

## Gene Puckett named to church, state post

R. Gene Puckett, editor of the Maryland Baptist since Aug. 1, 1966, has been elected executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

The organization, based in Silver Spring, Md., near Washington, works for religious freedom and separation of church and state.

Puckett, 47, will resign from the news publication of the Baptist Convention of Maryland effective July 31.

A native of Kentucky, Puckett will continue to live in Reistertown, Md., about 40 miles from Silver Spring, and maintain membership in the Woodbrook Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation.

He came to the Maryland Baptist from the associate editorship of Western Recorder, 1963-66. Previously he was a pastor in Florida, 1961-63; the first full time editor of the Ohio Baptist Messenger, 1958-61; and a pastor in Kentucky and Ohio, 1952-58.

Active in Southern Baptist life, Puckett has been president of the Southern Baptist Press Association; chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's committee on order of business; and president of the trustees at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of Western Kentucky University and Southern Seminary.

## B'hood nominee quits minutes before vote set

The search committee seeking a new executive director for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission was reorganized and given additional guidelines by the commission's trustees when the committee's nominee withdrew without explanation just prior to the May 16-18 meeting.

A five-member search committee was elected by the trustees last November to recommend a successor to Glendon McCullough, who was killed in an automobile accident last year.

The nominee of the committee was to have been William E. Hardy Jr., minister of education at First Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss. Hardy had served as chairman of the Brotherhood Commission, 1976-78. He was elected last November as chairman of the search committee, but withdrew from that post when the committee began to consider him as a possible nominee.

Hardy's nomination as executive director was approved unanimously by the search committee Mar. 11 and by the commission's executive committee Apr. 19.

At the opening session of the meeting May 16 Jack Deligans, acting chairman of the search committee, told the trustees that earlier in the day Hardy had asked "that his name not be presented to commissioners for consideration at this time."

The three other remaining members of the search committee are Jack L. Knox, president of QS Storage-North American Van Lines, Germantown, Tenn.; Lee Prince, pastor of Union Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.; and Carl E. Vods, Alexandria, La., businessman.

The trustees formally accepted Hardy's resignation as chairman and as a member of the search committee. They expanded the committee to seven, electing Billy Rogers, a real estate broker in Earle, Ark.; Reginal Stokes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, Ala.; and Jack Harwell, editor of the Christian Index, Atlanta, Ga. Knox will serve as chairman.

The committee asked Robert Dixon, director of Texas Baptist Men, Dallas, to serve as the search committee's contact with state Baptist Brotherhood leadership, who have expressed great concern with the process to secure a new executive director.

The Brotherhood Commission trustees approved a recommendation from the search committee "that from this date and following none of the present or future members of the search committee shall be eligible for consideration as executive director."

The next scheduled meeting of the Brotherhood Commission will be Nov. 7-9.

## Supreme Court rules customs officials can inspect boxes of church materials

Returning to the bench for the stretch run of its current term, the U. S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower federal court ruling that U. S. customs officials did not violate the rights of members of the Church of Scientology of California by opening and inspecting four boxes of church materials flown from London to Los Angeles International Airport.

In other actions, the high court refused to hear the appeal of an Indiana teacher who was fired for reading the Bible to his classes, denied a hearing to a Pennsylvania man who claimed he was denied real estate tax exemption because of religious beliefs, and ruled that a Lutheran campground facility in Pennsylvania is entitled only to fair market value indemnity.

The California Church of Scientology took the federal government to court over the inspection of church related papers and documents even though they were returned to church officials after four days.

A U. S. customs agent at the airport became suspicious of the boxes' contents upon discovering references to the CIA, Interpol and sabotage. He and his supervisor then determined that the documents should be detained and examined by a customs special agent.

The special agent, Michael Peel, reviewed the materials over a three-day period and determined that they contained potential evidence of tax fraud and possibly violations of other laws. His decision was quickly overruled by the Bureau of Customs, however, and the materials were handed over to church officials.

In appealing to the Supreme Court, church attorneys declared that a lower court decision against the church would, if allowed to stand, "signal that all written matter brought into the United States by any means other than by international mail will be subject to reading and detention . . . for any reason at all, or for no reason." The resulting "chilling effect on the exercise of First Amendment rights of speech and expression would be monumental," the argument said.

The government, on the other hand, argued that federal customs officials must be permitted to open cartons coming into the country "without probable cause and without warrants" in order to detect violations of customs laws.

In the Indiana Bible reading case, the high court refused to hear the appeal of Max W. Lynch, an assistant mathematics professor at Indiana State

University who was dismissed five years ago for insisting on reading the Bible to his classes.

Lynch, who taught high school-age young people at the University's Laboratory School in Terre Haute, was notified by school officials in the fall of 1973 that he was violating university policy. When he persisted with the readings, he was fired.

Lynch, who earlier lost an appeal to the Indiana Supreme Court, argued in a written brief that his dismissal violated his free exercise of religion.

His "compelling religious beliefs caused Lynch to read his Bible" to his students, the brief continued. Furthermore, no one was required to remain in the room during the readings and no religious service as such was involved.

The university brief countered by citing previous Supreme Court decisions that merely allowing dissenting pupils to leave the classroom during such exercises is not a satisfactory solution. "The supervisory position of control occupied by the teacher over student grading and conduct, coupled with peer pressure and disapproval" would deprive the students of their constitutionally protected freedom to believe as they wish," the statement argued.

The justices also declined to hear the appeal of a Pennsylvania man, Robert B. Graham, an ordained "cardinal" in the universal life church, the mail-order ordination service headed by Kirby J. Hensley of California.

Graham took his case to the Bucks County Court of Common Pleas after the County Board of Assessments refused to exempt his house from real estate taxes.

None of those arguments convinced the county court or the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which like the nation's high court, refused to hear the case.

In another Pennsylvania case, the justices ruled 8-0 that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America is entitled only to the fair market value of the camping facility and not the cost of its replacement.

The synod took the government to court after condemnation proceedings were initiated to acquire land on which the synod operated summer camps. A federal district court held last year that the government was obligated to pay the fair market price for the property, but not the "substitute facilities" price which the synod claimed was due it.

## Houston parking, transportation rough

Messengers to the 134th Southern Baptist Convention, in Houston, June 12-14, are being urged by local committee and convention planners to go the extra mile in cooperating despite difficult parking and transportation problems in Houston.

During the daytime, parking will not exist when messengers converge on the Summit for sessions on the morning and afternoon of Tuesday, June 12; the morning of Wednesday, June 13; and the morning and afternoon of Thursday, June 14.

"The local committee and the Southern Baptist Convention planners, who have been working hard to iron out as many difficulties as possible, urge messengers to show a cooperative spirit as we work together under God's leadership to make this a great convention despite the transportation problems," said Tim Hedquist, convention manager.

Hedquist, assistant to the treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said sheets of information will be available at check-in at 39 convention hotels to help messengers to work out transportation.

He said the convention has established a hotline number in Houston—850-0735—for persons who get confused about travel and need help. The hotline will be open Monday, June 11, 1 p.m.-9 p.m.; Tuesday, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.

"The glut of Houston traffic allows absolutely no parking at the Summit before 6 p.m.," Hedquist said. He urges messengers to observe that regulation to avoid being towed by the city. He said buses will run continuously from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. each day and will be numbered and color-coded for easy identification.

Messengers with cars are urged to drive during the day to the Rice Stadium Parking Lot, at University Blvd. and Greenbriar, and take a shuttle bus (Bus #4) to the Summit. Parking is \$1 per car. It also costs \$1 to ride the bus to the Summit and \$1 for the return trip.

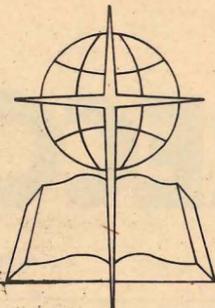
But the good news, Hedquist says, is that messengers may park free at the Summit for the Tuesday and Thursday evening sessions and may park at the Astrodome for the Wednesday evening session for \$2.

Messengers without cars may ride to the Summit or the Astrodome from three locations—the Hyatt Regency, Downtown Holiday Inn and the Rice Stadium Parking Lot during the day—and also from the Shamrock Hilton at night. Feeder buses will take messengers at other convention hotels to the departure point of the shuttle bus.

Total cost from the hotel to the Summit or Astrodome is \$2. Bus tickets may be purchased at the Summit, various hotels or the bus at the hotel.

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

WESTERN RECORDER  
(ISSN 0043-4132)  
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Published by Western Recorder Inc., Box 43401, Middletown, KY 40243 weekly, except for one week in July and December. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

Subscriptions: Single \$4.20; foreign, \$4.25; church budget, \$3.00. Payable in advance, except church accounts, which require tax exemption number.

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C. R. Daley

## Daley Observations

### An ill-conceived campaign

The Western Recorder front page news article last week describing political activity in connection with the election of a convention president to succeed Jimmy Allen is disturbing. Such maneuvering is unbecoming for people of God and is a poor reflection upon both those who sponsor a candidate and the candidate who allows it. This kind of behavior is more becoming in the back room scheming of political parties than in Southern Baptist life.

There is nothing wrong with any messenger deciding one person would make the most effective convention president nor in his saying as much to other messengers. But to hold pre-convention meetings in various areas of the convention to plan strategy to elect "our" candidate is wrong.

Such scheming in this case is predicated on false assumptions. One of these assumptions is that Southern Baptists are in a doctrinal crisis in which belief in the authority of the Bible is about to be abandoned. This is not so. All Southern Baptist teachers don't agree in every doctrinal detail but we have no heretics in places of strong influence. Those who reject basic biblical teachings are soon weeded out.

Another assumption is that a "biblical inerrancy" convention president could put the Southern Baptist doctrinal house in order. Experience teaches this is not so. An illustration is the election of Dr. K. Owen White in 1961 when the Elliott controversy on Genesis was raging. Elliott left his teaching post but not due to any convention president.

My observation is that would-be crusaders are neutralized when elected president of the convention. They find things are not as bad as they thought before looking inside and they generally end up as defenders of the establishment.

The biggest reason for resisting this latest misguided crusade is that we need no one-issue president. As important as biblical inspiration and authority are, we don't need an "inerrancy president." A convention president should be representative of all levels and types of Baptists, not one group off on some tangent.

Southern Baptists are committed to reaching every human being with the gospel in this generation. We are agreed on what that gospel is and it behooves us to be about our mission instead of trying to cram creedal words down one another's throats.

### Houston will bring complaints

Here's a prediction. The 1979 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Houston next month will be the most inconvenient, most expensive and

least appreciated of any in modern history. The prices for travel, lodging and food will be shocking even in these days of inflation.

The greatest inconvenience will be transportation from hotels to the meeting place. It will involve riding two buses each way at a cost of four dollars a trip. Every messenger faces this because there is no parking whatsoever available during the day near the Summit.

Most messengers cannot or don't want to stay in convention sessions all day. They prefer to return to hotels between day and night sessions for some rest. This means two trips a day costing eight dollars in Houston.

Word has gotten out about Houston's arrangements. Some messengers have decided not to go this year and more will decide to stay home as the word spreads.

This is unfortunate. It's desperately important that as many Baptists as possible participate in conventions. There is no other way to be as informed and as inspired. And so the idea of boycotting a convention because of unfavorable meeting conditions is unthinkable.

We could do better. It is not easy to find a meeting place which meets all the needs of 25,000 or more visitors but we could do better than Houston. Actually cities make bids for such large conventions and we do not have to put up with poor facilities.

The convention sites are arranged and recommended by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. The committee staff does most of the background work and it's a lot of work. There is no rule but the practice is to spread the conventions over all geographical areas of the United States. As far as Texas and the southwest is concerned, we could skip Houston and stick to Dallas.

There is some sentiment to discontinue moving the conventions around and to settle on St. Louis and Kansas City for all conventions. This is my position. Both these cities do well when we meet in them and their central locations makes sense.

For many of us the Houston convention will cost twice as much as if we were going to St. Louis or Kansas City. This is an important factor because most of the money used to attend conventions comes from Baptist offering plates.

I hope my prediction for a miserable convention in Houston is wrong. But if it is right, I hope you will let Southern Baptist Convention executive secretary Harold Bennett know.

The outlook for several years ahead looks better. Sites already decided upon are St. Louis in 1980, Los Angeles in 1981 (a poor choice), New Orleans in 1982, Pittsburgh in 1983, Kansas City in 1984 and Dallas in 1985.

### Editorial note

Now that agreement on the SALT II treaty has been announced, there will be vigorous debate in the United States senate and among many Americans. A pamphlet explaining and favoring the treaty is available on request from Western Recorder.

A pamphlet explaining and opposing the treaty is also available. It is entitled "20 Questions About SALT II" and can be obtained on request from The Coalition for Peace Through Strength, 499 South Capital Street, Washington, DC 20003.

## Baptist Forum

### Moody river, roll on

I read recently the Western Recorder news article about Dr. Dale Moody's claim that the convention is being used in a creedal way. I couldn't believe that the man shared the same name as such a great soldier of the cross, Dwight L. Moody.

I do not claim to be a great theologian nor do I possess knowledge of Greek or Hebrew. But I can look around and see the forest in spite of the trees. Upon looking at some of the issues being thrust back and forth between liberals and conservatives I think I can honestly see more virtue on the side of the "so-called" dissidents (conservatives).

The liberals at Southern Seminary say biblical authority is the issue and not holy inspiration. Then they promptly declare the Bible as not completely true. They ignore the fact that as long as Southern Baptists preached the Bible as "inerrant," we enjoyed the blessings of God in many souls being saved, churches being strengthened and homes with solid Christian foundations. Take heed brethren, when the liberals came forth and found favorable acceptance, the number of baptisms went down and the number of broken homes within the church membership increased.

Get out on the street and try to tell the young and the sin-hardened soul that he needs the saviour presented in a Bible that is not completely true and see how far you get.

Tony McAlister, Franklin

### Responds to SALT editorial

Your editorial concerning the SALT agreements which appeared in the May 2, 1979 issue of Western Recorder deserves, in my opinion, some response. I would agree that most people are ignoring the SALT talks and the proposed treaty, and I would agree that the importance of this treaty cannot be overemphasized. However, at that point, our views seem to differ.

In my view, Western Recorder is hardly a proper vehicle for editorials advocating either a pro or con position on this matter. It cannot be argued that your comments are neutral. The editorial, though it states, "Get the best available facts and then take a stand," is advocating approval of the treaty. It is unseemly that a denominational weekly paper would take this issue as the basis for an editorial when the "facts," which you say changed your feelings about SALT II, came from a pamphlet admittedly prepared by those favoring the treaty.

This willingness to accept a compromise agreement is only too evident a reflection of our national attitudes. As a people, we apparently are willing to replace confidence with fear and optimism with drear, cold pessimism.

All the pleasant, lovely sounding words such as peace, goodwill and security, are words without meaning unless they are bolstered by respect.

We will have peace and security, and even goodwill, when those who would destroy us; and remember, Mr. Kruschev said, "we will bury you," respect our ability enough to ensure those things.

You are entitled to your opinion, Mr. Daley. In the last 40 years, a great many of us have served in the armed forces of the United States to ensure your right to an opinion. But please, don't take unfair advantage of your position as editor of a denominational paper to attempt to influence Kentucky Baptists to support or oppose SALT II. Such practice demeans the paper and reduces its effectiveness.

Dennis L. Newberry, Owensboro

# Allen fears shift of SBC priorities from missions

by Jim Newton

Jimmy R. Allen looked back over his two years as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and wept with emotion as he talked about the challenge he has faced.

"God has given Southern Baptists a unique opportunity to become the flash point in starting fires of spiritual awakening that could sweep across the nation and around the world," Allen insisted. "We've just got to do it."

"If we don't respond, God will have to raise up someone else and we (Southern Baptists) will end up on the junk pile of discarded instruments that God is unable to use," declared the pastor of the 9404-member First Baptist Church of San Antonio, which baptized 225 persons last year.

At another point during a two-hour interview, Allen expressed quiet fears that the priorities of the denomination might be shifted from the SBC's Bold Mission Thrust plan to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000 to the issue of biblical infallibility and inerrancy.

"There are those who would like to change the agenda of the convention from missions to orthodoxy," he said. "Such a shift of emphasis would be tragic because it would make us miss God's initiatives at a time when we are in a unique position to become a flash point in spiritual awakening."

Allen acknowledged that ultra-conservatives within the denomination, spearheaded by Houston judge Paul Pressler and Criswell Bible Center president Paige Patterson of Dallas, have organized efforts in at least 15 states to elect a new SBC president they feel would be committed to "biblical inerrancy," and to introduce and adopt a motion or resolution on biblical infallibility. Allen said they have not disclosed their candidate.

"My only apprehension," Allen said, "is creating an atmosphere at the convention resulting in an erosion of trust in denominational leadership and in shifting the denomination's priorities from evangelism and missions to biblical inerrancy."

Missions and evangelism have been Allen's top priorities as convention president during the past two years. The SBC presidency is traditionally two one-year terms. He has poured his physical, emotional and spiritual energies into pushing Bold Mission Thrust.

Missions has been his all-consuming passion. Everywhere he's gone, Allen has challenged Southern Baptists to get involved personally, especially through the SBC's new Mission Service Corps, the plan to place 5000 volunteer missionaries alongside career home and foreign missionaries for one or two years. He's confident the goal can be reached if Southern Baptists respond to God's call.

During the interview, Allen reflected on his experiences as president of the 13.1 million member con-

vention, the nation's largest Protestant group, and the issues he has tried to face squarely.

One of his high moments was meeting with Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin to discuss peace in the Middle East and his concern over religious liberty in Israel.

Within a month after Allen's visit to Israel, minister of justice Shmuel Tamir issued a new official interpretation of Israel's controversial "anti-bribery law" stating that the law was never intended to limit religious freedom.

While "we did not win a major victory" by having the law repealed outright, Baptists did send a "major signal" to Israel on the subject of religious liberty, Allen said shortly after the new ruling was announced.

Allen said he was concerned about "world hunger and economic justice and the sheer survival of millions of people in the Third World." He said the national convocation on world hunger sponsored by six SBC agencies last November at Ridgecrest, N. C., was a significant step forward.

He said the SBC also made significant progress in dealing with the nuclear disarmament issue as a result of a nuclear disarmament conference at Louisville in February. Allen was interviewed on the Walter Cronkite news show on CBS-TV concerning his views on nuclear disarmament and support for the SALT treaties.

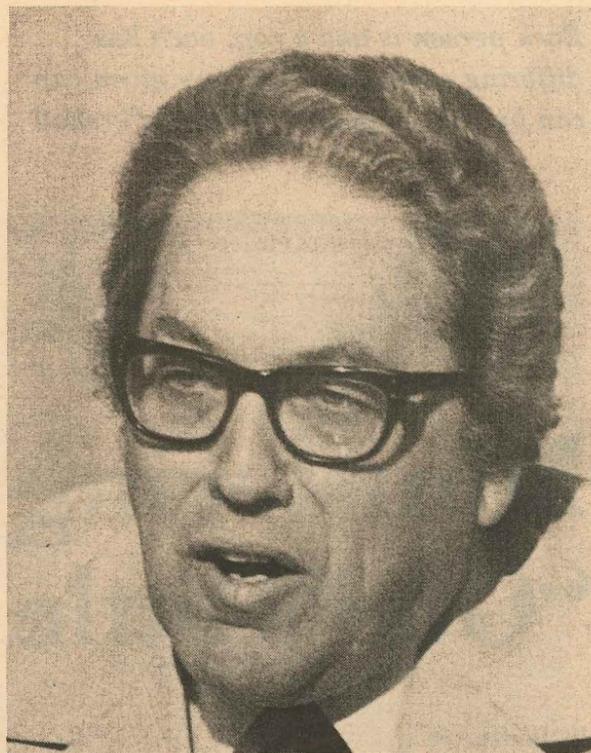
When he met with Prime Minister Begin, Allen advised the Israeli leader to have "the patience of Job" in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East and assured him that Southern Baptists were praying for both Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

In addition to his meeting with the Israeli prime minister, Allen and two other SBC leaders met in March with the new U. S. ambassador from the People's Republic of China, expressing Southern Baptist interest in sharing the gospel with people in mainland China.

Allen said the group was "politely received" and that they were told Chinese officials would work on an agenda to consider the possibilities of starting English-language churches for Christian Americans in the Republic of China. At the close of the hour-long meeting, Allen led the group in a prayer.

Three experiences meant the most to him personally, Allen said: (1) meeting with Prime Minister Begin, (2) challenging young people attending student week at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center to respond to missions service and watching 500 commit themselves to missions service and (3) presiding at a banquet at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D. C., when President Jimmy Carter challenged about 200 key Southern Baptist laypeople to financially undergird Mission Service Corps. About \$900,000 was raised in pledges as a result of that banquet, Allen said.

Although he is reluctant to talk about it, Allen con-



ceded that he has had a continuing personal relationship with President Carter, who proposed the idea of Mission Service Corps in a videotaped message to the SBC two years ago in Kansas City, when Allen was elected president.

Allen said he has been in "continuing communication" with the president but would not say how often they talk or disclose the content of their discussions. President Carter, Allen said, has been very careful to observe the concept of separation of church and state.

Although Allen told Separation Carter in advance of his plan to visit Prime Minister Begin in Israel, Carter told him he wanted to "stay out of Allen's visit."

Allen predicted the highlight of his entire two years as president of the SBC will probably occur during the last two days when the SBC meets in Houston June 12-14.

Allen has planned a Wednesday night convention session seeking to fill the Houston Astrodome and telecast a mission commitment service live via satellite to a potential Baptist audience of 75,000 at rallies in 11 cities.

Telecasting the service via satellite may turn out historically to be one of the most significant developments in SBC life during his term of office, Allen said. "We may be pioneering in an electronic age with something that might eventually become a new way for the convention to hold its annual sessions," he said.

During that televised service, featuring evangelist Billy Graham, an estimated 1000 mission volunteers who have made commitments for short term or career mission service during Allen's term of office will kneel on the Astro-turf for a period of commitment. Baptists beside them will be representative Southern Baptists who have pledged to support the mission volunteers with their prayers and finances.

"I pray that the next president of the convention will indeed join in Bold Mission Thrust as the priority concern of the denomination," Allen said.

"God's spirit is at work among us," Allen declared. "And I believe Southern Baptists will respond to the challenge."

## Baptist News in Brief

### SBC Joggers Jubilee slated for convention

One of Southern Baptist Convention's most unusual auxiliary meetings, the Joggers Jubilee, will be held at four locations 6:30 to 7:30 a.m., June 12, 13 and 14 in Houston.

Participants should convene ready to jog at either the Houston Baptist University track, the Rice University track, Memorial Park or the Allen Parkway Running and Bike Track, said Eugene Greer, program planning director for the Texas Baptist state missions commission.

A certificate will be given to each participant by the Church Recreation Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Also a commemorative patch, "Life Abundant, SBC Joggers Jubilee, Houston, 1979" is available for \$2 from The Strider, 11317 Earlywood

Dr., Dallas, TX 75218. Any profits from the sale of patches will go for missions through the Cooperative Program.

### Robison cancels Anita

Evangelist James Robison has withdrawn an invitation to singer Anita Bryant to appear with him at a "Freedom to Preach" rally June 5 at Dallas Convention Center.

Robison told about 80 ministers of several denominations at First Baptist Church, Euless, near Dallas, that the decision was based chiefly on concern for Miss Bryant's personal safety. His attorneys also expressed concern that her appearance would "cloud" the real issue of freedom to preach and focus too much attention on the homosexual community.

"We've had a large number of threats (made against Miss Bryant and

Robison) since our announcement that she would come here. . . . The homosexuals would like to ride that—have a parade," said Robison.

Also at the Euless meeting, W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, said his church will give \$1,000 a month to Robison's legal fund in his "Freedom to Preach" battle against Dallas TV station WFAA.

Robison's weekly television program—aired by about 90 stations was cancelled Mar. 2 by WFAA, an ABC-TV affiliate, after he denounced homosexuality as sin and read comments from various publications about homosexuals.

Station manager Dave Lane, a Southern Baptist layman, said the Sunday morning program was cancelled because of a "continuing problem" with the fiery Southern Baptist evangelist making statements "about other

religious organizations and community groups."

The problem WFAA attorneys had with the Feb. 25 broadcast, Lane said, was the total picture that was painted of homosexuals, specifically Robison's reading from the National Inquirer magazine linking homosexuals with child molesting, violence and murder.

### Miller new president of Brewton-Parker

W. Starr Miller, dean of school of education at Georgia Southern College in Statesboro, was elected president of Brewton-Parker College by the board of trustees.

Miller will succeed J. Theodore Phillips, who will retire at the end of the school year, June 30, after serving 22 years at the Baptist school.

Each person is like a cup; each has differing capacities. And any given cup can be only so full. — Howard Parshall

## Ministering among “God’s little ones”

by Walker Knight

The plaque on the front of the red-brick chapel reads “God’s House, dedicated to the Least of God’s Little Ones, 1970.”

“The least of God’s little ones” are the members of the chapel, the retarded residents of the Pinecrest (La.) State School.

Leading the flock is Howard Parshall, chaplain to the 1600 retarded residents. When he came to the school in 1957 as a prospective chaplain, his first glimpse was a room filled with 50 retarded male residents, most of them nude, jumping up and down or rocking back and forth, oblivious of each other.

By showing the young chaplain this section first, the superintendent exercised shock treatment, telling him, “These people are a part of our institution, and they are ones to whom you’ll be ministering.”

Now, more than 20 years later, Parshall and Pinecrest have gone through changes together. The residents have moved from mass quarters to four-person rooms. They are fully clothed and in control of their bodily functions.

An attendant is responsible for every 10 persons, and each resident’s day is programed for dressing, feeding, walking, bus rides, chapel, projects, canteen visitation and recreation.

Under Parshall’s direction, chaotic and disorderly worship services took on the form of traditional church. As he searched for ways to communicate Christ, the services became a focal point and the concept of his own ministry unfolded.

“I found that I became a religious figure who represents the living God,” he explains. “They understood God partly by understanding me and what I tell them about God—what they see and feel and experience in me as a person.”

Services begin on Sunday morning with a medley of bright religious songs by a volunteer pianist. A student assistant from Louisiana College leads the singing, drawing on songs that require physical move-

ments. Volunteers from the audience sing solos, followed by a short scripture and prayer by Parshall. The ensuing sermon is short, simple and repetitious.

“I have learned to put very little credence in the spoken word,” Parshall says. “They cannot think abstractly. Their involvement in an experience is more important.

“The story or sermon is the weakest part of the service. I am probably communicating more by my tone of voice, my stance and my gesture than by what I say.”

Over the years, the desire for a “real” church grew strong. Persons throughout Louisiana began to raise money for a chapel. Eventually \$40,000 was collected and the school’s maintenance crew provided the labor. Individuals and small groups bought pews.

At every worship service at Pinecrest, residents gave their nickels and dimes. After 10 years, the offering has reached more than \$750, enough for the piano.

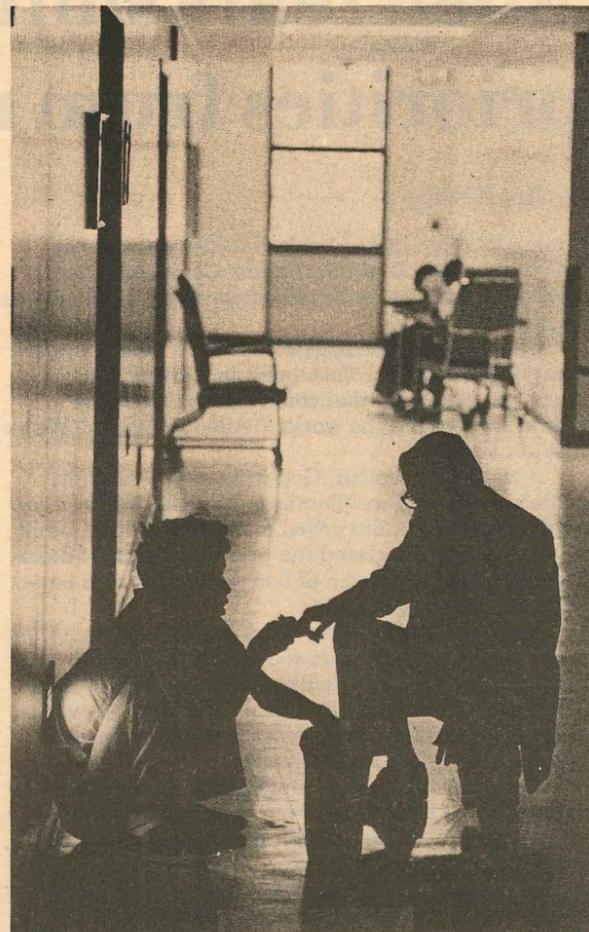
Parshall ministers to the school staff informally as he visits the cottages, hospital or administration buildings. But staff members feel strong support from him.

Paul Erny, the education director, says “He is a good release for me. We can talk. There is a lot of pressure in these positions and a few minutes with Parshall seems to relieve that pressure.”

One expansion of Parshall’s ministry relates to death. Not only does he attempt to minister to the dying and their families, but he plays a central role in the funeral of residents whose bodies are not claimed by relatives or are to be buried on the grounds.

Parshall is funeral director, signing death certificates and taking charge of the cemetery and recording the graves. He is determined to have the services as close to normal as possible. He utilizes the school’s Boy Scouts to serve as pallbearers.

When Parshall visits the Pinecrest canteen, the



Chaplain Parshall discovered at Pinecrest State School the more he gave the more he was given in return.

popular place to spend money and time, he is greeted with a constant stream of hugs, requests for him to read their letter or just to sit with them.

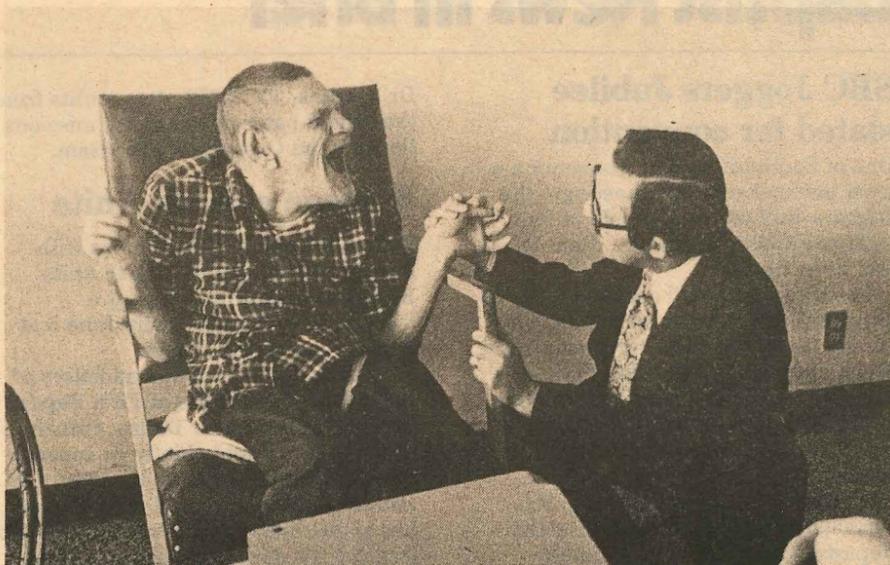
In the canteen, Parshall always finds a seat near the wall. “I never know when a strong arm is going to grab me, and I have to watch for spilling coffee and drinks,” he explains.

The first two or three years at Pinecrest, Parshall tried “to program for the residents, to make things happen.” Then, he recalls, “it began to dawn on me that they were affecting my life. They were making a contribution to me as a human being.

“The road to ministry was a road to openness to persons, just simply being myself with them. As this began to happen, they ceased to be retardates and more and more became my friends. They became persons. This is when my ministry turned around.”



For Howard Parshall the road to ministry was a road to openness to persons by being himself with them.



Chaplain Parshall has built a ministry in which “God’s little ones” communicate with him through emotions.

# Love never ends; nor does 'the call'

Romance robbed the Foreign Mission Board of a veteran missionary but she's back in Brazil, along with her husband, as a Mission Service Corps volunteer.

Dorine Hawkins lacked six months of having 30 years of service when she resigned to marry Buford Stewart, who had spent all his life in the Austin, Tex., area as a land developer.

Now, more than two years later, Rio de Janeiro is their home as they share the title of "hosts" for the South Brazil mission.

Their job description might fill a page in any manual if all the ramifications were listed. They line up housing for visiting missionaries during mission meetings. This means placing them in guest rooms of those based in Rio. They also take responsibility for the scores of missionaries who stop in Rio en route to and from their fields.

The Stewarts have just about worn their own grooves in the pavement between Rio's airport and the missionary homes. They average 20 round trips a month and have made as many as three trips in a single day.

Their work doesn't end there. Southern Baptists visiting Rio usually end up in one of the hotels catering to tourists, 10 miles or more from the center of Baptist activities. The Stewarts show the touring Baptists around the institutions and agencies, which include a seminary, training school, college, good will center, publication center and headquarters for the Brazilian Baptist Convention.

Dorine, like most missionaries, can swing her car around the sharpest curves with the best of taxi drivers and never bat an eye. But, with an adjustment to Brazil's traffic that amazes his passengers, Buford can match her at every turn and knows directions as

by John J. Hurt

well as he knows Austin.

"I am overwhelmed," she says of his adjustment to Rio.

Buford's first wife, Elizabeth, died of a heart attack in 1975. She and Dorine were close friends before Dorine's missionary appointment.

"The Lord just directed us," Buford says of events which led to their marriage in December 1976. The romance was in its early stages when he won a Chamber of Commerce contest for a trip for two to Mexico. He swapped it for a round-trip ticket to Brazil and convinced Dorine that her future was with him in Texas.

It was the next year at Ridgecrest (N. C.) Baptist Conference Center, during foreign mission week, after an appeal for retirees to consider short-term missionary service, he turned to her and asked, "Is there anything an old man can do in Brazil?"

She says, "The Lord touched him before he touched me," but smiles when asked if she had been praying about just such an opportunity. "I think the Lord worked it mutually," she says.

Buford was at retirement age but had not retired. They were commissioned in December 1977. Their



Picking up visitors in Rio's airport can sometimes cause problems when the Stewarts aren't sure what the visitors look like—so they hold up a sign.

service was to begin as soon as he could close personal business commitment. Several miracles rushed business deals into completion so they could leave for Rio.

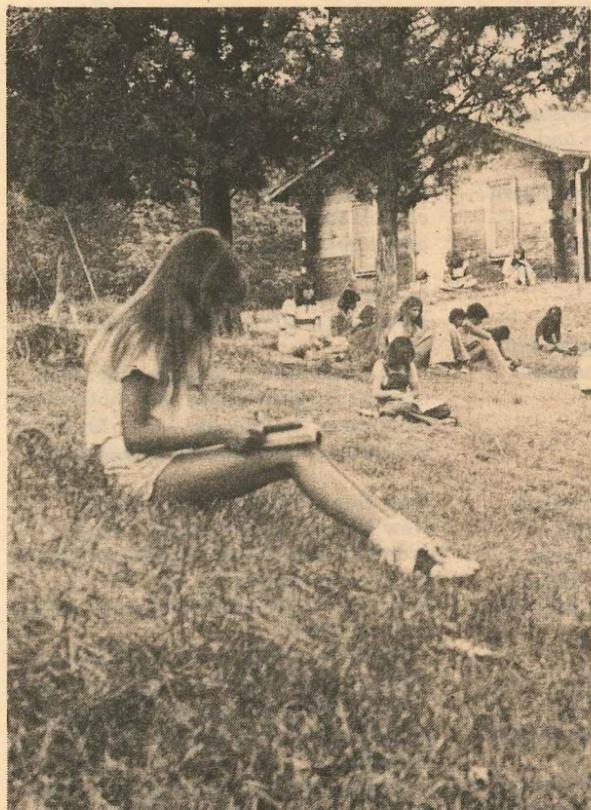
Dorine says she still has adjustments to make about her love for the training school. She was the first director and the Dorine Hawkins Stewart administration and classroom building is now under construction.

"I feel as much a missionary now as ever," she says in the transition from full missionary status to that of an unpaid volunteer. "I was a missionary overloaded with tourists then and now I'm relieving 40 missionaries of that responsibility."

The Stewarts could add "evangelist" to their job descriptions. Their time at the airport, train and bus stations waiting for arrivals is spent passing out Baptist tracts and talking with those who will pause for discussion.

It is only then that she has the edge. Buford's Portuguese is limited to a two-month crash course plus what he has learned on the side. She can roll the words with all the eloquence of 30 years of on-the-job training.

## Cedarmore: mission field for Kentucky Baptists



Cedarmore is a place for spiritual as well as physical development.

by Teresa Sanders

Cedarmore, Kentucky's state Baptist camp, doesn't sound like the most exotic or far away mission post for a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary summer missionary.

But Becky Mathews of Charleston, W. Va. is happy about her selection to serve as recreation director for seven one-week camps at Cedarmore this summer. She is among the 12 student missionaries sponsored by the summer missions committee.

She describes her summer assignment as "a blessing in disguise."

At first she said she was "shocked" by her potential post because she would be only about 40 to 45 miles away instead of across the nation or even across the world.

But then she became accustomed to the idea and started anticipating her upcoming stint at Cedarmore.

Her Cedarmore mission field will include 200 youth or children per week, adult counselors and BSU summer missionaries assisting as referees and team leaders.

The seven weeks will include two children's music camps, a high school youth music camp and four KBC youth weeks.

Becky holds the distinction of being the only girl on the administrative staff for the church music camp.

The female "rec leader" has planned activities such as siamese kickball, swimming tournaments, canoe paddle boat relay, scavenger hunts, blanket volleyball and a super star obstacle course for her

four-hour sessions Tuesday through Thursday each week.

Though this is her first attempt at "recreating," she has served previously in camps as counselor for disadvantaged youth and as a life guard.

She is a 1977 graduate of Ohio State University and attended law school before coming to Southern. She is a second-year MDiv student.

Becky is looking forward to a game and camper-packed summer in the rolling hills of central Kentucky — even though her mission post is not miles and miles away as she first imagined.



Becky Mathews

# Mountains to the Mississippi

## Congregations

**New Hope aids hard-of-hearing**  
New Hope Baptist Church, Bethel Association, has installed an amplification system to aid the hard-of-hearing.

The system features a small transmitter, received by transistor receivers held by users who hear the service through ear plugs.

**Bethany celebrates 50th anniversary**  
Bethany Baptist Church, Louisville, had special services commemorating 50 years of service since the founding Jan. 17, 1929.

The day long observance began in morning worship service with W. C. Fields, pastor of the congregation from 1949 to 1952. Fields is now assistant to the executive secretary and director of public relations for the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dinner was served for members, former members and guests following the morning worship service.

Afternoon activities featured Eugene Enlow, pastor from 1952 to 1964. Enlow is currently serving as pastor of Beechmont Baptist Church, Louisville.

**Huffman honored by Kento-boo**  
planned by the Kento-boo deacons and honored pastor Ralph Huffman May 5 on the occasion of his 40th anniversary in the gospel ministry. The affair was planned by the Kento-boo deacons and their wives without the knowledge of Huffman.

The celebration began with a picnic supper served on the church lawn and culminated with a testimonial service. A large number of church members, Huffman family members and guests filled the sanctuary for the recognition service.

Mel Butler, chairman of the deacons, presided in the service and presented an attractive plaque to Huffman on behalf of the congregation. Mrs. Huffman was also recognized and presented flowers.

The program consisted mainly of testimonies of the four children of the Huffmans. Three of the children are in the Baptist ministry and the other one is married to a Baptist pastor.

A son, Jerry, and daughter, Marilyn, are students at Southwestern Baptist Seminary and were unable to attend the service. They spoke by recordings to the group.

Ron, another son, and Steve Alford, a son-in-law, were the main speakers. Ron is pastor of the New Columbus Baptist Church in Owen County and Steve serves Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Ten Mile Association.

Other speakers included George Jones, executive secretary of Northern Kentucky Baptist Association, and Western Recorder editor C. R. Daley.

Special music including some original compositions was arranged by Norman Blankenship, Kento-boo minister of music.

Huffman has been Kento-boo pastor only since July 1978. In the past year the church has had 45 additions.

**Christian Assoc. to blitz Wisconsin**  
Christian County Baptist Association will use the Blitz Team plan in organizing seven new Sunday schools in Wisconsin this summer. Forty people from 16 different churches will make up the teams. The 35 Baptist churches in the county are supporting the mission outreach as part of the Bold Mission Thrust effort of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The association missions committee is directing the effort. The committee is composed of Wayne Newby, chairman, Ed Hancock, Mrs. Kenneth Smith, David Gardner and Mrs. Dexter Jones. Ralph McConnell is director of missions.

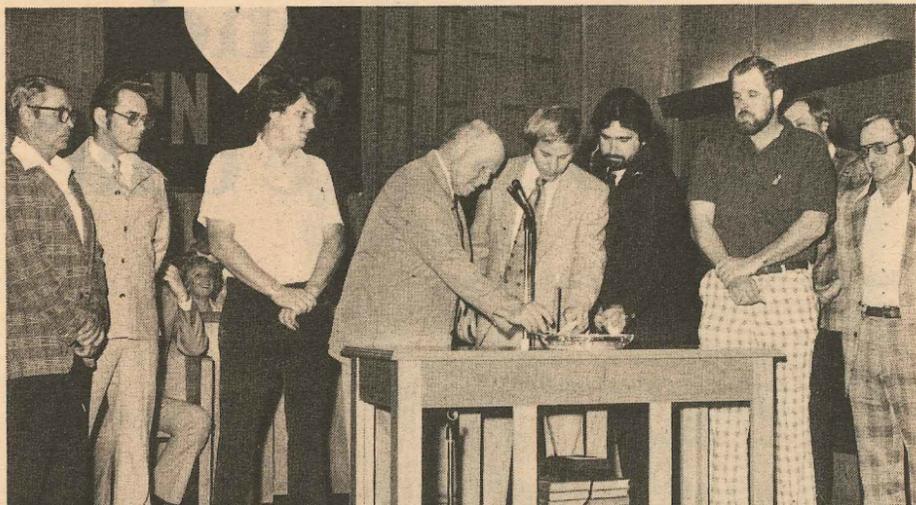
It is estimated the program will cost from \$1200 to \$1500 for each team. The churches are raising the money over and above their regular associational budget contributions.

Three teams will be working for 10 days in Madison, Wis., and the others will work in Monroe, Sun Prairie, Steven Point and Fitchburg. Each team is made up of a preacher-pastor, music director, adult, youth, children's and preschool teacher.

**Hyland Heights burns mortgage**  
Hyland Heights Baptist Church, Catlettsburg, held a mortgage burning service erasing the debt on the W. K. Wood fellowship building.

The building was dedicated in 1973 in honor of W. K. Wood. A retired minister from Ashland, Wood preached the sermon at the special service.

Participating in the service were: Charles Cooper, treasurer; Lute Caldwell and Mason Robinette, deacons; Lute Caldwell Jr., designer;



**Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, recently held a note burning service to celebrate the final payment on its educational building which was constructed in 1975.** The educational facility provides space for the church's educational program, a fellowship hall and church offices. Trustees and members of the building committee who participated in the service were [l to r] James Lax, Leon Burns, Bobby Dyer, Kenneth Brown and Jim Stallins. Shellie Wade, a member of the building committee, was not able to participate in the service. Don Mathis is pastor.

Ruby Chaney, teacher; and Betty Bryan, oldest member in years of service.

Rodney Hale is pastor.

**Cooperative programs alive and well**  
When the tornado of 1974 damaged Brandenburg Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, Loyall, sent help.

When the recent flood damaged FBC Loyall and East Pineville Baptist Church, Brandenburg Baptist Church came to their aid.

On May 6 when both churches, Loyall and East Pineville, dedicated their buildings two couples from Brandenburg Church, Mr. and Mrs. Cal Pollock and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hullett, attended both dedication services.

**Heart Throbs will thrill you**

Sixty-five members of Immanuel Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., will be in concert at Victory Memorial Baptist Church, Louisville, May 24.

The group called "Heart Throbs" ranges in age from 60 to the mid-80's.

They are directed by John C. Sawyer, minister of music at Immanuel.

The Louisville concert is sponsored by Beechmont Baptist Church and is open to the public.

Eugene Enlow, pastor at Beechmont, was formerly pastor of Immanuel.

The Heart Throbs will present "Count On Us," a musical of humorous activities, written by Don L. Madaris.

They are currently on a singing tour to St. Louis, Louisville and Nashville.

## Revivals

**Great revival at Woodlawn**

Revival at Woodlawn Baptist Church, Lebanon, resulted in 44 decisions.

Eighteen persons accepted Christ, four were added to the church and 22 made rededications, according to pastor W. A. Clutts.

**Successful revival at Friendship**

Pastor James F. Smith reports a successful revival at Friendship Baptist Church, Irvine.

Visible results included 20 decisions including professions of faith, transfer of letters and rededications.

An all time Sunday school attendance record of 142 was set on the Sunday following the revival.

**Revival at FBC, Corbin**

First Baptist Church, Corbin, reports gratifying results from a recent revival.

There were 35 professions of faith and eight letters. On Wednesday and Thursday evenings 100 public decisions were made. John Dunaway pastors.

**Eleven conversions at Southside**

Eleven persons accepted Christ in revival services at Southside Baptist Church, Princeton. There were 14 additions to the church.

A record attendance of 515 was set in Sunday school May 6.

Don Mathis is pastor.

**Revival at Ridgecrest**

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Beaver Dam, has completed a successful revival.

Over 32 decisions were made with 11 additions to the church.

Jesse Tichenor is pastor at Ridgecrest.

## Ordinations

**FBC Murray ordains Moody**

First Baptist Church, Murray, has ordained G. T. Moody to the ministry. Moody was recently called as associate pastor of Murray. He has been at the church 13 years in areas of education and administration.

Moody is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and has done additional study at Southern Seminary and in Israel.

The ordination message was delivered by Dwight Moody, one of the four children of the Moodys. Mrs. Moody is the former Reita Redden of Lexington.

**New Hope ordains Perrin, Hardy**

New Hope Baptist Church, Cadiz, ordained Neal Perrin and Steve Hardy to the gospel ministry Apr. 29. Perrin is the son of Lloyd Perrin, pastor of New Hope.

Hardy has been called as pastor of Midway Baptist Church, Dover, Tenn.

Neal Perrin has accepted the pastorate of Little Prince Baptist Church, Herndon.

Perrin was introduced to the council by his brother, Lloyd Perrin Jr.

The council consisted of 28 ordained men. William E. Franks, director of missions, Little River Association, was the moderator.



**Pastor and Mrs. Ralph Huffman examine the plaque presented by Mel Butler on behalf of Kento-boo Baptist Church.**

## LIFE AND WORK SERIES

## Sins of affluence

**Amos 5:12, 14, 21-24** Amos' day was characterized by great prosperity and moral and spiritual deterioration. As God's spokesman, Amos denounced the sins of the people, which included hating judgment, accepting bribes, oppressing the poor, perverting justice and preaching idolatry. Knowing divine judgment would befall them because of their wickedness, God's prophet admonished the people to repent and establish righteousness in the land in the hope "it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious."

People should not expect God to manifest his presence and to demonstrate his power in their midst or in their behalf when they are living in sin. Through Amos, God warned the people there was still time for them to repent and to find grace in his sight. Because of their hypocrisies and inconsistencies, and their attempt to cover their sins with religious rites, God refused to answer their prayers, declined to accept their worship and rejected their substitutes for obedience to him. He longed for true righteousness.

**Amos 6:1a, 4-7** Although the people were blessed of God, they were "at ease in Zion" while injustice and oppression stalked through the land. It is never right to be at ease when and where great needs exist. They were affluent, but shirked their responsibility of that with which God had entrusted them. Being wealthy is not a sin, but to misuse it is wrong.

Many were living in luxury, forgetting their blessings had been given them for the welfare and service of others rather than the mere gratification of their flesh. They used instruments which David had devised for the praise of God for impious purposes. They were blind to the afflictions of others and ignored their needs. It was impossible for the people to avert the consequences of their own selfishness, greed, ambition, sensuality and self-indulgence, unless they repented of their sins and that they were unwilling to do.

## INTERNATIONAL SERIES

## Saul rejected: David anointed

**1 Samuel 15:10-16, 22-23; 1 Samuel 16:1**

**Disobedience** Through Samuel the prophet God directed Saul to slaughter the Amalekites, because they had dealt so cruelly with the Israelites. Saul went forth to execute God's order but he, like others, obeyed God only as it suited his personal whims. He had the people put to death, took King Agag captive, brought him back and showed him off as a trophy of the battle. He also spared the best animals and brought them home.

**Displeasure** God was greatly displeased at Saul's disobedience. Before Saul returned God informed Samuel the king had to be set aside. God instructed Samuel to inform Saul he was through with him and his family as a kingly line, and another would take his place.

**Deception** When Samuel faced the disobedient king, who was proud of himself for doing what he considered an excellent job, Saul put on a long face and remarked, "I have performed all the commandments of the Lord." Instead of deceiving God or others, Saul merely deceived himself.

**Disclosure** As soon as Saul made his false claim, the cattle began to low and the sheep began to bleat. When Samuel thus exposed his disobedience and deception, Saul confessed his sin, but tried to put the blame on those over whom he exercised authority.

**Duty** Saul's "pious" plea about offering the spoils as a sacrifice to God met with a rebuke. Such a "sacrifice" was abominable in the sight of God. After Samuel removed Agag from the scene and destroyed all the animals, he made it clear "to obey is better than sacrifice." The thing that counts with the Lord is wholehearted obedience.

Saul eliminated himself, through disobedience, from reigning over Israel. The Lord sent Samuel to the home of Jesse in Bethlehem and told him to anoint his youngest son David for the position. When one is not dependable in an important assignment the Lord replaces him with another upon whom he can rely.

## Dog prayers

## Frank Owen

One of the greatest friends students ever had at Southern Seminary was Professor Inman Johnson who taught music and speech. "Prof," as his students affectionately knew him, is retired in Virginia now. We will always miss him in Kentucky but are blessed to be in touch with him from time to time.

In 1939, "Prof" lived in an apartment on the campus to which he invited lonely looking students, of which I was one. He had a little honey-colored cocker spaniel dog named Troubles, which he had taught to "pray." "Troubles, go say your prayers," Prof would say. Promptly the dog would go and sit up beside the piano bench, place his paws on the edge of the seat, lay his chin on his paws and close his eyes as if in prayer.

Of course, Troubles didn't pray. He had been well trained, coached into position while hearing the command and rewarded, repeatedly, with a dog biscuit, until he had learned to respond by putting on the act. I believe they call such training condition and response.

One is made to think of much of our human praying. Some of us can only pray for the dog biscuit; that is, we only pray when we are asking for something and are somewhat conditioned on whether to pray next time on the basis of whether we got what we asked for last time.

Everybody knew, though, that Troubles didn't really pray because we assume that a dog can't pray. This is probably the greatest difference between a human being and a dog. Dogs have no use for an altar. Human beings build altars and use them, at least occasionally, because human beings can pray. Better human beings not only can ask for things in prayer but they can give thanks in prayer and pray very thoughtfully, which a beast can't do.

It is terribly sad to see human beings go through life without ever exercising this single greatest difference between the lower animals and man, made in the image of God. It is sad to see the only creature God made, who can use an altar, fail ever to find or build and use one.

## Personnel

### Norris Chapel calls Gause

Joseph L. Gause is the new pastor at Norris Chapel, Henderson.

He came to Norris from Ninth St. Baptist Tabernacle, Paducah.

Gause attended Bethel Bible College in Mishawaka, Ind. and Spalding College in Louisville.

He and his wife Julia have three children, Sonji, 12, Alecia, 10 and Aaron 3.

### Rose new Oak Hill pastor

Oak Hill Baptist Church, Sonora, has called Warren Rose as pastor.

Rose had previously been youth director at Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville.

A graduate of Union, Rose is currently a student at Southern Seminary.

He and his wife, Kathy, have one child, Alisa, 2.

### Alan Powell to Williamstown

Alan Powell is the new associate pastor at Williamstown (Ky.) Baptist Church, Crittenden Association.

A South Carolinian, Powell is also an MDiv student at Southern Seminary. He holds a bachelor's degree in religion from Furman University.

He is responsible for youth ministries.

Powell and his wife Linda reside in Williamstown.



Powell

### Ronald Abrams to Tennessee

Ronald Abrams has been called as pastor of Fairview Baptist Church, Tazewell, Tenn.

Abrams is currently a student at Clear Creek School.

He is married to the former Cathy Carol Payne. They have one child.

### Jack Mercer to Sonora

Jack Mercer has been called as pastor of First Baptist, Sonora. He will assume duties June 2.

Mercer presently is pastor of Hope-well Baptist Church in Henry County.

He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and is currently a student at

Southern Seminary. He plans to graduate in December with the MDiv degree.

### Smith accepts Blackwater pastorate

Ellis Smith has accepted the pastorate of Blackwater Baptist Church, Tyner.

Smith came to Blackwater from Northside Mission, Barbourville.

He holds a BS from Cumberland College and an MA from Union College.

He is married to the former Wilma Joyce Davis of Barbourville. They have two children, Gregory, 9, and Jeffery, 6.

### Hale to Hyland Heights

Hyland Heights Baptist Church, Catlettsburg, has called Rodney Hale as pastor.

Hale is a May graduate of Cumberland College and a native of Fairview.

He has previously been pastor and music director in the Mount Zion Association.

He and his wife, Karen, have two sons, Nathan and John.

### Critser begins new ministry

Forrest Critser began as minister of youth at Lawndale Baptist Church, Green Valley Association, Apr. 15.

He came from Cairo Missionary Baptist Church in Henderson where he had been pastor.

He is married to the former Pamela Taylor. They have two children, Shawn, 7, and Shane, 3.

Ronald Payne is pastor of Lawndale.

**Louisville church calls Mississippian** Fred Jenkins has assumed the pastorate of Cloverleaf Baptist Church, Long Run Association.

He came from Danville Baptist Church, Corinth, Miss., where he was pastor.

Jenkins attended Mississippi State University.

### Franklin Crossroads calls Thomas

Franklin Crossroads Baptist Church, Cecilia, recently called its first minister of music and youth, Mike Thomas.

A first year student at Southern Seminary, Thomas most recently was minister of music and youth at Round Top Baptist Church.

Thomas Stokes is the pastor of Franklin Crossroads.

### Pleasant Hill calls Mike Jones

Cumberland College student Mike Jones, who has been supplying at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, South Union Association, was recently called as pastor there.

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## Perfunctory preaching: IOU to congregations

by Don M. Aycock

This article began as "Confessions of a Pulpit Pros- titute." I imagine many other pastors are like I am. They mount their pulpits on Sunday mornings, ready or not. They speak words, but not always the Word. It seems to me, or at least it seemed, to do this consti- tutes the prostitution of one's calling, using it for impure motives.

As I thought through this matter I changed my mind. I am not trying to save my conscience or to condone sloppy and ill-prepared work. What happened was I looked closely at the faces which greet me when I rise to preach on Sunday morning.

On my left is a middle-aged woman whose life seems mortally boring. Behind her a man who is con- tinually struggling to grow up. To my right sits an older man who has fought the demon alcohol all of his life. Often he loses the battles. Behind me in the choir is a lady in her late 80's. She realizes life for her is almost over. Next to her is a teenage boy who is trying to find his place in life.

The point is all of these people bring with them great needs. They need a word from God to lift them up, assure them, strengthen them and prepare them for life now and the life to come. I had to ask myself, "What right do I have not to feed these people when

they come to church? When they come seeking bread, can I give them a stone in the form of a weak excuse for having no bread?" I realized my concern for not having what I consider to be the exact word for them is a form of pride. Who am I to know exactly what they need? Only God can know. Through my words, however prepared, he speaks to his people. The Lord speaks more clearly and powerfully when I speak that way, but even my shabbiest efforts are sometimes blessed of God.

I have no right to withhold God's blessing from my people simply because I do not feel inspired. The gospel does not primarily rest on how I or other preachers feel. It stands on the power and purpose of God himself.

"Perfunctory preaching" can be thought of as per- haps mechanical or without feeling. But by this term I mean preaching which is done, without regard to how I feel, or what the weather is like, or how large the crowd is, or anything else. It is a plea for steady, done on any given Sunday. Paul admonished Tim- othy, "... proclaim the message, press it home on all occasions, convenient or inconvenient. . . ." If we can follow Paul's advice and are faithful, then we have a chance of seeing God's promise unfold before our eyes. "My word will not return unto me void."

## The significance of the baptism of Jesus

by Stephen McSwain

The significance of Christ's baptism is important in establishing a theology of baptism. Sooner or later in one's spiritual pilgrimage the question arises, "Why was Jesus baptized?" And that question usually arises out of a similar, and somewhat perplexing, query "Why should we be baptized?" By briefly examining some current "theologies," this writer will attempt to arrive at a biblically sound understanding of the significance of the baptism of Jesus and its relation to Christian baptism.

Most Baptist scholars are agreed John's baptism had value only as the sinner had individually repented and responded to God. The baptismal rite of John ex- pressed outwardly the repentant condition already experienced inwardly. The baptism of John set forth the hope of the baptized repentant person and assured him of a place in the coming kingdom of God.

Why would a sinless messiah submit to a baptism for sinners who had repented and turned unto God?

Friedrich Schleiermacher in *The Life of Jesus* responds by noting Christ's baptism by John was wholly for John and not of any real significance to himself. To imply Christ's baptism was of no signifi- cance to himself is to assume too much. Surely our Lord's baptism was a highlight of his mission, for it was there the Holy Spirit descended upon him and empowered him to perform the redemptive purposes of God.

J. Middleton Murry in *The Life of Jesus* maintains

Christ came to be baptized by John because he too was a sinner among sinners. However, Jesus did not come to his baptism as a sinner! He came so as to identify himself with sinners.

There are diverse ideologies circulating among de- nominal groups and scholarship today. I contend the following statements are the most plausible for ascertaining the significance of Christ's baptism:

1. Jesus' baptism was the inauguration unto his messianic task. He knew he must be equipped, anointed and empowered to overcome evil and fulfill his task. Therefore, he prayed for spiritual anointing.
2. Christ's baptism set forth symbolically the great truths concerning his death, burial and resurrection.
3. Christ's baptism was an example for all subsequent followers.
4. Christ recognized his need to identify with sinners.

As Jesus came to be baptized in the Jordan identi- fying himself with sinners, so too are we to be bap- tized, thus identifying ourselves with him. Christ's baptism initiated his messianic mission; Christian baptism initiates one as a witness unto the redemp- tive work of God. At his baptism, Christ was marked with divine approval by the descent of the dove and the voice from the heavens. In Christian baptism one outwardly bears testimony to the inward experience of conversion, whereby the acceptance and approval of the redeemed are sealed through the work of Christ. In sum, as deity, Christ's baptism effected his eternal unity with humanity and Christian baptism expresses the eternal union of the redeemed with the redeemer.

