

BULLETIN

Equipping Today's Church Leaders

Volume 1, Issue 1

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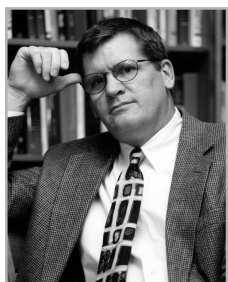
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: *David Mead*
Collierville, Tennessee

PREACHING

Resurrection Power

Paul N. Jackson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies



Perhaps nothing has the power to rivet our attention as the unexpected, whether it is a thrill or a chill. Imagine our elation during seminary days when my wife found an envelope filled with fifteen twenty-dollar bills in the parsonage mailbox one Saturday morning—an envelope that someone sent *before* my wife poured her heart out to God in search of three-hundred dollars to pay bills! Conversely, imagine the sheer horror of those employees recently who opened anthrax-laced letters in Senator Tom Daschle's and CBS news anchor Dan Rather's offices. Quite a contrast!! Sometimes the same source can offer either thrills or chills. Well-timed rain can be a farmer's godsend; but too much can easily become a torrential flood destroying valuable land, crops, and livestock. I can remember the snowfalls of Alaska and Colorado blanketing the earth with pristine beauty; but I have also seen the destructive power of a ferocious avalanche. Numerous examples abound all around us from nature and our personal lives. Although we have always wanted to adopt a child, not in our wildest dreams did we think it would happen when our children were 16, 17, and 20! Hailey Elizabeth Jackson made her stunning, unlikely entrance into our world on January 21st of this year. At our house she has definitely arrested our attention. Soon I will have a twenty-year-old and a twenty-day-old! Surprised? We are, too.

At Easter each year, we are invited to celebrate the most unbelievable miraculous surprise in all of history. An event even those closest to Jesus would fail to believe—the resurrection. Even though Jesus foretold His impending execution and resurrection at key junctures during His earthly ministry, the disciples dismissed, ignored, or tried to correct Him for so carelessly misunderstanding His own mission as the promised Messiah. The Messiah who, in the spirit of the guerilla fighter Judas Maccabeus, should rise to power and route the Roman aggressors as the “hammer” had so effectively delivered the Jews from some of the darkest days in their history when the Seleucid Antiochus dominated and persecuted the Jews in the second-century B.C. This kind of kingdom building did not materialize, much to the disappointment of the disciples. It was surprising to them that Jesus did not seem even slightly interested in physical resistance. At the outset of Passover in A.D. 30, Jesus did not appear swinging a sword victoriously and riding into Jerusalem on a great white stallion to conquer his impending executioners; He triumphantly rode in on a donkey to die! In their minds, Jesus fooled around and lost His life; if equally careless, they would be next. R. Kent Hughes depicts the post-crucifixion mood well: “As those who had

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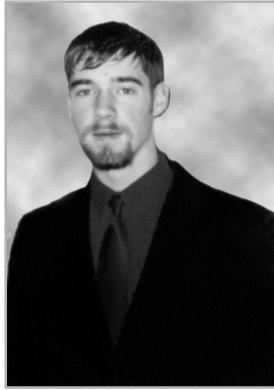
The Bulletin is a bi-monthly publication of Union University equipping church leaders.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



DAVID MEAD

Home Town - Collierville TN

Home Church - Collierville First Baptist Church

Class - Freshman

Major - Christian Studies

Vocational Plans - IMB International Missionary

Current Service - Youth and Childrens' Minister, Interim Pastor for Cairo Baptist Church, Alamo TN

"Union University is the perfect school for anyone who wants to prepare themselves for what God wants to do in their lives. I have met many faculty and staff who have been willing to help point me in the right direction. The people at Union want to see me find and do God's will for my life. God has used them to give me direction, a ministerial focus, and the classes I need to prepare me for the mission field."

REVIEWING

Resource Recommendations From the Center for Biblical Studies



Brad Green, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies



Ray Van Neste
Director, Center for Biblical Studies
Instructor of Christian Studies

As Easter approaches, we will be thinking about the nature of the resurrection and the importance of this key event for Christians. In addition to our attention to Scripture, there are outstanding volumes that can help us reflect upon and understand the resurrection, and its importance for the Christian faith.

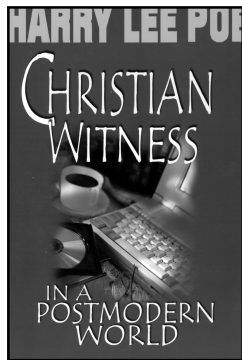
First, as one of the key texts on the resurrection is 1 Corinthians 15, we will do well to consult good commentaries on that passage. Gordon Fee's commentary on 1 Corinthians remains one of the best (Eerdmans, 1987). His discussion of chapter 15 on the resurrection, like much of the rest of the commentary, is marked by a careful, scholarly, yet readable discussion of the text. His summaries at the beginning and ending of each paragraph are immensely helpful as they show how each paragraph fits in the flow of the letter and often make insightful comments about the application to the church today. While no commentary is perfect, Fee's can be immensely helpful in preaching. The most recent commentary is that of Anthony Thiselton in the New International Greek Testament Commentary series (Eerdmans, 2001). This is a truly comprehensive and detailed examination of 1 Corinthians. This commentary will take time to work through but will provide much useful understanding of how the text operates and the theology which it teaches.

Murray J. Harris has written *Three Crucial Questions About Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994). This 120 page volume asks "three crucial questions": "Did Jesus exist?"; "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?"; "Is Jesus God?" Harris, a New Testament scholar at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, answers all three questions in the affirmative. While none but the most skeptical scholars would deny that Jesus existed, many scholars would deny the resurrection and the deity of Christ. This volume is a helpful and brief look at New Testament teaching on the reality, resurrection, and deity of Jesus. Of particular interest as we approach Easter, the chapter on the resurrection is presented as a debate at the "Debating Society at Oxford," a helpful literary device. The volume includes an appendix in which Harris outlines a possible harmonization of the resurrection narratives.

Readers wanting to explore the theological significance of the resurrection, especially the relationship between resurrection and redemption, should read Richard B. Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1987). Evangelicals appropriately emphasize the centrality of the cross for a Christian doctrine of salvation. While certainly affirming the importance and centrality of the cross, Gaffin suggests that Christians need to see the critical link between the resurrection of Jesus and salvation (not coincidentally, the

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READING



Christian Witness in a Postmodern World

By Dr. Hal Poe
Professor of Faith and Culture
Abingdon Press, 2001

What happens to evangelism when old assumptions about how to present the gospel no longer work? How do you bear witness to Jesus Christ when rational argument and external authority no longer bear much weight among those to whom you are speaking? You start, says Dr. Hal Poe, by recognizing that the situation is as much an opportunity as it is a challenge. While modern assumptions about rationality and authority no longer prevail, they have been replaced by a postmodern awareness of the spiritual dimensions of life and a perception in the culture that the consumerist “stuff” upon which we have grounded our lives cannot offer meaning. Formerly, we assumed that non-Christians held to a scientific worldview that is hostile to the Christian message. Now, we know that postmoderns have likely had very little experience of Christianity, and hence that its life-changing story can grasp them in fresh and startling ways. In short, the postmodern world in which we live presents new and exciting opportunities to share the “old, old story” with a world increasingly hungry to hear it.

ENGAGING



Preaching and Defending the Resurrection

Gregory Alan Thornbury, Ph.D.
Director of the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Christian Leadership
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies

Preach and teach well during the Easter season. Without the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead, there is no Christianity. (1 Cor.15:13ff) If Christ is not raised, Paul once warned the church at Corinth, then our message is meaningless and we are still in our sins. Because the resurrection resides at the heart of the Christian gospel, the need for pastors and apologists to provide evidence for the fact that Christ is risen remains continuously acute. Whether in the pulpit or in an evangelistic encounter, we must stand ready prepared with answers for skeptics. To this end, it is helpful to have a short list of reasons for the historicity of the resurrection committed to memory. While the following is certainly not an exhaustive list, it nonetheless offers corroborative proof for the historicity of our claims about Jesus of Nazareth.

"People generally do not knowingly forfeit their lives for something which they knew to be a total falsehood."

Why should one believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

1. The disciples died for their beliefs.

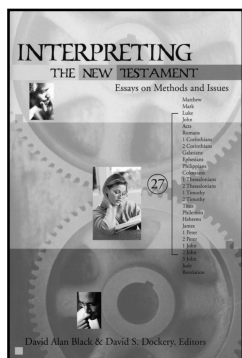
Perhaps the most oft-cited circumstantial piece of evidence which attests to the fact of the resurrection is that the followers of Jesus willingly submitted themselves to lives of torture, prison, persecution and death rather than deny or compromise their message. This fact says a great deal for the authenticity of their claim that Jesus was alive. We do know from historical accounts external to the Scriptures that the bodily resurrection of Christ formed the foundation of the apostles' good news. People generally do not knowingly forfeit their lives for something which they knew to be a total falsehood. Since church tradition informs us that the apostles were all martyred (with the exception of John), we can only conclude that these holy men truly believed that Christ was literally raised in the body on the third day and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

2. The conversion of skeptics. (i.e. James and Saul)

Two of early Christianity's most famous converts gained notoriety for a previous repudiation of Jesus' message. James, Jesus' half brother, famously doubted that Jesus was the Messiah. (Jn. 7:3-5) James, of course, abruptly changed course and emerged as the

See ENGAGING on page 6

READING



Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues

David Alan Black & David S. Dockery,
Editors

Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001

One of the world's best-known and most influential bodies of literature, the New Testament, is also one of the least understood. Bewildered by a plethora of methodologies, the modern reader may well hesitate to go beyond a cursory reading (and understanding) of the New Testament writings. Even if one has the desire to teach or preach from the New Testament with authority and credibility, who has the time or courage to study it in depth and to proclaim it without fear or favor?

The purpose of *Interpreting the New Testament* is to enhance interpretation, teaching, and preaching by providing a useful means of learning what the New Testament is all about and – whenever possible – the historical reasons why it speaks the way it does. It endeavors not only to acquaint readers with the scope and trends of modern New Testament scholarship but also to enable them to have a clearer and more enjoyable experience when reading and applying these twenty-seven inspired books.

WORSHIPING



Easter Worship: Lark or Dight?

Michael Penny, D.M.A.
Associate Professor of Music

Meet a word from the world of art painting: “chiaroscuro,” a strange Italian word meaning “light-dark.” It is a painting technique wherein certain areas, such as the faces of Mary and the Christ child, are made to stand out by contrast with the heaviness of the dark background. It is used most noticeably in the works of some Renaissance painters. But artists will quickly own that the technique exists to some measure in a large percentage of artwork. The idea exists theoretically in many artistic endeavors. Look at the funny papers and notice how much shading an artist uses to make his characters stand out in three dimensions. Look how many times we say funny things to lighten a dark mood.

We often overlook this concept in the present trend of pop-ness and style in contemporary Christian worship. There is much darkness in the Easter message that we don't like to think about. When Judas brought the soldiers and clerics to find Jesus, they were carrying torches and lanterns; it was night (Jn 18: 2). Jesus said to them, “This is your hour—when darkness reigns” (Luke 22:53). The process before Pilate and Herod—and Peter's denial—all were at night (see Luke 22; the servant girl [vs. 56] strains to identify Peter in the firelight).

We also tend to overlook the darkness that surrounds us all when we are not in Christ—the darkness of not having a saving relationship with Christ, or that painful darkness when we who are saved try to duck out of His sight, as we all do at times. In your Easter worship

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Tennessee
&
Rio De Janeiro

Mission Opportunity January 19-28, 2003

Union University is partnering with the Tennessee Baptist Convention to offer this mission opportunity to you and your church. We would like to invite you and members of your church to prayerfully consider joining this evangelism team that is being assembled to take the Gospel to Rio. The team's purpose will be street evangelism. We will focus our efforts during a carnival-like celebration called the “Rock in Rio” which occurs every three years. Our desire is for God to assemble a team of 100. There will be plenty of translators available. Anyone who is mature in the faith and willing to share the Gospel is qualified to participate. If you are interested and would like additional information, please contact Dr. Charles A. Fowler at 1-800-338-6644.

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book has also been published under the title, *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*). Christians wanting to come to a fuller understanding of the resurrection as essential to a Christian understanding of redemption would do well to spend time with Gaffin's volume.

Lastly, when trying to craft a sermon and apply the text at hand, reading other good sermons is often helpful if you can find sermons which are substantive and based on the text. The sermons of C. H. Spurgeon can be especially helpful in plumbing the depths of the theology in a passage and in illustrating and applying it. Spurgeon is eminently quotable. Kregel has published *Spurgeon's Sermons on Christmas and Easter* or you can access many of Spurgeon's sermons for free online at The Spurgeon Archive. At this site the sermons are indexed by titles and by scripture passages (as well as chronologically) so one can fairly easily find the relevant sermons. Spurgeon is theologically rich, pastorally aware and zealously evangelistic.

Spring 2002 Go Trips

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this year, why not illustrate some darkness?

This is not so far-fetched. In the Easter service in the Eastern Orthodox church, the lights start low and the characteristic icons and gold and brass fixtures are covered with black cloth. The mood is mournful—then at the right moment the cloths are torn off all at once, the lights spring up and the service turns ebullient. What a wonderful picture of crucifixion and resurrection!

Consider the example of the tenebrae service—tenebrae means “shadows” in Latin—of the Roman liturgy. The sanctuary is dark except for candles, and these are gradually extinguished to represent the abandoning of the disciples. What a striking picture! The hymn “Go to Dark Gethsemane” has generally fallen out of favor—yet it is a wonderful music picture of the sorrow of Easter. The gospel hymn “Low in the Grave He Lay” contains the chiaroscuro contrast in one hymn! And we can find anthems and solos to fit, even if we have to go to the world of—forgive me this blasphemy, Lord—classical music. The material is out there.

Every church musician should listen to the “Crucifixus” and “Et resurrexit” movements of Bach's B Minor Mass! In the first mentioned movement that genius Bach sets the one word “crucifixus”—“crucified”—repeatedly to mournful, crying tones. There follows immediately the joyous, bright “Et resurrexit,” a real toe-tapper! It is a dazzling musical picture of the Easter message.

Why not put darkness in your service, starting with the lights low and the music somber and soft and then thrusting them both up? Or using the candles as in a tenebrae service to illustrate the desertion Jesus felt? Why not consider a Good Friday or Maundy Thursday (the traditional day of the first Lord's Supper) service which ends in the darkness of snuffed candles and silence—having told your church members to come back Easter morning and see the transformation to light? Or starting the hymn “Low in the Grave He Lay” in dim light and flooding the sanctuary with full light on the chorus?

Now I will explain the title. I love puns. A lark is a light joke; “dight” is an old word meaning “adorned.” I pray your Easter service will be neither a lark nor merely dight. I pray it proclaims, to believer and lost alike, the Light that overcame the darkness—with a clear picture of the latter. Praise be to Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

senior leader in the Jerusalem church. Such a turnaround is difficult to imagine if Jesus' ministry had ended in failure at Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. In addition, Saul the persecutor's conversion to Christianity and his insistence on the resurrection as the central feature to the Gospel is inconceivable if he had not in fact met the risen Lord on the road to Damascus.

3. Alterations to Jewish beliefs and cultural practices

Certain central beliefs and practices defined life for the faithful Jew. Among these were adherence to monotheism (belief in one God) and observance of the sacrificial system at the Temple in Jerusalem. Without such identity markers, one effectively declared his independence from Judaism as practiced in the first century A.D. and was ostracized from the people of God. The early Jewish converts to Christianity signaled their confidence in the risen Messiah by their willingness to change their conception of monotheism so as to include a Trinity of persons and by their determination to forfeit the sacrificial system at the Temple. They did so on the strength of the evidence that Jesus had fulfilled the law through his death and was vindicated by God himself in the resurrection.

4. Communion and Baptism

The two ordinances practiced by the early Church pictured the centrality of the death and resurrection of Christ. While the Lord's supper clearly emphasized the substitutionary character of Christ's atonement, baptism illustrated the resurrection of Christ from the dead. (Rom. 6)

The two ordinances of the Church are parallel to each other and cannot be separated. That the apostles baptized new Christians reveals that they knew that Christ had not only been crucified, but raised to new life by the power of God.

5. The Counter-Cultural Philosophy of

hoped in Jesus slowly trudged away from the scene, the icy fingers of death tightened about their hearts in chilling, numbing grief."

What could reverse their hopelessness? What could ever restore their joy again, and dislodge them from the death grip of utter despair? It would take a miracle, something extraordinary, and something totally unexpected—the *resurrection*!! Luke 24:13-35 provides a unique post-resurrection conversation. Jesus appears incognito to two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, interestingly in proximity to where Judas Maccabeus supposedly attacked the Syrian forces some two-hundred years before, thus generating a Messianic fever that the disciples would catch and be unable to shake until the first Easter. The dialogue Luke records showcases opposite interpretations of Jesus' death. E. Earle Ellis characterizes it well: "For the two disciples it is a *tragedy*, the end of a 'prophet' who they had hoped was the Messiah (19-21). From the scriptures Jesus interprets his death as a *necessity*, the ordained way in which Messiah was to 'enter into his glory'" (25-27). So, what does Luke want to teach us about the resurrection from this unexpected meeting on a dusty road seven miles from Golgotha? While there are many lessons to be gleaned, I want to point out two.

I. The Resurrection Is Transformational. When one compares Luke's story of the ambitious, courageous, church in Acts to the shivering, scared band of defectors before Jesus' demise, there is a complete about-face. Peter may be the best example. Do you think the bold interpreter of the fiery tongues of Pentecost is the same man who just six weeks before categorically denied he even knew Jesus while he warmed himself by the courtyard fire within eyesight of Jesus? Not even close. In this story we see the gradual transformation taking place.

Why did Cleopas (Jesus' uncle) and his anonymous companion (some say Mary) not recognize Jesus? Verse sixteen reads, "But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him." Some blame this haziness on God. Others may blame it on Satan. Probably it is neither. Jesus will instruct them, but what clouds their vision is mere *human disbelief*—perhaps Luke wanted to draw attention to the depth of this disbelief; a disbelief that Jesus is going to uproot with some well-timed biblical interpretation. Remember, Jesus is the last person they expected to see. Luke wants us to see the power of the resurrection to transform skeptics into fully persuaded heralds of the gospel. He does not want their belief based solely on emotion. It makes perfect sense in this context. When Jesus asks them about the subject of their conversation in verse seventeen, Cleopas sarcastically responds to Jesus in the next verse saying to the effect, "Certainly you know what has happened these past few days. Where have you been, behind a rock?" Part of the beauty of the story is that the readers know the identity of the interrogating stranger. These two travelers, like the rest of the disciples, are confused, disillusioned, depressed, and maybe even angry; yet Jesus does not give up on them. This is a renovation project Jesus has undertaken; much the same way He dealt with Peter in John 21. In fact, I believe all the personal appearances achieved the goal of repairing misguided theology. The personal, risen Christ transformed the rumor of the empty tomb into an undeniable fact. Jesus completed the transformation once He rebuked them for their lack of faith, interpreted the scripture for them, and broke bread with them. Suddenly, they recognized Him. Mission accomplished! Then He just as suddenly vanished.

II. The Resurrection Account is Trustworthy. A second truth I believe Luke wants us to see in this passage is the important role of Scripture. Followers of Christ were depleted spiritually and did not understand the Messiah's death. Their confusion is a direct result of their failure to comprehend Scripture. Jesus desired to embed the promises of prophecy concerning His death just as deeply in them as their disbelief had sunk. There is more than

continued on page 7

Christianity

The prevailing worldview of Greek philosophy during the time of the New Testament advocated a dualism which claimed that the material universe was evil and that only the spiritual realm was good. If the early Christians wanted to fabricate a belief system which might tickle the itching ears of either Jew or Gentile, they certainly would not have dreamt of God incarnate crucified, dead, buried, and risen in a real glorified body.

Our preaching and teaching about the resurrection defines us as faithful ministers of the gospel. During the season in which we celebrate a living Savior, let us preach with passion, conviction, and joy. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

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meets the eye in verse twenty-seven. R. Kent Hughes captures the essence of Jesus' lesson well: "He is the Savior prophesied on Mt. Moriah, the Atoning Lamb of the Passover, our Tabernacle and Temple (for He is our Sacrifice and our Priest), our Manna/ Bread of Heaven, the Suffering Servant who was 'numbered with the transgressors,' the Son who suffered separation from the Father for us when he bore our sins." This is the how Jesus caused their hearts to burn within them, by pointing out His death and resurrection in the Old Testament.

We do not have the advantage of personally seeing the risen Christ as did the first disciples. We must depend upon their testimony in the New Testament so we can believe in the risen Lord. Jesus believed that these messianic prophecies should not have surprised them. He modeled dependency on the Word of God at every turn in His teaching and preaching. He spent a great deal of time demonstrating how the Scripture foretold the most important and indispensable events ever to occur in history—the death and resurrection of the Messiah. Jesus effectively connected the Old and the New Testaments by reinterpreting the history of Israel through His own experience. For one example: We must understand the Passover if we are to make sense of the Lord's Supper and its message of death and resurrection. This news certainly surprised them, but it eventually thrilled them as well. If the central focus of the New Testament is found in the Old Testament, what else is there that we should be careful not to miss?

As Easter approaches, I hope you will read the resurrection account anew and allow the Holy Spirit to remind you of the transformational power the resurrection holds. Based on the authority of God's Word and through the power of the resurrection, you and I can be touched and changed in surprisingly new ways when we open our hearts to receive. First Corinthians 2:5 admonishes us by saying, "so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but the power of God." The faith of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not adequately account for the power of God. Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." I pray this will not be said of us. Let's pursue with passion the truths God has for us in His record of the resurrection of Jesus.

Upcoming Chapel Guests

March 8

Al Mohler, President
Southern Baptist Theological
Seminary
Louisville, KY

March 15

Mark Brister, President
Oklahoma Baptist University
Shawnee, OK

April 10

Mark Dever, Senior Pastor
Capitol Hill Baptist Church
Washington D.C.

April 19

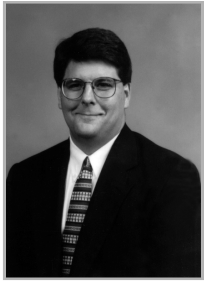
Rob Mullins, Minister to
College Students
Bellevue Baptist Church
Cordova, TN

April 26

Scott Patty, Pastor
Grace Community Church
Nashville, TN

You are cordially invited to attend.
Chapel services begin at 10:00 a.m.
For more information please call
Campus Ministries at 731-661-5062.

A Note from the Editor



It is a great honor to introduce you to this new ministry resource, the *Union University Bulletin*. It is a bi-monthly publication offered to you

at no charge by Union University. The *Bulletin* is designed to provide specific and practical ministry helps to church leaders like yourself. This inaugural issue is focused on Easter. There is perhaps no more important season in the life of the Church than Easter because of the triumphant sacrifice of Jesus and His overwhelming defeat of death and the grave. Given the significance of the season, we want to provide you with some ideas that you may want to prayerfully consider

incorporating into your local church's celebration. God has blessed Union with a tremendous faculty and they have graciously offered their insight and experience to you through this publication.

All Tennessee Baptist Convention pastors will receive a hard copy of each issue of this publication. Electronic copies in Adobe Acrobat format will be made available to all other church leaders at <http://www.uu.edu/unionbulletin/>. If you or other church leaders would like to receive an e-mail notification of each new issue, simply visit the website and fill out a short form that will ask for your name, church name, ministry position and the email address where the notification is to be sent. Please feel free to share this information with fellow ministers whom you feel could benefit.

The opportunity to serve as editor of the *Union University Bulletin* is a wonderful blessing in my life. My prayer is that this publication will be come a meaningful addition to your library of ministry resources. If you have suggestions or comments regarding the *Bulletin*, please do not hesitate to send them to me at the following address:

Dr. Charles A. Fowler
Vice President for Development/
Church Relations
1050 Union University Drive
Jackson, TN 38305

God is so gracious to allow you and me to serve as His instruments to build and equip His Church. I pray He uses the *Bulletin* to be a blessing to your ministry and church.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Fowler, Ph.D.



1050 UNION UNIVERSITY
JACKSON, TN 38305
