

SBC Passes 13 Million But Organizational Enrolments Down

Southern Baptist Convention church membership topped 13 million for the first time in the denomination's history in the 1976-1977 year, but losses were recorded in the number of baptisms and in enrolment for Sunday school, Church Training, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood.

Church music was the only organization to gain and total membership, number of SBC churches, mission gifts and receipts also increased.

The report, compiled by the Research

Services Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, was from reports of 34,849 Southern Baptist churches.

The number of churches in the SBC increased by 0.5 percent, to 35,255, an increase of 182. The total includes 406 nonreporting churches.

Church membership in the SBC went up 1.2 percent, 160,594 to 13,083,199. Resident membership was 9,443,431.

Baptisms in the SBC dropped by 10.1 percent, a decrease of 38,806. The 345,690 baptisms was the lowest number

in the SBC since 1949.

Total receipts for the convention increased by 9.2 percent, more than \$151 million, to a total of \$1.8 billion. Mission gifts went up by 10.3 percent, almost \$27 million, to a total of nearly \$290 million.

The drop in Sunday school enrolment follows five consecutive years of gains. The decrease of 0.4 percent represented a loss of more than 27,000 members, resulting in a total enrolment of 7,430,931.

Church Training enrolment was off 3.9 percent from the 1975-76 total, to an enrolment of slightly less than 1.8 million, reflecting a loss of 72,227.

Woman's Missionary Union enrolment dropped by 1.8 percent in 1976-77, a loss of 20,949 to a total of 1,118,085, while Brotherhood enrolment dropped 1.2 percent, or 5,672, to a total of 473,309.

In church music, the 0.7 percent increase of 9,506 brought the total enrolment to 1,382,104.

WESTERN RECORDER

FEBRUARY 22, 1978

Kentucky Baptists' Weekly News Journal

Vol. 152, No. 8

HEW Secretary Defends Carter on Parochial Aid

Joseph A. Califano Jr. defended President Jimmy Carter against charges that he lied to Catholics during the 1976 campaign when he said that he, if elected, would work for federal funds for parochial schools.

The secretary of U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, who is a Roman Catholic, said that candidate Carter carefully chose his words relating to education aids to parochial schools. He said that Carter's pledge was limited by the restrictions placed on him by the U. S. Constitution.

The Carter campaign pledge relating to constitutional aid to parochial schools has been widely cited by Catholics as an endorsement of tax credits for those paying tuition in such schools. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D.-N.Y., himself a Roman Catholic, went so far as to say that the president lied to the American people when he came out against tax credit proposals.

The Califano defense of the president came during hearings on the administration's alternative proposal for aid to middle class Americans with children in college. Specifically attacking tax credit aid to education, the Carter plan proposes a \$1.4 billion package of grants, work study and loans in fiscal 1979 to increase existing student aid programs. The Moynihan-Packwood proposal for tax credits is estimated to cost the government a minimum of \$4.7 billion.

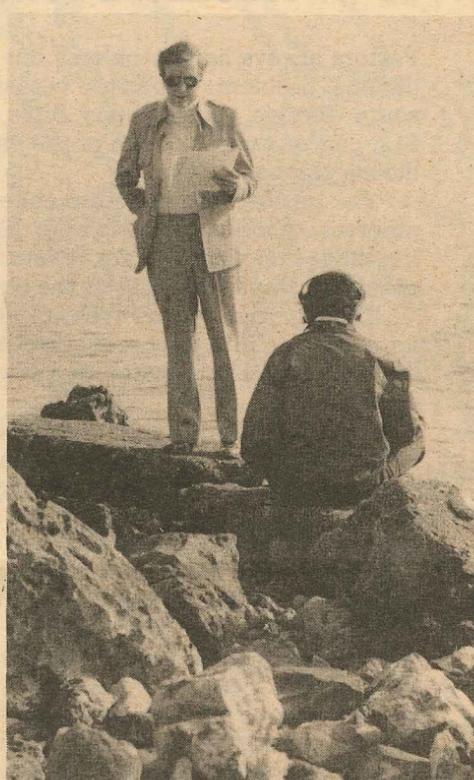
Many private school groups and the Roman Catholic education interests support the Moynihan-Packwood type of tuition tax credit aid to both elementary-secondary and higher education. The nation's public school educational organizations and religious liberty organizations, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Americans United, oppose the proposal.

Tennesseans Seek Leader

The administrative committee of the Tennessee Baptist executive board will serve as a search committee to find a successor to Ralph Norton as executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Norton, who has held the post since Jan. 1, 1973 will retire Dec. 31, 1978.

George E. Capps, associate executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, Nashville, is chairman of the administrative committee, which has approved guidelines for the election of Norton's successor.



Frank Pollard, "The Baptist Hour" host, stands on the shore of the Sea of Galilee to record a series of radio sermons from Israel and Bible lands. The first program recorded in Israel by the Southern Baptist Radio-TV Commission aired Feb. 12. Pollard is pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.

Write Now to Stop 'Sex Life of Jesus'

An aid to U. S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield said the Danish filmmaker who has sought unsuccessfully to produce a movie on the alleged sex life of Jesus in several foreign countries has also failed to find a producer in the United States.

Tom Getman, legislative aide to the Oregon Republican, revealed that filmmaker Jens Thorsen has turned his objective to finding a book publisher who would agree to publish a script of the film in book form.

Thorsen has failed to have the obscene film, "The Many Faces of Jesus," produced in such nations as Britain, Israel and Denmark. If made the film reportedly would depict Jesus as having been sexually active in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

Hoping to find refuge in the United States Constitution's guarantees of free speech and free press, Thorsen came to this country some time ago, but has had no success.

Getman said that Thorsen recently asked Grove Press of New York City to produce the book, but noted that the publisher has apparently made no decision. He said Hatfield's response to a surge of complaints about the project has been to urge concerned Christians to write Grove Press, 196 West Houston St., New York, N.Y. 10014, asking the company to refuse to publish Thorsen's work.

Hatfield, a Baptist, has been telling angry Christians that neither Congress nor President Carter can do anything about the movie or the book simply because it is not a legislative issue.

Ky. Invited to Conference

Pastors and lay persons throughout Kentucky are invited to share in what may be a first for Southern Baptists—a "Midwest call to prayer and discipleship."

The three day conference on the discipline of prayer will be held at the Illinois Baptist Building in Springfield Mar. 16-18.

The conference is designed to deal with New Testament principles of living and growing in Christ. Discipleship will be explored by Peter Lord, president, Florida Baptist Pastor's Conference; Max Don Barnett, University of Oklahoma Baptist Student Union director; and Lewis Abbott, a pastor in Irving, Tex.

Kentuckians interested in attending the conference should write Charles L. Chaney, Box 3486, Springfield, IL 62708 for more information.

BPRA Elects Seven

Richard M. Styles, vice president of university relations for Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., was elected president of the Baptist Public Relations Association during the organization's annual meeting.

Styles succeeds James H. Cox, associate editor of Western Recorder, state newspaper for Kentucky Baptists. Cox will serve as awards chairman for 1978.

Other 1978 officers are program vice president, John Seelig, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Tex.; membership vice president, Stan Haste, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C.; secretary, Evelyn Strickland, Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, Tenn.; newsletter editor, Mike Duduit, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; and treasurer, Don Hepburn, Southwestern Seminary, Ft. Worth.

Building Help Coming

A church furnishings and building products exhibit is set Mar. 14-15 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. Manufacturers and suppliers will have displays and representatives demonstrate church building materials and equipment.

Sponsored by the Church Architecture Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, the exhibit will acquaint students, seminary personnel, area pastors and church planners with quality church building furnishings and equipment.

The exhibit area will be located in Gheens Hall in the seminary library building from 8 to 5 Tuesday and 8 to 12 noon Wednesday.

SS Growth Emphasized

Calling for an increased "growth consciousness," Robert G. Fulbright, director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible Teaching Division, presented employes a five-year plan for increasing Sunday school enrolment across the Southern Baptist Convention.



Fulbright

The plan calls for an increase in Sunday school enrolment of 12 percent, to 8.3 million, by 1982. To achieve this, enrolment must average a gain of 178,106 each year. Enrolment now stands at 7.4 million.

Fulbright said that to achieve the goals would require Sunday School Department employes to make a "personal commitment to growth consciousness." He also said growth would have a high visibility in Sunday school periodicals and field services.

Introduction of the growth plan was stimulated by the fact that Sunday school enrolment declined last year for the first time in three years.

Fulbright cited the cradle roll plan for ministering to expectant parents and families of infants as having great potential for reaching people.

"One problem in the past has been that too many of our enlargement efforts have been aimed at the same target group," he said. Ministry to ethnic and language groups, bus outreach and fellowship Bible classes were among other growth approaches he identified.



Our First Call Is To Be

Kentucky Baptists will be especially interested in reading and all Baptists can profit by reading Jim Newton's article on missionaries Buddy and Jean Albright in this February issue of *The Commission*. Buddy and Jean have been in the African countries of Zambia and Malawi for 18 years and probably are as effective witnesses for Jesus Christ as any Southern Baptist missionaries in the world though they would be the last to agree with this assessment.

Buddy and Jean have a special place in my heart. They were bright, talented and popular students at Georgetown when I was a faculty member there. They sincerely and patiently searched for God's place for their lives and ultimately found it in Africa. Lexington is their base in this country and their sons have followed them in training at Georgetown College where association and close friendship developed with one of our sons.

The Albrights have not been satisfied only to fill the traditional role of white missionaries in Africa but have sought more effective ways to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have found that identification with Africans and the African life style gives them a hearing they could never have as American missionaries holding to our western culture and life style while preaching and teaching the gospel in Africa.

Jean and Buddy by now are as much or more African than American in dress, diet, living facilities and other life style characteristics. This is not merely an accommodation on their part but a way of life they now love.

They live as Zambians. They eat and read by candlelight, not by electricity. Jean cooks on a woodstove, washes clothes in an old fashioned washer with a hand cranked wringer and depends upon a home made outdoor hot water heater.

In response to Jim Newton's question, "What is the most effective thing you've done during your 10 years as a missionary in Zambia?" Buddy replied, "Oh, I don't know. Really, it's not what a missionary does, it's what a missionary is that's important."

Now that's a profound insight. That's cutting right through to the heart of the matter and it's as true for every Christian as for a missionary. We are called first of all *to be* and not *to do*. And what we are will ultimately be more influential than what we do or say.

This does not mean what we do is not important. It does mean what we are is more important and that our character gives validity to our words and deeds. What the world needs most is to see what Jesus Christ can make out of a person and not merely to hear a pretty testimony or even a powerful sermon.

A pastor's sermon is important but what impresses his listeners most is not his sermon but his life. This is why some powerful preachers are failures and some mediocre preachers are successes when it comes to a transforming impact in a community.

A deacon's public prayers are important and so is a Sunday school teacher's lesson. But if the deacon or teacher is a dishonest business man, plays it loose morally or uses other people for selfish gain, his prayers and

lessons are a mockery and he is a stumbling block.

Buddy and Jean Albright don't sit around being something without doing anything. For example, Buddy brings in the native pastors for one week of each month for intensive teaching and training but he doesn't even care to talk about it because he insists what he is is more important than what he does.

We speak of the sacrifices of Baptist missionaries serving on foreign fields and these are real. Merely to leave homeland and family is more than most of us would do but actually many Baptist foreign missionaries have high standards of living compared to those around them. It could be that the testimony of life styles is stronger than the testimony of sermon.

A Welcome Problem for a Pastor

Pastors always have problems but I met one recently with a most unusual problem. It was the occasion of my annual visit with a church in south Georgia for a January Bible conference. As usual upon arriving my first concern was to learn of the welfare of the pastor and the church during the past year.

The pastor, a friend since college days, reported that in addition to an otherwise good year, December 1977 had brought a kind of excitement that kept him sleepless for several nights and led to the calling of a special business meeting of the church to attend to an unexpected matter.

The excitement was over an unexpected gift to the church from one of its families. Gifts to churches at the end of the year are not unusual but this one was. It amounted to a few thousand less than a million and a half dollars.

A pastor unexpectedly informed of such a gift understandably would be sleepless, not just with excitement but with concern over how to lead the church in the wisest use of such a sum of money.

The donor put little restriction on how the funds were to be used. It was wisely specified that it was not to be used for current expenses of the church in order not to discourage other members from the responsibility and joy of regular giving.

The story of the donor and his wealth is interesting. He started out without any special training and without financial resources. He invented an irrigation system for his farm and it caught on not only locally but by now in several foreign countries.

He sold out his business recently and the million and one half dollar gift to his church represents a tithe. The gift came to the church in the form of four checks from the company purchasing the business and I saw the first two checks totaling over \$900,000. They arrived, believe it or not, in the regular mail in window envelopes with regular 13 cents postage.

Here is an amazing example of stewardship training. A pastor long ago taught this man to be honest in tithing his blessings from the Lord. His tithe in the beginning was only a few dollars a month but look at it now.

The gift is a fine reflection upon the giver. Not all those starting out to tithe stick to it when they get rich.

This gift is also a fine reflection upon the church and the pastor. For a member to trust this much money to his church means he has confidence in the wisdom of its leadership and its members.

The most exciting thought is that other Baptist pastors could be kept awake in the same way if all those Baptists blessed by the Lord with wealth were honest and committed.

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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Baptist Forum

Run, Don't Walk!

Anyone with an ounce of sense and a grain of knowledge would not have written the letter published in the Feb. 1 issue of *Western Recorder*. I refer to the nonsense signed by Lloyd D. Perrin of Cadiz, Ky.

If our pious Baptist (?) ministers would spend half the time in study that they spend defending their flimsy faith, they would not be attacking scholars of the Bible such as E. Glenn Hinson. If Mr. Perrin should ever be called to pastor my church I would run—not walk—to the nearest exit.

Rogna R. Tankersley
Paducah

HMB Strategy to Penetrate Key US Cities and Counties

The framework for Mission Service Corps volunteers and a Baptist blitz on key U. S. cities and counties will be funded when the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions reaches its goal.

Only 11 of the \$13 million goal is budgeted for the support of missionaries, field ministries and special projects of the Home Mission Board.

Of the remaining two million dollars, 25 percent will be used for the Mission Service Corps (MSC). By the end of 1979 the Home Mission Board expects to have 750 places for 1000 to 1200 MSC volunteers. Easter offering funds will go to the processing of volunteers, their orientation and on-site expenses. Volunteers are financially supported during term of service by individual sponsors themselves.

The remaining percentage will go to the board's key cities/key counties.

This project of giving missions first-aid to key metropolitan and rural-urban areas was begun in 1975. The first phase was implemented in 1977 with a penetration into six cities and 71 counties.

The six cities were New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Seattle and Houston. They have a total population of 27.5 million and are 74 percent unevangelized. Of the 71 counties, 55 are without Southern Baptist witness (no church or mission). It is estimated that among their four million total population, 75 percent are unevangelized. They are located in 12 states.

Phase two involves nine cities with an increase in population of 20 million. Cities involved are Detroit, Washington (DC), St. Louis, Atlanta, San Francisco/Oakland, Portland, Denver, Miami, Cleveland and another sector of New York. These cities are 70 percent unevangelized.

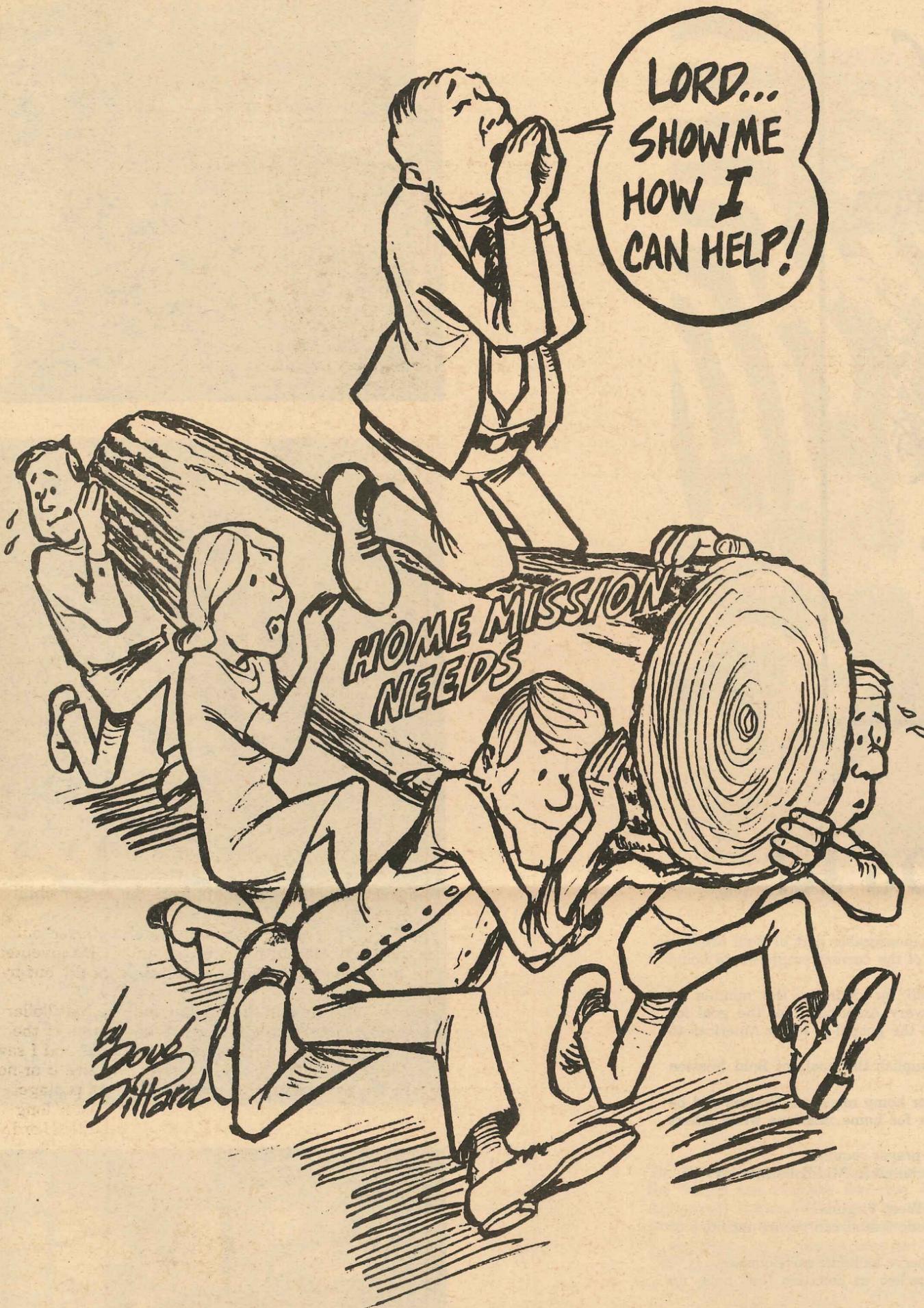
Phase two involves counties in seven states. Of these, 18 have no Southern Baptist witness. Also, with one million population about 60 percent are unevangelized.

Seven cities will be penetrated in 1979 with the beginning of phase three.

In the initial year no missionary is assigned to a key area on a permanent basis. If the \$13 million goal is reached a career missionary may be assigned.

Leonard Irwin, director of the Home Mission Board's planning section, said, "We will let our strategy pinpoint needs. If we discover, for example, that a language missionary or a Christian social ministries worker is needed in a particular area and we have the funding to provide the personnel, we will do it. Until that time we greatly depend on the local resources, the people who actually live in our key target areas."

Offering funds will go to canvassing these areas and provide the base for penetrating the key U. S. cities and counties.



Boldly boost your Annie Armstrong Easter Offering by 21% to make possible these home missions thrusts:

Evangelism Projects	645,000
Mass Media for Bold Mission Thrust	90,000
Church Extension	2,000,000
Readiness of Mission Service Corps	500,000
Language Missions	5,000
Small Church Evangelism	3,000,000

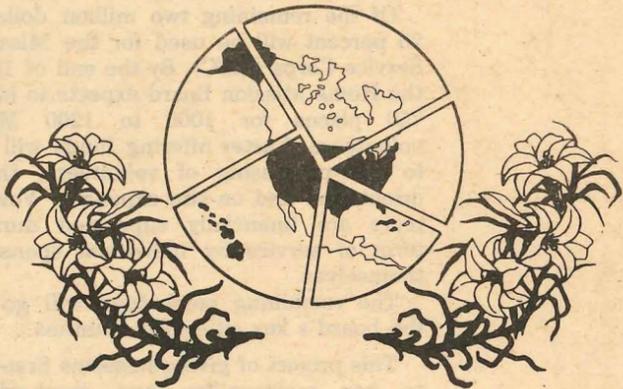
Metropolitan Crusades	30,000
Christian Social Ministries	1,404,000
Increase in Missionary Salaries	300,000
Associational Assistance	1,380,000
US 2 Missionaries	250,000
Volunteer Involvement in Missions Process	55,000

All funds over \$11,000,000 go to Bold Mission Thrust. National Goal \$13,000,000.



Share!

YOUR FAITH WITH AMERICA



**WEEK OF PRAYER AND
ANNIE ARMSTRONG
EASTER OFFERING
FOR HOME MISSIONS**

Prayer Can Do It!

Although the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is a measurable part of Bold Mission Thrust it is not the biggest or most important part of the current emphasis on home missions. Prayer is.

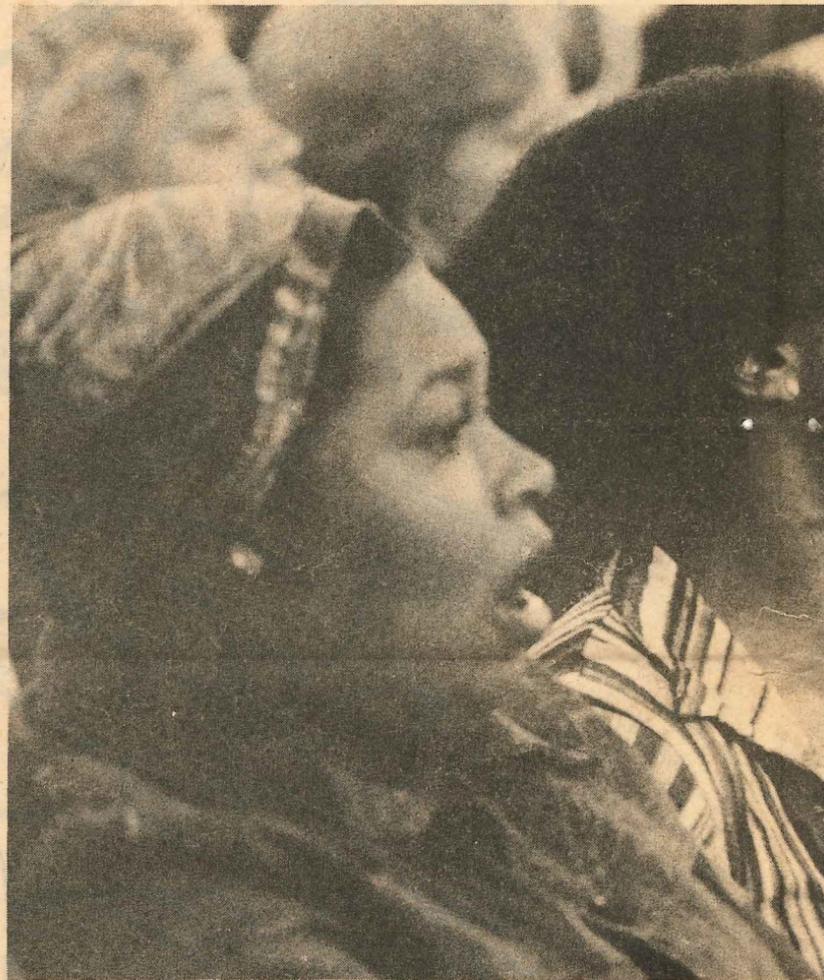
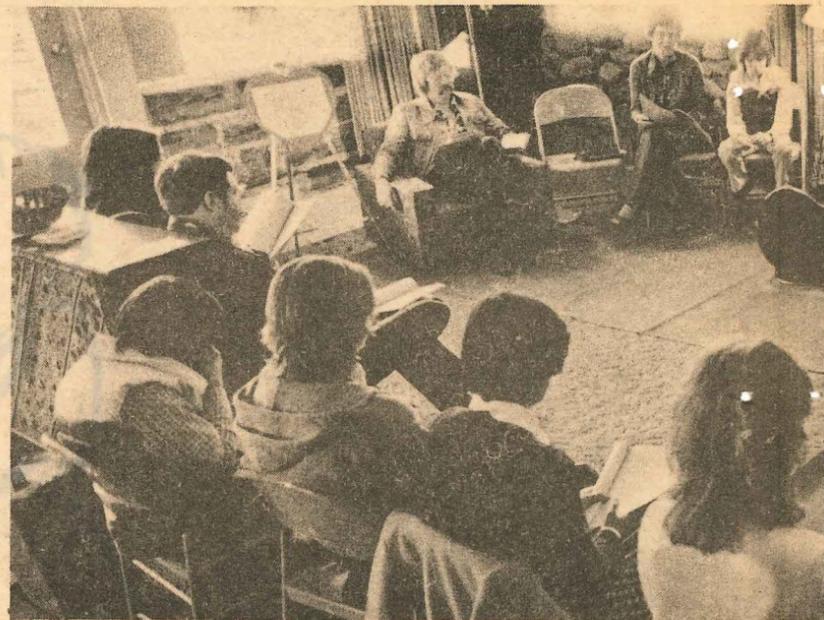
The \$13 million goal can scarcely pay the bill for doubling the number of missionaries or for enough mass media to reach every American. Yet the goal for Bold Mission Thrust in home missions is to present the gospel to every American to to organize a congregation within his reach.

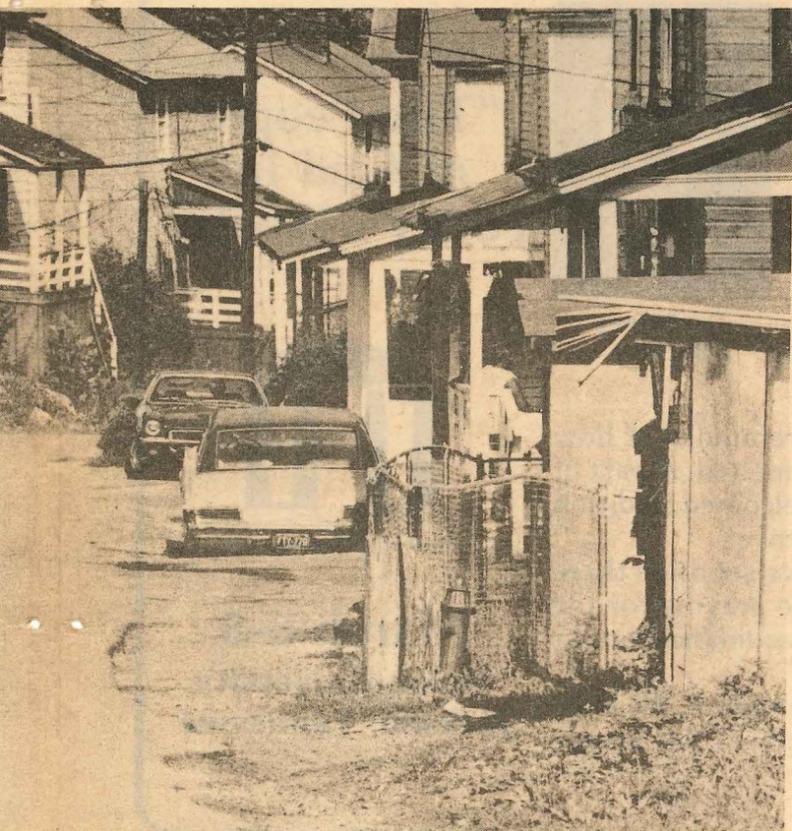
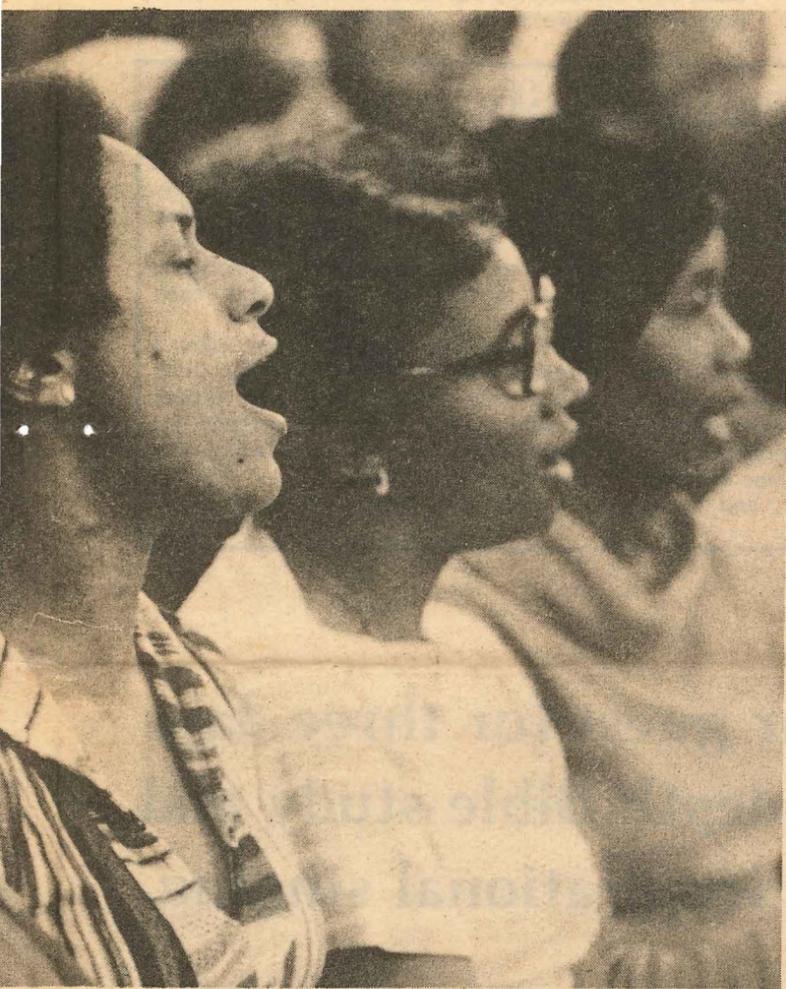
The offering will help but only prayer can accomplish the goals of Bold Mission Thrust.

March 5-12 is a week for concentrated prayer for home missions. Pastors will be devoting part of church meetings to specific prayer for home missions while others will pray every day.

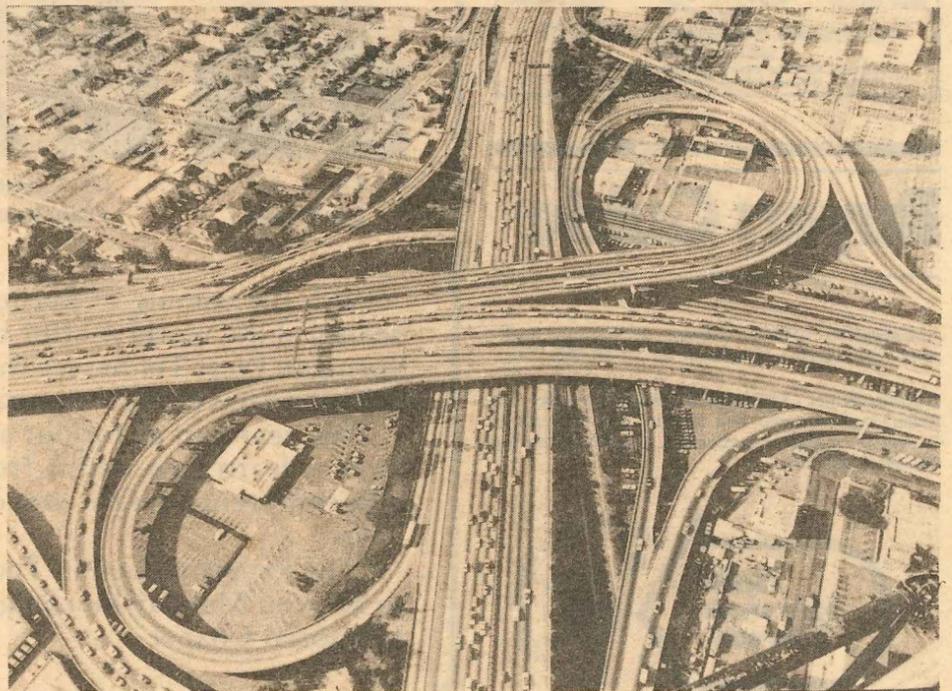
A poll of missions leaders marked up this list of prayer requests:

1. Funds and leadership will be available for a church in Middlebourne, W. Va., where interest has been expressed.
2. People will volunteer to help with projects in West Virginia.
3. Several congregations in Connecticut and Rhode Island can secure facilities of their own.
4. At least 2000 people will offer themselves to serve as home missionaries.
5. Pastors will answer 600 calls to begin churches in counties that have no effective evangelical witness.
6. All 13 million Southern Baptists will participate by giving at least one dollar to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.
7. Residents of East Side Manhattan will attend the Bible study in apartment 4-B, East 85th Street, led by Elmer and Jean Sizemore, so a new church can begin.
8. More community ministries can begin in Metropolitan New York Baptist Association.
9. Persons will repond for service among ethnic groups.
10. Ten thousand Southern Baptists this year will do some sort of volunteer short-term missionay project.
11. Every church will issue an invitation for its people to be personally involved in home missions and lives will change.
12. Black Southern Baptist church will increase.
13. Young couples will adopt infants with special needs from the Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center, New Orleans. These infants are biracial or have special physical problems.
14. Money will be provided for ministry to the American Indians in northern Nevada, Vietnamese in San Francisco and Portuguese in central California.
15. People will commit themselves to serve in 750 homeland Mission Service Corps assignments and a church or individual will sponsor each.
16. Bold Mission Thrust can be made in Putnam, Sullivan, New York, Warren, Hunterdon counties and New Jersey.
17. And, finally, pray for the student revival team, Gardner-Webb Baptist College, N. C., that witnesses to the deaf.





The freeway for home missions isn't free but it is just as effective and complex as the famed Los Angeles freeway. The freeway for home missions is the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. The destination is a \$13 million goal, much of which carries the payload for Bold Mission Thrust.





Scarcely anybody is evaluated any more frequently than the preacher who serves as pastor of a church. In Baptist life the congregational democracy is free to act upon pastoral matters any time it wishes and a great deal of evaluation of his life and work is going on all the time.

I couldn't tell where they had gone to church. I wouldn't write this if I could. I was standing in line at an eating place and could not fail to hear the conversing group behind me.

"I loved that poem he gave, wish I had a copy of it."

"Yes, but it was inappropriate for his subject

matter."

"I don't care, I loved it and wish I had a copy." "His offertory prayer wasn't appropriate either," said another. "An offertory prayer should be about the offering, it shouldn't stray into other subject matter." I sort of guessed at this point that the pastor had kept the congregation standing too long through a general prayer in connection with the offering.

No one was vicious or particularly unfriendly about it, but they were evaluating his conduct of the morning services pretty thoroughly.

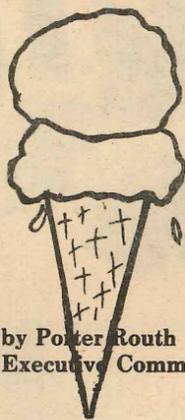
I am sure all of us have heard such comment when it is on the destructive side and sometimes almost

vicious. Then, I am glad to say, I have heard a great deal on the positive side, too, in the same manner. I hope you and I only participate in the latter.

One thing is certain, though, Brother Pastor, you live in a glass house. You may not have to stand formal election very often but you are evaluated at every turn. God give you good poise. You are on candid camera and you are in focus.

You know something, the world is evaluating all of us Christians and even judging our Lord's power to make new creatures by our lives. "... what manner of persons ought (we) to be..." (II Pet. 3:11).

i really don't need a double-dip



by Potter Routh
SBC Executive Committee

It was just a single dip ice cream cone. Since I am counting calories I don't eat them very often, but the special for the month was banana nut and the picture on the window of yellow ripe bananas and fresh crunchy nuts was more temptation than I could bear.

It was just a single dip and the digital figure on the shiny new cash register signaled a bright red 31 cents. Thirty-one cents for a single dip. That is another good reason for not buying more banana nut cones.

Age does provide some perspective,

and as I lovingly licked the cooling cream my human computer brought back another day when a single dip cone was only a nickel—five shiny pennies—with no tax.

How about my pastor? When he buys an ice cream cone for his kids, does he have to pay six times what his daddy paid when he was young? How about our missionaries? In some countries of the world a single dip would be over a half dollar—if you could get it.

That single dip cone got me thinking about books...and boots...and beans

and beauty shops. The prices have all gone up. And they are the prices my pastor and his family have to pay. They are the prices my church has to pay. They are the prices our missionaries have to pay at home and—even larger—around the world.

I must think about this more when I worship with my offering. I must think about this more when our church considers increasing the percent for Cooperative Program—and when our state plans its division.

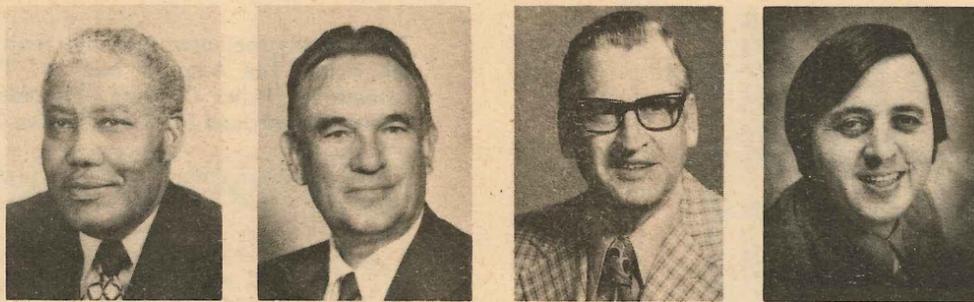
I really don't need a double dip.

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"The People of God in Today's World"



March 6-8
Union University
Jackson, Tennessee

With the coming of Spring we are traditionally reminded of how beautiful the world is after the winter snows have melted. A part of Spring in West Tennessee that is fast becoming a welcomed tradition is Union University's Annual Spring Bible Conference.

This year join us for our seventh conference as we set aside three days to learn new truths from God's Word. We are praying for the best conference ever as we continue to seek Christ's guidance for our lives.

"The People of God in Today's World" will be our theme. We hope to see you Monday morning, March 6 at 10:00 a.m. in G. M. Savage Memorial Chapel.

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Mountains to the Mississippi

Personnel



Miss Dalton



Pate



Mrs. Pate



Thompson

Miss Dalton to Morganfield

Rozanna Dalton, a native of Sturgis, has been called as minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church, Morganfield. Miss Dalton completed the master of church music degree at Southern Seminary in December.

Pike Picks the Pates

John F. Pate began his duties as director of missions, Pike Association, Jan. 1.

Pate is a native of Evansville, Ind. and a graduate of Indiana University. He received the bachelor of divinity from Southwestern Seminary and for the past three years has been director of missions, Northwest Indiana Baptist Association. Prior to that he pastored

Northeast Park Baptist Church, Evansville, Ind.

Both Pate and his wife are appointed by the Home Mission Board. The former Virginia Harris of Athens, Mrs. Pate received a bachelor's degree from the University of Evansville and a master's in religious education at Southwestern Seminary.

The Pates are living in Stanville.

Southside Calls SBTS Student

Steve Thompson, a student at Southern Seminary, has accepted the pastorate of Southside Baptist Church, Louisville. A graduate of Murray State College, he and his wife, Joyce, have two sons, Robin, 8 and Chris, 5.

Congregations

Mrs. Jones Is Honored

Mrs. Boyce Jones was recently honored by East Baptist Church, Paducah, in recognition of more than 50 years of service. Mrs. Jones has been active in Sunday school, Church Training, Woman's Missionary Union, youth work and vacation Bible school.

Board Serves 51 Years

Ernest Board, a Baptist deacon for 51 years, has been honored by being elected deacon emeritus of Franklin Crossroads Baptist Church, Cecilia. Board was

ordained in 1927 by Vertrees Baptist Church and has served in the Franklin Crossroads Church for the past seven years.

Also recognized by the congregation were deacons Clarence Cecil, ordained in 1948 and Paul Thomas, ordained in 1945.

Deaths

Salyer Passes

Elkhorn City Baptist Church passed a resolution of appreciation upon the death of Winfred Salyer. It noted that his passing will leave a void in the life of the church. Salyer taught a Sunday school class and served as a deacon.

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Group/Tour Host Arrangements Available



Mr. Brent Caldwell is Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, Louisville, Kentucky. He is a native of Princeton. He has a Master of Divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and a Law degree from University of Louisville School of Law. Mr. Caldwell will be the primary program personality.



Mr. Floyd Taylor is a native of Arkansas. He attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and has his Law degree from University of Louisville School of Law. He is an attorney working with the Kentucky Baptist Board of Child Care. He will assist Mr. Caldwell with the program.

FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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Florence Baptist Church
283 Main Street
Florence, Ky.
Rev. J. William (Bill) Jones, Pastor

Melbourne Heights Baptist Church
3728 Taylorsville Road
Louisville, Ky.
Dr. Hankins F. Parker, Pastor

Central Baptist Church
1644 Nicholasville Road
Lexington, Ky.
Rev. Bill Turner, Pastor

Baptist Tabernacle
1200 Jefferson
Paducah, Ky.
Rev. Kenneth Brown, Pastor

Warren Association Office Building
1435 High Street
Bowling Green, Ky.
Rev. Francis Tallant, Assoc. Miss.

Sunday School Lessons

by H. C. Chiles
Lessons for March 5, 1978

International Series

Awaiting the Promise

Acts 1:1-14

The "former treatise" to which Luke referred was his gospel containing the record of what Christ began to do and to teach. Acts, a continuation of that gospel, contained the record of what Christ continued to do through his followers.

Theophilus, to whom these two productions were ascribed, was a lover of God and likely a friend of Luke, a man of great social distinction and a Christian of wide influence.

After Christ's resurrection, on 10 occasions he presented himself to his disciples—five on the day he arose and five during the subsequent 39 days. Those days were enough to settle their doubts.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit—Acts 1:4-5

Christ commanded the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem and await the arrival of the Holy Spirit.

The Commission of Christ—Acts 1:6-8

Still expecting Christ to bring political independence to Israel the disciples asked if he would restore the kingdom immediately. He replied this was not of paramount importance. It was not their privilege to "know the times or the seasons."

Instead of peering into the future they were expected to be busy witnessing for Christ. A witness is one who has

experienced something and is willing to tell. Christian witnessing is of two kinds—the lips and the life. The life speaks when lips are silent.

The Ascension of Christ—Acts 1:9

It must have been thrilling for the disciples as they beheld Christ gradually ascending until he disappeared from their sight. What sober thoughts must have occupied their minds.

The Return of Christ—Acts 1:10-11

As the disciples gazed into heaven two messengers stood by and informed them it was not the Lord's will for them to remain there. They reminded the disciples they had a task to perform. These messengers comforted the disciples with the assurance Christ would return and his coming would be as literal as his departure.

The Days of Waiting—Acts 1:12-14

As a demonstration of their obedience the 11 apostles promptly returned to Jerusalem. A total of 120 persons entered the "upper room" which was a place of hallowed memories. In the same spirit they began to pray for 10 days. God blessed them with a mighty outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Life and Work Series

Who Took Jesus' Life?

Today's lesson is based on the passages of scripture which deal with two appearances of Christ before Pilate, the procurator of Judea.

John 18:33-38

When members of the Sanhedrin asked Christ "Art thou the son of God?" he answered in the affirmative. They rushed him to Pilate's residence and demanded he pronounce the death penalty upon Christ. Pilate asked, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" Their refusal to name the crime with which Christ was charged provoked Pilate. Wanting to get this case off his hands, Pilate said, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." They replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

Pilate had Christ brought before him to avoid a public examination. He asked Christ, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Bringing Pilate to face his own responsibility Christ asked, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself or did others tell it thee of me?" Pilate sought to evade Christ's pointed question by sarcastically asking, "Am I a Jew?" As if to say, "Since I am a Roman am I to know

everything about the ideas and politics of the Jews?" Pilate asked, "What has thou done" to create this situation? In perfect poise Christ acknowledged his kingship.

Convinced of the innocence of Christ, Pilate hesitated to declare it. Concluding Christ was only a harmless enthusiast and not a rival of Caesar, he reported to the multitude, "I find in him no fault." His verdict met with howls of rage.

John 19:12-16

Pilate did not assert his authority and release Christ. The Jews informed Pilate if he did so he would prove he was not a friend of Caesar.

It was evident to Pilate the accusers wanted the death penalty inflicted on Christ regardless of the facts. Pilate tried to avoid doing anything but that was impossible.

Pilate made an attempt to release the Lord Jesus. His words, "Behold you king," brought an outburst of hatred from Jews who were determined he must die. Without pronouncing a formal sentence, Pilate delivered him to the Jews and permitted them to do as they pleased.



BUCKHORN [Ky.] LAKE RESORT PARK—
Can Spring Be Far Behind?