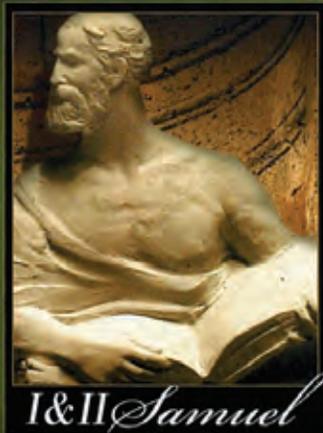


Prayer-filled mission to Russia

The Ultimate "Everyman's" Commentary for Study or Sermon Preparation!

HOLMAN *Old Testament* Commentary



I & II Samuel

GENERAL EDITOR

Max Anders

AUTHORS

Stephen J. Andrews
and Robert D. Bergen

Old & New
Testament
series are now
complete.



1 & 2 Samuel (Vol. 6) \$19.99 - 978-0-8054-9466-2
Complete Holman Old Testament Commentary \$299.97
978-0-8054-9523-2 Individually \$19.99



Complete New Testament Commentary \$179.97
9-780-805-428-285 Individually \$19.99

No other reference series gets to the heart of the Bible as efficiently as do *Holman's Old Testament and New Testament Commentaries*.

Designed to offer a detailed interpretation when time allows, or an essential understanding of the text when time is short, the *Holman Old Testament Commentary* series and the *Holman New Testament Commentary* series provide unsurpassed clarity and convenience.

The *Holman Old Testament Commentary* series is available in individual volumes or as a collected, cost-saving, 20 volume set.

The *Holman New Testament Commentary* series is available in individual volumes or as a collected, cost-saving 12 volume set.

BHPublishingGroup.com



CONTENTS

Volume 55 • Number 4 • Fall 2009

Facts & Trends is published four times a year by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. *Facts & Trends* is a free publication. Our goal is to help you carry out your ministry more effectively.

Editorial staff:

- Polly House, editor
- Katie Shull, graphic designer
- Kent Harville, visuals specialist
- Brooklyn Lowery, editor in chief
- Rob Phillips, director, communications

Contact us:

Mail: *Facts & Trends*
 One LifeWay Plaza
 Nashville, TN 37234-0192
 E-mail: facts&trends@lifeway.com

Subscribe:

Subscriptions to *Facts & Trends* are free. To be added to our mailing list, please e-mail your name and address to facts&trends@lifeway.com.

Cover photo: Brian Krebs, left, prays with Pastor Pavel and translator Oksana in a new building that will house a church near Novokuznetsk, Russia.

Phone numbers, Web addresses and other content referenced in articles were verified at the time of printing, but are subject to change. When searching the Web, please use discretion.

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

COMMENTARY

- From My Perspective: When theology meets evangelism 4
- LifeWay Research: Pastors struggle with evangelism 5

ARTICLES

- LifeWay team goes to Russia..... 8
- LifeWay employee has second ministry 11
- Russian woman continues legacy of faith..... 12
- Arkansas church enjoys excuse-proof VBS 14
- Winner of VBS photo contest announced..... 17
- LifeWay's HCSB award honors late pastor 18
- 30 years of special needs ministry 19
- Churches must welcome and affirm men..... 22
- Background checks help churches avoid surprises 24
- Glorieta camps offer good clean fun 25
- Church expands with LifeWay Architecture's help 28
- B&H releases Old Testament commentary series 30

RESOURCES

- For you from LifeWay..... 32



VBS in Sidney, Ark. • 14 Men and church • 22 Glorieta Camps • 25

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

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

When theology meets evangelism

The first time I read Michael Green's *Evangelism in the Early Church*, it was a required textbook for a seminary course. My subsequent six readings have been the result of my desire to be reminded of the passionate heart of evangelism in the early Church.

One of the greatest appeals of the book is the deep commitment to both theology and evangelism, and the recognition that the two cannot be divorced. Green says it well in the preface: "Most evangelists are not very interested in theology. Most theologians are not interested in evangelism. I am deeply committed to both."

Green noted some of the evangelistic motives of the early Church. Each motive has deep theological and biblical roots:

A sense of gratitude. The early Christians were prepared to sacrifice all, even their own lives, in order to share the Gospel of Christ. One of their primary motives was their overwhelming gratitude for what Christ did for them (Galatians 2:19-20; 1 John 4:10).

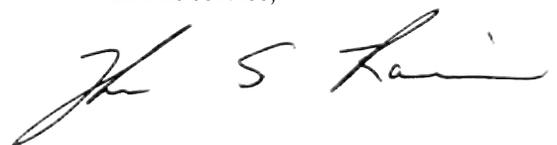
A sense of responsibility. The Bible is replete with Great Commission passages such as Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 that reflect this sense of responsibility. Paul, in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, reported, "I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:21).

A sense of concern. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). The simple but powerful truth is that there are really two categories of humanity: the saved and the lost. The saved will spend eternity with Christ; the lost will spend eternity separated from Christ in hell. We must proclaim with passionate concern that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6).

No great evangelistic move of God has ever taken place without the rightful wedding of theology and evangelism. When evangelism has no theology, it degenerates into human-made methods and manipulation. When theology has no evangelism, it degenerates into a dry and powerless academic exercise.

May the evangelical church in America see a Great Commission resurgence like the early Church. May our motives be deeply theological. May our actions be passionately evangelistic. And may God do a great work in our land.

In His service,



Read an expanded version of this column at ThomRainer.com (July 20 post). Launched earlier this year, ThomRainer.com offers twice-weekly columns by Rainer, offering his insights into the local church and drawing from years of experience as a father, pastor, researcher, seminary dean and LifeWay president.



Research: VBS, feeding ministries top church evangelism activities

Pastors struggle to set personal evangelism example

by Mark Kelly

When it comes to evangelistic outreach, the most common methods Southern Baptist churches use these days are Vacation Bible School, feeding ministries, visitor follow-up and prayer for people who have not made a decision to receive Christ.

Most pastors, however, struggle to lead by example in personal evangelism, and churches don't make the most effective use of available media to communicate with people who are unchurched, meaning those not associated with any church.

These were the key insights drawn from an online study, conducted by LifeWay Research, that asked Southern Baptist pastors more than 30 questions about their personal evangelism efforts, evangelism in their preaching, their church's evangelism

methods and advertising outreach methods used to reach their communities.

Events and ongoing activities

By far the most common outreach event conducted by Southern Baptist congregations is Vacation Bible School. Eighty-five percent of pastors say their churches held VBS in the past 12 months. The next most common event, registered by 58 percent of pastors, is a prayer emphasis focused specifically on outreach or unbelievers.

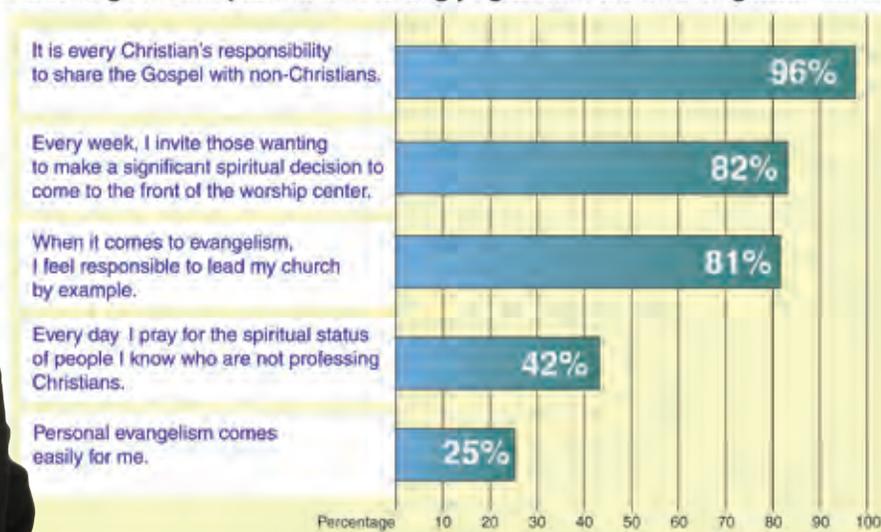
The next most-often mentioned events are servant evangelism projects (46 percent), revival services (45 percent) and door-to-door canvassing (44 percent).

Pastors also were asked about ongoing evangelistic activities. The most common ongoing evangelistic activity, as cited by 86 percent of pastors, is conducting weekly follow-up with people who visited a church service.



SBC pastors' views on personal evangelism

Percentage of SBC pastors who strongly agree with the following statements



Concerning their personal beliefs about evangelism, 43 percent of pastors strongly agree that evangelism is often overshadowed by other priorities. Only about one-third of pastors cite evangelism training as an ongoing activity, though 96 percent strongly agree that every Christian has a responsibility to share the Gospel with non-Christians.

The second most-often mentioned ongoing activity, at 77 percent, is offering food to people who are in need in the community.

“Government stats show that use of food stamps is up, and our research shows that requests to churches for financial assistance are up,” said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research. “Three out of four Southern Baptist churches were prepared to give food to those in their community who had needs as the economic difficulties escalated across the country. Churches have the responsibility to help believers be prepared to share the reason for the hope they have in Jesus Christ, and this is a tangible way of being prepared, as Scripture calls us to be.”

Church Advertising

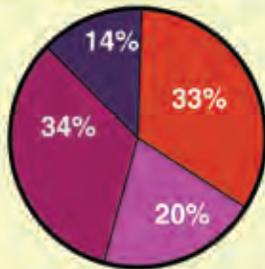
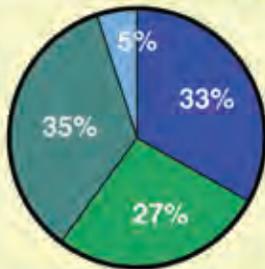
LifeWay Research

SBC pastors indicate which advertising tools their churches have used in the last 12 months

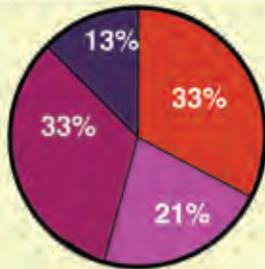
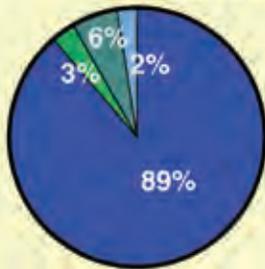
NAMB -- LifeWay Research

Americans reveal how they are willing to receive information about a church

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING



BILLBOARD ADVERTISING



■ Have not used
■ Used, with no noticeable response
■ Used, with a few responses
■ Used, with many responses

■ Very unwilling
■ Somewhat unwilling
■ Somewhat willing
■ Very willing

Note: Some charts do not equal 100%, because of rounding.



Pastoral leadership

Other questions about dimensions of pastoral evangelism revealed that pastors set good examples even though many feel evangelism is difficult.

The survey found the traditional “invitation” is still alive and well in Southern Baptist churches, with 82 percent of pastors strongly agreeing that they invite people to come forward to make spiritual decisions. Another 8 percent somewhat agree.

Additionally, 81 percent of pastors strongly agree, and 18 percent somewhat agree, that they feel responsible to lead their churches by example in the area of evangelism. A total of 86 percent agree, either strongly or somewhat, that they pray daily for people they know who are not professing Christians. But 39 percent say personal evangelism does not come easily for them; only 25 percent strongly agree they find it easy to share the Gospel one-on-one.

In spite of the challenge, however, the vast majority of pastors – 96 percent – say they

have shared the Gospel with at least one person outside of church in the past six months. Sixty-six percent say their frequency of witnessing falls between one and 15 times. Nineteen percent report that they shared the Gospel 16-40 times, and 10 percent claim more than 40 times; 4 percent acknowledge they have not witnessed to anyone in the past six months.

Ninety-nine percent of pastors also say they have invited at least one unchurched person to attend a church service or some other church program in the past six months. Twenty-nine percent estimate they have invited more than 40 people, and 1 percent say they haven't invited anyone.

"Many pastors are setting good evangelistic examples," said McConnell, "but their congregations may benefit just as much from hearing a pastor honestly share that it isn't always easy for him. The typical believer can relate to that. Even the apostle Paul asked the Ephesians to pray that he would have boldness to share the Gospel."

Using media

The research also determined that Southern Baptist churches don't make frequent use of available media to communicate with Americans. An early 2009 study conducted by LifeWay Research, in support of the North American Mission Board's "GPS" national evangelism initiative, revealed resistance to advertising media among Americans. Still, the percentage of churches using advertising media is much smaller than the percentage of

"Many pastors are setting good evangelistic examples, but their congregations may benefit just as much from hearing a pastor honestly share that it isn't always easy for him."

— Scott McConnell

Americans who are willing to receive information through communications media.

Building upon that early 2009 study, this new research found the most common medium used by Southern Baptist churches to communicate with their communities is newspaper advertising. Two-thirds of pastors say their churches advertised in a newspaper in the last 12 months. The previous study showed that 48 percent of Americans are very or somewhat willing to receive information about a church through an informative ad in the newspaper.

The older study also showed that 46 percent of Americans are very or somewhat willing to receive information about a local church through billboard advertising. In contrast to Southern Baptist churches' strong use of newspaper advertising, only 11 percent of Southern Baptist churches advertised on a billboard in the last 12 months, the new study revealed.

The second most common communications medium used by Southern Baptist churches is invitation cards distributed by church members.

Sixty percent of pastors say they have distributed such cards in the previous 12 months, and 44 percent report they noticed some response from the effort.

"Understanding your community's openness to various kinds of communication is one way to understand your church's context," McConnell said. "Research indicates that efforts like the invite cards that encourage personal conversations with a congregation's friends and family are most effective. However, the right advertising has the potential to touch people that a local church may not be able to reach otherwise."

The entire report, "Southern Baptist Evangelism Today," including details on the methods that churches and pastors use for evangelism and which advertising media generate responses, is available at www.lifewayresearch.com. ■

Methodology: Research for the "Southern Baptist Evangelism Today" study is based on an online survey LifeWay Research conducted among 801 Southern Baptist pastors. The sample size provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed ±3.4 percent for the total sample. Responses were weighted based on church size to minimize response bias.

WE RECOMMEND

- *Share Jesus Without Fear* by Bill Fay
- *Evangelism in the Early Church* by Michael Green
- *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* by Will Metzger

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.



First Person:

LifeWay team sees strength, joy in Russian believers

The contrast between the Russian believers and non-believers was startling.

At the bus stops, people stood in groups. Silent. Avoiding eye contact. As one member of our team said, they have their “Russian face” on. No smiles. No acknowledgement of other people.

But the believers were a different story. They smiled. They laughed. Joy. That’s what I saw — joy.

I was part of a team of 10 people from LifeWay who went to the city of Novokuznetsk in southwestern Siberia this summer on a LifeWay-sponsored employee-led mission trip.

We went to Russia with team leader Brian Krebs, a LifeWay employee who also serves as a volunteer virtual strategy coordinator with the International Mission Board. In that capacity, Krebs works with evangelicals in Novokuznetsk, helping them develop strategies

to reach out to the city of more than 500,000. Krebs said that believers make up less than 1 percent of the city's population.

Two churches

One church we visited was comprised primarily of older people. These were believers who lived through the Soviet era. They understand persecution. They saw their building taken away; they saw members taken away. Now, they worship with a strength and dignity that is palpable. They believe the time is coming when it will be hard for believers again, so they appreciate the relative freedom they have now.

Another church we visited was a church made up of mostly young believers. Many of them came from a rehabilitation center for heroin and alcohol addicts. They had been set free of the addictions. They worship with freedom and abandon. These people are free and thankful because they remember the captivity of not having a relationship with Jesus.

Conversation time

I forget how interested people worldwide are in learning English. We spent two evenings at the public library where we sat at tables and invited local people to come and practice their English with us. While we weren't allowed to overtly share the Gospel, we were allowed to answer questions about why we had come to Novokuznetsk. By the time we left, I think most people understood.

This was a great time to meet some of the city's young adults. They were happy to practice and hear us speak. One young lady, when asked why she wanted

to learn English, said that she had to learn the language to be successful in business. I laughed to myself thinking about Russians learning English words with a Southern drawl.

Sharing allowed

While we had a certain degree of freedom to share our faith in Russia, common sense was called for.

One evening we attended an outdoor concert sponsored by one of the churches and the rehabilitation center. The praise band and a Christian rapper led the gathering in music, interspersed with testimonies of former heroin addicts who had been set free through Christ. This was allowed because the church had secured a permit from the city to host the concert. Since it was a nice evening, people from the surrounding apartments sat outside and listened. After the concert, some of our team and some of the church members had the opportunity to talk with the concertgoers.

The EvangeCube, a wonderfully easy-to-use block-shaped tool for sharing the Gospel, was a curiosity that allowed Kathy Collins, one of our team members, to share the Gospel with several people at a time. Speaking through an interpreter, Collins was privileged to lead several women and youth to receive Christ. Afterward, a member of the sponsoring church was



Top: Kathy Collins witnesses to a mother and daughter. Both women received Christ.

Bottom: Worshipers sing hymns at the Baptist Church of Novokuznetsk.



able to follow up with them, offering information about the church and a personal invitation to come.

I talked with Lidiy, an 82-year-old lady, about Christ. As I presented the plan of salvation, Lidiy patted my hand and smiled. Sadly, I don't think she really understood very much about what I was telling her through our translator since she was a little inebriated. She may not have understood the message, but she did understand someone holding her hand, talking with her and spending time with her. I gave her a tract in Russian outlining what we had talked about. She said she would read it when she felt a little better. She left me with a squeeze of my hands and kisses on both cheeks. I hope that at some point she will look back and, if she isn't sure about her faith, make a decision to receive Christ.

Parting memory

We left Russia after eight days of sharing, learning, encouraging and praying. On our last day, a dozen church members hosted us for a barbecue, Russian style. They roasted pork on skewers, offered us fresh tomatoes, brown bread and several varieties of fruit juices. Even better than the delicious food was the warm fellowship. We didn't know many of the same songs, but we all knew "Amazing Grace" and "How Great Thou Art." The blending of American and Russian voices, offering music in both languages, was beautiful. I imagine God smiled when He heard the joyful noise. ■



Top: At the public library for English conversation
Middle: At the outdoor concert
Bottom: At the Baptist Church of Novokuznetsk

LifeWay employee serves as IMB volunteer in Russia

Brian Krebs has a divided heart. His heart is split between his life as a husband, father, grandfather and LifeWay employee and his other life as the face of Southern Baptist missions in Novokuznetsk, Russia.

For the past three years Krebs has served as virtual strategy coordinator (VSC) with the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board (IMB). The VSC position allows a person to work in an area that has no on-site missionary presence, but is seen as a location ripe for a partnership. In this position, Krebs works with evangelical churches in Novokuznetsk, supporting their ministry and helping them engage unbelievers in the city.

"Less than 1 percent of Novokuznetsk's 500,000 people are believers," Krebs said.

"There are a few believers there who are working diligently to reach out to the people of Novokuznetsk," he said. "I want to come alongside them and help them with whatever they need to do that."

Krebs' interest in Novokuznetsk began five years ago when his home church in suburban Nashville, Tenn., Grace Community Church, a Southern Baptist congregation, began teaching English as a ministry in Belarus.

"Our church has had a strong English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry for many years," Krebs said. "When we felt the Lord leading, we wanted to expand this ministry into international work. The IMB told us

of the need in Russia, and we were ready to join them in meeting it."

Krebs and his wife, Vicki, accompanied groups from Grace Community to Belarus annually from 2003-2006 and fell in love with the people they met.

"The people are so hospitable," he said. "Naturally, they were wary of our intentions, but when they understood



As a virtual strategy coordinator, Brian Krebs, left, ministers to evangelical churches in Novokuznetsk.

that we really were sincere in wanting to help them with English, they welcomed us warmly."

Krebs met Andy Leininger, the IMB missionary in Novosibirsk, Russia, who told him about the VSC position. In 2007, Brian and Vicki Krebs were appointed.

"I am committed to going to Novokuznetsk at least once a year to work with Anatoly, the pastor of the Baptist Church, and other evangelical pastors," Krebs said. "Their work is hard. I am committed to doing anything I can to support them."

On the recent LifeWay-sponsored mission trip to Novokuznetsk, Krebs and nine other volunteers spent eight days doing outreach among the people of the city. They worshipped with fellow Christians in local churches, had an English conversation time at the city's public library, and visited a drug rehabilitation center and a youth camp.

"Novokuznetsk is not a tourist destination like Moscow or St. Petersburg," Krebs said. "Just the presence of Americans is a curiosity. This gives us the opportunity to share our love of Christ and, at the same time, give these local churches extra visibility. We come for a week, but the churches are here all the time. We want to help connect the people with the churches."

"I feel extremely blessed that LifeWay has allowed me to serve in this VSC position with the IMB," Krebs said. "This is a good example of two of our Southern Baptist entities working together to spread the Gospel."

Krebs' dream is to engage more U.S. churches with the ministry in Novokuznetsk. "We can learn from their models of ministry to drug and alcohol abusers and ministry to people in prisons. We can teach them a lot about developing leaders. With their relatively new capitalist society, the demographics of Russia are changing. I can see Christian businessmen coming to Novokuznetsk and holding seminars on good solid business principles with the young business leaders. The possibilities are absolutely endless." ■

Martyred father left powerful legacy of faith

Knowing that her father gave his life for his faith has made 82-year-old Yelisavyeta Krukova a lifelong prayer warrior.

Krukova is a longtime member of the Baptist Church in Novokuznetsk, a city of more than 500,000 in southern Siberia. Her ministry is one of prayer. Krukova organizes the overnight prayer vigils that happen every Wednesday and Friday. She enlists people to pray, and if anyone enlisted has a conflict, that person must notify her so she can find another church member to fill in. The prayer time cannot be broken.

Prayer is a serious ministry for the church. Krukova remembers well the times of fear and persecution for the evangelical church in Russia.

She shared her family story:

My father, Nestor, was a Christian evangelical minister in Russia before the Russian revolution of 1917. My father and mother moved to western Siberia, to what was then called Kuznetsk, in 1912.

My father shared the Gospel with all around him. After the revolution, he continued to preach and teach despite the dangers. He was arrested and sent to prison twice when I was a child – one time for six months, another time for a year. Not so long. He came home to my mother and us, but he would not stop preaching and teaching.

In 1938, my father was arrested again and sent to another prison, this time for 10 years. But even in prison, he would preach, and in December of 1944 he was shot and killed there because he would not stop preaching.

My family relied on prayer for our very existence. Times were hard. I had nine brothers and sisters, 10 of us in all, but five died. Only five of us lived to be grown. Life was hard. But we loved each other and loved God.

This city has had three names, Kuznetsk, Stalinsk and now Novokuznetsk. Our family lived here, and in 1944 we joined the Baptist evangelical church.

I met my husband, and we married and had 10 children. I have 57 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. I live with my husband, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren in a beautiful house that my children built for me. My family loves me and respects me.

We older women must pray. We pray well because we know it is important. I am in charge of our prayer ministry. People know we must take it seriously. ■



Above: A face of courage: Yelisavyeta Krukova

Facing page: Worship at the Baptist Church of Novokuznetsk



ONLINE

For more photographs and audio slideshows from the mission trip to Novokuznetsk, go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends.

Small church has excuse-proof VBS

story by Polly House, photography by Guy Lyons

It's not Sydney, the one in Australia, but Sidney, the one in Arkansas.

VBS Director Jennifer Shaw and her crew of volunteers at Sidney Baptist Church took the *Boomerang Express* Vacation Bible School theme to heart and offered children, youth and adults of their small northern Arkansas community the opportunity to learn about Jesus through LifeWay's Aussie-themed VBS curriculum.

Sidney is small. The population is not even 300, but that statistic doesn't even come up when Shaw and her volunteers talk about Vacation Bible School. They could list several reasons to not have VBS. After all, it is a challenge to host VBS in a small church, but Shaw and her team don't whine or give excuses. They debunk them.

Excuse 1: "Our community is too small and we don't have enough kids."

Sidney doesn't have many kids either, but that provides an opportunity to reach out. Sidney Baptist leaders encourage their church's kids to invite their friends from the surrounding area. The kids rise to the challenge and the ones who bring friends receive prizes.

Excuse 2: "We don't have enough workers to plan every detail for VBS."

So what? Shaw used the VBS Super Sampler and said she had just about everything she needed, including instructions and suggestions. She ordered posters, inflatables and other items that made decorating easy. She handed off the appropriate information to the grade-level workers, the "snack ladies," the audiovisual coordinator, the music leader and others. They all took care of their responsibilities and let Shaw know if they needed her help.

Excuse 3: "There aren't enough snack, craft or other ideas to keep kids busy, and they get restless."

Sidney handles this by using ideas provided with the curriculum along with some original theme-centered ideas. For instance, one of the craft teachers at Sidney Baptist recycled

Right: Chase listens intently during Bible study.

Below: The town sign for Sidney notes the small population.

Facing page: Perri is greeted by Pastor Joe Jackson.



the cardboard mailing tubes from the VBS posters and used them to make “Aboriginal rain sticks.”

It helps to have an experienced leader heading up the crafts. Joyce Hancock has served with VBS for 43 years. She knows what the kids like and how to customize craft ideas to appeal to them. “You have to make sure there is plenty for them to work on,” she said.

Excuse 4: “We are concerned about security when the children leave. It’s too hard to keep up with them.”

You should be security conscious. At Sidney, Shaw had every class return to the sanctuary for a 10-minute closing session. She had a prize giveaway, read announcements and offered a closing prayer. This time also allowed her to account for everyone. After that, children were dismissed to the person picking them up, and it wasn’t a free-for-all in the parking lot. Shaw knew every child was safely on his or her way home, and she didn’t have to worry about anyone being left behind.

Excuse 5: “We just don’t do a parent’s night program because our children and youth don’t have time to memorize all the songs and drama.”

Alana Green is the VBS music queen at Sidney Baptist. She’s also a certified financial planner who understands the value of a good plan. She knows that memorizing all the words to the songs and the drama for the parents’ program is difficult, so she came up with a simple plan. On family night, a screen is placed at the back of the church so everyone on stage can see the words. Green said this relieved the actors’ anxiety and helped the singers feel more confident.

Excuse 6: “We are a very creative church and we don’t want to do VBS ‘by the book’ like everyone else.”

VBS is all about being creative in telling children, students and adults the Good News of Jesus Christ.





Creative snacks play a part in VBS success.

God is the originator of creativity! Start with a VBS Sampler, then find ways to personalize the program for your church.

Green said that several years ago she saw a white-gloved group use sign language and motions while singing under a black light. She liked the idea and, for the past few years, the youth and some older children have performed one of the slower VBS songs in the dark with glowing hands. She said the audience looks forward to that song because it's different and fun. It's not "by the book," but it's special to them.

At Sidney, they get creative with the snacks, too. The snack ladies prepare themed snacks, like this year's kangaroo tails (chocolate-dipped bananas on a stick), but they also prepare other snacks the children like. This year, they supplemented with homemade chocolate-dipped strawberries and even some veggie-stuffed squash fresh from the garden.

Excuse 7: "We have a hard time getting the parents to bring the kids to the church for VBS."

Sidney offers the parents a reason not only to bring their kids, but to stay. The pastor leads an adult VBS class. The adults may not do crafts or music, but the snacks are a hit with them and create a time for fellowship.

"Churches all over are discovering the wisdom and fun of hosting VBS for adults, as well as for children and youth," said LifeWay VBS Specialist Jerry Wooley.

In a small church like Sidney Baptist, the workers aren't many, but each one has a heart for VBS. They look forward to each summer and spend hours in planning and preparation.

Part of that preparation is being alert to opportunities for outreach to children and youth throughout the year. Shaw said one of the special things about working with VBS in a small community is the awareness that many people with whom she comes in contact are past or future attendees.

"We draw kids from all around the area," she said. "When I see little kids at school where I teach or in town, they see me and remember me from Bible School. It's funny; they look at me like 'I know you,' and then say they went to Bible School." ■



VBS craft time brought out big smiles.

RESOURCES

Go to LifeWay.com/factsandtrends to see more photos and a video from Sidney Baptist Church's VBS.

For more information on LifeWay's 2010 VBS, go to www.lifeway.com/vbs

Virginia church wins the 2009 VBS Photo Contest



GRAND
PRIZE

Salem Baptist Church in Sparta, Va., submitted the winning photo in the third annual *Facts & Trends Online VBS Photo Contest*.

For the first time, submissions to the contest were archived into geographically labeled albums at the LifeWay News page on Facebook. The contest concluded with visitors to *Facts and Trends Online* voting for the winning image from the group of 10 finalists chosen by LifeWay staff. Voters gave the winning photo 38 percent of the nearly 1,200 votes cast in this year's contest.

The winning image was a bird's-eye view of VBS attendees performing the *Boomerang Express* musical, but images from Pioneer Baptist Church in Clewiston, Fla., and Liberty Baptist Church in Everton, Mo., came in a close second and third respectively.

Salem Baptist Church will receive a 2010 *VBS Super Sampler*, courtesy of LifeWay's VBS area.

All photos will remain archived on Facebook. The winning image, along with the other finalists, will be featured on *Facts & Trends Online*. ■

LifeWay honors slain pastor with first HCSB Award

story by Chris Turner

Fred Winters was a man known for loving the Bible and people. It was reflected in his passion for preaching the Gospel and seeing people come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Winters was recognized posthumously as the inaugural recipient of the HCSB Award at this year's SBC meeting in Louisville, Ky.

The award, presented to Winters' widow, Cindy, by LifeWay President Thom Rainer, is designed to recognize a man or woman who has demonstrated the highest level of commitment to the preaching or teaching of the Word of God. Winters was shot and killed earlier this year while preaching to his congregation at First Baptist Church, Maryville, Ill.

"The first HCSB Award goes to a former student of mine, a friend who led First Baptist to unprecedented growth and biblical faithfulness," Rainer told messengers during LifeWay's SBC report. "On March 8, 2009, a gunman entered the worship center of the church and shot and killed this pastor while he was preaching the Word as he had done faithfully at First Baptist Church of Maryville for nearly 22 years."

Rainer said the award arose from LifeWay's first core value: "We believe the Bible is the eternal, infallible, inerrant Word of God and is the plumb line for everything we say and do."

"A few years ago, LifeWay began a major Bible translation that resulted in one of the most accurate English translations ever: The Holman Christian Standard Bible, which is usually called the HCSB," he said. "This translation has received accolades around the globe for its accuracy and readability, and quickly became one of the top translations in the world. The award reflects the first and foremost core value of LifeWay [*We believe the Bible is the eternal, infallible, inerrant Word of God and is the plumb line for everything we say and do.*]



"The first HCSB Award goes to a former student of mine, a friend who led First Baptist to unprecedented growth and biblical faithfulness."

— Thom Rainer

Second, it celebrates the HCSB as one of the great English translations of our era."

Rainer emphasized the importance of maintaining biblical fidelity and said that in translating the HCSB, scholars took great caution to stay faithful to the accuracy of ancient manuscripts while producing a readable translation.

"There is a great deal of responsibility involved in translating the Bible, and LifeWay employees recognize the trust placed in them," he said. "LifeWay takes its stewardship of the Word of God with utmost seriousness." ■

Fred Winters' widow, Cindy, addresses the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Louisville, Ky., after accepting the HCSB Award in his honor.

LifeWay celebrates 30 years of special needs ministry

story by Andrea Higgins, photography by James Yates

This fall LifeWay celebrates the 30th anniversary of publishing printed Sunday school lessons for special needs learners – resources that were rare prior to the late 1970s.

“The thread of neediness and disabilities runs throughout Scripture,” said Gene Nabi as he reflected on LifeWay’s 30-year-old decision to create resources for the special needs community. Nabi, who is now retired, served as LifeWay’s second special needs ministry consultant. “Parents have a desperate need as to what kind of spiritual nurture can be given to their children.”

Originally spearheaded by Doris Monroe, the special needs ministry area of LifeWay’s church resources division has led the way in publishing leader and learner resources that encourage churches to include everyone in the mission of the Great Commission.

LifeWay’s first dated Sunday school materials for the special needs community were released in fall 1979. *The Sunday School Resource Kit for Teaching the Mentally Retarded* was intended for use with children.





VBS fun time for special needs campers

In the 1980s, however, research revealed most of the learners in special needs classes were adults. In response, the *Special Education Resource Kit* that LifeWay released in fall 1989 could be used with adults for the first time. The resources were expanded throughout the 1990s and were renamed *Access* in 2000.

The curriculum has been adapted as societal needs have changed. Trends in public special education continually influence the teaching strategies incorporated in updated versions of the curriculum. For instance, in the 1990s public schools emphasized mainstreaming

special needs students – incorporating them into the larger educational population – and LifeWay responded by including adaptation tips for special needs children within the core children’s Sunday school resources.

LifeWay now encourages a range of options for children with special needs, including learning

buddies, separate classes and other options. In 2007, LifeWay launched *Bible Teaching for Kids: Special Buddies*, curriculum geared toward children in first through sixth grade.

“We’ve gone from our first publication, which was all black and white text, to a multisensory curriculum filled with colorful visuals and hands-on teaching ideas,” said special needs resources editor Ellen Beene, who has been with LifeWay for 24 years.

Before discovering *Access*, Jo Ann Banks of Asheville, N.C., rewrote all of her materials from a regular adult lesson and created images on a flannelgraph for her adult special needs classes.

“Once I found *Access*, I wasn’t frustrated any more,” Banks said.

Daphne Lyon of Garner, N.C., has a 24-year-old daughter, Kate, with Down syndrome. Lyon attended the special needs track of The Power of the Connected Sunday School Conference (aka Sunday School Week) at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C., in July.

Lyon is a member of Aversboro Road Baptist Church in Garner, which has an active special

WE RECOMMEND

- *Special Needs – Special Ministry* by Joni Eareckson Tada
- *Exceptional Teaching: A Comprehensive Guide for Including Students with Disabilities* by Jim Pierson
- *In Jesse’s Shoes* by Beverly Lewis

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

needs department that offers three classes and provides respite and activities once a month for families of children with special needs. Her church also uses the *Access* and *Special Buddies* materials published by LifeWay.

“The materials are so good,” Lyon said.

So good, in fact, Lyon said when her daughter’s Special Olympics softball competition conflicted with “High Attendance Sunday,” Lyon asked permission to do the lesson on site during the games. The engaging and adaptable material helped her present the lesson not only to her daughter’s team but also to a team from another town that joined in and actively participated.

“I think we had the highest numbers for high attendance and the highest newcomer numbers,” Lyon said with a smile.

Dianne Reynolds of Gainesville, Fla., was also at the Ridgecrest event. She attended hoping to uncover more LifeWay resources for the special needs ministry task force she leads at Northwest Baptist Church.

As the parent of a child with special needs, Reynolds is concerned with reaching an underserved population – people with special needs and their families.

Most programs in the church will accept any volunteer who is willing to serve, but special needs ministry is a bit different.

“Special needs is the one area where churches tend to seek only volunteers who have a specific calling to special needs ministry or who have prior experience,” said

Carlton McDaniel, LifeWay’s current special needs ministry specialist. “In any other area of service, you’re expected to be untrained when you volunteer.”

In the past, few ministry resources were available to prepare people for volunteering among the special needs community. McDaniel said that has changed.



“Today there are multiple resources and training opportunities available for volunteers who want to serve in special needs ministry,” he said. “Churches have access to all the support they need to equip leaders for reaching families with special needs.

“Those old excuses are disappearing.” ■

RESOURCES

Go to LifeWay.com/specialneeds for more information about LifeWay’s special needs ministry and resources.

Go to LifeWay.com/factsandtrends to read more about the special needs ministry track at The Power of the Connected Sunday School Conference (aka Sunday School Week) at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center.

Churches urged to welcome and affirm men

story by David Winfrey, photography by Cat McDonald

Churches must provide more manly environments if they truly want to reach men, a pastor and seminary professor recently told a workshop audience.

“I’m not sure pastoral leadership has had any desire to reach out to men in any significant way,” said Kevin Smith, assistant professor of church history at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Speaking at the Black Church Leadership and Family Conference in July at LifeWay’s Ridgecrest Conference Center, Smith said many church staff members have grown too comfortable with congregations dominated by women in both attendance and leadership.

Smith acknowledged that some church leaders don’t know how to reach out to men. “Men, women and children are three different demographics, and interacting with men, women and children is totally different.”

Churches cannot say they want strong families that result in strong churches while ignoring male involvement and leadership.

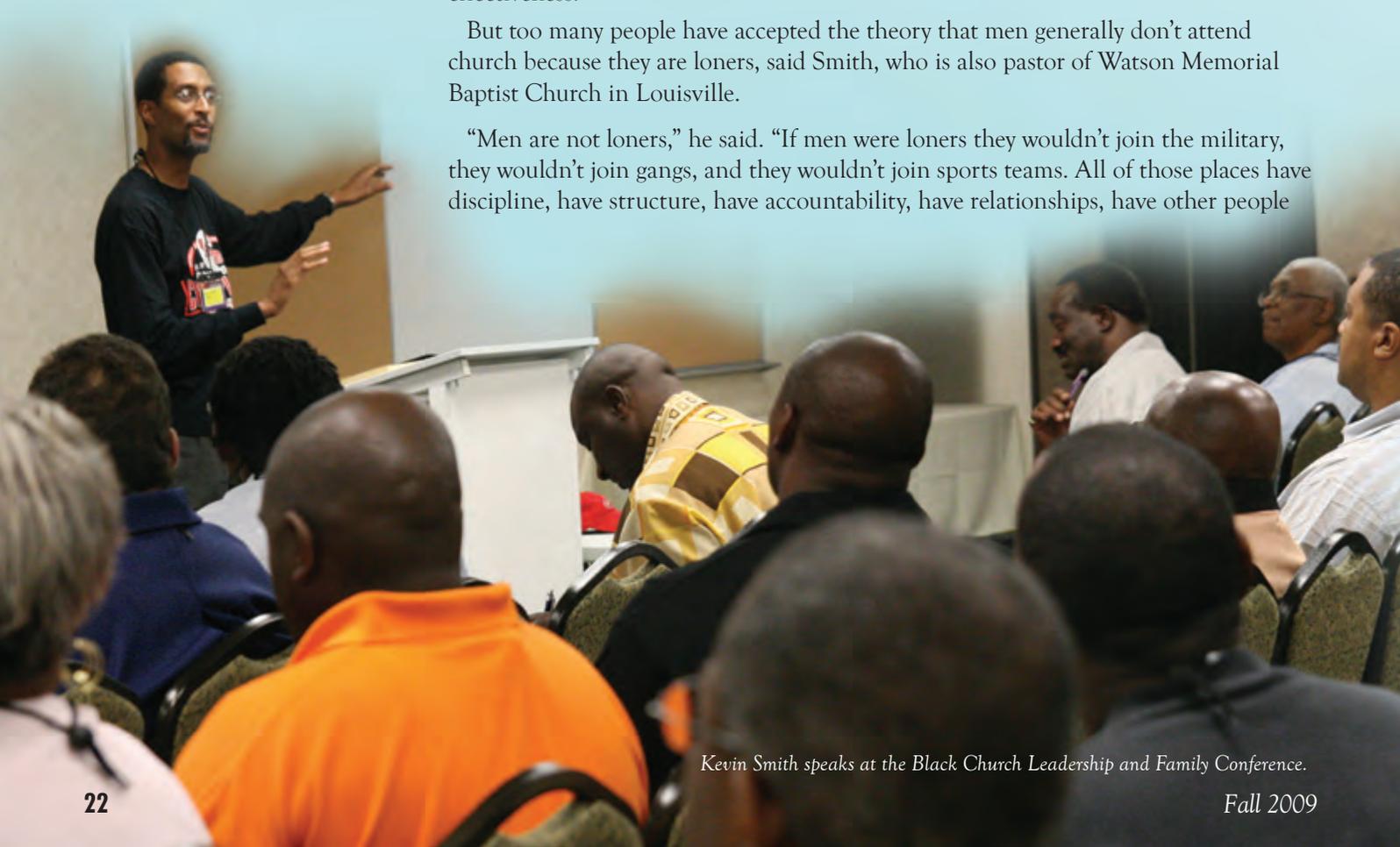
“The church must want men specifically because men open the doors to so many other things,” Smith said. “There is nothing like being a pastor and a leader in the church and feeling confident that you’ve got an army of men with you,” he added, pointing out that reaching men can add a new dimension to church leadership and effectiveness.

But too many people have accepted the theory that men generally don’t attend church because they are loners, said Smith, who is also pastor of Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville.

“Men are not loners,” he said. “If men were loners they wouldn’t join the military, they wouldn’t join gangs, and they wouldn’t join sports teams. All of those places have discipline, have structure, have accountability, have relationships, have other people

“We’ve got to put up examples of godly manhood, particularly in the African-American church. You should not have to check your manhood at the church door.”

— Kevin Smith



Kevin Smith speaks at the Black Church Leadership and Family Conference.

involved. But it's places where the men can be men. They can do manly things."

Buddhism, Islam and Confucianism are not experiencing the same gender gap, Smith added. "It's us," he said. "There's something unappealing to men about what we're doing."

The lack of men has resulted in a feminizing of the church, he said, that affects everything from decorations to music.

"Much of the stuff we sing, men aren't going to sing," he noted. "The Bible does not say Jesus is your lover. ... He's your Master and your King. Isn't no man going to stand up and sing love songs to Jesus."

Challenging men

Like the old U.S. Army advertisement, churches will attract men when they provide an environment that challenges men to "be all that you can be," Smith said.

"You want to raise up strong, godly men in the church? You've got to treat them like men," he said. "Men have entrepreneurial tendencies. Men have risk taking tendencies. Men want a challenge. Men want something laid before them and then [want to] strive to meet it."

Jesus modeled behaviors that men admire today, Smith noted. Jesus' strong actions often mesmerized men, including his enemies. Even when in the face of persecution and the cross, Jesus impressed Pilate, Smith said. "The Bible says Jesus was so cool and icy about the whole situation, Pilate was like, 'Dang!'"

Smith urged church leaders to

gauge whether their churches welcome and affirm men.

"What is the atmosphere of your church?" he asked. "Is it one of comfort and ceremony, or is it one of confrontation and challenge? Is it one of conformity, or is it one of expectation where people are pushed to grow?"

Taking it home

Jewell Jones, associate pastor of Greater Vision Baptist Church, Cleveland, Ohio, said he came to the conference seeking resources to reach more men.

"It's not just our church, but it's churches all over, and nobody really addresses the issue except in maybe a few different books," he said. "I came, basically, reaching out for some help."

Jones said the workshop challenged him to consider whether his church and other congregations really want men.

He said he started a list of men he intended to talk to when he returned home.

"I want to have that candid, confrontational conversation and say, 'Hey, why aren't you coming? What is it?'" he said. "We'll never get them to come if we have no idea why they're not coming."

Smith said churches will never accomplish all that God wants them to until they attract and involve men at the same levels they do women.



A family worships together during the conference.

"In the church, we have beautiful examples of godly womanhood," Smith said. "We've got to put up examples of godly manhood, particularly in the African-American church. You should not have to check your manhood at the church door." ■

RESOURCES

Nearly 1,000 people attended this year's Black Church Leadership and Family Conference. Next year's event is scheduled for July 19-23 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center. For more information, visit LifeWay.com/blackchurchlife.

Go to LifeWay.com/factsandrends for more stories and photos from the Black Church Leadership and Family Conference.

Go to the [LifeWay News](#) page on Facebook to follow a discussion string on why men don't want to be involved in church.

WE RECOMMEND

- *Young Lions* by Chris McNair
- *Men's Fraternity: Quest for Authentic Manhood* by Robert Lewis
- *Men's Fraternity: Great Adventure* by Robert Lewis
- *YOU!* (Bible study curriculum)

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

Background checks help churches uncover the unexpected

by Brooklyn Lowery

Good guys don't wear superhero capes, and bad guys don't always have shifty eyes and devious-sounding chuckles.

In real life, discerning the heroes from the villains often requires more than a visual assessment.

That means you can't know whether someone is "good" or "bad" by looking at them when they walk through the front door of your church and volunteer to serve.

That's why LifeWay entered an agreement with BackgroundChecks.com to provide discounted screenings for churches.

"It is so important in this day and time to run these checks," said Barbara Strong, church secretary at Jubilee Worship Center in Westmoreland, Tenn. Strong runs the checks for Jubilee, which began using BackgroundChecks.com about a year ago. "We just don't know who is coming into our church. We'd like to think everyone is a good Christian, but we can't know that."

BackgroundChecks.com reported that about 450 churches have requested more than 5,000 background checks on volunteers and prospective employees since LifeWay began offering the service in 2008. Most of those searches returned clean records or minor traffic-related offenses, but 80 screenings uncovered serious felony offenses, and more than 600 people had some type of criminal history that may have disqualified them from volunteering or working at a church.

First Baptist Church, Estero, Fla., has had to turn away a few volunteers due to the information uncovered by BackgroundChecks.com. Associate Pastor Wayne Rogers runs the checks for the church, which he said is a

church that welcomes a lot of "snowbirds" who are only present during certain times of the year.

"It's important that we let new folks know we will be running checks," Rogers said, adding that the church stresses the confidentiality and necessity of the process. "When we have a negative screening result, we deal with it in a loving way. We know that people make mistakes, and we know we've been made new creations in Christ."

He added that, as much as possible, church leadership tries to minimize embarrassment in these cases, but that specific people – directors of the children's or youth areas, for instance – must be informed that a particular person should not be permitted around children.

"Children are our precious commodity," Rogers said. "They've been entrusted to us, and we have to protect them at any cost."

Greg Young is a buyer for LifeWay Christian Stores, and he also serves as the minister of education at Cedar Hill Baptist Church, Cedar Hill, Tenn. Cedar Hill began using the screening service about a year ago and has so far screened 50-60 people. Young said all church staff members and all volunteers who will be working with individuals 18 years old and younger are required to submit to the screening.

In spite of church budgets that are shrinking in the current economy, Young said his church did not even consider cutting back by nixing background checks.

"We're trying to make sure we provide the safest environment possible for youth and children," Young said. "BackgroundChecks.com helps us with our due diligence, and I think that's being a good steward." ■

RESOURCES

For more information about background screenings, visit LifeWayStores.com/backgroundchecks.

Go to www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends to read an accompanying article about the wisdom of doing background checks by LifeWay's Bill Emeott.

At Glorieta camps kids have ‘good, old-fashioned’ Christian fun

story by Sue Sprenkle, photography by Tara Patty

Camp was filled to capacity. What was she going to do?

When Heather Murry tried to enroll her children in camp at Camp Ridgecrest for Boys and Camp Crestridge for Girls, there were no spots open. The Ridgecrest camp staff suggested she try their newer sister camp in Glorieta, N.M.

The mother of five from Belmont Baptist Church in Conyers, Ga., called that “divine providence.”

“Glorieta boys and girls camps are the jewel of the Southwest,” Murry said. “It’s an undiscovered treasure. We wouldn’t trade any camp in the world for this one. It has everything from good, old-fashioned archery and canoeing to worship and quiet times, all in one of the most beautiful settings you’ll ever experience.”

Murry’s five children –Alexis, Ally, Jimmy,

Meredith and Paul – agreed, or at least they did when they slowed down long enough to give their opinions. The two-week camp for children who have finished grades 1-10 is chock-full of activity.

Camp Glorieta for Boys, Camp Glorieta for Girls and Glorieta Family Camp (debuting in 2010) are the three elements of the Glorieta Summer Camps program offered by LifeWay.

“We are always, always busy doing something,” 10-year-old Jimmy confided while waiting his turn at four square. “It’s pretty fun – especially since we don’t have to see our sisters that much.”

A chorus of boos sounded as the entire younger boys’ cabin, including younger brother Paul, backed up Jimmy’s statement. They happily explained that the girls stay on their side of the camp while the boys stay on their own side. This brought laughter from a counselor. He quickly added that the boys



were still sore about losing to the girls on Newspaper Night, one of the few activities where the two camps interact.

Murry took in the scene, beaming at the camaraderie among the boys. This was exactly what she imagined her kids would experience at camp – good, clean, old-fashioned Christian fun. She counted it a privilege to watch her kids have fun and grow in Christ.

After making the 1,400-mile trek from Georgia, camp staff suggested she stick around and be the “Camp Mom.” Duties included washing more than 60 loads of camp laundry. All that laundry changed her mind slightly about “clean” fun – especially after mud pit day.



“Mom! Mom!” exclaimed 9-year-old Paul from the edge of the mud pit. “Did you see that? Did you see how much mud? Totally covered!”

It was hard to distinguish one boy from another among the laughter and horseplay. All were covered from head to toe in the slippery, dark brown slime.

Bible stories came to life in the depths of the mud. A mud city design contest found one cabin building Jericho and its infamous falling walls. As the boys constructed their masterpiece, they recounted details of the story of Joshua and his army.

“The aim of many summer camps is to entertain the kids constantly, but look at these guys,” Murry said, pointing to the mud-caked melee. “They are making their own fun. You can’t plan this kind of creativity and impromptu Bible teaching.”

The three Murry sisters, on the other hand, crinkled their noses at the mention of the girls’ mud pit day. They admitted it was fun until it started raining. Twelve-year-old Meredith quickly changed the subject to include her “all-time favorite” activity: horseback riding. As she went into great detail of how to brush a horse, others from her cabin joined in, adding their own tips. As the various stories melded together, showing the mounting excitement of actually riding the horses, a first-grader stepped from behind the group and made her voice known.

“It’s just the best thing ever!” she said, summing it up as everyone nodded in agreement.

This is the first camp experience for 14-year-old Ally. She admitted she was pretty nervous about it in the beginning but quickly realized how silly that was. She couldn’t imagine missing the fun of singing

and dancing or participating in the Circle of Progress:

Dressed in black shorts and white tops, the girls enter the Circle of Progress ceremony in total silence. A sense of seriousness envelopes the room. A camp counselor explains the ceremony. Each camper receives an “honor necklace” and learns the “secret Glorieta girls’ handshake.” (A handshake so secret, it cannot be revealed in this article.)

“Why do we use a circle?” asks the counselor. “A circle means unity. We are coming together as one group of girls put on this earth for one purpose – to serve God.”

Slowing down enough to hear God is something campers in the older girls’ cabin relished. Alexis, 15, and her cabin mates said they like getting away from the busyness of their mid-teen years and just hanging out with each other and God. With no computers, no television and no cell phones, the teens filled their time canoeing, camping and hiking.

“It’s awesome. There’s nothing to worry about here,” Alexis said with a wistful sigh. “It’s just two weeks of pure fun. And there’s not a more beautiful place in the world to talk to God than in the Prayer Garden.”

This intimate setting was exactly what Murry was searching for in a camp. She pointed out that counselors have a lot of one-on-one time with the campers, and the children become friends with everyone.

“Glorieta is a smaller camp with fewer kids, but they have just as many activities as the camps at Ridgecrest,” Murry said. “It’s just a good, old-fashioned camp experience like I had as a child.” ■



RESOURCES

For more information about Glorieta Summer Camps, including next year’s new Family Camp, visit GlorietaCamps.com or call (866) 794-CAMP (2267).

‘Breakout Church’ expands with LifeWay Architecture’s help

by Jeanette Littleton

What do you do when your church suddenly takes off with astounding growth but you’re meeting in an elementary school with limited space?

For Lenexa Baptist Church in Lenexa, Kan., the answer is obvious: Build its own church facility.

The church started in 1988 in the Kansas City metropolitan area. By the early ’90s, it had about 110 members, but under the leadership of Senior Pastor Steve Dighton, the church’s attendance skyrocketed along with the area’s growth.

The church grew so quickly, in fact, that it was cited as one of America’s top 13 “Breakout Churches” – churches that “are impacting lives and entire communities” – in a Billy Graham

Center study and in the 2005 book *Breakout Churches* by LifeWay President Thom Rainer. In 2007, LifeWay Research recognized the church as one of 19 standout churches in the Southern Baptist Convention.

So when this church faced growth challenges, church leaders contacted LifeWay Architecture for help developing a four-phase plan to meet the church’s immediate needs for a space where the congregation could meet while construction continued for eventual growth.

“The Lenexa project was a great example of how the church leadership put a lot of trust in LifeWay to guide them in the design of their building,” said Gary Nicholson, director of LifeWay Architecture. “The lead architect on this project helped them determine not only the number of rooms and size, but also the

Exterior view of Lenexa Baptist Church in Lenexa, Kan.



amount they could afford to spend on each phase, then designed a building that would help them get the most growth for their programs within that budget.”

The first phase of the new building was finished in 2001 and the congregation moved in.

But everything wasn't going according to plan. The church membership, then at 500, was still expanding rapidly. The church was growing more quickly than expected, and some adjustments needed to be made.

“LifeWay drew the concept for our initial master plan,” explained Larry White, executive pastor at Lenexa. “When it was time to design and build Phase 1, a local architect was selected. The idea was that a local firm would be more accessible and able to deal with the local issues, [but] that did not prove to be totally accurate.”

Lenexa leaders returned to LifeWay Architecture for Phase 2. Although the project was underway, LifeWay revised the plan without disturbing the church's smooth flow or growth.

“LifeWay was selected for Phase 2 because of their knowledge of churches, which function and operate differently than most facilities,” White said. “It is our experience that this knowledge is of the utmost importance.”

LifeWay Architecture's Steve Newton served as lead architect on the Lenexa project. He said that joining the Lenexa project at Phase 2 did not pose a problem. “LifeWay Architecture is used to working with churches of all sizes, all over the country, and in various stages of building. Thanks to technology and the ease of travel, we're able to provide excellent service regardless of the distance and situation.”

Lenexa also found it was important for LifeWay Architecture to be flexible with the building plans since it became necessary to rework the original project to add capacity while finishing the building more quickly than originally planned.

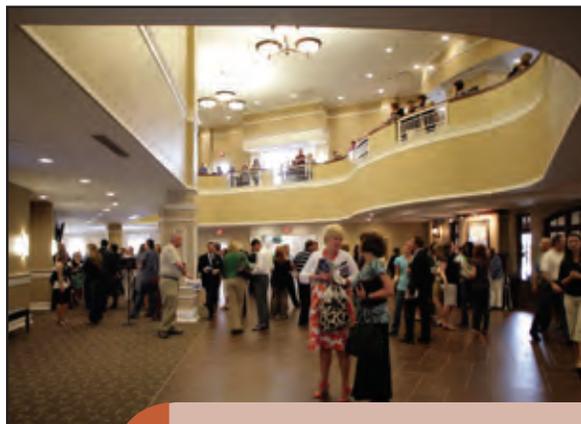
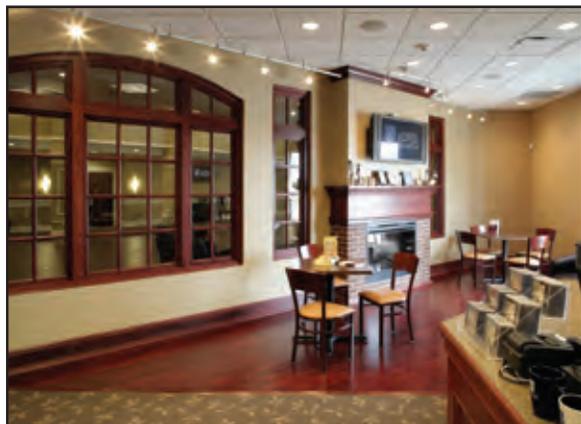
“The initial strategy was projected to be a four-phase project with final completion in 2015,” White said. “Because of our growth, it became a three-phase project, containing even more square footage.”

The now 1,200-member church dedicated the finished building six years ahead of the original projection.

Lenexa Baptist Church has been just as pleased as LifeWay with the results.

“The team at LifeWay understands the needs, the challenges, and the complexities of the local church,” said White, whose family ran a construction business when he was younger. “Based on my experience, I can honestly say that LifeWay is one of the finest firms I have ever contracted with.” ■

Interior views of the church building



MORE

For more information on LifeWay Architecture, see www.lifeway.com/churcharchitecture.

B&H releases complete Old Testament commentary

by Kelly Shrout

Pastors, teachers and students of God's Word now can have the complete *Holman Old Testament Commentary* at their fingertips and in their libraries. B&H Publishing Group released the full commentary package in June.

"We at B&H see value in offering a resource that encourages teachers and preachers to engage with Scripture," said Steve Bond, senior editorial director for Holman Bibles and Bible reference at B&H Publishing Group.

"The Bible is a vast book that was written over a span of 1,000 years by 40 different authors living in different cultures who spoke different languages," he said. "The Holman Old Testament Commentary exegetes the text in such a way that it is applicable even in the 21st century."

The commentary features biblical exposition of chapters, life principles and applications, teaching outlines, deeper discoveries and discussion topics.

"This commentary is unique because it provides the teacher or pastor most all of the components they need to teach or preach a passage of Scripture," Bond said. "Many commentaries just have exposition and that's very important, but the Holman commentary provides additional teaching aids like illustrations, historical references and supporting research."

The application focus is a unique feature of the commentary, he added

"The writers help teachers convey the message of the text in its original context, but also help them see the principle from the passage and how it applies throughout the week."

Bond said most pastors don't have the resources to have a researcher on staff who can provide background material for sermons, but the commentary assembles these elements in one place so teachers and pastors have more time to pray, focus and let the biblical text do

its work in them.

"All Sunday school teachers and pastors would like to have [a researcher], but it comes at a high price," he said. "Having the commentary is like having a personal researcher. This doesn't mean that the teacher or pastor won't look to other resources. These volumes just give the teachers a good start in preparing to teach and preach."

Bond said he is confident that the authors of the commentary offer clear exposition of the text.

"The commentary was written by authors who hold to the inerrancy of Scripture and who are trustworthy Bible interpreters," he said. "I feel very confident in placing these commentaries in the hands of laypeople and pastors."

Steve Andrews, professor of Old Testament, Hebrew and archaeology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., wrote the commentary on 1 Samuel and carefully compared the Hebrew text with the New International Version before writing the volume.

"I have found that the study of the original languages enables one to be a better interpreter and expositor of the Word of God," Andrews said. "Doing this helps avoid doctrinal mistakes and the misinformed speculation of secondary literature. It also provides access to the best scholarly and devotional sources and gives the student of the Word the confidence to compare and evaluate the ancient and modern translations of the Bible."

Max Anders, creator and general editor of the *Holman Old Testament Commentary*, said understanding the Old Testament has the potential to renew spiritual vitality in churches.

"Our understanding of Scripture is increasingly shallow," Anders said. "Our appreciation of God is increasingly shallow. Our eternal perspective is increasingly shallow."

Our Christlike character is increasingly shallow. Yet many people hunger for a deeper understanding of Scripture and a deeper walk with God.”

Anders said as pastors and Bible teachers go more deeply into the Scriptures for their own lives, they can pass on a new spiritual vitality to the church.

It is vital for teachers and pastors to have a proper understanding of the Old Testament for many reasons, he added.

First, the Bible is one story of redemption from Genesis to Revelation.

“If we do not understand the Old Testament, we do not understand the first half of God’s story of redemption, and our appreciation for what God has done in Jesus is cut in half,” he said.

Second, the Old Testament contains prophecies and promises fulfilled in the New Testament.

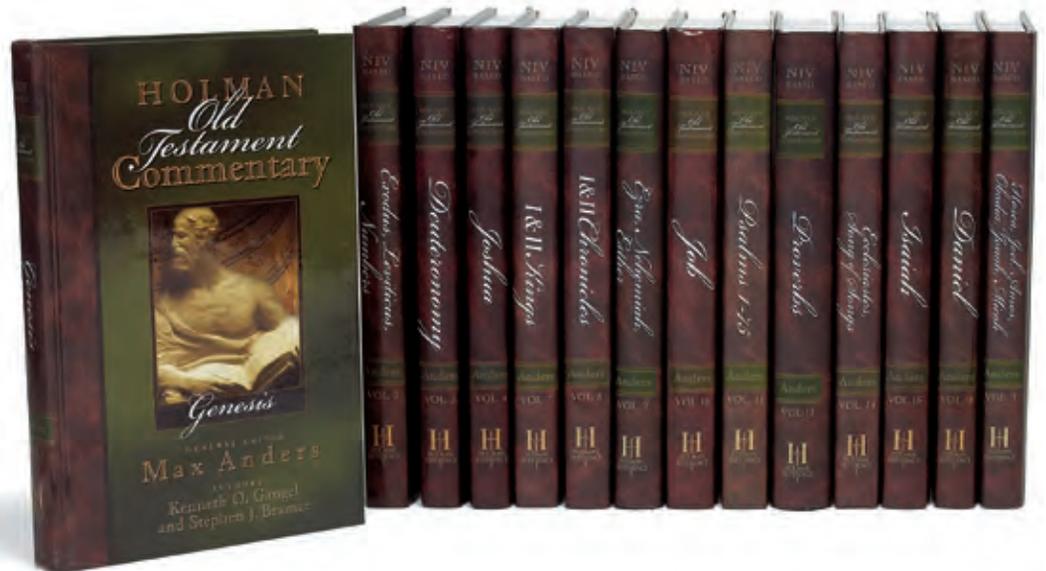
“When we understand the prophecies and promises, and see them fulfilled or expanded in the New Testament, we understand that the world is not spinning out of control, but is unfolding God’s profound plan to redeem and restore humanity,” Anders said. “It helps us see that we can trust God no matter what.”

Third, the Old Testament was written for the instruction of new Christians (Romans 15:4).

“From the story of the crossing of the Red Sea, we learn that God can deliver us when no solution to our problem is on the horizon,” he said. “From Joseph we learn that our trials are preparation for God’s blessing and use. From David’s sin we learn that repentance will bring about restoration. We can learn how to live more biblically by studying the Old Testament.”

Fourth, the Old Testament is a picture of New Testament truth.

“The entire sacrificial system, as well as the layout of the tabernacle and temple, are physical things designed to picture sin, alienation from God, sacrifice, redemption and restoration to God,” Anders said. “We have a stunted understanding of our hopeless condition in sin and our redemption in Jesus without an understanding of the Old Testament.” ■



WE RECOMMEND

The Holman Old Testament Commentary series and single volumes are available at www.lifeway.com/shopping, through customer service at (800) 458-2772 and from LifeWay Christian Stores at www.lifewaystores.com and (800) 233-1123.

NEW RESOURCES

LifeWay Church Resources at www.lifeway.com and (800) 458-2772
 LifeWay Christian Stores at www.lifewaystores.com and (800) 233-1123

B&H PUBLISHING GROUP

A Hope and A Future: Overcoming Discouragement

by Don Wilton

“For I know the plans I have for you” – [this is] the Lord’s declaration – “plans for [your] welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” – Jeremiah 29:11 (HCSB)

In *A Hope and A Future*, Don Wilton introduces readers to the power of God’s Word and guides them toward resolutions that can fill their lives with spiritual purpose instead of earthbound discouragement.

Releases Oct. 1
 ISBN 978-0-8054-4555-8
 Paperback. \$16.99

Double Cross

by James David Jordan

Double Cross continues the story of Taylor Pasbury, introduced in James David Jordan’s novel, *Forsaken*.

Taylor is haunted by the past. After a stint in the Secret Service, she has become a private security specialist. When she discovers a body, all the evidence points to embezzlement and suicide. But Taylor has no way of knowing that her long-gone mother is about to reappear and lead her down a path of danger and deceit.

Releases Oct. 1
 ISBN 978-0-8054-4754-5
 Paperback. \$14.99

Guardian of the Flame

by T.L. Higley

Guardian of the Flame transports readers back to one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, where characters struggle to find meaning in a pagan society and are confronted by the one true God.

The year is 48 B.C. Sophia guards the famous Lighthouse of Alexandria in Egypt. She gets caught in the middle as political turmoil swells when Roman General Julius Caesar and his legion storm the city, and Cleopatra, Greek queen of Egypt, fights to retain her country.

Releases Oct. 1
 ISBN 978-0-8054-4732-3
 Paperback. \$14.99

In the Secret Place: A Pilgrimage through the Psalms

by Jerry Rankin

For years International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin has begun each day by reading and meditating on a psalm. “The graphic, picturesque language evokes images that stir our emotions and strengthen our confidence. To know that God is our rock, our shield, our fortress, and our strong tower all convey an understanding we need each day,” he says.

In the Secret Place gathers devotions and prayers written by Rankin for each of the 150 chapters in the book of Psalms. They reflect an openhearted journey of faith

and deepening love for God.

Releases Oct. 1
 ISBN 978-0-8054-4881-8
 Paperback. \$14.99

The Painful Side of Leadership: Moving Forward Even When It Hurts

by Jeff Iorg

The Painful Side of Leadership encourages and equips Christian leaders with biblical insights to better manage ministry circumstances, relationships and choices. Author and Golden Gate Seminary President Jeff Iorg details why painful things happen and the hope that God always provides.

Releases Oct. 1
 ISBN 978-0-8054-4870-2
 Paperback. \$14.99

CHURCH RESOURCES

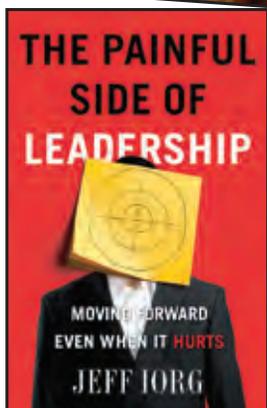
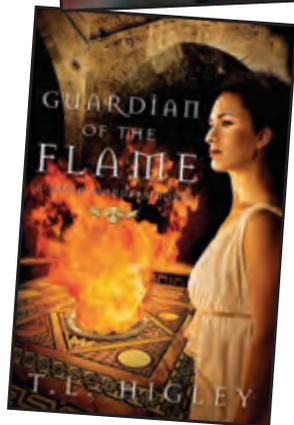
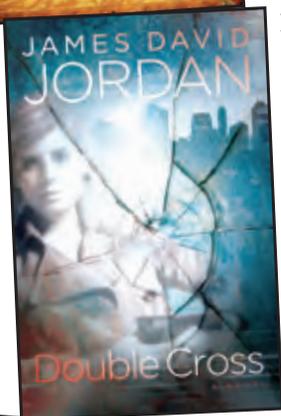
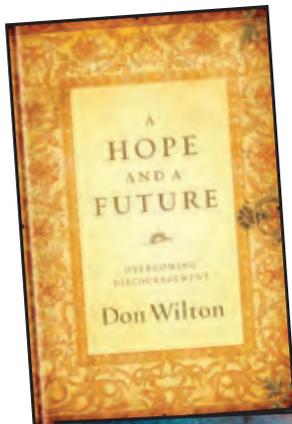
How to Sunday School Manual

This resource is a compilation of 105 short, to-the-point articles from 80 different experts and practitioners that offer practical tips and advice for organizing and leading a Sunday school ministry.

Released in August
 LifeWay product #0-0516-4710
 \$14.95

Context: Engaging the Young Adults in Your Community

Every young adult ministry has a setting and circumstances that surround it. *Context* is designed to help leaders determine where





their ministry is and where it has the potential to go. Using the spiritual markers of community, connection, responsibility and depth, *Context* examines the challenges of young adult ministry and offers answers.

Released in September
LifeWay product #0-0512-6270
\$3.95

Fresh Encounter, Revised

by Henry Blackaby, Richard Blackaby and Claude King

This revised study helps the church make application in six key areas for revival and helps the church become a catalyst for spiritual awakening in the world. 6 sessions.

Releases in October
Member book, LifeWay product #0-0518-9421, \$11.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0522-6601 \$99.95



El Desafío del Amor Estudio Bíblico (The Love Dare Bible Study, Spanish)

by Michael Catt and Stephen and Alex Kendrick

A marriage-centered study for individuals and couples based on clips from the motion picture *Fireproof*. It uses activities that create community, provide opportunities to discuss real life in real marriage, explore and apply God's Word and invite participants into a risky but redemptive journey. 8 sessions.

Released in September
LifeWay product #0-0525-7233
\$8.95

¿Podemos hablar? Conmovedoras conversaciones con Dios Libro del alumno (Can We Talk? Soul-stirring Conversations with God member book, Spanish)

by Priscilla Shirer

This study delivers familiar spiritual disciplines through a fresh, new method of teaching. As participants respond to a variety of biblical passages, prompted by thought-provoking questions, they'll develop a Christ-focused

view of important issues and a closer walk with their Creator. 6 sessions.

Releases in October
LifeWay product #0-0518-9422
\$12.95

Sunday school semester or small group. 13 sessions.

Released in June
Workbook, LifeWay product #0-0524-4705, \$6.95; DVD LifeWay product #0-0524-4725 \$26.95

Confident

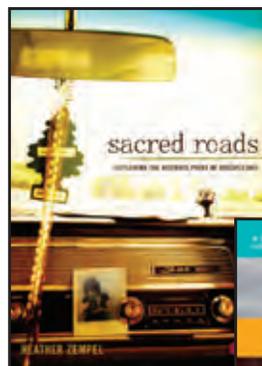
by Carol Sallee

God created His children - including teen girls - to walk in confidence.

This study teaches girls that despite the everyday battle, they can walk in daring confidence, not because of anything the world offers, but because of Christ's indwelling

presence. 6 sessions.

Released in August
LifeWay product #0-0518-9794
\$10.95



Sacred Roads
by Heather Zempel

Sacred Roads takes a look at a few faces of discipleship including relational, experiential, intellectual, personal and incarnational, finding the attributes of each and providing ways to implement them. 5 sessions.

Releases in October
Member book, LifeWay product #0-0523-3433, \$7.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0518-9432 \$69.95



You Are Gifted

by Ken Hemphill

This study of the key passages on spiritual gifts found in 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 will help your church members learn how to discover and develop their spiritual gifts. It's ideal for a

Fuel Ignited: Living Your Faith, Volume 2

This study will lead students in living out their faith in every sense of the word. Living your faith is expressed through relationships and influence, and students will discover how God has called and gifted them to live.

Releases in November
Small group leader edition (3 CD-ROMs), LifeWay product #0-0519-1382, \$9.95; DVD & CD-ROM leader set, (3 CD-ROMs & 2 DVDs), LifeWay product #0-0519-1379 \$159.95

NEW RESOURCES

LifeWay Church Resources at www.lifeway.com and (800) 458-2772
 LifeWay Christian Stores at www.lifewaystores.com and (800) 233-1123

Serie Vital, Tomo 5 *(Vital Series, Volume 5, Spanish)*

This new Spanish print resource includes three four-week studies each quarter that support LifeWay's student KNOW, OWN, KNOWN spiritual development strategy.

Releases in October
 LifeWay product #0-0525-3609
 \$29.95

VBS 2010 Saddle Ridge Ranch Sampler and Super Sampler

Start planning your own range ridin' adventure by ordering your Sampler filled with curriculum, music, promotional items, craft pack samples and more. The Super Sampler includes all this and more.

Releases in December
 Sampler, LifeWay product #0-0518-7840, \$69.99; Super Sampler, LifeWay product #0-0518-2597
 \$199.99

Club VBS 2010 Route 254 Starter Kit

The Club VBS 2010 Starter Kit is packed with



Route 254 Starter Kit

all the samples you need to plan your itinerary and assess the needs of your church. Then order curriculum and other supplies for each class separately.

Releases in December
 LifeWay product #0-0518-7673
 \$99.99

LIFEWAY WORSHIP

It Is Finished ... Paid In Full!

created by Marty Parks

This is the first release in the brand-new Let's Sing imprint. It's an easy SATB Easter musical designed for small- to medium-sized choirs. It includes great songs requiring minimal rehearsal. The 40-minute presentation includes parts for two narrators.

Released in September
 LifeWay product #00-521-3127
 \$7.95

Reign, Jesus, Reign arranged & orchestrated by Cliff Duren

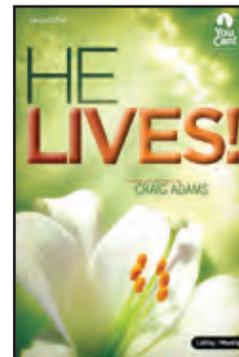
This 17-minute Easter mini-musical from Daywind Music includes four brand-new songs with brief and optional narration. It's ideal for churches with limited budget and limited rehearsal and performance time.

Released in September
 LifeWay product #00-525-6960
 \$4.95

He Lives!

created by Craig Adams

This vibrant Easter musical features many of the best-loved Easter anthems of all time. Written in unison/optional two-parts, this



20-minute work includes inspirational narration.

Released in September
 LifeWay product #00-518-1811
 \$6.95

Super Sampler





Looking for a ministry that will reach your community?

Let this study by the Blackabys return your church to its first love—Christ—and watch Him work powerfully *in you and through you*. And check out the Kelly Minter interview with Henry and Richard in the DVD Leader Kit. Order online, call 800.458.2772, or visit the LifeWay Christian Store serving you.



www.lifeway.com/freshencounter

LifeWay | Adults

LifeWay

FALL 2009 - Oct., Nov., & Dec.

ORACLE ID 005174964

Go to FTO

www.lifeway.com/factsandtrends

Go to *Facts & Trends Online* to see more articles, more photographs, more videos, just more! At FTO you can:

Read

- how one Arkansas church had a “showdown at the Boomerang Express” to raise funds for LifeBoxes for the troops
- a dad’s story about how his autistic son has grown up and graduated from college
- about Oliver North speaking to bikers at Ridgecrest
- how health issues made one pastor run for his life at the Downhill@Dawn half marathon
- about the special needs track at Power of a Connected Sunday School, full of fun in ministry
- about how some attendees at Black Church Leadership and Family Conference dared to affirm their marriages
- how youth from a Texas church changed the world of some low-income senior adults

Hear

- the story of a Russian woman’s martyred father and how his legacy of faith made her the prayer warrior she is today

See

- more photographs from LifeWay’s mission trip to Novokuznetsk, Russia
- a video and photographs from M-Fuge at Samford University
- photographs from Fuge camps at Glorieta

Plan

- for upcoming holidays with information, ideas and tips. These will be updated all the way up to Christmas, so check back periodically.

ДОМ МОЛИТВЫ
ЕВАНГЕЛЬСКИХ - ХРИСТИАН
БАПТИСТОВ

