

# BULLETIN

## SEMINARY EXTENSION

### DEPARTMENT

P. O. Box 1154

Jackson, Mississippi

Volume X

November, 1961

Number 11



Pictured (left to right) Miss Miriam Robinson, Rev. Harve Kincaid, Rev. Frank Koger, Dr. E. L. Spivey, Dr. W. R. Grigg, & Rev. James Lambert.

## It Happened In Western North Carolina

### How It Came About

Ten months after a group of dedicated men met at the First Baptist Church in Murphy, North Carolina, a vision became a reality. Realizing a need peculiar to this region of the state, the writer met with a group of pastors and associational missionaries to discuss the possibility of an all-out effort of Seminary Extension. It was concluded that unless a program of Christian adult education could be provided on a long-term basis, Baptists were in danger of declining rapidly. Region 10 had become an area of intense propagation for the Roman Catholic faith.

On February 29, 1961, a meeting was held in connection with the Regional Pastors' Conference at Bryson City, North Carolina, with Dr. Douglas M. Branch, Executive Secretary of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; Dr. E. L. Spivey, Director of the Division of Missions of North Carolina; Dr. Wendell Belew, Secretary of the Department of Associational Missions of the Home Mission Board; the writer (Frank Koger), Associate in the Seminary Extension Department of the Southern Baptist Seminaries, and pastors and associational missionaries representing Region 10. An

all-out effort of Seminary Extension seemed to be the answer.

Plans were made for this endeavor to be studied. An advisory committee was appointed, with the Rev. J. D. Griffin of Cherokee, North Carolina, as chairman.

A second meeting was held in the Baptist Building, Raleigh, North Carolina, on March 29, 1960. Present at this meeting were Dr. Lee Gallman, then Director of the Seminary Extension Department, Dr. Stewart Newman, Chairman of the Seminary Extension Commission; Dr. Sydnor Stealey, President of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina; Dr. Wendell Belew; Dr. E. L. Spivey; Rev. Alton Morris, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Murphy, North Carolina; and the writer.

On July 15, 1960, Rev. Alton Morris, called by the three agencies involved to lead out in this work, resigned as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Murphy, and became Teacher-Director of Seminary Extension work in Region 10 — Western North Carolina.

### What Are the Results?

This work is now under the direct supervision of the Mission Department of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. During the Fall of 1960 twelve centers were opened. There were 388 persons enrolled in these centers. One hundred fifty-five of the 388 were ministers.

### What Are the Agencies Now Saying?

Dr. Douglas Branch says, "The Seminary Extension program has (Continued on Page 3)

## A PLACE TO HIDE

Ralph A. Herring

The talk is again, and more alarmingly, of bomb shelters—hiding places from the fury of an atomic blast and its deadly fallout. According to a recent Gallup Poll, fear of World War Three has reached its high point in ten years. Over the globe there hangs a pall of uneasiness. Living in a world of terrifying physical violence, man desperately needs a place to hide. Shelter from the fury of H-bombs or hurricanes is essential if he is to survive. But there is something other than physical violence from which to hide, and talk should be increasingly more about that.

The first man's hiding place was not from violence but from shame—shame at his own condition in the light of Reality. It was not God's presence that injected the element of fear for Adam and Eve, but their own sin. The powerful drive for recognition so characteristic of human nature is thrown into reverse by sin. Shame is the inevitable consequence. Never underestimate its power. No fire is hotter than a burning sense of shame. There is more torture in it than in any emotion that man may feel. The tragedy of tragedies is that as a sinner, man is unspeakably embarrassed by the very glory for which he was created.

All this quest for hiding is, therefore, quite understandable. What is not so understandable, however, is man's choice of places in which to hide. He may do passably well in hiding from physical violence, but in the emotional and spiritual realm he is as foolish as the proverbial (though maligned) ostrich. He reasons that if he shuts his eyes to truth, others will also. Of course, many of them do, but not God. The Book he wrote is a complete expose of the artifices behind which men seek in vain to hide the nakedness of their own souls.

The woman at the well of Samaris dodged behind an age-old con-

troversy about worship to hide the rottenness of her morals. Judas was a thief who sought to hide his dishonesty behind his criticism of one who was doing what she could for Jesus. Chagrined by Christ's inquiry into the subject of their discussion, the disciples tried to hide their embarrassment behind a pathetic obstructionism saying, "Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." Peter hid his cowardice for a time behind bold bad talk, but ran out to weep in the darkness when he caught the eye of Jesus. The critics who challenged the authority of Christ took cover under agnosticism because they lacked the courage to face the issue their question had raised.

Today men on the outside of the church hide behind the hypocrites within, forgetting that only a hypocrite could or would hide behind another hypocrite. To conceal this sin behind that good work, to take this weakness and cover it with that show of strength is as stupid for man as it is insulting to God. What sort of God would be taken in by such devices!

But there is a place to hide. This is God's good news in answer to man's innermost need. That place is in God himself. It may be stated as a law of his very being that God uncovers all that man hides from Him and hides all that man confesses to Him.

The writer of the 91st Psalm describes this hiding place as "the secret place of the most High." To him it was not a desperate last minute resort, but a "dwelling place." It also afforded protection from the violence of nature and wicked men. Safely concealed "in a cleft of the rock" Moses discovered that only the hidden man may safely look upon the splendor of God. Paul knew about this hiding place and revealed its se-

cret entrance. Writing to the Colossians he said, "Ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God."

The great apostle's own life is an illustration of the mystery to which he refers. Like Jacob who came to be known as Israel, Paul also had two names: Saul and Paul. In a way every Christian has two names—like Simon and Cephas, like John the Son of Thunder who came to be known as the apostle of love, like Joseph nicknamed Barnabas, son of consolation. The thing that Paul was chiefly ashamed of, that he wanted most to hide was, to use his apt phrase, "the old man." Known to his contemporaries as Saul, this man was a very shameful sort of person indeed. Covetous, proud, satisfied in his own righteousness and for that reason bitterly resentful toward Jesus, he became persecutor and murderer.

But God forever took care of Paul's embarrassment when Saul surrendered to the risen Lord that day on the Damascus Road. His experience was of a kind in which all Christians share, if they but knew it. In order that they might know it, Paul wrote, "Ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God." To appreciate the relief expressed in this passage, think how embarrassing it is to be confronted with one's sinful, sordid self—especially in certain company! Paul knew that such a tragedy could never overtake him. Satan would like to bring that confrontation about to his embarrassment and God's, but where would he look to find Saul? Not among his old acquaintances, not in his old haunts, certainly not in heaven—no, not even in hell itself. Through the mystery of the cross, Saul was forever hid. With nothing more to hide, Paul was free to seek out the glory from which once he fled and to encourage his fellow Christians to do so likewise. "Seek those things that are

above . . . When Christ who is your life shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory."

The talk is again of bomb shelters. The time may indeed be near when war breaks out in atomic fury, but is that the important thing? Even nearer than such a war may be the "revealing of the sons of God," that moment when man steps out from things as they appear into things as they are—into the reality and ineffable glory of God's presence. Talk should be increasingly about that, and the good word for sinful man that there is a place to hide.

## IT HAPPENED IN N. C. . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

exceeded our fondest expectations. We consider it one of the most significant, effective, and successful operations we have."

Dr. E. L. Spivey says, "Since the inception of the Seminary Extension program, I have been completely sold on the value through an enlightening outreach. The program is laying the foundation for the future expansion of their interest, (pastors and laymen) that will include some of these leaders going to Fruitland, college, or perhaps seminary. The greatest impact will be upon the character and lives of the people back in the many churches from whence the leaders came to these Seminary Extension Centers."

"My personal opinion is that this has been one of the most successful endeavors in which we have recently engaged," says Dr. Wendell Belew.

### What Are Individuals Saying?

Rev. Alton Morris said, "This work has done more than anything we have attempted in our region to bring about a feeling of unity and Christian fellowship on the part of Baptist people, especially among our pastors."

A teacher, Rev. J. Mason Hudspeth, says, "I believe the Seminary Extension Centers have served two useful purposes already. They have led people to books and other sources of learning that they did not know was readily available. They have inspired a desire to know in many of the people who have come. One class seems to have met a particular need of the people who have been intensely subjected to the propaganda of the Roman Catholic Church. Our whole area needs information to give strength against the militant moving of Roman Catholicism."

A Negro pastor, Rev. Harvie Kincaid writes, "We cannot put into words what these courses have meant to us. I want to thank God for making it possible for us to learn more about God."

A Negro Layman, Frank Suderth, says, "Through these courses thus far, I feel, I have been drawn closer to God."

The Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina last year appropriated \$900 to implement this work. This year, they are appropriating \$1,000. The Laubach System of learning to read was used in connection with courses in Seminary Extension in several centers, under the direction of the director of the movement of literacy by television. This will continue.

### More and Better Centers Are Expected

On September 21, 1961, an Interracial Workshop was held at the Liberty Baptist Church, Sylva, North Carolina. This was sponsored by the SED and the Division of Missions of North Carolina Convention.

The workshop was highly successful. There were teachers, directors, registrar-treasurers, advisory committees, pastors, associational missionaries and interested lay people present.

The main purposes of the workshop were stated as: Creating a

climate, or a fellowship learning experience, where there is acceptance and understanding, challenging people to become responsible for the kind of learning that leads toward God-centered living, and producing changes in human behavior in the area of things known—things done—things felt—things valued—and things comprehended.

What Seminary Extension can do for our ministers was presented by Dr. E. L. Spivey. These were: (1) Appreciation for the Baptist Denomination, (2) Appreciation for world missions, (3) Better attendance at denominational meetings, and (4) Better attendance at Assemblies (Ridgecrest) for specialized training.

The Seminars for directors, registrars, teachers, and pastors proved to be one of the highlights for the day. Many of the problems were solved by the appointing of committees necessary for this particular program in Region 10. Better direction will be given for extension centers of a higher quality for this Fall. An associational missionary remarked that this was the best thing that had happened since the inception of this program a year ago.

Rev. Ben Fisher, Administrative Assistant and Director of Public Relations, Southeastern Baptist Seminary, brought to the group two inspirational messages.

### As the Writer Now Sees It

Region 10, of Western North Carolina has already proven what can be done where there are similar needs. Such areas are many all over the Southern Baptist territory. More and more our seminaries are seeking to expand this work by sharing. For those who are unable to attend a college or seminary, Seminary Extension offers an unlimited opportunity. Therefore, the Seminary Extension Department looks upon its program of informal adult education, not as being in competition with our schools and seminaries,

not even the educational organization within our churches, but as a way of helping individual Christians prepare to be equal to the heightening demands and enlarging opportunities that are ever before them, strengthening anyone and everyone who feels called upon by God to the highest potential.

Frank Koger

### AN APPRECIATED TESTIMONY

The following testimony from Dr. Porter R. Routh has cheered those in the SED. We are glad to share this with our readers.

"Recently on a trip from Atlanta to Memphis for the Brotherhood Men's Conference, I sat down on the plane next to a young man and before long he was telling me of his work.

"I did not introduce myself at first, but found out in the conversation that his name was James Robert Pratt and he was pastor of two growing rural churches, the Mt. Arnon Baptist Church and the Lower Three Runs Baptist Church located near Allendale and Martin, South Carolina.

"Brother Pratt told me that he served as a paratrooper during the war and then in the shipyards at Charleston for a number of years following the war. During this time he felt the call to give his life in the gospel ministry. He told me that he had finished his college work but did not have any theological training. He felt that he could not go to the seminary at the time, but he had heard of the Seminary Extension Department. He gave a glowing testimony of what the Seminary Extension Department had meant to him in the development of his own ministry. He told me of the fresh insights he had gained through the guided study, not only in the Bible but in the fields of practical work in the preparation of his sermons, and in other fields of service.

"I wanted to pass this testimony on to you because it was not given with any idea of reproduction, but came from the sincere heartfelt gratitude of a pastor who had discovered its usefulness."

### A FRESH EMPHASIS

Emphasis falls afresh upon the correspondence courses offered by the Seminary Extension Department. To one new upon the scenes, it might seem that this important aspect of our work has suffered in comparison with that which has been accomplished through extension centers. The ratio of drop-outs is understandably higher in correspondence considering the quality of self-discipline required for one working alone ever to complete the work to which he set his hand in enrollment.

A part of this fresh emphasis on correspondence courses will appear in a program of advertising. Of course, the best advertisement is the good word spoken by friends of the Department. The machinery exists, or to use a better figure, the pipe lines are already laid by which the advantages of seminary instruction are channeled to any individual desirous of receiving that instruction. Initiative and self-interest will start the flow that will certainly be recognized by the increasing verdure and fruitfulness of any man's field of labor.

The other part of this emphasis is a meeting of the instructors in the correspondence courses, familiarly known as "graders." Unheralded and unknown except for red marks and comments on the margins of the papers they grade, these men perform a vital ministry far more personal than the outside world would think possible. There are valuable lessons to be gained from their combined experiences. Their discussions will expedite the work of this important department. We shall try to get ready for the increased enrollment which we trust God is pleased to grant us.

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Published monthly by  
The Seminary Extension  
Department

of the Southern Baptist Seminaries  
P. O. Box 1154  
JACKSON 5, MISSISSIPPI

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Second Class Postage Paid at  
Jackson, Mississippi

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