

Simply Divine

- **Most popular drink:** French vanilla cappuccino with whipped cream
- **Number of blood-drive participants:** 44
- **Number of kids in childcare:** 32
- **Typical audience age:** Lots of college Sunday school classes, but plenty of 30s and 40s, too
- **Not-so-momentous moment:** The opening-night concert by LaRue, which didn't receive as favorable a response as Kerr
- **Oh the weather outside was:** Raining buckets
- **Song verse most likely to keep running through participants' heads:** "I will run to the cleft of the mountain and wait for you. Will you come and meet with me?"



A theatrical performance by the Rev. Jacquie Weekley draws raves from the audience.



Divine Rhythm concludes with an emotional praise session as Kerr's band leads participants in "Awesome God."

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move over, **R**esurrection

by Annette Bender

DIVINE RHYTHM DELIVERS POWERFUL MUSIC & MESSAGE

GATLINBURG, Tenn.— Nearly doubling attendance in only its second year, Divine Rhythm ended on a powerful note with participants on their feet singing "Awesome God" and applauding the speaker, worship leader and Creator.

A reported 562 young adults came to Mills Auditorium Jan. 18-20 to see what the conference had to offer for the beyond-high-school set who have "outgrown" Resurrection. Resurrection is the conference's annual youth retreat, now attended by more than 10,000 youth and counselors in its 16th year. Last year's Divine Rhythm drew 309 participants.

Attending Divine Rhythm for the first time, Kelly Milligan, 18, gave the experience a thumbs-up.

"Resurrection is such an awesome, overpowering experience," said the Tennessee Wesleyan student and member of Concord UMC. "It's great to have something to follow that up with, to be able to worship with people our own age. The music is probably my favorite part."

Worship Leader Wayne Kerr and his band from Houston kept the audience laughing and lifting their voices in praise with music ranging from his own Adam Sandler-style "First Grade" to the tender "Meet with Me" by Breakaway Ministries.

With her message "Storms of Life," the Rev. Jacquie Weekley led participants through a three-day experience that included breaking into "tribes" for prayer and reflection and doing the hokey-pokey as a lesson to "put your whole self in" to seeking God.

"Don't tell God how big your storm is. Tell that storm how big your God is," Weekley repeated, offering up her own experiences as a young widow and a former convert to Judaism. A highlight was her theatrical presentation of God's creation of the world, drawing raves from participants throughout the weekend.

In addition to music, message and worship, participants sipped cappuccino, dozed on sofas and browsed the Internet during off-hours in the auditorium's entrance hall, next door to where Resurrection is held at Gatlinburg Convention Center. Other activities included a Medic blood drive, free childcare provided by the conference Children's Ministry Team, and a Bible study led by Weekley, pastor at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church in California.

The event concluded with communion and an emotional praise session, with Kerr's band leading "Awesome God" and participants literally jumping for joy. ■



In its closing ceremony, Divine Rhythm participants receive communion on Sunday morning.



Wayne Kerr, with his Houston-based band, leads the audience in worship.



Mikaela Cecere tops off a customer's cappuccino with whipped cream at an onsite coffee bar, provided by a local coffee shop.

Still Going Strong

RESURRECTION HITS HOME WITH YOUNG SPEAKER, VETERAN BAND

GATLINBURG, Tenn. — A radical speaker and a conventional band: Somehow, they complimented each other at the conference's 16th annual youth retreat Jan. 11-13 and Jan. 18-20 at Gatlinburg Convention Center.

More than 10,000 youth and counselors attended Resurrection 2002 for the usual upbeat activities. James Ward from Chattanooga performed the contemporary Christian music that has made him a long-time favorite house band. Youth clamored for Resurrection T-shirts until all 2,500 were sold out. Young people ranging from ages 11 to 18 reveled in the sights and sounds of a mountain tourist town.

But frivolity took a back seat when speaker Shane Claiborne took the stage, wearing homemade clothes and delivering an anti-materialistic message that youth and counselors couldn't easily shake off.

A Maryville, Tenn., native who attended Resurrection himself as a young person, Claiborne, 26, now serves the homeless through an inner-city community in Philadelphia. Citing statistics of wealth and poverty involving companies such as Nestle and Gap, his message was that Christians need to know the poor before they can help the poor.

"Jesus doesn't say, 'When I was hungry, you gave a donation to Habitat for Humanity,'" Claiborne told his listeners. "He doesn't say, 'When I was naked, you gave some clothes to the Salvation Army.' The tragedy in our church is that rich people never meet the poor."

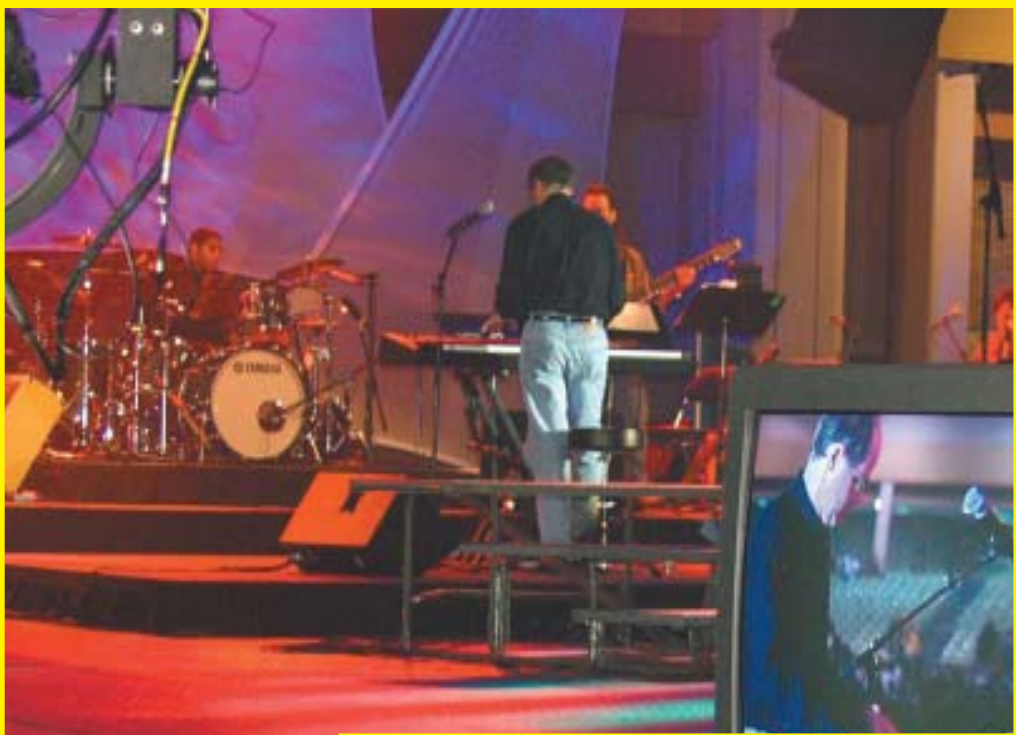
While some participants commented that Claiborne's message made them feel guilty, seventh grader Matt Farr said that he was impressed to "try not to be so greedy."

"He made us more aware of what's going on," said the Jones Memorial UMC youth from Chattanooga. "He's also close to our own age, so he knows where we're coming from."

Another dramatic moment occurred when Bishop Ray Chamberlain opened the second weekend of Resurrection. Holding a curved cross, he told of the recent cross-burning on Newport Mayor Roland Dykes' lawn. Dykes is a member of Woodlawn UMC and the father of Holston Conference graphic artist Dion Dykes Sr.

"This cross represents Christ's embracing love," Chamberlain said, "and that love is for us all. It is a cross of love, not a cross of hate."

Each weekend drew more than 5,000 participants, concluding with Sunday morning communion. ■



The James Ward Band returns to the Resurrection stage as the weekend house band.

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The crowd gets fired up by the 60-member Bethlehem Center Mass Choir from Chattanooga.



Shane Claiborne, a Holston native currently serving Philadelphia's homeless, delivers a message unlike that of previous Resurrection speakers.



Holston youth express their loyalty to long-time favorite performer James Ward and his band from Chattanooga.



Organizers register more than 5,000 youth and counselors during each of Resurrection's two weekends.

Res-onating Success

- **Crowd pleaser:** The 60-member Bethlehem Center Mass Choir, whose energy sent youth bouncing into the aisles and up to the stage.
- **Left behind:** Lots of mittens and gloves. The lost and found box was loaded with 'em.
- **Seniors do it in style:** When the call went out for volunteers, 28 retirees from Gray, Tenn., helped prepare some 5,000 badges for the retreat's second weekend.
- **Biggest gripe:** Adults weren't happy when conference staff enforced the one-adult-per-seven-youth ratio this year. The idea is, there are a limited number of seats, and youth are the target audience.