

# MID-SOUTH GREAT BANQUET NEWS

## LOOKING BACK AT GB #4

It is often during the toughest times that we question whether God's love for us is real, whether we have been mistaken in our discernment of his will, or whether we are being punished for some wrong of the past. In such times I have often thought of the psalmist's words, from Psalm 143:

The enemy has pursued me,  
crushing my life to the ground,  
making me sit in darkness like those  
long dead.

Therefore my spirit faints within me; my  
heart within me is appalled.

I remember the days of old;  
I meditate on all Your works;  
I muse on the work of Your hands.

I spread out my hands to You;  
My soul *longs* for You like a thirsty  
land.

I have needed these words often during the three years my family has been away in New Jersey, as I pursued a call to ordained ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. There were many times during those three years where I struggled and felt like I was walking in the darkness, uncertain of where I was going. God would remind me, in those days, of all the grace he has poured out upon my life and the lives of my family members. One of the graced memories I returned to again and again was/is my Great Banquet and the way God changed my heart that weekend.

It was 1995 and I had 3 little kids and a full-time job- no time to attend a weekend "retreat". But my friend from Minnesota had told me about her own amazing experience at a Cursillo weekend and I was curious. Jona-

than and I were faithful church-goers. We loved Jesus and experienced our forgiveness as a tremendous gift. But as I attended the worship services, listened to talks, and shared with my sisters-in-Christ, I found that God wanted so much more for my life. He wanted me to have more knowledge of him, more joy in his love, and more obedience as I followed his call in my life.

While at the Banquet, I experienced a powerful time of prayer, where I felt God telling me that I would (not should, like it was an option) be leaving my career as a psychologist to do something in full-time ministry. I didn't know what that meant, but I told my husband and my pastor, Chris Scruggs. It took a number of years, but I believe as I sit here in my office at Advent Church in Cordova, that this exactly where I am supposed to be. The Great Banquet does not result in everyone being called to ordained ministry. But it is a place where God meets us, in the quiet places of our hearts, and in the noisy fun of Christian community.

God used the Great Banquet to teach me many things. I can't list them all, but I can say I am a different person because of it. And I continue to benefit as I practice the disciplines I learned at the banquet.

If you have been away for awhile, remember the days of old, think about the works of grace God has brought you. Perhaps it is time to serve at a banquet or bring a friend. No one thing is the only way God works, but the Great Banquet is an awesome way to be encouraged, to be challenged again, and to share God's love with a new friend. Decolores.

Cindy Schwartz, Advent Cordova

## TIME FOR A CHANGE

As anyone who has served on Agape can tell you, there are many tasks that are performed behind the scenes and away from the limelight and celebrations of the weekend. Although these are largely thankless, they are necessary and Agape suffers them without complaint. But now, you have an opportunity to lighten their load somewhat!

Since virtually the beginning of the Banquet weekends in this area, we have stored supplies, decorations and other necessities in a separate storage facility located away from the sites of the weekends. This has required Agape to make advance trips to the facility to inventory supplies before the weekend, another trip right before the weekend to load supplies in a rented truck to transport everything to the site where everything is unloaded for the weekends and the rental truck returned. After the weekends, the truck has to be rented again, everything has to be reloaded on the truck and then (after the party is over and everyone else is back at their homes basking in the glow of the weekend) Agape and a few volunteers have to spend another few man-hours transporting everything back to the storage facility where the truck has to be unloaded, everything carefully stored and the truck returned to the rental agency.

Now, though, the Board of Directors has decided to address this situation by buying our very own cargo trailer! Everything we need will be stored in the trailer which will be parked in a free location year round. This will reduce Agape's chore to simply hooking up to the trailer, hauling it to whichever site we're using for that weekend where the trailer will remain until the end of both weekends. Agape can have the trailer already loaded by the time the weekend is over when the trailer can simply be returned to its parking spot and everyone can go home! Agape will have a more convenient place to visit to inventory, organize and add to supplies before the weekends, and last but not least, the Banquet will be spared the monthly expense of the storage facility and the rental of the truck!

Of course, trailers aren't free and that is where you come in. In another article in this very newsletter, you can find out how you can help make all this happen.

Visit our NEW webs site at [www.midsouthgb.com](http://www.midsouthgb.com)

Contact your Board of Directors at  
[BoardofDirectors@midsouthgb.com](mailto:BoardofDirectors@midsouthgb.com)

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The Board of Directors extends a special thanks to:

Our Editor Karen Wilson, Our Printers Tim & Jeannine Beyer and Time Card Sales

## TRAILERS AREN'T FREE

In the article "Time for a Change" you read why we need a trailer and how it will save monthly storage expenses in the long run. We're asking for your generosity in raising **\$5,000** to cover the expense of purchasing this storage trailer. We hope to be able to purchase the trailer soon enough to be used by the upcoming GB weekends. If each family unit donated \$50 or more the money would be raised in a flash. Consider not eating out for one night and donate that amount to the "gift that keeps on giving". (No, it's not the jelly of the month club). But, it will save time, expense and potential back injuries. You know what I'm talking about. So, let's all help hitch the trailer to the truck campaign.

Enclosed is an addressed envelope that may be used for a tax deductible donation. (As always consult your tax advisor regarding taxable donations).

We Want Your Donation (W W Y D)! Thanks in advance for your continued faithfulness to the mission. **You may also visit our website [www.midsouthgb.com](http://www.midsouthgb.com), go to the bottom of the page and click 'donate.'**



**Visit our web site at [www.midsouthgb.com](http://www.midsouthgb.com)**

The **Prayer Chart** tab will allow you to sign up for the 72 hour prayer vigil for the men and the women's weekend. Look for Mid-South Great Banquet Men's #52 and Women's #53.

The **Forms** tab will allow you to print a form or register a guest online.

It will also allow you to print a form or fill out a sponsor form online.

The **Donate** tab at the bottom of the page will allow you to pay weekend fees or make donations. **NEW:** We now accept PayPal as well as all major credit cards.

## WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

Remember the 2 questions at the end of the weekend?

What has the Great Banquet meant to you?

What are you going to do about it?

*Billy Wilson, Mid-South Great Banquet #50*

After my weekend I felt called to serve but I really didn't know where or what I would be doing. I started exploring options and seeking guidance about where I might be used. I learned there was a need for a youth music minister at St. Paul United Methodist Church. I applied and through the grace of God I got the gig! I meet weekly with 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth. We do contemporary praise and worship and spend time in the word. It's awesome! It is only the grace of God that a piece of crap like me could be used for good.

*Chris Cave, Mid-South Great Banquet #50*

Over the weekend my eyes were opened to problems with people that were standing between me and my relationship with Christ. These problems hindered me from being the Spiritual leader of my family and the man God wanted me to be. Christ took that away! After returning home I invited my family and my Church to witness my public commitment to follow Christ through Baptism. My journey continues.....

## AGAPE MAN

Have you ever wondered who brings all the Great Banquet and Awakening supplies to the weekends? Or how they seem to magically appear and disappear during the GB weekends? Wonder no longer my friends. It's "Agape Man"!

No he's not "Big Foot" but he is a "gentle giant of a man" and has taken this task as one of his many personal missions since he attended GB #13. Those of us that have helped on occasion know it's not magic. It's just plain hard manual labor and has been done by our very own Mark Gray (with his ever constant companion Dan Cave). Think about this please. We're now about to hold Men's GB #52 and Women's #53. How many of us would give of ourselves for this long with little or no recognition? He is Christ's hands and feet in action. He has provided the trucks, and obtained storage at half price for many years saving our GB funds hundreds of dollars.

As our GB community grows it has become time to purchase a dedicated trailer to store and transport our supplies to the GB Mission fields. And so comes the end of the need to have Mark supply us a truck and storage shed. It's well past time to recognize Mark and Dan for all their dedication and back breaking work for all these many years.

Please take time to thank them both for being the quiet, behind the scenes, servants of God.

Community members--The men's & women's kitchen teams have a great way for you to participate in the upcoming weekends. Here is our tried and true recipe:

### RECIPE FOR A HAPPY BANQUET KITCHEN

- Heaping piles of yummy snack agape (homemade, store bought, sweet or salty)
- Bottles of drinks for the thirsty (especially diet drinks and bottled water)
- Generous amounts of time (1-2 kitchen helpers daily to wash dishes, serve and help)
- Dash of helping hands (first day set up and final day clean/pack up)
- Pinch of sweetness (to seat guests and serve meals during Saturday dinner)

Choose any of the ingredients above and mix well—the sweet flavors complement each other! Simmer with Faithfulness and Generosity. Garnish with Radiant Joy. Serve with LOVE!

#### **To volunteer your time:**

- For the men's weekend call Peyton Burnett at 901-238-5771
- For the women's weekend call Sandi Sartin at 901-737-9268 or email **sandi\_sartin@yahoo.com**

#### **Agape drink and snack donations**

- For the men's weekend: Donations can be dropped at Faith Presbyterian Church, 3427 Appling Rd, the week of September 20<sup>th</sup> labeled for Great Banquet.
- For the women's weekend: Donations can be dropped at Advent Presbyterian Church, 1879 North Germantown Parkway, the week of October 4<sup>th</sup> labeled for Great Banquet.

### REFLECTION FROM ROY

We often hear someone say that they have "given something to God." We probably have said it ourselves on many occasions. How often have you then taken it back? So why did your giving it to God not work? I think it may be because you gave it to him with your palms up and He didn't take it from you. In Psalm 37:5 there is a phrase that says "Commit your way." A missionary to India was having difficulty in translating this verb into the dialect of the people with which he was working. The Hebrew verb literally means to let it roll off. The missionary translated this verb to turn your life over to God "PALMS DOWN." The next time you give something to God do it with palms down and then let it roll off into God's hands. This commitment is more than an emotional response done during the 16<sup>th</sup> verse of Just As I Am. This is something that should be volitional and vocational. It comes out of your will and is determined as your way of life.

Roy Whaley  
Community Spiritual Director

## AWAKENING NEWS:

Thank you to all those who participated in the last Awakening Gathering at Faith Cumberland. It was a great time to reconnect with people and a wonderful time of worship. We want to stay connected with everyone throughout the year so watch for more information regarding Gatherings in the future.

The next Awakening will be once again held on Martin Luther King weekend January 16-18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Pinecrest Campground in LaGrange, TN. Lay Directors have been picked and we are very proud to announce that Jim Williams will be leading the guy's team and Lindsey James will be leading the girl's team. Team formation is in full swing at this time with team meetings scheduled to start November 5<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for these leaders and their team members in the next few months as they go through this process. Also, continue to pray for our young people (and teachers) who have just started school again that they have a safe, fun and productive year.

Don't forget about the "The Awakening" Facebook page. Look us up and friend us so you can stay connected and get all the up to date information on what's going on in the Awakening community.

Any information on anything or anything I can help with regarding the Awakening please contact me.

Serving Him,  
Shawn Weiser  
Liaison to the Awakening  
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901-377-5831 (Home)  
901-387-9738 (Cell)



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### TEAM DEDICATION / GATHERING

**When : September 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM**

**Where : First Presbyterian Church Covington**

403 South Main Street, Covington, TN. 38019

**What to Bring : Your favorite Potluck Dish and a drink.**

We will worship together, share communion together and dedicate Mid-South Great Banquet Teams #52 & #53.

You don't want to miss this Dedication Celebration

***Child Care Available***

# GREAT BANQUET & AWAKENING CALENDAR

September 19<sup>th</sup> 5:00 PM First Presbyterian Church Covington  
Team Dedication / Gathering 403 S. Main St., Covington, TN 38019

## MEN'S MID-SOUTH GREAT BANQUET #52

Lay Director: John Tate

Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> Send Off 7:00 PM Pinecrest  
Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> Serenade 7:05 PM (Arrive at 6:15 PM Chapel on Campgrounds)  
Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> Candlelight 7:30 PM Chapel on Campgrounds  
Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> Closing 3:30 PM Pinecrest

## WOMEN'S MID-SOUTH GREAT BANQUET #53

Lay Director: Trilby Williams

Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> Send Off 7:00 PM Pinecrest  
Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> Serenade 7:05 PM (Arrive at 6:15 PM Chapel on Campgrounds)  
Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> Candlelight 7:30 PM Chapel on Campgrounds  
Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> Closing 3:30 PM Pinecrest

## 4<sup>th</sup> Day Meeting for MSGB #52 and #53

Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> 5:00 PM Grace Presbyterian, 6671 Yale Rd., Bartlett, TN 38134  
(Saturday) — Child Care Available

November 7<sup>th</sup> 5:00 PM Munford Presbyterian Church  
Gathering 25 N. Tipton St., Munford, TN 38058

## AWAKENING "2010"

**Lay Directors: Awakening #21 Jim Williams; Awakening #22 Lindsey James**  
Pinecrest — Highway 57, LaGrange, TN 38046

Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> Send-off Saturday 8:30 AM  
Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> Candlelight Sunday 7:30 PM  
Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> Closing Monday 3:30 PM

Weekend meal and talk times will be posted on web site [www.midsouthgb.com](http://www.midsouthgb.com)

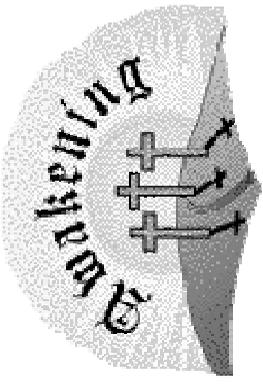
## MEN'S #54 —

Lay Director: Ken Carlton — April 22 - 25, 2010 — Rose of Sharon Campground

## WOMEN'S #55 —

Lay Director: Margie Gray — April 29 - May 2, 2010 — Rose of Sharon Campground

# MID-SOUTH GREAT BANQUET NEWS



Mid-South Great Banquet  
P. O. Box 343357  
Bartlett, TN, 38184

*DeColones!*