

# Facts & Trends

## ***Vaughn Forest***

***Connecting people  
with Sunday school***

*Coverage starts on page 16*

MAY/JUNE 2006

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

 **LifeWay**  
Biblical Solutions for Life

# Contents

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## Commentary

- From my perspective: What are we building? ..... 4
- New, improved facilities top wish list ..... 6

## Articles

- Arkansas preacher ministers in home church ..... 10
- Smaller church pastors have big gifts, talents ..... 12
- Alabama church does Sunday school right ..... 16
- Moore speaks to college women in Chicago ..... 21
- LifeWay involved in family's 'Extreme Makeover' .... 24
- New B&H book shows Da Vinci Code flaws ..... 28
- Ministry is Cruise's greatest adventure ..... 29
- Survey shows top 10 issues affecting families ..... 33
- DayBreak refreshes women in the Northwest ..... 34
- LifeWay Stores are oases in Seattle area ..... 36
- Music & youth have tight connection ..... 38
- ACP analyst reflects on SBC trends ..... 43

## Resources

- For you from LifeWay ..... 48

*Cover photo: Pastor Lawrence Phipps of Vaughn Forest Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., makes it a priority to keep his church's Sunday school moving forward. It starts by loving people and training leaders. Photos by Kent Harville.*



*Toolbox for Small Church Pastors • 12*



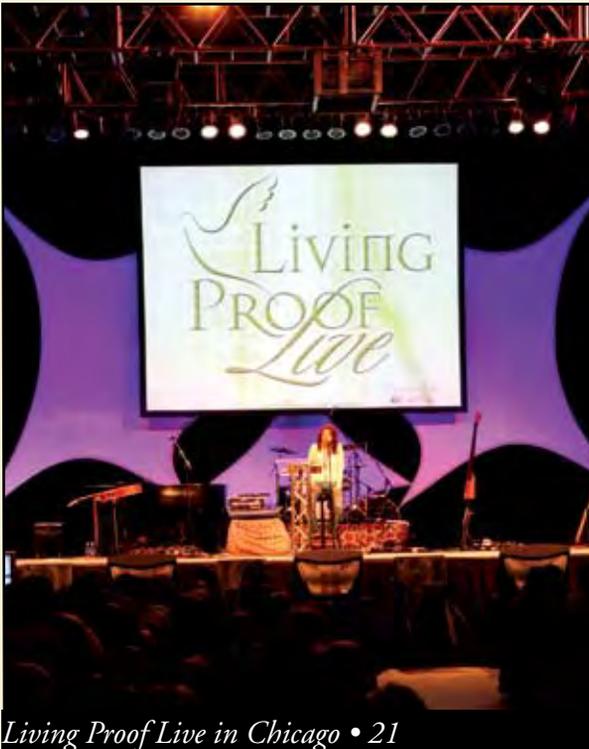
*Sunday school • 16*



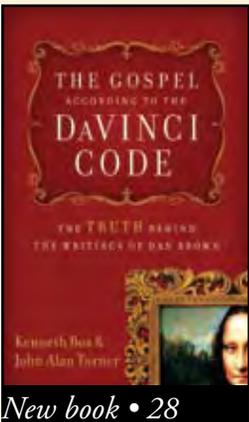
*'Extreme Makeover' help • 24*



Jason Cruise's outdoorsman ministry • 29



Living Proof Live in Chicago • 21



New book • 28



Youth bands • 38

## Coming in the July/August issue:

- Christian media being consumed by churchgoers
- Travis Cottrell is passionate about praise
- ACP historical data speak to membership, giving

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## Our purpose

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

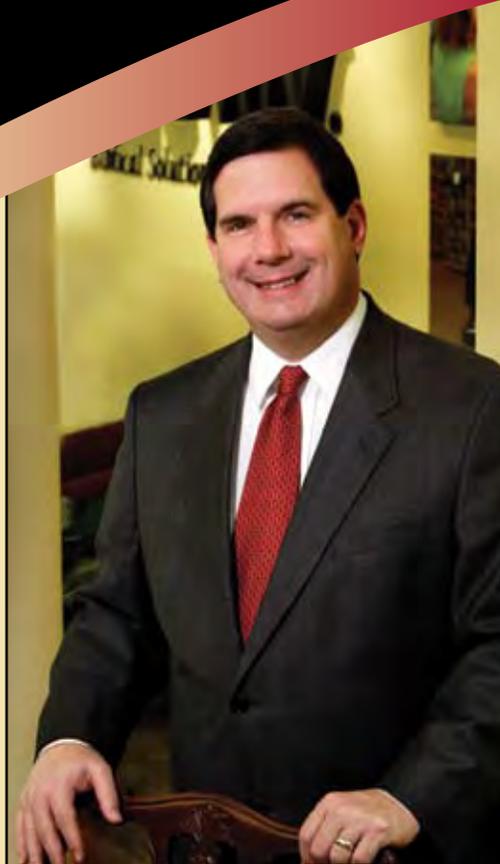
## Our format

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

## Our people

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

# From my perspective



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

## Which church are we building?

**B**uildings are not the church. I sometimes wonder if we lose sight of that by how construction-driven Christians are, especially Southern Baptists. There is nothing inherently wrong with buildings, but I fear we are dangerously close to paralyzing our evangelistic effectiveness because of the weight of debts shouldered by so many churches. Southern Baptists alone owe several hundred million dollars to banks because of construction. Much of this debt is long-term debt and can for years dictate how a church allocates its resources. A building has never led one person to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

But when we look at the church as a living organism found in the collective body and unity of Christians, church takes on a dynamic identity. I love how Paul pictures the church:

*For we are God's co-workers. You are God's field, God's building.*

*According to God's grace that was given to me, as a skilled master builder I have laid a foundation, and another builds on it. But each one must be careful how he builds on it, because no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid – that is, Jesus Christ.*

*If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one's work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one's work.*

*If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward.*

*If anyone's work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire. Don't you know that you are God's sanctuary and that the Spirit of God lives in you?*

*If anyone ruins God's sanctuary, God will ruin him; for God's sanctuary is holy, and that is what you are (1 Corinthians 3:9-17, HCSB).*

Paul clearly states that we are “God’s building,” and that our foundation upon which we are to build is Jesus Christ. He asks: “Don’t you know that you are God’s sanctuary and that the Spirit of God lives in you?” My

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point here is this: Paul never associated the church with buildings but identified the church as the collection of people in whom God dwells.

The research done exclusively for *Facts & Trends* in this issue and found on the following pages indicates both pastors and laity may have distorted priorities regarding church. The survey indicates that pastors would most likely use a windfall of money to expand or update facilities while laity would most want to pay off existing debt from previous construction. We are in desperate need of balance – in our budgets and in our lives.

Let's put it in perspective: Believers in Africa meet under the sweeping canopy of acacia trees, the only cover from the harsh sun; rural Christians in much of Central and South America meet in one-room cinderblock buildings covered in tin; our Asian brothers and sisters in megacities meet in high rise apartments and factories.

As an aside, one statistic that alarmed me in the survey is the percentage of pastors (6 percent) who see social ministry as a priority. We should not seek to alleviate people's pain and suffering apart from the gospel, but we must meet the physical and emotional needs of people as well as give priority to sharing the gospel. Again, it is about balance. Jesus was significantly interested in the eternal destinies of people but He always sought to relieve the hurts of others. The laity in the survey indicated a desire for their churches to place a higher priority on social ministry.

The takeaway from the survey is this: We need a balanced perspective on what it means to be a church. We must reach out to the lost and hurting around us and touch them with the love of Christ. We do that most effectively when our churches – bodies of believers – are not shackled by the weight of debt. With this balanced perspective, the majority opinion can then be that a financial windfall would be applied to fulfilling the Acts 1:8 challenge: being Jesus' witnesses from near to far.

I pray this perspective helps all of us stay focused on building the church Jesus intended. ■

In His service,

## We recommend

- *The Debt-Free Church: Experiencing Financial Freedom While Growing Your Ministry* by Jeff Berg & Jim Burgess
- *Honest Money* by Gary North
- *Basic Budgeting for Churches* by Jack A. Henry

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.

# ***New, improved facilities***

top churches' wish list  
for unexpected money

*by Ron Sellers*



W

hat would you do with an unexpected financial windfall? In research conducted exclusively for *Facts & Trends*, this question was posed to almost 1,700 Protestant ministers and churchgoers, with a twist: they were asked for their first priority for how to spend a sudden windfall their church might receive.

Ellison Research (Phoenix, Ariz.) conducted two studies for *Facts & Trends*. One is a representative sample of 504 Protestant church ministers nationwide, and the other is a companion survey of 1,184 people who attend Protestant churches at least once a month.

While few churches are likely to actually experience a sudden financial windfall, the research helps clarify the overall budget and spending priorities of clergy and laity – and where those priorities sometimes fail to align.

Clearly the top priority among ministers is to build, expand or update their church's buildings and facilities – 31 percent say this is how they would spend a sudden financial windfall their church received. This was even more of a priority in Southern Baptist churches, where 43 percent would spend the money on facilities.

Among all Protestant pastors, buildings and facilities are followed in priority by increasing community evangelism activities

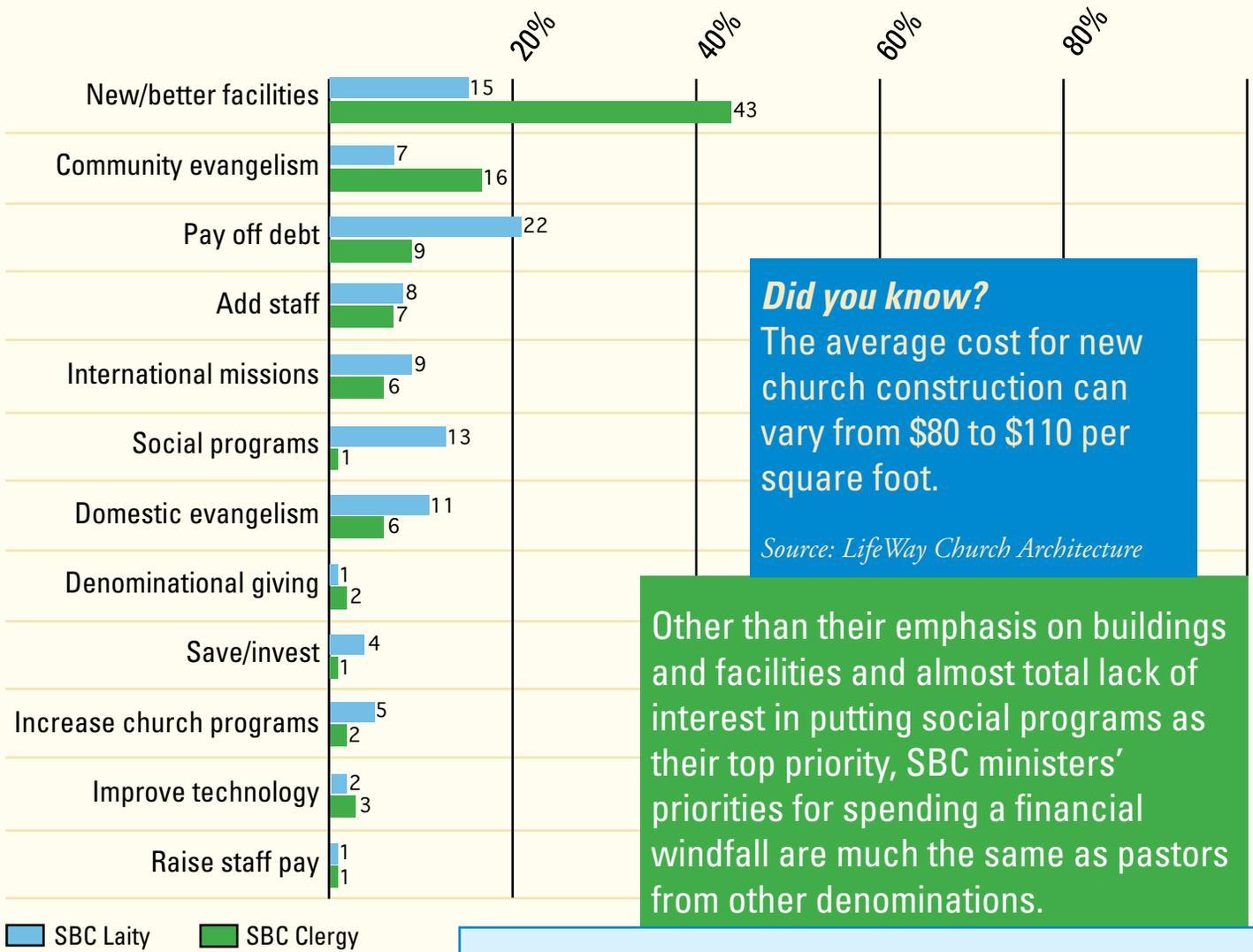
(16 percent), paying off debt (12 percent), and adding staff (10 percent).

Other than their emphasis on buildings and facilities and almost total lack of interest in putting social programs as their top priority, SBC ministers' priorities for spending a financial windfall are much the same as pastors from other denominations.

Churchgoers sometimes have different priorities for church finances than do pastors. Among laity, three priorities are tied for the top position: paying off debt (18 percent), increasing social programs, such as helping with homelessness or education (18 percent), and building, expanding or updating church facilities (17 percent).

Of the four top clergy priorities, facilities and debt are also among the top priorities for laity. But only 8 percent of laity put community evangelism as their top spending priority, and just 2 percent say adding staff is their top priority. On the other hand, laity is three times as likely as

# Southern Baptist churches' top priority for spending a sudden financial windfall for the church



## Did you know?

The average cost for new church construction can vary from \$80 to \$110 per square foot.

Source: LifeWay Church Architecture

Other than their emphasis on buildings and facilities and almost total lack of interest in putting social programs as their top priority, SBC ministers' priorities for spending a financial windfall are much the same as pastors from other denominations.

## Did you know?

Church remodeling projects can vary from \$20 to \$75 per square foot.

The range for the construction of a Christian Family Life Center (gym, etc.) is \$60 to \$110 per square foot.

Source: LifeWay Church Architecture

## Other denominations

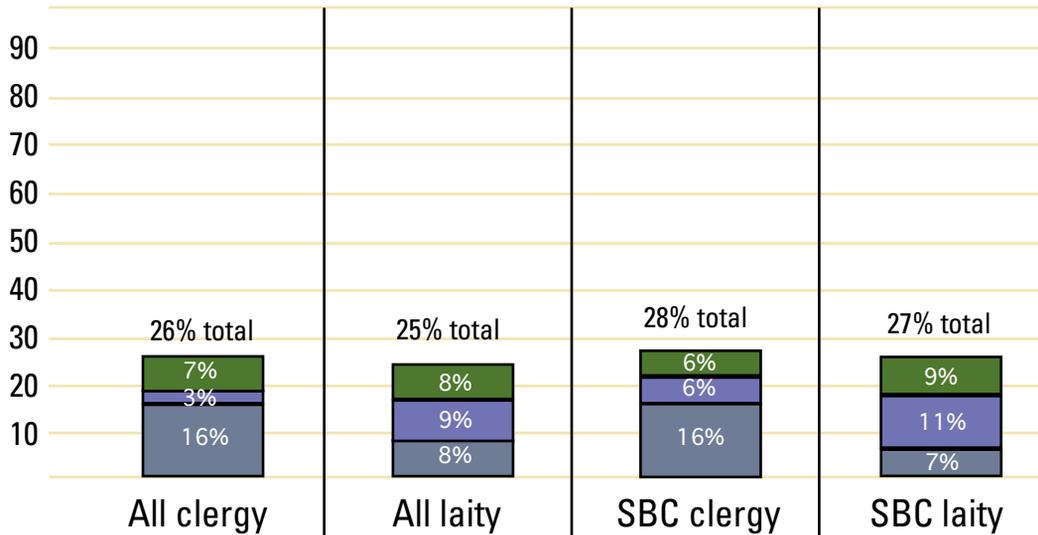
Priority for spending a sudden financial windfall for the church

	Other Baptist	Methodist	Lutheran	Pentecostal	All Others
New/better facilities	29   19	29   22	20   8	39   24	24   17
Community Evangelism	18   6	13   12	19   5	20   6	15   9
Pay off debt	14   16	9   18	6   29	18   12	10   16
Add staff	6   1	11   1	13   0	9   1	13   2
International missions	11   13	5   2	2   4	5   11	8   8
Social programs	11   16	5   18	2   14	5   18	8   19

Percentages: Clergy | Laity

## Type of mission and evangelism spending that is top priority

Local  
Domestic  
International



clergy to say the first priority for increased spending should be social outreach.

From the findings, it may appear at first glance that evangelism, missions and outreach are a higher priority for clergy than for their congregations. In reality, both put a fairly high priority on evangelism – they just have different priorities for where the evangelism should take place.

Pastors focus primarily on their local community (16 percent), versus international missions (7 percent) or overall domestic evangelism (3 percent). But 26 percent of pastors say their first priority would be spending money on evangelism and outreach of some type.

Among laity, 25 percent put evangelism and outreach as their first priority, but laity is equally divided among local, domestic and international evangelism as their top priority.

The study does show some different budget priorities for clergy and laity. This doesn't mean one side or the other is

wrong, but it does suggest that each group probably needs to understand the priorities of the other group more clearly.

For instance, ministers may need to do a better job explaining why improved facilities should be a budgetary priority and will further the ministry effectiveness of the church (particularly in SBC churches, where the gap between pastors and clergy is larger than average).

In the same way, members of the congregation may need to do more to facilitate church spending on social programs if those are important to them – including volunteering their own time and leadership to make this kind of outreach happen more often.

It was noteworthy that pastors rarely would spend the money on themselves. Only 1 percent would raise staff pay or benefits, or increase staff training and education, as their top priority. Virtually all ministers are thinking first about their church, their community or the world at large before their own needs or desires. ■



*Ron Sellers is president of Ellison Research (Phoenix, Ariz.), which is conducting exclusive research for Facts & Trends on issues important to our readers.*



Photo by Kent Harville

# This preacher stayed home

by Polly House

**B**randon Brasel is a brave man; some would say fearless. He is pastor of the church where he grew up. And, about one third of the church members are his extended family – four generations of them.

“I’m proud to be pastor of First Baptist [in Parthenon, Ark.],” Brasel said. “It is a little weird to be pastor of the church where I grew up, but at the same time, I love all these people and I know they love me and my wife and daughters.”

The Brasels joined about 80 other people at the Toolbox for the Smaller Church Pastor and his Wife, sponsored by LifeWay Jan. 23-25 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C.

Brasel, 28, said he was “a pretty good kid” growing up, so there aren’t a lot of horror stories about his youth or teenage years he has to live down. “The former pastor told one story on me about when I was a little boy, about three. He looked out the window during his sermon and saw me jumping up and down in a mud puddle. I don’t remember how I escaped from the service, but I guess I sneaked out somehow. The preacher said he couldn’t help himself and started laughing. He said the next thing he remembered was my dad going out to get me!”

Then, there was the time as a teenager that he was riding his four-wheeler, making a lot of noise, around the home of an elderly woman from the church. “She didn’t think much of that,” Brasel said, a little embarrassed at the memory. But, now, that same woman is 90 years old and dealing with cancer. “We have developed such a great relationship,” Brasel said. “I

go and sit with her and visit with her and pray with her. She is happy with me as her pastor.”

Brasel is a bivocational pastor, working on the family farm with his father and grandfather. They raise beef cattle and operate a saw mill and logging business. The Brasel family has been in the area for generations.

Brandon and his wife, Candra, met in elementary school, but then Candra’s family moved to a neighboring town and she transferred to a different school. “We reconnected when I was a freshman in college and was his cousin’s roommate,” she said. Except for a six-month period soon after their marriage in 1996, the Brasels have lived in the area their entire lives. “This is home,” she said.

Family connections abound in the church – mom, dad, grandfather, sisters, cousins, nieces and nephews. Brasel’s father and a cousin are deacons.

“I have three older sisters, and two of them and their kids are members,” Brasel said. One sister is widowed and one divorced, so Brasel has taken on multiple roles as uncle, father-figure and pastor to his nieces and nephews. “It’s cool having that kind of relationship with them,” he said. “I think they feel some accountability with me being the pastor of their church. Maybe it makes them think a little bit.”

About 40-50 people attend First Baptist on Sunday morning, with about 15 of those being youth. “When I came, there were only about three youth, but now we have about 30 in our Wednesday night group,” he said. “Most of the youth who come do it on their own. Most of them don’t have a

mom or dad who comes with them. They get themselves up and to church. My hat goes off to them. I don’t know that I would have done that when I was their age.”

Candra, a mental health specialist who coordinates the school-based mental health services for the Harrison (Ark.) public school system, knows youth can benefit from involvement in church. “We encourage the youth to be involved in a church youth group, whether it’s ours, or another one.”

Both of the Brasels hope to see more children get involved in church. “We do a big Vacation Bible School every summer,” she said. “Lots of children come to that, but we haven’t developed a big children’s program at the church yet.”

Brasel said he looks forward to using the tools he learned during the LifeWay conference at his church. “The best thing I have learned is how to match people’s skills with the jobs at the church. It’s important to involve everyone in the work, no matter what they can do.”

First Baptist is in the tiny north Arkansas hamlet of Parthenon, about six miles from Jasper, a town of about 500 on the beautiful Buffalo River in Newton County. The entire county only has about 8,500 people, based on figures from a 2002 census.

“We are never going to be a huge church,” Brasel said. “There just aren’t that many people living around here. But there are still people to reach and people who need to know the Lord. So we’ll keep serving where we are.” ■

**“We are never going to be a huge church... But there are still people to reach”**

— Brandon Brasel



# Small church pastors have big gifts, talents

by Polly House

Photos by Kent Harville

## *Most Southern Baptist pastors need help.*

They need help because:

- 1) They are the only pastoral staff members of their churches.
- 2) They work with all the age groups – babies to senior adults.
- 3) They know the names and life situations of every church member.
- 4) They know if one family goes on vacation, 10 percent of their congregation may be absent.
- 5) They know every crushing, critical word will get back to them.

## **Most churches are small**

The Annual Church Profile (ACP) conducted by LifeWay shows that almost 26,000 of the SBC's more than 43,000 churches have an attendance of fewer than 125 people.

This tells LifeWay that “most” pastors are probably the lone staff members at their churches. With this in mind, LifeWay sponsored the Toolbox for the Smaller Church Pastor and his Wife, Jan. 23-25 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C. About 80 people from 12 states attended the event.

“Pastors, you are some of the most gifted and talented leaders in the SBC,” Barry Campbell, director for the Carolinas in LifeWay's regional operations area, said to the group. “You are some of the hardest working pastors. You do it all. Plus, you rarely get any recognition for your ministry.”

Campbell is author of *Toolbox for [Busy] Pastors*, published by LifeWay. It offers 100 “how-to's” for pastors. The book is especially helpful to single staff member churches because it is designed to save time yet achieve the best ministry results. “This is a reference book that we think can help when, for example, a pastor has to do his first wedding,” Campbell said. Written in an executive summary fashion, information is brief and to the point.

“We have wanted to do this conference for the pastors and wives in smaller churches for a long time,” said Chris Johnson, editor of *Life Answers* at LifeWay and one of the coordinators of the event. “We appreciate the work these pastors do and understand the frustrations and the joys.” Johnson, bivocational pastor of Central Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., understands the work especially well.



*Facing page: LifeWay's Barry Campbell tells pastors of smaller churches they are some of the SBC's best.*

*Above: Participants at the Toolbox for Smaller Church Pastors gather for brainstorming.*

Johnson credited Kay Vantrease of LifeWay's church leadership training area with the Toolbox conference becoming reality. "Kay is a member of a small church and has such a heart for the ministry of these pastors. She sees the needs these guys face and how LifeWay can work with them to help them make a positive impact on their churches and communities."

### Challenges in ministry

The pastors attending the event said two of the biggest challenges in their ministries are developing and motivating lay leadership. Eddie Mosley, pastor of spiritual development at First Baptist Church, Smyrna, Tenn., told the group one way to address this issue is to intentionally involve children and youth in the ministry of the church.

"In the little church in Kentucky where I grew up, my pastor trusted me as a 5th grader to take up the offering. That's been a long time ago and I still remember that. When I was a teenager, I couldn't sing. But, I got to be the 'snake man' (handling all the sound cables) for the youth choir so I still got to go on the choir trips. It's about involving people with what they can do. I didn't get it at the time, but my pastor was training the next generation for ministry."

Mosley reminded the pastors to never use the sentence "We've got it covered" in ministry. "For example, if you have someone who asks if you need him to

take up offering, don't tell him 'We've got it covered.' Let him take up the offering. You can't have too many people doing it. If someone asks if you need him to set up tables for a fellowship, don't say 'We've got it covered.' Let him help. What 'We've got it covered' says is 'Just go on to the lake this weekend. We don't need you.' They will learn pretty quick that they aren't necessary."

Matching people's interests with their point of service is crucial, Mosley said. "Find out what your people love to do and fit it in with the ministry. If they get to do what they love, you won't have to motivate them."

### Small is the majority

Brandon Brasel is fairly typical of many of these pastors. He leads First Baptist Church of Parthenon, Ark., a hamlet in the northern part of the state. They average between 40-50 on Sunday mornings, about a third of whom are members of his extended family. "We are never going to be a huge church," Brasel said. "There just aren't that many people living here. But there are still people to reach and people who need to know the Lord."

Stan Jenkins, pastor of Wells Chapel Baptist Church in Wallace, N.C., said, "We [pastors of smaller churches] are most of the pastors in the SBC. But we go to so many conferences where the ideas are just over our heads. They don't apply to our situations."

## We recommend

- *Toolbox for [Busy] Pastors* by Barry Campbell
- *The Good Book on Leadership: Case Studies from the Bible* by John Borek, Danny Lovett & Elmer Towns
- *Paul on Leadership* by C. Gene Wilkes
- *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* by Robert H. Welch
- *EKG: The Heartbeat of God* by Ken Hemphill
- *And the Place was Shaken: How to Lead a Powerful Prayer Meeting* by John Franklin

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*Bruce Nichols, center, pastor of Rolling Fork Baptist Church, Boston, Ky., prayed with Sam and Linda Evangelista, pastor and wife from International Bible Church, Jonesboro, Ga. Participants divided into small groups to pray for their churches, their ministries and themselves during the closing session.*

Karey Johnson, wife of Gary Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Aberdeen, Md., said, “I was so glad when we got here that the conference leaders understood where we are in small churches. They really knew about our specific needs. I was surprised that many of them are themselves pastors of smaller churches. That gave them a lot of credibility.”

The Johnsons’ church is near the Aberdeen Training Grounds. Both of them understand the transient nature of military church members. He is a former military chaplain and her father was career military, moving his family all over the world. “With the church being so close to the military base, we have a lot of people coming through, but they stay for a while, then get transferred somewhere else,” he said.

Breakout sessions for the pastors included Planning the Work and Ministry of Your Church, Blending Hymns and Praise Choruses for Worship, Using Technology in Worship, Using Online Learning in

Your People Development Strategy, Practical Ideas for Discipling Your People in Prayer, Effective Leadership, Dealing with Church Conflict, and Setting Effective Boundaries. The wives’ topics included sessions on Understanding Your Husband’s Inner Needs and Struggles as a Pastor, and Living in the Fishbowl that is a Pastor’s Family. The wives also

were treated to some spa time, getting some well-deserved pampering from local beauty consultants.

### God placed

Tim Dowdy, pastor of Eagle’s Landing Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga., reminded the pastors that God has a plan for them and their ministry. “God put you in the place where you are. He could have put you any place at any time in history, but He chose here and now for you. You are uniquely qualified and set apart by Him to serve where you are. So, don’t be afraid to lead!”

On the last day Bruce Nichols, pastor of Rolling Fork Baptist Church in Boston, Ky., expressed what event organizers heard many times from participants. “This has been great. I feel affirmed in my ministry and have so many good ideas to take back with me. If LifeWay has this Toolbox again next year, I’m coming back and bringing a bunch of guys with me.” ■

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# *No matter what it's called,* **Sunday school is about connecting people to the church**

*by Polly House*



*Photo by Kent Harville*

*Teacher John Stokes teaches a young adult class at Vaughn Forest. Growing classes such as this need to multiply to continue their ministry and growth.*

**S**outhern Baptists trying to define Sunday school is like judges trying to define obscenity. They may not be able define it, but they know it when they see it.

In most churches, Sunday school is called, well, Sunday school. But some churches use terms like Bible study, Bible fellowship and life study. In most churches, it happens on Sunday morning, but other churches may have Sunday school on Thursday night or Saturday morning. That's OK.

What all these names and times have in common, however, is that they are gatherings of believers and nonbelievers who are focused on studying God's Word.

They are open and accepting to new people at any time and they care about each other.

## **Sunday school in 3D**

David Francis, director of Sunday school at LifeWay, said Sunday school needs to be three dimensional. In his book, *The 3D Sunday School*, Francis said that in a balanced, three dimensional Sunday school members invite unchurched friends, relatives, associates and neighbors; create

small-group experiences in which people discover the great truths of the Bible and hear the faith stories of other believers; and work together to provide people the opportunity to connect through fellowship and ministry.

The three parts are equally important. “The three dimensions get out of balance when one dimension becomes more important than the others,” Francis said.

One church that successfully practices the 3D Sunday school model is Vaughn Forest Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala. As Francis put it, “If you want to see Sunday school done right, go to Vaughn Forest.”

### Doing it right

Vaughn Forest Pastor Lawrence Phipps and interim adult ministry pastor Daniel Edmonds call their Sunday morning time of Bible study and fellowship Life Changing Bible Fellowship (LCBF). One of the strategies to their success is they never let people get too comfortable in their classes.

“We are always moving people around from room to room and multiplying – we don’t say dividing – classes,” said Edmonds, who is also the director of the office of Sunday school for the Alabama Baptist State Convention. “No one feels ownership of a space around here and they think it’s normal to constantly be creating new classes.”

In February the church began offering two LCBF times on Sunday mornings. Growth in the classes, coupled with lack of space, demanded it. “Our members knew we were bursting at the seams in all our classes, so the need to move to two LCBF times was not a huge surprise to anyone,” Edmonds said.

### Classes multiply

Because of the emphasis on serving, staffing the second LCBF hour was not



**“The ultimate success of a class will not be measured in how many people can be put in seats, but how many people the classes place in service ...”**

— Lawrence Phipps, pastor, Vaughn Forest

difficult. Every adult class has a teacher in training waiting in the wings to begin leading a new class. “We just never let our classes become stagnant,” Edmonds said. “They are always changing and growing and multiplying. Our folks think that’s normal!”

Phipps said, “The ultimate success of a class will not be measured in how many people can

be put in seats, but how many people the classes place in service, and the classes’ ability to start new classes. Our goal is not to get people to show up, but to grow up and go out to serve in existing classes or to start new classes.”

### TEAMS

Phipps and Edmonds created and self-published a resource called *Growing Sunday School TEAMS: A 5 Step Practical Guide to Growing the Church through the Sunday School*.

Photos by Kent Harville



*Melva and Earl Falls, top middle, relocated to Montgomery following Hurricane Katrina. They lived in the church's mission house until they could find a house of their own. Vaughn Forest's ministry to them was a major factor in the couple's decision to stay.*

“TEAMS is an effective tool that God can use in a church that is committed to reaching and building lives through the Sunday school,” Phipps said in the opening chapter of the book.

All of a church's adult Sunday school classes potentially can have TEAMS, an acronym standing for Teacher, Evangelism leader, Administrative leader, Ministry leader and Service leader.

Ideally, a class will be large enough to have several members in each TEAMS area. The teacher team includes a teacher who regularly leads the class study; a teacher in training who works under the leadership of the teacher and teaches about once a month; and a discipleship coordinator who works in the class to promote the studies in the church's Discipleship University.

The evangelism team has an evangelism coordinator who keeps evangelism the focus of the Bible study class; an evangelism leader who leads the class in a systematic evangelism outreach strategy such as LifeWay's FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy; and, if using FAITH, FAITH learners who will serve on FAITH teams and work with the leader to identify, contact and enroll prospects in Bible study.

The administrative team has an administrator who keeps the class organized and on task; a prayer leader who leads and coordinates class prayer support; and a

“We are always moving people around from room to room and multiplying – we don't say dividing – classes.”

— Daniel Edmonds,  
interim adult ministry  
pastor, Vaughn Forest

## Growing Sunday School TEAMS

*Growing Sunday School TEAMS: A 5 Step Practical Guide to Growing the Church through the Sunday School* by Lawrence Phipps and Daniel Edmonds is available from Vaughn Forest Baptist Church. To purchase a copy, write For LIFE Ministries, 8660 Vaughn Road, Montgomery, AL 36117, or visit [www.forlifeministries.com](http://www.forlifeministries.com). Other accompanying resources include *It's Life Leader's Guide* and *Student Disciple's Workbook*, with administrative guide and CD's, and *More Abundant Life: The Christian's First 100 Days* are also available. To date, Phipps and Edmonds have donated proceeds from the sale of *Growing Sunday School TEAMS* to Vaughn Forest mission endeavors.



*Left: Members and guests alike share fellowship time following the morning service.  
Below: Ron Duckett serves as a Welcome Desk greeter, helping guests feel more at home at Vaughn Forest.*



class secretary who completes class records, paying special attention to the current contact information of new members and guests.

The ministry team includes a ministry coordinator who ensures all the care groups provide effective ministry; care group leaders who make sure everyone in the class has a place to fit in and receives care and love; and a fellowship coordinator who plans and organizes class fellowship activities.

The service team consists of a service coordinator who encourages class members to use their spiritual gifts in the Sunday school ministry; a new class leader who helps the class move toward multiplying itself; and a class missionaries' leader who helps the class stay in touch with and minister to individuals who leave the class to serve in the preschool, children and youth areas. These missionaries are prominently featured on a bulletin board in their corresponding classrooms and are remembered in prayer during class prayer time. Class group leaders make certain they are included in all fellowship opportunities.

### Evangelism connection

Vaughn Forest knows a thing or two about doing evangelism in connection with Sunday school. The church served as one of the 28 FAITH originator churches in 1998. LifeWay used a Phipps-designed prayer partner card as the model for the FAITH prayer partner cards. Vaughn Forest is in its 25th semester of evangelism-discipleship; beginning with Evangelism Explosion in 1994, transitioning to FAITH in 1998, and changing to It's LIFE, a ministry they developed in 2003.

But what happens after the people have been reached, evangelized and invited to church? What does the church do then? As Vaughn Forest exemplifies, going the extra mile makes for a great first impression.

### We recommend

- David Francis's book, *The 3D Sunday School*, and supporting training materials are available online at no cost. Go to [www.lifeway.com/sskickoff](http://www.lifeway.com/sskickoff) to download free, reprintable helps for organizing a 3D Sunday school.

First-time guests at Vaughn Forest have plenty of clearly marked parking places near the front door. A welcome desk is front and center, staffed with smiling people ready to help register guests and help them locate an appropriate Sunday school class. Then, someone escorts guests to their class and introduces them to a welcoming class member who will introduce them to the rest of the class. Since most class members wear name tags, guests feel comfortable wearing them, too. A class member often walks to the worship center with the guests and sits with them in the service. Guests are seldom left alone from the time they enter until they leave. That is how to make people feel welcome, members believe.

### Simple to join

“Historically, most churches tend to make it harder to join a Sunday school class than

to join the church,” Phipps said. “That’s backwards! It’s silly that we want people to come three Sundays in a row before we’ll enroll them in a class. Then if they are out three Sundays in a row, we want to take them off the roll. To join the church, all you have to do is show up one Sunday, walk down the aisle at the end of the service, shake the pastor’s hand, and you’re a member.

“It ought to be a lot easier to become a member of a Sunday school class,” he said. “It’s through the Sunday school that people will form the relationships that will keep them involved in the church. Most of the people who join a Sunday school class will wind up joining the church. I believe if new members form relationships with others in the small group setting, we’ll lose fewer members through the back door.” ■

*Student minister Matt Andress joins other ministry staff members in serving the Lord’s Supper to groups of worshippers at Vaughn Forest.*



*Photo by Kent Harville*

# *Beth Moore to college women:* **Serve God's purpose in your generation** *by Kelly Davis*



*Photo by Robin Pendergrast*

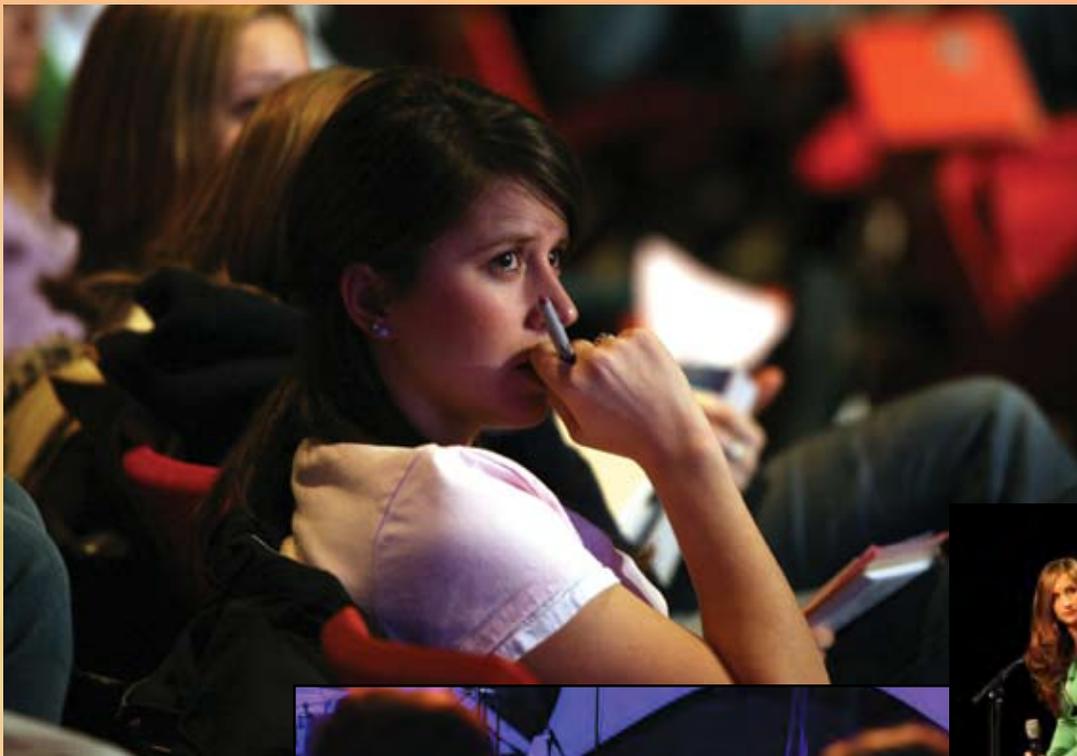
**C**arrying the torch lit by her late 92-year-old mentor, Bible teacher and author Beth Moore came to light the torch for the next generation during a special edition of Living Proof Live designed exclusively for college-age women.

“As our generations overlap, God holds [the older] generation responsible to pouring our lives into the younger,” Moore said to the 1,500 college women at the Pavilion on the campus of The University of Illinois. During the two-day event, worship leader Christy Nockels of Watermark gave a devotion and offered insight into how to have the appropriate worship posture before the Lord.

Moore’s focal passage, Acts 13:36, spoke of King David’s dedication to serving God’s purpose in his own generation. “For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed,” Moore passionately read to the crowd.

Just as David served God in his own generation, “You have been called to serve God’s purpose in your generation,” Moore

*More than 1,500 college-age women gathered March 10-11 at the Pavilion on the campus of the University of Chicago to hear Beth Moore exhort them to serve the Lord in their generation.*



*Left: An attendee listens as Beth Moore outlines four ways to serve God's purpose. Below: (l-r) Melissa Moore, Beth Moore and Christy Nockels provide honest, biblical feedback to questions from the audience. Below left: Times of ministry framed the worship and Bible study sessions.*

*Photos by Robin Pendergrast*



told the women, who represented more than 24 states and Canada. "You and I have a little turn around this planet earth," she said as she walked up and down the aisles of the Pavilion hugging women in the crowd. "Our life is a vapor ... we must be extremely intentional about serving God in our generation."

Referencing Acts 13:36, Moore laid out four ways the young women can live out God's purpose for their lives in their own generation.

First, Moore explained that God's purpose is highly personalized. "God has thought your life through," she said. "God thinks about you." Moore explained that the word "purpose" in the Greek deals with God's thought process behind His plan.

She explained that in His omniscience,

God knows how each life will turn out, but has a specialized plan for each person. "Nothing in this life is haphazard," she said, referencing Jeremiah 29:11: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

Conference attendee Amy Thompson, 20, a sophomore at Texas State University at San Marcos, said that Moore's explanation of God's personalized purpose encouraged her to continue to follow God's plan for her own life.

"College is a hard time for girls and Beth helped me see that this generation needs Christians to show not only what they are against, but what they're for," Thompson said. "It's so amazing that God's plan is

highly personalized for everyone and we need to be in fellowship with Him in order to follow that plan.”

Second, Moore explained that God's purpose is progressively revealed in each person's life. “He won't tell us [His plan] in totality because He is about relationships,” she said, adding that through His plan, God reveals certain aspects of His nature at the appropriate times.

Brittney Thomas, 23, a graduate student at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, said she identified with Moore's teaching on God's progressive plan for each person's life.

“Looking back at my life, I can see how God reveals His plan in His own timing,” Thomas said. “I was in the 1997 Paducah school shooting where the gunman shot my best friend and four others as we prayed before school. Until then, I didn't know how to handle a hard situation.”

“From that one instance in my life, God has progressively revealed why it happened and He has used that terrible situation to help others,” she said. “I learned to live in the here and now and be faithful to God as He reveals His plan for my life, just as Beth Moore is teaching us.”

Thomas said that while “we often hear all the negative about this generation ... this conference helped me see that we are here for a purpose and we can make a difference in the world.”

Third, Moore said that God's purpose is perfectly timed. “You have been assigned to this generation, and if this generation screams one thing to us it's relevancy,” she said.

“You have been called to be relevant to this generation,” Moore said, but warned of

pitfalls that go along with being culturally relevant.

“If Christianity is the narrow way, then relevancy is like walking on a tightrope,” she said. “It's tricky because it's easy to fall to the right or left.”

Falling too far left leads to carnality, she said, and explained that while young women must relate to matters of culture in order to remain relevant, they must guard their minds to matters of carnality. Christians must be connected enough to know how to minister in modern culture without it affecting them, she said.

Moore also mentioned that falling too far right on the relevancy tightrope leads to hyper-spirituality. “We will be irrelevant when we become self-pious,” she said, citing the example of how the Jewish leaders poured over Scripture but did not believe in Christ in John 5:36.

Moore encouraged the women to not only know Scripture, but to let the Word of God dwell in them while they extend hope, healing and grace to others.

Fourth, Moore explained that God's purpose is supernaturally empowered. “God has specifically gifted you,” she said, citing the diversity of spiritual gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12. The Spirit is active in each gift and distributes to each one as He wills, she said.

“This is our charge and this is our time,” Moore said. “The most important thing that can happen in your life and mine when it's all said and done, is that we served God's purpose in our own generation as relevant Christians.” ■

*For more information about Beth Moore and Living Proof Live events, go to [www.lifeway.com/women](http://www.lifeway.com/women).*

# LifeWay helps 'Extreme Makeover' build family's house, ministry

by Russ Rankin



Photo by Russ Rankin

*Marcus Rich, LifeWay logistics department, unpacks boxes of Broadman & Holman books in the chapel the night before the home is unveiled to the White family.*

On March 12, America was introduced to the White family, courtesy of Ty Pennington, ABC's hit show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" and a brand new house. And LifeWay was there – behind the scenes – to help make it happen.

John White, a second-generation pastor in Dewey, Okla., was known as a tender pastor with a big heart and a big family. John, his wife, Danna, and their five children filled the parsonage of Bluestem Baptist Church and were known throughout the small community 45 minutes north of Tulsa as selfless people who exemplified and lived the two greatest commandments. They loved the Lord and their neighbors.

In April 2005, joy turned to tragedy when John's earthly life ended with a massive heart attack on the day of his 19<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Instead of celebrating with her husband, Danna was made a widow, and Sarah (17), Esther (16), Zeb (15), Rebekah (14), and Ruth (13) lost their father.

With John's meager life insurance and some community fund-raisers, Danna was able to purchase two old trailers. But with no working kitchen, carpet, power, heat or even locks on the doors, the children often spent the colder nights at friends' homes just to stay warm.

"Danna has such amazing strength," said Cindy White, who is married to John's brother, James. "It's been such a tough year, but (Danna) has always been such a welcoming and giving person. When you've got five kids at home ... they always had friends over, kids who didn't have a place to go. They always knew they'd find love at Danna's. Even with a two-bedroom house, there was always room for people to come."

Despite the hardship of the past year, Danna continued to have a missionary's heart, and expressed repeatedly on the March 12 show her desire to minister to others in need.

In the White Family episode of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," the design team built on Danna's desire to be a ministry beacon in her community. Providentially, the show contacted LifeWay to play a special role in its plans to help stock a chapel being built inside the home.

Karin Jarlstedt, a design producer on the show, contacted Phill Burgess, executive director of LifeWay's Holman Bible Outreach International, which facilitates the translation, production and distribution of

affordable Bibles and Scripture portions for evangelism, mission projects and training.

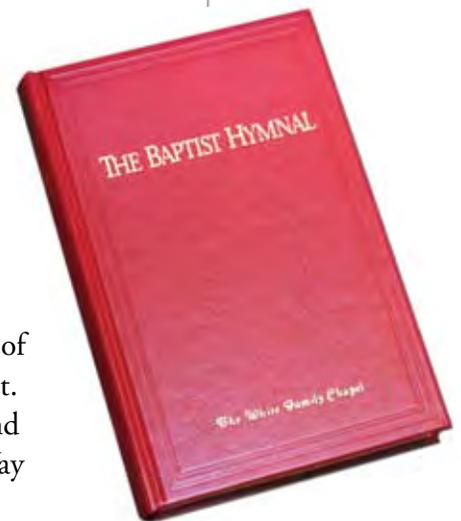
Jarlstedt had an urgent request for Burgess: 50 pew Bibles and 50 Baptist Hymnals – all embossed with "The White Family Chapel." An additional 1,000 Bibles to give away to the volunteers would be great, she added, as would some new books to stock a library.

"And she needed them yesterday," Burgess recalled with a laugh. "But after hearing the story of Danna White and her kids, we knew there was no way we couldn't participate in blessing this family."

Just 48 hours after being contacted by the show, everything the producers asked for was headed to Tulsa on a LifeWay truck driven by Chad Price and Marcus Rich of LifeWay's logistics department. There, they joined Burgess and employees of the Tulsa LifeWay Christian Store.

Landon Gaines, manager of the Tulsa store, said it was gratifying to watch the show when it aired, knowing the intense amount of work that went into building a house in five days. Even though the LifeWay work didn't make it to the screen, the results were equally as satisfying, he said.

"Our mission was to be a part of this show and to have a hand in impacting this family in a very positive way," Gaines said. "Even though we weren't shown, it feels rewarding to know our hard work and involvement will help spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ for generations to come."





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1. LifeWay employees pray together after setting up the White family chapel.
2. Phill Burgess, left, executive director of Holman Bible Outreach International, and Chad Price, right, from LifeWay's logistics operations, open the box of Bibles with "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" design producer Karin Jarlstedt.
3. Landon Gaines, manager of the Tulsa LifeWay Christian Store, and Burgess sort through books that will fill the shelves of the White Family Chapel.
4. LifeWay's freight truck, driven from Nashville, backs up to the "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" house in Dewey, Okla.
5. Chrysta Jernigan of the Tulsa LifeWay Christian Store puts books on the chapel shelves.

Photo by Russ Rankin

Gaines added that the Tulsa store employees' involvement in the show has given them "a renewed sense of vision for our store and our purpose in the community."

"We have had several opportunities to intensify our relationships with our customers and our community because of the show," he said. "I had a customer remark that being a part of events like this is what life is all about. Through conversations

others that they will touch with the love of Christ in the future."

The LifeWay group began setting up the chapel at 10:30 p.m. the night before the project's completion. After unpacking boxes of books and Bibles and stocking shelves of the library, the LifeWay employees prayed together in the chapel, again committing the fruits of their effort to God.

"Her husband may have gone home, but Danna White's ministry is just getting



like that we have opportunities to show and tell them about our vision and commitment."

"God's Word is transformational, and we could see Danna White's desire for a place to touch others with the love and truth of Christ," Burgess said. "Our mission is to share Christ and provide biblical solutions for life. The first thing we did as the onsite LifeWay team was resolve that it isn't about getting seen on camera; it's about playing a role in impacting a family and the countless

started in a new way," Burgess said.

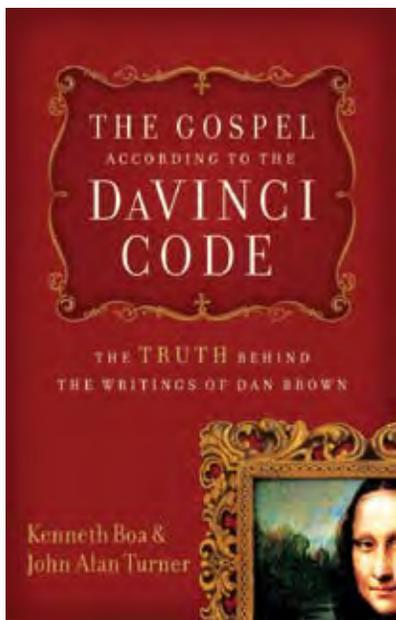
"LifeWay is blessed to have been able to come alongside her in this way. This is the perfect example of seeing where God is at work and joining Him there.

"We have no idea where this could lead and what impact this show will have," he added. "God's Word does not return void, so we know something big will happen. I am so thankful we were able to play a role in helping this family make an impact in the community." ■

*"Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" is produced by Endemol USA, a division of Endemol Holding. David Goldberg is the president of Endemol USA. The series is executive-produced by Tom Forman. The show airs Sundays (8:00-9:00 p.m. ET), on the ABC Television Network.*

# New B&H book sets record straight about worldview behind *The Da Vinci Code*

by Rob Phillips



It's only fiction. That's the final line of defense when Dan Brown, author of runaway bestseller *The Da Vinci Code*, is confronted about shoddy research or challenged about his Gnostic beliefs, according to Kenneth Boa and John Alan Turner, authors of a new book that sets the record straight about Brown's postmodern worldview.

*The Gospel According to The Da Vinci Code: The Truth Behind the Writings of Dan Brown* was released May 1 by Broadman & Holman, LifeWay's publishing arm.

The book refutes the worldview behind *The Da Vinci Code*, the best-selling hardcover adult novel of all time.

The timing of the B&H book's release precedes the scheduled May 19 release of the Sony motion picture based on Brown's book and starring actor Tom Hanks.

According to the authors, Brown promotes a postmodern worldview akin to the age-old heresy of Gnosticism, which became the greatest doctrinal challenge to the church in the second century. While taking on many complex forms, Gnosticism is basically a philosophical approach to the gospel that promotes secret "knowledge" (*gnosis* in the Greek), resulting in a denial of both the full deity and humanity of Christ, among other false teachings. Paul, John, Peter and Jude all addressed the germ of Gnosticism in their New Testament writings.

For example, some of the "secrets" that the characters in *The Da Vinci Code* claim to know include:

- Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, and they had a child whose descendants may still be alive.
- This made Peter jealous, so he covered it all up after Jesus died.
- The early church engaged in a massive cover-up to conceal Jesus' marriage and his humanity in order to put men, rather than women, in control.
- Jesus was not considered divine until centuries after his death when the Emperor Constantine suppressed the ancient documents that tell the real story and had the Council of Nicaea cobble together what we have today in the New Testament.

Boa and Turner warn that *The Da Vinci Code* may do for orthodox Christianity what the movie "Inherit the Wind" did for the debate over religion and education – replace fact with fantasy. "Inherit the Wind" was a fictional account of the famous Scopes Monkey Trial and inaccurately cast evolutionists as reasonable men and women of science, while creationists were depicted as bumbling simpletons. *Monkey Business: The True Story of the Scopes Trial*, released last year by B&H, sets the record straight on that historic event.

"Dan Brown says that faith is a continuum and that he is a Christian – in his own way," write Boa and Turner. "But the views Dan Brown showcases through his characters' discussions are irreconcilable with traditional, orthodox Christianity. We're not terrified by Dan Brown or his ideas and we're certainly not asking you to be either. However, ideas have consequences."

And saying his book is only fiction is no defense. ■

## Also on this subject

- *Breaking the Da Vinci Code* and *Breaking the Da Vinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everyone's Asking* by Darrell L. Bock
- *Da Vinci Code on Trial* by Stephen Clark
- *The Gospel Code: Novel Claims about Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Da Vinci* by Ben Witherington III

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

# His ministry IS adventure

*By Russ Rankin*

**J**ason Cruise's eyes light up when he starts relating stories about hooking trout in a cold mountain stream. His voice quickens describing the patience involved in outwitting and luring a tom turkey.

But it's ministry that really gets Cruise excited; ministry that lures and connects disconnected men with their Creator God through the call of the great outdoors.

*(continued on next page)*



*Photo by Kent Harville*



*Jason Cruise, outfitter and fishing guide Toner Mitchell, and David Moss, member of Belmont Heights Baptist Church, plan their fishing trip while studying a map a river near Glorieta.*

Cruise founded Outdoor Ministry Network (OMN) three years ago to train other churches to develop successful outdoor ministries.

Taking his sense of adventure a step further, Cruise recently joined with LifeWay Christian Resources to start a Weblog (blog) to foster a sense of community among Christian outdoorsman.

The blog – [www.outfittingyourfaith.com](http://www.outfittingyourfaith.com) – is designed to be a “year in the life” format, and includes Cruise’s personal adventure as he transitions from the pastorate of Belmont Heights Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., to concentrate fulltime on OMN.

“There has never been a place for Christians to go to connect with other likeminded guys on things they are passionate about – from turkey calls to high-end ministry tools,” Cruise said. “The blog is a place where men can have community and share ideas as well as find outlets for adventure and ministry.”

Ron Pratt, national event planner with

LifeWay Conference Center ministries, collaborated with Cruise in 2005 to develop outdoor events at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center, located outside Santa Fe, N.M. The first event drew men from as far away as Maine.

“Last year at our first-ever Glorieta Adventures fly-fishing event I saw firsthand how God is using Jason and his passion for connecting hunters and anglers with God,” Pratt said. “We had limited the event to 30 men and we sold it out. Not only were these men learning more about fly fishing from Jason’s expert advice and experience, but they were learning more about their walks with other men and with God.”

From the success of that inaugural event, Pratt expanded registration for the Sept. 27-29, 2006, fly-fishing retreat to 50. “I am so thankful that Jason has the passion, the gifts, the skills and the talents to connect outdoorsmen with God,” Pratt said. “Jason and I are continuing to explore other opportunities in using the outdoors to touch men for God.

“Our hope is that this blog will become

a hub of conversation for people of all ages who are seeking continued relevance within a changing culture,” Pratt added. “This may very well be a new ministry model. By watching Jason live out his calling in a cutting-edge and exciting way, we believe that will stir ideas and excitement about ways men can be drawn to Christ.”

According to Cruise, the typical male is disconnected from church and spiritual things because there is nothing that appeals to him within the walls of the church.

“With churches, it’s like bow hunting,” Cruise explained. “If you aim at nothing, that’s what you’ll hit. The marginal man is marginal because he’s never had an interest and the church is not aiming at him.

“Outdoor Ministry Network is about teaching men how to connect with men who aren’t believers. Sometimes the only connection you’ll have with a man is that you both love to shoot stuff.”

To reach the disconnected, marginal man, Cruise said, “We’ve got to get in his world and relate to him on his level and in his interests. Otherwise, he’ll continue thinking church is a place that is requiring him to give up his manhood.”

By admission, Cruise is transparent and shares candidly on his blog about struggles and concerns of the ministry. “I never want to be one of these Teflon preachers – someone who is a fake and never has problems,” he said. “That kind of life gets exposed.”

This year, Cruise again will participate in Glorieta’s fly fishing retreat, Sept. 27-29, as well as the inaugural Glorieta Adventures Elk Hunt retreat in October that already is sold out.



*Top: Anglers gather early in the morning to plan their day of fly fishing.*

*Bottom: God’s natural beauty provides a backdrop for fly fishing near Glorieta.*

## We recommend

- *The Sportsman’s Bible*
- *The Heart of the Sportsman* by Jason Cruise
- *Into the High Country* by Jason Cruise
- *The Hunter’s Call: Capture the Adventure of a More Meaningful Life* by The Hautman Brothers
- *With God on a Deer Hunt* by Steve Chapman
- *A Look at Life from a Deer Stand Gift Edition* by Steve Chapman

*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.*

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# LifeWay online research reveals top 10 issues facing families

**A** two-round survey conducted last November and December by LifeWay's Internet strategies department found that modern families struggle with a variety of issues ranging from an anti-Christian culture to materialism.

In November 2005, Internet strategies began soliciting participation in the Top 10 Issues Facing Today's Family online research project.

From the initial list of responses, LifeWay compiled the 20 most frequently submitted answers and sent that list to the original survey respondents. During January, those participants used the same Internet survey tool to rank their top 10 from among those 20 issues.

LifeWay began revealing the results of the survey in early March with the announcement of materialism as the No. 10 issue. Each week, the Internet strategies department unveiled another topic in ascending order along with an extensive list of resources and information addressing that issue.

Ministry areas throughout LifeWay offered materials such as articles, movie clips, dramas, Web sites, sermons, Scripture passages and illustrations intended to aid ministry leaders in helping others or directly assist families facing the problems.

"This was an opportunity to put forward the best our organization has to offer related to the top issues as identified by the survey participants," said Michael Epps Utley, marketing coordinator in Internet strategies. "LifeWay exists to provide biblical solutions for life, and this survey gave us some additional insight into the solutions people are looking for in order to address key challenges among their families."

Some of the survey results proved surprising, Utley said. For instance, it was expected that substance abuse would rank in the top 10. Instead, unexpected issues such as busyness (No. 3) and lack of communication (No. 7) received a majority of votes.

"We were a little surprised to see anti-Christian culture rank as the No. 1 issue," Utley added. "But when we took a look at the rest of the list, we realized that today's anti-Christian cultural mentality could be considered a contributing factor when it comes to these other issues."

Overall, more than 2,000 people from around the country offered their opinions in the survey, making this survey pool even larger than the one that contributed to last year's Top 10 Issues Facing Today's Church research project.

In addition to the 10-week series revealing these top issues, LifeWay also plans to unveil issues 11-20 with a special bonus week announcement in mid-May.

"Obviously, numbers 1-10 tell us a lot about what people are dealing with, but 11-20 were revealing as well," Utley said.

"People took the time to give us their opinions and we wanted to return the most thorough and helpful response possible."

All of the results as well as extended reports and resources compiled to address these issues are available online at [www.lifeway.com/top10](http://www.lifeway.com/top10). ■

## Top 10 Issues Facing Today's Family

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

# DayBreak attendees challenged to 'come away' and 'be set free'

by Jenny Rice

The young redhead crawled out of an old Jeep Cherokee with a backpack on her shoulder and a Bible in her hand. The expression on her face showed hope and anticipation. "I am in need of a God break," she said.

Tiffanie Maney, a student at the Moody Bible Institute satellite campus in Spokane, Wash., needed time away from responsibilities at school, home and ministry. Maney drove more than three hours to a LifeWay-sponsored DayBreak event at Overlake Christian Church outside Seattle.

DayBreak is designed for young women between the ages of 20-35. With a shortened schedule tailored for today's woman on the go, DayBreak includes biblical teaching from authors Angela Thomas and Priscilla Shirer and worship led by Kelly Minter in an intimate, relaxed setting.

Women of all backgrounds – students and professionals, married and single, mothers and daughters – began the afternoon with a prayer experience followed by breakout sessions designed for close interaction between speakers and attendees. The late afternoon panel discussion provided an opportunity for participants to ask specific questions of the speakers about life and ministry.



Kelly Minter



Angela Thomas

## Come away and be set free

Shirer, women's ministry speaker and author of *He Speaks to Me: Preparing to Hear from God*, shared with participants the challenge she received from God concerning the Scripture in Matthew 11: "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

According to Shirer, to come to God, you have to come away from something. Based on her study of the entire chapter of Matthew 11, Shirer challenged DayBreak participants to come away from being tangled in the temporary, from dabbling in doubt, from being caught up in customs and from gambling with God's grace.

In her breakout session, Minter also challenged participants to "come away" from modern day idols. Minter's definition of an idol is "anything that you look to find life in."

Whether self sufficiency, relationships, achievement, appearance or approval, Minter said fear and lies attach us to our idols.



Priscilla Shirer



“Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28 HCSB

“People are in pain, so they run to idols,” Minter said. “They experience loss and think their false god will fill them. They are burdened and think they will find relief in their idol.

“The Lord has been setting me free because He is where I will find life,” said Minter, who shared personal testimony of how God was revealing truth to her about idols.

Thomas, author of *Living Your Life as a Beautiful Offering*, shared how God had set her free from being a “wallflower.” Striving to be the “perfect Jesus girl,” Thomas

eventually came to a breaking point when she cried out to God and asked Him, “Do you think I’m beautiful? Is there anything about me that is pleasing to you?”

Since that prayer, Thomas has learned that “when God is in the room, all the wallflowers get to dance. He looks into your eyes and sees the woman He dreamed of when He made you. He says to you, ‘I didn’t bring you here to stand around and watch. I made you to enter in. Let’s dance.’”

### Need a break?

Thomas shared that sometimes women will come to her and say they are “too tired to dance.”

Maney said she understood that sentiment. She became a Christian at the age of 5, but spent much of her youth living a fast life. “I used to be rebellious against God, but now I am a rebel for God.”

Needing time alone with God away from daily responsibilities, Maney found the rest she needed at DayBreak.

“I have so much going on that I have to take weekends like this,” said Maney. “This event was quick, but a refresher and a good reminder to continue the battle.” ■

## We recommend

- *He Speaks to Me: Preparing to Hear from God* by Priscilla Shirer
- *A Jewel in His Crown: Rediscovering Your Value as a Woman of Excellence* by Priscilla Shirer
- *Living Your Life as a Beautiful Offering* by Angela Thomas
- *Do You Think I’m Beautiful?* by Angela Thomas
- *Water into Wine: Hope for the Miraculous in the Struggle of the Mundane* by Kelly Minter

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.

## More DayBreak Events

Four more DayBreak events are planned for 2006: June 3 in Decatur, Ala.; Aug. 5 in Denver; Aug. 19 in Austin, Texas; and Nov. 18 in Little Rock, Ark. For more information about DayBreak and other LifeWay-sponsored conferences for women, visit [www.lifeway.com/women](http://www.lifeway.com/women) and click on “women’s events.”

# A spiritual oasis in the Emerald City

by Jenny Rice

Flying into the Seattle-Tacoma airport, it is impossible to escape the beauty of the area. Seattle is surrounded by lush forests, soothing waters and snowy mountain peaks, thus, its sobriquet, “the Emerald City.”

The beauty does not end with the natural surroundings. The people of Seattle are known as some of the friendliest and most accepting in the country. Priding themselves on individuality and diversity, Seattleites have a wide range of lifestyles and beliefs, including spiritual beliefs.

“The Northwest is very spiritual, but not very Christian,” said Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in San Francisco and former executive director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention. “Most people believe in God or some supernatural force, but they do not have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.”

According to [seattlechurchplanting.com](http://seattlechurchplanting.com), while there is a small Southern Baptist presence in the Northwest, several religious groups – including New Age, Wicca and Mormonism – thrive in the area.

“The Southern Baptist population is less than 1 percent,” Iorg said. “There are more Southern Baptist churches in Houston than there are in the entire Northwest Baptist Convention.”

In 2005, LifeWay began its ministry to the Seattle area through three new LifeWay Christian Stores in Bellevue, Issaquah and Shoreline. LifeWay focuses first and foremost on ministry to customers and the community through all of its stores, but the Seattle stores are in a unique mission field.

“Washington is the number one

unchurched state in the U.S.,” said Jan Watkins, Bellevue store manager. “Oregon is the second most unchurched state. There is much diversity here. Just look at the shopping center our store is in. To our right and left we have a Jewish bookstore, a Chinese import store, a Japanese restaurant, and a Russian restaurant.”

After spending most of his LifeWay career managing stores in Colorado and Oklahoma, Watkins moved to Seattle to manage the Northwest stores last year. He was surprised at the spiritual state of the area.

“You just assume that we are all one big happy country and that we all believe in Jesus, but we don’t,” Watkins said.

Watkins described the Seattle area as an accepting community; people do not challenge the beliefs of others. However, he has found the word “Christian” to be somewhat taboo.

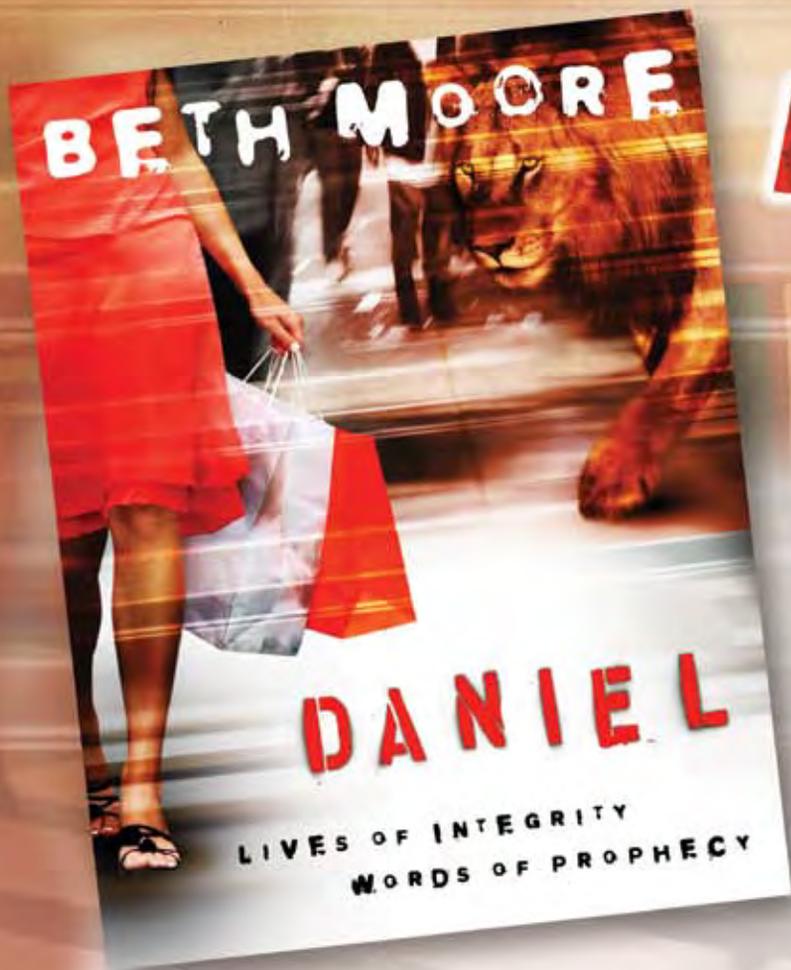
“When you tell people that you are a Christian, they assume you are judgmental because of what they have heard about outspoken Christians in America,” Watkins explained. “It’s like a case of identity theft – all Christians aren’t abortion clinic bombers just like all Muslims aren’t the Taliban. The people here don’t want to know about Christians – but they will ask you about Christ.”

Watkins sees a shortage of Southern Baptists in the community but is hopeful about the impact LifeWay can make through its stores and events.

“We are a spiritual oasis here because we provide biblically related resources and services,” he said. “Because of their own faith, the LifeWay employees here are the key to ministering to customers. They are passionate about people.” ■



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# **Boldly live**

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**BABYLON**  
without falling prey  
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Just as the prophet Daniel faced unbelievable pressures—to compromise his faith, to live in a hostile culture, and to confront temptations and threats—today’s believers face many of the same trials.

Introducing ***Daniel: Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy***, Beth Moore’s newest release. This 12-session Bible study is unlike any other from Beth Moore. First, it can be studied in two parts. Part one, chapters 1-6, reflects the life of the prophet Daniel, and how we can live with integrity in our modern-day Babylon. Part two, chapters 7-12, explores the amazing and alarming prophecies from Daniel’s time through the second coming of Christ. This interactive group Bible study includes DVD teaching segments that are essential to the Member Book assignments.



Resources for ***Daniel: Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy*** include:

Leader Kit (6 DVDs with bonus content, Leader Guide, and Member Book)

	1-4158-2589-0	\$199.95
Member Book	1-4158-2588-2	\$14.95
Audio CDs	1-4158-3245-5	\$39.95
Leader Guide	1-4158-2587-4	\$6.95

To order, call 1.800.458.2772, click on [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com) or visit the LifeWay Christian Store serving you.

 **LifeWay**  
Biblical Solutions for Life

# Music and youth go together like a song and a prayer

*by Brooklyn Noel*



*Evan Isaac performs at Clearview Baptist Church,  
Franklin, Tenn. Photo by Kent Harville*

Every Wednesday they come by the dozens. Clad in blue jeans, peasant skirts, polo shirts and camouflage shorts, some came straight from music lessons or basketball practice, while others spent an hour fixing their hair. Middle school youth minister Paul Teller doesn't care how they look – the point is that they come.



Teller knows students show up at Wednesday night church services for various reasons, but while they're at Clearview Baptist Church, Franklin, Tenn., he has the opportunity to offer an experience that leaves a lasting impression.

So he hired a rock band.

More than a year ago, Teller implemented a multisensory middle school worship service anchored by Even Isaac, an independent Christian rock band that recently provided songs for segments of *Fuel*, a DVD-based youth Bible study produced by LifeWay Christian Resources.

"Music captures the emotions that simple words or even a youth minister can't touch," said Teller, who has served at Clearview for nearly two years. "Music touches on a level emotionally that traditional Bible study cannot."

*Fuel* producer Rick Simms agreed, which is why he, creative director Bill Cox and producer Debbie Beavers devote so much time to the musical aspects of the digital Bible study.

### Truth in the lyrics

"We recognize the extreme importance of having music," Simms said. "It's the driving force of connecting with people. Especially when you marry film and music."

Simms explained that LifeWay designed *Fuel* to supply a multimedia Bible study experience for a

generation accustomed to flashy MTV images and ever-present MP3 players providing life's soundtrack.

Over the course of two years, the eight-volume study presents 96 Bible stories through dramatic Hollywood-quality scenes, comedy sketches, applicable student interviews, straight-forward presentations from youth leaders and multiple other means likely to impact youth.

Music, Simms said, plays a lead role in making *Fuel* relevant to its student audience.

"Music is such a huge piece of people's lives," he said. "You can set your mood through the perspective of the music you're listening to."

"When we can bring that power of music, it's a way to help kids relate to some of the stories we're telling."

### Band info

For members of Even Isaac, their call is to share God's message, and music just happens to be their method of communication as well as their passion. This summer, they will have the opportunity to share that message in yet another setting as the worship band for LifeWay's inaugural Centri-Cruise camp that will take place on a Caribbean cruise to the Bahamas June 24-30.

*Middle school ministry volunteer Scott Claybrook leads a Wednesday night prayer time.*



*Photo by Kent Harville*

## Creating an experience

Simms said choosing the perfect music for a particular *Fuel* segment often happens in a “know it when you hear it” fashion, but that isn’t to say the process is haphazard.

“Part of it is just to include deep music so we can share the message,” Simms said. “Anything that will engage them and make them go deeper.”

When it came to finding the right song for a *Fuel* Vol. 2.3 music video titled “Fairytale,” Simms knew “One Way,” a song from Even Isaac’s “Revamped” CD, fit the bill.

The segment portrays a teenage girl beautifully outfitted and happily headed to a costume party. Soon after arriving, however, she discovers her boyfriend with another girl and the evening takes a turn.

As she drives away with tears smearing her carefully applied makeup, Even Isaac sings, “Searching for someplace to find love she deserves, I wish that I could make her see... there’s only one place to find love like that; a love this world could never be. There’s only one place to find love like that; a love that sets the captive free.”

The segment, which is intended to celebrate the Father’s love, ends with the

main character’s earthly father comforting her while she cries and Even Isaac intones, “There’s only one man who gives love like that; a man who died upon a tree. There’s only one man who gives love like that; a man who came for you and me.”

## Modern relevance

Paul Reter, acoustic guitarist for Even Isaac, said providing music for *Fuel* allowed the 6-year-old band to expand upon its calling in a way he feels is particularly significant.

“*Fuel* gave Even Isaac a new opportunity to reach people,” said Reter, who fronts the band that includes his brother, keyboardist Stephen Reter; bassist Doug Price; drummer Adam Silverman; and guitarist Danny Zaverl.

Reter said his experience with the band and leading youth has taught him that students respond to quality, relevant material and are quick to overlook the sometimes mediocre Christian multimedia offerings in favor of higher budget secular productions.

“Kids are your best critics,” Reter said. “If something isn’t done on a level that is excellent, they can tell. *Fuel* is very well done and looks professional. It fits a sorely needed role.”

*For more information about Fuel, visit [www.lifeway.com/fuel](http://www.lifeway.com/fuel).*

That multimedia, particularly musical, role in youth ministry is one that Mike Harland, director of the LifeWay Worship Music Group, expects to only gain importance in coming years.

“Student ministers are gravitating to music in their ministries because they’re smart,” said Harland, who led multiple youth and music ministries before joining LifeWay about 10 months ago. “Music is a hook. *Fuel* has to have a worship music component for it to be effective with that generation and for it to be what it should be.”

Label-signed artists have contributed their talents to the digital Bible study, but the *Fuel* production team also has found that a record contract isn’t necessarily a prerequisite for relevant, quality music. Simms said he is always on the lookout for independent artists who are eager to present God’s message any way they can, but aren’t restricted by ties to the mainstream music industry.

“It’s a neat thing to work with guys like Even Isaac because they’re doing great music and using what God’s called them to do,” Simms said. “There’s been a mass move to more independent music and the more people say, ‘I want to hear something new and fresh,’ that’s great for us.”

“We don’t just want to be entertainers,” Reter said. “We don’t want to be just a distraction from [secular music]. We want to mean something.

“They don’t need to just remember the music – they need to be changed by it.” ■

*Producer Rick Simms adds music to a Fuel segment.*



Photo by Kent Harville

## No band, no problem

Paul Teller, middle school youth minister at Clearview Baptist Church in Franklin, Tenn., recognizes that most youth ministries aren’t blessed with a professional-quality worship band willing to commit to a weekly service on a youth ministry budget. So he offered these alternative methods for creating an effective multisensory youth worship experience:

- Always look for ways to incorporate music with visual images.
- Incorporate products like *Fuel* that have pre-packaged multisensory messages.
- Play a worship CD as background during Scripture readings.
- Use projection screens whenever possible.
- Play music quietly during prayer times.
- Be concerned with quality control. Unprofessional music and multimedia components can be more of a distraction than enhancement.
- Engage as many senses as possible. Consider whether scent or taste are applicable to the lesson in addition to the obvious sight and sound elements.
- Create a focus group of students who can offer opinions and ideas. They will help you stay “in touch” with the youth group as a whole.

Artists and bands interested in contributing to future volumes of *Fuel* are invited to submit professional quality CDs to Rick Simms at One LifeWay Plaza, MSN 195, Nashville, TN 37234.

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

## The site to see your Sunday School in 3D!

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ADULT

# ACP analyst reflects on trends in Southern Baptist churches

(Part 1 of a 2-part series)

Since 1918, Southern Baptists have received statistical information from LifeWay on the trends of attendance, giving, baptisms and Bible study participation of Southern Baptist churches.

The Annual Church Profile report, recognized far and wide by its acronym – the ACP – has been shepherded for the last 16 years by J. Clifford Tharp Jr., senior coordinator of the Annual Church Profile in LifeWay's finance and business services department. Tharp recently developed four statistical papers examining various facets of Southern Baptist churches from 1950-2004.

The four papers, entitled “Reflections on Southern Baptist Giving,” “Reflections on Southern Baptist Baptisms,” “Reflections on Southern Baptist Membership,” and “Reflections on Southern Baptist Sunday School Enrollment” are an examination of decades of statistics compiled in the ACP and include Tharp's thoughts regarding the growth and decline in the various areas within Southern Baptist churches.

In this issue of *Facts & Trends*, Tharp's reflections on Sunday school enrollment and church baptisms are presented in a condensed format. The remaining two topics – giving and church membership – will be presented in the July/August issue of *Facts & Trends*.

To read Tharp's unabridged articles, which also include helpful charts and tables, visit the LifeWay newsroom at [www.lifeway.com/news](http://www.lifeway.com/news).

## Southern Baptist baptisms

In his article “Reflections on Southern Baptist Baptisms,” Tharp examines the period 1950-2004, noting that significant analysis on baptism statistical trends from 1845-1992 already has been published.

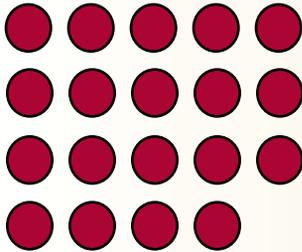


# Baptisms

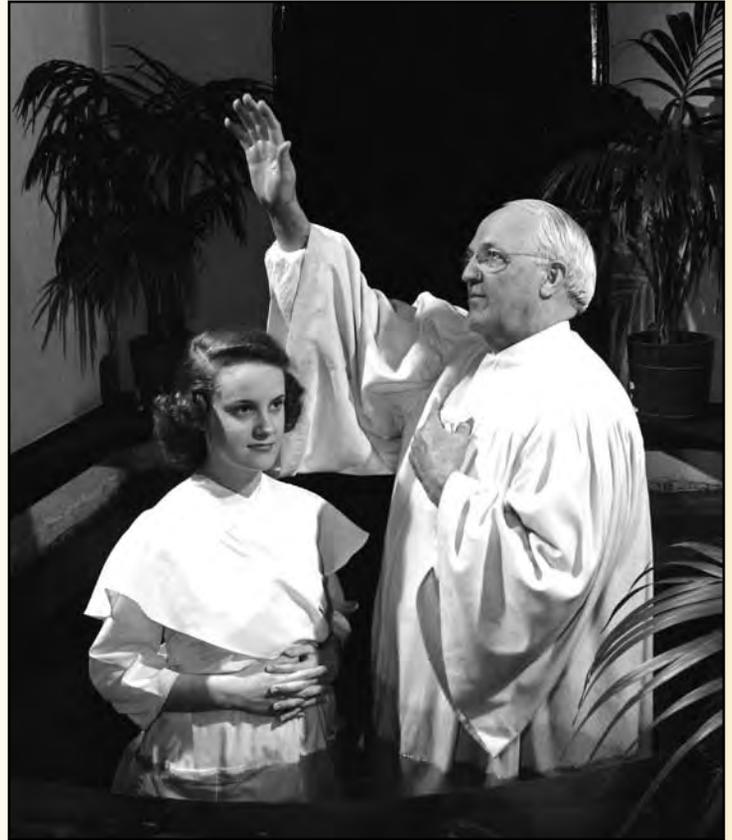
Baptisms-to-membership ratio: the number of members it 'takes' to have one baptism

1950

19 Members



1 Baptism



Tharp's data gathered for the ACP in this area include total baptisms (total number of baptisms during the reporting year), total members (total of both resident and non-resident members added together), and resident members (members who live close enough to the congregation to attend).

"While several years of increased baptisms served to raise the trendline, the trend from 1950-2004 continues to be plateaued," Tharp writes. "The trendline for that period is basically flat, projecting an annual increase of only 45 baptisms.

Tharp's data reveal that throughout the 54-year period, Southern Baptist baptisms remained within a narrow band – from a low of 336,050 in 1978 to a high of 445,725 in 1972. While an upward trendline for the years 1987-2004 increased the projected annual increase in baptisms

to 2,987, "this reversal served only to end several years of decline and did not move baptisms off of their plateau into a new epoch," Tharp notes.

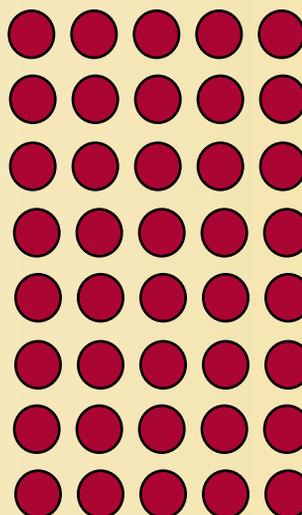
Another measure of effectiveness in evangelism is the baptisms-to-membership ratio. Tharp explains that "this ratio is one of the statistical items reported to the Convention each year and shows the number of members it 'takes' to have one baptism." Tharp's analysis showed that this ratio has been increasing over the 1950-2004 time period, showing less evangelistic effectiveness.

"In 1950 it took 19 members to baptize one person, while in 2004 it took 42 people to baptize one person," he writes. "Thus the ratio has increased by 2.2 times over the period." And while pundits claim total membership is not reflective of the



2004

42 Members



1 Baptism



true strength of the denomination as membership rolls tend to build and not be kept current, Tharp shows that using resident membership drops the numbers, “but the trend stays the same” and reflects a similar – 2.1 times – increase.

Tharp presents several observations based on his research. Among them, he writes that “during this 55-year period, Southern Baptists have engaged in many activities and emphases whose goal was to increase baptisms and evangelism. It would appear

that none of these actions have resulted in any long-term, sustainable increase of evangelistic growth.”

Additionally, he shows that “racial/ethnic congregations appear to be more effective in evangelism ... than white/non-Hispanic congregations” and “the age-composition of Southern Baptist baptisms has changed over the years, being highly correlated with the changes in the U.S. white population.”

“Factors which may have impacted Southern Baptist evangelism effectiveness

“... racial/ethnic churches tend to be more effective in evangelism than white, non-Hispanic churches. But, these churches tend to be smaller, and smaller churches are more effective in evangelism. Which of these factors – racial/ethnic make-up or size – has the most impact?”

— Cliff Tharp

are many and complex,” Tharp concludes. “Some of them are interrelated. For example racial/ethnic churches tend to be more effective in evangelism than white, non-Hispanic churches. But, these churches tend to be smaller, and smaller churches are more effective in evangelism. Which of these factors – racial/ethnic make-up or size – has the most impact?”

Tharp cautions against over-simplification of the issues when looking at statistical information, and writes that while his reflections on baptism statistics are “of a descriptive nature,” they are presented to “shed illumination on some aspects of this significant aspect of Southern Baptist life.”

### **Southern Baptist Sunday school enrollment**

Even before the development of the ACP, Sunday school enrollment has been a vital part of Southern Baptist life and played a defining role in the formation of the Sunday School Board in 1891. The ACP measures Sunday school information through total enrollment and average attendance.

Charting Sunday school enrollment from 1950-2004, Tharp shows that total enrollment in Sunday school declined from the mid-60s to mid-70s. Although the next 20 years saw an increase, “in recent years the increase has been slight,” he writes. In 1950, Sunday school enrollment was slightly above 5 million. In 2004, enrollment was 8.2 million.

“Many issues may impact this (failure to achieve higher enrollment numbers), one of them being the way Bible study is being conducted,” Tharp writes.  
“With the rise of small groups/cell groups, it is possible that Bible study is taking place, but it is either not being



counted or not being counted under Sunday school. This factor alone could impact the trends.”

In his research, Tharp shows that this is indeed a factor affecting Sunday school enrollment. In 1991 the ACP added the category “Other Ongoing Bible Study” in its breakdown. “That percentage has nearly quadrupled over the 14-year period,” Tharp writes. “It appears that other ways of conducting Sunday school/Bible study have emerged and that these newer approaches comprise a significant (and increasing) segment of the Sunday school total enrollment.”

In his conclusion, Tharp writes that significant questions arise from his study and that Southern Baptist churches – and LifeWay – would do well to constantly examine methods and curriculum. Churches should factor age, current church participation and even ethnicity in developing strategies for increasing Sunday school enrollment.

“The close relationship between Sunday school age-group enrollments and the U.S. white population raises the issue of how diverse our Sunday schools actually are,” he writes. “The entire racial/ethnic population may be an opportunity for Southern Baptists.” ■

## ACP – a road map of where we’ve been

by Thom S. Rainer

**I**f you want to know where Southern Baptists are going, it is important to know where we’ve been. Our history often offers us a road map and such is the case with the Annual Church Profile (ACP).

The adjacent article is an in-depth analysis of where Southern Baptists have been for the past 54 years. It is the type of longitudinal study that certainly identifies strengths and weaknesses. Cliff Tharp, the study’s author, has an intimate knowledge of the ACP, having led this research for LifeWay for the past 16 years.

One trend you’ll find is the decline in baptisms. This is not news. Much has been written about this decline over the past few years. This report puts the decline much more into a long-term context. We use the number of baptisms as an indicator of how effectively our churches are reaching people with the gospel. Obviously discipleship and Christian maturity are equally important.

Another trend you’ll see is that there is great growth among ethnic and smaller churches, the report stating that “racial and ethnic congregations appear to be more effective in evangelism ... than white/non-Hispanic congregations.” It is exciting to see that Christianity is growing among the ethnic communities coming to America, but my desire is that evangelism among all groups would intensify. We must reach people with the gospel then lead them to spiritual maturity.

Finally, this study also magnifies the need for churches to participate in the ACP. Is it a perfect study? No, but it is the best study we have that gives an overview of the health of our denomination. Obviously, the more churches that participate, the more comprehensive the information. I assure you the information we gather will impact decisions about resources developed by LifeWay. We seek to influence our culture with the inerrant Word of God. Having this information helps us do that so I encourage you to make sure your church participates.

**If you have questions about the ACP, contact with your local Baptist association or state Baptist convention.**

# Resources

for you from LifeWay

## Broadman & Holman

### ■ *The Two-Degree Difference*

by John Trent

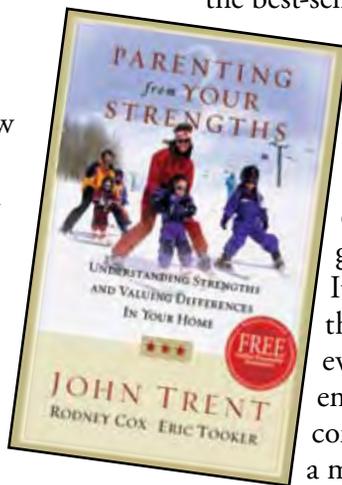
Best-selling author John Trent realized that despite the boom in spiritual books pointing to the promise of a more meaningful life, the process of actually changing one's life is still much too overwhelming to hundreds of thousands of readers. Trent provides real-life insight along with a study guide that any person or small group can use to keep moving forward. Releases May 1. Hardcover. B&H product #0-8054-3064-6, \$19.99



### ■ *Parenting From Your Strengths*

by John Trent, Rodney Cox and Eric Tooker

The authors of *Leading From Your Strengths* now help parents and children build harmony and avoid conflicts by introducing the same tools and insights that have helped hundreds of ministry teams become more connected. Here, a Global Parenting Plan draws on the imagery of global positioning devices, "triangulating" a parent's position by getting a reading from three known positions: God's unchanging Word, their unique parenting strengths and the way each child is fearfully and wonderfully made. By drawing on these factors, parents can draw closer to each other and be even more effective in raising their children. Releases June 1. Hardcover. B&H product #0-8054-3065-3, \$14.99



### ■ *The Gospel According to The Da Vinci Code*

by Kenneth Boa and John Alan Turner

Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* has become the best-selling hardcover

adult novel of all time, sprouting a postmodern worldview called gnosticism.

It concludes that matter is evil and human emancipation comes through a mystical, secret knowledge. *The*

*Gospel According to The Da Vinci Code* refutes not only the blockbuster book, but also looks at Brown's other writings and his Web site to question his perception of absolute truth. Truth-seeking readers misled by Brown's mass media-accepted outlook will be pointed instead to the Bible.

Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4190-1, \$14.99

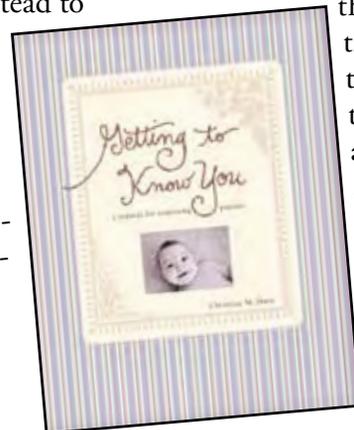


### ■ *Teen Virtue 2*

by Vicki Courtney  
Following up the best-selling first issue of this book-smart, magazine-styled series, *Teen Virtue 2* confidently guides young girls through the delicate world of key relationships with family, friends, boys and God. The experienced, article-length insights of Vicki Courtney are paired with contemporary designs that appeal to female teenagers. Where they will be after perusing *Teen Virtue 2* is undoubtedly closer to things that matter most. Releases June 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4191-3, \$14.99

### ■ *Getting to Know You*

by Christine Dorn  
A life story begins in the womb, and the chapter set there is one that parents and children alike can always cherish. *Getting to Know You* is a guided journal for



expecting parents, helping them chronicle every experience during those very special nine months. Along with the baby basics, *Getting to Know You* includes colorful illustrations, display areas for mementos, a how-to section on journal writing and guidelines that ensure this book will be a keepsake. Releases May 1. Hardcover. B&H product #0-8054-4043-7, \$19.99

■ **Reagan's Children**  
 by Hans Zeiger

The British have called those born during the Margaret Thatcher prime ministry "Thatcher's Children." Likewise, the 30 million Americans born from 1981 to 1988 could be considered "Reagan's Children." In his second book, young activist Hans Zeiger, born in 1985, suggests his generation is indeed reflective of former President Ronald Reagan's conservatism, faith and optimism. Releases June 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4062-3, \$12.99



■ **A Fall Together**  
 by Jennifer O'Neill

Real life, with its greatest hurts and grandest dreams, is the basis for *Circle of Friends* and *Just Off Main*, a deeply engaging women's fiction series by actress Jennifer O'Neill. Book one, *A Fall Together*, introduces the quintet of primary female characters. Varied in age, ethnicity and

status, they are united by their small town citizenship, their spiritual crossroads and the determination to take on their personal issues with hope.

Releases June 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4195-6, \$14.99

■ **Walk Back the Cat**  
 by Pamela Binnings Ewen

From A.D. 33 to the 1950s to 2005, *Walk Back the Cat* tells the intricate, page-turning story of Wesley Bright, a corrupt clergyman out to destroy the Christian church. Like a cat retracing its



steps to return home, the reader must go back to discover the root causes of Wesley's actions. And although Wesley thrives on

proving that truth is relative, what will soon transpire is brilliantly absolute. Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4344-4, \$16.99

■ **Scimitar's Edge**  
 by Marvin Olasky

Former college roommates Hal Bogikian, a newspaper columnist, and Malcolm Edwards, a university professor, both atheists, disagree on most major issues. But they remain associates through the efforts of Malcolm's aunt, Phoebe du Pont, a wealthy Christian widow. When du Pont invites the two men and

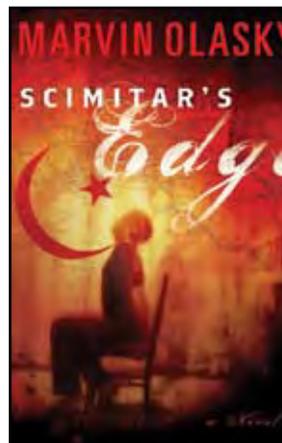
her beautiful assistant, Sally Northaway, on a trip to Turkey, the four Americans become the target of a terrorist's kidnapping plot. Along the way, there are razor-sharp thriller sequences and a budding romance. Releases June 1.

Hardcover. B&H product #0-8054-4183-2, \$21.99

■ **Wish I'd Known You Tears Ago**

by Stephen Bly

In this closing book of the *Horse Dreams* trilogy, soul-searching Indiana schoolteacher Develyn Worrell has finally found her groove. Ready to savor the end of summer in a small Wyoming town, she settles in for a time of peace and contentment. That is, until her daughter pays a visit, an eclectic friend plans to marry, a suspicious stranger enters the picture, and a dear mentor suffers a heart attack. Such confusion would be overwhelming, except for the steady friendship of Cooper Tallon. With Develyn's trust in the Lord still growing, she looks forward to whatever follows. Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-3173-X, \$14.99



# Resources

for you from LifeWay

■ ***The Secret Road Home***  
by Robert Wise  
After World War II, frail concentration camp survivors were released



only to find their families gone and their cities destroyed. In turn, many displaced Jews sought a new homeland, but their spiritual journey would also be duly political and dangerous. *The Secret Road Home* is a fictional account of historic events leading up to the 1948 rebirth of Israel as an officially recognized nation-state. Colonel Al Barnard is among the American troops called on to close the camps. As a Christian, he is rocked by the horrors he sees there and becomes a champion for the Jewish people. Releases May 15. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-3074-1, \$12.99

■ ***The Way of the Wilderking***  
by Jonathan Rogers  
In book three of the acclaimed *Wilderking Trilogy*, civilizer Aidan returns home to discover that a party known as the

Aidanites has arisen among his fellow Corenwalders. They believe the “Wilderking Chant” makes reference to Aidan and that he is destined to

overthrow Corenwald’s tyrant King Darrow. Aidan has no intention of leading any such rebellion. But when the Corenwald kingdom continues to weaken and the enemy Pyrthens threaten to invade, it’s clear the Aidanites are the only army his people have left. What soon transpires among civilizers, feechiefolk, Corenwalders and Pyrthens alike, no reader could predict. When all is said and done, who will be the Wilderking? Releases May 1. Hardcover. B&H product #0-8054-3133-9, \$15.99

■ ***Hell in a Briefcase***  
by Phil Little and Brad Whittington  
Matt Cooper is a true international man of mystery. A private security executive, his adrenaline-junkie days consist

of last-minute flights, Hollywood parties and direct calls from top CIA brass. But the jet-set lifestyle hardly matters once Cooper meets Mr. Roberts, “an old broken-down millionaire” and uncommon Christian who coaxes Cooper into traveling with him to Israel. Through the strange man’s incredible connections, Cooper goes behind the curtain of Middle East terrorism. The deeper he goes, the closer he gets to a plot involving eleven stolen briefcase nukes. Suspected of having them is an Al-Qaeda splinter group. Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4080-1, \$16.99

■ ***Sea of Glory***  
by Ken Wales and David Poling

In 1943, a German submarine en route to a top-secret radar installation in Greenland torpedoed the U.S.A.T. *Dorchester*. The four Army chaplains on board

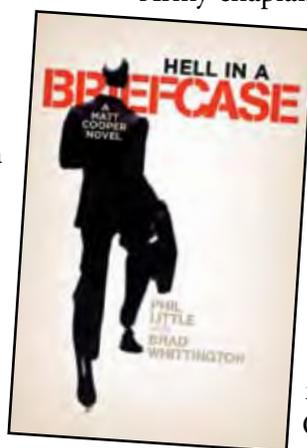
were quite different from each other: a Methodist pastor, Jewish rabbi, Dutch Reformed minister and Catholic

priest. Yet in the terror following the attack by deadly U-boats, the chaplains united in a final sacrifice that transformed every survivor who saw it – and inspired one man to trade the bitterness of the past for the promise of the future. This is a paperback edition of 2001 hardcover release. Releases May 15.

Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4380-0, \$14.99

■ ***The Little Handbook to Perfecting the Art of Christian Writing***  
by Leonard G. Goss and Don M. Aycock

In *The Little Handbook to Perfecting the Art of Christian Writing*, two publishing industry veterans have much to share beyond choosing subject matter, improving grammar and strengthening sentence structure. Yes, those elements definitely matter and are duly addressed, but there are other skills to be polished if one wants to get a published. Readers will gain an insider’s view of how the Christian publishing industry actually works. This release provides the “know-how” that is needed to further the inspiration for anyone called to Christian writing. Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-3264-7, \$14.99



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# Resources

just released from LifeWay

■ **Not a Safe God**

by **Tim Riter**

Jesus said that disciples must die, give up their family, rejoice even in suffering and not worry about anything. Postmodern people in and out of the church hunger to explore those difficult teachings in a world gone soft. Author Tim Riter says, “Contemporary Christianity has focused so much on God’s goodness that perhaps we’ve forgotten He’s a lion. He’s not safe – not



safe at all. He demands much of us and throws down the gauntlet to the fatal disease of complacency that has infected us.” Releases June 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4298-7, \$14.99

■ **Worship 365**

by **David M. Edwards**

Worship: a subject that touches the very heart of God. In

*Worship 365*, award-winning songwriter and conference leader David M. Edwards defines worship as what must become an irremovable part of our everyday lives; not only

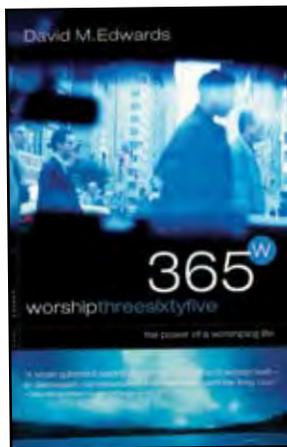
something we do at church a few times each week. Edwards takes us step-by-step through the worship process, highlighting what it is, how it happens, what it does and where it takes us. Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4367-3, \$12.99

■ **Breaking the Missional Code**

By **Ed Stetzer and David Putnam**

Across North America, many pastors are excited to see churches growing. Still others are equally

frustrated, following the exact same model for outreach but with lesser results. Indeed, just because a “missional breakthrough” occurs in one place doesn’t mean it will happen the same way elsewhere. *Breaking the Missional Code* provides expert insight on church culture vision casting, plus case studies of successful modern



missional churches. Releases May 1. Hardcover, B&H product #0-8054-4359-2, \$17.99

■ **Planting Missional Churches**

By **Ed Stetzer**  
*Planting Missional Churches* is

an instruction book for planting biblically faithful and culturally relevant churches. It addresses the “how-to” and “why” issues of church planting by providing practical guidance through all the phases of a church plant. Releases May 1. Hardcover. B&H product #0-8054-4370-3, \$21.99

■ **Kingdom Promises**

By **Ken Hemphill**  
The *Kingdom Promises* series is based on short, yet everlasting statements from Scripture; key verses that define who we are in

Christ and who He is to us. This unique grouping of devotional books will help believers grasp the undeserved rewards of God’s grace and the power that flows from His very existence. Each conveniently pocket-sized book features more than 40 devotions. Releases June 1. Paperback. *He Is*, B&H product #0-8054-2783-X; *We Are*, B&H product #0-8054-2781-3; *We Can*, B&H product #0-8054-2780-5; *But God*, B&H product #0-8054-2782-1, \$3.99 each

■ **Finding Fullness Again**

By **Ralph Douglas West**  
As in Naomi’s case in the Bible’s book of Ruth, today there will likely be times when every believer arrives at a desolate place in the heart, truly crushed in spirit for whatever reason. *Finding Fullness Again* by Pastor Ralph Douglas West takes an encouraging look at the story of Naomi and Ruth to remind

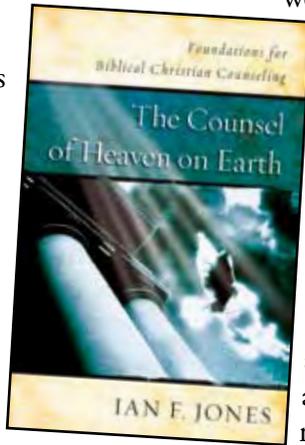


readers that they too can keep pressing forward – not just running on empty. Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-4089-5, \$12.99

■ ***The Counsel of Heaven on Earth***

By Ian F. Jones

*The Counsel of Heaven on Earth* provides a helpful introductory look at the principles of biblical Christian counseling based on models found in



the books of Genesis and Isaiah. It also includes extensive survey research plus insight from personal counseling experiences that author Ian F. Jones encountered at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, where a gunman killed seven people and wounded many others in September 1999. This book invites all professionals to consider his fresh biblical Christian counseling approach. Releases June 1. Hardcover. B&H product #0-8054-4343-6, \$29.99

■ ***One Sacred Effort***  
 By Chad Brand and David E. Hankins

The preamble of the original constitution of

the Southern Baptist Convention describes the purpose of the SBC as “eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort, for the propagation of the gospel.” These

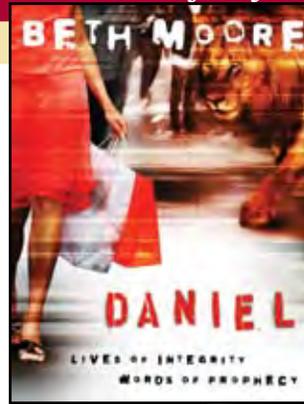
words convey the mission and purpose that are distinct facets of the SBC Cooperative Program. *One Sacred Effort* looks close at the unique and enduring ministry operation.

Releases May 1. Paperback. B&H product #0-8054-3163-2, \$14.99

**LifeWay Church Resources**

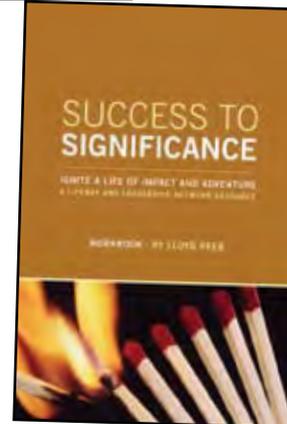
■ ***Daniel: Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy***

Beth Moore’s newest Bible study, *Daniel: Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy*, clearly demonstrates how believers can live with confidence despite today’s self-absorbed society. This in-depth study examines both the life of the prophet Daniel and the prophetic teachings of the book. The 12-session study falls into two distinct sections: Part



one focuses on the life of the prophet. Part two takes a dramatic turn by delving into amazing and alarming prophecies. Each study-part is six weeks long.

Each part can be studied separately, with a break between the two studies as an option. Because this study draws primarily from Moore’s teaching presentations, the weekly DVD teaching segments, videotaped in Moore’s home church in Houston, and several locations in Los Angeles, are essential to the study. Leader Kit includes DVDs with bonus content, Leader Guide and a Member Book. Releases June 1. Member Book, LifeWay product #1-4158-2588-2, \$14.95; Leader Guide, LifeWay product #1-4158-2587-4, \$6.95; Audio CDs, \$39.95; Leader Kit, LifeWay product #1-4158-2589-0, \$199.95



■ ***Success to Significance: Ignite a Life of Impact and Adventure***

by Lloyd Reeb

Moses didn’t find his niche for service until he was 40, but Scripture tells us how God was able to use him. Lloyd Reeb had a similar experience. Reeb found his ministry niche in his late 30s, and now he suggests that a lot of adults

today have the same kind of potential. In addition to the ministry guide published last quarter, the latest additions to the *Success to Significance: Ignite a Life of Impact and Adventure* include a small-group curriculum. Leader Kit includes one Workbook, a DVD with video segments, a CD-ROM with leader helps and a copy of the Zondervan tradebook. This series was developed in partnership with Leadership Network. Releases June 1. Workbook, LifeWay product #1-4158-3498-9, \$9.95; Ministry Guide, LifeWay product #1-4158-3213-7, \$79.95; Leader Kit, LifeWay product #1-4158-3499-7, \$149.95

# Resources

for you from LifeWay

## ■ January Bible Study 2007

### *John's Letters: How to Grow in Loving God* by Daniel Akin

January Bible Study (JBS) is a great fit after the holidays or any other time of the year. JBS '07 – based on 1, 2 and 3 John – guides participants to grow in fellowship and obedience, in their commitment to the Lord, in love and wisdom and in the confidence of their faith. For the first time, the study is broken down into two distinct lessons for each of the four messages. So this year's JBS is versatile enough to adjust from four sessions to eight.

Releases May 1. Adult Learner Guide, LifeWay product #1-4158-3227-7, \$6.95; Adult Leader Guide, LifeWay product #1-4158-3220-

X, \$8.95; Planning and Promotion Pack, LifeWay product #1-4158-3221-8, \$24.95

### ■ *Call to Follow Christ: Six Disciplines for New and Growing Believers*

by Claude V. King

The first release in a new basic discipleship series, this study is designed to help new Christians understand and put into action those disciplines that will strengthen their relationship with Christ and help them develop a lifestyle of obedience. This seven-session, foundational resource addresses six disciplines: Abiding in Christ; Living by God's Word; Praying in Faith; Building Godly Relationships; Witnessing to the World; and Ministering to Others.

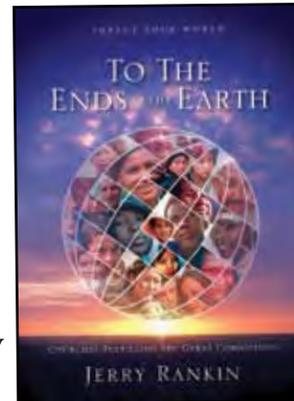
Suggestions are included for small-group meetings and one-on-one mentoring. Workbook includes a music CD with seven songs sung by

Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir soloist Damaris Carbaugh to enhance daily devotion/study time. Releases May 15. LifeWay product #1-4158-3262-5, \$9.95

### ■ *To the Ends of the Earth: Churches Fulfilling the Great Commission*

by Jerry Rankin

This nine-session study (first in the *Impact Your World* series) offers practical ideas for working alongside the International Mission Board and other channels. The stories will help Christians understand how missionaries need their prayer support, financial support and personal involvement. Leader Kit includes a Member Book with leader helps, the trade book, and a DVD featuring footage of international missionaries in action. *To the Ends of the Earth* is timely for use before the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering or with team members as they go on international mission trips. Releases June 1. Member Book, LifeWay product #1-4158-3532-2, \$12.95; Leader Kit,



LifeWay product #1-4158-2583-1, \$99.95

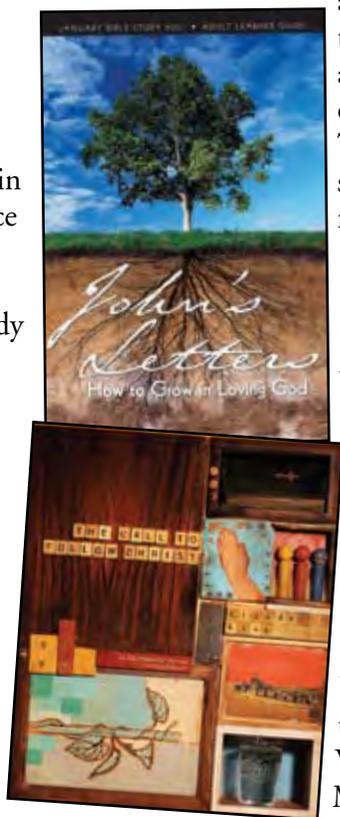
### ■ *LXVI: A study of the sixtysix books, Vols. 21 and 2*

*LXVI* is a 24-volume set of CD-ROMs providing a six-year Bible

study experience through all 66 books of the Bible. Each volume contains a complete, 13-week Bible study experience for students that includes activity-based teaching plans; PowerPoint® presentations; Bible commentary; reproducible handouts; devotionals; maps and timelines and articles. Releases May 1. *Volume 21: Ephesians, James, 1–3 John*, LifeWay product #1-4158-3271-4, \$59.95; *Volume 2: Exodus, Ruth, Proverbs*, LifeWay product #1-4158-3274-9, \$59.95

### ■ *Fuel 2.4: Igniting New Life with God's Story*

This multimedia-based curriculum for grades 7–12 presents the Bible in chronological order over two years. Continuing the journey through the New Testament, *Fuel Volume 2.4* uniquely examines the lives of the apostles beginning with Saul's conversion and ending with John's vision



of heaven. Releases May 1. DVD and CD-ROM Leader Set (includes two DVDs and three CD-ROMs), LifeWay product #1-4158-2820-2, \$149.95; Small Group Leader Edition (CD-ROMs only), LifeWay product #1-4158-2748-6, \$ 9.95



“Blueprints,” and includes an inspirational leader article and specific helps for teaching. Fall 2006 topics include excellence, joy and justice. Releases May 1. *Excellence*, LifeWay product #1-4158-3151-3, \$12.95; *Joy*, LifeWay product #1-4158-3150-5, \$12.95; *Justice*, LifeWay product #1-4158-2947-0, \$12.95

■ **Vital Character**  
*Vital Character* provides students with examples of godly character traits and challenges them to model those traits in their lives. Each study uses reproducible worksheets called “Foundations,” along with reproducible devotional guides called

■ **LifeTrak 6.4**  
 Each undated, quarterly issue of *LifeTrak* features a multimedia-based CD-ROM with everything from adaptations for small group and master teacher formats to contemporary music to the Holman CSB® text. Both the older and younger youth

editions include at least one evangelism lesson each quarter. Releases June 1. *LifeTrak 6.4 for Older Youth*, Topics: peace and justice, grades 10–12, LifeWay product #1-4158-2548-3, \$29.95; *LifeTrak 6.4 for Younger Youth*, Topics: gratitude and communication, grades 7–9, LifeWay product #1-4158-2542-4, \$29.95

position themselves to spiritually hear His voice. The six-week, interactive Member Book is designed for personal daily study and for review during group meetings, and includes a leader guide. Releases May 1. *He Speaks to Me: Preparing to Hear from God, Spanish Workbook*, LifeWay product #1-4158-3300-1, \$10.95

## Spanish Resources

■ **Él me habla: Prepárese para escuchar a Dios (He Speaks to Me: Preparing to Hear from God, Spanish Edition)** by Priscilla Shirer  
*He Speaks to Me* helps Spanish-speaking adults develop a more intimate and personal relationship with God by learning to



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