

Henry Blackaby challenges Union students

Jenny Eastman
Union University News Office

JACKSON — The exhortation was loud and clear: do not harden your hearts.

Henry Blackaby, president of Blackaby Ministries International, encouraged Union University students to make sure their hearts were ready to see, hear, and obey God.

Blackaby, co-author of *Experiencing God*, was speaking during a chapel service on Union's campus Oct. 8.

"I have one life to live and I will face eternity," Blackaby said in his opening remarks.

"God has created me for eternity."

Blackaby's message from Matthew 13:10-17 emphasized the importance of living one's life for the Lord because time is limited and recognizing the awesome privilege of hearing and seeing from the Lord.

"God is in the process of shaping you," Blackaby said. "You may not recognize the Potter's hands,

but any child of God is being shaped."

Blackaby directed his sermon directly to Union students.

"Do not harden your hearts while you're college students,"



BLACKABY

Blackaby said. "The major decisions you face during college will affect the rest of your life."

Blackaby mentioned text from Matthew 20 and his thoughts on the role this generation may play in ushering in the kingdom of God.

"This generation may be the eleventh hour laborers," Blackaby said. "We may be the last generation God sends. There will be an eleventh hour."

A sense of urgency was in Blackaby's voice as he told students to stop and listen to the Lord and see what the Lord was at work doing. He encouraged students to let God be at work in their lives, to throw away their own agendas and to listen to the voice of the Lord.

"God has an agenda," Blackaby said in his closing re-

marks, "and He has put you in the middle of it." □

Giving beyond local church lower than 1968: study

Associated Baptist Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Church members are giving less of their income to churches today than 35 years ago, and even less of those contributions are put to work outside the local congregation, according to a new study.

Giving as a percentage of per capita after-tax income dropped 16 percent — from 3.11 percent to 2.62 percent — among Protestant church members between 1968 and 2002, said empty tomb inc., an Illinois organization that studies congregational giving patterns.

But church-based giving to ministries beyond the local congregation dropped even more — 41 percent — from 0.66 percent to 0.38 percent during the same period.

The study, "The State of Church Giving Through 2002," looked at contribution data from about a third of the 350,000 congregations in the United States, the organization said. The study's authors said recent reports of increased

charitable giving through churches are misleading because they don't account for increases in population, inflation, and per capita income. □

Welch concludes evangelism tour

Baptist Press

WAIKOLOA, Hawaii — In reaching Hawaii, Bobby Welch successfully visited Southern Baptists in all 50 states and Canada in just 25 days of travel.

Hawaiian Baptists from all around the island of Kona welcomed Welch and celebrated his arrival Oct. 7 by placing a purple and white lei around his neck in the traditional Hawaiian manner.

Waikoloa Baptist Church was the last stop on the last day of the unprecedented "Everyone Can Kingdom Challenge for Evangelism" tour to encourage Southern Baptists to "Witness, Win and Baptize ... ONE MILLION!" in one year.

Welch stood before his Hawaiian audience and brought the same message he has now delivered literally all over North America.

"Instead of going off in all different directions," Welch exhorted, "let's all pull together as one and make a real impact on this country." □

Tennessee Baptist Convention 2004 - 2005 Cooperative Program Budget

Area	2003 - 2004 Approved	Executive Board Recomm.	Dollar Adjustment	% Adjust.	% of Total
Southern Baptist Convention					
International Mission Board	6,666,535	6,666,535			
North American Mission Board	3,038,606	3,038,606			
Seminaries	2,885,276	2,885,276			
Ethics & Rel. Liberty Comm.	198,663	198,663			
Annuity Board	101,331	101,331			
SBC Operating	442,658	442,658			
Sub-total	13,333,069	13,333,069	0	0.0%	37.5%