

Facts & Trends

In His Grip
***Using golf as a
ministry tool
to reach out to men***

JULY/AUGUST 2007

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

 **LifeWay**
Biblical Solutions for Life

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Volume 53 • Number 4
July/August 2007

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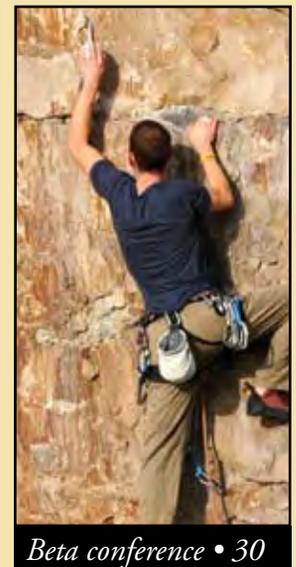
Cover: Golfers tee off during the Pastor's Masters event in North Carolina May 7-9. Photo by Guy Lyons.



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Facts & Trends wins!

Facts & Trends was awarded major awards in two national religion news competitions for 2006.

At the April 11-14 Baptist Communicators Association workshop in Mobile, Ala., *Facts & Trends* was awarded first place in the print media and design division. It also received an Award of Excellence (first place) from the Religion Communication Council at that group's national convention in Louisville, Ky., April 26-28.

RCC also awarded *Facts & Trends* an Award of Merit in Graphic Design, Art and Photography for "Baptism in Rain from Catalao, Brazil," the cover photo on the November/December 2006 issue.

LifeWay's communications department staffers also garnered awards from the Baptist Communicators Association for articles and photographs that appeared in *Facts & Trends*. Visit *Facts & Trends Online* to read details about the winners.

Coming in the September/October issue:

- New LifeWay Research survey examines private prayer language issue
- Fly fishermen gather at LifeWay Ridgcrest
- Worship Week participants get music and news

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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

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From my perspective



'Church customers' always looking for that BBD

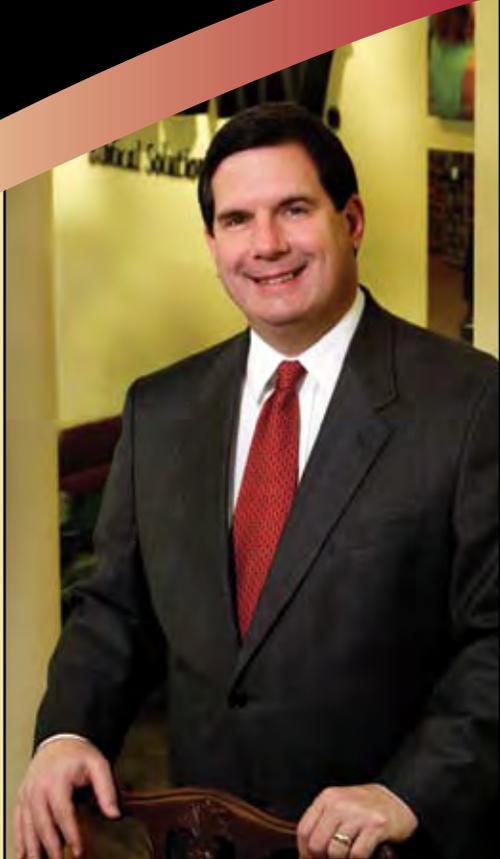
Back in the Dark Ages – you know, during the 80s and 90s before cell phones really took off – AT&T, Sprint and MCI dominated the phone industry. There were wars between them, each looking to pick off the other's customers by getting them to switch providers. Of course that was also the day of constant telemarketing and it seemed like the majority of the calls were offers to switch phone services. Some people welcomed the calls, switching constantly in search of a “BBD” – Bigger, Better Deal.

Unfortunately, churchgoers also are too often stuck in the switcher mode looking for a BBD. You'll see on the following pages a recent study conducted by LifeWay Research on church switchers. The research describes some legitimate – and some not so legitimate – reasons why switching takes place.

One reason is unregenerate people looking for religion in their lives but not truly having a relationship with Christ. A study I did a few years ago found that 31 percent of the people exiting church immediately following a worship service were unable to articulate clear evidence of salvation. I would hazard that many of these are not first-time guests but people who sit in our churches every week.

This is one of the reasons why at the Southern Baptist Convention this year I focused on evangelism and relevance. To me, the two are hand in glove. Jesus Christ never goes out of style. He is “before all things and by Him all things hold together,” as Paul writes in Colossians. There is not a situation that exists whose solution is found anywhere other than Christ. Hebrews records that He was “tested in every way, as we are, yet without sin.”

But questions are asked from within one's cultural context. The message of Christ never changes and must never be compromised, but finding culturally relevant ways and using relevant resources to answer those questions



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

Subscribe

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



within the context do change. I believe this is where research can assist local church leaders to better understand their respective environments. The research helps ministers and laypeople find ways to effectively put people’s cultural context into the context of Scripture and not the other way around.

Let’s not forget, however, that evangelism is not the end of our responsibility to those with whom we’ve shared the gospel. Jesus said “make disciples.” I believe a major reason

“The message of Christ never changes and must never be compromised, but finding culturally relevant ways and using relevant resources to answer those questions within the context does change.”

— Thom Rainer

we see so much church switching stems from spiritual immaturity. People simply have not been taken more deeply in their faith through a systematic, intentional study of Scripture. If we are not helping believers grow in their faith, it won’t be long before they’re looking over the fence thinking the grass is greener on the other side. But face it, the grass isn’t always greener in the next field; it’s greener where it gets watered. Pastors and lay leaders do a disservice to those they shepherd if

they lack – as Hebrews also says – a commitment to moving people “on to maturity.”

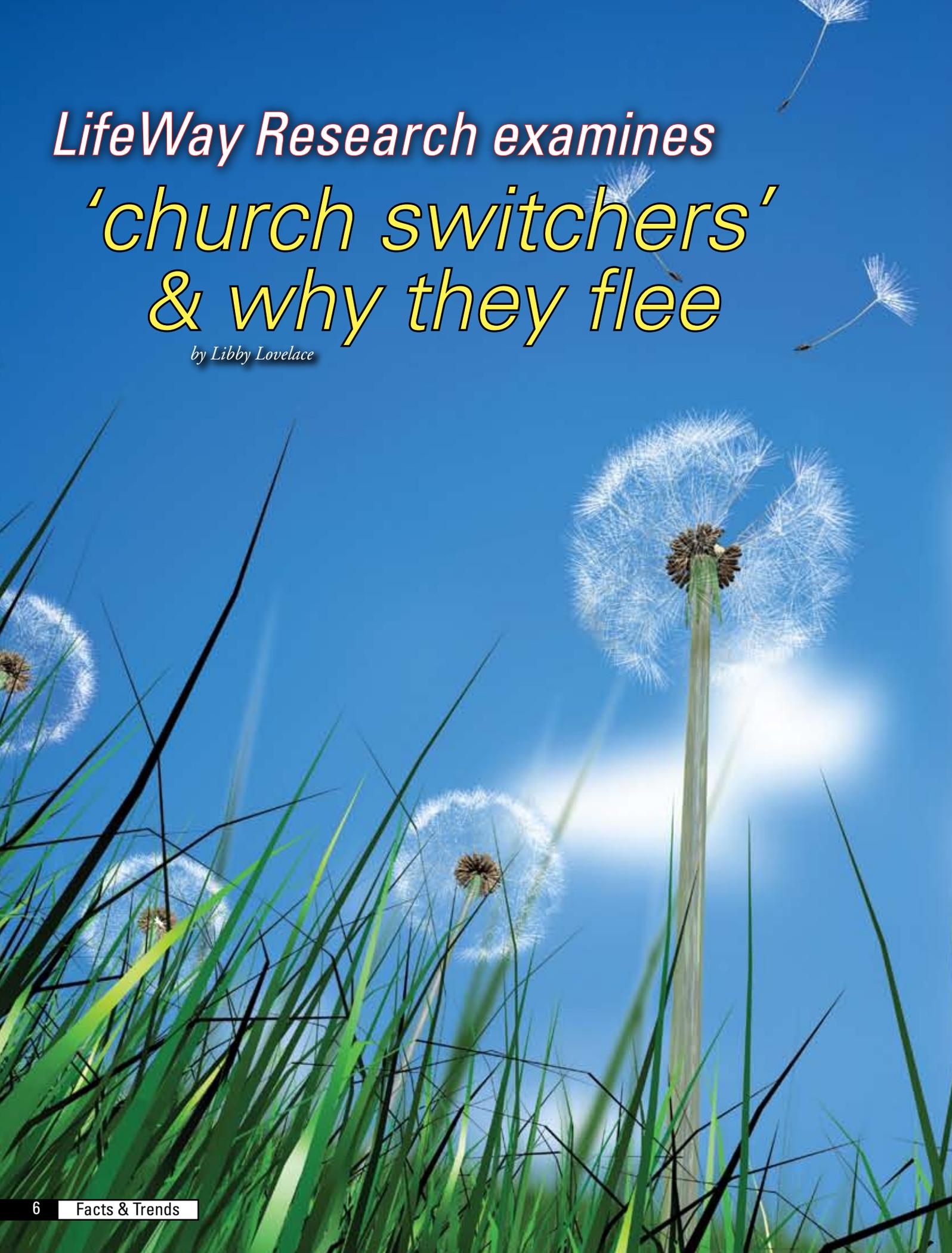
Ultimately, healthy churches are the product of spiritually committed individuals working in unity for the purposes of glorifying God and making His name known. Anything that distracts from those two purposes diminishes the mission of the local church and becomes a distraction. May we have a passion to become a bride worthy of our Lord.

In His service,

We recommend

- *Effective Evangelistic Churches*
- *The Unchurched Next Door*
- *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*
- *Eating the Elephant*

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



LifeWay Research examines
'church switchers'
& why they flee

by Libby Lovelace

The latest findings from LifeWay Research give the top 10 reasons adults switch churches.

This study builds on LifeWay Research's 2006 study of the formerly churched, which explored the reasons adults stop going to church. The current findings explain why people change churches and how these situations differ from those in which the individual does not resume church attendance at all.

Church switchers are defined as Protestant Americans who have attended more than one church regularly as an adult.

"There are two types of people who slip out through the back door of the church," said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research. "One group is probably leaving church permanently, and the other group is going to find a new church."

Reasons other than relocation

To understand why adults choose to change churches, 415 "non-mover" church switchers – who changed churches for reasons other than changes to their residential location – were surveyed in December 2006.

The results indicate that overall, those who change churches for reasons other than moving are more likely fleeing their previous church rather than being drawn to another. Fifty-eight percent of study participants said the greatest impact on their decision to switch churches was "my need/desire to leave my previous church." The other 42 percent left because of the desire to join their current church.

Not meeting needs

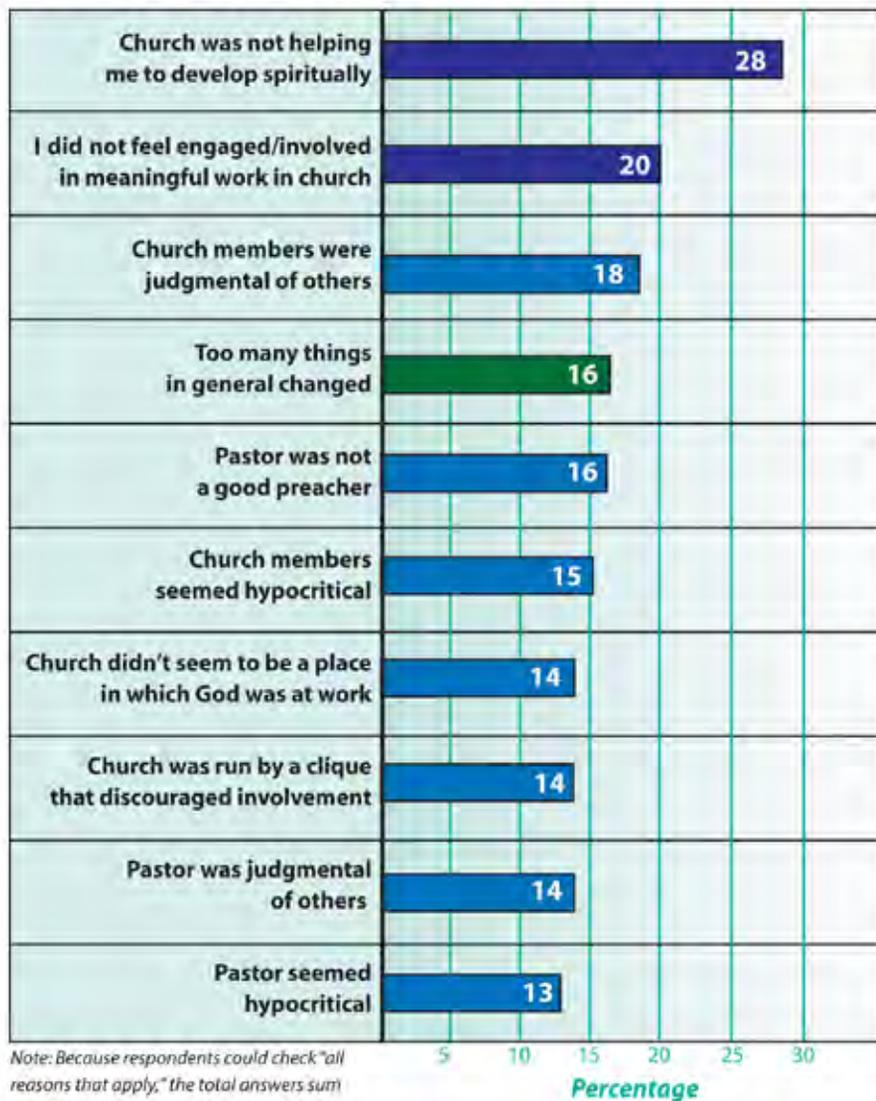
The top two reasons people leave their church have to do with their needs not being fulfilled by their previous church.

Of all reasons churchgoers choose to leave their previous church, the No. 1 reason is because the "church was not helping me to develop spiritually." Twenty-eight percent of non-mover church switchers indicated this as the reason.

Another 20 percent of respondents said they left because they "did not feel engaged or involved in meaningful church work."

Top 10 reasons for leaving previous church

Among American Protestants



Disenchantment

Another common element among church switchers is disenchantment with church members. Eighteen percent of respondents indicated “church members were judgmental of others” as a reason for switching.

Other member-related reasons for switching are “members seemed hypocritical” (15 percent), “church didn’t seem to be a place where God was at work” (14 percent) and “church was run by a clique that discouraged involvement” (14 percent).

Disenchantment with the pastor is also a common reason churchgoers switch. Sixteen percent cite the “pastor was not a good preacher” as a reason for leaving their previous church. Also in the top 10 are the following: “pastor was judgmental of others” (14 percent) and “pastor seemed hypocritical” (13 percent).

Read an in-depth viewpoint on this research study by Brad Waggoner on *Facts & Trends Online*

He writes: “I am writing this response to the Church Switcher study from the perspective of a minister with more than 20 years of church staff experience. During many of these years it was my responsibility to orient, train and assimilate new members. In this role, I frequently met people who had left another church in the community to join ours. I must admit that I always approached these people with some skepticism and caution. I would wonder why they were leaving and what they were looking for. Would they stick any better at our church? Were they bringing any toxic attitudes with them?”

For more, go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends.

Unwelcome changes

Sixteen percent of survey respondents said too many changes in general drove them to switch churches.

One respondent said, “The pastor of my previous church left and the new pastor was radically different, and the music switched from traditional to rock music.”

According to McConnell, “These church switchers leave because they are unhappy with changes in the overall direction of the church. Respondents had the opportunity to select specific changes they did not like, such as worship style, teachings, or a staff member leaving, but the largest proportion selected too many changes in general – the culmination of many changes in the previous church they did not like.”

Different from formerly churchd

Church switchers’ disenchantment and disappointment with their previous church’s failure to meet their needs differ from those who do not return to church.

The prior LifeWay Research study of formerly churchd adults indicated that the primary reasons given for leaving the church are changes in life situation. While 59 percent of the formerly churchd cite this category of reasons, only 21 percent of church switchers leave their previous church because of life changes (excluding moving).

Implications for church leaders

Brad Waggoner, LifeWay’s vice president of research and ministry development and director of LifeWay Research when this study was completed, expounds on the church switcher study in a companion article (available at www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends) and offers suggestions for church leaders who desire to build stronger, healthier churches.

“Of all of the reasons for leaving the church, the top two are ‘the church was not helping me to grow spiritually,’ and ‘I did not feel engaged/involved in meaningful work in the church,’” Waggoner writes. “These are actually very encouraging findings. The fact that the majority of church switchers express a desire to grow spiritually and become active in service should strike a chord of optimism for leaders.

“...[T]he most helpful response any leader can make to this study is to allow these findings to fuel the desire to disciple and involve every church member. With few exceptions, a pastor who possesses solid leadership skills and a passion to disciple and involve others will see this happen in the church.” ■

“The fact that the majority of church switchers express a desire to grow spiritually and become active in service should strike a chord of optimism for leaders. “

— Brad Waggoner

We recommend

- *Redefining Church Membership* by John S. Powers
- *How to Attract and Keep Active Church Members* by Donald P. Smith
- *The Meaning of Church Membership* by Wayne C. Clark
- *Effective Evangelistic Churches* by Thom S. Rainer

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



Brad Waggoner is LifeWay's vice president of research and ministry development

Missiologist Ed Stetzer named director of LifeWay Research

LifeWay, NAMB and IMB forge collaborative research effort

Three Southern Baptist entities – LifeWay, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the International Mission Board (IMB) – have forged a collaborative research effort in which LifeWay Research will conduct special research projects on behalf of NAMB and the IMB.

As part of the new initiative, Ed Stetzer became director of LifeWay Research and LifeWay’s missiologist in residence June 1. Before joining the LifeWay staff, Stetzer was senior director of the Center for Missional Research at NAMB.



Ed Stetzer

Stetzer, 40, brings a wealth of experience to LifeWay Research, which LifeWay President Thom Rainer launched in February 2006 to equip church leaders with insight and advice that leads to greater levels of church health and effectiveness. Under Stetzer’s leadership, LifeWay Research will provide vital information that will support both NAMB’s and the IMB’s church-planting and evangelistic efforts worldwide.

“Ed’s experience as an evangelist, church planter, theologian and researcher makes him one of the most highly sought-after thinkers and speakers in evangelical Christianity today,” said Rainer. “He brings to LifeWay Research a proven track record for knowing the heartbeat of the church and for understanding what churches must do today to remain biblically sound and culturally relevant.”

Recognized mission/research expert

About the new research effort, NAMB President Geoff Hammond said, “I am excited about the relationship NAMB and LifeWay will have in collaborative research. We will avoid duplication of effort and continue to have the keen missions-mind and superb research skills of Ed Stetzer. He has done some of the leading research on Southern Baptist church planting in recent years and we look forward to continuing to have these skills available to NAMB and our partners. I see this as increasing our ability to provide our partners with excellent research.”

IMB President Jerry Rankin said, “Few leaders have a heart and commitment for missions at home and abroad that exceed the passion of Ed Stetzer. This position will enable all of us to understand and relate more effectively with our constituent churches in a synergy that should accelerate fulfilling our mission task at home and abroad.

“The partnership and support of LifeWay in our global mission task has been a blessing that has enhanced the effectiveness of the IMB,” he added. “Through materials that train and equip churches and the provision of resources for overseas work, LifeWay’s focus on missions reflects the cooperation and servant relationship among denominational entities that is the strength of Southern Baptists.”

SBC President Frank S. Page expressed his support of the action. “Philippians 1:5 speaks about a partnership in the gospel,” he said. “I cannot think of a better example of

cooperation and coordination than this strategic move. Dr. Stetzer is one of the foremost missiologist researchers in our nation. I congratulate him and commend LifeWay, NAMB and the IMB for this joint endeavor.”

Church planter, teacher, pastor

Before going to NAMB in 1998, Stetzer planted churches, served as a pastor and helped revitalize churches in four states. Stetzer also has trained pastors across North America and on five continents.

He holds a doctor of philosophy degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctor of ministry degree from Beeson Divinity School, as well as two master’s degrees and a bachelor’s degree.

Stetzer served for three years as a professor at Southern Seminary and has taught at 15 other seminaries. He has written numerous books for LifeWay’s B&H Publishing Group including *Breaking the Missional Code*, *Planting Missional Churches* and *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and How Yours Can Too*. (See review of the latter on page 44.)

Informed and influential

Stetzer will report to Brad Waggoner, vice president of LifeWay research and ministry development. “Ed is one of the most informed and influential leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention and the broader evangelical world,” said Waggoner. “He possesses a unique blend of academic and research skills along with a solid practical understanding of the local church and the culture we seek to penetrate. I know of no one who is more gifted to lead LifeWay Research.”

At his February 2006 inauguration as LifeWay’s ninth president, Rainer revealed his intention for LifeWay Research to become the leading Christian research organization in the world. “We will have a finger on the pulse of culture and the unchurched world. Our intention as Christians is not to mirror culture, or concede to culture, but to impact culture with the truth of Scripture.”

As director of LifeWay Research, Stetzer will guide an organization that focuses on church leaders, the church and the unchurched. LifeWay Research plans to release eight major studies each year and already has published results of surveys on the prevalence of Calvinism in Southern Baptist churches, the willingness of the formerly church to return, why young adults are falling away from the church, and others.

“I am thrilled to work with Dr. Rainer and Dr. Waggoner as we seek to serve churches by making LifeWay Research the premier Christian research agency,” said Stetzer. “In addition, I look forward to working alongside NAMB and the IMB as partners in Great Commission research.”

Hammond said NAMB is “grateful to Ed for the significant contribution he has made to our missions agency in recent years. He understands the church planning process and has helped us see that North America is a mission field and we need to act as missionaries, understanding the culture and sharing the gospel with relevance and passion. NAMB will not be losing these assets, simply sharing them with the IMB and LifeWay.” ■



Pastor's Masters golf retreat:

Good time, great message

story by Jerry Higgins, photography by Guy Lyons

As senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Lilburn, Ga., Ken Hall takes his faith from the pulpit into the deep bunkers of life. He also looks heavenward when he finds himself in a fairway bunker or the deep rough of the local golf course.

The three-day Pastor's Masters Golf Retreat, held May 7-9 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in the western North Carolina mountains, was a natural fit for Hall and other pastors and church staffers to combine their passion for golf and the Lord. But it wasn't about who was closest to the pin; it was about getting closer to God.



Right: Randy Huckabee, pastor of First Baptist Church, Okeechobee, Fla., congratulates David Alderman (right), a layman from his church, after Alderman's great putt.

Below right: Ron Andrew, pastor of Fletcher Memorial Baptist Church in Statesboro, Ga., blasts out of a bunker at Reems Creek Golf Club in Weaverville, N.C.

The group had the opportunity to play three of the area's most challenging courses: Grove Park Inn Resort and Spa, Silver Creek Plantation and Reems Creek Golf Club.

It was the second time Hall and his recreation director, Bill Linduff, attended the retreat. Last fall they were at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center, just outside Santa Fe, N.M., and learned about the ministry of In His Grip Golf Association and its founder, Scott Lehman. They learned how to use the golf course as a mission field and golf as an evangelistic tool.

"A lot of men in my church play golf," Hall said. "It is a great way to put something that men love and evangelism together."

The retreat consisted of three seminars describing the ministry and what was called Life Instructions. Like the thick rough of Reems Creek, the slick greens at Grove Park, or the up-and-down Silver Creek track, life's trials, tribulations and joys can be attained through a Christ-driven life, according to Lehman.





Ron Pratt, LifeWay's national event planner, prepares to swing at Reems Creek Golf Club in Weaverville, N.C., on the last day of the event.

Lehman said he focuses on “the 5 F’s” in his life and ministry:

- **FAITH**
“How is our time with the Lord?”
- **FAMILY**
“It’s important that I am serving and spending quality time with my wife.”
- **FINANCES**
“They are not mine; they are His.”
- **FITNESS**
“Our body is His temple to do His work.”
- **FUTURE**
“I’m seeking out the hopes and plans for our lives.”

“Faith is above all else,” Lehman said. “The foundation of the cross is the only thing that matters. I don’t believe Jesus gave us the Great Suggestion. He gave us the Great Commission.”

Lehman used the golf devotional book, *The Master’s Grip*, which parallels life, golf and faith, during the study times. The book, along with the companion Bible study, are tools pastors can use to lead lost golfers to salvation, he said.

Allen Gregory, the outreach pastor at Bangor (Maine) Baptist Church, said the Pastor’s Masters golf retreat gave him creative ideas to take back to his church. “When a pastor from Maine with a burden for souls hears ... how one man uses golf to reach others for Christ, that intrigues me. I’m convinced that churches need to think a little bit out of the box to reach out to their community in ways that maybe we haven’t done before.”

Lehman was extremely pleased with the event.

“It was awesome,” said Lehman. “I think there were many new friendships and I know God is at work.” ■

The next Pastor’s Masters event will be at LifeWay Glorieta Sept. 17-19. Registration for the fall event will be limited to 72 golfers. For more information, go to www.lifeway.com/golf.

Golfer connects passion for fairways with pursuit of faith

story by Jerry Higgins, photography by Guy Lyons



Scott Lehman's passion for golf led to a passion for evangelism and helping men reach other men for Christ.

Scott Lehman has always been passionate about golf, beginning at age 8 with a shortened Northwestern 7-iron on a backyard course with six buried clay flower pots.

Later, as a golf instructor and sports apparel salesman, Lehman was caught up in the pursuit of wealth and travel and was hiding financial difficulties from Leslie, his wife of two years.

Leslie saw their lives drifting apart and told Lehman she couldn't continue in the marriage. Lehman looked for answers in a shopping mall.

"There was a Christian bookstore. I had never been in a Christian bookstore before," he said. "I turned in and found a little book called *In His Grip* [by Jim Sheard and Wally Armstrong]. It was a golf devotional book. I never knew anything like that existed. I bought it, looked inside and didn't know that there were Scriptures in there. I asked Leslie if we had a Bible and she said 'On the bookshelf. You will have to dust it off.'

"In golf, the most important key fundamental is the grip and how your hands are placed on the club," Lehman said. "The book started to talk about the key fundamental in life is living a lifestyle in His grip. God began to open my heart to His message.

Lehman said as he began to read God's Word, he was drawn to Proverbs 3:5-6, which is now his life verse. "I just knew God was calling me out," he said. A few months later, he gave his life to Christ.



“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.”

— *Proverbs 3:5-6 (HCSB)*

Now nearly 10 years later, Lehman’s passions include describing how Jesus Christ drastically changed his life and brought new focus to his marriage. His passion for ministry and golf resulted in the foundation of In His Grip Golf Association, a ministry that teaches churches how to use golf as an evangelistic tool to share the gospel on the fairways.

Lehman started the ministry nine years ago in his local church, Heritage Wesleyan in Rock Island, Ill., for parachurch fundraising and evangelism. It evolved into the current model: two-day leadership training workshops, where four members of a church learn how to run an In His Grip Invitational (a one-day church member-guest golf tournament) and how to implement a year-long golf ministry.

“We need to reach [golfers], which is one of our core values,” Lehman said. “We believe we have to teach them to grow in the image of Christ through Scripture passages at every hole, small group Bible studies and golf retreats. But then, we send them to fulfill the Great Commission. Our reach, teach and send has resonated in the churches with the idea of not leaving people stranded once they are reached.”

Bill Linduff, recreation director at First Baptist Church of Lilburn, Ga., first heard about Lehman’s ministry last fall during the inaugural LifeWay-sponsored Pastor’s Masters Golf Retreat at LifeWay Glorietta Conference Center. Linduff said his church was looking for ways to use golf as a ministry tool.

After going to a training session in January, Linduff and the church staff went to work. They hold a yearly church golf event, and said that using the In His Grip model gave the church more of an outreach focus.

“Every church can do it,” Linduff said. “We really heard Scott’s heart. It doesn’t matter how small your church is. If you have access to a golf course, this is a useful way to reach men. We want guys to come and see that they can have a great time with a bunch of ‘church’ guys.”

Lehman said that last year, the first full year of In His Grip, six churches signed up. This year 18 more from all different denominations will host IHG Invitationals. Lehman said his vision for the next 10 years is to have 1,000 churches with In His Grip established as the golf ministry.

“Right now, the tournaments are averaging 100 guys. That would be 100,000 golfers impacted with the message of Jesus Christ,” Lehman said, describing how In His Grip builds bridges across denominations to reach out in the golf community.





Participants at the Pastor's Masters gather around Scott Lehman during a time of prayer.

Last year, Lehman was introduced to officials from LifeWay's B&H Publishing Group, who were interested in producing *The Golfer's Bible* (to go along with other Holman Christian Standard version special devotional Bibles).

The resulting devotionals come from a 2006 book Lehman co-wrote with Sheard called *The Master's Grip*.

"To see a golfer's Bible now a year after that introduction ... it is just God pulling it together," he said. "It is very humbling to be a part of a golf devotional book since it has such a deep meaning for the start of my personal walk with Jesus."

In the immediate future, the ministry is geared toward men because the majority of golfers are male.

"Men are saying, 'I want to serve the church, but I don't see myself singing in the choir or working in the nursery,'" Lehman said.

"But they love to golf," he said. "They can build a ministry around their passion for golf. My question to them is, 'Who gave you the passion?' God gave me my passion. How do we use that passion to glorify God?" ■

We recommend

- *The Master's Grip: Focus for Life and Golf* by Jim Sheard
- *In His Grip* by Jim Sheard
- *The First Tee Shot* by Wally Armstrong and Mike Yorkey
- *The Master's Touch* by Ted Sprague
- *The Holman CSB Golfer's Bible*

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

LifeWay VBS 2008 themes announced; Outrigger Island and Cactus Canyon are destinations

by Polly House

Whether you're up for an aloha-style adventure to live God's unshakeable truth or a trail-blazing trip through the Wild West, LifeWay has a Vacation Bible School option for 2008 that will meet your outreach needs.

"Outrigger Island: Living God's Unshakeable Truth" and "Club VBS: Cactus Canyon" are the VBS themes for 2008.

Both themes were introduced to the audience at the Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio, Texas, June 12-13.

Set in a tropical paradise, LifeWay's main VBS line will take the children, youth and adults to Outrigger Island where they will learn to know, speak and live God's truth. Based on Psalm 86:11 – "Teach me Your way, Lord, and I will live by Your truth" – this tropical adventure will help participants develop the stability they need to become unshakeable in a world of shifting sands.

Outrigger Island is designed for all ages and follows a traditional VBS schedule with three-hour sessions throughout a weeklong summer program. Churches have dozens of

options for curriculum, crafts, decorations, snacks and recreation in this line.

In "Club VBS: Cactus Canyon," kids will saddle up and hit the trail. They will learn all about the good news in John 3:16 – "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" – and how they can tell family, friends, and people around the world about Jesus.

Cactus Canyon resources for 2008 include a new starter kit that will provide administrative, worship rally and leader guides for each of three age groups: 3-K, grades 1-3 and grades 4-6. With a shorter two-hour schedule, Club VBS is designed to adapt to multiple settings so it can be used during a traditional summer week, school breaks, mission trips or day camps among other times.

"Outrigger Island and Cactus Canyon are some of the best themes we've ever had for VBS," said Mary Katharine Hunt, who manages LifeWay's preschool and children's ministry area, which includes VBS. "I think the children will not only have a great time visiting Outrigger Island and Cactus Canyon, but they will learn about how God's truth never changes and how much He loves them.

"The children learn God's truth because LifeWay's VBS is always based on God's Word. We are intentional in planning VBS to be so much more than just a fun time."

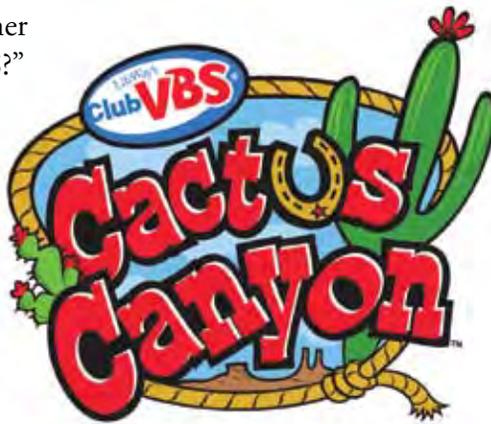
"Whether you choose Outrigger Island or Cactus Canyon, the key is to emphasize the evangelistic aspect of VBS," said Jerry Wooley, LifeWay's VBS ministry specialist, pointing out that 26 percent of Southern Baptist baptisms in 2006 came as a direct



Photo by Keith Tyrrell

result of VBS. “What else would you do next summer that will have as much evangelistic potential as VBS?”

On Aug. 15, LifeWay will launch www.lifeway.com/vbs to offer additional information and resources related to both VBS lines. Messengers to the SBC received information and promotional materials to take back to their churches. The complete curricula will go on sale Dec. 1. Selected Outrigger Island promotional materials will be available Oct. 1. ■



VBS continues as SBC's best evangelism tool

Keeping with its 10-year pattern, Vacation Bible School continues as the single most effective evangelism tool in the Southern Baptist Convention. Numbers show 26 percent of SBC church baptisms in 2006 came as a result of VBS.

LifeWay recently released 2006 VBS statistics. Children, youth and adults were reached with the truth about Jesus using the two VBS lines: “Arctic Edge: Where Adventure Meets Courage” and “Club VBS: Space Quest.”

Jerry Wooley, LifeWay's VBS ministry specialist, explained that totals are based on information provided to LifeWay by churches submitting a VBS report and/or information submitted to the Annual Church Profile.

- Number of SBC congregations reporting VBS: 26,502
- Total VBS enrollment: 2,962,457
- Decisions to receive Christ as Savior: 94,980
- Decisions for church-related activities: 3,022
- Total Sunday school prospects discovered: 280,693
- Prospects enrolled in Sunday school: 39,218
- Prospects added to Sunday school prospect files: 212,108

- Baptisms resulting from VBS (of SBC total): 26 percent

“These are great numbers,” Wooley said. “Vacation Bible School stands alone in its evangelism and outreach.”

He said one thing LifeWay learned from this report is that the number of churches hosting nighttime VBS continues to grow. This year 66 percent were in the evening.

“This is due to several factors, including staffing,” he said. “It is harder to get adult workers during the day. Plus, some of the churches have told us that just as a common sense and comfort measure they plan their VBS in the evening when the temperature is cooler.”

This year's VBS themes: “Game Day Central: Where Heroes are Made” and “Club VBS: Jungle Jaunt” were enthusiastically embraced by churches, according to Wooley. At the four VBS Preview events held in January and February of this year, almost 2,000 people from churches around the country learned about the new VBS offerings.

“With all the excitement about this year's VBS, we expect next year's numbers to continue to show VBS is reaching people like nothing else,” Wooley said. ■

2006 ACP:

Growth seen in attendance, number of churches, but SBC baptisms down nearly 2 percent

by Russ Rankin

While the number of Southern Baptist churches in 2006 increased by 524 and reported more than \$11.3 billion in total receipts, LifeWay President Thom Rainer reported that total baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention fell for the second consecutive year.

According to the Annual Church Profile (ACP), information gathered by LifeWay, baptisms last year dropped from 371,850 to 364,826, or 1.89 percent, eclipsing 2005's distinction as the lowest annual total since 1993. The 2005 ACP reported a 4.15 percent drop.

"While it is certainly encouraging to see new Southern Baptist churches being birthed, our baptism totals once again show that we are not doing an effective job stepping up to the task of sharing the gospel with a lost and dying world," Rainer said.

"As a nation and a people we are blessed with enormous financial resources and gifts, and our churches reflect that," he added. "How blessed we would be if our churches adopted that same fire and fervor for evangelism."

The 2006 ACP shows growth in several areas. Total membership of Southern Baptist churches increased slightly to reach 16,306,246 members. The net increase of 524 churches, more than double the net increase from 2005 – for a total of 44,223 – represents a 1.2 percent boost for 2006. In the 2005 ACP, there was a net increase of 234 churches.

Primary worship attendance rose to

6,138,776, reflecting a 1.43 percent growth. Church-type missions operating – defined in the ACP as "a body of baptized believers having a distinct identity that meets regularly for worship, engages in Bible study and evangelism, and provides opportunity for stewardship and fellowship, but has not yet constituted as a church" – was the largest percentage increase in 2006, realizing a 2.06 percent growth.

Rainer pointed out that numeric/percentage changes for certain categories could not accurately be figured for the 2006 ACP, as some state conventions or associations did not ask for some items to be reported, or asked in a way that gave results that were not comparable with totals reported in the 2005 ACP.

The impacted categories and their 2006 totals include:

- Total receipts: \$11,372,608,393
- Total tithes, offerings and special gifts: \$10,425,420,529
- Undesignated receipts: \$8,293,404,321
- Total mission expenditures: \$1,285,616,031
- Sunday school enrollment: 7,931,753
- Discipleship training enrollment: 1,503,826
- Music ministry enrollment and participation: 1,466,124
- WMU enrollment: 811,139
- Men/boys mission education enrollment: 376,379

"Southern Baptists are a people committed to the gospel," Rainer said. "Missions and evangelism have always been our rallying cry. Churches should view this

"Churches should view this report as a commendation, but also as a sobering reminder that there is much more that we need to be doing."

– Thom Rainer

report as a commendation, but also as a sobering reminder that there is much more that we need to be doing. Our mandate to share the Good News of Jesus Christ

remains our focus, but as a convention we must renew our passion for reaching the burgeoning masses in our states, cities and neighborhoods.” ■

2006 Southern Baptist Convention Statistical Summary

<i>Item/Statistic</i>	<i>Final 2006</i>	<i>Final 2005</i>	<i>2006-2005 Numeric Change</i>	<i>2006-2005 Percent Change</i>
State Conventions	41	41	0	0.00%
Associations	1,185	1,182	3	0.25%
Churches	44,223	43,699	524	1.20%
Total Membership	16,306,246	16,270,315	35,931	0.22%
Baptisms	364,826	371,850	-7,024	-1.89%
Ratio of Baptisms: Total Membership	1:45	1:44	(N/A)	(N/A)
Primary Worship Attendance	6,138,776	6,052,321	86,455	1.43%
Church-type Missions Operating	5,241	5,135	106	2.06%

Other 2006 Items

Not Comparable with 2005 Totals:

Totals in this table have incomplete data for 2006 due to some state conventions or associations either not asking the item or asking it in such a way that the results were not compatible with other data. Thus, the 2006 SBC totals for these items are not comparable to 2005 SBC totals and numeric/percent change calculations are not appropriate.

<i>Item/Statistic</i>	<i>Final 2006</i>	<i>Final 2005</i>
Other Additions (2)	394,321	396,443
Sunday School Enrollment (2)	7,931,753	8,068,780
Discipleship Training Enrollment (1, 2, 3, 4)	1,503,826	1,667,709
Music Ministry Enrollment/Participation (4)	1,466,124	1,577,364
WMU Enrollment (2, 4)	811,139	804,983
Men/Boys Mission Education Enrollment (2, 4)	376,379	388,264
Total Tithes, Offerings, & Special Gifts (2, 4)	\$10,425,420,529	\$9,932,910,264
Undesignated Receipts (2)	\$8,293,404,321	\$7,842,598,469
Total Receipts (2)	\$11,372,608,393	\$10,721,544,568
Total Mission Expenditures (2)	\$1,285,616,031	\$1,233,644,135

Notes:

1. Prior to 2005, discipleship training enrollment counted people more than once (counted for each group in which they participated). In 2005 (and afterwards), the item was changed to count people only once regardless of how many studies in which they participated.
2. California Southern Baptist Convention either did not ask this item or their item definition was not comparable with the definition used by other state conventions.
3. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina did not ask the discipleship training item in a way that yields comparable data.
4. Fifty-four associations in Texas did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the total.

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April 12, 2007

Happy Anniversary, Dead Sea Scrolls!

by G.B. Howell Jr.



Dead Sea Scroll
fragment

I woke up saying to myself, “I do have the best job at LifeWay!”

I was waking up in an efficiency apartment at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. What brought me to Kansas City? Two things: a downtown exhibit featuring the Dead Sea Scrolls and a workshop the seminary was hosting that also featured the scrolls. As editor in chief of LifeWay’s *Biblical Illustrator* magazine, I was there to see the exhibit and attend the workshop.

Why all the activity related to the scrolls? Because 2007 is the 60th anniversary of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

You have probably heard the story of how, in 1947, a Bedouin shepherd was reportedly looking for a lost sheep in the Judean desert near the northwestern corner of the Dead Sea. Hoping to scare the sheep into the open, the shepherd threw a rock into one of the caves. Rather than hear the bleating of sheep, however, he heard something shatter.

The shepherd had happened upon what has been called the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th century. From 1947 to 1956, workers explored eleven caves in the region and discovered more than 800 manuscripts and 40,000 fragments written on papyrus, animal skins, and even one scroll engraved in copper. Some scrolls contained

full texts and were stored in clay jars. Many of the fragments, though, were scattered on the floor of the caves and were as small as your thumbnail. The scrolls and fragments contained biblical texts, religious writings and records of community rules and writings.

The scrolls were written by a religious community, likely the Essenes, who lived almost monastic lives in their settlement at Qumran. They copied Scripture and religious texts from about 200 B.C. to about A.D. 68. When the Jews revolted against the Romans in Israel in A.D. 70, the Essenes stored several jars containing the scrolls in the caves at Qumran. The region's arid climate provided the perfect conditions for preserving the scrolls for centuries.

The value of the scrolls has proven to be immeasurable. The texts are the oldest copies of Hebrew Scripture ever found – more than 1,000 years older than the previously known texts. Plus, the scrolls provide a glimpse into what Jewish life was like in the time of Jesus.

Because of the anniversary and the exhibit in Kansas City, Midwestern Seminary hosted the workshop. They brought in scholars to discuss the importance of the

scrolls and what they contribute to our understanding of the Old and the New Testaments. Sadly, though, the seminary workshop and the downtown exhibit have both come to a close.

However, your opportunity to learn about and even see the Dead Sea Scrolls is not over. The Natural History Museum at San Diego is hosting an exhibit of the scrolls. They are calling the exhibit, “the largest, longest, and most comprehensive ever assembled in any country.” So, if you have been looking for an excuse to visit San Diego, you can visit through the end of this year.

If, however, you cannot visit San Diego, *Biblical Illustrator* is putting some articles on our Web page that highlight the scrolls, their importance in the life of Jesus and information about the Essenes. You can find those articles by going to www.lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator.

Let's see ... I get to learn about the Word of God; help others as they

elevate the Word; get to work with world class Christian scholars; and edit *Biblical Illustrator*. You know what? I do have the best job at LifeWay! Happy Anniversary, Dead Sea Scrolls. ■

G.B. Howell Jr. is editor in chief of LifeWay's Biblical Illustrator.



We recommend

- *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* by Forentino Garcia Mertinez
- *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* by George J. Brooke
- *The Library of Qumran, on the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* by Hartmut Stegemann and Emanuel Tov

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

Million-dollar view echoes the priceless ministry at GGBTS LifeWay Christian Store

story by Polly House
photography by Kent Harville



Darren Draeger may be the manager of one of the smallest LifeWay Christian Stores, but no other manager can claim his million-dollar view.

Draeger directs the operation of the LifeWay store at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. From the customer service desk, he and the other store employees look through a wall of windows, past the roofs of multimillion-dollar houses, and across San Francisco Bay to the city.

While the Marin County property is very valuable, the ministry of Draeger and his small staff is priceless.

“We have Southern Baptist churches in the San Francisco area, a few of them, but most are small and struggling,” Draeger said. “This whole area is very secular, but it’s a spiritual buffet. There’s an eastern religion influence, some Christian influence, but mostly a New

Age mentality – a ‘whatever is spiritual to me is OK’ attitude.

“There is a suspicion about Christianity and, to be honest, most people are sort of anti-Christian,” he said. “Honestly, though, I don’t think people’s negativity comes because of Christians they know, because most people don’t know any Christians. There just aren’t many of us here.”



GGBTS student Garth Clayborn works in the LifeWay store while attending seminary.

With a population of about 250,000 and the highest per capita income of any county in United States, Marin County, where Mill Valley is located, can certainly support any kind of business enterprise, and bookstores are very popular. However, the LifeWay store is the only Christian bookstore in the county, according to Draeger.

“You don’t just run by the local strip mall and find a Christian store,” Draeger said. “Our store is a destination location for people wanting Christian resources. People who come here are looking for something they won’t find anywhere else.”

Churches as far away as Oregon, Nevada and northern California take advantage of ordering directly from the store by phone. “They will call us and we’ll take care of them,” said store employee Garth Clayborn. “I had a church this morning that called and ordered 1,000 portable communion sets.”

Karen Anthony from Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Fairfield, Calif., and John Pflasterer, church administrator at First Baptist Church in Fair Oaks, Calif., are both working on masters in educational leadership at Golden Gate. They agreed that the store is invaluable

to them as students and as church leaders.

“In our seminary orientation, they tell us to take advantage of the LifeWay store,” Anthony said. “It’s really convenient to get our seminary texts, as well as materials we will use at church.”

Pflasterer said he often takes time between classes to browse in the store, just to keep up with new materials that are available. “I’m passionate about discipleship,” he said, “and I find materials and resources that I can take back to my church to help grow our members in the faith.”

“[In the San Francisco area] you don’t just run by the local strip mall and find a Christian store.

– Darren Draeger

The LifeWay Store has had a presence on the Golden Gate campus since 1966. Draeger has been manager since 2003. “I got my first masters here at Golden Gate, then stayed on as store manager,” he said. “Now, I’m working on my second masters. It’s funny, so many people ask me if I plan to leave after I get my degree and go out and serve in a place of ministry. I just tell them I’m already serving in a place of ministry – this store. We do a tremendous ministry here, equipping students to go out all over the world and minister in Jesus’ name.” ■

Huntsville LifeWay Christian Store manager named store manager of the year

Man of integrity. Servant heart. Family man. Loves people. Loves the Lord. Sees eternal significance in his work. Hard worker. Has a heart for churches.



Photo by Russ Rankin

Scott Tarver

While these are words often used to depict the character of a church leader, the description is a poignant portrayal of Scott Tarver, LifeWay Christian Stores' 2006 Manager of the Year.

LifeWay Christian Stores selects the store manager of the

year based on financial criteria, customer feedback, professional accomplishments and contributions to LifeWay as an organization.

Tarver currently manages the Huntsville (Ala.) LifeWay Christian Store, but previously served as manager of the LifeWay Christian Store in Shreveport, La.

"Scott Tarver is a humble, godly leader who is passionate about God's calling on his life," said Eddy Perry, director of the Southwest region for LifeWay Christian Stores. "He is an action-oriented leader committed to high standards of excellence. He is a strategic thinker who takes initiative. Scott loves, values and is dedicated to developing the people he is blessed to lead."

Tarver is quick to say that earning the award of store manager of the year is not a one-person task.

"Store manager of the year is all about the

team," Tarver confessed. "The staffs here in Huntsville and at my former store in Shreveport contributed greatly to me being selected for the award. I give much of the credit to them. Having a good staff is key."

Passion for eternal impact

Tarver said he is passionate about each resource that leaves the store and the potential impact it has for the Kingdom.

"My favorite part of my job has to do with the resources we provide," Tarver said. "Unlike a grocery store where you can purchase things to meet a temporal need, what we provide has an immeasurable impact eternally.

"And the impact not only happens with the one customer who leaves the store with the resource. There could be 15-20 people impacted when someone shares a book with another person or uses the resource for Bible study or ministry."

Honored in front of peers

Tarver was presented with his award in front of his peers at the national sales meeting of LifeWay store managers April 15-19 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center. At the awards banquet April 16, Tarver recognized his store associates and challenged his fellow managers to pursue greatness by following the servant attitude of Jesus Christ.

"We have such a powerful impact [as store managers]," he said. "What are you doing everyday to help your team grow and mature to be who they need to be? I hope the staffs in my stores would say, 'he wanted us to be great.'" ■

Sunday school seminar helps leaders strategize for healthy growth

by Brooklyn Noel

The second of four 2007 National Sunday School Director Seminars brought everyone from senior pastors to Sunday volunteers to Nall Avenue Baptist Church, Prairie Village, Kan., for an intensive two-day opportunity to network and learn from others in the Sunday school field.

Wayne Poling, senior lead Sunday school leadership specialist at LifeWay and seminar coordinator, welcomed attendees to the training by preparing them to gain information designed to help them:

- 1) **build a strong Sunday school team**
- 2) **develop a dynamic, effective Sunday school program**
- 3) **cultivate life-transforming Bible study**
- 4) **create a Sunday school strategy**

The seminar built upon the definition of Sunday school as a “foundational strategy in a local church for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for building on-mission Christians through open Bible study groups that engage people in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry and worship.”

“A clear understanding of the purpose and mission of Sunday school is absolutely vital to all the other decisions we make,” said Wayne Etheridge, a Sunday school specialist at LifeWay.

“The best friend you [senior pastors and ministers of education] can have in a church is the Sunday school director.”

– Wayne Poling



Strategy vs. event

Before digging into the “how to” of building and running a Sunday school program, seminar instructors explained that effective Sunday school programs should function both as dynamic strategies set up to flourish over time and as regular events focused on individual classes or experiences.

To clarify the distinction, Poling helped attendees define a strategy as an ongoing process that functions as a means to an end and leads to increased enrollment. “I love to see the teacher’s heart be that ‘God has given me the people of this class to touch their lives and see them transformed,’” he said.

An event, on the other hand, is likely encased in a single experience and is often characterized by attendance rather than by enrollment.

Developing this type of successful Sunday school program requires an invaluable, committed and motivated planning team, seminar leaders stressed.

We recommend

- *3D Sunday School Booklet*
- *Ten Best Practices to Make Your Sunday School Work* by Ken Hemphill and Bill Taylor
- *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur* by Ken Hemphill

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

A good problem to have

Instructors at the LifeWay National Sunday School Director Seminar stressed the importance of establishing a pattern of growth in a church’s Sunday school program. That growth, however, requires leaders to frequently assess whether the meeting space accommodates the burgeoning program. Seminar instructors recommended posing the following three questions:

- **Where do we have classes that are too large for their present space?**
- **Do we need new space for the above class or is the class too large and needs to split?**
- **Where do we have classes that have more space than they need?**

If more space is needed

Seminar instructors recommended seven ways to create that space:

- 1. Check carefully for unused space and put it good use.**
- 2. Adjust the current use of space for more efficiency.**
- 3. Empty out church storage rooms.**
- 4. Consider multiple uses for the same space.**
- 5. Don’t be afraid to use the church offices, fellowship hall or gymnasium.**
- 6. Look into using adjacent space such as schools or businesses.**
- 7. Build additional space.**

For senior pastors and ministers of education in attendance, Poling had a particular word of advice: “The best friend you can have in a church is the Sunday school director.”

Lessons learned

During five general sessions, seminar participants received training in knowing the purpose of Sunday school, enlisting the necessary help to run their church’s program, enlarging the Sunday school ministry, providing adequate resources for the program, and going out to recruit new members.

Trish Holley, an event associate in LifeWay’s church leadership training area, said participants in the seminar, regardless of the size of the church from which they came, learn a “mixture” of useful information at these conferences. “By being about basic Sunday school, the information applies to you whether you have 100 people or 2,000 people in your Sunday school program.”

Seminar participant Doug Lawrence agreed, saying that the training encouraged him because he feels his church is “on the right path.”

“God has a plan for each of the churches [here],” said Lawrence, director of Sunday school at Immanuel Baptist Church, Butler, Mo.

Lawrence attended the conference with his church’s senior pastor, Lynn Snapp, who began his tenure at Immanuel Baptist only 14 months ago, but has made discipleship a priority to characterize his leadership at the church. “Discipleship was my first concern,” Snapp said. “Sunday school is just a slice of making disciples.”

The training culminated in a lengthy, guided role-playing session during which participants organized themselves into Sunday planning teams responsible for developing a strategy for a Sunday school program. The project began by asking teams to establish a vision for their program and ended with producing an action plan to accomplish the desired improvements.

Snapp said the conference proved worthwhile, particularly the assimilation and role-playing exercises, adding that the weekend motivated him “to go back and help the church to re-dream the vision of what Sunday school should and could be.”

For more information about Sunday school training events, visit LifeWay.com and click the “Sunday school” link under the ministry menu. ■



LifeWay gives new ministers of education crash course in training, networking

A man in a blue t-shirt and khaki pants is climbing a rock wall. He is wearing a climbing harness with a white bag and is using a metal climbing device on the rock. The rock is light brown and has some cracks. The man is looking up and to the right.

A minister of education has a unique role in the church. He or she shoulders the load for keeping up with what everyone in the church is learning and how every aspect of that learning goes hand-in-hand.

Tough job!

LifeWay addressed the unique role of the minister of education with a Beta conference designed exclusively for new ministers of education. Twenty-two ministers of education with three years experience (or less) from 12 different states gathered at LifeWay in Nashville April 23-25 for training and networking.

“As I visited with churches and ministers of education over the past year, I realized a significant number of new ministers of education have no formal theological education or background,” said Bruce Raley, LifeWay’s national education ministry leader and organizer of the conference.

“Beta” is a rock climbing term that implies moving forward and climbing higher. Raley chose the theme based upon a desire to assist ministers of education move forward in training and church ministry.

“About one-third of all new Christian education ministry leaders are moving into staff positions from within the church,” Raley said. “These are lay leaders with integrity, the trust of the pastor and a proven church leadership track record. However, many do not have the work competencies necessary to be effective. We designed the Beta conference to help train these new leaders in those competencies.”

Raley explained that new church staff leaders are not necessarily young leaders. “In fact, we are seeing many being called to education ministry leadership positions after years in other occupations,” he noted. “It is not unusual at all to see retired men and women becoming ministers of education. We also had two former international missionaries at the Beta conference who recently have been called to churches here in the States.”

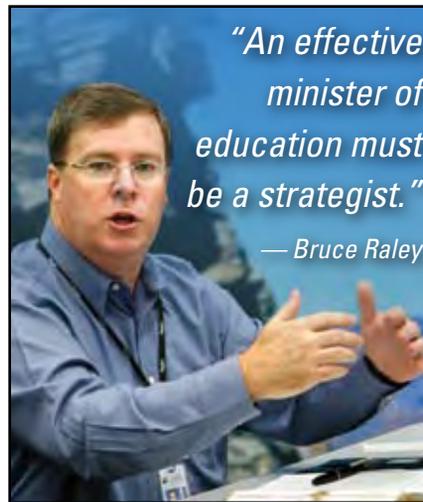
Conference participants heard from specialists and ministry leaders from LifeWay’s discipleship, outreach, Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, age group and gender ministries.

Another Beta conference is scheduled for October 2007. For information, call the LifeWay national education ministry office at (615) 251-3637, or subscribe to the CE NEWS e-newsletter at www.lifeway.com/newsletters.

"The education ministry is an umbrella," Raley said. "It encompasses a number of general ministries as well as those that are more specialized in nature. In addition to specific ministry training, we also had significant discussion on pastor/staff relationships, simple church, affecting change, and other pertinent topics."

Raley said the group also spent considerable time in training how to strategize ministry. "An effective minister of education must be a strategist," he said. "Each church has its own DNA. No two churches are identical. Therefore, each church must develop its own strategy for evangelism and making disciples. Classes, individualized studies, online training, and big venue events are all used as part of the process."

"As church leaders, we must not only move from the 'one size fits all' mentality, but also from the 'what's hot now' thinking," Raley said. "Leaders should make long term process plans for the church education ministry. In most churches with ministers of education, that person must be the strategist." ■



"An effective minister of education must be a strategist."

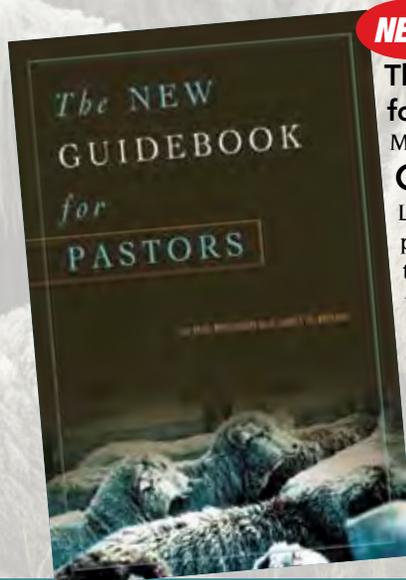
— Bruce Raley

We recommend

- *The Effective Minister of Education* by Jerry M. Stubblefield
- *Christian Education Handbook* by Bruce P. Powers
- *A History of Christian Education* by Ronnie Prevost and James E. Reed

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

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ENDURING INSTITUTION • SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR CHALLENGES
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Three popular Bible teachers take 9,000 women deeper into the Word

story by Polly House, photography by Kent Harville

Although the West Coast is not considered part of the Bible Belt, an observer wouldn't have known it by seeing the 9,000 women at Deeper Still, an event led by popular Bible teachers Priscilla Shirer, Beth Moore and Kay Arthur.

Event attendees converged on downtown San Francisco March 9-10 to experience 10 hours of music, worship and intense time in the Word of God from the three well-known Bible teachers and successful authors: Shirer, founder of Going Beyond Ministries in Dallas; Moore, founder of Living Proof Ministries in Houston; and Arthur, founder of Precept Ministries in Chattanooga, Tenn.



L-R: Beth Moore, Priscilla Shirer and Kay Arthur share some lighthearted time at the Deeper Still event.

“God gets glory when no one else can explain what has happened to you.”

— Beth Moore

“We’re not here to entertain you,” said Arthur during a welcome time. “We are here to join with you and go deeper still into the presence of God.”

Deeper Still was the first time the three women had shared a teaching platform. Each spoke of her tremendous respect for the others’ ministry and the joy of being able to come together for the event.

Playing to the crowd, the women laughed and made jokes about puffy lips, big hair and high heels, drawing laughs from the audience.

When it came time to delve into the Word, however, everyone got serious. Each speaker taught from a passage relating to David.

Priscilla Shirer

Shirer began the teaching time by asking, “What was it about David that caused him to be a man seeking God’s own heart?”

“He recognized God as his source,” Shirer said. “He realized everything he had and everything he was came from God.”

“...[W]hen we give up control of our own lives and realize that God is in control, then when things start spinning out of control – and they will – we can look up at God and thank Him because He is going to have to take that responsibility,” she said.

She cautioned the women that when asking God to become a presence and a passion in their lives, they must be ready to take in all that He is.

“David wanted the entirety of God – not only the sweet vanilla parts,

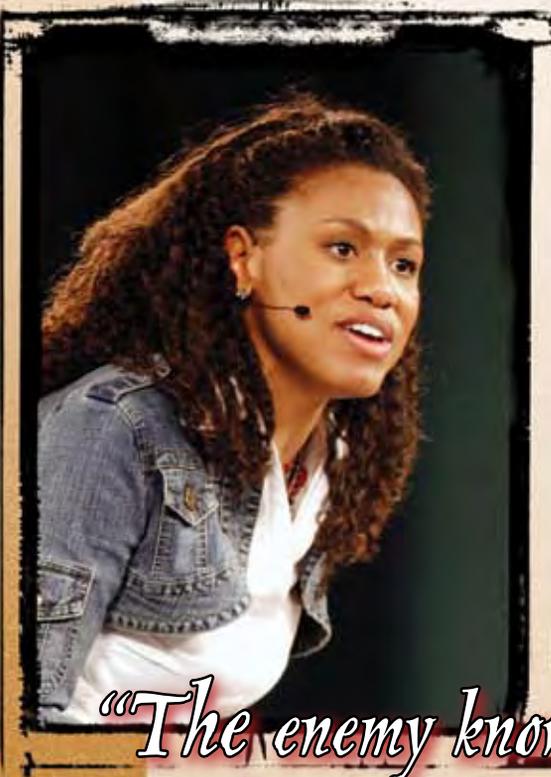
but also His power and wrath. We have to be willing to take all of God when we invite Him to be close.”

When God is close, there will be attacks, she said. “Sisters, let me tell you this: As long as you aren’t a threat, the enemy will

leave you alone. As long as you just go to church, he will ignore you. But, when you start spending time with God every day, the enemy can’t stand that.

“The enemy knows he can’t destroy you, but he will spend the rest of your life trying to distract you.”

Shirer reminded the women that all religions are not equal. “What separates us from



“The enemy knows he can’t destroy you, but he will spend the rest of your life trying to distract you.”

– Priscilla Shirer

every other religion on the face of the earth is we can talk to our God and He will speak back to us.”

Shirer gave five ways to discern God's voice: Look for the message of the Spirit; live in the mode of prayer; search out the model of Scripture, always remembering God's voice will never contradict Scripture; seek out a mentor and submit to the mentor's ministry, just as Samuel did to Eli; and expect the mercy of confirmation.

Beth Moore

Moore began her segment of teaching time in 2 Samuel 7, saying God is a God of timing.

“When King David was settled into his palace and God had given him rest from his enemies, he was talking to the prophet Nathan,” Moore said. “Then David decided it was wrong that he should be living in a palace while the ark of God sat in a tent.

“So Nathan told David to do whatever his heart told him. But later, Nathan got a word from God about it.”

Moore said, “But, God didn't ask David to build God a house. It was not time for that to happen. God had plans for one of David's descendants to build a house after David died. It wasn't David's time.”

She continued by reminding the women that David, now king, was an unlikely choice. He had been a shepherd, not one of noble birth.

Transitioning to talking about the power of God manifesting itself in a believer's life, she said, “God gets glory when no one else can explain what has happened to you. Are you where you want to be? No, of course not. Neither am I. But, praise God, are we where we used to be? No!”

Only through the power of God can Christians live the abundant life. “The victorious, delivered life is just as contagious as a defeated one,” she said. “I want to live totally sold out to God and I want to take people with me. I want to take my family with me.”

Kay Arthur

Arthur continued using passages relating to David and his relationship with God, this time focusing on the time after his sin with Bathsheba.

“David was in the pit of despair when he was convicted of his sin,” Arthur said. “Some of



We recommend

- *He Speaks to Me* by Priscilla Shirer
- *David: 90 Days with A Heart Like His* by Beth Moore
- *Lord, Teach Me to Pray* by Kay Arthur

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



“We’re not here to entertain you. We are here to join with you and go deeper still into the presence of God.”
— Kay Arthur

you are probably in the pit now. I’ve been in that same pit, one of my own making.”

But, quoting 2 Corinthians 12: 9, Arthur said, “His power is perfected in my weakness.”

She said David understood that God is a God of grace. “Even after his sin, David moved forward because he really understood that. God told David that he would live under His chastening hand for the rest of his life.

She listed four consequences of David’s sin: The sword would never depart from his house; evil would rise up against him in his own household; his wives and concubines would be given to others in his household; and the baby he and Bathsheba had would die.

In spite of all this, Arthur said, “God’s grace was sufficient.”

Arthur shared with the women what she said was the most important thing she had learned in all her years of ministry: “God is sovereign! There is no greater authority than His. His sovereignty reigns overall.

“If you think you’ve gone too far away from God, remember this, ladies: if God has not taken you out, He still has a purpose for you.”

Speaking for herself, Moore and Shirer, she said, “It is our heart’s desire that you would be so confident in God so that you could say, ‘If I live, praise the Lord; if I die, praise the Lord.’”

Diverse group of women

Faith Whatley, director of women’s ministries at LifeWay, said the event was the most cross-generational and multiethnic of any of the women’s events. “You have these three wonderful Godly women who draw different groups. Women of all ages from high school to senior adults are here. We’ve seen black, white, Asian and Hispanic women. It’s wonderful!”

Whatley said she wasn’t sure what to expect with this event in San Francisco. “What we have learned is that there are thousands of godly women in this area of the country who are hungry for solid biblical teaching. I’m honored that LifeWay was able to meet their heartfelt need.” ■

Arkansas transplants finding new home, ministry in California

Pam and Garth Clayborn are Arkansans, born and raised. But now they are living in California and adjusting to a new culture and a new dependence on God.

Pam, a nurse, and her husband, Garth, a student at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, moved to Mill Valley, across the bay from San Francisco, last fall for Garth to begin seminary. He is working on two masters degrees simultaneously, one in theology from GGBTS and another in global studies through Union University. He also holds down a part-time job at the LifeWay Christian Store on campus.

Pam and six other women from Strawberry Community Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Tiburon, Calif., were among the 9,000 women who attended Deeper Still, an event featuring Bible teachers and authors Beth Moore, Priscilla Shirer and Kay Arthur, sponsored by LifeWay.

Being in a Bible study event with so many other women was "wonderful," Pam said. "I really liked what Beth [Moore] said [that] until you have struggles and times of crisis, you can't really know how redemptive God is.

"I have to say I have really struggled with the move from Arkansas where people choose a church based on programs, people and worship styles. Out here, Garth and I just looked to

find a church that taught biblical truths!" she said. "You get more basic in Marin County where 98 percent of the people are unchurched."

She added that what she heard at Deeper Still touched her heart. "I needed this. Seeing all these women participating in a Bible study is encouraging."

She said she and Garth are more dependent on God than ever before, especially with no family around them. "You really do grow closer as a couple and as a Christian." ■



Pam Clayborn

Event update:

A second Deeper Still event is scheduled for Sept. 7-8 in Nashville, Tenn., but already has sold out Nashville's largest arena – the 17,500-seat Sommet Center.

Paige Greene, director of LifeWay's women's events, said women who were unable to get tickets for the September Deeper Still event can check the LifeWay Web site [www.lifeway.com/women] for information about a satellite location being set up in Nashville.

LifeWay International consultants

disciple to the ends of the earth

story by Chris Turner, photography by Michael Yarber

Punta Arenas, Chile, is near the bottom of the earth geographically. Acts 1:8 defines such an isolated place as “the ends of the earth,” and Diego Rivadeneira would agree.

“Many people don’t go there because it is very extreme,” he said. “The churches are very small and the pastors are very humble. The spiritual needs are great and the pastors and churches need tools to assist their ministries. I go there because it helps them make disciples. I go there because Jesus commands it.”

Rivadeneira embodies the Great Commission focus that guides LifeWay International. Rivadeneira is one of dozens of LifeWay International consultants located in Spanish-speaking countries who attended the department’s annual training event held May 11-13 in Miami. This year’s theme was *Edificar el Reino* [Edify the Kingdom], taken from Ephesians 4:12-13.

Luis Aranguren, director of LifeWay International, told the consultants that today’s church is too often full of programs that lead to busyness, and said, “The focus needs to be where Jesus placed emphasis in the Great Commission: Making disciples.

“Teaching them to obey goes beyond leading a seminar. It is teaching them by living it yourself, by showing it,” Aranguren said. “Obedience comes day by day. The objective of the church is to mature believers for obedient service to the Lord. We don’t need more activities, we need disciples.”

Making disciples is at the heart of Rivadeneira’s calling to ministry. Although he has been in Chile for 12 years, the 33-year-old Ecuador native began his spiritual journey after a cousin invited him to a home Bible study. He put his faith in Christ and almost immediately was influenced by biblical teaching, godly mentors and printed resources. He credits *Experiencing God*, by Henry Blackaby, as being instrumental in his decision to move to Chile and begin seminary.

“I believe what we do as consultants is important because many churches don’t have a Great Commission focus,” he said. “But when they are taught what Jesus calls us to, it is incredible to watch the transformation. The people get a right understanding about God’s mission and they begin to impact the people around them.”

Rugged terrain and few roads greet visitors to remote Chilean villages.



Being a part of the transformative process is the goal of LifeWay International, says Luis Lopez, the department's manager of consulting and training.

"Our purpose is to provide the most relevant biblical resources possible to churches around the globe," he said. "Through these resources, we are able to help people of all races know Jesus Christ and seek His Kingdom. The most effective way we can do that is through the consultants. Because they are nationals living in the field, they can understand the needs of the local churches better and provide relevant training to church leaders."

Since its launch in 1999, LifeWay International has increased the number of workshops it hosts around the world. In 2006 alone, the department and its consultants hosted 923 workshops that trained 93,552 pastors and church leaders who represented 9,113 churches in 36 countries. Four predominantly Muslim nations in the Middle East were among the countries where evangelicals received training.

Rivadeneira said it may sound exceptional that so many people attended so many workshops in so many countries, but with a tone of urgency he added, "People are hungry for the Word of God both in and out of the church and they must be reached." He recounted one story of many he said he could tell that demonstrates the hunger.

"We had a workshop way up in the mountains in a very small church. We had a man come who had heard about the workshop and he lived very far away. He



walked two hours in the rain to catch a bus for another hour. He was still soaking wet when he arrived but wanted to come and learn more about what we were teaching. Others have come from even farther. It is humbling because I know it is not me they are coming to hear but it is the opportunity to grow in God's Word that brings them."

A workshop can include many different topics and are designed to meet the needs of local believers. Among the variety of topics taught are: growing in faith, marriage and family, youth discipleship, leadership training and women's ministry.

"Our vision is that as God works through us, we will help people, churches and evangelical organizations around the world in their efforts to know Jesus Christ and seek His Kingdom," Lopez said. "We want to be the most relevant and accessible provider of spiritually transforming biblical solutions possible. At the same time, we understand that books don't make disciples, people do. God's Word transforms; that is what people need to hear."

And Rivadeneira would quickly add that includes even those people living in extreme conditions near the bottom of the earth. ■



Top: LifeWay International consultant Diego Rivadeneira, center, and LifeWay mission trip volunteer Danny Dixon, left, witness to Chileans.

Directly above: A young boy sits in his mother's lap while she speaks with the missionaries.

For information about LifeWay International, go to www.lifeway.com/espanol or call (888) 251-2312.

Wednesday night suppers ...

8 FRESH IDEAS

by Diana Davis



Wednesday night supper at the church is a great tradition. It provides a joyful opportunity for fellowship and gives many Christians the extra boost they need to make it through a tough week.

Has your church's midweek dinner slipped into monotony lately? Need some fresh ideas to keep it special? Here are eight simple ones ...

1. GET LOGO APRONS AND SAVVY SERVERS.

Purchase inexpensive bib aprons by the dozen, and monogram the church logo or motto on them. It won't cost a fortune, and it will add a touch of class. Our deacons serve Wednesday dinners (Acts 6:2-3). Using a rotation schedule, they demonstrate joyful fellowship and servant leadership. This gesture brings recognition and respect for our deacons, and everyone loves their servant spirit.

2. USE SIGN HOLDERS AT EACH TABLE.

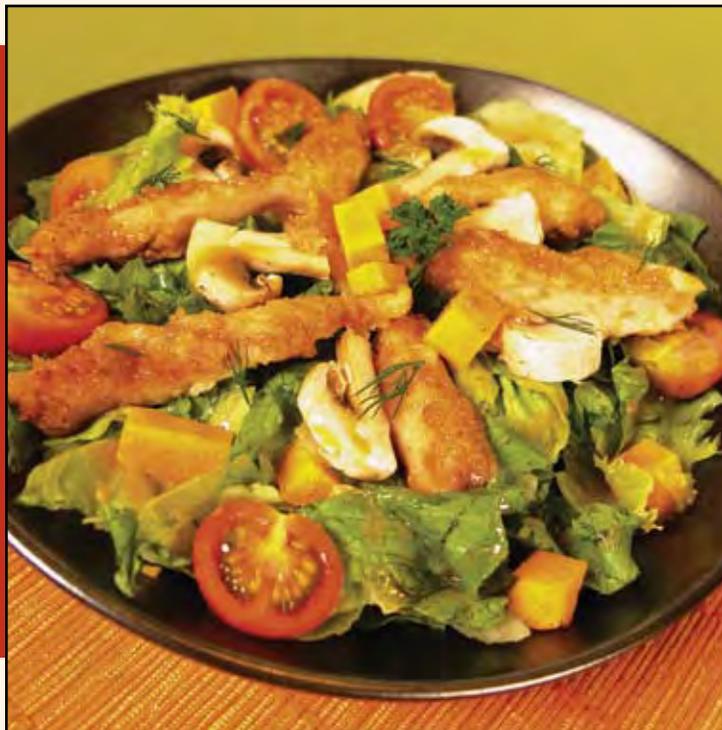
Purchase appropriate-sized plastic sign holders for each dining table. Display Wednesday evening schedules and room numbers for all ages on one side and upcoming church events on the other side.

3. EXTEND AN OUTDOOR INVITATION.

Occasionally advertise Wednesday dinners on your church's exterior sign, i.e. "Join us for dinner Wednesday at 6 p.m. Cheap price; Invaluable conversation!" Be sure friendly members are ready to assimilate guests.

4. SET UP A PASTOR'S TABLE.

Give a printed invitation to new members of your church for a free Wednesday dinner with the pastor at a special pastor's table. If there are extra seats at the table, invite their Bible study teacher or another church



Diana Davis and her husband, Steve, live in Indianapolis. She is a popular women's conference speaker and especially loves encouraging pastors' wives and deacons' wives. Steve is executive director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. For more information, go to www.dianadavis.org.

member their age to join them. Treat them like kings! Make a “welcome new members” table sign and print their names on place cards. Give them a small gift, such as a church license plate cover. At our church, the deacons actually “bussed” the pastor’s table, and church members made a great effort to stop by to reintroduce themselves to new members. Best of all, the pastor can learn names, hear stories of the new members’ Christian walk, discover interests and gifts, and help plug them into ministry and friendships.

5. TAKE RESERVATIONS.

To help with planning dinners, request an RSVP using a tear-off in Sunday’s worship bulletin for one-time or standing reservations.

6. OFFER AN INFORMAL SUMMER SCHEDULE.

Wednesday evening schedules in the

summer might be more informal. For example, our church adjusted Wednesday menus to a lighter fare of salad, soup and loaded baked potato. Our Wednesday evening prayer service was held around the dinner tables.

7. PROVIDE A FAMILY RATE.

Aid families by limiting the maximum cost per family or offering reduced rate children’s meals. Always provide meals free for church staff families.

8. ADD SIMPLE EXTRAS.

Don’t get in a rut. Live or recorded background music is always a nice touch. Rearrange the dining tables occasionally to add life. Add one-time extras, such as fresh flowers from a member’s garden, a strolling violinist, or youth servers. Keep Wednesday evening meals fresh with occasional surprises. ■

We recommend

- *Fresh Ideas: 1,000 Ways to Grow a Thriving and Energetic Church* by Diana Davis
- *The Gift of Hospitality: In Church, In Home, In All of Life* by Delia Halverson

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



HolmanTV uses new media to promote timeless Word

by Kelly Davis Shrout

The student generation has gone tubular. YouTube, FaceBook and MySpace are modern realities that signal the permanence of the social networking age. As millions of students gravitate to online communities and blogs, HolmanTV will be there to offer an alternative message.

On May 14, LifeWay's B&H Publishing Group launched HolmanTV (www.holmantv.com), an innovative video blog with 3-5 minute episodes designed exclusively for the 20-something media-savvy generation. The aim is to expose high school and college students to the new Holman Student Bible that releases this month.

Tim Jordan, B&H marketing manager, and Steve NeSmith, director of B&H's e-

The logo for HolmanTV features the word "holman" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by "TV" in a larger, blue, sans-serif font. To the right of "TV" is a blue icon of a radio tower with concentric circles representing signal waves.

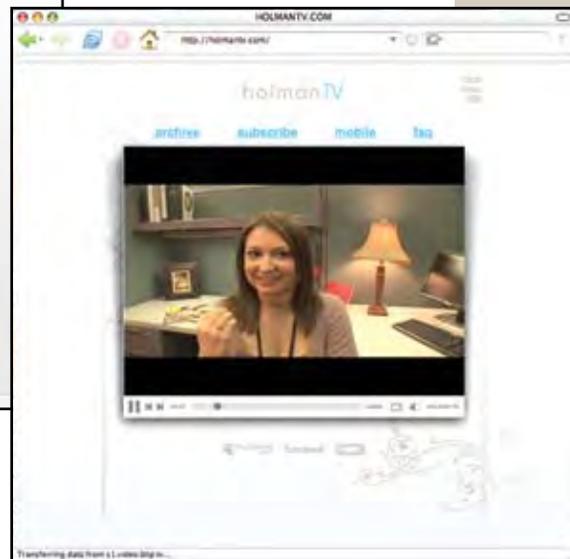
business, after looking at marketing trends, realized that old methods won't reach new crowds. Jordan and NeSmith decided to create a campaign tailored to capture the attention of a student audience.

"We began the campaign by asking where the students are," Jordan said. "They are online. Social networking sites are where they are. In the last two years, social networking has exploded."

YouTube last year boasted 100 million videos served per day and countless other video blog Web sites also totaled similar



www.holmantv.com



visits. Jordan and NeSmith saw the evolution toward online communities as an opportunity to promote relevant, “redeeming” programming on the same video blog sites.

“This generation is consuming media like never before. And what we see

online are grassroots efforts,” NeSmith said, adding that professional filmmaking is not the standard for the media generation. “We see students filming everyday life and that’s what makes the social networking Web sites so popular. It’s about average people documenting their lives.”

The eight shows feature 2-5 minute individual episodes centered on the lives of two cubicle-constrained characters – Holman and Gigi – who find themselves traversing the city of Nashville trying to make it big in the music industry.

“I think many students will be able to identify with the characters,” NeSmith said, adding that Holman and Gigi personify the state of the younger generation.

The music component of the video blog will attract young music fans, while many young adults will identify with Holman and Gigi’s quest to break free from the cubicle and live their own dreams, Jordan and NeSmith said.

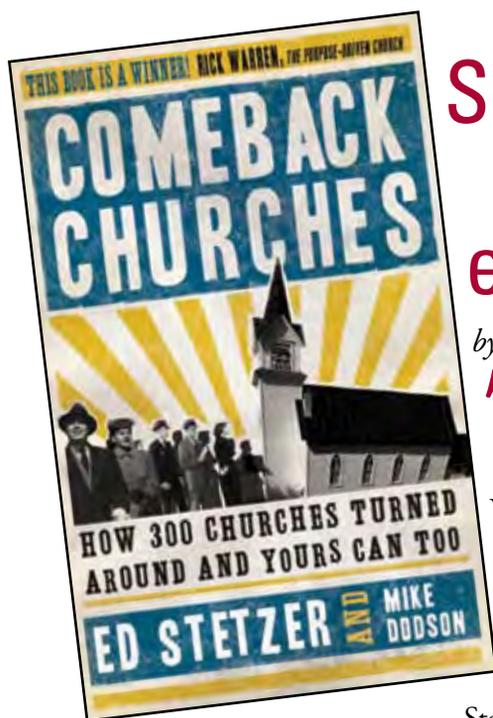
The final 17 seconds will feature a segment on the Holman Student Bible, which will appear like a sponsor tag for the video blog.

“Students don’t want commercials,” Jordan said. “They want to be entertained. We are creating a clean alternative for media-driven students to consume. We want to add value and provide a resource without being overtly commercial,” Jordan added.

“We believe God’s Word is life changing,” Jordan said, mentioning the Bible was designed for students to interact with the graphics and study notes. “We hope that when students read through the text, they will ask God to show them how to apply it to their lives. That’s the whole point of the HolmanTV project.” ■

Inside LifeWay

Visit www.lifeway.com/insidelifeway to listen to a podcast featuring Jordan and NeSmith.



Secret to becoming a 'comeback church' explored in new B&H book

by Shawn Hendricks

The few remaining people at Terrace Heights Baptist Church in Yakima, Wash., didn't want their church to die. Something had to change fast.

Terrace Heights is one of many churches in the United

States that started out strong, stopped growing and then fell into a period of decline. Currently, 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches have leveled off in growth or are in decline.

In *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*, published by LifeWay's B&H Publishing Group, co-authors Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson researched 300 churches among 10 denominations around the country. They mapped out a detailed approach to restoring "plateaued" or declining congregations.

Stetzer is director of LifeWay Research and a former pastor. Dodson has been a pastor and church planter strategist for more than 10 years.

Evaluating the church's situation

According to *Leadership Journal*, which the authors cite, 340,000 churches are in need of church revitalization.

"Over time, most churches plateau, and most eventually decline," Stetzer writes. "Patterns and traditions that once seemed special eventually lose their meaning ... [Congregations] become more concerned about a well-used policy manual than a well-used baptistery."

For Terrace Heights, realizing there was a problem was the first step.

The second step involved being more upfront about the church's vision and direction. The congregation toughened its membership requirements by unveiling a new member's course and a yearlong new member "boot camp."

"They were desperate for anything that might bring life," Terrace Heights pastor Rob Morris said. "We know it is working because we have seen very few people leave or stop coming to the church."

Having the courage to admit mistakes and take action is where church revitalization begins.

"Business as usual will continue to produce the same slow or no-growth environment that plagues the large majority of churches," Stetzer writes.

"The church will need to have an honest evaluation of their current condition, get the church working together for a common solution, and determine what to do together."

A sharper focus

Many struggling churches are focusing too heavily on the wrong things, such as worship and preaching styles.

"The wrong question is whether your church is 'traditional' or 'contemporary' and which is better," Stetzer adds. "The real issue is whether your church is biblically faithful, acting as the presence of Christ in the community at large, able to relate Christ to people in culture, and is on mission."

Most of today's struggling churches fail to relate to their communities, the authors contend.

Since 1991, the adult population in the

"Business as usual will continue to produce the same slow or no-growth environment that plagues the large majority of churches."

— Ed Stetzer

United States has grown by 15 percent. During that same period, the number of adults who do not attend church has nearly doubled, rising from 39 million to 75 million – a 92 percent increase.

As staggering as that last statistic may be, most of today's churches still are not adapting to this growing trend. The authors contend this is more of a "heart" issue than one of strategy and style.

"Most Christians don't like lost people," Stetzer writes. "We wish it were not so, but it is. Lost people don't think like us; they often don't vote like us; they influence our kids ... they are not our people."

Christians must get past their prejudices and focus on relationships and building

more small-group ministries, Stetzer adds. Christians are likely to leave the church within the first six months if they don't develop at least seven significant relationships in the congregation during that time.

Outreach is vital

Nearly all growing churches have an outreach strategy, and almost all declining churches do not.

Ultimately, people need community, and it is up to the church to provide that community.

"People who are connected in community are more likely to make the journey to connect with Christ," Stetzer writes. ■

"Most Christians don't like lost people. We wish it were not so, but, it is."

– Ed Stetzer

Specifically designed for students, it features commentary sidebars, topical quotes, biographies, and much more.



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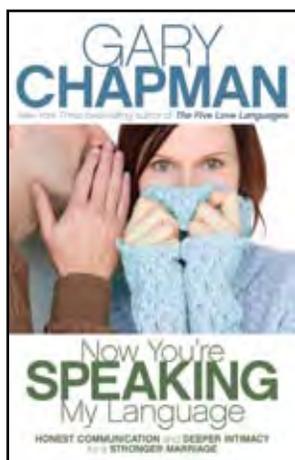
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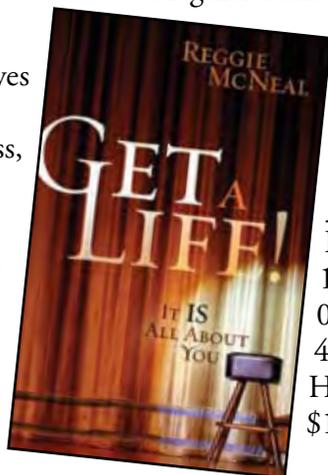
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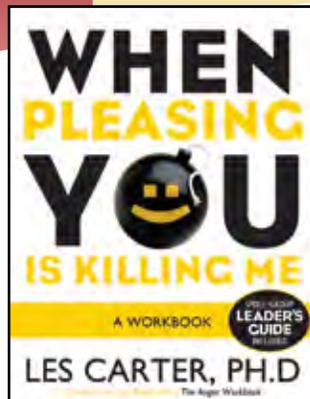
and intimacy are key points in developing a successful marriage. Releases July 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4460-5. Paperback. \$12.99

■ *Get a Life!*

by **Reggie McNeal**
 It's not an insult; it's an exciting invitation. In *Get a Life! It Is All About You*, popular church culture author Reggie McNeal begins to change the conversation about what it means to live an intentional life. He suggests that since we are "squarely in the cross hairs of God's design and redemptive love," the popular phrase "it's not about me" is apt to be misinterpreted. Instead, McNeal coaches readers to consciously stop and think about their lives on a regular basis to be sure



they are living for God's Kingdom. Releases July 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4299-1. Hardcover. \$16.99



■ *When Pleasing You Is Killing Me*

by **Les Carter**
 Do you sometimes feel others take advantage of your good nature? Do your efforts to serve others leave you emotionally drained? *When Pleasing You Is Killing Me* is a unique self-help workbook that will help you: break unhealthy relationship patterns, develop new attitudes and behaviors, stand up for yourself, create balance, and better manage your life. Psychotherapist Les Carter, formerly of the Minirth Meier Clinic, shows how to develop your God-given gift of service without allowing others to take advantage of you.

Releases Aug. 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4489-6. Paperback. \$14.99

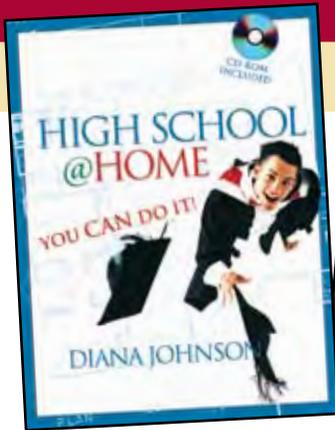
■ *A Late Spring Frost*

by **Jennifer O'Neill**
 Real life, with its greatest

hurts and grandest dreams, is the basis for *Circle of Friends, Just Off Main*, a faith-centered fiction series for real women written by actress Jennifer O'Neill. Book three in the series, *A Late Spring Frost*, will answer many budding questions about these intriguing characters. Will young Chelsea have her baby? Can Irene heal from her darkest secret? Does Tonya choose friendship over flirtation? Springtime offers beauty and renewal, but a cold snap could undo the season's greatest gifts. Releases July 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4197-0. Paperback. \$14.99

■ *High School@Home*

by **Diana Johnson**
 For homeschool parents overwhelmed at the prospect of teaching their teenagers, *High School@Home* offers great help. This user-friendly educational guide helps busy parents design a program based on their student's future goals; understand college entrance requirements; establish guidelines for the student's high school course of study; create courses that meet the student's unique needs; and keep simple records.

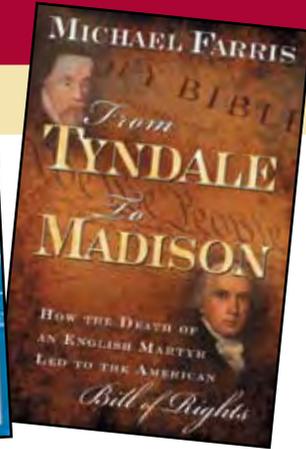


Releases July 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-4545-9. Paperback w/CD-ROM. \$19.99

■ **From Tyndale to Madison**

by **Michael Farris**

From Tyndale to Madison is a sweeping literary work tracing the epic history of religious liberty across three centuries, from the



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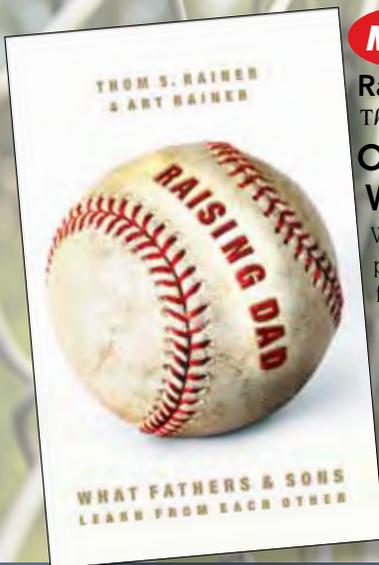
the Bible. It traces the Reformation through the personal words of Martin Luther, John Knox and John Calvin. A little more than 100 years later, across the sea, James Madison, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson fight to establish a bill of rights that guarantees every American citizen their “free exercise” of religion. Michael Farris, an exemplary 21st century statesman and constitutional lawyer who regularly defends religious freedom on Capitol Hill, shares eye-opening

historical details regarding the sacrifices people made to secure the inalienable rights we enjoy today. Releases July 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-2611-3. Hardcover. \$24.99

■ **Fire and Rain** by **Ray Pritchard**

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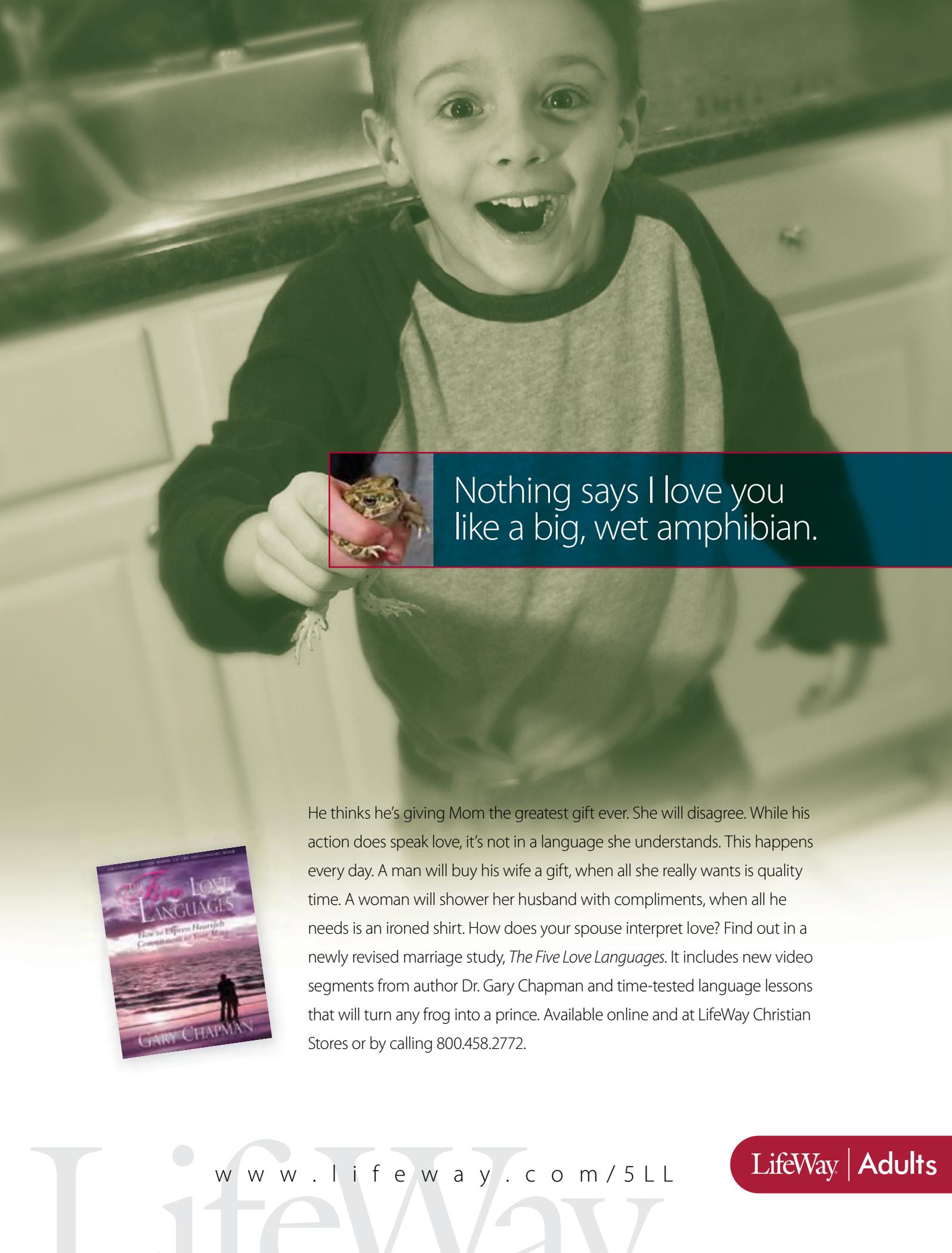
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Biblical Solutions for Life



Nothing says I love you like a big, wet amphibian.

He thinks he's giving Mom the greatest gift ever. She will disagree. While his action does speak love, it's not in a language she understands. This happens every day. A man will buy his wife a gift, when all she really wants is quality time. A woman will shower her husband with compliments, when all he needs is an ironed shirt. How does your spouse interpret love? Find out in a newly revised marriage study, *The Five Love Languages*. It includes new video segments from author Dr. Gary Chapman and time-tested language lessons that will turn any frog into a prince. Available online and at LifeWay Christian Stores or by calling 800.458.2772.

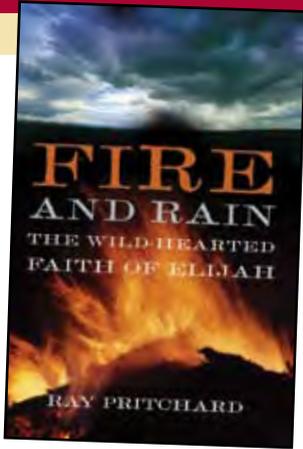


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from sodden wood, rain from dry-eyed heaven, and recognition of Jehovah from pagan lips." In *Fire and Rain*, author



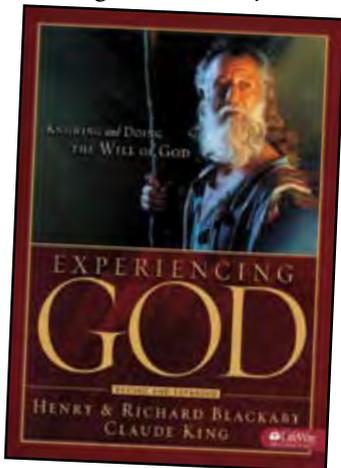
Ray Pritchard brings the relatable elements of Elijah's life into the 21st century, delivering an exceptional character study about seizing the day for God.

Releases Aug. 1. ISBN 13:978-0-8054-2696-0. Paperback. \$14.99

LifeWay Church Resources

■ ***Experiencing God, Revised: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*** by Henry Blackaby, Richard Blackaby and Claude King

This best-selling study has been revised and expanded! Just like before, it guides learners to a relationship with God through which they come



to know and do His will. It leads participants into the life-transforming arena of honestly interacting with God. The DVDs included with the leader kit contain newly taped content for each of the 12 video sessions. The leader kit includes one member book; one leader guide; one B&H paperback trade book; five DVDs with 12 30-minute messages. Included is step-by-step guidance for an introductory session and small-group sessions that correspond to member book units. Plans also include insights that will help leaders respond to questions that may arise. Six audio CDs contain 12 30-minute messages from Henry and Richard Blackaby taken from the teaching segments of the DVDs. (13 sessions) Releases in August. Member book, revised, LifeWay product #0-0508-4536, \$14.95; Leader guide, revised, LifeWay product #0-0508-5768, \$6.95; Leader kit, revised, LifeWay product #0-0509-6105, \$179.95; Audio CDs, revised, LifeWay product #0-0509-5984, \$34.95

■ ***The Five Love Languages, Revised***

by Gary Chapman

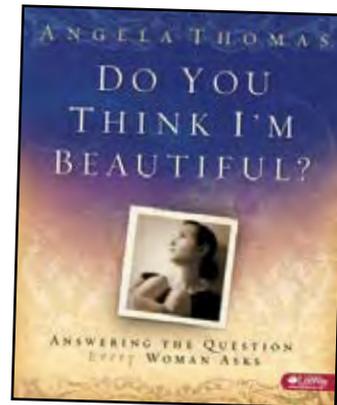
Through fun-filled presentations, Gary Chapman helps participants identify their own love language and understand their spouse. Created with more flexible presentation options, the revised leader kit allows

leaders to customize the study, and contains: DVDs of Chapman's messages; one member book; a CD-ROM with PDFs of viewer guides for each session, leader helps, and the love language profile; and *The Five Love Languages* trade book. Like the original, the first and last video sessions may be used to lead a short class or retreat; another option might be to conduct five to seven sessions over several weeks. All taped segments are new, and the expanded member book includes content to support each one. (7 sessions) Releases in August. Member book, LifeWay product #0-0508-5884, \$12.95; Leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0503-5510, \$149.95

■ ***Do You Think I'm Beautiful?***

by Angela Thomas

Adapted from the trade book with the same title, this study encourages interaction and deep exploration among women. Video-enhanced study contains practical Bible teaching that helps women understand



how God completes them in ways His creations cannot. Combined with Thomas' warm and intimate anecdotes from her own life, *Do*

You Think I'm Beautiful? helps participants bridge the gap between the life a woman longs for and the life she actually has. The leader kit includes DVD-based messages and member book. Releases in August.

Leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0503-5527, \$149.95; Member book, LifeWay product #0-0509-9267, \$10.95

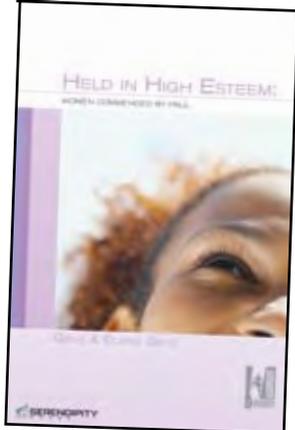
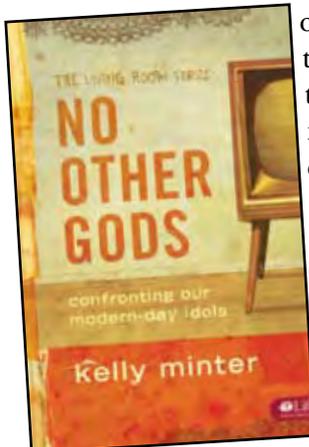
■ ***WEE Learn Curriculum Guide for Pre-K***

This new edition combines fun activities with pre-reading, pre-writing, phonics and number skills. Each

Resources

just released from LifeWay

unit features two Bible stories, and the expanded appendix contains teaching helps, finger plays and recipes. Five new plans for group activities have been added to each unit. Parent letters also are included to highlight the reading, writing, number and phonics skills their children are learning. It's easily adaptable for preschool care, parent's day out, full-day childcare, and before/after-school care settings. The first half of the resource releases in July and second half ships automatically in November. *Curriculum Guide for Pre-K*, LifeWay product #0-0503-5404, \$219.95; Teaching pictures for Pre-K, LifeWay product #0-0503-5405, \$24.95



■ **No Other Gods: Confronting Our Modern Day Idols**
by Kelly Minter

When author and worship leader Kelly Minter invited friends over for Bible study, their living room conversation revealed the problems with “functional gods.” As they discussed how modern-day idols take

God’s place in our daily lives, they set out to dethrone false gods and draw near to the God. Join them as they seek to live out their relationship to Christ and each other.

(8 sessions) Releases in July. Member book, LifeWay product #0-0503-5500 \$12.95

■ **Held in High Esteem: Women Commended by Paul**

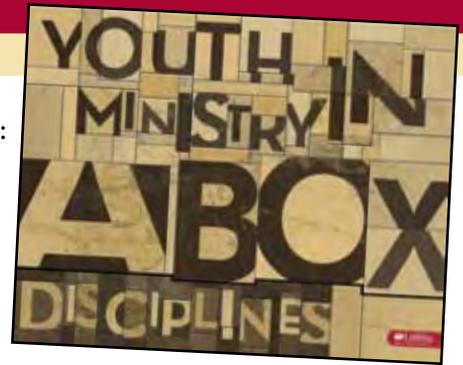
This dynamic new small-group study from the Women of Purpose series examines some of the women recognized by Paul for their unique character traits and

spiritual disciplines:

Eunice and Lois, who passed on a legacy of faith; Phoebe, whose life was marked with enduring servanthood; Priscilla, a strong wife, leader and teacher; and Junias, who possessed remarkable character and loyalty. Participants experience a combination of interactive, discovery-focused Bible study; experiential activities; and opportunities to connect with God, other women and their own hearts. (6 sessions) Releases in July. Serendipity House product #0-0503-8462; \$7.99

■ **Growing Disciples: Pray in Faith**
by T.W. Hunt

This revised and updated version of *In God’s Presence* gives new and growing believers guidelines to develop intimate communion with God. Participants learn to hear from God in prayer; respond to God through confession, praise, worship and thanksgiving; and join God’s work through petition and intercession. Leader guide is included. Part of the Growing Disciples series. (6 sessions) Releases in July. LifeWay product #0-0503-5525, \$9.95



■ **Youth Ministry in a Box**

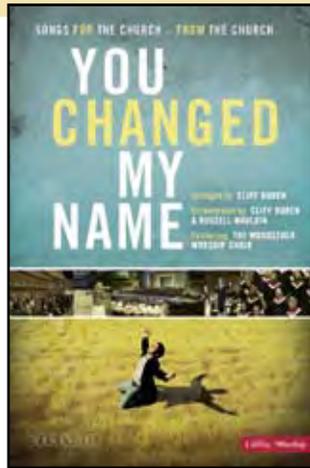
This resource was created with the smaller churches in mind as an affordable way to plan student ministry without the hassles – but with lots of extras. It contains everything needed to lay a biblical foundation for students, one quarter at a time. The content of each box is based upon a theme, allowing leaders to present a topic in Bible study and to reinforce a similar concept through discipleship. The first two releases of this innovative resource give leaders the option of a “Disciplines” or “Relationships” theme. Each themed box provides leaders with three months of Bible study and discipleship options for students in grades 7-12, along with a preview copy of a Bible study the leader may choose to use later. In addition to printed materials, *Youth Ministry In a Box* includes a *Fuel Fire Starters* DVD and a sampler CD of Christian artists. As a bonus, there is also a coupon for a discount to LifeWay’s

Centrifuge summer camp. For every 10 students, this resource meets Bible study needs at \$1.25 per student, per week, for 12 weeks! Releases in July. *Youth Ministry in a Box: Disciplines*, LifeWay product #0-0503-5507, \$149.95; *Youth Ministry in a Box: Relationships*, LifeWay product #0-0509-2717, \$149.95

LifeWay Worship

■ *You Changed My Name Songs FOR the Church – FROM the Church*

arranged by Cliff Duren; orchestrated by Cliff Duren and Russell Mauldin
 SATB/Moderate
 Experience a snapshot of some of the best musical ministry moments from the life of a thriving congregation in the new choral collection,

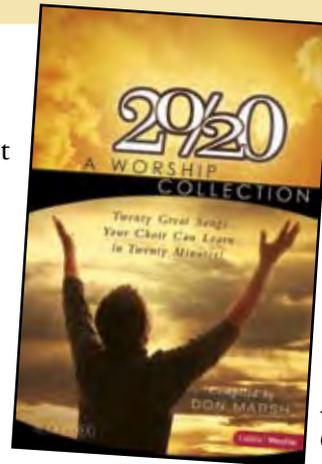


You Changed My Name. Directed by Scott C. White from the worship ministry at First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., it draws from a unique blend of styles that resonate with a diverse audience. Each soulful arrangement is designed to be used individually or grouped together to match the mission of the ministries where they are used.
 SATB choral book, Product #0-0509-

0478, \$8.95; Listening CD, Accompaniment CD, Orchestration and CD promo pak also are available.

■ *20/20: A Worship Collection - Twenty Great Songs Your Choir Can Learn in Twenty Minutes!*

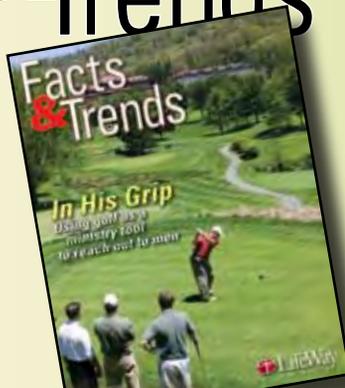
compiled and adapted by Don Marsh; arranged by Dennis Allen, Keith Christopher, Travis Cottrell, Cliff Duren, Tom Fettke, Richard Kingsmore, Camp Kirkland, Russell Mauldin, Gary Rhodes and J. Daniel Smith
 SATB/Moderate
 Don Marsh has compiled another great collection of anthems and worship



songs, arranged so that your choir can learn each one in 20 minutes or less. The creator of *20/20: A Christmas Collection* and

20/20: A Southern Gospel Collection, Marsh uses his experience as a choral director and worship leader to compile practical arrangements that your choir will enjoy singing again and again.
 SATB choral book, Product #0-0508-9464, \$9.95; Listening CD, Accompaniment CD, Orchestration and CD promo pak also are available.

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

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July/August 2007

ISBN: 9-9999-0233-4