page and above: *Lucado teaching at Crossroads Tabernacle in the Bronx.*

New church musical is companion piece to *3:16: The Numbers of Hope*

A study as inspiring and gripping as *3:16* needs to reach all audiences of the church, so LifeWay has released a church musical, *3:16: The Numbers of Hope*, adapted from the Max Lucado book.



Writer and composer Travis Cottrell leads the live worship experience that also includes narration by Mike Harland, director of LifeWay Worship.

The musical is a mix of Easter and non-seasonal songs that are appropriate for any time of year.

To hear selections from the musical, go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends.



Game Day Central – Where heroes show their stuff

story by Polly House, photography by Kent Harville

"Game Day Central: Where Heroes are Made" may have been the theme for 2007 Vacation Bible School, but for one church, the heroes were already there.

Metropolitan Baptist Church, known around Houston as "The Met," hosted 1,000 children and 300 volunteers for its July 9-12 Vacation Bible School. Those volunteers are the "heroes" that made the week a success.

"Our volunteers who help in VBS are what make it work," said Julie McClesky, director of The Met's preschool area. "They are wonderful and gifted. There's no way this week could happen for the children without them. They give up a lot of time and energy to make this all happen."

Volunteers make it work

Whatever the size of the church, volunteers are crucial to the success of VBS as every child needs personal attention from a caring adult.

The Met relies on repeat volunteers to make its VBS go smoothly. Many of the volunteers are schoolteachers who don't necessarily teach in their small groups during the school year, but are ready to pull out all the creative stops for VBS.

"So many of our volunteers have done this for so many years that they begin thinking early about what they want to do, so when the time comes to start our prep, they are eager to get started," Sandi Lawrence, The Met's life development director, said.

Many of the big, bright theme-appropriate decorations for VBS at The Met came from LifeWay's VBS resources. The volunteers themselves created others, such as huge sports-themed banners. They used sports paraphernalia. They wore sports-themed clothing. Some of the decorations are shared with other local churches.

"We're intentional and try not to leave anything to chance," Lawrence said. "Preparation and planning make for a good experience for the children, the parents and the workers."

Managing the masses

"Registration for 1,000 children could be a logistical nightmare," Janice Keifer, VBS preschool director, said. "It's a huge responsibility, but VBS Tools [LifeWay's computer software for handling VBS data] has made it simpler. Just being able to preregister most of the children helps. We can adapt the forms so they work better for us."

Stacey Shockly, the volunteer who handles preschool registration, said she began signing children up in February and registered them into the week of VBS. Having the registration information from the previous year available made it simpler this year. "I didn't have to re-enter everything on every child," she said.

"Our volunteers who help in VBS are what make it work."
– Julie McClesky

Not every volunteer taught in a classroom or led music. Some had snack duty. Operating like a NASCAR pit crew, timing was everything for a VBS snack team at The Met. Sports-themed snacks and drink cups were out in a flash. Twenty children encircled the tables, had their snack and drank their juice. Within minutes of that group's departure, the snack team descended on the tables to wipe off, sweep up and lay out a new table setting for the next snack group's treats.

One of the volunteers said she loved doing the snack time and appreciated the suggestions LifeWay offers in the VBS material. "The theme snacks are fun, easy and the children love them."



Melissa Weldon leads the children in the week's theme song, "Game Day Central."

Facts & Trends Online

- *View slideshows of VBS at The Met and the Facts & Trends Online VBS photo contest.*

Go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends to view Facts&Trends Online.

"We're intentional and try not to leave anything to chance."

– Sandi Lawerence

Purpose of VBS

VBS is about much more than games. It's about telling children about Jesus.

On Thursday morning, the fourth and fifth graders assembled in the auditorium at The Met with children's pastor Gene Wright and children's ministry associate Thomas Hernandez.

The decision to receive Jesus is "a decision you have to make," Wright told the group of about 250 children. "Not your mama or your daddy; not your friends – just you."

After Wright led the children in prayer, 80 children indicated they had prayed to receive Christ.



Emily and Noelle, both 6, enjoy VBS craft time at The Met.

Wright and a group of volunteers took these children aside and gave each child a letter to take home to his or her parents telling about the child's decision.

Lawrence said that after VBS someone from the children's ministry talked with each child individually to make certain he or she understood. "Some absolutely do; others may not be quite clear. We want to know for sure they are certain about what they did before we proceed."

In August, the children's ministry hosted a gathering for the children and their parents to talk about baptism.

"We, of course, don't baptize any child without the parents' permission," Wright said. "But we do encourage parents to allow the child to be baptized. That tends to settle the salvation issue for the children. It's like the follow through on the decision. Once a child is baptized, you don't often see him coming forward again, saying he 'prayed the prayer.'"

Looking forward to next year

After a week of VBS, the leaders and the volunteers were tired. They were ready to end the week. But, already, they were looking to 2008 VBS and its theme: "Outrigger Island." Keifer said, "We'll have a good time with that one. I think it will be fun." ■

Alabama church wins top prize for VBS photo contest

More than 100 churches submitted 300-plus photos from local church events featuring the 2007 LifeWay VBS themes "Game Day Central" and "Club VBS: Jungle Jaunt."



Summerville Baptist Church in Phenix City, Ala., submitted the winning photo of kids and teens playing with an oversized VBS football, associated with the "Game Day Central" theme.

Grace Community Church in Newton, Kan., and Metropolitan Baptist Church in Houston received honorable mentions for their outstanding photos of children attending VBS. A multimedia slideshow of the top 25 photos submitted, along with photo tips from *Facts & Trends* photographer Kent Harville, are available on *Facts & Trends Online*.



OUT OF SPACE? OUT OF FUNDS? OUT OF ANSWERS?



Your church isn't 'one-size-fits-all'; why should your facilities be? **LifeWay Church Architecture** understands your church, and we can create custom, cost-effective solutions that meet your unique ministry needs. We can even help you raise the funds to make your vision a reality. If you need help determining your next step, then your next step is to call us!

LIFEWAY CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

Phone: 615.251.2466 | E-mail: carch@lifeway.com | Internet: www.lifeway.com/ca

LifeWay
Biblical Solutions for Life

NOTICE: Not intended as an offer for architectural services where prohibited by state law. LifeWay Church Architecture provides consultation and church growth planning in all fifty states and Canada. Architectural services are limited by law to states/jurisdictions where LifeWay is currently licensed.

Special needs community can serve and be served

by Brooklyn Noel

Walt Micksch has cerebral palsy. He also has a wife, two daughters, a business degree, and years of experience in the field of operations management and logistics.

"From the time I could hear words, I was told 'God has a plan for your life and there is a reason you are here,'" said Micksch, who credits his parents, Joe and Ella Micksch, and his childhood physical therapist, Dorothy Spark, with pushing him to "be involved in the world" regardless of his cerebral palsy.



It was Spark, a member of the church Micksch attended as a child, who introduced Micksch to special needs ministry by encouraging him to volunteer with a special needs community group when he was a young teenager.

"She used that to show how I had no room to complain and that God could really use these people," Micksch recalled.

That early understanding led Micksch to a lifetime of service both in and outside of church, though not necessarily to the special needs community. Micksch said, however, that recent contact with several families with children who have cerebral palsy has reawakened his desire to serve in special needs ministry.

The timing, then, was perfect for Carlton McDaniel, LifeWay's special needs specialist, to approach Micksch about helping start a leadership team composed of people who have special needs.

This new leadership team is the next step

Besides singing in the church choir, Denise Williams serves by helping children with special needs on and off buses for the local school system. Photo by Bob Schatz.

toward more fully integrating the special needs community into the larger church community. "They [people with special needs] are in Wal-Mart, they're in the school system, they are in so many aspects of society, but where are they in the church?" McDaniel asked.

Finding ways to minister to, and through, members of the special needs community is the mission of LifeWay's special needs ministry team.

"It's not just about ministering to them [members of the special needs community], we're helping them to see that they are called by God to be leaders as well," said Ellen Beene, editor of LifeWay's *Special Education Today* magazine, *Access* curricula, and the special needs edition of LifeWay's Vacation Bible School curricula.

An evolving ministry

LifeWay has a heritage of providing resources for special needs ministry that began in 1979, McDaniel said. The ministry has developed considerably during the last 28 years, and, in particular, during the past couple of years.

"Society as a whole is more accepting and aware of special needs and more churches are recognizing the need to create ministries to reach the special needs families in their community," McDaniel said. "This generation of parents is more likely to expect the church to provide a place for their child with special needs.

In 2007, LifeWay launched www.lifeway.com/specialneeds, an online resource housing articles, downloadable items, event information and other materials intended to meet the growing demand for special needs ministry resources.

Also this year, LifeWay introduced a new five-year study plan for *Access*, a resource for adults and older youth with special needs that uses a storytelling approach to communicate biblical truths.

The *Access* curricula has been available since 2000, but the fall 2007 edition represents the first curriculum designed specifically for learners with special needs to follow a five-year plan.

In addition to this change in the *Access* curriculum, LifeWay's church resources area also introduced a new line of curriculum for children in grades 1-6 called *Special Buddies*.

Beene said the education strategies of *Special Buddies* grew out of what LifeWay learned from years of working with local special needs programs.

"*Special Buddies* is a new resource, but not a new thought," McDaniel said, adding that the curriculum is intentionally designed for compatibility with the mainstream *Bible Teaching for Kids*. This compatibility means that *Special Buddies* can be used as a resource for adapting lessons for learners who may need additional help or for the teacher who may be teaching a self-contained class.

More than a study

Having access to specially tailored curriculum is important, but training, McDaniel said, is where church leaders, parents and volunteers garner encouragement and skills for building a successful special needs ministry.

In the past, special needs training opportunities and curricula focused on older youth and adults. LifeWay, however, has recently expanded its special needs ministry to include tools for effectively

Facts & Trends Online

- *Read more articles on the subject of special education.*

Go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends to view Facts&Trends Online.



Help make life better for God's retired servants.

"Well done..."

MATTHEW 25:21

"I want nothing extra – just to pay my bills and live with dignity in my remaining days."

– NORMA FRIEND

"Our need is urgent," Ed reluctantly wrote when he applied for help from the Adopt An Annuitant ministry after 37 years of serving small churches. **When Ed passed away, Norma was left behind and struggling to pay for things like food, utilities and medicine, but she was not alone.**

Through the Adopt An Annuitant ministry, Norma received the precious gift of dignity from her Southern Baptist family. God's promise to provide for His faithful servants, and our opportunity to act on that promise, are at the heart of the Adopt An Annuitant ministry.

GuideStone and the Adopt An Annuitant ministry provide critical financial relief to thousands of retired Southern Baptist ministers or their widows. One hundred percent of your gift goes to help someone with daily necessities like food and medication. **Learn more about this vital ministry or donate online by visiting *www.AdoptAnAnnuitant.org* or calling 1-888-98-GUIDE (1-888-984-8433).**

GuideStone® Financial Resources

Do well. Do right.℠

© 2007 GuideStone Financial Resources 12338 09/07

SERVING SOUTHERN BAPTIST RETIRED SERVANTS FOR 90 YEARS

teaching all ages of learners with special needs.

According to McDaniel, LifeWay is the only organization doing the type of hands-on training that takes place during the Learning Lab offered annually at LifeWay's Sunday school events at Ridgecrest and Glorieta conference centers.

During those events, McDaniel or another LifeWay staff member coordinates a Learning Lab where conference attendees volunteer to serve as teachers to children and adults with special needs in addition to attending seminars focused on special needs ministry. The students in the Learning Lab are often adults who attended the conference with a church group. Sometimes the students are the children of parents attending the Sunday school events.

While teachers in the Learning Lab gain valuable experience in special needs ministry, the students in the class gain exposure to biblical truths through Vacation Bible School.

McDaniel also conducts training seminars with local churches, associations and other groups as requested. In these settings, he strives to keep the ministry individualized and personal.

"We don't start classes – we start ministries," he said. "We want to teach Jesus in understandable ways, but we have to get families in the door to start that ministry."

Beene said that special needs ministry impacts nearly every aspect of church life, including the church building itself.

"You have to consider how they get to the choir loft or the pulpit. How do we adapt the playground?" she said, pointing out that LifeWay's church architecture area can renovate existing churches as well as design original structures that anticipate the need for accessibility.

As churches develop special needs ministries and involve members of that community, McDaniel said church leaders should think in terms of individuals and consider where each person's strengths lie.

"Most of the time we begin a special needs ministry thinking of the impact it will have on the members," McDaniel said. "It doesn't take long to realize that our members with special needs are actually ministering to us."

Micksch has spent nearly 30 years serving the church in some capacity, so he knows the breadth of service that individuals with special needs can perform.

"The goal of every Christian is to serve God," Micksch said. "People usually ask, 'How can we serve this segment of God's people better?' but I think the question is 'How can they serve us?'

"Their special need is to serve God, just like everyone's special need is to serve God." ■

For more information about the resources, training and curricula available for special needs ministry, visit www.lifeway.com/specialneeds.

Tips for integrating into ministry members with physical disabilities

Walt Micksch has filled a variety of ministry roles throughout more than 30 years in church in spite of having mild cerebral palsy. He offers the following tips for involving individuals with special needs in church service:

- Ask them whether God has already laid a service or function on their heart.
- Offer to pray with them as they seek God's direction toward service.
- Create a list tailored to what you know to be each individual's strengths. Ask them to pray through those options. Often this generates additional ideas not on the original list.
- Involve loved ones in the process.

Hearing the statistics, they chose to take action

Those most familiar words – "I do" – began their union together.

After having two sons, their long awaited little girl came. But soon, Lori and Steve Campbell of Brentwood, Tenn., found themselves sitting in the office of a specialist facing their worst nightmare. The developmental condition of their precious bundle was being evaluated. With her diagnosis came more powerful words: "brain damage." A thousand questions, but only time could bring the answers. Their world of pink was quickly turning gray.

That day the wise doctor shared two alarming statistics:

1. Fifty percent of all marriages, even Christian marriages, end in divorce.

2. Eighty percent of couples that have a special needs child will divorce.

"In 30 minutes we learned that our daughter was not normal and our happy marriage might not survive," Lori said.

It was time to take action. "Being quite certain that God was speaking through the words of the doctor that day, we determined that with His help we could defy the odds," she said.

Their prayers began and His counsel came

"As the years have gone by, we have learned valuable truths that keep our relationship strong," Lori said. "Each year our anniversary is not just to be a time to take a nostalgic look back, but also a time to honor and praise God for preserving our family. We've been married 25 years, and with the continued grace and counsel of God, the words still stand: 'We will.'"



Lori and Steve Campbell

Lori offered these suggestions on marriage that she and Steve follow:

• **Make time to pray.** "God is our counselor and understands our needs. He is our strength each day. Tap into the source, individually and as a couple."

• **Allow space.** "Coming to terms with a diagnosis takes time. You and your spouse will process the things at different times. Acceptance comes in stages. Be patient with each other."

• **Romance, romance, romance!** "Keep the spark alive by making your spouse a priority. Sometimes a simple outing without the kids can be a date. A text message during the day can let your spouse know he or she is in your thoughts."

• **Recognize your limits.** "Doctor appointments and school parent meetings can be emotional and draining. Communicate with your spouse and attend together as needed. Keep your schedule light on those days. Give yourself time to process new information. Eat dinner out on the hard days."

• **Individual time is a must.** "Make time for yourself. Keeping yourself healthy physically and mentally sets the tone for the whole family. An occasional massage, a night out with the friends, or even a weekend away without responsibility is so reviving. Spend money on the health club … and GO!"

• **Accept the help that is available.** "Many respite programs are offered through churches or community organizations. Even the school system's bus service can be a great

benefit. You shouldn't go it alone. Everyone needs support."

• **Grieve your losses.** "Handling a diagnosis comes in stages. Reviewing the stages of grief can be helpful. Acceptance will come with time, but knowing where you are emotionally can be so beneficial along the way."

• **Everybody has needs.** "Don't neglect your other children as you care for the one with special needs. Plan activities, events and even short trips when you leave your special needs child home and allow the others to run at their own pace from time to time." ■

Lori and Steve Campbell recently celebrated their 25th anniversary. They have four children: Christian, 18; Austin, 16; Ali, 12; and Mia, 4. They are members of Rolling Hills Community Church in Franklin, Tenn.

God answers my prayer for 'just joy'

by Jeff Atwood

The very young doctor said, "We need to do a tap, to check on her spinal fluid."

"Why do we need to do that?" I asked. "She just has an ear infection."

"We need to consider the possibility she might have bacterial meningitis," he said.

At that very moment, life as we knew it changed forever.

"How often does this happen?" I asked. "I mean, that an ear infection could turn into bacterial meningitis?"

"Not often," said the doctor.

"Like maybe one in a million?" I asked, nervously.

"Yeah ... maybe."

A painful blur

We quickly were ushered out of the room by someone (it all became a blur) because "this procedure may be a bit uncomfortable for your daughter." And standing in the hallway, bracing myself against the flat, white hospital wall, I heard the doctor count "1, 2, 3 ..." and then my sweet little 6-month-old Madison made the most horrible sound I have ever heard.

Moments later, the doctor called us in and held up the syringe. "See how milky that spinal fluid is? It should be crystal clear. I am afraid she does have bacterial meningitis. We'll run this to the lab to confirm it, but we need to get her upstairs right away."

Facts & Trends Online

This story is excerpted from an article by Jeff Atwood in the Fall 2007 issue of LifeWay's Special Education Today magazine. Read the entire story at Facts & Trends Online. For more information about SET and other resources, go to wwwlifeway.com/specialneeds.

A feeble prayer

For 11 days, we rode the wave of good news and bad news. Our hope would rise with a positive report from the doctor and fall with disappointing results from a test. We quickly learned anytime the doctor said, "I need to talk with you," it was never good news.

I remember praying by Madison's bedside during one of those visits. A life support machine breathed for her, a feeding tube kept her nourished, tubes and IVs surrounded her little tiny arms and legs, and a raft of different monitors played sentinel to everything going on in her body and brain. At that moment, I was not strong enough to pray for healing or wholeness. I was not confident enough to pray she would be restored or renewed. All I could utter at this point was a very feeble "God, give her joy in her life. That's it. Just joy. That is all I can pray right now."



Madison on cover of Fall 2007 issue of Special Education Today

Crystal clear

Over the next few weeks, months and years, we began to see fully the challenges resulting from Madison's bacterial meningitis. She lost the function of about a third of her brain due to the swelling and loss of blood flow during the fever. She has a significant seizure disorder. She has a mild form of hemiplegic cerebral palsy and has all the expected cognitive and developmental challenges seen in people with similar brain injuries. Madison is active in her school now, but continues to slide a bit further behind her peer group every year.

Made to worship

Madison loves to sing worship songs. One day as she and I ran some errands, I felt angry, thinking about how my daughter was trapped in her own body.

But Madison wasn't thinking any such thing. "Daddy, play number 11, play number 11." She wanted to hear a specific song, so I played number 11 for her.

As the music came on, I looked back in the rearview mirror and watched as Madison sang to Jesus, "I will give You all my worship. I will give You all my praise." Then I realized Madison is not a prisoner. She is free. She is freer than most of us ever will be.

Madison is unconcerned with how things look. She is free to enjoy the life God gave her. She is free indeed! ■

Madison peeks around the corner of her house.

VBS curriculum expands to children with special needs

Beginning in 2008, LifeWay's Vacation Bible School materials will feature resources customized for children with special needs.

Outrigger Island: Special Friends is a VBS resource that provides leaders with tools for working with children, youth and adults with special needs in either self-contained or mainstreaming environments.

LifeWay's VBS specialist Jerry Wooley said LifeWay will offer a VBS resource geared toward children with special needs partly because of confusion over the special needs curriculum offered for adults in the past.

"People saw that we offered VBS curriculum for people with special needs and they assumed it was for children," Wooley said. "It actually was for adults."

LifeWay recently launched *Special Buddies*, a Sunday school line for children with special needs. As churches began using this Sunday school material, LifeWay wanted to have something to offer when it came Vacation Bible School time.

Outrigger Island: Special Friends features:

- An all-in-one leader guide. This single, reversible guide features all the resources necessary for both children and adults.
- An entirely self-contained program with the flexibility to rotate through recreation and activity times with the entire VBS group.
- Helpful tip sheets for VBS teachers and rotation leaders as well as a resource for a self-contained class.
- Daily themes that mirror the theme of the overall Outrigger Island curriculum.

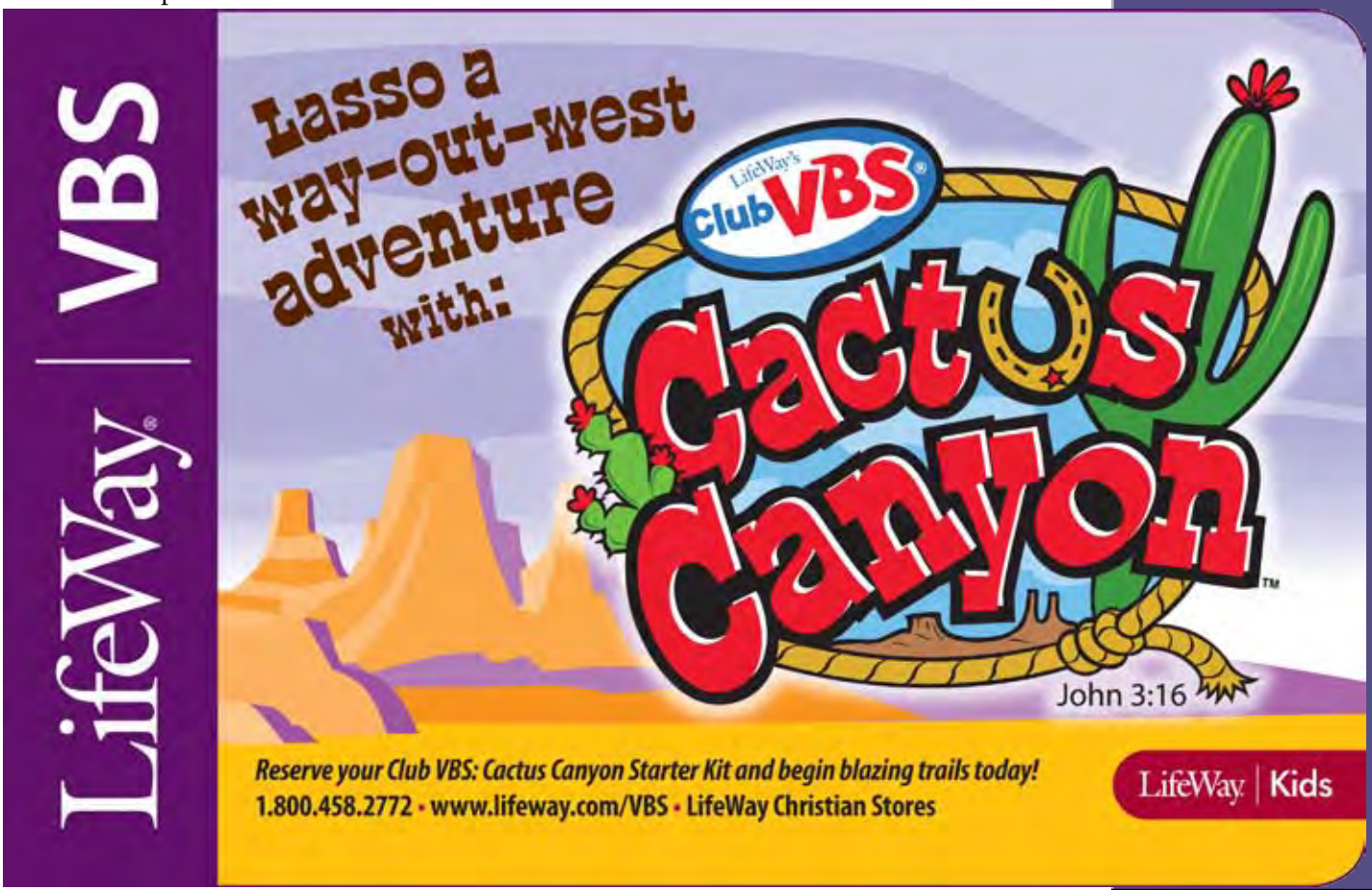
VBS Tools Online, also will include sections devoted to special education. Visit www.lifeway.com/vbstools to learn more.

Outrigger Island: Special Friends will be available Dec.1, 2007-Sept. 1, 2008. ■

We recommend

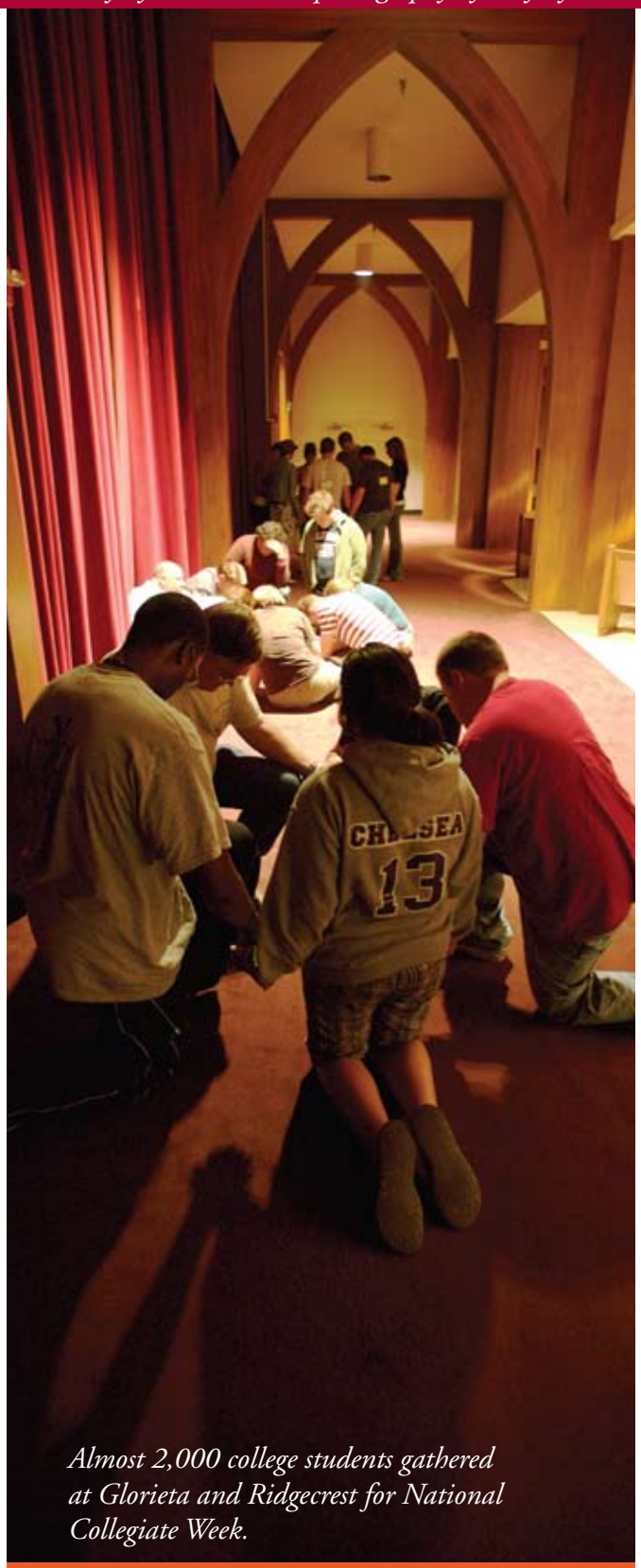
- *Our God, Big God* by Jeff Atwood
- *Special Needs, Special Ministry*
- *Empowering Your Child Who Has Special Needs*

These books are available from LifeWay Christian Stores at www.lifewaystores.com and (800) 233-1123.



Relationships at the center of collegiate ministry

story by Chris Turner, photography by Guy Lyons



Almost 2,000 college students gathered at Glorieta and Ridgecrest for National Collegiate Week.

Linda Osborne hasn't met a person she isn't willing to engage in conversation, especially if college students are involved. She likes to talk. But ask her about her vision for collegiate ministry and ideas come quickly and to the point: Partnership. Networking. Equipping. Strengthening. Reaching. Connecting.

Osborne is less than a year into her role as national collegiate ministry leader for LifeWay, but she has 21 years of campus ministry experience serving at Arkansas State University, Florida State University and Louisiana Tech University. The Winona, Miss., native plans to draw from her experience and her vast collegiate ministers network to bring focus to LifeWay's effort to assist in the mission of reaching college students with the gospel and helping them grow in their faith.

Osborne took a brief break from a busy Collegiate Week at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center Aug. 6-10 to discuss her ministry philosophy and the future of collegiate ministry.

Q: You've been involved in collegiate ministry for more than two decades. How would you describe your ministry philosophy?

LO: In a single word: relationship. College students want relationships. They want to talk and they want to be in community with others. This was a significant finding in a study done by LifeWay Research earlier this year titled, "Young adults falling away from church." Relationships open the door for campus ministers and church ministers to have spiritual influence in their lives. Students will talk about anything and ministers need to be a part of the conversation. Relationships pave the way for sharing the gospel with them to providing godly counsel.

Q: You've also talked about relationships among leaders themselves. How does that philosophy extend to what you'd like to see LifeWay accomplish in relation to churches and campuses?

LO: One of the great joys I have in this position is getting to work with college ministers and BCM [Baptist Collegiate Ministry] directors across the country, many of whom have been good friends for years. We are all aware of the needs on college campuses. We do have BCMs on 839 campuses and work with 42 state Baptist conventions that minister to more

than 279,000 students. However, there are more than 18.7 million college students on campuses across the United States. There is a lot of work to do. Most of those don't have a personal relationship with Jesus. I believe having a relationship with leaders across campuses, conventions and churches is going to be critical if we are going to have an impact for Christ.

Q: What will be LifeWay's role in these relationships?

LO: Years ago the Southern Baptist Convention gave LifeWay the responsibility of collegiate ministry. Last year a number of state collegiate directors met with LifeWay's president, Dr. [Thom] Rainer, and asked him if LifeWay could make collegiate ministry more of a priority. He responded in a very positive way. One of the positive changes was to put collegiate ministry in our network partnerships department. This is a perfect fit. It gives us a chance to build relationships with state convention leaders, ministers, the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board and a host of others. We all realize that if we are going to make a dent in that 18-plus million that it is going to take all of us working together to do more than we can do as individual entities and my goal is for LifeWay to offer leadership in helping bring this about.

Q: We are at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center for National Collegiate Week and there are 1,400-plus college students here and another 500-plus at LifeWay Ridgecrest. What type of impact do you think this week makes in their lives?

LO: I believe it makes a huge difference. Consider, Collegiate Week is just one aspect of what we believe will be a comprehensive equipping approach to collegiate ministry, but it is a very important aspect. We have students here from campuses across the country, most of them secular schools. I've already heard a number of comments from them about how this week is spiritual preparation for going back into challenging circumstances, in many cases where there is hostility toward Christianity. Here they get solid biblical teaching during our large group times and more specialized training during small group sessions in areas like apologetics, evangelism and missions. It helps equip them for their personal ministries. The really cool thing is that they literally have a chance to reach the nations for Christ right on their campuses with so many international students coming from every corner of the world.

Q: What role does the local church have in your vision for collegiate ministry?

LO: Campus ministry is not the church. While BCM is an important arm of the church, the church is the bride of Christ and ultimately that is where students need to connect. It is important that we help them make that transition. The LifeWay Research study that released in August showed that 70 percent of teenagers who say they attended church regularly in high school drop out of church between the ages of 18 and 22. That is an alarming figure. We've got to help them make that transition and to not walk away from their faith. However, it is important for the local church to embrace their role in ministering to college students. Unfortunately too many churches that are not in "college towns" don't see themselves as college churches, but if your church has a single student who has gone off to college, then you are a college church and there are lots of ways your church can support your student. ■

"… if your church has a single student who has gone off to college, then you are a college church and there are lots of ways your church can support your student."
— *Linda Osborne*

Facts & Trends Online

- *Read an interview with Steve Masters, BCM director at LSU and LifeWay's national transitions ministry specialist. He addresses the problem of teens who drop out of church and gives ideas for helping high school graduates include church attendance in their collegiate life.*

Go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends to view Facts&Trends Online.

Significant Church FOCUS:
Help for leaders of smaller membership churches

by Mark Kelly

One of the loneliest, most difficult jobs in the world is pastoring a smaller membership church. A pastor mediates chronic tension between members and wrestles with church traditions that prevent new outreach efforts – all the while working an outside job to provide for his family.

In a congregation of 35 people, a pastor rarely feels he can turn to anyone in the church about his frustration and discouragement.

Because his congregation isn't large, a pastor may feel his local association or state convention staff is busy with "more important" issues and can't be bothered by the problems of one pastor in a "little" church, says Mitch Martin, bivocational ministry specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources.

"A group of bivocational pastors was on their way to a meeting at their Baptist state convention office," he said. "As they approached the front door, one of them stopped and said, 'You mean we can just walk right in there?'"

Martin said that misperception is disappointing. "Most of our state conventions have someone on staff whose ministry is focused on helping pastors," he said. "These pastors need to know that their churches and ministries are not substandard. They need to understand how to lead their congregations into the significant, effective ministry God created them to have."

For that reason LifeWay is collaborating with state conventions and local associations across the country in a new initiative called "Significant Church FOCUS," a leadership development process designed to help pastors break the deadlock in their churches and find the unique strategy that will breathe new life into the congregation.

Smaller membership churches are not inferior ministries; they are actually the norm in Southern Baptist life, said Ray Gilder, bivocational ministries specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention. And their problems are the entire convention's problems, he added.

"Only 1 percent of Southern Baptist churches averages more than 1,000 in Sunday school. About 75 percent of them average less than 100," Gilder said. "Most of the churches that are plateaued or declining are bivocational and smaller membership churches.

"Helping bring new life to these

"Smaller membership churches are not only the backbone of the Southern Baptist Convention, they are the heart and soul, arms, legs, and feet of our work. When God renews the leadership of 30,000 churches, we'll see lives and communities transformed all across this country."

– Mitch Martin, LifeWay bivocational ministry specialist



struggling congregations is strategically very important for building the kingdom of God throughout Southern Baptist life," he said.

In a weekend pilot-project workshop at Cookeville, Tenn., held in mid-September, pastors and their wives from several smaller membership churches got a sneak peek at Significant Church FOCUS. Similar workshops were held in June and September in Louisiana; others are planned for coming months in New Mexico, Ohio, Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia.

Significant Church FOCUS introduces a simple process called "The Leader's Cross," which guides a pastor through evaluating his church's situation, making decisions about its values and priorities, planning to achieve a few key goals, and engaging the congregation in the work of ministry. The effectiveness of the initiative lies in helping pastors understand who God created them to be as leaders, then showing them how to enlist and work with core ministry partners in their church.

"Pastors basically do three things: lead, care and proclaim," Martin said. "My research indicates that pastors feel their greatest need is knowing how to be more effective leaders. Too many pastors find themselves in the situation of being Lone Ranger ministers. Although they don't talk about it openly, many are quietly unhappy in their ministries.

"The subtitle of this effort is FOCUS, which stands for Finding Our Church's Unique Strategy," Martin said. "I want pastors to know how to develop ministry teams in their churches and work together under God's leadership to discover their unique ministry approach. I want these pastors and teams to have a tool they can use to lead their churches forward."

Many pastors mistakenly believe that preaching by itself will solve a church's problems, said Billie Friel, interim director of missions for Wilson County (Tenn.) Baptist Association.

"After the conference, one pastor told me he had thought he could preach his way out of pastoral needs and problems," Friel said. "You won't get there just by preaching; you have to be a leader.

"Significant Church FOCUS helps you understand that church leadership is a team effort between the pastor and his people," he said. "The only Lone Rangers in the Bible – Jonah and Samson – did not have effective, happy ministries."

Martin believes Significant Church FOCUS has great potential to revitalize congregations.

"There are approximately 30,000 Southern Baptist churches that average 125 or less in Sunday school," he said. "If all those churches started just one new Sunday school class with an enrollment of 10, that would mean 300,000 new people reached for Bible study. If they baptized just three additional people next year, that would mean almost 100,000 souls for the kingdom!

"Smaller membership churches are not only the backbone of the Southern Baptist Convention, they are the heart and soul, arms, legs, and feet of our work," he said. "When God renews the leadership of 30,000 churches, we'll see lives and communities transformed all across this country."

For information about Significant Church FOCUS, contact your associational director of missions or state convention office, or contact Mitch Martin at mitch.martin@lifeway.com. ■



A message of hope for the lost. A message of how for the church.

In his book *3:16 The Numbers of Hope,* Max Lucado explores a simple 26-word Bible verse, revealing fresh insights to Christians and an eternal promise to everyone. In *3:16 The Church Experience,* the message is put in motion. This six-session study not only examines John 3:16 but shows believers how to share its incredible news with friends, neighbors, and even strangers—just by telling their own 3:16 stories. Does someone need to hear yours? Order your study online, call 800.458.2772, or visit the LifeWay Christian Store serving you.

3:16

www.lifeway.com/316

LifeWay | Adults

Jay Wells directs expanded African-American ministry

When LifeWay decided to expand its African-American ministry, Elgia "Jay" Wells, a pastoral ministries veteran, was the logical person to step up to lead.


Jay Wells

Wells is leading LifeWay to better serve African-American churches, in part by strengthening long-standing relationships with pastors and church staff members and by developing ties to new church leadership. Currently, there are 3,700 African-American churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, and that number is growing.

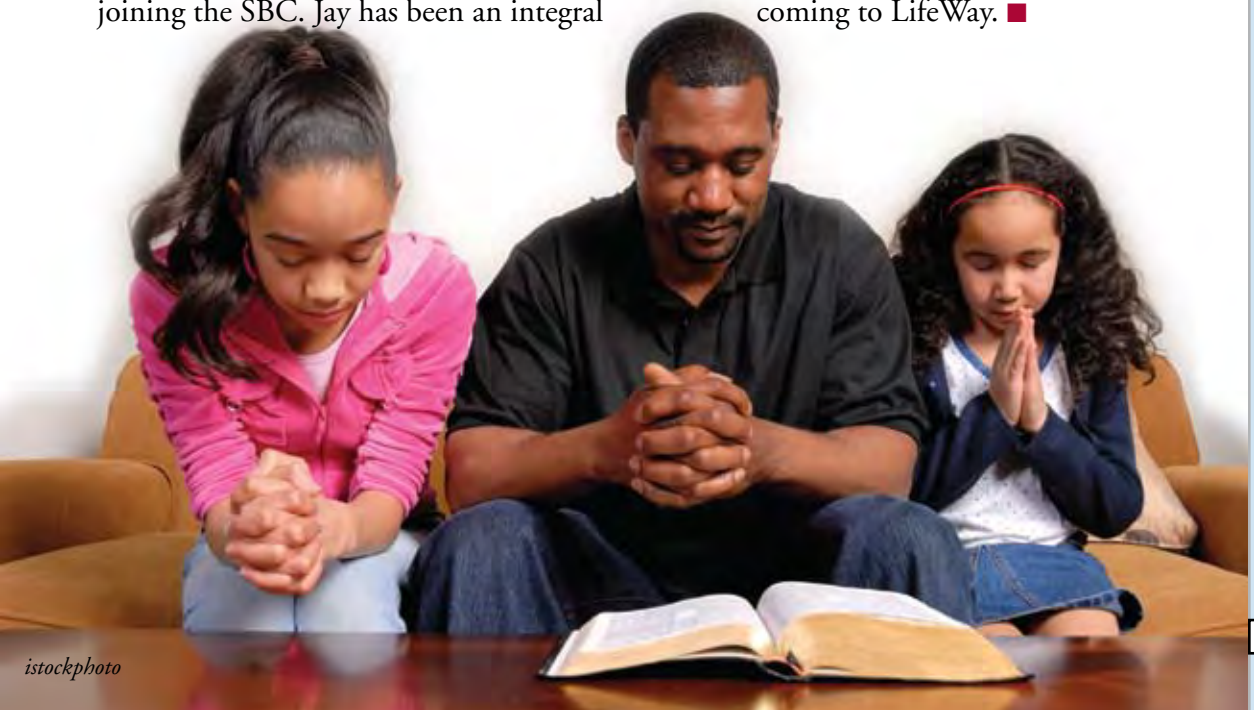
"Our goal is to see African-American churches reach people for Christ," said Wells, who joined LifeWay in 1989.

"LifeWay has had an intentional ministry to African-American churches since 1985," said Ralph Hodge, director of LifeWay church relations and consulting. "The work has continued to grow over the years with the increased number of churches joining the SBC. Jay has been an integral part of this ministry and I believe is uniquely gifted by the Lord to lead LifeWay to an even more effective level of service."

According to Hodge, LifeWay is expanding its ministry in response to growing requests for resources that meet the unique cultural needs of the African-American community. "We have had direct input from the National African Fellowship of the SBC that we move in this direction, and we are eager to do so," he said.

In July, LifeWay launched a new Web site, www.lifeway.com/blackchurchlife, to more effectively speak to the issues and needs of the African-American community.

Wells holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Tuskegee (Ala.) University and a Master of Divinity degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Carolyn, have three adult children – Warrick, Denise and Craig. Wells served as minister of education and associate pastor at Emmanuel Baptist Church in San Jose, Calif., and on the staff of the California Southern Baptist Convention prior to coming to LifeWay. ■

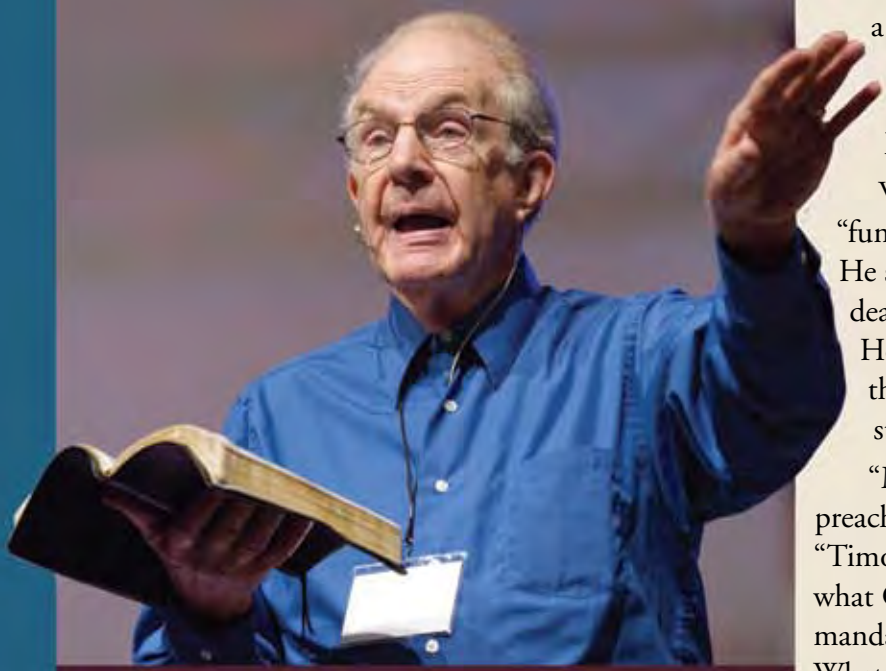

istockphoto

Disciples given tools at Evangelism & Discipleship Week

story by Jerry Higgins, photography by Gibbs Frazeur

Bill Morris is typical of those who attended the annual National Evangelism and Discipleship Conference at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in July. He wanted to gain new ideas about starting a men's ministry back at his church – Mount Moriah Baptist Church in the central Alabama community of Weogufka.

However, he came away with more. Morris also met people who use horses as a ministry tool – something else Morris had been praying about. Morris said many people in his church ride horses and he was looking for a way to link that with his church.



Roy Fish

"This has been great; one of the best (conferences) I've ever attended," Morris said. "Not only was it very uplifting and inspiring but very practical. I have a lot of information that I'll take back and contacts I can use to help in the ministry."

The conference, sponsored by LifeWay, had 11 different study tracks ranging from youth ministry to chaplains. Noted Bible scholar T. W. Hunt taught *The Mind of Christ* for the first time in nearly 10 years, while Don Wilton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C., and Roy Fish, distinguished professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, were keynote speakers.

Inspirational messages

Wilton's four messages ran the gamut of why people come to this type of conference. Some people are looking for miracles from God, but that doesn't have to be a grandiose act. It can be as simple as healing a relationship or fixing a marriage in trouble.

Wilton said people have to trust the Word of God, especially when facing life's difficulties like Jonah (Jonah 1:1-17).

Wilton also said everything should point to the "functionality of the local New Testament church." He said the New Testament church is pastor-led, deacon-served, team-organized and body-approved. However, he reminded the audience that after they learned everything at the conference, they still had to ask, "What's next?"

"Ministry is a battlefield," Wilton said in preaching the final message from 2 Timothy 1:6-8. "Timothy knew God called him and he embarked on what God called him to do. Paul gave Timothy four mandates: Settle up, stir up, stand up and step out. What has God done to you this week? Where do we go from here?"

Fish looked at what happens when the church is a "praying church." He said it's critically important that new believers are discipled immediately by the believers because "Satan enjoys devouring the testimony of new believers."

"I believe the first 24 to 48 hours in the life of new believers are the most crucial hours in the Christian life," Fish said. "We know all about justification but know little about sanctification. Our churches are filled with spiritual babies, if they are there at all."

Fish, in preaching his second sermon from Acts 4:29-33, said the church is "shaken" when people pray.

"The presence of God is manifested in and through his people," Fish said. "The power of God is received and the purposes of God are accomplished. There are lost people all around us, and the time has come when we just can't sit there. Jesus said that to his disciples."

"I believe the first 24 to 48 hours in the life of new believers are the most crucial hours in the Christian life."
– Roy Fish

In-depth teaching

Claude King, editor in chief in LifeWay's leadership and adult publishing area, conducted classes from *Abide in Christ*, the second book in the seven-part *Growing Disciples* series. The book is a Bible study based on *The True Vine*, written in 1864 by pastor and Christian writer Andrew Murray from Jesus' parable of the true vine in John 15. The parable helps Christians experience love, joy, power and friendship in relationship with Christ. King and Bo Stevens, pastor of discipleship and administration at Bow Valley Baptist Church in Cochrane, Alberta, helped update the study to modern language.

King went through the nine steps used in the book for believers to "abide in Christ," ranging from entering the relationship with Christ ("graft you on to the vine") to be transformed, obeying Him, relating to Him through prayer and His Word and it results in "bearing much fruit."

In the men's ministry track, Sid Woodruff, men's ministry specialist at LifeWay, said many churches lack a well-planned evangelistic men's ministry and many churches struggle to figure out what makes men tick.

"We spend too much time organizing a ministry. We don't spend enough time creating a culture for ministering to men," Woodruff said.

John Burnett, family ministry consultant for the Georgia Baptist Convention, led a group that discussed the "Top 10 Issues Facing Today's Family." The issues were whittled down from a LifeWay survey of 2,000 people and the results were:

1. Anti-Christian culture. 2. Divorce. 3. Busyness. 4. Father figure. 5. Lack of discipline. 6. Financial pressures. 7. Lack of communication. 8. Negative media influence. 9. Balance of work and family. 10. Materialism.

"You can't depend on the church to teach 100 percent of this," Burnett said.

Ross Mowery, the discipleship chairman for the Middle River Baptist Church in Baltimore, sat in on the discipleship track and came away impressed.

"I heard how to do intentional discipleship in my church," Mowery said. "Too often there is a lack of depth of discipleship in the local church. The cornerstone of any discipleship program is prayer. You have to have a good foundation to build a program." ■

Facts & Trends Online

- *Read an article about T. W. Hunt's lesson on The Mind of Christ.*

Go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends to view Facts&Trends Online.

Effective evangelism = biblical obedience

story by Jerry Higgins, photography by Gibbs Frazeur

Mike Smith sat in a wooden rocking chair overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina and spoke about why people have trouble with evangelism.

"Jesus said, 'Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men.' He didn't say every time you fish you're going to catch something," said Smith, LifeWay's FAITH Evangelism specialist. "The issue is fishing for people. I think we have to celebrate the people who are fishing and not just the people who are catching. We've got to encourage people to fish."



Mike Smith

Across the campus of LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, Roy Fish, distinguished professor of evangelism and evangelism chair at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was preaching a message about evangelism from John 4:35-39.

"There is equality in sowing and reaping," Fish said. "As Southern Baptists, we have failed to see this. We have made heroes out of reapers. Maybe not consciously, but we have relegated sowers to relative unimportance. The reaper is the person we put in the spotlight."

The messages from both men, and others at LifeWay's annual national evangelism and discipleship conference, were repeated over and over: The church has to do a better job of discipling its members, and the members must do a better job of going outside of the church and evangelizing the lost no matter where they are.

"Evangelism is the heartbeat of missions," said Don Wilton, pastor of First Baptist Church of Spartanburg, S.C., and a keynote speaker at the conference. "It's what we do. Missions are what we are. Evangelism is incomplete without discipleship. Our mandate is to equip the saints for ministry. Evangelism and discipleship are twin sisters. They are complementary.

"What is our mission? To reach all people with the gospel of Jesus Christ," Wilton said. "We do that through evangelism. It's the functional goal for which we strive. Evangelism and discipleship run down parallel tracks. You can't have one without the other. They are inseparable."

Churches use all sorts of means to disciple its members. In the "one size does not fit all" world, churches have used FAITH, G.R.O.W., and other programs to teach believers how to evangelize. But, according to experts at the conference, too often young believers are given the tools but not the instructions on how to use them.

"You don't tell a baby, 'There's the refrigerator. Get something to eat,'" Wilton said. "Many times we say, 'Here's the Bible. Read it. Learn it.'"

Smith said, "The population is growing but we're not converting the lost. We can't keep doing this and survive. Look at plant

life or animals. If they don't reproduce their own kind, they die. What happens if the church multiplies our kind? If we don't reproduce our kind, we die. What is the reason we exist? It's to make disciples."

Smith and Fish agreed that people want instant gratification. So, if one presents the gospel and it is not accepted, many times the person thinks he or she is a failure and won't move on to the next person.

"Sowing must always precede reaping," Fish said. "(New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary President) Chuck Kelley once said, 'Part of our frustration in evangelism is that we are a reaping denomination. We are living in a field that has not yet been sown.'

"The average person in the United States who comes to Jesus Christ comes the seventh time that he or she hears the message," Fish said. "Are you willing to be the No. 4? Are you willing to be the No. 4 five times? There would not be a No. 7 if there weren't a No. 4."

"Usually when you sow a seed, you never find out what happened. But when you get to heaven, you will see the results of your sowing," he added. "You will see people you dropped the seed of the Good News of Jesus in their hearts."

Barriers to evangelism

Smith said evangelism confronts people with three major issues that get in the way of effective evangelism:

1. Loving people. "People are not a notch on a gospel belt. People aren't always easy to love," he said. "I think a lot of people look at people like a target instead of being people. They are people that God loves and we are to love. We struggle with loving sinners. It takes time and that means inconvenience."

2. Loving God. "Jesus said, 'If you love me, you'll obey me,'" Smith said.

3. Fear. "Fear locks up so many people," Smith said. "They say, 'I'm afraid I won't say the right thing or get asked questions I don't have answers to. I'm afraid I'll mess it up.' But I think our love for God and our love for people will help us overcome these fears. How uncomfortable will they be in eternity if I don't talk to them?"

Claude King, editor in chief in LifeWay's leadership and adult publishing area, said the greatest evangelism will take place when discipleship has been done correctly. The message of Christ's life and what Christ did for us, when lived out, is contagious, King said.

"What is our mission? To reach all people with the gospel of Jesus Christ."
– Don Wilton

"People see it. They want it," King said. "And people who have it bubble over with vitality. That's really what the Great Commission is all about: As we are going, be serious about making disciples."

Smith said statistics show that fewer people are coming to church than in previous generations. If that continues, there's a real possibility of more churches dying in the process without true biblical discipleship and evangelism.

"I am called to share the gospel. God's job is to do the converting," Smith said. "I've got to believe that the gospel can change your life and I just have to talk to you about it. There comes a point where I have to live my faith and share my faith and I'm going to leave the results up to God." ■



Planning for Baptist Hymnal

2008



Prepare your ministry now with this ground-breaking planning resource.

Visit www.lifewayworship.com for pricing, availability, and preorders.



LifeWay | Worship

New B&H book helps couples enhance intimacy through communication

by Jenny Rice

"I do." Two simple words spoken between a husband and wife at the beginning of what is hoped to be a marriage of intimacy.

With the United States facing its highest divorce rate in history, many couples have changed "I do" to "I don't anymore."

Best-selling author Gary Chapman offers help to couples struggling with intimacy in his new book *Now You're Speaking My Language*, released by B&H Publishing Group. The book is an updated paperback version of his earlier release *Covenant Marriage*.

According to *Now You're Speaking My Language*, 86 percent of divorced couples cite "deficient communication" as the reason for failed marriages.

"Communication and intimacy are two of the most important aspects of developing a growing marriage," Chapman writes. "Good communication is the road to intimacy."

Chapman outlines unhealthy patterns of marriage and offers tips on how to restore healthy communication between spouses.

Five levels of communication

All communication is not equal in value, Chapman writes. He adds that "some levels of communication foster greater intimacy than others," and lists five levels of communication beginning with the most superficial in nature to the most intimate.

1. Hallway talk – nice, polite talk said throughout the day. Examples include questions such as, "How are you?" "Be careful." "See you later." Such statements are not to be thought of as useless, but positive ways to acknowledge the other person's presence.

2. Reporter talk – only the facts. "You tell each other what you have seen and heard, when and where it took place, but you're sharing nothing of your opinions about the events," he writes. "The success of much of life is dependent upon this kind of communication. But, intimacy in marriage requires conversation that goes beyond the facts."



3. Intellectual talk – conversation beyond the sharing of factual information to the sharing of opinions, interpretations or judgments of those facts. Examples include, "I think the church should give more money to foreign missions," or "I wish we could spend a weekend together in the mountains soon."

4. Emotional talk – a deeper level of communication with the sharing of feelings and emotions. "We risk much more when we communicate on this level," Chapman writes, "but we also have the potential for entering a higher level of intimacy."

5. Loving, genuine truth talk – couples speak the truth in love, being honest but not condemning, open but not demanding. "[Communication on this level] allows each of us freedom to think and feel differently," Chapman writes. "Rather than condemning one another, we seek to understand our spouse's thoughts and feelings, looking for ways to grow together in spite of our differences."

The book offers wisdom for couples that seek to restore trust in their relationships through less defensive barriers and reactions.

"All of us experience emotional defensiveness, but it need not be destructive," Chapman writes. "In fact, defensiveness can lead to more meaningful communication and deeper intimacy." ■

We recommend

- *The Five Love Languages*
- *The Four Seasons of Marriage*
- *The Marriage You've Always Wanted*
- *Home Improvements*

These and other resources by Gary Chapman are available through customer service at www.lifeway.com and (800) 458-2772 and from LifeWay Christian Stores at www.lifewaystores.com and (800) 233-1123.

Internet technologies designers, developers working on LifeWayWorship.com

by Brooklyn Noel

In September 2006 LifeWay Worship announced plans to develop a resource intended to meet diverse church worship needs by coupling an updated hardback Baptist Hymnal with modern technology.

The Worship Project has two main components: a downloadable audio hymn and worship song repository featuring 1,000 songs and a 700-song updated hardback Baptist Hymnal. In addition to these elements, The Worship Project also will feature an innovative online worship planning tool available at LifewayWorship.com.

LifeWay Worship anticipates unveiling The Worship Project in late 2008, but LifeWayWorship.com already has launched. Currently the Web site houses information on the project status and offers visitors the option of registering for e-mail updates. By the time The Worship Project becomes available, however, LifeWayWorship.com will feature far more than news updates.

"The search function will allow music ministers to put together a worship service based on topical or scriptural references."
— Patrick Watts

Patrick Watts, manager of sales, marketing and events for LifeWay Worship, is working with the team of developers in LifeWay's Internet technologies area to build and test the online portion of The Worship Project.

Watts said one of the most exciting aspects of LifeWayWorship.com will be the ability to search for specific songs and hymns based on the author, title, metrical index, topic, scripture reference, and even the full text of a song's lyrics.

"The search function will allow music ministers to put together a worship service based on topical or scriptural references," Watts said, adding that the worship planning resource will simplify situations that require quick changes to a worship service. "We're excited about the breakthroughs we're having that can have a positive impact on churches everywhere and help them create effective worship services."

Allyson Hobbie, the Internet technologies supervisor of creative development and project manager for LifeWayWorship.com, said LifeWay Internet technologies designers and developers present their work to LifeWay Worship team members every two weeks for critique. LifeWay Worship also randomly selects customers once a quarter to test the resource.

"We have learned that customers are pleased with what they have seen of the application to date," Hobbie said. "They have expressed that there is definitely a need for this resource."

By the end of 2007, LifeWay Worship plans to have more than 975 songs recorded for the online hymnal and all of the songs selected for the updated hardback Baptist Hymnal.

Sample copies of the Baptist Hymnal, which is scheduled for release in August 2008, will be on display at events next summer such as the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting and the LifeWay Worship Leadership conferences at Ridgecrest and Glorieta conference centers. ■

To sign up for e-mail updates on The Worship Project, visit www.lifewayworship.com.

Office supply savings means more money for ministry

by Jenny Rice

Folders, pens, paper and staplers are necessary in a church office, but can seem like superfluous expenses in light of funds needed for evangelistic and discipleship purposes.

In an effort to help churches lower administrative costs, LifeWay Christian Stores recently signed an agreement with the national office supply company OfficeMax, whereby churches may qualify for 15-70 percent discounts through the OfficeMax Advantage Program.

"We are always looking for new ways to provide churches with the resources they need while respecting the stewardship of their tithes and gifts from church members," said LifeWay Christian Stores Vice President Mark Scott.



For churches affiliated with LifeWay, OfficeMax Advantage Program benefits include discounts on more than 12,000 office supplies; free overnight shipping on orders $50 or above (with exceptions for furniture, special orders or back orders); a no-hassle return policy; and a personal account manager assigned specifically to service churches.

OfficeMax also tracks each church's order history for efficient reordering of supplies and churches can print reports for financial records.

Churches may utilize the LifeWay discount with OfficeMax in three ways – by phone, online or in person at more than 900 OfficeMax retail locations. For free registration, churches may call (877) 633-2MAX, select option 4, and mention the LifeWay affiliation.

Pricing and shipping charges may vary in Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico.

Additional information on the comprehensive list is available at www.lifewaystores.com/specialservices. ■

Introducing another LifeWay OneSource Program



ACTS (Advanced Church Technology Systems Group) and LifeWay Christian Stores introduce a new OneSource Program.

ACTS offers you over 10 years of church experience in a full range of IT services including Hardware/Software Sales, Network Design/Support and Web Design/Hosting for churches.

ACTS is a Microsoft Certified Partner which enables them to offer churches Microsoft Software at charitable prices which means substantial savings for your church.

ACTS GROUP

Microsoft CERTIFIED Partner

For additional information call
1-877-564-8300
or visit us online at
www.LifeWaystores.com/acts

Z354

Founders Ministries, Southeastern Seminary sponsor conference on Calvinism

by Chris Turner

Calvinism, a frequent topic within the Southern Baptist Convention and beyond, will be the theme of a Nov. 26-28 conference sponsored by Southeastern Seminary and Founders Ministries, an organization based in Cape Coral, Fla., that supports the principles of Calvinism as represented among some of the leaders in the early years of the SBC.

The conference, titled "Building Bridges: Southern Baptists and Calvinism," will be held at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center outside Asheville, N.C.

"The Word of God calls us to love the Lord with all of our heart," said Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Seminary. "It also calls us to love Him with all of our mind. Thinking biblically and theologically, therefore, is essential to a balanced and healthy Christian life.

"Calvinism has generated a lot of interest in recent years in Southern Baptist life," Akin noted. "Unfortunately we have often talked at and not with one another. Unhealthy rhetoric and misrepresentations from all directions have led to confusion and even ill will among brothers and sisters in Christ. We hope this conference will demonstrate how important theological issues can be discussed with grace, integrity and love."

"We hope this conference will demonstrate how important theological issues can be discussed with grace, integrity and love."

— Danny Akin

First sessions will begin on Monday and conclude at noon Wednesday. Program fees are $75 (excludes meals) or $104 (includes six meals). Lodging options are $69 per night in Mt. Laurel Inn or $54 per night in Pritchell and Maple. Contact LifeWay Ridgecrest reservations at (800) 588-7222 or online at www.lifeway.com/buildingbridges.

List of conference speakers:

- Danny Akin, president, Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.
- Tom Ascol, executive director, Founders Ministries and senior pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Cape Coral, Fla.
- Voddie Baucham, church planter and pastor of preaching at Grace Family Baptist Church, Spring, Texas
- David Dockery, president, Union University, Jackson, Tenn.
- J.D. Greear, pastor, Summit Church, Durham, N.C.
- Nathan Finn, instructor of church history, Southeastern Seminary
- Ken Keathley, senior associate dean, professor of theology, Southeastern Seminary
- Charles Lawless, dean, Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
- James Merritt, pastor, Cross Pointe, The Church at Gwinnett Center, Duluth, Ga.
- R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president, Southern Seminary
- David Nelson, senior vice president of academic administration, dean of faculty, professor of theology, Southeastern Seminary
- Tom Nettles, professor of historical theology, Southern Seminary
- Jeff Noblit, senior pastor, First Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, Ala.
- Thom Rainer, president and CEO, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.
- Ed Stetzer, director, LifeWay Research and resident missiologist, LifeWay Christian Resources
- Brad Waggoner, vice president of research and ministry development, LifeWay Christian Resources
- Sam Waldron, academic dean and professor of theology, Midwest Center for Theological Studies, Owensboro, Ky.
- Greg Welty, assistant professor of philosophy, Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas
- Malcolm Yarnell, assistant dean of theological studies/ associate professor of systematic theology, Southwestern Seminary

Subjects to be addressed during the conference are: The Historical Record; Calvinism: A Cause for Rejoicing, A Cause for Concern; The Atonement: Its Design, Nature, and Extent; Theological Stereotypes: Let's Be Fair and Honest with Each Other; Election and Calling: A Biblical/Theological Study; and Working Together to Make Christ Known.

Each subject will have at least two speakers addressing differing perspectives and at least one panel discussion will be held.

"We intend to follow the example of those who have gone before us by rediscovering the spiritual vitality that comes from humble, honest theological dialogue," said Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Fla., and executive director of Founders Ministries. "We have a significant lineup of excellent theologians who represent what Scripture means when it says iron sharpens iron. This conference is an opportunity for Southern Baptists to experience the kind of theological sharpening that takes place when brothers and sisters come together to learn from one another and to challenge each other to follow our Savior more faithfully."

LifeWay Research, which explored Calvinism as its inaugural study last September, will serve as conference host. Brad Waggoner, LifeWay's vice president for research and ministry development, said this conference is compatible with the mission of LifeWay Research.

"The goal of LifeWay Research is to provide relevant information to people and churches for the purpose of reaching people for Christ," Waggoner said. "Calvinism is obviously something that a lot of people have discussed over the past couple of years. Anytime Christians can come together – especially those within the same 'family' – and seek deeper biblical understanding, the entire body of Christ benefits. LifeWay Research's desire is to stimulate and inform those types of discussion." ■

Does It Matter Whether Your Bible Translation Is
All New?

If you're a serious Bible reader, it matters plenty.

Most of today's popular translations are actually revisions of earlier versions. This means that—while the creators of these Bibles may reference the biblical texts during development—their efforts are constrained by the time-worn translation philosophy and language structure of their predecessors.

Twenty years in the making, the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* is an entirely new, trustworthy translation from the original biblical languages that renders the scholarship and authority of Scripture with renewed word power. So accurate, yet so inspiring to read, it literally sets the standard for generations to come.

Ready for an all-new perspective on God's Word? Read the *Holman CSB*.

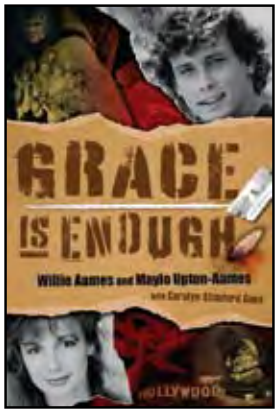
HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE®
Get Closer
www.HolmanCSB.org



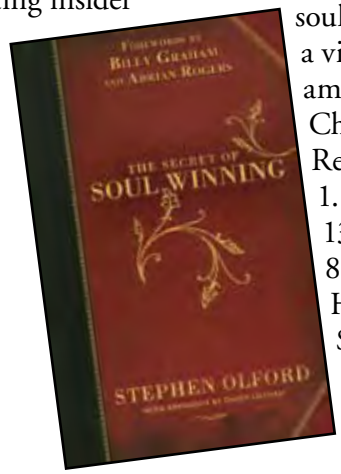
Resources
for you from LifeWay

B&H Publishing

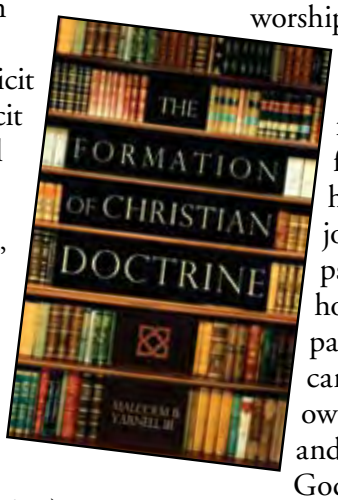
■ ***Grace Is Enough***
By Willie Aames and Maylo Upton-Aames
While actor Willie Aames ("Eight Is Enough" and "Charles in Charge") was at the peak of Hollywood success, his future wife, Maylo Upton, was a teenage runaway. Together, they found God and got their messy lives clean, but the ghosts from their past would duly roughen the road to victory. *Grace Is Enough* is their fascinating insider story of fame and infamy, spiritual regrets and renewal, and the ultimate realization that with God all things are possible. It will appeal to and greatly inspire everyone from pop culture fans to the traditional Christian nonfiction reader. Releases Nov. 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4379-0. Hardback. $19.99



■ ***The Secret of Soul Winning***
By Stephen Olford and David Olford
The late legendary pastor Stephen Olford's mid-20th century ministry classic, *The Secret of Soul Winning*, returns to print in 2007 with extensive updates from his son, David. It includes the original introduction from Billy Graham, plus a previously unreleased foreword by the late Adrian Rogers. Here, the Olfords relate many of their experiences with soul winning, a vital practice among Christians. Releases Nov. 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4547-3. Hardback. $12.99



■ ***The Formation of Christian Doctrine***
By Malcolm B. Yarnell III
The Formation of Christian Doctrine is a high level academic study of the history of Christian doctrinal development. The book distinguishes at length between the scholarly term "invention" (making explicit what is implicit in the biblical revelation) and the idea of "invention" (presenting a novelty as Christian teaching that conflicts with the biblical revelation). Malcolm B. Yarnell III is associate professor of systematic theology, assistant dean for the theological studies division and director of the Center for Theological Research at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a prolific contributor to academic scholarship in the areas of systematic theology, historical theology, Baptist studies and political theology. Releases Nov. 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4046-1. Paperback. $19.99



LifeWay Church Resources

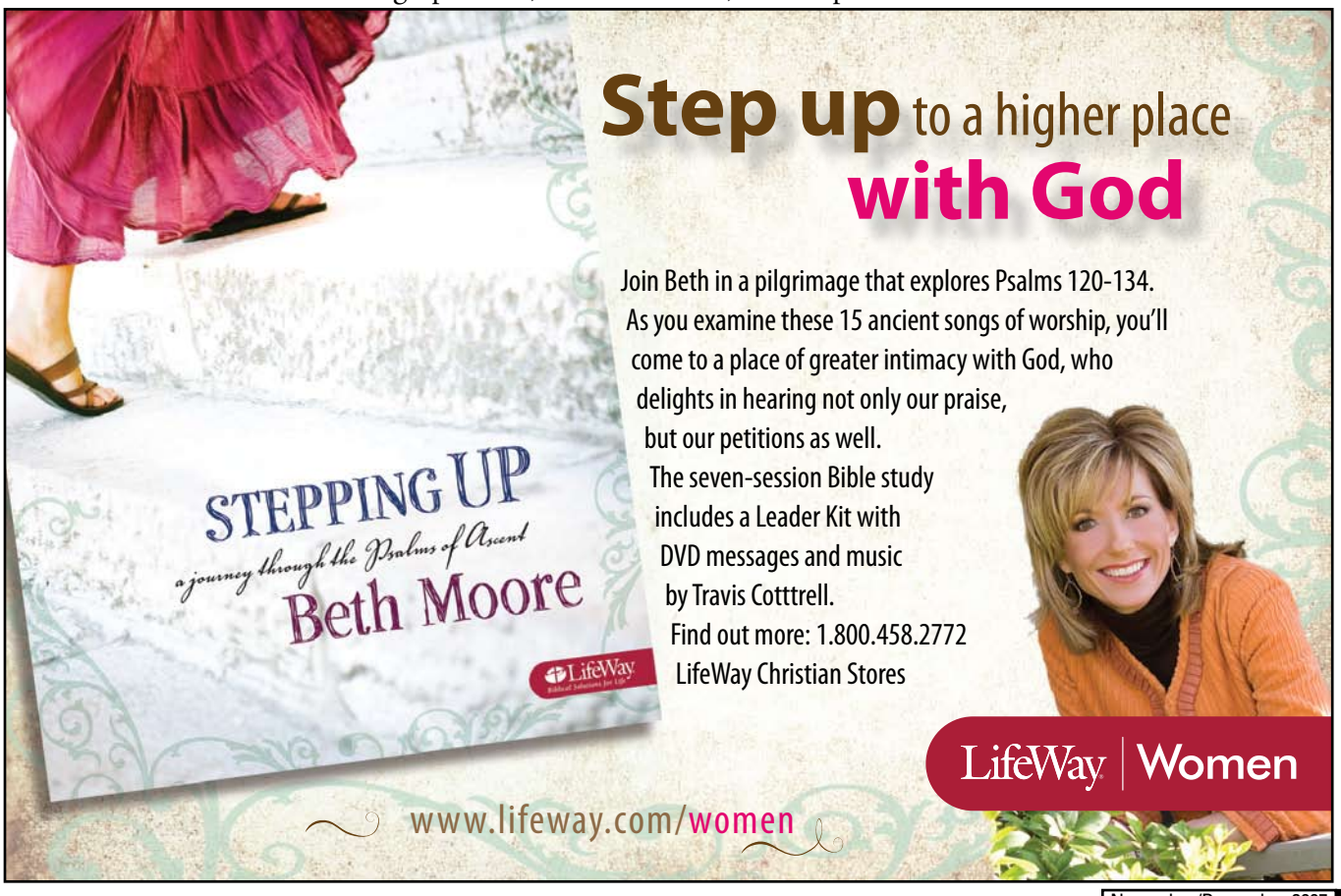
■ ***Stepping Up: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent***
by Beth Moore
This brand-new, detailed study of Psalms 120-134 engages participants in opportunities for personal reflection and worship. Just as a song or poem can express feelings of fear, doubt, hope and joy, these 15 psalms model how study participants can voice their own petitions and praises to God. The leader kit contains four DVDs, one member book and one leader guide. Bonus content on the DVDs includes interviews with author Beth Moore; the study's editor; and details about the culture of ancient believers. The member book includes personal study and viewer guide pages to complete each week. The leader guide provides helpful suggestions and questions. Audio CDs, available separately, contain the audio portion of the seven teaching

sessions. (7 sessions) Releases in November. Leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0503-5499, $149.95; Member book, LifeWay product #0-0509-1397, $12.95; Leader guide, LifeWay product #0-0509-0899, $6.95; Audio CDs, LifeWay product #0-0509-1396, $39.95

VBS 2008: Super Sampler



■ ***VBS 2008: Outrigger Island Sampler* and *Super Sampler***
Surfboard-shaped samplers will get you off to a steady start on planning, promoting and hosting an incredible VBS for waves of kids! Each durable bag features a hibiscus print with the Outrigger Island logo. Open either up and you'll find one copy of both the Bible study learner and leader guides for each of the six age groups (from preschoolers through preteens); rotation resources; and administrative, promotional and witnessing helps, too. *Super Sampler* contains additional items such as the worship rally pack (includes one worship rally guide, booklet, DVD and enhanced CD); leader packs; additional promotion items, accessories and decorations; and sample craft packs for preschoolers and children. Releases in December. *Sampler*, LifeWay product #0-0503-5611, $59.99; *Super Sampler*, LifeWay product #0-0503-5775, $189.99




LifeWay VBS
LifeWay's
Outrigger ISLAND
Psalm 86:11
LIVING GOD'S UNSHAKEABLE TRUTH
ALOHA!
Surf's up at Outrigger Island
where kids will learn to know, speak, and live God's truth. Based on Psalm 86:11, this tropical adventure will help kids develop the stability they need to become unshakeable in a world of shifting sands.
Catch the wave—reserve your VBS 2008 Super Sampler (00503577 • $189.99) or Sampler (005035611 • $59.99) today!
LifeWay | Kids
1.800.458.2772 • www.lifeway.com/vbs • LifeWay Christian Stores

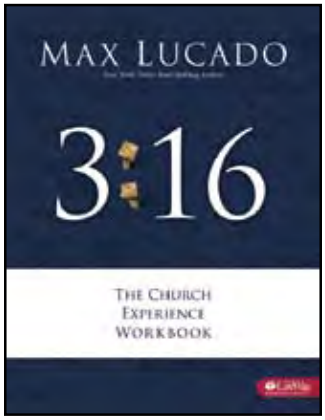
■ ***ClubVBS 2008: Cactus Canyon Starter Kit***

This kit is a handy way to lasso your VBS program. New design offers more flexibility than ever before. The tough-for-the-trail canvas bag contains administration/rotation resources; one leader and learner guide for each age group; worship rally resources; and promotion samples and accessories. Additional curriculum and other supplies are available separately, so each Club VBS program can be customized to fit groups of all sizes. Releases in December. *Club VBS 2008 Starter Kit*, LifeWay product #0-0503-5634, $99.99

■ ***3:16: The Church Experience***

by Max Lucado

Perhaps no other Bible verse is so well known and loved by Christians as John 3:16 – and so welcomed by those just coming to the faith. Beloved author Max Lucado calls it the "Hope Diamond of the Bible." Congregations that like positive, uplifting sermons will love this study. Aside from a brief, but necessary, discussion of hell – after all, that's what makes the good news so incredibly good – the message examines such details as the unshakable love of God, the perfection of His gift, the hope of "whoever" and the bliss of "eternal." But what gives this study extra appeal is its call to Christians to share their own personal 3:16 stories. The leader kit contains two DVDs, one CD-ROM, a member book, the trade book, *3:16: The Numbers of Hope,* (Thomas Nelson) and other *3:16* resources to help leaders maximize the effectiveness of the study in the church and surrounding community. (6 sessions) Releases in December.

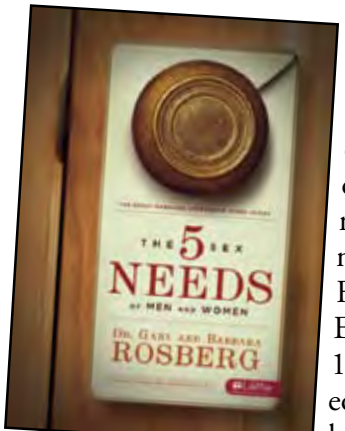


Member book, LifeWay product #0-0511-5511, $12.95; Leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0503-5514, $129.95

■ ***The 5 Sex Needs of Men and Women***

by Gary and Barb Rosberg

This video-driven study is part of *The Great Marriage Experience* video series. Packaged as a set or available separately, the four DVDs contain three sessions each, and the study sessions build upon several biblical truths: God created sex – it's His idea; God created men and women differently on purpose; and great sex in a godly marriage is God's plan – designed to bring pleasure and deep joy. A workbook-format viewer's guide (one per participant is necessary for the study) contains all 12 sessions. It is designed to guide individuals' attention as they watch the Rosbergs teach and ask questions on the DVDs, followed by group discussion (sometimes with husbands and wives in separate groups or as couples). It approaches the subject of sex with care and sensitivity to participants' comfort level. (12 sessions) Releases in December. Viewer guide, LifeWay product #0-0511-2688, $4.95; DVD, volume 1, LifeWay product #0-0511-3634, $24.95; DVD, volume 2, LifeWay product #0-0511-3635, $24.95; DVD, volume 3, LifeWay product #0-0511-3636, $24.95; DVD, volume 4, LifeWay product #0-0511-3637, $24.95; DVD set, volumes 1-4, LifeWay product #0-0509-3571, $79.95



■ ***FAITH Evangelism***

We've done our research. We've gotten input from churches that have been using FAITH. The result: a totally re-designed FAITH Evangelism. The roots of FAITH remain the same – creating a culture of evangelism in your church by equipping and mobilizing believers in lifestyle evangelism, disciple making and ministry. FAITH Evangelism 1 focuses on equipping the learner to share their faith and minister. FAITH Evangelism 2 will focus on developing leaders and team building. The new leader kit 1



Resources
just released from LifeWay

comes ready with all the components your church will need to facilitate FAITH in your church. FAITH Evangelism 1 releases in December. FAITH Evangelism 2 products will be available summer 2008. FAITH Evangelism 1 leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0510-8885, $99.95
The following FAITH Evangelism 1 products are available for purchase: journal, facilitator guide & CD, implementation guide CD-ROM, FAITH prayer partner commitment cards, FAITH "A Step of Faith" tracks, FAITH "Next Steps in Following Jesus" tracks and FAITH Evangelism outline cards.

■ ***Fraternidad de Hombres:La búsqueda de una masculinidad auténtica (Men's Fraternity: Quest for Authentic Manhood, Winning at Work & Home, Spanish edition)***
Imagine the transforming power of Hispanic men in your church and community convening to examine their lives and take steps toward embracing authentic biblical manhood. That's the goal of *Men's Fraternity*, a three-year men's ministry curriculum developed by Robert Lewis. It's an excellent vehicle for community outreach and for building rapport among the men in your church. (16 sessions) Releases in November.
LifeWay product #0-0509-7867, $9.95



■ ***TLW: Complete. A Life of Purity***
The fight for purity is about much more than sex; this study aims to help students grasp that concept. By addressing purity regarding the mind, the heart, submission to God and waiting for His best, students are challenged to consider purity in all aspects of their lives. This new True Love Waits resource uses a unique flipbook approach (the guys' study is on one side of the book and the girls' study is on the other side). Resource contains a helpful leader's guide to start conversations and stimulate discussion as you pursue small group study. (5 sessions) Releases in November.
LifeWay product #0-0503-5508, $ 6.95

■ ***Fuel 2: Owning Your Faith, Volume 6***
Each volume of *Fuel 2* offers 12 sessions of foundational biblical truths, giving students the solid ground they need. *Fuel 2* contains DVDs, commentaries, teaching plans and reproducible student handouts. Utilizing digital tools prevalent today, *Fuel 2* provides an edgy, life-changing, experiential Bible study by using attention-grabbing drama, montage and music video to present the major narratives of the Bible. This flexible resource is great for Sunday school, Wednesday Bible study, discipleship groups, student retreats and other Bible study settings. Releases in November.
CD-ROMs, LifeWay product #0-0503-5502, $9.95; DVDs & CD-ROMs, LifeWay product #0-0503-5505, $159.95



■ ***Jaded: Rediscovering Hope in Reality***
by Mike Harder
For some reason, it seems we're hardwired to think that happiness is a result of circumstances working out the way we dreamed they would – then our idealism intersects with harsh reality. This collision leaves many young adults wounded and jaded, facing life with bitterness and cynicism rather than hope in God. Sessions cover the process of healing from the past and focusing on passages from 1 Peter 5, Ezekiel 36, Jeremiah 29 and others. A leader kit includes a member book, an enhanced CD and a DVD. The enhanced CD includes a leader guide with discussion questions, biblical commentary, music and promotional materials. The DVD includes two film shorts that overview the real life topics of cynicism/idealism and how wounds mark us. The member book also available separately. (5 sessions) Releases in November.
Member book, LifeWay product #0-0510-7925, $7.95; Leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0503-5519, $69.95



We know the church. By heart.

2008 National Discipleship and Evangelism Conference
LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center
June 30-July 4

2008 Sunday School Events
LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center
July 11-14
LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center
July 21-25

We're not exaggerating. We're experts in church leadership training. That's why, year after year, we can confidently offer premier training experiences for every leader in your congregation. Bring a group to one or both of these events and you'll select from a variety of workshops, enjoy inspirational worship, and benefit from wonderful fellowship. And you'll leave with plenty of sound, practical helps for launching a successful 2008-09 church year.

We know the church. We love the church. And we'll equip your members to *be* the church. For details on speakers, tracks, accommodations, and more, visit *www.lifeway.com/events*, or call 800.254.2022.

www.lifeway.com/events

LifeWay | Leadership

Resources
just released from LifeWay



■ ***LXVI, Volume 18: Romans, Hebrews***

This six-year Bible study experience goes through all 66 books of the Bible. A 24-volume set of CD-ROMs to be released over a period of years, each volume is a complete 13-week Bible study experience for students. It features 13 of the following: activity-based teaching plans with options for going deeper; discussion-based teaching plans; PowerPoint presentations for master teaching settings; reproducible handouts for use during the Bible studies or in continuing the study between sessions; weekly devotional reading and help for students. It also includes maps and timelines; *Biblical Illustrator* articles; Bible Navigator; and more. Order one volume per class. Releases in December.

LifeWay product #0-0130-3875, $59.95

■ ***Finding the Story Within the Song: Experiencing the Gospel as Music and Lyric***

This small-group study explores how the music and lyrics of timeless, mainstream songs move us because they are echoes of Eden. It uses these songs to help group members understand Ecclesiastes 3:11 – that we're pre-wired to recognize the "larger story" as it unfolds through these songs. The study also explains that if we've missed the music, we've missed the gospel; if we've missed the lyric, we've missed the story. Whether adults are particularly passionate about music or not, this study will capture their hearts. Intentionally discussion-driven, the study is flexible enough for personal study (play list is included; a CD is not.) Releases in December.



LifeWay product #0-0511-7804, $7.99

■ ***Soul Café: The Keeper of the Story***

This new series offers spiritual take-away for those Christians who are passionate about their faith, but recognize that the local church is not – and need not be – the epicenter of their spiritual adventure. First topic up in this discussion-based series is the heart, the keeper of everyone's story. As participants pull up a chair and yank this study from their backpack, pocket, purse or murse, they'll begin a guided, relevant group journey. It offers a satisfying menu both to those hungry to experience Jesus Christ in His fullness and to those who know they're hungry but have yet to decide. Here's a way to feed both. LifeWay product #0-0511-7805, $5.99

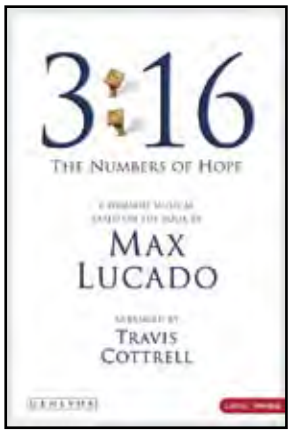
LifeWay Worship

■ ***3:16 The Numbers of Hope***

Arranged by Travis Cottrell, orchestrated by Phillip Keveren, narrated by Mike Harland

SATB with praise team/Medium to difficult/58 minutes

Beloved pastor and prolific author Max Lucado began a massive



effort to bring hope to millions through a word-by-word study of John 3:16 in his book, *3:16 The Numbers of Hope*. As word of this simple, yet powerful resource spread, LifeWay and others came alongside to develop companion pieces such as this inspiring musical with the same title. This live worship experience is led by Travis Cottrell and includes narrations from Max Lucado's book adapted for presentation. This beautiful mix of Easter and non-seasonal songs is perfect for worship any time of the year.

SATB choral book, Product #0-0509-7376, $8.95; Listening CD, Accompaniment CD, Accompaniment DVD, Rehearsal tracks, PDF CD-ROM orchestration, Bulletins (pack of 100), Posters (pack of 10), and CD promo pak are also available.

■ ***EverybodyWorship: Igniting a New World in Worship***

Produced by Paul Mills

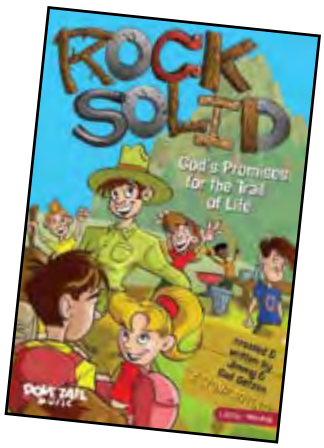
Appropriate for corporate settings, small groups, or individual worship, *EverybodyWorship* contains new songs and technology that encourage worshipful interaction. The songbook, listening CD, and DVD can be used in a variety of ways because they come in a variety of formats. A DVD called "Audio Impact" pairs some of the songs with devotional messages by dynamic communicators Max Lucado, Erwin McManus, Mike Glenn, Eric Bryant and Ergun Caner. Ignite your worship today! Songbook, Product #0-0510-7664, $14.95; Listening CD and DVD are also available. Individual *EverybodyWorship* tracks are available for download at www.lifeway.com/worshipmusic or www.everybodyworship.com.



■ ***Rock Solid: God's Promises for the Trail of Life***

Created and written by Jimmy and Gail Getzen, Unison, opt. 2 & 3-part/ Easy/40 minutes

The 25th annual Summit Challenge is a test of faith and skill as hikers trudge on rocky paths to the top of a mountain. Join these brave hikers as they explore God's beautiful creations and discover how the journey through life is comparable to an uncertain hiking trail. The gospel message is clear and kids will be encouraged that God will guide their steps when they walk by faith. If you choose to incorporate the optional Stomp band element, use hiking items to play rhythms along with the songs. Come march along with fellow hikers and sing about God's rock solid promises to each of us! Choral book, Product #0-0509-3565, $7.95; Listening CD, Accompaniment CD, DVD, Dovetailor, Bulletins (pack of 100), Posters (pack of 10) and CD promo pak are also available.



Facts & Trends



A subscription to *Facts & Trends* is absolutely free. To subscribe, notify us of a change of address, or discontinue your subscription, please fill out the form below and mail it back to us.

Name: _____

Church: _____

Mailing address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone number: _____

Check item below:

_____ Please add me to the *Facts & Trends* mailing list.

_____ Please delete me from the *Facts & Trends* list.

_____ Please send *Facts & Trends* to my new address above.

My old address is:

_____

Clip and mail to: Facts & Trends, LifeWay Christian Resources, MSN 192, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0192 or e-mail the same info to: facts&trends@lifeway.com.

Facts & Trends Online

Features are available now!

Young adult church dropouts

- **Listen** to an *Inside LifeWay* podcast as Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research, and Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research, discuss the study results.

3:16 The Church Experience multimedia


Max Lucado

- **View** an audio slideshow of Max Lucado at the taping of his new resource produced by LifeWay
- **Listen** to an *Inside LifeWay* podcast featuring an interview with Lucado about the *3:16* resource.

In your opinion...

- **Participate** in *Facts & Trends Online* poll:

Q: In your opinion, which of these is the greatest challenge to starting a ministry for children with special needs?

VBS special needs ministry

- **Read** about Vacation Bible School materials produced by LifeWay to serve young church members with special needs.


Special Needs Ministry

- **Listen** to an *Inside LifeWay* podcast featuring an interview with Ellen Beene and Carlton McDaniel from LifeWay's special needs team about the struggles, triumphs and issues related to working in a special needs ministry.



Why do young adults leave the church?

Go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends

Features added throughout the month – keep checking with us!



Christmas activities online

Christmas activities

- **Check out** a Christmas activity provided by *Facts & Trends Online*. **Share** your favorite Christmas activities that have been successful at your church, including quizzes or special events.

Ask David Francis



David Francis

- Did you know that 87 percent of new church members who are involved in worship and Sunday school remain active members? **Find out** how to grow and strengthen your Sunday school from the expert, David Francis, director of Sunday school at LifeWay.

The vision for African-American churches

- **Listen** to an interview with Jay Wells, the new director of LifeWay's African-American ministries, as he talks about his vision for spreading the gospel and supporting the ministry of African-American churches.



Spreading the gospel

VBS at the Met

View an audio slideshow of this summer's VBS week at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Houston.

Have feedback?

Submit your views and thoughts on topics discussed in this issue of *Facts & Trends.*

About us:

Facts & Trends readers may now enjoy special features such as photo slideshows, audio and supplemental articles with LifeWay's experts at *Facts & Trends Online.*

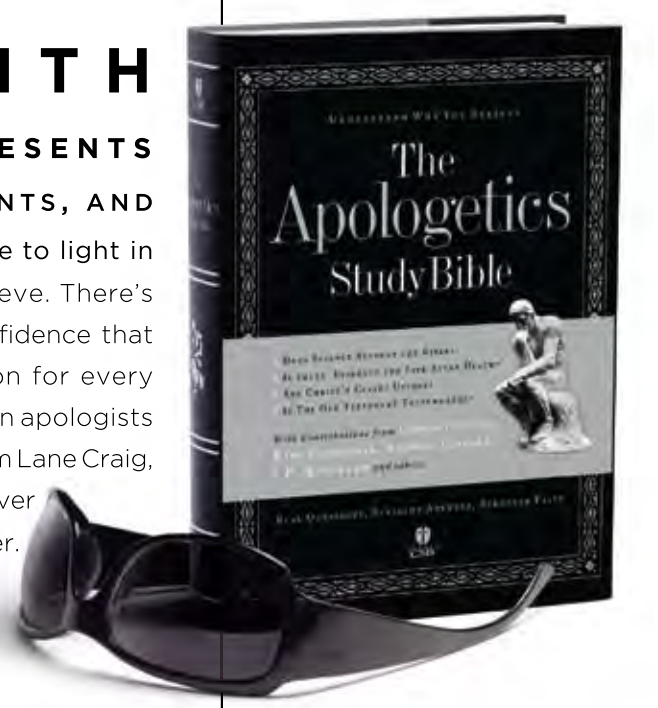
LASER SURGERY FOR BLIND FAITH

THE APOLOGETICS STUDY BIBLE PRESENTS POWERFUL EVIDENCE, SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS, AND historical fact to bring the incomparable Truth of Scripture to light in a post-modern culture that challenges everything we believe. There's no need to take steps of faith in the dark. Grow your confidence that the biblical worldview offers the most coherent explanation for every inquiry imaginable. Contributors include a who's-who of modern apologists such as Ravi Zacharias, Hank Hanegraaff, Chuck Colson, William Lane Craig, Albert Mohler, Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel, JP Moreland, and over 90 more. Available at your favorite bookstore or online retailer.

www.ApologeticsBible.com

B&H PUBLISHING GROUP

HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE®
Get Closer



LifeWay®
Biblical Solutions for Life

Facts & Trends is published by **LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention®**, One LifeWay Plaza, MSN 192, Nashville, TN 37234

Non profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nashville, TN
Permit No. 2

November/December 2007

ISBN: 9-9999-0233-5