

# Men essential to church renewal

By CATHY FARMER

**N**ot a foot shuffled, not a throat was cleared as Dan Schaffer of Wesleyan Building Brothers told near 500 men that they were absolutely essential, foundational, to the renewal of the Church. The sanctuary at Archer's Chapel United Methodist Church in Frog Jump, Tenn. became silent with the silence of held-breath expectancy. "I believe every man in this room has a deep fear that they will come to the end of their life and it will have counted for nothing," Schaffer said quietly. "Most of you," he continued, "most of *us* are on the verge of the last quarter of our life. But the white hair I see in this room encourages me," he said surprisingly, running counter to the usual dirge sung by those who see the aging of the average United Methodist as the death knell of the church. "This can be the most significant quarter of your life. You can leave a spiritual legacy that will last for eternity." Schaffer is convinced that our culture tells men over 60 that what they have and are is outdated, not valuable. But if those men reach spiritual maturity focused on Christ, he believes they have a gift to give the Church that the Church is desperate for. "There's a whole younger generation of men crying to be approved of as valuable," he said. "Most of them have never had the approval of their fathers." Then he issued the challenge: "Will you commit to become life-givers? Will you give life to all you come in contact with? Will you encourage those around you and release them to be all they can be? "The men in this room are the hope for the United Methodist Church in this conference." After Schaffer issued the challenge, the Rev. Mark Irvin stepped forward to invite the men to register for the Wesleyan Building Brothers Male Leadership Experience, August 15-17, at Lakeshore Assembly. Led by Schaffer, the event will help those who attend to become spiritually mature Christians who are able to reproduce their faith and become spiritual fathers and mentors to others.

For information or to register, call the Rev. Irvin at 731-664-8480 or e-mail him at [mwirvin@bellsouth.net](mailto:mwirvin@bellsouth.net). •

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