

WESTERN RECORDER

JUNE 16, 1977

Time to Take a Fix

Ancient mariners without the help of radar or even a compass had ways of determining where they were and how to reach their destination. One of these ways was "taking a fix" by the stars. They learned where they were by their position to the stars which could always be trusted because they were fixed.

As modern mariners on the sea of life we would do well to take an occasional fix to be certain we are not drifting off course. We live in the fastest changing world in the experience of humanity and it's easy to lose our bearings without being aware of what's happening.

One area in which we can easily get off course is our church relationship. This is especially so in the summer-time when vacations and other activities put us on the move and scatter us over the face of the earth.



In nearly every church I visit it's the same story. Attendance is down, offerings are down, Vacation Bible School helpers are hard to enlist and everything is in a slump including church morale.

It ought not be so. True Christian commitment is not measured by how many times we go to church but not much true commitment is found among those who desert the church for the lake, the golf course and other pleasure-giving experiences on the Lord's day. Jesus enjoyed life and never worried about trying to live up to the expectations of the religious legalists but he never got confused about his priorities. He knew why he was on earth and refused to be sidetracked by self-serving choices.

It's ironic that the more blessings we receive the more tempted we are to forget their source and use them selfishly. Modern affluence turns out to be an enemy instead of a blessing.

Before we could afford a boat, a cottage on the lake, country club membership and other extras we could be found in church on the Lord's day with the Lord's tithe. But now these not only take us away but also some of us take the Lord's tenth to make payments on things that dishonor him. How confused can we become?

It's time then for many of us to take a fix for we are further off course than we think. We must reestablish our priorities and remember from whence we were hewn.

Those not claiming commitment to Christ are not expected to put him and his church first. But we are. That was our promise and is our obligation if we are true disciples.

Jesus made it plain that loyalty to him had to be first for those who followed him. The price is still the same.

The distractions of this world do not rob Christians of their commitment. They only reveal who are and who are not truly committed to Christ and his church.

Where are you right now on the voyage of life?

An Unfounded Charge

The Supreme Court decision banning prescribed Bible reading and prayer in public schools is one of the most unpopular rulings in the history of the Court. More efforts have likely been made to reverse it or circumvent it than have been made to undo any decision the Supreme Court has ever made.

All these efforts so far have failed but they continue. The latest one is being made by undying advocates of tax aid to parochial schools and champions of religious exercises in public schools. This effort is gaining widespread support because it appeals to a fear of many sincere people. This fear is that in the absence of religious instruction in public schools, atheism or humanism is being taught.

This fear is fed by occasional reports that some immature, smart aleck public school teacher is telling pupils there is no God. Wherever this happens, there is good reason to be concerned. Those who agree that tax funds should not pay for instruction in Christian religion in public schools are just as concerned that public schools are not to be used to teach a religion of "secular humanism." The latter is worse than the former though both are out of place in public schools.

Those charging that public schools are teaching secular humanism have taken their accusations to the courts in Missouri and lost.

The same charge was also considered by the Maryland State Board of Education. After several years of study involving testimony of more than 1600 pages and 163 exhibits, the conclusion was that secular humanism was not being taught in the public schools of Montgomery County, Maryland.

The charge that secular humanism is being taught in American public schools has also been investigated by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. In a recent address at the annual meeting of the National Coalition for Public Education and Religious Liberty, James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, declared that the charges are unfounded and unjustified because the evidence does not show that Judeo-Christian values are being denounced or denied in public schools.

Wood further pointed out that those making the charge are in reality champions of public funds for parochial schools.

An editorial in "Church and State," the publication of Americans United, calls the charge "a myth carefully cultivated by the advocates of tax aid for sectarian private schools and school-sponsored religious teaching or devotions . . ."

Then let us not jump on the bandwagon of those making this charge without validating it. If some foolish teacher should do this, let his or her hand be called immediately and emphatically but let us not indict public school teachers and officials as a result of a false charge by those wanting public funds for parochial schools.

Baptist Forum

It would be the height of ingratitude, if we did not express our deep appreciation for all the help we have received from countless numbers of individuals and churches over the past two months, since the devastating flood nearly destroyed our church and community.

I have been overwhelmed with the generosity of God's people. We have tried to acknowledge every gift personally, but there were work groups from various churches, food, clothing, furniture etc. brought where I did not get a name or address. To all of these, I would like to say thank you for the members of First Baptist Church, Pineville, and all the churches in our area. We shall always be grateful for fellow Christians who came to our aid in a time of great need. Perhaps someday, we will have an opportunity to reciprocate.

I would especially like to thank Paul Hatfield, our Associational Superintendent of Missions, Franklin Owen, Bob Jones, A. B. Colvin, Kathryn Jasper, and a host of other people at the Kentucky Baptist Building who stood by us so faithfully.

The flood has taught us many things, but one of the greatest lessons is that people do care, and God always walks with us in our time of need. Pray for all our churches and pastors, as we try to restore our facilities and put our work back together for a greater tomorrow.

Charles F. Jones
Pineville, Ky.

appreciated. But this disaster points up the need for a continuing plan and fund to be ready to step in when disaster hits. Such an organization should be state or convention-wide and funded through the Cooperative Program and supplemented by a yearly special offering. Cost of administering such a program could be financed by interest from the fund.

Disaster calls for immediate aid for those affected. Housing, clothes, furniture, repairs and other necessities are needed. Currently our state and national conventions and boards are not geared to providing fast assistance or money in an emergency. An office set up for this particular function could quickly get help to where it is needed.

Other denominations have set up disaster relief organizations. Immediately after the flood the Mennonites sent a team to Pikeville and brought supplies, equipment and men to help people repair and clean their homes and businesses. Baptists should also be ready and prepared to help people in this need.

Disaster will strike again sometime, somewhere. Floods, tornados, fires, earthquakes and other tragedies will affect people and their churches. Now is the time to be prepared for the next emergency. The Southern Baptist Convention will meet this month and the Kentucky Baptist Convention will meet in November. Let us organize now while the memory of the floods is on our minds.

Gary Maynard
Pikeville, Ky.

Three years ago disastrous tornados ripped through many areas in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. This spring tragedy struck again as severe flooding hit eastern Kentucky, West Virginia and Virginia. In both cases many Baptists and their churches were affected.

In Pikeville both the church and community were hard hit. Damage to the church building and contents totaled over one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000). Numerous church families' homes and businesses were devastated. Almost no one was insured. This story is being repeated in town after town in the flooded region.

Individuals and churches have sent clothing, furniture, money and manpower to help and this is greatly

Rev. John Sylvester and Rev. Joy Johnson are a husband/wife team called copastors of Twenty-Third & Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville using different names for distinction. Their story appeared June 2 in Western Recorder.



One concern about using different last names is that it gives the appearance of unmarried and living together. True, they can tell anyone who will ask but some won't ask. Others outside the church will not believe it when they're told. This example can hurt their image because of the misunderstanding. Not only do they have to feel all is right because John & Joy know they are not living in adultery, but John & Joy must "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thes. 5:22) so as not to mislead others.

When one says they want to unite with Christ but do not wish to make a public profession of their faith, my pastor husband has often asked them if they would like to propose and have her say, "yes but I want to keep it quiet. I'll be me, you be you and I'll wear my old name SELF." You can't unite with Christ and not bear the name Christian. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away: behold all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17). Compare that verse with this one "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22).

When Joy gave herself to the Lord she became a new person. She was no longer Joy Johnson (Self) but Joy Johnson Christian. When she submitted herself unto her husband as unto the Lord she again omits Self and takes a new role and a new name, Sylvester. She can still have identity using Joy Johnson like some are Mary Lou or Joyce Jean. As belonging to Christ gave her the name Christian, belonging to John gave her the name Sylvester to show oneness with him.

Mrs. Kelly Kennedy
Dry Ridge, Ky.

I am writing to you in regard to women wearing pants in church. I am a member of a Baptist church in the south end of Louisville. We have women wearing pants in church. The pastor preached against it one Sunday and it helped, but the next Sunday one or two wore them. I think they don't show much respect to Christ or his church. I hope you will print this in the Recorder.

J. E. Hampton
Louisville, Ky.

Baptist News in Brief

Carter Challenges SBC To Volunteer Missions

President Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist layman, challenged Southern Baptists to a massive world mission program at a White House luncheon attended by ten Southern Baptist leaders.

President Carter urged the Baptist leaders to develop more fully the volunteer mission programs of the denomination to encourage larger numbers of both young and older people to give up to two years of service at their own expense or paid for by their families or by the church of which they are members.

"The test of a church is not in its building or in its staff, but in the number of people reached for Christ," the President commented.

Those present for the luncheon meeting with the President were: Porter W. Routh, executive secretary, SBC Executive Committee; Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary, Foreign Mission Board; William G. Tanner, executive secretary, Home Mission Board; Glendon McCullough, executive secretary, Brotherhood Commission; Mrs. A. Harrison Gregory, president, Woman's Missionary Union; Grady C. Cothen, president, Sunday School Board; Owen Cooper, former SBC president; Fred Gregg, the President's Sunday school

teacher; Annie Ward Byrd, a retired editor of the Sunday School Board; and Charles Trentham, pastor of First Baptist Church, Washington, D. C., of which President Carter is a member.

Georgia Woman Ordained

Sally Carter, who will become the first woman chaplain of Sweetbriar College in Virginia on Sept. 1, was ordained to the ministry by her home church, Waldrop Memorial Baptist Church, Columbus, Ga.

A 1977 graduate of Yale Divinity School, Miss Carter is a graduate of Mercer University, a Baptist school in Macon, Ga.

Only between 20 and 30 women are believed to have been ordained by Southern Baptist churches.

SBC Slates Conference On Rural Evangelism

The Southern Baptist Convention's departments of Rural Urban Missions and Mass Evangelism are co-sponsoring a national conference on rural church evangelism in Memphis, Tenn., Sept. 26-28.

Conference leaders will include Ray Robbins, professor of New Testament

at New Orleans Seminary; C. B. Hogue, director of evangelism, Home Mission Board; William G. Tanner, executive director, Home Mission Board; and Henry Roe, rural church evangelist.

Further information is available from Jay Brown, evangelism director for Kentucky Baptists.

State WMU Schedules Leadership Conferences

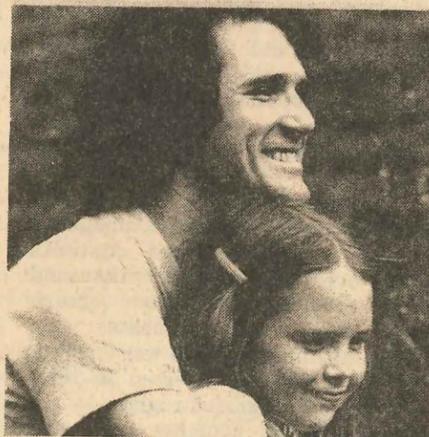
Three state WMU leadership conferences will be held in July at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly. One will run from Monday evening to Wednesday noon, July 25-27. A similar session will be held Friday evening to Sunday noon, July 29-31. Thursday, July 28, will be a "drive-in" day for those who cannot spend the night.

Conference theme will be "Tomorrow . . . in Kentucky," emphasizing the Bold Missions Thrust in which Baptists will be involved during 1977-79. Various speakers will be featured on the program including Mickey Martin, a native Kentuckian who is currently a WMU consultant for the Southern Baptist Convention.

Reservations may be made by sending \$5 prepayment to Cedarmore for the three-day conference or \$1 fee for the one-day meeting.

Double Exposure

An American tradition is Father's Day, scheduled for celebration again Sunday, June 19. And yet, how typical of us Americans! We've commercialized the event so much even dear old dad may soon come to think of it as just another pretty tie or anticipated card. Better still are the gifts of time and service he may receive. Hopefully we've not reached a point that this is forgotten. While fathers are due a certain amount of pampering on this special occasion experience tells us that no gift means as much as one given from the heart by those we love most dearly. Giving of self remains the best of all.



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Anti-Gays Win in Miami

Southern Baptist Anita Bryant, who led anti-gay forces to victory in a special Dade County, Fla. election repealing a controversial law prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing against homosexuals, says she will carry her fight to other cities having similar ordinances.

Miss Bryant, a prominent entertainer and television star, said she has been contacted by many cities that have laws similar to the Dade County ordinance. She specifically referred to San Francisco, Minneapolis and San Antonio as cities where she expects to carry the Save Our Children fight against the "gay rights" laws.

Miss Bryant headed the Save Our Children organization formed to lead opposition to the Dade County law. Her opposition to the law triggered a national fight and campaign between anti-gay forces and homosexuals. Anti-

gay forces won a referendum on the homosexual amendment, then won the fight for repeal of the law by an overwhelming majority.

Graham Announces Plans For Las Vegas Crusade

Billy Graham has agreed to hold an evangelistic crusade in Las Vegas, Nev., Feb. 1-5, 1978. The meetings will be held in the Las Vegas Convention Center which can accommodate up to 20,000 people.

The decision to conduct a crusade culminates a two-year movement to bring Graham to this city which is known world-wide for its gambling. One of the original backers of this crusade movement was M. E. McGlamery, Director of Missions, Lake Meade Baptist Association.

Graham's next crusade will be Oct. 21-30 in Cincinnati.

Edwards Accepts Call To Hawaii Pastorate

Bruce E. Edwards, who resigned the pastorate of Plains (Ga.) Baptist Church in February will become pastor of Makakilo Baptist Church on Oahu, Hawaii, in mid-July. Edwards' new congregation of about 125 persons is the only church in a city of some 5,000 population. He will be jointly sponsored by the congregation, the Hawaii Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The minister drew worldwide attention during the presidential campaign of Jimmy Carter, a former member and deacon in the Plains church, and during subsequent battles over whether to admit a black, activist minister to worship services and membership with the Plains congregation. Edwards had been pastor in Plains more than two years when he resigned.



Dr. Fred E. Halbrooks
Sunday School Director



Dr. James E. Rennell
Associate

Sunday School Week

August 8 - 13, 1977

Cedarmore Baptist Assembly

Sponsored by
Sunday School Department
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Age Group Conferences for Youth, Adult and Preschool Children

Special Conferences for Deaf (Church Conference Only)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| ★ Long Range Planning | ★ Teacher Improvement | ★ Media Workshop | ★ Action |
| ★ Small Church Sunday School | ★ Adult Start-A-Class | ★ Think Senior Adults | ★ Adult Extension |

Registration Information

Please Detach And Mail To:

Sunday School Week
Cedarmore Baptist Assembly
Bagdad, Kentucky 40003
Phone (502) 747-8911

Church or Association _____ Associational S.S. - Aug. 8-9
Contact Person _____ 1st Church Leadership 10-11
Address: _____ 2nd Church Leadership 12-13

Please make reservations for the following persons. We are enclosing \$5.00 reservation fee for each person which will be applied to their total cost.

Name _____	Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____	Address _____
Name _____	Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____	Address _____

(Use additional paper if necessary.)

Western Recorder

"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."—Jude 3.

Published 50 times per year by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43401, Middletown, Ky. 40243. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

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Individual, \$3.68 (tax included); Foreign, \$3.75; Church Budget, \$2.50. All except church accounts payable in advance. Church accounts must have tax exemption number.

President's Address

LET THE CHURCH REACH OUT

James L. Sullivan
President, Southern Baptist Convention
Nashville, Tenn.



A shell-shocked soldier in World War I stood dazed as an officer approached to ask, "What is your name?" His reply was, "I don't know, sir." Other questions like, "Who is your commanding officer?", "What outfit are you with?" and "How long have you been here?", came in rapid fire order. To each he answered with puzzlement, "I don't know sir." "Then why are you here?" the officer asked. In response the added soldier stood erect, clicked his heels together, saluted and said, "I am here to fight, sir." Like Abraham of old, he did not know "the where" but he did know "the why" of his journey.

Southern Baptists like Abraham stand now at the crossroads feeling compelled to move, asking God to lead each step of the way and to determine our route as we progress. We stand where Abram stood at Ur when God commanded that he move into the land which he would be shown. As Abram went, "not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8) he did know why. With that sense of Calling and destiny he moved in the spirit of conquest into the unknown tomorrow and God blessed him immeasurably. What would have happened had he stayed in Ur? Likely the world would never have known of him. Certainly he would never have achieved greatness.

Moving toward Palestine the strategic land of his calling, Abram was placed at the very neck of the hourglass of his world's geography. For it was God's plan from the first that from that place the entire world would be influenced. His descendants would multiply like the sands of the sea. He would be blessed and he would prove a blessing. Through his lineage would come the Messiah to save all who would believe.

Southern Baptists now stands at a similar threshold. God is calling, even ordering. The hour to move out and upward is upon us. We have named the movement the *Bold Mission Thrust*. We are declaring courageously "Let the Church Reach Out." This is not the time for the routine and the ordinary. These are intense times and the challenge must be met with faith and daring much like Abraham's journey.

In speaking on "Let the Church Reach Out," let me deal first with a: "Survey of our Heritage", then "Sensing our Obligations" and ending with "Surging into Action."

- I. *Survey of Our Heritage*—Let us reach far back in time to ask, "What is the church?" "Where did it come from?" "What is it here to do?" "Who constitutes its membership?" These and other pertinent questions must be asked.

All too many people think of the church as a building on a corner with a spire, pews, and an organ. The church may meet there, but the church is the people. In a sense a church is a meeting of equals, under God each with a voice and a vote. But while it operates by democratic processes, it is not really a democracy. Rather it is a theo-democracy, with members discussing and voting, but with each seeking God's will rather than the mere wish of the majority.

A church is an organism. It lives, chooses, feels and grows. Paul likens it to a human body with many coordinated parts, all different but all needful, and all bound together into one. But the church is also an organization. It has officers, schedules, a place of meeting, established ways of doing things. It is an organized organism because it has a work to do and ought to get on with the doing of it.

Our Baptist beliefs go back to the very beginnings of the church by Jesus Christ himself. So without apology we go back to the New Testament for our sources in matters of faith and in practice.

More recently and on these shores we have been celebrating our national Bicentennial. No one has had a more glorious history to review than that of our own Baptist forefathers who crusaded for soul freedom of all people in America's early days. They were not a privileged people, but they understood what they needed to please God and to live at peace with themselves and others. So they became the glad heralds of freedom. They had few books, in fact most of them had only a Bible and a hymnal. But these were used profusely and with effectiveness.

They worked hard, practiced self-discipline and started little churches and schools wherever they went. God blessed their efforts. A famous man of letters once said, "Our greatest deeds we do unknowingly." This certainly applied to our Baptist forefathers. For little did they know the greatness of their deeds, but their efforts laid the firm groundwork for our present day of stupendous Baptist membership and strength in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Our Baptist history is glorious and our people have been courageous. Imprisoned they have not been embittered or silenced. Publicly whipped and humiliated, they have not backed up or backed down.

No one would argue that the church is perfect, yet it is one of the truly dynamic forces of history. Study the seven churches of Asia. They had their frailties and shortcomings.

But they also had their glories. Like Simon Peter they faltered at times and failed at the very moments of their greatest opportunity. But God made them effective.

Dr. J. B. Gambrell expressed it well when he said "God can sure hit a straight lick with a crooked stick." While there are no flawless people or churches, or church members, we do have a flawless Christ, a perfect Gospel and matchless Book of divine revelation. Such is our heritage.

II. *Sensing Our Obligations*—A church cannot wait for everything to be ideal before it moves out and up, nor can a denomination. We must start where we are with what we have and move forward as God leads step by step and day by day.

The responsibility of every church in every community is to evangelize. No one can practice the principles of the Sermon on the Mount who has not met the Christ who preached that message. God took every initiative in human redemption and expects us to do likewise. He sent his Son. He gave his Son. He gave his church. He sent his spirit. So must we exercise initiative. And a church is to lead out in searching for lost people. Sinners cannot be expected to flounder their way to church doors and find their way to the cross accidentally.

A church also has other major duties. Note a few:

1. *Help Believers Communicate with Their Maker*—Man's greatest God-given ability is that of worship. Here is where he excels over the beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea. Man was made in God's image, after God's likeness, and can speak with his Maker and listen to God speak in return.
Ability to worship is not only humanity's greatest capacity, but is often man's most neglected opportunity. The church is to help people exercise this greatest capability, that of worship, and do it with regularity as well as with reverence and awe.
2. *Proclaim the Truths of God*—The pulpit is central in a Baptist church. The preacher is not an echo of tradition, but like John the Baptist he is a voice of revelation. John cried clearly "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:29). Prophecy had pointed out the nation, tribe, location and family. But John pointed out the man. The fingers of the prophets of God today should thrill to their tips with the truths of the Gospel proclaimed. Like John this announcer of God's Word is to condemn sin, exhort sinners to turn from their evil ways, call the world to prepare to follow the Savior, then identify Christ in such unmistakable terms that the world cannot fail to understand.
3. *Provide Christian Instruction*—God not only ordered us to teach in the Great Commission, but he also gave us our textbook, the Bible, with which to do it. Our teaching must be zealous and for results. The lessons must be related to life. The equipping of the

saints is an endless and ever incompleting task.

I tend to agree with Dr. Gaines S. Dobbins who said that spiritual immaturity is perhaps the number one problem of every church. Insurmountable difficulties arise when those who are "born again" fail to grow up to their fullest potential in spiritual maturity.

Dr. Howard Williams spoke of it colorfully when he said, "Nothing is more beautiful than a child kicking and cooing. Nothing is uglier than an old man still kicking after he has forgotten how to coo." Paul counted this one of his major problems and challenged his followers to get off the milk diet of infancy and onto the meat diet of maturity. If people do not grow after conversion, the church and the convert have both failed. Conversion may be the end of Christian experience but it is the front end of it.

4. *Fulfill its Local Responsibility*—Southern Baptists make much of a local church. We do it because this is where the emphasis lies in the Bible. One-hundred-four of the one-hundred-nine times the word church is used in the Bible is in the local sense. And if a church fails its members and its own community, who else is there to take up and carry on? Yet this is the beginning point of a church's concern and effort, not the ending place.

The work of the local churches is indispensable. As churches go so goes the denomination. As churches prosper, our Convention prospers. When churches are filled with despair, our denomination is affected adversely. Like gushing springs the local churches are the starting points of the broad river of our Baptist witness. They flow together to bless the arid earth famished for spirituality.

5. *Share and Share Alike With Others*—One of the real needs is the development of religious bifocals, so a church can see clearly both at home and abroad and be as concerned beyond itself as it is about itself. Such is both Christian and Christ-like. No church exists to serve itself. Only as it blesses others can a church prosper and have grounds for survival.

III. *Surging Into Action*—Christ-like compassion will not allow for inaction anywhere in the world.

Christianity is more than a theory. It is rescue. Look at Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. His tears flowed freely, but they were not wasted tears. He went outside the walls of that city and died for the city for which he had wept. Feelings alone were inadequate. Bold action was demanded. It was given. So is it always. The first thing Saul of Tarsus asked on the Damascus Road was, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me do?" (Acts 9:6).

Witness Jesus when he was feeding the 5,000. (John 6:1-10) (Matt. 14:16). Three kinds of human attitudes emerged.

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One was that of impatience. The crowds were getting on the nerves of one tired disciple who had not eaten or slept for hours. So he cried, "Send them away." Another disciple measured human need in the light of money and wondered how they could finance such a massive project. So he cried "two-hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient." The size of a coin in front of his eyes blinded his vision to a world of opportunity. Jesus, the compassionate shepherd commanded, "Give ye them to eat", in other words "Feed them." Compassionate concern found a way. Action was the key on that day of victory.

For Jesus, action was all in a day's work, whether it was the widow of Nain needing comforting, the leper needing understanding and healing, or the Gadarine Demoniac who needed his wild nature tamed and calmed. Jesus never passed by leaving human need unnoticed and untouched.

Excuses will not get the job done. Bold action is necessary if the world is to be lifted from quagmire of sin. Rescue is the most necessary thing on earth, more urgent than medicine for a doctor or blood for the body. To do the job our churches must work together. The church at Jerusalem must be interested in the churches in Judea and Samaria and the people who dwell there.

Baptist associations and state conventions play a vital role in this spiritual conquest by giving vision, meaning, interpretation and know-how. Great is their influence on the churches to whom they minister. No one would coerce a local church, yet if our churches can only know what is expected of them they do their best. Knowing what is expected they usually respond and measure up. They will work harder to increase mission support and giving by every means available to them.

Having a vision of the world and a compassion for it is vitally necessary also. Matthew 14:14 is a hidden verse which many of us miss because the words are simple and flow by hardly noticed. The verse reads, "And Jesus saw the multitudes and had compassion on them and healed their sick." In this brief statement we see vision, compassion and action—these three, and in that sequence. Without vision God said his people would perish. Unless God's people have vision the whole world perishes. And action is never meaningful unless preceded by vision. Realizing that the world is just one generation away from paganism should goad us into zealous action as we seek to rescue persons in peril. This one reason should command our best even if there were no other motivations.

The world must be penetrated with the piercing Gospel. Jesus spoke meaningfully when he likened us in our work to "salt" yea, even "light." Each is ineffective in isolation. Each does its work by penetration—sharp, cutting, incisive, influencing action.

The very size of the world may intimidate us. The disciples must have popped out in cold sweat when Jesus laid a world, a whole world on their hearts and shoulders in one bold sweep. They knew they could not do so great a task alone. But with God's help there was no limit to what they could do. When

God's finger points the way, God's hand helps us walk in it. So the disciples did their best. History records the rest. The whole world has had the impact of their dedication and proclamation. If God could do so much and such great things through twelve men, imagine what he could do with twelve million if we were as committed as they.

Our denomination is in the era of its greatest strength and testing. For the first time we have the resources, the manpower, the know-how, the national coverage geographically and the nation's eye. Too, we have the methodology. We have dedicated missionaries committed and in training, or already there. And the Cooperative Program which was a long time being born is now a dynamic instrument for regular sustained, and systematic sharing of our message with the whole world. So are the special mission offerings. It is not only the first time in our individual lifetimes that such a situation holds, but it is the first time in our denomination's lifetime as well. God has brought us to this hour. We still respond either like Jonah who fled frantically from a task so big, or we will brace up and face the crisis as the early disciples did when they had their all at the feet of Jesus to go wherever he would lead and do whatever he would command.

The fields we as Southern Baptists have entered already are many and worthy. Our missionaries are widespread. We have established churches, hospitals, schools, children's homes, homes for the aged and many other worthy endeavors. They are already a reality. Our goal is to use these forces to extend, expand, let God empower and move with force to the ends of the earth and through us, so each person can hear of and respond to Christ before this century ends. This is the way the Gospel must spread—through public media, loud speakers, word of mouth, mass rallies—every way. Yet no method is ever quite as effective as face to face, heart to heart sharing of one's personal faith.

A bold mission thrust calls for the 50-50 ideal of budget sharing with each church re-examining its percentage of giving and increasing with regularity until as much is being done for others as for ourselves. Bold Missions cannot be thrust forward by a few churches even if they do sacrifice. The job is too big for the few. Everyone and every church must act in concerted effort.

Victory is assured if we meet God's conditions. By God's grace and power we have enlightenment, encouragement and divine strength. We must have the power of God to achieve. The world is fascinated by power. It views Niagara with awe. It feels the earth vibrate as a jumbo jet gets airborne. It witnesses the military might of the Pentagon, the publicizing power of the press and airwaves as well as the financial strength of Wall Street, but all of these combined cannot establish or maintain one single Baptist church anywhere on earth. That too takes power, but God's power. The type of power that was promised when Christ said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

Pentecost was imperative for the disciples because there

had to be spiritual power sufficient for the task they were assigned. They sensed their inadequacy. They knew they could not achieve without the leading of God's spirit. So Pentecost was given. Pentecost was a parallel to Bethlehem. Great miracles and revelations took place at each. The Holy Spirit's one coming is adequate for all times, just as the one coming of Jesus to earth can save all mankind always. We do not need another Pentecost, but how dreadfully we do need pentecostal power if we are to have a *Bold Mission Thrust* felt around the globe.

Pentecost would have been meaningless and powerless had it not been bathed in the prayers of those early believers. Remember the Upper Room experience? They were not praying down the Holy Spirit. They were praying the rusty hinges of their own hearts loose so they could receive the Holy Spirit in full power when he came. No wonder they called it the Upper Room. It was such an exalting experience for those early believers, they never forgot.

People never stand taller than when they are on their knees praying for others, asking God to use them to bless a world. Delay is deadly. Not only do sinners die without hearing of our blessed Redeemer but church members tend to grow cold and calloused when Christian witnessing is not going on continuously and with vigor. So we must move speedily and mightily. The time is heavy upon us. Let the church reach out—now.

Convention Sermon

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

William L. Self
Pastor, Wieuca Road Baptist Church
Atlanta, Ga.

Esther 4:14

In 1976 the nation pulled up a peanut plant in South Georgia and twelve million Southern Baptists marched out. The nation does not know what to make of Southern Baptists. We are a strange species not easily classified. We are as diverse as the talented W. A. Criswell and the insightful John Claypool, as Duke McCall and Randall Lolley, as Foy Valentine and Adrian Rogers.

Strange people these Southern Baptists—united but autonomous, cooperative but independent, regionally named but worldwide in vision.

Strange people these Southern Baptists. We have more members than there are people and budgets that stagger the imagination. We have programs that IBM would be proud of and institutions that would be the envy of any federal bureaucrat. We have enough debt to satisfy even a democratic ad-

Let me close with some practical suggestions:

1. Inform your people of the Bold Mission Thrust and its opportunities.
2. Get your church involved, stressing the imperative of missions in the Bible.
3. Challenge your people to tithe in support of the type of mission action that can be bold, exciting and challenging.
4. Re-examine your own church's giving through the denomination and increase the percentage annually.
5. Use your church organizations to focus attention on the missionary opportunities the church has and coordinate teaching and action.
6. Preach about missions often to your people or encourage your pastor to do so.
7. Pray endlessly for the ones engaged already in the massive mission movement and pledge your encouragement and financial support.
8. Pray especially for our theological schools in their crisis as they seek to train many future missionaries to serve with skill and effectiveness.
9. Work in love with fellow-believing Baptists so the effects can be more visible, felt far and wide.
10. Be positive, anticipating victory for God's glory.



ministration.

Strange people these Southern Baptists. Our flag is planted in every state and in 87 countries of the world and if there is a place where people hurt, we are organized to heal in Jesus' name. Where the world itches, we have developed programs to scratch. We refuse to be provincial, racial, or narrow in social understanding. We love the scriptures, the gospel, and have a disposition for building churches and institutions.

Strange people these Southern Baptists. We now have Episcopalian money, Methodist organization, Pentecostal zeal, and Calvin's theology.

Our place in the national life is providential and significant and can best be understood against the background of our text for this hour.

Nestled in the backwaters of the Old Testament is the intriguing little book of Esther. The name of God is never

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Convention News

mentioned, but the purposes of God are clearly demonstrated. Esther, a beautiful Jewish girl, had risen from the ranks of an exiled semi-slave people to a place of prominence in the court of Xerxes, ruler of Persia. From slave girl to a king's harem, and to take the place of Vashti on the throne was a miracle in and of itself. However, anti-semitism had infected Persia; and Haman, the Prime Minister, had incited the king to authorize the destruction of all Jews in the empire (3:8). When Mordecai heard of this, he informed Esther, urging her to appeal to the king. In his appeal to Esther, he made it quite clear that the providence of God had placed her in the royal court at this decisive time in the life of Israel. He further reminded her that even though she was queen, she would not be spared when the destruction came (4:14). The words used by Mordecai were simply, "Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Mordecai was persuasive and was able to overcome her hesitancy to risk her life. Esther agreed to his plan and said to Mordecai: "If I perish, I perish." Then Esther approached the king, told him of the edict that would mean the destruction of her and her people. She persuaded him to issue a new edict permitting the Jews to take vengeance upon their enemies. Haman, the villain, was executed on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

Esther, in her response to the appeal of Mordecai, had clearly seen that (1) where there was a need and (2) an ability to meet that need, (3) there was a calling from God. Her people had been spared because she was willing to seize the hour that God had provided.

Southern Baptists stand at a critical juncture in the national life. We did not ask for this mantle—it was thrust upon us. Like David of Bethlehem, we have been sought by Samuel to be anointed for our destiny. Like Moses, happy with Jethro's flocks, we have been led to a burning bush and told that the nation must be delivered from its secular Pharaohs. Like Nehemiah, we have been given an opportunity to rebuild the temples of our land that lie in disarray.

Amos said to Israel on the behalf of our God: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). Jesus reminds us that "Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required" (Luke 12:48 RSV). If a clear reading of the times and of scripture is correct, it seems evident that this denomination set on a hill had better let its light shine; for if we do not, our candlestick may be removed. The Convention stands like Esther and I shall take the role of Mordecai and suggest that we have come to this place on the national scene by the providence of God. This hour demands positive action on our part. Like Esther we must see the need.

I. THE NEED

The temptation in a sermon like this is to talk too much about the needs of our day. But in the midst of all of the peripheral needs our world is experiencing, I suggest that there are two basic needs which we are uniquely equipped to meet. From these needs all of the peripheral needs seem to

grow.

First of all, our world has lost its sense of meaning. In our effort to secularize, we've given up any sense of belief in the spiritual. We have pulled out the old structures that have given us an understanding of our universe, and the children of this disaster are tossed about like dry leaves in the wind. Instead of man come of age, we are discovering that we are simply primitive man who has learned to shave and use deodorant. We are empty, gray flannel clad savages who have developed sophisticated tools for destroying one another. Modern science may have given us a world where some men live longer and better, but we are also more frightened and disturbed, more rebellious and alienated.

We are learning that man can bear great physical and spiritual hardship, but he cannot bear a sense of meaninglessness. Even in the midst of our affluence, we are finding that satin and gold does not really answer the question: "Why am I alive and what meaning does life have?" We are like so many overweight Peggy Lees asking the musical question in a syncopated monotone, "Is this all there is?" Another house, a bigger office, another rung on the ladder; and we cry out again, "Is this all there is?"

A life dedicated to garden parties and bridge clubs is as empty as the beer cans that line our highways. Bigger and better is no life and we know it. Perhaps Freddy Prinze is Everyman. He grabbed the top rung early; the brass ring came easy, only to reaffirm what our gospel has been saying. There was no meaning there. Our world cannot live without meaning.

The second need Southern Baptists must address in our national life is: we live in a land of people who are trying to survive. Our technology has reduced us to the primitive state and every new technological advance brings us new technological disaster. A break-through in the power plant brings us a crisis on the ecology front; a break-through in cancer research is a disaster for the food business.

On a New Year's television program a year ago I heard a prominent citizen of Atlanta, when asked by the hostess what he was grateful for as he viewed the year just past, reply simply: "I'm grateful that I survived." This creeping sense of desperation has produced the feeling of "hanging on by the fingernails" existence. Every businessman suspects that each deal simply causes him to hurry so that he can stand still. Pushing the rock of Sisyphus up the hill again only leads to his continuing exhaustion and causes him to mark the day until Social Security takes over.

Our culture is too much like the book, *Alive*. It is the story of a soccer team that crashed high in the Andes mountains. One survivor had a steel shaft through his stomach and another had his leg severed at the knee with the bone exposed. They were a motley crew of broken limbs and dead flesh sprawled all over the top of the mountain in sub-freezing weather.

They organized themselves into a community of survival. They gathered up all they could of the debris to sustain life and rationed what food they could find from the crash among themselves. Finally they realized they were not going to make it unless they stacked the dead bodies of their departed companions in a special area. The elements stripped away every veneer of civilization until they were reduced to a state of having to decide whether to live or to die and the only way they could live would be to succumb to cannibalism. The deepest ethical mores of their lives had been worn away and the old lobster had gotten through to them. They found themselves, in order to live, chewing the flesh of a dead companion. Any sensitive minister knows the pressures of living in a highly syncopated pressure-cooked society that has reduced our people to the same level.

II. OUR ABILITY TO MEET THESE NEEDS

We have never thought that man was perfectible, for we have observed firsthand his ability to cultivate Gardens of Eden and then destroy them. It was man that built the ovens of Dachau, but it was also man that sang and prayed as he entered. To man's search for meaning we bring an unyielding, clear-eyed experience of grace and affirmation. Man's capacity for evil frightens us, but God's capacity for grace encourages us. It is to this ghetto of the soul that we speak, for in his Holy Spirit we have experienced the capacity to change. It is the gospel of God that replenishes the malnourished soul of this land. Our world has lingered too long at the table of secularism. Southern Baptists are still naive enough to believe that God can change men; he can change nations; he can change our world.

Alan Watts, the Zen-Buddhist philosopher, spoke to a group in Atlanta ten years ago. He suggested that if the central thrust of the Christian faith is true (the resurrection of Christ and the defeat of death), then we should be doing more and with greater boldness. We deny the resurrection power by our small vision and our safe stance. My life wish for the churches is that they will rediscover Jesus and his resurrection as the core and power of their faith, that they will know this faith power in its detail and teach it to their members. This will make them living centers of meaning. I wish for them a resurgence of life and meaning pulsating in their veins. This will only occur when the resurrected Christ is rediscovered.

I confess that there are times that I wonder about the powerlessness of our churches. My mind runs through the buildings that we occupy, the bureaucracies that we have built, the wealth that we control, the programs that we have mastered and the brains that we have commandeered. This drives me to ask myself: Did ever so many labor with so much to produce so little? Jesus said to his disciples, not to the world at large: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). We can produce buildings and issue position papers; we can structure committees and hold annual assemblies; but where it requires the energizing of God's Spirit, it is still what the Master said: "Without me, ye can do nothing." There are times when it seems we have everything in the church in the

Christian community except the power of God's Spirit. We have developed a form of godliness but have denied the power thereof (II Timothy 3:5). Perhaps we are suffering from sterility that comes when we abandon our first love. We need to rediscover Jesus Christ. A dead church cannot witness to life, but a living church can. A dead society will respond to a living Christ and a living church. That's bold.

I wish for our pastors that they would rediscover the essentials of their calling. They need to be delivered from the errand boy mentality and to rediscover the joy of serving living bread to dying men rather than delivering Sunday School literature and keeping records for a committee. God called our pastors to preach his living word and the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God (Luther). Perhaps our churches are not bold because of the generations of leaders who have trivialized the gospel. Now abideth administration, counseling, and preaching, but the greatest of these is preaching. God intended for a living church to be his instrument for winning this world.

Now to the agencies. This is God's hour for you, too. Make some mistakes. Be willing to risk some money in marginal ministries. I'd rather see you strike out aiming for the center field fence than not even coming to bat. Boldness and playing it safe seem to be at opposite ends of the pole.

Let's be bold enough to devise a workable urban strategy. Let's be bold enough to crusade against the ghettos of the mind. Let's be bold enough to act redemptively toward singles and divorcees. Must we always live with the illusion that our homes are like *Home Life*? Seven per cent of Americans still live the way we imagine. The rest of the nation lives with marital brokenness. When will we learn to speak to the "woman at the well"? My life wish for the agencies is that Bold Mission Thrust will not be a retreading of the old campaigns of the past. Let's not let it become our 1977 edition of "A Million More in '54" or "Every Baptist a Tither." We have the ability to meet the needs if we will risk using our massive institutional and organizational genius to break new ground. If Bold Mission Thrust does this, praise God! If Bold Mission Thrust is only a resurrection of the rusty swords of other campaigns, let's pull down the banners and admit our blandness and get ready for exile. People on the streets of the world are still asking the crucial question: "Is there a God and does he care?" The Bible still answers this question affirmatively. Let's break some barriers.

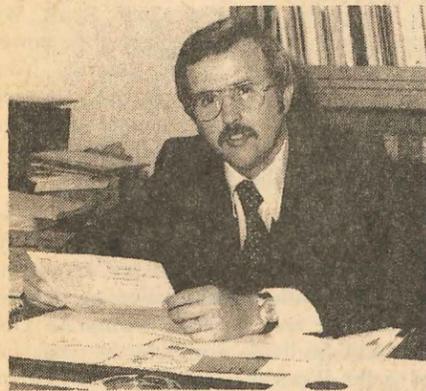
III. OUR CALLING FROM GOD

It is hard to recognize the providence of God in this hour. It is easier to acknowledge where he was in the past. However, it is our responsibility today to read the signs and follow even if it is into "the darkness where God was."

Esther cried: "If I perish, I perish." This is a clear focus on risk taking and not risk management. It is incumbent upon us to seize this hour whatever the cost.

Southern Baptists, who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Christian Education



Michael B. Colegrove, Cumberland College director of admissions, was recently elected president of Kentucky Association for the Promotion of College Admissions. A native of Apple Grove, W. Va., Colegrove has been on the Cumberland faculty since 1973.

Kentucky Native Honored

A former Kentucky pastor has been named professor emeritus of history at California Baptist College in Riverside. Dewey H. Jones, who earned his undergraduate degree at Murray State University, was given the honor during the annual faculty staff banquet held recently.

Wake Forest in Conflict With Carolina Baptists

Wake Forest University, which has had its hassles with North Carolina Baptists before, is at the center of another hotly debated controversy.

The controversy ignited when a small student group took it upon itself to invite Larry Flynt, publisher of the sex-oriented Hustler magazine, to the campus last February and give him its "Man of the Year Award"—tongue in cheek, a student spokesman said. Coy Privette, president of the State Baptist Convention of North Carolina, appeared the next night, at the group's invitation, to rebut Flynt and receive an "Alumni of the Year Award."

Ever since then, the Biblical Recorder, the state convention's newspaper, has been flooded with letters, first from pastors and laymen deploring Flynt's appearance and what they

perceived to be a decline of Christian values on campus, and then from defenders of the school. The concern has escalated to a full-blown controversy over the relationship between the school and the Baptist state convention. Broad hints have been made in the Recorder that perhaps the convention and Wake Forest University should no longer be entwined.

Dissolution of ties to N. C. Baptists may be difficult, since the convention approved a contract with the Reynolds Foundation in 1946 which binds the convention to provide at least 7.5 percent of its distributable income each year to Wake Forest, in perpetuity, with Reynolds providing not less than \$350,000 per year.

A major reason for the ill feelings is the knowledge that North Carolina Baptists are a minority at Wake Forest. The Baptist state convention provides \$750,000 to Wake Forest, yet only 27 percent of the student body is Baptist, and only 10 to 11 percent of the applicants each year are North Carolina Baptists.

Pastors' School Focuses On Counseling Ministry

"Shepherding the Flock of God" is the theme of the annual West Tennessee Summer Preachers' School which will be held at Union University, Jackson, Tenn., July 11-15.

The week-long program will focus on the pastor's counseling ministry and will feature several guest speakers including Walter Jackson, chaplain of Kentucky Baptist Hospital, Louisville.

Others on the program include J. D. Grey, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, New Orleans, and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Robert L. Hamblin, pastor of Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., and current president of that state's convention.

Two Kentuckians Receive Degrees from Midwestern

Two Kentuckians were among the 87 students to graduate May 28 from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.



Combs Turner

Wayne Combs and Ronald Mark Turner both received the Master of Divinity degree.

Combs is the son of Henry Combs, Jackson. He worked for many years as a radio broadcaster in Hazard, Lexington and other states prior to entering the ministry. He is currently pastor of Dawn (Mo.) Baptist Church.

Turner is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Turner, Elliotville. Turner hopes to find a pastorate in the pioneer mission area.

SBTS: 'Byrd Sanctuary'

The Byrds are "nesting" at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville.

Edward L. Byrd and his wife, Marty, came to Southern in 1937 to prepare for the pastorate. Now, 40 years later he is returning to Southern this fall as visiting professor of pastoral studies. He recently retired after 27 years as pastor of First Baptist Church, Florence, S.C.

Just before Byrd was asked to come as professor, Marty was elected as one of four women now serving on Southern's Board of Trustees. Byrd was a trustee 10 years (1964-74) and was chairman of the board two of those years.

Adding to the coincidence—their son, Davis, enrolled and was the seminary's "architect-in-residence" last year. Davis was a successful architect and planning consultant before coming to Southern. President Duke McCall discovered Davis had just completed plans for the campus of a South Carolina college and before long, Davis had a job offer—administrative assistant for campus planning, while a student at Southern.

Maybe, one sharpwitted observer noted, the seminary should have a sign which reads, "Byrd Sanctuary."

Cannata's Imprisonment—A Journey Of Faith

Dr. Samuel R. J. Cannata Jr. spent 16 days in prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April, but says his jail term was "really a journey in faith."

Cannata, a Southern Baptist missionary, was arrested along with his family in their home in rural Ethiopia on April 3, 1977. The family was released after a night of house arrest but Cannata was imprisoned 16 days on a firearms technicality. At the conclusion of the investigation, Cannata was released with no charges filed.

The Cannatas are one of four Southern Baptist missionary families still hoping to obtain permission from the Ethiopian government to continue work in the rural areas of the east African country.

Each of the families will travel to Nairobi, Kenya, later this month to attend an agricultural missions conference. On July 11, they will meet with Davis L. Saunders, area secretary for eastern and southern Africa, to discuss the continuation of Southern Baptist mission work in Ethiopia.

Cannata said he knew the importance of "praising the Lord" in all circumstances and did keep on praising the Lord. But he admits it was praise without much enthusiasm or faith at the time of his imprisonment.

"Especially that first night in prison," Cannata remembered, "it was such a humiliating and helpless feeling. There was nothing to do but trust the Lord, because no one else could do anything anyway."

Although he knew he was innocent of any wrongdoing against the Ethiopian government, Cannata remarked, during this period "the Lord made me more aware of the shortcomings and sin in my life. God began to show me that the victory was his," Cannata stated.

A few days before Cannata's arrest,



he was studying the scriptures on suffering and "admitted to the Lord that I didn't understand fully their significance."

"Now I'm understanding a little more about their significance. Our family was blessed in the experience. We all grew a lot spiritually in a short time and are closer than ever before," Cannata continued.

During his imprisonment, Cannata said he handed out New Testaments and Bible correspondence school books to prisoners and policemen as he gave his testimony about "my Lord's love."

His wife, Ginny, also a missionary, has a story of faith too.

"Not until I heard our police driver telling people along the road that he was carrying prisoners in the car (referring to us) that day, did I realize what freedom meant to me, Mrs. Cannata claimed. "Never again will I take freedom lightly."

"The children rallied around me and helped me as never before," she said. "We knew the strength and peace we had and experienced each day was

from God alone, and we give him all the praise."

The nights were the hardest for Mrs. Cannata, "because I couldn't see Sam. But I experienced much peace and found many new promises in God's word to claim, as I read, prayed and praised God when sleep was impossible.

"I read through the Psalms and wrote down all the things God says he will be for us each day if we claim these in our lives," she added.

Mrs. Cannata and their children were allowed to visit Cannata and bring him food. As she drove to the police station each morning, she said "praise songs," so that when she arrived the "knot in my stomach was gone," and she could greet her husband happy and relaxed.

"As I waited in officials' offices and met these top officials, doing what I could to follow Sam's case, I had only peace," Mrs. Cannata said. "I experienced such a wonderful presence of the Lord each day that I will never be the same again."

"Even though it was the most frightening experience of our lives, it was also the most wonderful experience for each one of us. Thank you for your prayer support which made it possible for us to call it a most wonderful experience."

Missions & Ministries

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International Series

Celebration of Freedom

Wailing over the death of the firstborn had scarcely ceased, and the Israelites had barely withdrawn from Egypt, when Pharaoh regretted that he had permitted his slaves to escape. Immediately, he and his army pursued them, thereby hoping to prevent them from leaving the country. Knowing Pharaoh's intentions, and being aware of his wrath, the people were sore afraid. As they travelled, God went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.

Exodus 14:21-25, 30-31

Pursued by their enemies, at whose hands they were expecting a prompt and horrible death, the Israelites blamed Moses for their plight. Thoroughly convinced that God was able to perform what he had promised, Moses assured his people that God would protect them. Holding out his rod over the Red Sea, as he had been commanded by his God, Moses saw God open the way through the waters and the people walked through on dry ground.

Upon seeing the Israelites go across dryshod, Pharaoh and his hosts pursued them. When they came into the midst of the parted waters, Moses stretched forth his rod again and the waters returned to their natural state. The waters drowned Pharaoh's mighty host, but every Israelite was safe on the other shore. As certainly as God refused to forsake the Israelites, we can rest assured that he will not forsake his children today. We can always rely on God and his precious promises.

After the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea they encamped for a brief period on the shore thereof, and there they saw the winds and waves driving the bodies of the drowned Egyptians upon the shore, making available to them weapons and armor.

Exodus 15:1-3, 20-21

The song of Moses reflects the heart and mind of a true believer as he gives due recognition to the provisions of God. It sets a high standard for all of those who would truly praise God for his marvelous blessings. The immediate occasion for this song was the destruction of the Egyptian armies. It focuses attention upon the strength of God and its great superiority over that of Pharaoh and his hosts.

As long as the Israelites were in bondage there were not any grateful or joyful strains upon their lips. Following their deliverance, their sighing gave place to singing and their groans were replaced by praise. They sang God's praises and magnified his name because he had glorified himself by overthrowing and destroying the Egyptians.

Led by Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses, the Hebrew women went out and participated joyfully in singing the praises of God in celebration of his great deliverance of their people from the mighty Egyptians. The song ended as it began with the praise of God about whose power and future reign they did not have any doubts.

Life and Work Series

The Christian Hope

Whether one is attempting to solve the difficult problems of daily life or facing the experience of death, he needs the Christian hope which is both steadfast and sure.

II Timothy 4:1-2

Under the shadow of death Paul wrote to his trusted friend Timothy about the things that were vital. From the time of his salvation Paul had been called upon to pay a tremendous price for the witness which he bore for Christ. Without any thought of boasting about anything he had done for Christ, Paul reminded Timothy of the hardships, afflictions and persecutions which he had been called upon to endure, hoping to impress upon him that he, too, would suffer if he remained loyal to Christ.

From Paul, Timothy received the charge to keep on preaching the Word with earnestness and constancy. The preaching of the Word was not an elective, but the great imperative. In preaching the Word, the servant of Christ is to strive to acquaint people with the mind of God, to proclaim the gospel to the unsaved, to show the lost that they need the Saviour and his salvation, and to set before the unsaved the only remedy which the Lord has provided.

II Timothy 4:6-13

Paul knew that his days on earth were numbered. Under those circumstances it was not strange that his thoughts were turned first to the past and then to the future. He did not boast of his achievements for the Lord, but he gladly gave God the glory for his numerous accomplishments.

Paul viewed the Christian life as a conflict with self, the world and Satan. Paul was grateful that he could say, "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course." Viewing life as a stewardship also, Paul said, "I have kept the faith," meaning the body of truth which had been committed to him by Christ.

Paul was cheered greatly by the glorious prospect which awaited him, when he would appear before the judgment seat of Christ and receive "a crown of righteousness" as a reward for his loyalty to his Lord and his Word.

Paul was disappointed and grieved that certain of his associates whom he had trusted fully had forsaken him and left him in the lurch at the time when he needed them most. However, Luke had remained with him and had ministered unto him. He requested Timothy to make a special effort to come to him in his loneliness at his earliest opportunity. Paul asked him to bring with him his books that he might study them in his imprisonment.

II Timothy 4:16-18

The fact that the Lord stood with Paul and empowered him to do a marvelous job of proclaiming the gospel under extremely difficult circumstances prompted Paul to burst forth into a doxology. He believed that, if his imprisonment should end in his death, it would be the beginning of an experience far more wonderful than any he had ever had on earth, for he would be with his Lord and the redeemed.

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PARTNERS IN GROWTH

Mountains to the Mississippi

Heavy Winds Damage Mt. Washington Church

Heavy winds caused extensive damage June 5 to Kings Baptist Church, Mt. Washington.

Over one-half of the roof on the educational building was torn away by the strong winds. There was also extensive water damage throughout the educational building. Although the church sanctuary was not damaged, Kings Baptist lost practically all of its Sunday school space.

No final damage estimate has been made, but the loss to the 10-year-old building is expected to run into several thousand dollars.

Howard Receives Degree



Howard

Charles (Milton) Howard of Marion, Ill., received a doctor of ministry degree during the May graduation at Luther Rice Seminary, Jacksonville, Fla.

Howard is a native of Henderson County, Ky., and holds degrees from Murray State University and Southwestern Seminary. All of Howard's ministry has been in Illinois.

Unity Has Celebration

Unity Baptist Church, Ashland, celebrated its 140th anniversary with special services May 15. Congressman Carroll Hubbard was the guest speaker at Unity, the oldest Baptist church in Northern Kentucky. Harold Cathey is the pastor.

Mayfield Church Holds Special Colonial Service

First Baptist Church, Mayfield, went back to the olden days to celebrate its 139th anniversary.

John Simpson, who has pastored the church for the past nine months,

organized the special service. He was dressed in clothes of the colonial period and had arranged a display case which contained many letters, documents and pictures from earlier eras.

The worship service was also in the Puritan tradition with men sitting on one side of the church and women and children on the other. About the only concession to the modern era was that the service didn't last three hours as in colonial times.

Jaycees Honor Hodge

Ted Hodge, chaplain at Louisville's Baptist East Hospital, has been chosen as one of the Outstanding Young Men in America for 1977 by the Jaycees. Hodge is also an instructor in pastoral care at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Frank Owen: Church Memories II

Another episode for my proposed memory series might be the dreadful experience of many years ago in Bessemer, Ala. I was assistant pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham, when our pastor, John H. Buchanan, buzzed my desk and said, "Frank, do you want to preach at Bessemer tomorrow?" I replied that I could only do so on a very close time schedule because of a Sunday school hour commitment. He explained that a sudden illness made Bessemer badly in need of a pulpit supply "even if he must arrive late." Thus my "blind date" was agreed to with the new deacon chairman, Mr. Brooks, who was also on the line with Dr. Buchanan.

I arrived just as they were singing the doxology. Bounding up the steps I shook hands with the most hospitable white-haired greeter I have ever seen. He escorted me quickly to the rostrum upon my stating, "I am Mr. Owen, who is to preach today."

I shook hands with presiding officer Brooks. He didn't act like himself. He had joked on the phone that he "might not have all his senses" in this first such experience. He motioned uneasily toward a pulpit chair.

Mr. Brooks came back and forth a couple of times during the hymns, asking questions—introduction data, no doubt. Among them, "Are you a preacher?" (My role as assistant could

well have been as a layman.) I nodded affirmatively.

"What kind of a preacher?" This seemed the first normal sign shown under duress by the previously jocular Mr. Brooks I had met on the telephone. I caught the sense of his backstage humor quickly as to whether I was a good or a poor preacher and reassured him with a side-long wink that I was "just a medium sort of a preacher." This really knocked him off. His mouth and voice repeated my words, parrot fashion, but I could see that his mind really was not functioning at all and at last I realized that something was radically wrong.

He went back and called for another hymn (after the anthem). I got up and crossed the rostrum again to reach a printed folder on a table. As I sat back down I was stunned to read "First Methodist Church."

The house swam before me. I prayed "Oh, Lord, let me out of here the easiest way." The Lord paid no heed to that prayer. Next, I remember standing beside Dr. Saxon (not Mr. Brooks) and he was answering my question with great relief written in his face, "Why, that's two blocks farther up the street."

I rushed straight for the narrow aisle next to the wall. Someone hissed, but I kept going to discover too late the dead-end and had to retrace, red-faced.

Somehow the description of the white stone columns "facing downtown" hadn't come clear enough to differentiate between the South Highlands Baptist Church and the First Methodist Church. Advice to guest ministers: always read the sign over the door.

