

## Announcements

● On page 7 of the March 26 issue, a headline in the "Calendar" section reported an incorrect date for the upcoming Children's Issue Forum. The forum will be held at St. Paul UMC in Wytheville, Va., on Sunday, April 25, from 2 to 5 p.m. *The Call* regrets the error.

● Annual Conference participants who have audiovisual needs must contact the conference communications office by April 30. If you need help with hymn selections, video, audio, or PowerPoint presentations, contact Donna Hankins, interactive media specialist, at (865) 690-4080 or [dhankins@holston.org](mailto:dhankins@holston.org). Annual Conference 2004 will be held June 13-16 in Lake Junaluska, N.C. ■

## The Call

[www.holston.org](http://www.holston.org)

Serving 925 churches in east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and north Georgia

USPS 020-295

Published Biweekly by

Holston Conference

of the United Methodist Church

9915 Kingston Pike, Suite C, Knoxville, TN 37922  
Telephone (865) 690-4080 Fax (865) 690-3162

Periodical Postage Paid At  
Knoxville, Tennessee

Postmaster: Send address changes to:  
*The Call*, P.O. Box 32939  
Knoxville, TN 37930-2939

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*The Call* uses the following symbols to identify articles about small, medium or large churches:

**S** = Churches with average 85 or fewer in principle weekly worship service(s)

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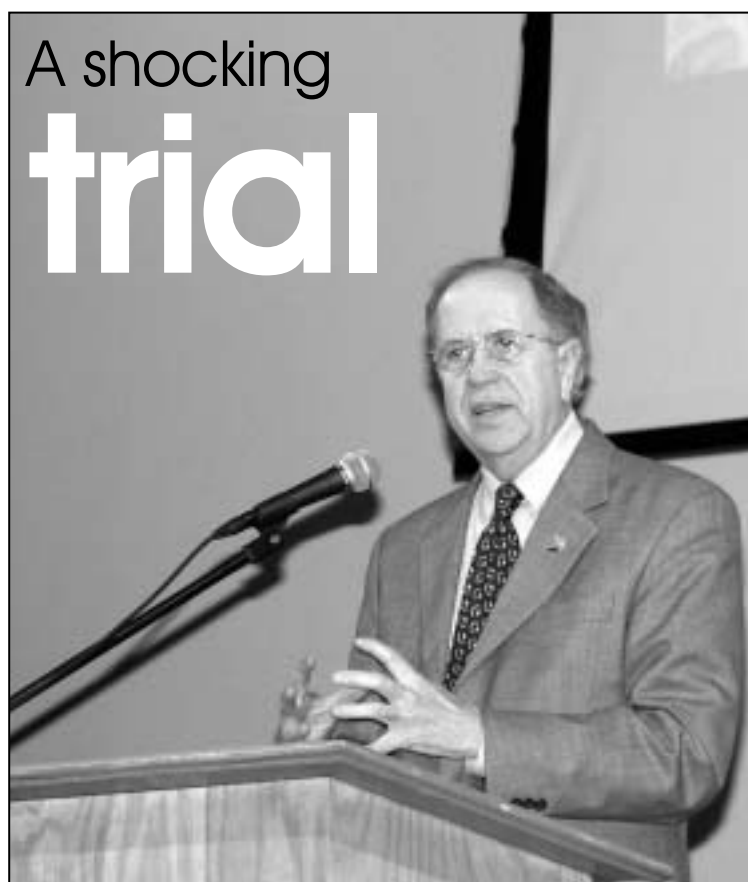
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## Bishop's Perspective

By Ray W. Chamberlain Jr.



Bishop Ray Chamberlain speaks at March Forth for Children.

**Y**es, there is a big trial that scares the wits out of me. It is a-coming! The consequences will be dire.

This trial is scheduled (according to Matthew 25:31) "when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him." It will be Judgment Day. No church trial on the face of the earth compares with it. All the posturing won't matter then. This will be a Jesus event. False piety and the mere religion of words will be revealed for the sham they are.

What is shocking and telling about this upcoming trial is that Jesus indicts the "righteous" (Matthew 25:37). But this should not really surprise us. During his earthly ministry, Jesus saved his harshest words for the religious folk who kept the law – people who determined to kill Jesus for breaking the Sabbath law to heal a lame man. Jesus told them that though they conscientiously attended to all the religious rites – and though they appeared holy and clean on the outside – they were full of crud on the inside. They were spiritually bankrupt.

On that great Trial Day, Jesus has a litmus test. He asks:

**"Did you feed the hungry?"** (And this means more than opening soup kitchens. Did we provide a decent wage for the migrant worker? Did we ignore those who were out of sight and pretend they didn't exist?)

**"Did you welcome the stranger?"** (How many refugees can we allow to wallow in misery all over the world, including right here in Holston?)

**"Did you clothe the naked?"** (Did we do anything about the outrage of 24,000 children who die every day in our world of

preventable diseases? Did we help the millions without health insurance and proper care in this country?)

Will our answers be any better than the response recorded in Matthew: "When did we see these things?" Perhaps our excuse is that we were too busy fussing over sanctuary carpet colors, or fighting over church laws, or preoccupying ourselves with matters of structure and polity. Yes, there is a need for church buildings, structure and policies. But God forbid that on Judgment Day we plead for mercy because we were so obsessed with secondary issues, we didn't have time for the things that mattered most to Jesus.

There'll be a lot of church trials that will concern me, but the one that haunts me, drives me to my knees, and motivates me is the trial Jesus will conduct. When he looks at how we spent our resources and time and the things we argued about, I fear I know what his verdict will be.

God help us all!

### Helping refugees

Many churches in our conference (including First Broad Street and Colonial Heights in Kingsport District, Cherokee and Piney Flats in Johnson City District, and Asbury in Morristown District) have recently sponsored refugees.

Bridge Refugee and Sponsorship Services Inc. is seeking congregations to help sponsor refugees from Liberia. Call the Bridge office to learn how you can "help one of the least of these" and in so doing respond to the plea of Jesus the Christ. Contact: Bridge, 707 Florida Avenue, Bristol, TN 37620, phone (423) 652-1588. ■

## Reading List

We asked these participants in the Ministers' Spouses Retreat, "What book is lying on your nightstand?"

### ● Carol Green

Spouse to: Jim Green  
Maryville, Tenn.

***Making a Just Peace: Human Rights & Domination Systems***, by C. Dale White

### ● Joy Rainwater

Spouse to: Mickey Rainwater  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

***And the Shofar Blew***, by Francine Rivers

### ● Barbara Wansley

Spouse to: Malcolm Wansley  
Bristol, Va.

***Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymn Stories***, by Robert J. Morgan ■



## Exchange

ABINGDON DISTRICT, Va. – The Cooperative Children's Ministry of Byars-Cobbs, Emory, Lebanon, Mead-owview, Smyth Chapel, and Yellow Springs UMC is seeking a part-time director for Sunday evening programming and special events for children two years old through fifth grade. During fall 2004, the director will work cooperatively with a program coordinator. In Spring 2005, the director's position may expand to include the tasks of the program coordinator. Call Tara Wiseman at (276) 944-6842 or email her at [twiseman@ehc.edu](mailto:twiseman@ehc.edu) for job description information and an application. Deadline: April 15, 2004. ■

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. –First Knoxville UMC has a large assortment of used folding chairs free to any United Methodist church in the area. Call Helen Eitt at (865) 525-0435 if your church has a need for 100 or more chairs. Must be able to pick up at the church: 3316 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919. ■