

# Facts & Trends

***Bringing  
Encouragement  
to Southeast Asia***

JULY/AUGUST 2008

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

 **LifeWay**  
Biblical Solutions for Life

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## 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 Shrout, Brooklyn Noel, Chris Turner, writers; Jenny Rice, *Facts & Trends Online* editor; Kent Harville, visuals specialist; Shirley Richardson, Web editor; Russ Rankin, manager, editorial services; Rob Phillips, director, communications department.

## 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 resources. Whether you're a pastor, church staff member or lay leader, you'll find ways to enhance your ministry.

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*LifeWay Christian Resources is an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention. It receives no Cooperative Program funds but is self-supporting through the sale of its resources.*

## Facts & Trends Online

[www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends)

### Get more in FTO!

Visit Facts & Trends Online (FTO) at [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) for special features associated with articles in this issue and for new feature stories including:

- VBS 2009 theme announcement
- Outrigger Island VBS in Hawaii
- Worship Week at Ridgecrest
- Deeper Still in Atlanta with Kay Arthur, Beth Moore and Priscilla Shirer
- LifeWay Research studies on pertinent SBC issues

In May, FTO introduced a new video column called *On Assignment* with Kent Harville, LifeWay's award winning staff photographer. Check out his entertaining videos as he offers practical tips on making your photography better.



### Cover photo:

*Kathy Hamilton, left, a volunteer from Hong Kong, prays for a young Thai single mother of two and former bar hostess – and a new believer. Photo by Chris Sinclair.*

# Contents

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## Commentary

- From my perspective: Which economy has your focus? .....4
- Survey: Churches have economic concerns, but giving still strong..6

## Articles

- LifeWay ministers to missionaries, believers in Thailand .....8
- New urban Bible study is edgy, real..... 12
- *YOU* editor aims for cultural relevance..... 14
- Connect, Grow, Serve, Go – What is that about? ..... 15
- Baptist Hymnal printing process touches LifeWay musician ..... 16
- Churches obligated to protect children .....20
- Background checks help offered through LifeWay Stores.....21
- Want your guests to feel unwelcome? Here’s how .....22
- 2008 VBS photo contest up and going.....26
- Gideon Festival offers light to Hollywood darkness..... 27
- Blackaby says God belongs in the market place .....30
- 10 ways to prevent embezzlement of church funds.....32
- Conference designed for pastors of smaller churches.....34
- Pastors of smaller churches name their top 10 challenges ..... 35
- Gospel music celebration gets feet tapping, hands clapping .....38
- 2007 ACP report called ‘disheartening’ .....42
- Couples make marriage a priority ..... 44
- Communicators’ work honored in three competitions ..... 46

## Resources

- For you from LifeWay .....47



# From my perspective

Thom S. Rainer, president and CEO, LifeWay Christian Resources

## Which economy is it going to be?

**I**t is impossible to be within earshot of a television or radio, or scan the headlines of a newspaper, or open an Internet news site and not hear or see reports about the economy. Random headlines found after a quick glance of online news on any given day back this up.

Discussions about the economy are more prominent these days than war, healthcare, politics, global warming, mortgage companies, oil prices and tuition increases, mostly because each of these are micro parts that contribute to the overall health of our macro economy. Some days it seems as if the whole thing might collapse. The stress saps a significant amount of emotional and mental energy as we wonder how we are going to make ends meet. This reality is new ground for many, especially those 40 and younger who for the most part have known nothing but economic prosperity their entire lives. The

anxiety affects all areas of our lives, and the research on the following pages indicates the church suffers as well.

Can there ever be certainty in the economy? Well, that depends upon which economy you are focused.

Jesus launched His ministry with the greatest sermon ever preached (Matthew 5-7). He lays out the Beatitudes, covers a wide range of relational issues, defines how to give, how to pray, how to fast and tells us our material possessions – our economy – can rule our lives. Fortunately, He then tells us how to live.

“This is why I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or your body, what you will wear.” (Matthew 6:25; HCSB)

This statement is extraordinary! Food and clothing – along with



shelter – are among the most basic, mundane needs and He tells us not to worry! According to his definitive 1943 paper titled, “A Theory of Human Motivation,” Abraham Maslov, the father of humanistic psychology, writes that these very basic things are needed if one is to make the most of one’s abilities, fulfill his or her potential and move toward becoming all he or she is capable of becoming.

Jesus points His listeners to God. In fact His next statement in that same verse couldn’t be a greater contradiction to Maslov’s egocentric teaching: “Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing?” Jesus says that it is the idolater who seeks his security in things similar

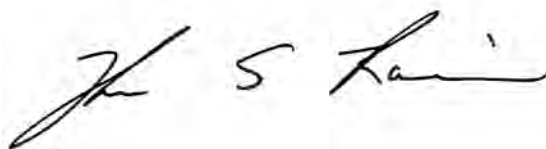
*“This is why I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or your body, what you will wear.”*

— *Matthew 6:25 (HCSB)*

pursuit of God and righteousness is the foundation upon which life is built. Jesus said one can’t serve God and money. It is easy to give lip service to truths like this in days like these while holding back a portion of our devotion, “just in case.” But in Mark 12:30, Jesus tells us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Press that into your heart! He wants us to really want God.

We only have so many resources, even during booming economic times, yet the question remains: “In whose economy are you investing: Maslov’s or God’s?”

In His service,



## We recommend

- *Doctrine that Dances* by Robert Smith
- *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer
- *Spirit-Led Preaching* by Greg Heisler

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

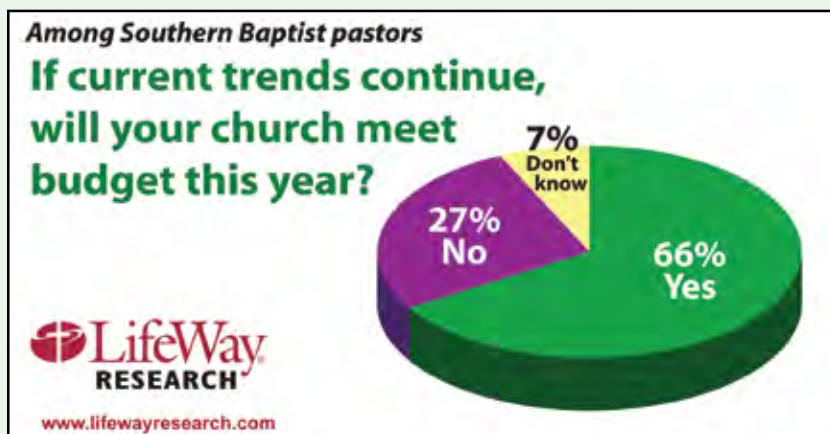
# Economy pinching most churches, but giving still strong

by Mark Kelly

While economists debate how serious America's economic slowdown really is, Southern Baptist pastors report their members are still giving, in spite of the financial pressures felt by many families.

A new study by LifeWay Research shows that 72 percent of Southern Baptist pastors indicate difficulties in the U.S. economy are affecting their churches negatively, yet 76 percent say offerings are at or above levels they had expected when drafting budgets several months ago.

At the same time, 24 percent of the pastors say offerings are below what they had expected and 27 percent indicate their congregations will not meet budgets if current giving trends continue.

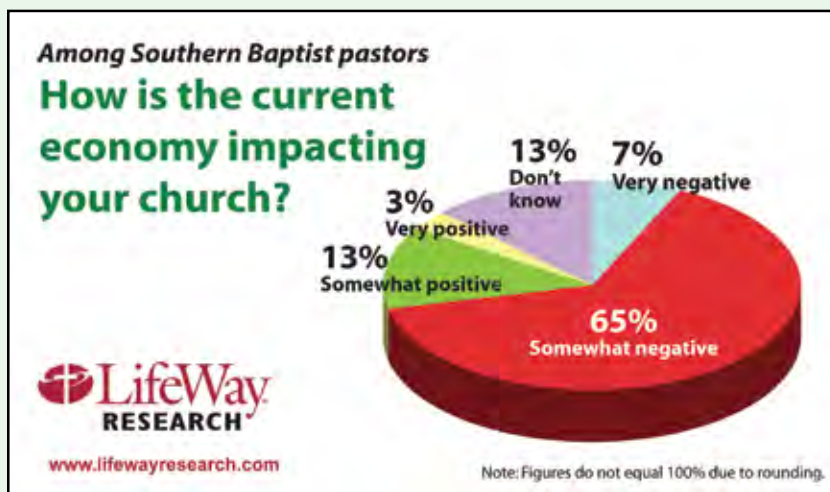


“When two-thirds of Southern Baptist churches are plateaued or declining in membership and attendance, it is no surprise that 20 to 30 percent of churches find their giving under budget at any given point in time,” said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research.

Americans are feeling the pressure of rising prices on food and gasoline and millions are falling behind on mortgage payments, but members in many congregations are exercising faith by continuing to give, McConnell said.

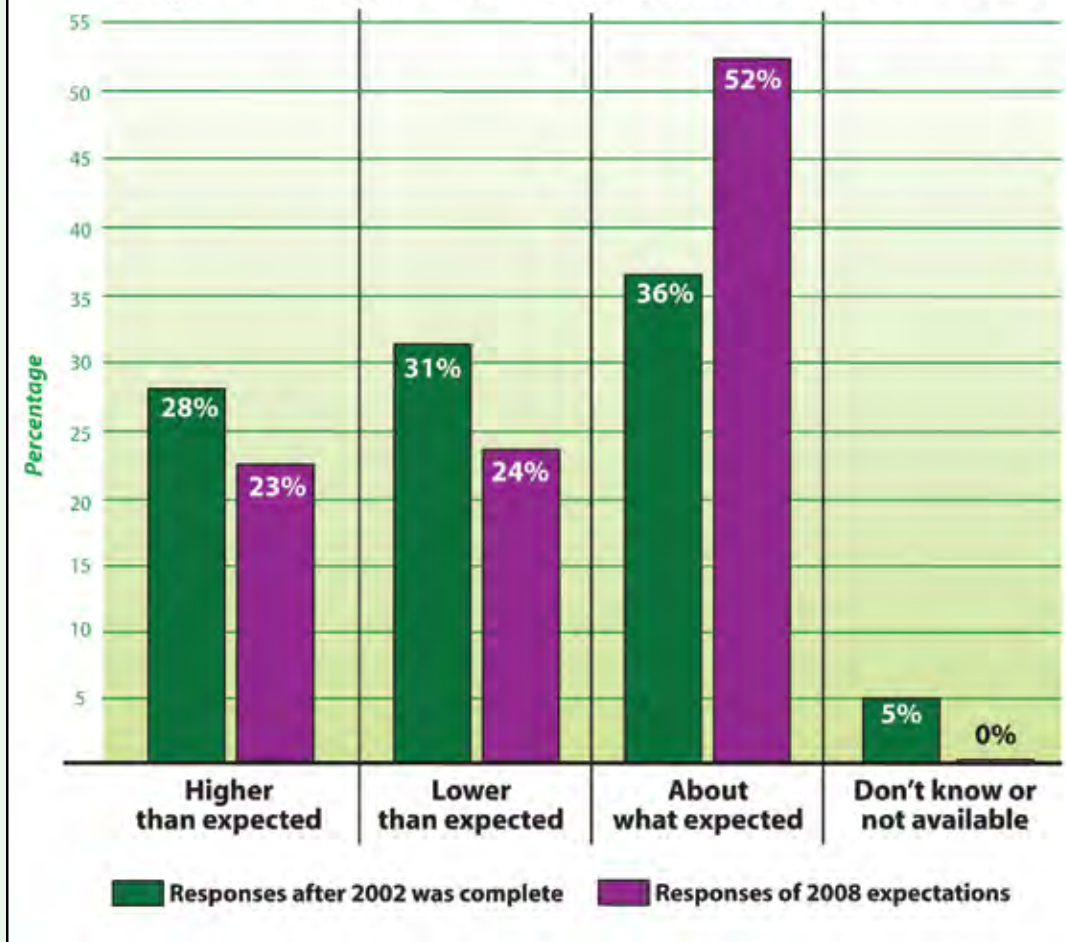
“God has asked us to give from the first fruits we receive, and it appears that many Southern Baptists are continuing to do this despite the financial pressures they face,” he said. “Giving God your first fruits requires much more faith when inflation is stealing what remains in your fruit basket.”

The online survey was conducted April 16-May 5, 2008, among a representative sample of 778 Southern Baptist pastors, McConnell explained. The sample size



## Church Income Expectations

Comparison among Southern Baptist pastors in 2003 and 2008



provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed 3.5 percent.

A similar survey conducted in February 2003 provides an interesting counterpoint to April's findings, McConnell added.

Although 2002 had not officially been a time of recession in the United States, a greater percentage of pastors (31 percent) indicated their church's total income ended the year lower than expected. A higher percentage of pastors (28 percent) also said income was higher than expected, while fewer (36 percent) said income was right at expectations.

That telephone survey of 497 Southern Baptist pastors or associate pastors had a 95 percent confidence that the sampling error did not exceed 4.4 percent.

Changes in congregational giving can be hard to predict, and that makes budgeting a real challenge, McConnell added.

"Difficulty in predicting giving not only affects responses to these questions, it also affects budgets," he said. "Many of these budgets were set more than six months ago.

"In the 2003 survey, we found a slim majority had budgeted for growth, but the size of the growth these churches budgeted was a very substantial 12.4 percent.

"If budget projections for 2008 were anywhere near that aggressive, optimism about meeting budget may fade as the year goes on." ■

### We recommend

- *The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving* by Randy Alcorn
- *Discovering God's Way of Handling Money Workbook* by Crown Financial Ministries
- *Making Change* by Ken Hemphill

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



# Ministry group brings **‘REST’** to women in Southeast Asia

*photography by Chris Sinclair*

LifeWay’s ministry to women recently crossed oceans and continents as an innovative ministry trip carried a message of “REST” to national believers and missionaries serving in Southeast Asia.

Under the title of REST: Renewal, Encouragement, Sharing and Training, a team of 25 women and three men from Canada, Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, Mississippi and Hong Kong led the retreat with the objective being to engage and truly minister to the ministers – Christian nationals and women serving globally; many in difficult, restricted-access countries.



According to Ann Cretin, regional manager for LifeWay International in Australia, Asia and the Caribbean, the idea for such a retreat was birthed a number of years ago when Cretin and her husband served as international trainers for LifeWay, based in Singapore.

“Throughout Southeast Asia there are many pockets of folks serving with the International Mission Board and other mission agencies,” Cretin said. “It really became a desire of my heart to

minister to the women living in the surrounding areas since they give so much of their time doing ministry for others.”

Featured at the conference was Mary Kassian, a speaker, teacher and author from Alberta, Canada. Kassian has published several books, Bible studies and videos including *In My Father's House: Finding Your Heart's True Home*, *Conversation Peace* and *Vertically Inclined*.

### REST theme

The team first led a one-day conference at International Baptist Church in Singapore, an event attended by more than 250 Singaporean nationals. The team then traveled to Thailand, hosting two one-day retreats for Thai churches in different cities, and culminated with the three-day REST retreat designed specifically for those serving on the international mission field. In addition to Kassian's keynote messages, team members led workshops for a variety of interests.

*Facing page: A volunteer speaks with a national believer.*

*Above: Team members helped women make crafts using scrapbooking and sewing techniques.*





The idea of “rest” is often distorted and misunderstood, Kassian said, especially by those in ministry who can get caught up in the stress and rigors of ministering to others.

Scripturally, “rest isn’t an absence of activity, but a state of completion and satisfaction,” Kassian explained. “REST is what we sought to bring to all the women we ministered to. And in doing so, REST is what we ourselves received. As Proverbs 11:25 says, ‘Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.’”

### Volunteers with varied gifts

Angela Rankin, a member of Thompson Station Church in Thompson’s Station, Tenn., and former IMB missionary in Asia, helped Cretin lead the team, which consisted of family counselors, a hairdresser, a professional makeup artist, a small business owner, professional musicians, women’s ministry leaders, two former missionaries to Asia, and other team members called specifically to intercessory prayer ministry.

“More than two years ago when Ann Cretin and I joined hearts and minds, we sought the Lord for what type of team He wanted to raise up for this sort of ministry outreach,” Rankin said. “We needed a team called to go, but with specific gifts and talents that could contribute to the workshops. Each team member was personally invited into this endeavor.

“The team committed themselves wholeheartedly and many testified to the reality that it became more about what God was doing in them than what He was doing through them,” she added. “It was amazing to see each member of the team use talents that perhaps they never



*Top: Debra Karmen from Alberta, Canada, left, ministers to a missionary in a special room set aside for prayer and counseling.*

*Center: Amy Stewart, a volunteer from Beaverdam Baptist Church, Beaverdam, Va., sings.*

*Bottom: Following ministry time at a Thai church, Thai women turn to pray for the volunteers.*

imagined could be used in a ministry setting – and really make an impact in the lives of women at the retreat.”

One of the most popular workshops at the REST retreat was led by Renee Browning, a professional makeup artist from Nashville, Tenn. Browning, among nine volunteers Rankin recruited from her church, led a workshop titled “Mission Possible,” focusing on self-esteem and inner beauty. Browning taught basic makeup tips that would be applicable whether in New York City or Southeast Asia. Because of donations given by various businesses in Tennessee, Browning gave away thousands of dollars worth of makeup and beauty supplies.

“It was so humbling to be able to speak into these women’s lives and tell them how beautiful they are and how beautiful they are to God,” said Browning, who was on her first overseas trip. “The Lord really showed me that anyone can be used overseas.”

### Refreshing encouragement

According to “Melissa,” a missionary serving in a restricted-access country, “Those who came to lead poured so much of His love into me. I realized when I got there just how long it had been since ‘two or three’ had gathered around me to pray.

“Rest isn’t an absence of activity, but a state of completion and satisfaction.”

— Mary Kassian

They totally pampered me with His love. They washed my feet, they spoke words of encouragement and they fought for me with their prayers. I feel so refreshed and brave.

“God used Mary Kassian mightily for all of us women who went,” she said. “It was truly a ‘whole’ event – whole in worship, in encouragement, in truth, in ministry. Whole in everything that Jesus is. And I feel renewed, encouraged [and] courageous.” ■



# Urban Bible study

*aims for edgy, relevant*

*by Polly House*

**Y**ou hear urban, you think black. But, that's not exactly true. That's too simplistic.

Urban is multicultural, interracial, vibrant, nonstop and exciting. It's Jesus loves the little children – red, brown, yellow, black and white – and every combination of those. Urban is America.

*YOU: Connect, Grow, Serve, Go!* is a new Bible study resource from LifeWay debuting this fall that is designed for urban audiences. Its discussion topics are edgy – think of the fall of Michael Vick and the power and pull of pornography over a married man. Not your usual Sunday school topics for sure, but topics like that are what people talk about. It's good ministry to bring those “outside of church” conversations inside.

The biblical content in *YOU* doesn't dance around the issues, either. It calls it as it is – you've sinned; you've messed up. Sin destroys your relationship with God. Here's what the Bible says to do. Tough stuff.

"I want *YOU* to take a comprehensive approach to relevant Christian education," said Chandra Bennett, *YOU* editor. "I want to help people address topics that are already in the public sphere and add a Christian perspective."

### American people are urban people

Just over 71 percent of Americans live in urban areas, defined as cities with populations of more than 50,000; 30 percent of Americans live in the 20 largest cities; 24 percent live in the 10 largest cities; and 17 percent live in the five largest cities (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and Miami metropolitan areas).\*

"As we talked to churches from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., we heard that urban churches are looking for something different than what the rural churches of middle America want," said Dawn Cornelius, a marketing strategist at LifeWay. "We generally think about urban churches being African-American, but they told us that, no, they are much more than one color. They have been multicultural and interracial all along."

The quarterly, non-dated material is a magazine format, with lesson plans, discussion starters, teacher helps, daily Bible reading, how-to's, follow-ups, with art and photos that reflect different colors and cultures. It's an all-in-one resource for putting the truth of the Bible into the hands of urban adults.

Charles Grant, a church consultant in LifeWay's African-American ministries area, was one of the LifeWay consultants who traveled around the country talking to churches and asking what they

\*U.S. 2000 Census figures, rounded to the nearest 100,000.

*"It's a myth that urban churches are all large. They aren't. Many have a very small membership."*

— Charles Grant



needed. He found that not all urban churches are alike any more than all small town or rural churches are alike.

"It's a myth that urban churches are all large," Grant said. "They aren't. Many have a very small membership. We wanted to find out what kind of resources would work for both. We think we've come up with something good."

"When I showed a sample of *YOU* to pastors, they saw incredible potential for this kind of resource," Grant said. "Its clear message of 'Connect, Grow, Serve, Go' sets a process for fellowship, learning, helping and

## YOU editor doesn't hold back

**C**handra Bennett is passionate about serving God and helping people. As editor of *YOU*, she does both.

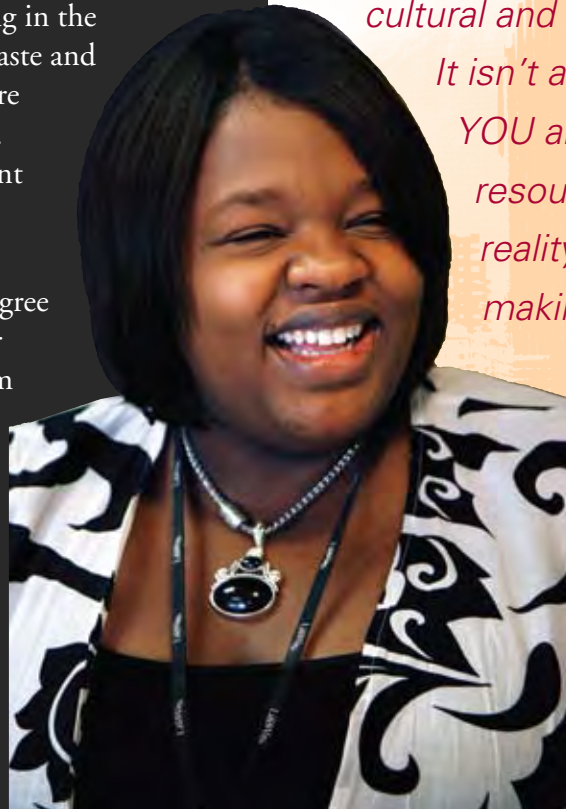
"I want *YOU* to take a comprehensive approach to relevant Christian education," Bennett said. "I want to help people address topics that are already in the public sphere and add a Christian perspective."

Before designing the new curriculum, Bennett and others visited with churches, young adults in particular, to find out what they wanted.

"After talking with a group of young adults in Milwaukee, we saw our goal – to capture the audience that thinks Sunday school and Bible study are irrelevant and boring," she said. "Our topics are going to be universal – topics that apply to people across cultural and racial lines. It isn't an option to make *YOU* an all-black resource. That's not reality anymore than making a resource that only speaks to all white people with 2.3 children."

Bennett knows about living in a multicultural world. Her father was in the military and her family lived in several states. "Living in the Detroit area gave me my first real taste and appreciation for the different culture groups and racial groups," she said. "Every weekend there was a different cultural festival going on. It was wonderful."

Bennett received her seminary degree in Michigan. She is completing her doctorate in educational curriculum in Nashville while working at LifeWay. "I have always had a passion for education. My mother is an administrator with a public school system in Arkansas, so I have seen the difference she has been able to make in people's lives. I want to do that same thing for churches." ■



getting outside the church walls."

Willie Freeman, pastor of Greater Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksville, Tenn., previewed the new *YOU* resource. He said, "Every church need a process and I think this can help us with that."

Lonnie Dawson, pastor of New Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, is ready to get started with *YOU* at his church. "This process of connect, grow, serve and go fits right into our church's strategy," he said. "I think *YOU* and the process that it is built around is going to be ideal for us." ■

*"Our topics are going to be universal – topics that apply to people across cultural and racial lines.*

*It isn't an option to make YOU an all-black resource. That's not reality anymore than making it a resource that only speaks to all white people with 2.3 children."*

— Chandra Bennett

# Connect, Grow, Serve, Go

by Polly House

**W**hat does that mean – Connect, Grow, Serve, Go?

It means resources from LifeWay will be categorized in a way that will meet the needs of churches and their people better than ever.

LifeWay's adult ministry resources team decided it needed a better way to communicate to churches how its resources can better serve the ministries of churches. So they have created a system to help churches understand how each product, service and event it offers will fit into the overall picture of adult spiritual health.

They are calling it Connect, Grow, Serve, Go.

**Connect** – This is worship, prayer, fellowship and other relational things that connect people with God, with other Christians and with their church. LifeWay wants to help you get connected on each of these levels.

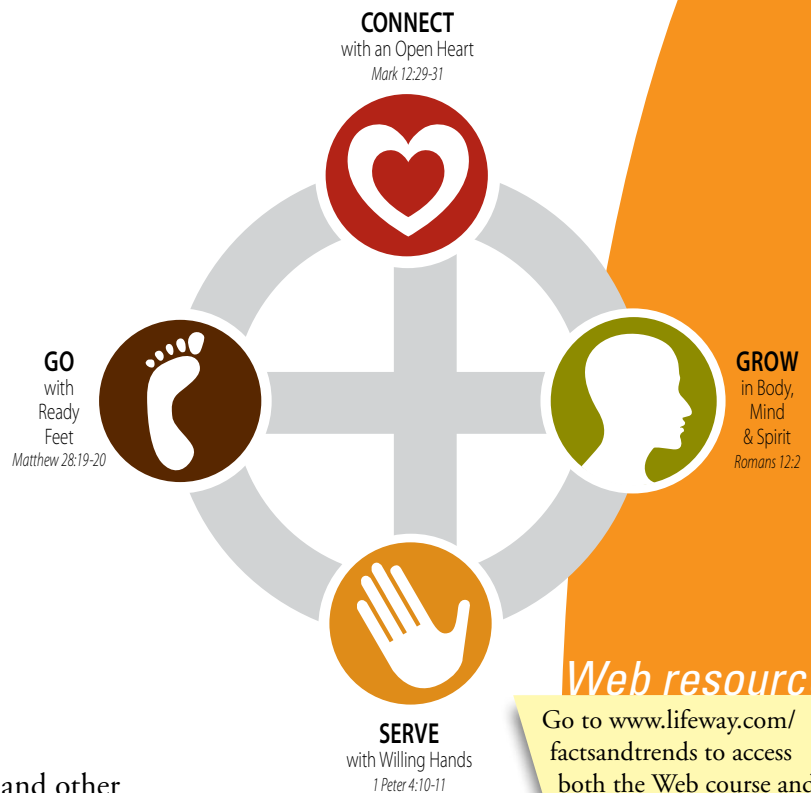
**Grow** – This is individual and group Bible study, teaching events and other resources that help Christians become stronger and more mature in their faith. Spiritual growth is the core of why LifeWay exists.

**Serve** – When Christians devote their time, talent and treasure to helping other Christians in any way, they're serving. LifeWay can help churches learn how to serve more effectively.

**Go** – Every Christian is called by Christ to go outside the church walls and tell others about Him. All of LifeWay's evangelistic resources fall under this banner.

Connect, Grow, Serve, Go is not a linear process – a Christian can engage at any point. No matter where they are in their walk, LifeWay is offering this balanced approach to assist them develop every aspect of their spiritual health.

To better understand this new way of looking at these four aspects of what we do at church LifeWay invites you to watch a free Web course that further explains Connect, Grow, Serve, Go. The Web course is hosted by LifeWay's Bret Robbe on the [www.acrobat.com](http://www.acrobat.com) Website. ■



## Web resources

Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) to access both the Web course and a printable one-page guide.

## Resources

The online catalog at [www.lifeway.com/shopping](http://www.lifeway.com/shopping) now features this new adult ministry system. Browse the catalog according to the area of spiritual health – connect, grow, serve or go – you need to meet in your church. We've given you examples of resources in each category.

### Connect – with an open heart (Mark 12:29-31)

- *3:16 The Church Experience* by Max Lucado
- *What Do You Do with Your Wait?* by Mike Harder

### Grow – in body, mind, and spirit (Romans 12:2)

- *Stepping Up* by Beth Moore
- *The Mind of Christ* by T.W. Hunt

### Serve – with willing hands (1 Peter 4:10-11)

- *Toolbox for Busy Pastors* by Barry Campbell
- *Deacons, Partners in Ministry and Growth* by Jim Henry

### Go – with ready feet (Matthew 28:19-20)

- *Share Jesus Without Fear* by Bill Fay and Ralph Hodge
- *Get Uncomfortable* by Todd Phillips

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A large industrial printing press is shown in operation. A wide sheet of paper is being fed through various rollers and mechanisms. The paper is held in place by several orange clips. The machine is complex, with many pipes, wires, and mechanical parts visible. The lighting is somewhat dim, highlighting the industrial environment.

# Baptist Hymnal 2008 comes to life

*Editor's Note: LifeWay Worship's Terry Terry has been closely involved with the creation of the 2008 Baptist Hymnal project since the beginning. Terry went to Berryville, Va., in April to see the first copies come off the press. Facts & Trends asked him to share his thoughts from this visit.*

I was impressed with the folks at Berryville Graphics. They were excited about these new hymnals. They were happy they got the printing contract. They were glad that the paper felt good and was easy to work with. They were proud the cover material was good quality. But what impressed me most was the care they took – and the time they took to tell me – that as believers themselves they loved being involved with the production of the Baptist Hymnal (2008) and The Worship Hymnal.

I watched the printing process on those big web presses, not unlike the newspaper I worked for while I was in college. I got a chill seeing those pages run, knowing the music that was on them would minister to the body of Christ. It was exciting to see the cases being assembled, and to be able to load a few cases as they were about to be married to book blocks. As I followed the production line down and watched the books being cured, I was still fascinated by the book-making process.

The bindery supervisor pulled a book off the line and handed it to me. It was still hot. I was so overcome I could not even speak. I hugged the guy and he whispered, "You're welcome."



*Facing page and above: Terry Terry of LifeWay Worship has been involved with the new hymnal project since its inception. In these photos, he watches as the hymnals are being printed and come off the press at Berryville Graphics in Berryville, Va.*

### When to expect your orders

Preordered copies of the Baptist Hymnal will begin arriving at churches on or before Aug. 8. Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) to link to more information about the new Baptist Hymnal and the Worship Project.



I was so taken with the fact that it was a “real” hymnal. As I looked through the pages, I saw those great majestic hymns and gospel songs I grew up singing from the 1956 version of the *Baptist Hymnal* right across the page from songs I learned three or four years ago, those newer expressions of faith, of redemption, of worship. I prayed for believers who will hold this book, raising their voices in song, in praise of our Abba Father, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit. Recalling that moment still brings tears to my eyes.

I am blessed to have been a party to this project. This has only come about through the grace of God! He pulled this off. Praise His name! ■



*Above: Workers at Berryville Graphics said they were proud to be printing the new Baptist Hymnal.*

*Facing page: LifeWay’s Terry Terry said he was moved to see the real hardcover hymnal, filled with songs from his childhood and new songs he has learned as an adult.*



***Your worship will go to greater heights!***

Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) for a link to a video hosted by LifeWay Worship director Mike Harland that will introduce you to the LifeWay Worship Project. The LifeWay Worship Project is a set of groundbreaking new products designed to provide your ministry, no matter the size, style, or available resources, with the tools you need to put “the exaltation of God” into the mouths of God’s people. At the same site, you can download the comprehensive LifeWay Worship Project brochure.

# Protection is a must for churches

by Bill Emeott

*Something as simple as a volunteer worker application and follow-up interview should be part of your church's protection policy.*

From all outward signs, John seemed to be a wonderful 6th grade boys Sunday school teacher. He prepared, attended leadership meetings, participated in outreach and even spent time with the boys outside of Sunday school; but something went wrong.

It was late one Wednesday evening when the call came to the pastor's home. A parent of one of John's students began to share incredible accusations. "Know that the church will be hearing from our attorney," was the final comment.

Completely bewildered, the pastor sought the advice of a local attorney. The attorney's first question was, "What does your church do to ensure that minors (anyone under the age of 18) are protected from abusive conduct by adults?" The sick feeling in the pastor's stomach grew as he confessed, "nothing."

Reports of abusive conduct toward children by adults are shocking. One doesn't have to look far to see how wide spread such accounts have become. It is estimated that one out of every four girls and one out of six boys will experience some form of sexual abuse by age 18. Churches cannot expect to remain unaffected by this problem.

So, what is a church to do? The answer is: Everything possible to screen and monitor those working with minors at church!

Implementing safety and security policies is no longer an option. Standard policies, including the "6/2" rule, are a must. This simple policy states that anyone working with children or youth must be an active member of your church for at least six months before assuming a position of leadership and that

there will be at least two adults in the room with minors at all times. These easy to implement policies will go far in discouraging predators.

Next, include a volunteer worker application and follow-up interview as part of your policies. Having current and prospective leaders complete an application form and conducting formal interviews with each will show your church, your community and possible predators that your church is watching and concerned for the safety of children.

Protection policies are incomplete without an official criminal background check. Many insurance companies are requiring churches to have complete checks as a prerequisite to coverage. Completing background checks on every adult working directly with minors demonstrates a desire and intent to protect children.

The bottom line is: It is our responsibility to protect minors at church. Yes, it may be a difficult transition and sometimes uncomfortable but protection is not an option. The mental, emotional and spiritual development of children is at stake. Don't ignore the possibilities. Ensure that your church is a loving and safe environment for children to grow in their relationship with their Lord and His church. ■



*Bill Emeott is lead childhood ministry specialist at LifeWay. Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) for a link to the sample Volunteer Worker Application.*

# Background check service advocates safe church environments

by Jenny Rice

**H**ow vulnerable are the children and youth of your church to volunteers or staff with criminal histories? Could you confidently look in the eye of a young mother and as a responsible church staff member say that you have done everything you can to make sure her child is safe?

“Of all the crimes against children in the U.S. every year, thousands will occur within the walls of churches and youth centers,” said Matthew Robbins with Backgroundchecks.com. “With crime and abuse at an all time high, churches must develop hiring programs that work to prevent dangerous situations before they occur.”

Because Southern Baptist churches are autonomous, the responsibility to provide safe, responsible employees and volunteers falls on the local church.

“Background screening will assist in making decisions that prevent placement of people in situations that could lead to them committing an illegal act that will harm a minor and ultimately hurt the trust that communities place upon organizations that have pledged to protect that trust,” said Robbins.

LifeWay Christian Stores has an agreement with Backgroundchecks.com to provide discount screening services for churches. Because most criminal records are kept at three levels – federal, state and county records – Backgroundchecks.com has compiled their own proprietary database called US OneSEARCH, the largest publicly available national criminal conviction database available. Individual services offered include motor vehicle record screening as well as education

and employment verification.

Background screenings may be helpful, but they also must fall within legal guidelines.

“While it is very important to create and execute a thorough plan for protection against violence or crimes against children and workers, organizations must be mindful of consumer rights as well,” said Robbins. “Backgroundchecks.com provides support by promoting strict adherence to the Fair Credit Reporting Act that was put in place to protect consumers from misuse of their background information.”

Some pastors or hiring committees may feel uncomfortable performing background checks on volunteers or staff members. However, the consequence of not performing these checks can be devastating.

“It is unfortunate that everyone must be checked out before they are given trust or confidence in their goodwill, especially when they are only trying to give back to the community through the giving of themselves to support a ministry,” said Robbins. “But child protection statistics tell a gruesome story that needs to change.” ■

## Resources

Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) for a link to more information on services offered by backgroundchecks.com through LifeWay Christian Stores OneSource program. In addition, many state conventions have related resources and information available for churches.

# 10 ways to make guests feel unwelcome

by David Francis

**A**pril Fool's Day is behind us – OK, well behind us – but it is still close enough for some people – like me! – to slip in some tongue-in-cheek jests. This list is for all those churches that really would rather people just leave them alone.

Got too many people visiting your church? Need to do some things to discourage them from coming back a second time? Here are 10 ways to make guests feel unwelcome should they show up at your church or class. You don't even need to do all of them. But be careful ... if you do the opposite of even six or seven of the items on this list, you might discover that guests are returning for a second visit. Do the opposite of nine or 10

of them, and you could discover that they come back a third or fourth time. Some will even enroll in your Sunday school or join the church.

To keep people away, try a few of these ideas:

## 1. Make parking for first-time guests inconvenient.

This is probably your best first line of defense against visitors, particularly first-time guests. Welcoming churches have parking spaces close to the main entrance of the building marked clearly "For First Time Guests." Some even have a special team of volunteers whose job is to warmly greet first time guests and give them

immediate directions, perhaps even providing a map and marking the parking area on it. It might be hard to believe, but some churches have a sign at the entrance that reads "First Time Guests: Please Flash Your Lights," with volunteers in the parking lot to direct them to the special parking area. You can only imagine the positive impression this makes. So you'll want to avoid it if you're trying to make guests feel unwelcome.

## 2. Get grouchy greeters.

A friendly smile and a warm handshake at the door goes a long way to make guests feel welcome. You could just get rid of greeters altogether of course, but if you're trying to make guests feel unwelcome, it is actually more effective to have grouchy greeters. Train them to carry on conversations with other greeters, and sort of just grunt at people they don't recognize. And make sure they don't direct guests to a welcome center.

## 3. Forgo a Welcome Center.

Even a clearly marked table or desk exclusively for guest information can make a really big positive impression. Especially if there is clear information about classes.

## 4. Treat guests like a doctor's office treats new patients.

Here's a tricky one. Go ahead and staff a welcome desk, but make sure the experience is as close to that of a new patient as possible. Ignore the guest for a few minutes. Act like the guest has been there before and knows what to do. Post a lot of signs. And best of all, hand them a clipboard and demand they



fill out some forms. On the other hand, good churches do get the guest's information, they're just nice about it.

### 5. Don't escort guests to their classrooms.

Really welcoming churches don't send people to their classrooms. They escort them. Starting with the youngest child (if there are children), a family is dropped off one-by-one at their classes, with the last stop being the adult class. So, just cut out this whole step if you want guests to feel unwelcome.

### 6. Put questions in parents' minds about the safety and security of their children.

The door of a preschool or children's Sunday school room may be the most critical place when it comes to making parents – and children – feel welcomed. In fact, mess this one up, and you can probably ignore the other nine ideas.

Here's what it looks like when guests feel welcome: A teacher – who arrived early and got the room ready with lots of learning activities – greets the parents at the door, then drops to a knee and greets the child on her eye-level. The parent is walked through the security process, which may include some combination of sign-in sheets and/or two-part pre-numbered stickers or even digital pagers in baby rooms. Brightly colored stickers may be provided for the parent to indicate medical or security concerns. The parent is assured that they will be contacted if anything requires their attention. So, if you want parents to feel uneasy in regard to their

children, just avoid doing any of this section.

### 7. Make finding a seat really hard.

All members can participate in this one. Just "save" all the seats at the back of the room or on the aisles. This works in the worship center and in the student or adult classroom. If you want to do more, make sure the chairs face the door, so everyone can stare at a newcomer as soon as they reach the door. If you can make a guest come to the front of the room, or crawl over several people to find a seat, you'll almost guarantee they'll feel unwelcome.

### 8. Have guests stand up while everyone else sits, or sit while everyone else stands.

I am not sure which of these works better to run people off. I almost think the practice of having guests remain seated while everyone around them stands is better if you want to make guests feel unwelcome. It is sort of like being a little baby in a crib surrounded by doting relatives. In a Sunday school class, it feels much better to a guest if they are acknowledged, and someone else introduces them.



## 9. Randomly call on people to read or pray.

You don't even need to pick on guests. Just call on random members to pray or read Scripture. That will serve to create anxiety in your guests that they may be next. Wise teachers always ask members ahead of time if they will read from the Bible, perhaps handing them the "address" of the verses on an index card so the member can mark his Bible and familiarize himself with the passage. Likewise, they ask a member before class if she would be willing to lead in prayer. Then during class, they make it clear by saying, "I have asked Kim to lead us in prayer after we've taken requests for about five minutes." Or, "Who did I ask to read verses 35-38?"



## 10. Don't wear name tags.

There is nothing that makes a guest feel more welcome than a room full of people wearing name tags. Absolutely nothing. Wearing a name tag is an act of faith. It says, "I'm expecting God to send someone to our class today who doesn't yet know us." The stick-on kind works fine.

I remember how welcome I felt the first time I visited Hope Fellowship Church in Cambridge, Mass. As soon as I walked into the tiny foyer, some young people – probably students at nearby Harvard or MIT – invited me to stick on a name tag. They were all wearing them, too. Everyone was calling me by name, and I them.

At a new church meeting in a middle school in Wake Forest, N.C., everyone wore name tags and many stopped dead in their tracks to greet me. I discovered the next day that I had been handed a name tag with a subtle red border. Members knew to wear a name tag with a green border. Regular attenders wore yellow. It was like a conspiracy – a whole church full of greeters anticipating newcomers each week. So, if you want to make guests feel unwelcome, by all means do not wear name tags! ■



*David Francis serves as director of LifeWay's Sunday school area.*



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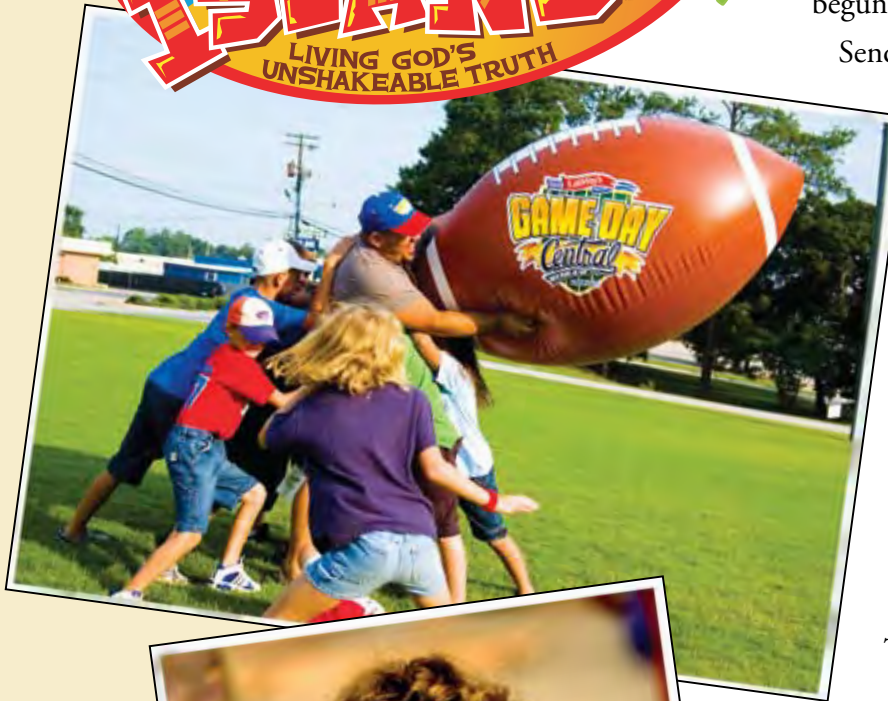
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# VBS photo contest is now open



Once again, *Facts & Trends Online* is inviting churches and individuals to submit photos for the 2008 VBS Photo Contest. This year, you get to help select the winning photo!

Lots of great photos from churches around the country are coming in, and the selection process has begun! We want to see photos from your VBS, too.

Send them to [Facts&Trends@LifeWay.com](mailto:Facts&Trends@LifeWay.com), but before you hit that send button, make sure your photos meet the following criteria:

- 300 dpi
- JPEG format
- Must be sent as an attachment to the email, not embedded in the email
- No more than three photos per church
- Must include church name, city and state
- Must include at least one child in photo
- Must feature one of the LifeWay VBS themes: Outrigger Island or Cactus Canyon

The deadline for submissions is Friday, Aug. 29.

The top 25 photos will be featured on the FTO Website, and the church with the best photo will receive a free 2009 VBS Sampler Kit.



Because photos will post online, the church must notify parents or legal guardians of minors photographed to ensure consent before submitting photos. ■

## Online

Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) to link to last year's top 25 photos and for tips on taking great pictures from LifeWay corporate photographer Kent Harville.



# Changing the world through faith and film

by Jenny Rice

**H**ollywood may seem like a dark, far away land to many traditional churchgoers. Entertainment headlines celebrate celebrities who are comfortable with drinking, drugs, sex and pregnancy outside of marriage. Many movies and television shows are so violent or racy that many Christians avoid them.

There is light in the dark world of film and television.

Christian actors, scriptwriters and filmmakers gathered April 14-18 for the inaugural Gideon Media Arts Conference and Film Festival at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. Aspiring artists and writers sat under the leadership and teaching of entertainment veterans to learn how to combine faith and films.

Conference speaker Ted Baehr, founder and publisher of *Movieguide* and chairman of the Christian Film & Television Commission in Hollywood, knows many Christians who have made it in the film industry, and many who have not.

“A tremendous number of people crash and burn in Hollywood because they never learned their craft,” said Baehr. “If we want to succeed, we must humble ourselves, listen to criticism and know our craft.”

“If the Old Testament were turned into a novel, most Christian bookstores wouldn’t carry it. If it were turned into a film, most Christians would ban it.”

– Steven James

Baehr encouraged Christians to take back the film industry and use the medium to communicate Christ and faith to the lost world.

“Ninety percent of children ages 12-24 are abandoning traditional values,” he said. “We are losing the next generation. We aren’t using the media well.”

Many Christian scriptwriters avoid controversial topics and may provide surface answers for issues their characters face. Professional filmmakers encouraged up-and-coming artists to keep Christ real in the movies they produce.

“Christians are dysfunctional,” said Ken Wales, a producer of “Amazing Grace,” a movie based on the life of William Wilberforce. “We are just like everybody else with conflict, but hopefully the resolution is different. As you tell your story, be real, be honest.”

Author and speaker Steven James writes suspense novels and joked about how Christians can be overly sensitive to uncomfortable story lines.

“If the Old Testament were turned into a novel, most Christian bookstores wouldn’t carry it. If it were turned into a film, most Christians would ban it.”

## We recommend

- *So You Want to be in Pictures?* by Ted Baehr
- *The Culture-Wise Family: Upholding Christian Values in a Mass-Media World* by Ted Baehr and Pat Boone
- *Finding God in the Movies: 33 Films of Reel Faith* by Catherine Barsotti and Robert Johnston

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

## A light in a dark industry

Actor and director Michael Albanese shared his personal struggle to keep things real while living as a Christian in the film industry.

“I’ve been on the frontlines of the entertainment industry for a long time. As Christians and artists, we have freedom we don’t take advantage of. We are trying to be ‘good Christians’ in a dark industry,” he said.

VeggieTales founder Phil Vischer learned the hard way that a relationship with God is more important than work for the Lord. A believer since childhood, Vischer did not fully understand what that meant until his Big Idea company went under in 2003.

“People think they will change the world by making films,” said Vischer. “If they would just walk with God, the world would change because the world doesn’t learn about God by watching Christian movies. The world learns about God by watching Christians.”

Kenny Sailors and his brother, Kyle, have produced videos, movies and television shows in Los Angeles for more than nine years. Part of their work has been producing rap videos.

“Some Christians from our hometown in Texas have criticized us for being in L.A. and working with rappers,” said Sailors.

“People always quote John 3:16, but they forget verse 17. We don’t condemn those in Hollywood. We are there to be Christ in the middle of all of that.”

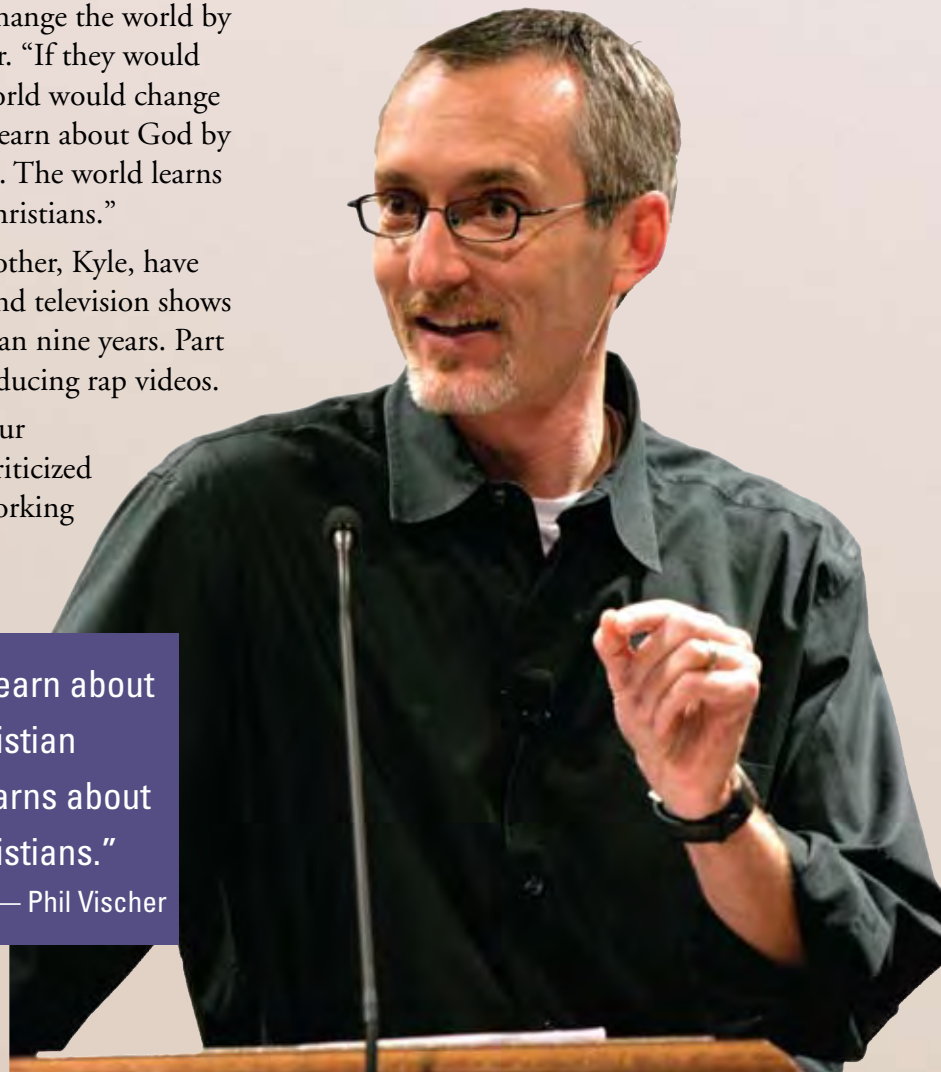
Growing up in a conservative Christian home, Sailors did not see his first movie until the 10th grade when he sneaked out to see “Home Alone” with a friend. Since then, God has instilled a passion in Sailors for producing films and videos. He said he sees his time in Los Angeles as an opportunity to take Christ to people who need it the most.

Sailors said he responds to critics from within the church by saying, “These people

“... the world doesn’t learn about God by watching Christian movies. The world learns about God by watching Christians.”

— Phil Vischer

*Phil Vischer*



are definitely not going to show up at your church. How are you going to reach them?”

### Don't give in to cynicism

In addition to feeling a call to spread the Gospel, script consultant Linda Seger encouraged artists to pursue excellence in their work.

“Christian filmmakers come with great intentions, but those aren't enough,” she said. “Learn the craft, learn who you are, and learn what you can contribute.”

Lorene Wales, a film production veteran and

chair of the cinema-television department at Regent University, challenged Christian moviemakers to persevere while striving to make a difference in the culture.

“Media is extremely powerful in our society,” she said. “Cinema has become so cynical. We are called to be salt and light in a postmodern world. But how?”

“Don't give up hope. Don't give into cynicism,” she said. “We need to say to God, ‘We will continue in the faith, be steadfast and grounded, and we will not move away from the faith.’” ■

## How Important is Text Accuracy to Bible Teachers? It's Critical.

To align *your* message with God's, your Bible should bring you as close to the original Scripture text as possible. That's why the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* translators chose the Critical Text as their primary New Testament resource.

Considered to be most accurate to the original writings by the majority of conservative scholars who've made a life's work of evaluating ancient manuscripts, the Critical Text allows the closest and most authoritative translation.

With each word choice, Holman CSB translators pored over every pertinent resource to arrive at the most faithful possible rendering of Scripture. The result? An entirely new translation from the original biblical languages that reflects the truth of God's Word with astonishing power and clarity.

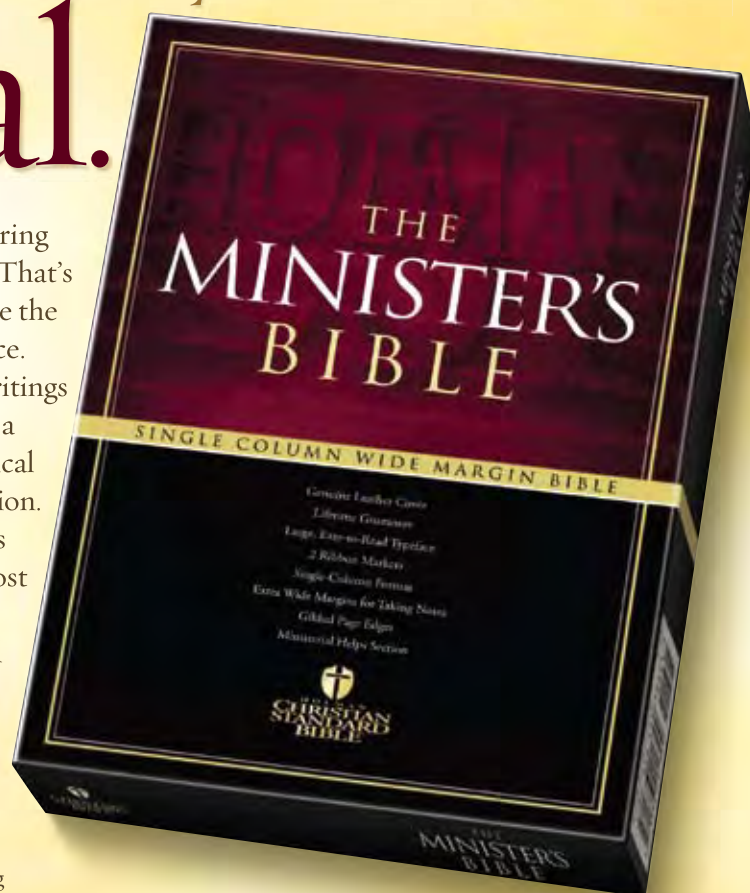
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# Blackaby book carries God to the market place

by Shawn Hendricks

If your job feels more like a soap opera than a calling, you're not alone. For many Christian professionals, daily routines include navigating a variety of drama and tensions.

There's the couple having an affair down the hall, a foul-mouthed supervisor in the corner office who is always saying something inappropriate, and your supervisor is pressuring you to write something inaccurate in the financial records. Any one of these things can distract us from influencing others and living a Christlike life.

"The nature of the market place barrages the carnal senses: success can foster pride and greed; competition can test your ethics and breed jealousy; gossip can spread like gangrene throughout the office; sexual enticement is always close at hand," Henry and Richard Blackaby write in their latest book.

In the B&H Publishing Group release, *God in the Market Place: Experiencing His Will in Your Work*, the father-son authors tackle these and other issues that Christian professionals confront daily. Specifically, the authors answer 45 questions Fortune 500 executives ask regarding faith, life and business.

"Christian men and women who hold influential positions in the market place want to know how their relationship with God practically affects their careers and their personal lives," the authors write.

"This book is our response to questions we have frequently been asked over the years by sincere Christians seeking to live their lives in a God-honoring manner."

## Businessmen with purpose

The Blackabys are no strangers to providing sound advice to those in the business world. Both work with Christian CEOs, and Henry Blackaby leads a monthly Bible study, "God in the Workplace." His son, Richard, writes a monthly electronic devotional for business people.

The elder Blackaby also is founder and president emeritus of Blackaby Ministries International and

author of *Experiencing God*, which has sold four million copies and been translated into more than 45 languages. Richard Blackaby is president of the family ministry.

Through the years, the Blackabys have witnessed how the workplace can take its toll on relationships, family and a person's faith. It's a place where people can be at their best, and too often, at their worst.

A common issue that believers deal with in the workplace involves their families and balancing work with responsibilities at home. Many professionals think they can put their family life on the backburner until their career gets to where it needs to be. But too often marriages and families end up suffering as a result.

"Some of the most famous business magnates in history were not even on speaking terms with their children," they write.

"Tragically, many executives forfeit the most precious relationships they have in order to get ahead. John D. Rockefeller became the wealthiest man of his day, yet all his influence, money, and persuasive skills could not convince his daughter Edith to visit him during his final decades."

### A witness in the workplace

Most importantly, though, the workplace is where believers have an opportunity to influence others with their Christian faith no matter who



**"Those who do business with you, either as a supervisor, a subordinate, or a client may not always agree with your policies or business strategies, but they should be intrigued by your God."**

— from *God in the Market Place*

their employer may be.

"Those who do business with you, either as a supervisor, a subordinate, or a client may not always agree with your policies or business strategies, but they should be intrigued by your God," they write.

"They may clamor for greater profit margins and higher sales performance, but they ought to be satisfied with your integrity."

In the end, handling all of these issues and making the right decisions comes down to our spiritual growth, the Blackabys contend. Are we spending time with God daily? Are we in fellowship with other

believers? What kind of influence are we on others?

"Realize that your value and self-worth do not come from a career or position but from your relationship with God," they write. "The Lord is entering corporate offices and inviting business people to join Him."

"Jesus is calling professionals from every field and mobilizing them for His Kingdom agenda ... Now is the time to join God in His exciting work." ■

### We recommend

- *Experiencing God* (family of resources)
- *Spiritual Leadership*
- *The Man God Uses*
- *Hearing God's Voice*

These and other resources by Henry, Richard and Tom Blackaby are available through customer service at [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com) and (800) 458-2772 and from LifeWay Christian Stores at [www.lifewaystores.com](http://www.lifewaystores.com) and (800) 233-1123.

# Protect those church funds – 10 ways to prevent embezzlement

by Keith Hamilton

Almost every other week I receive a message that another church has had funds embezzled. The reasons for the thefts are always varied. Sometimes, a person steals because of a financial crisis in his own life or in the lives of immediate family members. On the other hand, the person might be stealing just for the fun of it.

The age of the person who is embezzling money does not seem to matter. I have had experience with both teenagers and senior adults being involved in this crime. One factor seems to be constant in all the cases: Church members were surprised that the person embezzled the funds because the church trusted the person.

There are several things every church needs to do to help prevent this terrible crime from happening to their church. The church must guard itself and help protect the church treasurer and other financial leaders from even a hint that embezzlement of church funds is possible.

## **1. An annual financial review of church records needs to be conducted by the church finance committee or appointed ad hoc committee.**

The internal review is necessary to ensure that all church funds are spent according to the wishes of the church. If the financial review committee discovers a problem with the financial records, then the committee should contact an outside auditor to complete the investigation. If the outside auditor discovers embezzlement has occurred, then local authorities should be contacted for proper action.

## **2. Full disclosure of all church receipts and expenditures, including love offerings, should be reported to the congregation annually.**

The detailed financial report should comply with IRS record-keeping guidelines.

## **3. The church should require two signatures on checks for all church expenditures.**

Online bill payments should be verified by two signatures on the paper printout. A check signer should never



sign a blank check. Finally, the church financial secretary should not be one of the check signers. In many churches, the financial secretary receives and deposits part of the church's income. This would be a conflict of interest if she spent the money, too.

**4. The church treasurer should not receive or count the church's income.**

However, if the church treasurer occasionally receives church income, then the treasurer should record the income in a ledger that is available for public inspection. The church treasurer should never take the church's offering home with him or deposit the church's offering. This is the responsibility of other financial leaders.

**5. The church should use sealed bank security bags for church offerings.**

Sunday morning worship service and Sunday school offerings should be taken to the bank immediately following the morning service.

**6. At least two unrelated individuals should receive the church offering during the worship services and Sunday school.**

If possible, these individual should rotate with other individuals in their responsibilities.

**7. Likewise, church should rotate the money counters or tellers.**

As a general rule, the treasurer should not count the money, but should be available to assist the counters or tellers.

**8. Church offerings of currency should be counted and recorded on bank deposit receipts.**

The currency should be listed as dollars, quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies on the deposit slip. The deposit slips should be kept as part of the church's financial recordkeeping.

**9. A copy of the church financial records should be kept at the church.**

The church treasurer can process the recordkeeping at home, but the permanent records should be kept at the church. Also, contribution credit statements should be made available to everyone who has given to the church.

**10. The church should track giving patterns over time.**

Questions to ask include: Has the loose currency decreased or increased? Has income suddenly increased or decreased? Some churches even send marked currency through the system to make sure the offerings are received fully.

The church treasurer should take the lead in recommending these suggestions to help protect his name and reputation, in addition to helping prevent embezzlement of church funds. Likewise, the church financial leadership needs to listen and act upon the responsible suggestions made by the church treasurer. If a church thinks this serious crime could not happen to them, then they are sadly mistaken. ■

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*Keith Hamilton leads the church financial services ministry of the Georgia Baptist Convention. This article is adapted from LifeWay's Pastors Today newsletter. Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) for links to find out more about Hamilton and to sign up for a free subscription to Pastors Today.*

# Impact 2008 focuses on role of smaller churches

by Jerry Higgins

Steve Schenewerk is pastor of Winston Community Baptist Church, a small congregation in Winston, Ore., about 80 miles south of Eugene. Like many pastors of small churches, Schenewerk has felt overshadowed in the Southern Baptist Convention by megachurches and big-name pastors.

Les Puryear, pastor of Lewisville Baptist Church in Lewisville, N.C., felt the same way.

After discussions with LifeWay and others within the SBC, Puryear organized and

Referencing a 2006 LifeWay Research study, Puryear pointed out that 62.7 percent of all SBC churches have between one and 99 Sunday attendees, while another 20.7 percent have between 100-199 Sunday attendees. Those figures debunk the myth that the SBC is a large-church denomination.

“It’s not bad being a small-church pastor,” Puryear told the pastors. “We’re just as important as the largest church in the world. Jesus Christ is the One who builds the church. Jesus must love the small church because He’s built so many of them. Two or three gathered (with Jesus), not 2,000-3,000 or 200-300.

“There is the ‘bigger is better’ mindset,” he added. “Most people don’t see the beauty of the small church. Too many people look at numbers. Christian bookstores are full of books that tell you how to be successful written by large-church pastors with large church principles. We may seem like failures to the eyes of the world but to say we are unsuccessful is wrong.”

Puryear said small-church pastors need to be involved not only with each other but also with the SBC at large. Likewise, entities that produce ministry materials need to keep the small church in mind, Puryear said.

“The SBC needs to step to the plate and support small church pastors,” Puryear said. “They don’t know you and you don’t know them. We have to step to the plate. We have to be involved in state conventions and the SBC. The leadership needs to find out whom small-church pastors are and what we need.”

Then-SBC President Frank Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., whom like many of the speakers preached from Matthew 16:18, said he can sympathize with the small-church pastors. Even though



“Jesus must love the small church because He’s built so many of them.”

— Les Puryear

hosted Impact 2008, a conference specifically for small-church pastors. About 110 pastors from 13 states attended March 27-29 to hear messages about finances, critical issues and possible solutions and how God is at work in the small church.

“This was needed,” said Schenewerk, who received an invitation to attend from LifeWay President Thom Rainer. “The small-church pastor feels isolated and neglected. It’s not intentional, but resources of the denomination go where they will do the most good.”

Puryear led off the conference with a discussion about small churches in the SBC.

his church runs more than 4,000 on Sunday, Page never considered himself an “SBC insider.” He told the pastors they need to speak up, stand up and get involved in the SBC.

“You have to let go of the inferiority complex,” Page said. “Some people think you do not have the right to be heard. You need to step up to the plate.”

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of evangelism Alvin Reid told the pastors they have to be a Barnabas and support each other. Preaching from 2 Timothy 2:1-10, Reid said the men were called to be pastors, not pastors of a small church. He also gave seven principles which relate to leadership from the passage: be grounded in the Word of God, lead by equipping others, lead others in humility, lead others to greatness, lead with faith, lead by defining reality, and lead by the strength of your character.

“You are the buck that stops here,” Reid said. “Be faithful where you are. It’s a tough job.”

Several speakers stressed prayer as the most important support mechanism for the small-church pastor. Schofield said the first response to any situation in the church should be prayer. He added that a healthy praying church needs a healthy Bible-based prayer ministry and a strategic Kingdom-focused pattern of prayer. That will

## Top 10 challenges facing the small-church pastor

The top challenge pastors of small churches face is finding enough hours in the day to do the Lord’s work.

LifeWay Research gathered information from nearly 400 small-church pastors – defined as those who pastor churches with attendance of 100 or fewer on Sunday. These were discovered to be the top 10 challenges.

### 1. Time

Thirty-two percent of the responders said they were bivocational pastors and didn’t have enough hours in the day to do what they were called to do. Respondents said they were tired and drained of energy. They try to fulfill their calling and get the job done.

### 2. Resistance

Small-church pastors said their church doesn’t want to change, an attitude that can lead to stagnation. Pastors have to deal with “church bosses” who want to usurp authority from the pastor and forget that it’s God who controls His church.

### 3. Lack of commitment from members

Many pastors said they deal with apathy and indifference, but pastors of small churches seem to feel it more.

### 4. Too few workers

Pastors get worn out if the church’s philosophy is that he is a hired gun or “the professional.”

### 5. Age of the congregation

As the church gets older, young people do not feel attracted to the church.

### 6. Lack of money

Pastors said they don’t have the resources they need to do the job they want to do.

### 7. Worldliness of the church

There seems to be a “cultural seepage,” where churches have allowed the world’s standards to come into the church.

### 8. Age of the pastor

Several responding to the survey said they were getting too old.

### 9. Too few people

In the survey, pastors said they couldn’t get things done because they didn’t have enough help.

### 10. Demographics

The community around the church changes but the church isn’t growing.



Only one call really matters.

It's the one that will keep you connected to Christ forevermore. Once you've answered that call, there's a new study to help you understand and implement six key disciplines for a faithful and fruitful life in Him. Claude V. King's *The Call to Follow Christ* is the foundational resource in the Growing Disciples Series, which also includes *Abide in Christ*, *Pray in Faith*, *Witness to the World*, and *Fellowship with Believers*. Available online and at LifeWay Christian Stores or by calling 800.458.2772.



[www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com)

LifeWay | Adults

LifeWay

then allow people to experience God's activity and His "manifested presence."

"Prayer puts us back in touch with God's agenda," Schofield said.

David MacEachern, senior pastor of Bat Cave (N.C.) Baptist Church, closed the conference with a passionate plea for his peers to stay strong and believe that God is always working for a believing church.

"If you believe there is a formula to build a church to where your peers say you are successful, move to Texas," MacEachern said. "God's way of measuring success and your way of measuring success are worlds apart.

God is responsible for measuring success. He will build the church. God has called you and equipped you to scatter the seed. We're just His instruments.

"If you get your seminary degree and have only 10 people in your church, then make sure they are the 10 best blessed people," he said. ■

### Online

Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) for a link to an article on a challenge to pastors of small churches by SBC President Frank Page.

### We recommend

- *Leading the Small Church* by Glenn Daman
- *All Churches Great and Small! 60 Ideas for Improving Your Church's Ministry* by Kirk and Rosie Farnsworth
- *Unleashing the Potential of the Smaller Church: Vision and Strategy for Life-Changing Ministry* by Shawn McMullen

These and other resources are available from LifeWay Christian Stores at [www.lifewaystores.com](http://www.lifewaystores.com) and (800) 233-1123.

## Speakers at the Impact 2008 conference

- Then-SBC President Frank Page on the role of the small church in the SBC
- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of evangelism Alvin Reid on God's call on the small-church pastor
- Greg Lawson, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of Christian education, on financial considerations in the small church
- Brad Waggoner, vice president of B&H Publishing Group, on critical issues and solutions for the small church
- Tom Elliff, senior vice president for spiritual nurture and church relations with the International Mission Board, on how small churches can partner locally to reach internationally
- North American Mission Board evangelism resource manager Dick Church on innovative evangelism strategies for the small church
- Chris Schofield of the Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina on effective prayer ministry in the small church
- Kevin Bussey, a church planter in Charlotte, N.C., on how the small church can be involved in church planting
- C.B. Scott, senior pastor of Westmont Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., on how God is at work in the small church
- Chris Hauser, associate pastor of South Oak Ridge Baptist Church in Yadkinville, N.C., on how to have a vital children's and youth ministry in the small church
- Micah Fries, senior pastor of Frederick Boulevard Baptist Church, St. Joseph, Mo., on affordable technology for the small church
- David MacEachern, senior pastor of Bat Cave (N.C.) Baptist Church, on how success should be measured in the small church

"If you get your seminary degree and have only 10 people in your church, then make sure they are the 10 best blessed people."

— David McEachern



*First column, top to bottom: James McMahan, Ridgecrest, N.C.; Marie Kirkman, Hubert, N.C.; Eleanor Fodrey, Virginia Beach, Va.; Pianist Dino addresses the crowd following his performance. Second column, top to bottom: Virgie McGee, Fort Mitchell, Ky., Howard Cochran, Brentwood, Tenn.*



# Seniors celebrate at Ridgecrest

story by Jerry Higgins  
photography by James Yates

**L**ike the majority of the 1,200 in attendance at the first Senior Adult Southern Gospel Celebration, Lee Barham and his wife, Jean, were hoping to hear some inspirational music and messages. They were not disappointed.

The Barhams, of Youngsville, N.C., had attended several senior events throughout the Southeast. But this event on May 13-14, the first of its kind held at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, was one of the best, they said, because of the messages delivered by former New York Yankees' second baseman Bobby Richardson and evangelist Junior Hill, the comedy of Dennis Swanberg, and the music of Southern Gospel groups Greater Vision, The Greens, The Hoppers, Triumphant Quartet and Dino.

"Seniors tend to go to things like this," said Jean Barham, who's been married to Lee for 46 years. "We were looking to get away and spend time together. This was outstanding. I really enjoyed it."

The conference, which was put together by LifeWay and Williams Evangelistic Ministries, drew people from as far away as Texas and Colorado. Tim Williams, the president of WEM, started doing senior adult conferences about 10 years ago as a way to encourage seniors to keep serving in the church.

"We do revivals that involve children, youth, singles, college students, young married couples and we forget about senior adults," Williams said. "I think this (event) has been great. They've really enjoyed it."

"And it's not uncommon to see professions of faith," he added. "We don't see a lot like at a big revival or a crusade, but seldom do we have a senior conference where we don't see several professions of faith. Sometimes you have so-and-so who brings her husband who doesn't go to church and he hears the Gospel and comes to faith."

At the end of the opening night, Williams invited people to receive Christ as Savior. Six people did just that.

*Top left: Lois Haselden, Sumter, S.C. Top right: Comedian Dennis Swanberg keeps the crowd laughing all night long.*



First column, top to bottom: Members of Triumphant perform; Tony Greene from the Greens sings; Jim Hensley, Nicholasville, Ky. Second column, top to bottom: Gerald McBride, Denison, Texas; Betty Hensley, Nicholasville, Ky.; Bobby Richardson, the 1960 World Series MVP, describing his friendship with Mickey Mantle. Third column, top:



“You have to dare to stand for your principles when the world around you doesn’t. We need men like that.”

- Bobby Richardson





“It just doesn’t get any better than that,” said LifeWay National Event Planner Ron Pratt. “For our first event, I think it was a huge success.”

Those who came forward had just listened to the inspirational message from Richardson, 72, the 1960 World Series Most Valuable Player, seven-time American League all-star second baseman and five-time Gold Glove Award winner who still lives in his hometown of Sumter, S.C. Richardson, who was saved when he was 14, spoke about the difficulties he shared with his close friend, Mickey Mantle.

Mantle, who battled alcohol addiction, listened to Richardson’s testimony and heard about the road to salvation numerous times, including during Mantle’s chemotherapy treatments before he died of cancer in 1995. Mantle spoke with Richardson at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas and told him he had received Christ.

“I walked into his room and he had a smile on his face and said, ‘I can’t wait to tell you this,’” Richardson said. “I told him I wanted to go over it with him to make sure he got it straight. I went over God’s plan of salvation with him. He said, ‘That’s what I’ve done.’”

“(Richardson’s wife) Betsy went back and shared her testimony with him. She asked, ‘If a holy God appeared today and asked you this question: why should I let you in my heaven? what would you say?’ Mickey then quoted John 3:16. He had real peace and died three days later.”

The crowd was silent as Richardson spoke

about saying the eulogy at Mantle’s funeral on Aug. 15, 1995, as he had also done at Roger Maris’ funeral nearly 10 years before. And as passionate as Richardson was about his relationship with Mantle, he is more so passionate about being a Christian and what it takes to stay true to God.

“What is a man’s man,” Richardson asked. “You have to dare to stand for your principles when the world around you doesn’t. We need men like that. It doesn’t matter what is in the head. It’s the heart that matters.”

The music, at times, brought the seniors to their feet. The incredible vocals, along with traditional hymns like “Love Lifted Me,” “Standing on the Promises of God” and “Down at the Cross,” gave the group renewed vigor.

Next year, LifeWay will hold the event at both Ridgecrest (April 20-22, 2009) and Glorieta Conference Center (May 12-15, 2009), located near Santa Fe, N.M. For Pat and Lowell Socolofsky of Colorado Springs, Colo., that’s good news.

“I assumed this would be like an event we went to six years ago in Fort Worth, Texas,” said Lowell, who retired from the Air Force. “There were a lot of large groups here. If you like gospel music, seniors will not find a better event.” ■

*A panoramic view of the crowd of participants at the celebration.*

## Online

View a multimedia presentation by photojournalist James Yates about the event at [www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends).

# 2007 ACP:

## Baptisms in SBC fall to lowest level since 1987

*by Rob Phillips*

**T**he number of people baptized in Southern Baptist churches fell for the third straight year in 2007 to the denomination's lowest level since 1987, according to the 2007 Annual Church Profile (ACP) compiled by LifeWay. Although the SBC added 473 new churches and gave more than \$1.3 billion to support mission activities around the world, there's no escaping the disappointing fact that Southern Baptists are not reaching as many people for Christ as they once did.

Baptisms in 2007 dropped nearly 5.5 percent to 345,941, compared to 364,826 in 2006. The number of baptisms is a key measurement of the SBC's effectiveness in evangelism.

"This report is truly disheartening," said LifeWay President Thom Rainer. "Total membership showed a slight decline. Baptisms have now declined for three consecutive years and for seven of the last eight years, and are at their lowest level since 1987. Indeed, the total baptisms are among the lowest reported since 1970. We are a denomination that, for the most part, has lost its evangelistic passion."

Not all the news coming out of the ACP was so grim, however. The number of SBC churches grew by 1.1 percent to 44,696; primary worship attendance increased slightly to 6.15 million; and total mission expenditures topped \$1.3 billion.

Missions giving is significant and far reaching. For example, Cooperative Program funds support more than 10,250 missionaries who engage nearly 1,200 people groups throughout North America and around the world. In addition, CP funds support six seminaries, the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, the Ethics & Religions Liberty Commission, and other SBC entities. (LifeWay and GuideStone Financial Resources are self-funding, receiving no Cooperative Program funds.)

At the same time, CP funds support statewide efforts in evangelism, as well as children's homes, disaster relief efforts, volunteer missions, colleges and universities, camps and much more.

Rainer pointed out that numeric/percentage changes for certain categories could not be accurately figured for the 2007 ACP, as some state conventions did not ask for some items to be reported, or asked in a way that gave results that were not comparable to totals reported in the 2006 ACP.

Impacted categories and their 2007 totals include:

- Sunday school enrollment: 7,876,611
- Discipleship training enrollment: 1,664,348
- Total tithes, offerings, and special gifts: \$10.85 billion
- Music ministry enrollment/participation: 1,444,837
- WMU enrollment: 778,555
- Men/boys mission education enrollment: 381,355

LifeWay receives data for the ACP from state Baptist conventions. ■

## 2007 Southern Baptist Convention Statistical Summary

Item/Statistic	Final 2007	Final 2006	2007-2006 Numeric Change	2007-2006 Percent Change
State Conventions	41	41	0	0.00%
Associations	1,186	1,185	1	0.08%
Churches	44,696	44,223	473	1.06%
Total Membership	16,266,920	16,306,246	-39,326	-0.24%
Baptisms	345,941	364,826	-18,885	-5.46%
Ratio of Baptisms: Total Membership	1:47	1:45	(N/A)	(N/A)
Primary Worship Attendance	6,148,868	6,138,776	10,092	0.16%
Sunday School Enrollment <sup>(1)</sup>	7,876,611	7,931,753	Not comparable <sup>(1)</sup>	Not comparable <sup>(1)</sup>
Total Mission Expenditures <sup>(1)</sup>	\$1,327,856,082	\$1,285,616,031	Not comparable <sup>(1)</sup>	Not comparable <sup>(1)</sup>
Church-type Missions Operating <sup>(2)</sup>	5,254	5,241	Not comparable <sup>(2)</sup>	Not comparable <sup>(2)</sup>

### Notes:

- (1) Comparison between 2007 and 2006 data is not possible due to the fact that some state conventions did not ask the item in 2006. See the 2006 SBC Statistical Summary for details.
- (2) Some state conventions no longer use the designation of Church-type Mission to categorize congregations which are not self-determining, self-sustaining and self-propagating.

## Other 2007 Items

### Not asked by all State Conventions <sup>(1)</sup>

Item/Statistic	Final 2007	Final 2006
Other Additions <sup>(3)</sup>	361,583	394,321
Discipleship Training Enrollment <sup>(2) (4)</sup>	1,664,348	1,503,826
Music Ministry Enrollment/Participation <sup>(4)</sup>	1,444,837	1,466,124
WMU Enrollment <sup>(3) (4)</sup>	778,555	811,139
Men/Boys Mission Education Enrollment <sup>(3) (4)</sup>	381,355	376,379
Total Tithes, Offerings, & Special Gifts <sup>(3) (4)</sup>	\$10,845,108,310	\$10,425,420,529
Undesignated Receipts <sup>(3)</sup>	\$8,699,869,367	\$8,293,404,321
Total Receipts <sup>(3)</sup>	\$11,832,871,416	\$11,372,608,393
Value of Congregational Property <sup>(3) (4) (5)</sup>	\$37,737,114,929	Not asked in 2006

### Notes:

- (1) Totals for items in this table have incomplete data for 2007 due to the fact that not all state conventions asked the item or did so in a way not comparable with the standard definition. Similar actions occurred in 2006. Thus, comparisons between the two years may not be appropriate. See the Notes in the 2006 SBC Statistical Summary for specific details to determine if a comparison should be made.
- (2) Prior to 2005, Discipleship Training Enrollment counted people more than once (counted for each group in which they participated). In 2005 (and afterwards), the item was changed to count people only once regardless of how many studies in which they participated.
- (3) California Southern Baptist Convention either did not ask this item or their item definition was not comparable to the definition used by other state conventions.
- (4) The Baptist General Convention of Texas did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the total.
- (5) The Illinois Baptist State Association and the Kentucky Baptist Convention did not ask this item.

### Prepared by:

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Nashville, TN 37234-0123  
April 21, 2008

# Couples make

# *marriage a priority*

by Polly House

**O**ne weekend in May, 75 couples took intentional steps to strengthen their marriages.

They came to a LifeWay-sponsored Festival of Marriage weekend event at LifeWay in Nashville, Tenn., May 2-4.

No matter if the couples were marriage conference rookies or veterans – all were offered opportunities to learn about keeping the sparks alive in their relationships.

## Three take-aways

David and Claudia Arp, founders of Marriage Alive International and authors of a number of marriage resources including the best selling *Ten Great Dates*, were Festival keynote speakers. They told the couples there were three things they needed to take away from the conference:

- Remember that dating is an attitude. A great friendship is the best indicator of the probable success of a marriage. Dating and having fun with your spouse keeps the friendship fresh. Dating, they said, can be anything you do together that you both enjoy. It doesn't necessarily require spending money.
- Get and stay connected by using good communication skills. You will get angry with your spouse, they said. There is no other relationship that is more likely to produce anger than the marriage relationship because it is the most intimate earthly relationship. Find a positive way to process this anger, talk about it and deal with it. Remember, too, they reminded, that it is equally important to communicate the good things.
- Make your marriage intentional by setting goals you want to see God accomplish in your relationship. Be reasonable, realistic and clear when you set goals. Set specific steps to reach these goals.



## Local church possibilities

Gary and Kristin Nunn led several breakout sessions at the FOM weekend. He is discipleship pastor at Northbrook Baptist Church in Cullman, Ala., and she is a public school teacher. They are in their second year of serving as FOM conference leaders.

“These conferences are such a good way for couples to have some time to reconnect and focus on each other and their relationship,” Gary Nunn said. “They are a ‘jumping off’ point for couples to go back to their local churches and suggest to their church staffs that they make marriage a priority in their congregations.”

The local church is only going to be as successful as its families, he said, and families are only as successful as marriages.

“It’s to a church’s benefit to do what it can to help support couples as they navigate the waters of marriage,” he explained. “Churches can sponsor their own marriage conferences, bringing in outside speakers and leaders. They can host ‘date nights’ for couples, offering no-cost or low-cost childcare at the church. They can supplement the expenses of couples that attend an event such as this Festival of Marriage.

“Saving marriages is crucial to saving churches,” he said.

## Big group

First Baptist Church of Madisonville, Ky., is serious about helping couples keep their marriages healthy.

Eleven couples from the church came to the FOM in Nashville. Group leaders Tom and Elizabeth Rhodes said while the group had

a lot of fun and had enjoyed the trip, the event was more than just a fun time away from the busyness of home.

“These couples were given a lot of tools they can use to make their marriages more Christ-centered,” Tom Rhodes said. “Several of them didn’t know each other very well so they were able to develop some closer friendships with other Christian couples, as well as having some time to spend together as a couple.”

First Baptist of Madisonville gives more than lip service to couples wanting to strengthen their marriages. The church

supplemented the cost of the event for the couples. “We have a fund we use to offer financial helps to groups that want to attend conferences and

events,” Elizabeth Rhodes said. “There’s no better investment we can make.”

LifeWay marriage event coordinator Mark Satterfield explained that LifeWay’s Festivals of Marriage allows couples “to retreat to a place where they can focus on each other, their marriage and their relationship to God. Each of our FOM weekends offers a time for them to get away from jobs, kids and the daily grind so they can concentrate on their marriage.”

He said that the FOMs are held in locations around the country. Some, like the Nashville event, are smaller, while others, such as the one at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, are much larger. “We want to offer a variety of sizes and locales so that we will meet the comfort level of all our participants.” ■

LifeWay will host six more FOM events in 2008. Go to [www.lifeway.com/factsandrends](http://www.lifeway.com/factsandrends) to link to more information on these and other LifeWay-sponsored marriage events, blogs and articles.

## Remaining 2008 Festival of Marriage events:

- Oct. 3-5 –  
Glorieta, N.M.
- Oct. 10-12, 17-19,  
24-26 –  
Ridgecrest, N.C.
- Nov. 7-9 –  
Osage Beach, Mo.
- Nov. 14-16 –  
Ocean City, Md.

# Communications department honored for 2007 work

Members of LifeWay's communications department recently collected more than 20 awards for the work they completed during 2007, most of which has appeared in *Facts & Trends*. Recognition for excellence in photography, news and feature writing, design and podcasting was included in the list of accolades. Go to *Facts & Trends Online* for links to the winning entries.

## Baptist Communicators Association

### Grand Prize – The Leonard Holloway Award for Exceptional Achievement in Feature Writing

- Polly House: “With 2,000+ prayers of salvation, Nell Kerley is still going strong” (*Facts & Trends*)

### Photography division

#### Single photo, newspaper/newsletter

- Kent Harville: 1st place for “Riding with Purpose,” 2007 Ridgecrest Motorcycle Rally (*LifeLines*)

- Russ Rankin: 2nd place for “Beth Moore in Detroit” Living Proof Live event (LifeWay News)

#### Single photo, magazine

- Kent Harville: honorable mention for “Colorful Play,” 2007 VBS at the Met” (*Facts & Trends*)

#### Single photo, electronic

- Kent Harville: 2nd place for “Hogs with Heart,” 2007 Ridgecrest Motorcycle Rally (*Facts & Trends Online*)

### Audio/Visual Communication division

#### Podcast, distributed more than three times per month

- Brooklyn Noel, Chris Turner and Russ Rankin: 2nd place for *Inside LifeWay*

#### Podcast, distributed less than three times per month

- Kelly Davis Shrout and Russ Rankin: 1st place for *LifeCast* employee podcast

### Design division

#### Magazines, six or more issues per year

- Katie Shull: honorable mention for *Facts & Trends*

#### Newsletter, other newspaper, or tabloid

- Katie Shull: honorable mention for *LifeLines* employee newsletter

### Newsriting division

#### Single article, magazine

- Kelly Davis Shrout: 2nd place for 2,000 teens make “Fuge largest Ridgecrest crowd in a decade” (*Facts & Trends*)

#### Series or package, magazine

- Polly House: 1st place for “Cops, others let down their guard at Law Enforcement Summit” (*Facts & Trends*)

#### Series or package, online

- Brooklyn Noel: 2nd place for “Ridgecrest conference tells attendees that ‘SomeOne Cares’” (*Facts & Trends*)

### Feature Writing division

#### Single article, magazine

- Polly House: 1st place for “With 2,000+ prayers of salvation, Nell Kerley is still going strong” (*Facts & Trends*)

- Kelly Davis Shrout: 2nd place for “A photographer’s eye,” *Special Education Today* magazine

### Single article, online

- Kelly Davis Shrout: 2nd place for “Teen’s ‘revolution’ continues 6 months after untimely death” (*Baptist Press*)

### Series or package, magazine

- Jenny Rice: 1st place for Threads package (*Facts & Trends*)

- Brooklyn Noel: 2nd place for Special Needs Ministry package (*Facts & Trends*)

## Religion Communicators Council, DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards

### Best in Class, writing division

- Polly House for “Cops, others let down their guard at Law Enforcement Summit” (*Facts & Trends*)

### Newsletter, local or regional

- Kelly Davis Shrout and Jenny Rice: Award of Excellence for *LifeLines*

### Newspaper or magazine news

- Polly House: Award of Excellence for “Cops, others let down their guard at Law Enforcement Summit” (*Facts & Trends*)

### Single article, magazine

- Polly House: Award of Merit for “With 2,000+ prayers of salvation, Nell Kerley is still going strong” (*Facts & Trends*)

### Design, overall publication

- Katie Shull: Award of Merit for *Facts & Trends*, Sept./Oct. 2007 issue

## Associated Church Press, Best of the Christian Press

### Convention or meeting coverage, magazine

- Polly House and Kent Harville: Award of Merit for “Cops, others let down their guard at Law Enforcement Summit” (*Facts & Trends*) ■

# Resources

for you from LifeWay

## Broadman & Holman

### ■ *Between Us Girls: Fun Talk about Faith, Friends, and Family*

by Vicki Courtney

Following her bestseller *Between*, Vicki Courtney's *Between Us Girls* is an all-new full-color and fun-paced magabook encouraging girls between the ages of 8-12 to grow spiritually and socially in every area of life. Young readers will love the engaging articles, quizzes, games and fashion. *Between Us Girls* encourages girls to enjoy being their age rather than bowing to modern culture's temptations to grow up too fast. Releases July 1. Paperback. ISBN 0-8054-4667-2, \$14.99

### ■ *Manners Made Easy for the Family: 365 Timeless Etiquette Tips for Every Occasion*

by June Hines Moore

Christian etiquette expert June Hines Moore will improve the quality of life in homes everywhere with *Manners Made Easy for the Family*. This page-per-day guide to good manners presents 365 rules – just one or two sentences each – followed by a family application or practice point and example or instruction from the Bible. Parents and children can read and discuss each manner at breakfast or dinner for an entire year, learning about everything from table manners and to online “netiquette.” There’s even a helpful index for quick reference and for specific situations. Releases July 1. Hardcover. ISBN 0-8054-4741-5, \$14.99

### ■ *Shadow of Colossus*

by T. L. Higley

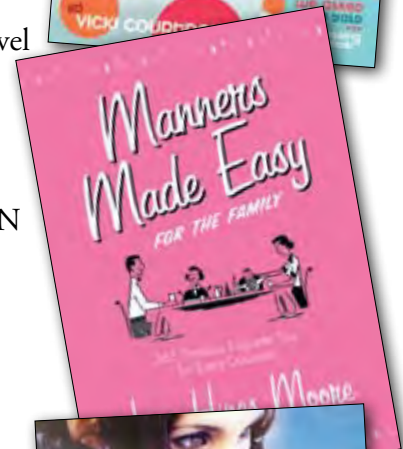
In a world enslaved by money and power, one woman dares to be free. Will an explosive secret enslave her again? The place is the island of Rhodes; the time, 227 B.C. In the 10 years that Tessa of Delos has been in

bondage as a hetaira, a high-priced Greek courtesan to a wealthy politician, she has learned to abandon all desire for freedom and love. But when her owner meets a violent death, Tessa is given the chance to battle for her own freedom and for those she is beginning to love. Forces collide that will shatter the island's peace and bring even its mighty Colossus to its knees. This novel offers a powerful story showing how the love of God can transform even the most hardened person and bring back to life a soul jaded by sin and grief. Releases Aug. 1. Paperback. ISBN 0-8054-4730-X, \$14.99

### ■ *Coming Unglued*

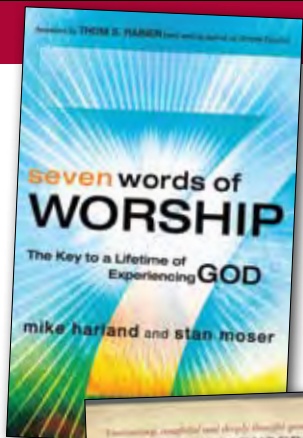
by Rebeca Seitz

*Coming Unglued* is the second book in the *Sisters, Ink* series of novels. At the center of the creativity and humor are four unlikely young adult sisters, each separately adopted during early childhood into the loving home of Marilyn and Jack Sinclair. Ten years after their mother has died, the multiracial Sinclair sisters (Meg, Kendra, Tandy and Joy) still return to her converted attic scrapbooking studio in the small town of Stars Hill, Tenn., to encourage each other through life's highs and lows. They've even turned their artistic passion into a new local scrapbooking business known as Sisters, Ink. *Coming Unglued* focuses on painter and musician Kendra who struggles with her sense of self-worth – a struggle that only intensifies when she realizes a friendship developed with a guy at a jazz club is actually an emotional affair. With her sisters' help, Kendra strives to do what's right, embracing the call to safeguard her heart and mind and hold fast to God's truth and grace. Releases July 1. Paperback. ISBN 0-8054-4691-5, \$14.99



# Resources

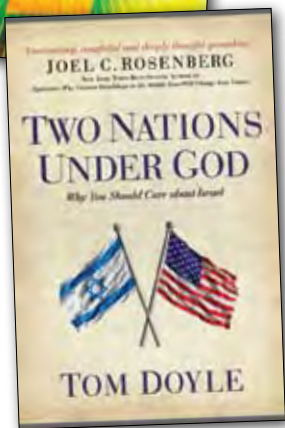
for you from LifeWay



- ***Seven Words of Worship: The Key to a Lifetime of Experiencing God*** by Mike Harland and Stan Moser, foreword by Thom S. Rainer  
*Seven Words of Worship* combines biblical truth, practical application and inspiring real life stories to clarify the reader's understanding and living out of worship, focusing the spiritual practice on seven key words: creation, grace, love, response, expression, presence and experience. Indeed, worship is a leading topic throughout the church today and the central purpose for gathering the body of Christ each week. But worship style and technique are often divisive elements among believers as well. More than a subjective art form or tradition, *Seven Words of Worship* authors Mike

Harland and Stan Moser explain that worship is foremost intended to be a pure and powerful declaration of love to God. When offered with passionate sincerity, worship brings God into our presence and makes all things possible. Releases Aug. 1. Paperback. ISBN 0-8054-4758-X, \$14.99

- ***Two Nations Under God: Good News from the Middle East*** by Tom Doyle, foreword by Joel C. Rosenberg  
Why should you care about Israel? With the war in Iraq, possible engagement in Iran, and an imminent presidential election, U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and the issue of solidarity with Israel remain important. *In Two Nations Under*



## Your wife is a gift from God. No, seriously.

Sure it's hard to believe sometimes. But God gave you a mate to make you more complete. Your spouse has strengths where you are weak. Together, you are better people. Of course, every marriage could stand a little improvement. That's why LifeWay offers resources and events to help you understand things like how the opposite sex really thinks, how people give and receive love, and ultimately, what a wonderful gift God has given each of you. Visit us online to learn more.

[www.lifeway.com/marriage](http://www.lifeway.com/marriage)

LifeWay | Adults

God, American missionary Tom Doyle presents even greater reasons why the U.S. should show concern for Israel. Part 1, “Why Should America Care?” is a biblical and historical primer on Israel with fascinating insights into connections between American and Middle East culture. Part 2, “Sorting Out the Middle East Maze,” presents more facts about Islam and the spiritual roots behind the Middle East conflicts. Part 3, “Maximizing the Moment,” is a call to action and prayer for the American church regarding the future of Israel. Best of all, readers will learn throughout that, despite the headlines, there is plenty of good news coming from the Middle East. Doyle reports on the increasing number of Muslims converting to Christianity, profiles local disciples and church planters, and provides helpful timelines, comparison charts, photographs, and more to keep every detail concerning Israel in perspective. This was originally released in 2004 under *Two Nations Under God: Why Should America Care about Israel and the Middle East?* Releases Aug. 1. Paperback. ISBN 0-8054-4771-7, \$14.99

## LifeWay Church Resources

### ■ *Show Who You Know*

by Paul Turner

Start building future leaders now with this new resource designed to help students make their faith known, mature students into leaders and grow their desire to express their faith. This is an uncomplicated resource for 7th-12th grade students with special emphasis placed on young Christian leadership. Developed primarily for use in a DiscipleNow setting yet flexible enough to be used in other creative ways, this makes a great fit for workshops or retreats with a leadership theme. It seems ironic that great leadership starts

with faithful following – yet this is what Christ calls us to do. 5 sessions. Releases in July. Leader guide, Product #0-0511-6690, \$9.95; Learner guide, Product #0-0510-1175, \$6.95

### ■ *Peregrinando: Un viaje por los Salmos de ascensión (Stepping Up: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent, Spanish Edition)*

by Beth Moore

Three times a year, the ancient Israelites traveled to the temple in Jerusalem. Along the way, and during the Jewish festivals, they sang what we know today as Psalms 120-134. This is available for Spanish-speaking adults and bilingual study groups who want to come to a place of greater intimacy and renewed relationship with God. Using a “Say It, Work It, Pray It” model, participants spend about two days of personal study on each of these 15 psalms. 7 sessions. Releases in July. Product #0-05125-347, \$14.95

### ■ *6 Secrets to a Lasting Love*

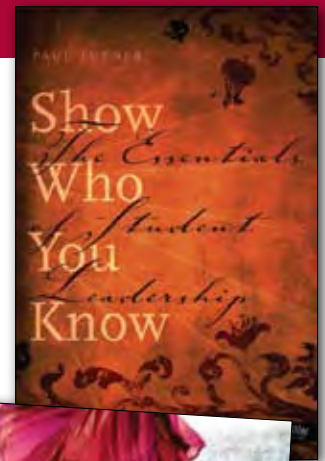
by Gary and Barbara Rosberg

The secret to a strong marriage is more than love – it’s six specific kinds of love that are all rooted in God’s Word: forgiving love, serving love, persevering love, guarding love, celebrating love and renewing love. Find out where you are in your relationship. Experience the marriage you dreamed of and build a love that will last a lifetime. 7 sessions. Releases in August. Member book, Product #0-0515-4527, \$9.95; DVD leader kit, Product #0-0503-5513, \$149.95

### ■ *More: Colossians –*

*Embrace the Mystery*

Something inside us yearns for more from life, God and Bible study than we’ve experienced. Discovering truth through Bible study is more than



# Resources

for you from LifeWay



breaking a verse down to its smallest parts and deconstructing a passage word by word. The new More series looks at the Bible and life through the lens of the larger story by embracing a balanced approach to inductive study by including not just the factual propositions, but focusing on heart transformation and life change from Bible study.

*Colossians – Embrace the Mystery* celebrates the unknown and calls believers to do the same. God wants us to know Him and welcomes our questions, even our fears. 6 sessions. Releases in July. Serendipity #0-0508-1528, \$7.99

## ■ *Life Connections YOUTH: Contagious Community*

Cell phones, pagers, IMs, text messaging, uploads, downloads ... Today's students are connecting in all kinds of ways to all kinds of things, so why shouldn't they be able to connect with God in a significant way? *Life Connections YOUTH* combines rich content with high-energy teaching to create an environment in which students grow closer to one another and to Christ. It's great for Sunday

school classes, home groups and Wednesday night curriculum. 13 sessions. Releases in July. Learner guide, Product #0-051-25107, \$6.99; Leader guide, Product #0-0512-5108, \$13.95

## ■ *Live to Worship*

*Live to Worship* is a Bible study developed in the DiscipleNow model for students to discover that worship is not just an event to attend on a Sunday morning or Wednesday night. It is personal and it is a way of life – profound, practical and permanent. This flexible resource also can be used on successive weeks as a special emphasis or in a retreat setting. A learner guide contains materials for each session, as well as five quiet times that can be incorporated into a DiscipleNow or retreat setting. The leader guide provides clear instruction, as well as sample pages. 5 sessions. Releases in August. Learner guide, Product #0-0511-3493, \$6.95; Leader guide, Product #0-0511-6686, \$9.95

## ■ *Sent: Living the Missional Nature of the Church*

by Ed Stetzer  
Throughout history, God has always been a sender. After all, He

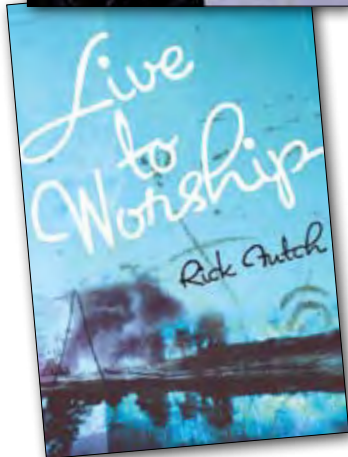
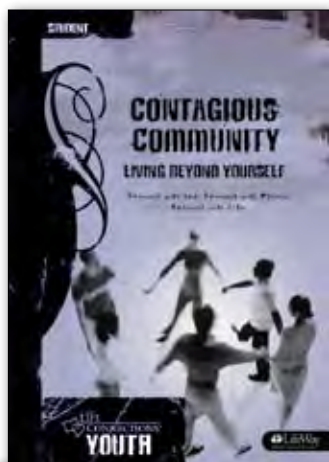
sent us His Son, who in turn sends us. Part of the *Threads* family, this new study examines what “being sent” looks like in the church today. Christ was all about action – always seeking, saving and serving. Uncover the meaning of missional and explore where you fit into the overall purpose of the church. Plus, join a group of young adults and their handheld cameras as they explore what being missional means in different contexts in this documentary feature. 5 sessions. Releases in August. Member book, Product #0-0516-5166, \$7.95; Leader kit, Product #0-0512-6272, \$69.95

## LifeWay Worship

### ■ *A Manger Suite*

Featuring the songs and actual arrangements from Michael W. Smith's recording, *It's a Wonderful Christmas*, created by Michael W. Smith, David Hamilton and Don Cason, arranged and orchestrated by David Hamilton

SATB w/vocal ensemble, children's choir/  
Medium/20 minutes  
Celebrate the glory of Christmas with this tremendous four-song collection/mini-musical



featuring songs from Michael W. Smith's *It's a Wonderful Christmas*, arranged by David Hamilton. These stirring musical selections – created for performance by SATB choir, vocal ensemble, and children's choir – are woven together with short narrations that move from the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy to the miracle of Christ's birth. Use this suite as part of a Christmas program or as a separate performance piece. It's new from Clear Call Music. SATB choral book, ISBN 0-05162709, \$5.95. Also available: Listening CD, Accompaniment CD, Rehearsal tracks, Choir CDs (pack of 10), CD-ROM orchestration (PDF), CD promo pak, Keyboard string reduction and Keyboard brass reduction. These individual titles are also available separately as anthems: "The Promise," "Son of God," "Sing Noel, Sing Hallelujah" and "Christmas Angels." These anthems are available at the following costs: SATB anthem, \$1.80; CD anthem tracks, \$24.95; CD-ROM orchestration (PDF), \$69.95

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Developed with the worship leader and team in mind, *SPIN 360* provides the best, current worship songs, along with the tools needed to perform them – whether you have a complete worship band, a handful of skillful players or no musicians at all. With each volume of *SPIN 360* you receive a songbook and a double CD. The songbook contains lyrics, sheet music, chord charts and a newsletter. Disc one of the set contains vocal tracks and is enhanced with PowerPoint, Media Shout, chord charts and lyric masters. Disc two of the set contains instrumental tracks with and without background vocals. *Volume 44* includes original tracks by artists such as Whitney Engle, Aaron Wagner, Casting Crowns and Matt Papa, plus *SPIN 360* versions of music from Hillsong United, Steve Fee and Matt Redman. Titles include "We Shine," "Beautiful News," "When I Think About the Lord," "Hosanna," "Fire Fall Down," "Glorious Is Thy Name," and "Live to Worship." *SPIN 360, Volume 44*, ISBN 0-05153103, \$34.95



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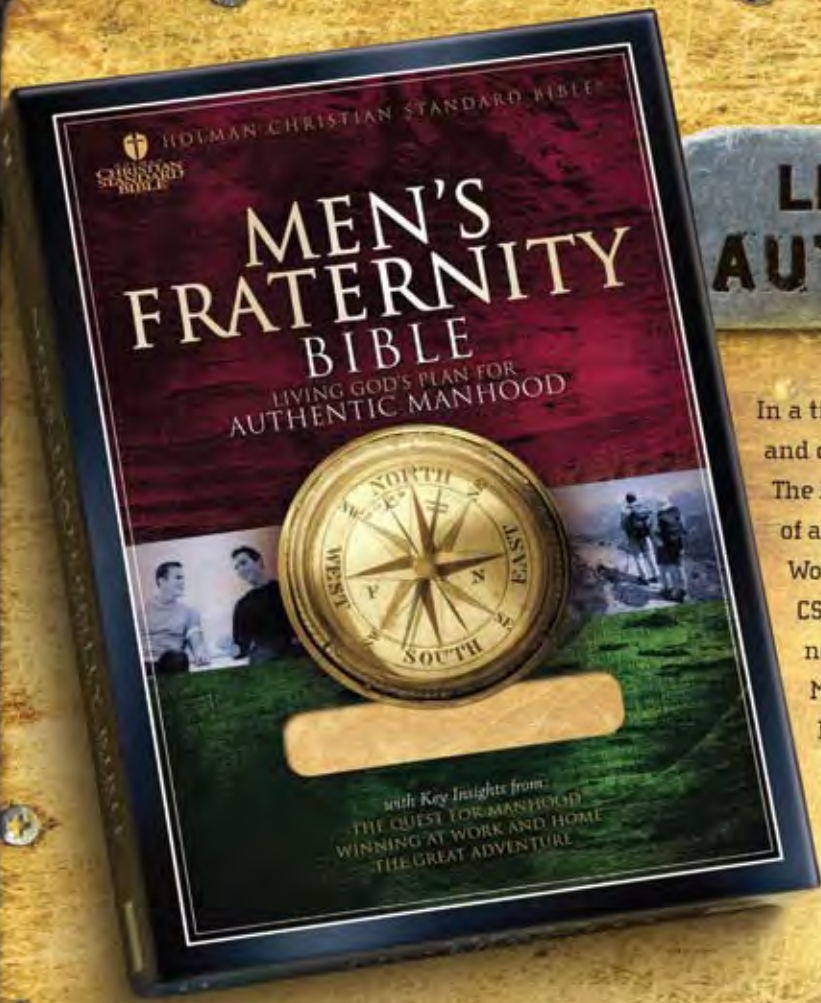
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