

inside

PROVIDENCE

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SHINING
God's
LIGHT
AT THE
UNITED
NATIONS

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Darkness can be frightening.

Something about the unseen and the unknown tends to stir our insecurities and heighten the level of our anxiety. Is it any wonder that many children are afraid of the dark and need regular reassurances that all is well?

Late one night while driving through a rural area of South Carolina, no stars or moon could be seen as the weight of the dark seemed to bury our car. Cathy and I could not help but wonder what would happen if we turned off the headlights. So we pulled over and stopped, turned out the lights and found ourselves in an eerie environment of total blackness. Sometimes after a brief delay, the human eye adjusts to the dark and sight returns, if only slightly. On this night, that did not happen—we literally could not see our hands in front of our faces!

With that experiment behind us, we gladly turned the lights back on and were on our way, but not without a profound appreciation for the relief we felt at being able to see and be seen. For all that, I find it fascinating that at certain times and in certain situations in our lives, we actually choose darkness. John's Gospel records an observation Jesus made about us when we make that choice.

“And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God” (John 3:19-21).

Only the darkness of sin makes the darkness of night seem appealing be preferable above light. By comparison, the fear of exposure is greater than the fear of what else may accompany us in the dark places. Evil loves to have a hiding place according to Jesus, but those who live by the truth are always coming to the light.

In the life of the church, this reality gets played out over and over again. When people are doing well spiritually, they love being with the people of God, love coming to worship the Lord and love to sit under the teaching of the truth of His Word. The light suits them. Openness fits the freedom of their friendship with God through the grace of Jesus Christ.

But when they fall down and away from the Lord through wrong choices and ungodly actions, the last place people want to be is around people walking in the light. Jesus intensified His description of this scenario by saying that people in this condition not only love the darkness but they actually hate the light. So, they avoid places where light threatens to expose their deeds, to reveal their heart condition.

Much of the abandonment of the church or lack of participation in church can be attributed more to the problem of spiritual darkness and a desire for secrecy than to the host of excuses that are usually offered for neglecting the assembly with other believers. The smoke screen of doctrinal problems frequently covers the real problem of infidelity to Christ at some point. The typical complaints about the conduct of the business of the church, the leadership approach of the church, or the ministry style of the church often serve as excuses to run for the cover of darkness and blame it on anything but our own desire to hide the truth about the failures of our own hearts.

If you have never felt this way when you were out of fellowship with the Lord, then bless you! But for all of us who have wanted to run away and hide when our souls were out of sorts, we can easily understand why people do what they do.

Yet understanding why does not address the matter, does it? How can we offer a safe place for fallen saints and sinners to come and be healed instead of feeling that they have to run and hide? Ultimately, nothing we can do will change the inclination of a heart intent on hiding in the darkness. We know that running to the darkness with our secret sins only deepens the darkness and makes it harder to escape. Christ invites weary and heavy-laden people to come to Him and He will give them rest.

One of the ways we can help desperate people who prefer darkness to light is to make the light so attractive that the hiding place loses its grip. Modeling an environment of grace demonstrates that the love of Christ breaks the bonds of sin and darkness. Forgiveness and freedom call out to those in the shadows and make it known that the beauty of the light is always to be preferred to the sightless drudgery of the darkness.

When you, or someone you know, starts looking for excuses to neglect the gathering of the body of Christ, recognize it as the symptom of a greater problem. The more we drift away into the shadows, the less likely we are to find the redeeming grace and healing love of the light of Christ.

So next time you find yourself looking for reasons to stay away from the Lord and His people, remember what Jesus said. If you are walking in the truth and light, you will want to keep coming back for more—more of His radiant glory to shine forth out of your life. You have been called out from the dominion of darkness to share in your inheritance in the kingdom of light. So keep coming!



SONG OF SOLOMON CONFERENCE

june 5-6
mark driscoll

God does not shy away from any topic in the Bible. And though many people wouldn't go directly to the Bible for advice on marriage, sex or dating, Song of Solomon offers eight chapters on those subjects. Using these poetic chapters as a guide, The Song of Solomon Bible Conference gives straightforward messages on those topics, and has impacted tens of thousands of lives doing so.

Providence Baptist Church will host the Song of Solomon Bible Conference June 5-6 with speaker Mark Driscoll. Driscoll is the pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Seattle and co-founder of Acts 29 Church Planting Network (www.acts29network.org). His church has been in the national media, including the *New York Times*, for their forthright series about sex and marriage.

He'll be bringing this frankness to the Song of Solomon Conference during the five sessions that cover the topics of attraction and dating, intimacy, conflict, romance and commitment. These conferences are not just for married couples, but for anyone who is seeking God's will to have the best love life possible. The conference message offers practical information about dating and marriage that is useful for anyone.

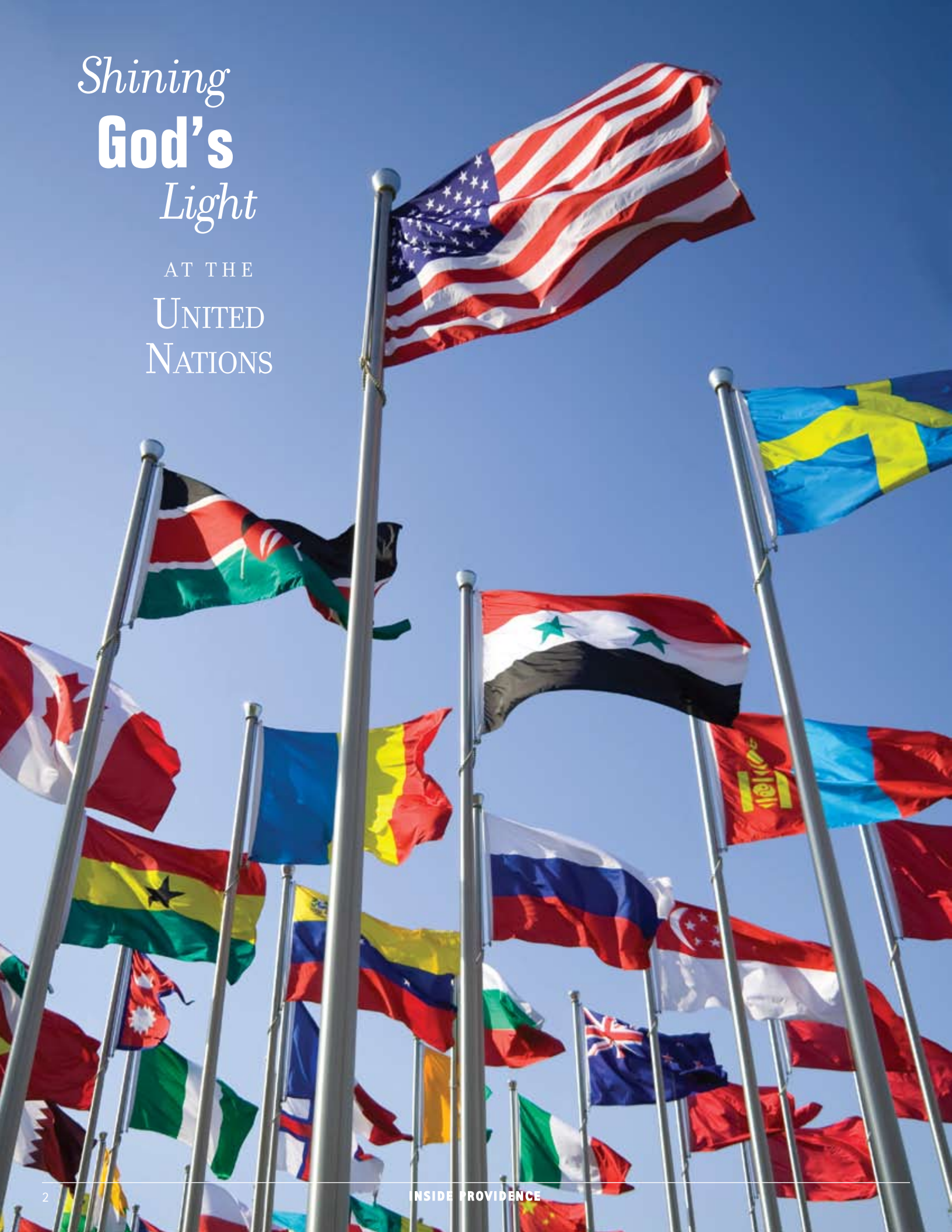
The Song of Solomon Bible Conference was founded by Doug Hudson with speaker Tommy Nelson in 1998. The ministry began as a four-week Bible Study at Doug Hudson's church and grew into a series and study guide that was distributed out of Hudson's home. It was also released in the book *The Book of Romance*. Since then, more than 200,000 people have attended the conferences and learned biblical principles for strengthening relationships.

Early registration is \$35 (\$30 for groups of 10 or more) or \$25 for college students and active military. Registration and information about the conference schedule is available online (www.songofsolomon.com).



Shining
God's
Light

AT THE
UNITED
NATIONS



The sparkling diamonds that are treasured by so many begin as the simple element carbon.

*Carbon is transformed into diamonds under conditions of immense pressure and high temperatures. From those conditions comes the most precious and revered gemstone in the world. Even the name diamond denotes its singularity. From the ancient Greek, *adamas*, it means “unbreakable.”*

Through unimaginable heartbreak and trials, God is able to make beauty that shines and casts light like a diamond. The King James Version of Isaiah 61:3 begins with “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them *beauty for ashes*, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (emphasis added).

When Desirae (Desi) Burton was not yet a teen, she began a journey full of pain that God would turn into beauty years later. At 12 years old Desi was raped and became pregnant and when she began to show at six months, her parents sent her to Miami for an abortion.

“Without any support, totally alone and terrified I was told that I would have no help in raising this baby,” Desi said. “I was rushed off to Miami, Florida where I was given a saline abortion.

“As a 13-year-old child I just wanted it to go away. My experience was horrifying, traumatic and life-altering.”

The trauma of that abortion was “instantly and deeply suppressed” and when Desi was 18 she became pregnant again and had another abortion.

“I was without support and being pressured to abort,” Desi said. “I was fearful of being a mother, and having no natural ability to bond with a baby I chose abortion again. The doctor told me that it was just a blob of tissue and not a baby!”

To this day, Desi can't fully comprehend what the sexual abuse and abortions have done to her.

“Childhood abuse and my two abortions resulted in broken relationships, bonding issues with my living child, guilt, self-loathing, depression, panic and anxiety attacks and suicidal thoughts, the consequences of this woman's right to choose,” Desi said.

Uncovering the Beauty Within

When a diamond is mined, the actual gemstone is encased in ore. The ore must be crushed and sorted before it is cut and its beauty is revealed. After her two abortions, Desi was left with a guilt that had the power to overshadow everything else, just as the ore covers the beauty of the diamond within.

But not only does God understand how she has been affected by these circumstances, He had great plans for Desi's life. Desi's friend, April Hymen, approached her with an opportunity to go to New York City and attend the United Nation's 53rd Commission on the Status of Women Conference (UNCSW).



Desi (left) went to the United Nations with her longtime friend April Hymen (right).

Desi began to pray and ask God to make it clear from His Word if she was supposed to go. The next day Desi was spending time with God in His Word before church and was given Psalm 2:8: “Ask of Me and I will give you the nations.”

During Pastor Horner's sermon later that morning, he spoke on Esther 4:14: “And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” Then her LIFE class began their new series, *That the World May Know* by Ray VanderLaan. The first session was on Jerusalem and explained that it was located on a hill so all the roads literally went through the city. God intended it that way so that all the nations of the earth would have to go through the city and His people would “make Him known to the nations.”

“Again the Scripture came up in Esther,” Desi said. “By this time God had made it very clear that I was going to the United Nations! A few years earlier God had made very clear to me that I was to speak about my abortions and how abortions hurt women and children.”

Desi wasn't even sure where to begin and said that she was “afraid and ashamed” of her past. But God had been preparing her for this trip for years. Since the heartbreak of her teens, Desi has gotten married, become a mother, has taught and spoken about childhood abuse and abortion and written *Victory in Christ After Childhood Abuse*. She is a member of the American Association of Christian Counseling and has received several certifications. With this training she has counseled hundreds of women in the midst of a crisis pregnancy.

shining God's light (cont'd.)

“While I am still responsible for the choices I have made, I know the God who sent His Son to pay the price for my sin,” Desi said. “His name is Jesus and through Him I have been forgiven, adopted and loved!

“Today I share my story even though it causes me to feel shame. He bore my shame on the cross and shed His blood for my sin. By His loving grace and mercy I have the responsibility and honor to give a voice to those whose voice cannot be heard and proclaim the truth to women in crisis pregnancies.”

With God's confirmation on her heart, Desi began preparing for her trip the UNCSW. While there she would be part of a lobby team for Endeavor Forum, Inc. She would walk the halls of the UN and talk to delegates and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). She would invite people to Endeavor Forum's workshops, hand out copies of her testimony and visit other workshops. Her main goal was to bring attention to the tragedy of abortion.

While doing their work, two of the ladies on the team talked to a guard and he let them in the General Assembly room.

“No one gets in that room unless you are a big-time delegate,” Desi said. “The guard took out all his keys and let them in. These team members sat in the heart of the UN and prayed over it and claimed it for Christ and for the nations.”

Later, two other team members, April Hymen and Milly Lace, felt led by the Lord to find and make contact with the US delegates. The Lord had laid the name Susan on Milly's heart. They went to another closed meeting and the same guard was at the door. They told him they were looking for Susan. He said no at first, but then let Milly go into the meeting. She leaned over to ask a woman if she knew where she could find Susan, and found that she was talking to Susan.

Susan wasn't happy Milly was in there and knew it was a closed meeting, but she told her she'd meet Milly outside. From this meeting she gained access to another meeting where they talked with people in President Obama's administration.

God's hand was at work inside and outside of these meetings. During their time in New York City, four people were saved, including a cab driver. After she returned from her trip, Desi received an e-mail from a young Irish man named Matt. He had been living in New York City for six months as a missionary with Youth With a Mission.

Matt's sister was in the States visiting him and they had gone to the UN to visit. As they walked around, Desi approached Matt and told him that the Lord had directed her to him. In his e-mail, Matt explained that he had just been thinking about how “irreligious” the UN was. After reading Desi's testimony, Matt gave it to his sister to read. He explained that this was the first thing about Christianity she had ever read. Matt was filled with excitement about this, because he had been feeling that God was pursuing his sister.

Their work, and the work of all pro-life proponents, is not finished. But through the work of the team at the UNCSW, abortion language was not included in the CSW's document.

Throughout the trip Desi was reminded of God's greatness.

“One of the most profound time was actually when we were at the hotel and our nights of worship and praise to our God!” Desi said.

“God has brought a much deeper and more profound healing to my life and given me a great sense of purpose. To reflect my glory; a reflected glory—God's glory!”

Though only a short trip to New York City, God used this trip in Desi's life to reveal the true beauty of His forgiveness. He has turned beauty into ashes and revealed His priceless glory—a glory in which even diamonds seem dull.



Easter Egg Outreach

Community Ministries held their annual Easter Egg Outreach for the children of Raleigh Gardens on April 4. The kids enjoyed games, food, an egg hunt and the story of Easter told through resurrection eggs. More information about ways to volunteer with Community Ministries or with Raleigh Gardens can be found online (www.pray.org/community).



Children

Catch the Reading Bug!

Summer Book Club
Four-years-old through fifth grade

Visit the church library (room 233) to catch the Reading Bug. The library is open on Sundays from 9-9:30 a.m., 10:30-11:15 a.m. and 7-7:30 p.m.



Reading Bug Favorites

By Paula Abbott

Spiders. Mosquitoes. Gnats. These are bugs most of us want to avoid, but the Reading Bug is an insect to be desired. As summer begins, these books should attract the Reading Bug to almost any child. Following each description is the location of that book series in the church library.

Bible stories—Whether a beginning reader or a parent is reading one of the four volumes, everyone loves *Read-Aloud Bible Stories* by Ella K. Lindvall. The words are simple, but the Bible truths are strong. (Nonfiction section)

Global studies—In the series *Children Around the World*, an American child can learn about the life of a child in another country and can see how the Gospel brings joy into the life of that child. (Nonfiction section)

Biographies—*Heroes of History for Young Readers*, a series by Renee Taft Meloche, uses rhyme and colorful pictures to convey the godly actions of many famous individuals. (Nonfiction section)

Questions for God—Jeannie St. John Taylor has created a true-to-life series that teaches a child about trusting God, praying to God and pleasing God. (Easy books)

Animal lessons—Whether the main character is a monkey, a cow or a spider, Todd Aaron Smith creates intriguing stories that reveal the character of God and His desire for our lives. (Easy books)

Animal lover—The older child who loves animals should try *Starlight Animal Rescue* series by Dandi Daley Mackall. This rescue center saves horses, dogs, cats and troubled children. (Juvenile fiction)

Fantasy—*The Wilderking Trilogy*, by Jonathan Rogers, creates a fantasy world in which Aidan, a shepherd boy, faces trials that parallel the struggles of young David in the Bible. (Juvenile fiction)

Graphic novel—Many young readers love the comic-book novels, and *Kingdoms: A Biblical Epic* presents the stories of Josiah, Jeremiah and others in this format. (Juvenile fiction)

American history—As older children reads the novels in the *American Adventures* series, they will learn much about the history of the United States. (Juvenile fiction)

Beginning readers—Valerie Tripp's *Hopscotch Hill School* books are interesting stories in vocabulary that early readers can handle.

Beginning May 3, pick up a reading log at the church library located in room 233. Keep a record of the books you read or a parent reads to you. On August 7, we'll have a pizza party in Prisms from 6-7:30 p.m. Prizes will be given to every child for the number of books read. Contact **Nancy Corson** (326-3000, ext. 232 or nancy@pray.org) for more information.

College

College Ministry Summer Events

Are you a college student in the Raleigh area for the summer? Our summer kickoff is May 19 in the Delta Lake Center. Join us at 6:30 p.m. for free food, H₂O, our LIFE class for college-age students, meets at 11 a.m. in the Delta Lake Center. Bible Study takes place on Tuesday nights beginning May 26 in room 611. We will be having food and fellowships throughout the summer. Check out our website (www.pray.org/college) for all the details.

Men

Men's Fishing Trip

July 26-29

Take a trip to the beautiful Shenandoah Valley for a fishing trip with the Men's Ministry. The three-day trip, July 26-29 is \$190 and includes riverside lodging and all meals. Information about a float trip and a tour of Luray Caverns is also available. Find registration on the calendar of events on the Men's Ministry page (www.pray.org/men). Contact **Rebecca Redmond** (326-3000 or rebecca@pray.org).

Happenings at Providence

Community



We will be passing out backpacks filled with school supplies, hosting a cookout and providing health exams to residents of Raleigh Gardens using the Baptist Men's Medical Bus. We would love for you to come and join us by "hosting an umbrella" on June 20 from 12-3 p.m. Providence families (children welcome) are invited to serve desserts to our neighbors under umbrellas or around blankets in the open field as a way of getting to know our neighbors. There will be games and an illusionist sharing the Gospel. In addition, we'll need a lot of school supplies as we plan to pass out 100 backpacks. Look for a list of suggested donations online or on the Community Ministries bulletin board.

Items will be collected in the church foyer or at the office entrance May 31 and June 7 and 14. To volunteer, register online (www.pray.org/community) or contact **Honey Beth Wiggs** for more information (326-3000 or honey@pray.org).

Marriage

Marriage Conference

September 27 and 28

Mark your calendars—because you won't want to miss our annual marriage conference—Sunday, September 27 and Monday, September 28. Dr. Gary Thomas, author of *Sacred Marriage*, and a number of other books, will be speaking. Gary Thomas is an engaging and passionate conference speaker and an award-winning author whose books on marriage, parenting and the Christian life have become worldwide bestsellers. He will speak on Sunday morning at all services, Sunday night for two sessions from 5-7:30 p.m. and Monday from 6:30-7:45 p.m. He will also speak at the Men's Leadership Focus Breakfast on Tuesday, September 30 from 6:30-7:30 a.m. Check out a variety of resources and video clips of Gary on his website (www.garythomas.com).

Senior Adults

Senior Celebration at The Cove

June 1-3



Surrounded by the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, The Cove offers an unparalleled environment for spiritual refreshment. This is a wonderful opportunity for adults 55+ to get away and be treated to great food, warm fellowship and inspiring music and teaching. Cost is \$350 and includes transportation, lodging (double occupancy) and six great meals at The Cove. A non-refundable \$50 deposit will hold your place. Reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis with deposit or full payment. Spaces are only reserved when a deposit or payment has been received. Register early; space is limited. Make checks payable to Providence Baptist Church and mail to the church address. Call **Nancy Corson** (326-3000) for more information.

Students

reThink Conference 2009

May 15

We will be hosting a second reThink Conference this year on May 15 in the Delta Lake Center from 8:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. This conference is for youth pastors, pastors, parents and youth leaders who desire a greater biblical understanding of how the family and the church work together in the context of youth ministry. Registration for Providence members is \$20 and is available at www.rethinkconference09.com.



IMPACT 2009
THE AMAZING RACE
JUNE 22-27 • CAMP R.M. COOPER

The Amazing Race is scheduled for June 22-27. Registration is still available online for the total camp cost of \$290. The required deposit at this time is \$115. Contact Stephanie Briggs (326-3000 or stephanie@pray.org).

Weekly Schedule

SUNDAY

8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m.

- LIFE Bible Studies
- Worship/Teaching – Worship Center

6 p.m.

- Celebration Service
(May 3)
- Mother's Day–No Evening Service
(May 10)
- Baptism/Benevolence/New Members
Worship Center (May 17)
- Memorial Day Weekend–No Evening
Service (May 24)
- No Evening Service (May 31)

MONDAY

6:45 p.m.

- Women's Precept – Room 611

7 p.m.

- College Big D-Groups
(May)

TUESDAY

6:30 a.m.

- Men's Leadership Breakfast –
Fellowship Hall
- Women's Leadership Focus Study –
Prisms

12 p.m.

- Spiritual Awakening – Room 401

WEDNESDAY

6:30 p.m.

- Choir and Orchestra Rehearsal –
Worship Center
- Awana
- MOPS (May 6 and 20)
- The Journey (May 27)

7 p.m.

- Refuge (May 13)
Middle School – Amphitheater
High School – Fellowship Hall
- Winning the Battle for Sexual
Integrity (Men's Group) –
Sixth Floor
- Boy's Brigade

7:30 p.m.

- The Gathering – Delta Lake Center
(1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays)

THURSDAY

9:30 a.m.

- Women's Precept – Room 659

Elders Update

The elders meet monthly to seek God's vision for Providence and plan for the future. In our efforts to keep you informed about the church's plans and progress, we strive to include a monthly report in each edition of *Inside Providence*.

Meeting Highlights

- The elders approved the Dave Ramsey Financial University as Sunday morning LIFE Class.
- They reviewed the current budget, debt and benevolence fund status.
- The 2009/2010 elder goals were finalized and approved. Owners of the goals will be assigned next month.

Pastoral Staff

David Horner Pastor/Teacher
 Blake Hickman Middle School Ministries
 Bob Stancil Pastoral Care
 Brian Frost Singles Ministries
 Chip Bugnar College Ministries
 Dave Owen Evangelism/College
 Eric Hamsho Music/Worship
 George Tissiere Missions
 Joel Leath Community Ministries
 Joel McDaniel Adult Ministries
 John Erwin Admin./Comm.
 Kevin Sweat Children's Ministry
 Leon Tucker Education Ministries
 Matt Morgan Elementary Children
 Mike Williams Outreach/Inreach
 Ricky Mill Shepherding Ministries
 Steve Wright Student Ministries

Elders

Bob Austin 341-0083
 Gordon Bolin 783-4716
 Dallas Brown 851-7141
 Earle Finley 844-3605
 Ed Gainor 848-0134
 Dick Harris 876-2284
 Tony McNeill 781-3609
 David Nelson 844-9160
 Richard Newton 790-9241
 Brian Schmidt 845-3439
 Mark Stowers 846-7156

Staff Anniversaries

Ken Brady 15 years
 Steve Wright 10 years
 Lynn Averette 9 years
 Bernice Brinkley 7 years
 Sheri Clawson 4 years
 Tiffany Dorrin 2 years
 Karen Reimer 1 year

Attendance Averages

March 2009

| Worship | | LIFE Bible Studies | |
|---------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| 8:00 | 489 | 8:00 | 185 |
| 9:30 | 930 | 9:30 | 1,401 |
| 11:00 | 922 | 11:00 | 927 |
| Total | 2,341 | Total | 2,513 |

New Arrivals

The Providence family celebrates with:

- **Andy and Laura Levandoski**, the birth of their daughter, Taylor Leigh, January 26
- **John and Kristen Sorrell**, the birth of their daughter, Hannah Elise, March 2
- **Jeff and Julie Schroeder**, the birth of their son, Aaron Matthew, March 3
- **Chad and Rachel Hensley**, the birth of their son, Kyle Joshua, March 4
- **Codey and Laura Hendren**, the birth of their daughter, Carly Ann, March 9
- **Lee and Shannon Dingle**, the birth of their son, Robert Stone, March 29

Sympathy

The Providence family offers its sympathy upon the deaths of:

- **Buck and Patricia Bunn's** son, Emory Lee Bunn
- **Kelly Corbet's** mother, Shirley Corbet
- **Daryl Emery's** father, Charles Emery
- **Mark Julian's** mother, Eleanor Ann Julian
- **Frank Perry's** brother, Robert Perry
- **Sue Ellen Thompson's** father, Tommie Williamson
- **Martha Thuston's** brother and James and Holly Kornegay's uncle, Gary Shoe

The New Providence Magazine

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

MAR JUN SEP DEC

This is the last issue of *Inside Providence* in its current format. Beginning in September 2009, Providence's magazine will come out four times a year, in March, June, September and December. The new quarterly magazine will give us the opportunity to publish more feature articles about what God is doing at Providence and in the lives of its members.

A monthly electronic newsletter will be available soon that will include all the announcements that were formerly in the monthly magazine.

The magazines will be available for pick up throughout the church or to download from the Providence website.



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Super Summer Adventure

Come jump on the train with us as we take the Boomerang Express around Australia and study God's Word! We will be looking at the life of Peter while enjoying games, snacks, music and more. Children ages four through fifth grade are welcome to join our adventure June 15-18 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. To volunteer or more information, contact **Tana Poole** (326-3000, ext. 289 or tana@pray.org). Online registration opens May 1.



June 15-18
9:30-11:30 a.m.