

Baptist and Reflector

Vol. 152/No. 23/June 11, 1986

News journal of Tennessee Baptist Convention

Rogers highlights virgin birth

By Charlie Warren

ATLANTA — Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, told about 16,000 people gathered for the Sunday night opening session of the 1986 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference that anyone who does not accept the virgin birth of Jesus Christ as literal Bible truth has some real problems.

"Not only do you have difficulty with the character of Mary, the character of Jesus Christ, the character of the Word of God, you have a big difficulty in your own character," Rogers said, "and I wouldn't give you a half a hallelujah for

your chance of heaven if you don't believe in the virgin birth."

Entitling his message "The cradle that rocked the world," Rogers focused on the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ, noting the sinful mockery of His birth, the sacred mystery of His birth, the sovereign majesty of His birth, and the saving ministry of His birth.

Rogers, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention and an announced candidate for this year's presidential election which was scheduled for Tuesday, received a veiled endorsement by Pastors' Conference President Morris

Chapman, who introduced him.

"I thank God that in our generation, God has found a man to stand in the gap," said Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas. "His name is Adrian Rogers.

"When God is ready to change the course of human history, He raises up a man to tell His story so strongly that we may follow God's course of history."

Noting Rogers' belief in inerrant Scripture, Chapman continued, "Adrian's courageous stand for truth leaves him no peers among the people who are called Southern Baptists. His convictions have given courage to countless men of God to determine with Peter and the apostles that we ought to obey God rather than men.

"Because he has been willing to stand alone if necessary, he has become the senior statesman of the Southern Baptist Convention and perhaps of Christendom in our generation."

Chapman's introduction was interrupted several times with applause and ended with a standing ovation as Rogers approached the podium.

"Not everyone believes in the virgin birth of Christ," Rogers noted, quoting some non-Southern Baptist theologians who stated their own disbelief in the virgin birth. He said the "legacy of modern liberalism" was revealed in a poll showing that only 56 percent of students in Protestant seminaries believe in the virgin birth.

"You take the virgin birth out of the Bible and there is no hope for humanity," Rogers said. "You take the virgin birth out and the house of Christianity will collapse like a house of cards."

Salvation of mankind, according to
(Continued on page 3)



Marjorie Jones McCullough
Woman's Missionary Union president

SBC messengers to use high-tech microphones

By Marv Knox

ATLANTA (BP) — Messengers to the 1986 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting this week will be conducting high-tech debate.

The substance of their arguments may be irrelevant in the world of technology; but the way they go about it will be state-of-the-art.

A computerized microphone monitoring system has been developed for the convention and was scheduled to be unveiled at the meeting this week in Atlanta's Georgia World Congress Center.

The mike system should assist convention messengers who want to participate in discussion of business while it allows the chair to conduct that business more efficiently, says Fred Wolfe, chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business, who asked that the system be developed.

Here is how the system will work:

—About 13 microphones will be scattered throughout the four halls in which the annual meeting will be held.

—Each mike will be equipped with four switches so that the first messenger in line can register his or her intent — to speak for the proposed action, to speak against the action, to call for a point of order, or to speak to a point of personal privilege.

—A microphone ordering box (MOB Box) will be located on the podium. It will have lights which indicate the position of each person who is first in line at each microphone. It also will have a digital indicator which will show which mike is next in line to speak, based upon the sequence in which the mikes were activated.

—Officials on the podium then can turn the mikes on from the MOB Box in the sequence in which debate is to be conducted.

For example: SBC discussion always is conducted so that a person speaking for a motion is followed by a person speaking against, and so on. By using the MOB Box, the chair or a colleague at the

podium can recognize the first person to speak to a motion and then open the mike of the next person who wishes to share the opposing view.

Selection of the microphones will not be automatic, however. The chair or someone he designates to operate the MOB Box can override the system's sequencing preference or cancel all microphones completely.

Wolfe has contacted state Brotherhood directors and several Atlanta-area churches and secured a corps of 27 laymen from 12 states who will work at the microphones. They will greet messengers who approach the mikes, arrange them in order according to the position they wish to take, and help them indicate that position on the mike's four-button switch.

Wendell W. Crews, a layman from First Baptist Church, Athens, will be the only monitor from Tennessee.

The system was requested because the Committee on Order of Business wanted to achieve two accomplishments, explains Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church.
(Continued on page 2)

Emergency number for SBC announced

ATLANTA — A special temporary switchboard has been installed at the Georgia World Congress Center for use by those needing to contact those attending this week's Southern Baptist Convention.

Although it will be impossible to beckon messengers to the telephone, a caller can leave a message to be relayed to those attending the convention, so that a return call can be made.

Calls should not be made to the Georgia World Congress Center office, but to the special SBC switchboard. The telephone number is (404) 222-6260.

Pastors choose Nelson L. Price

ATLANTA — Nelson L. Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference during the Monday afternoon session here, June 9.

Price won by acclamation after being nominated by former Southern Baptist Convention president Jimmy Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas.

Thomas A. Hinson, pastor of First Baptist Church, West Memphis, Ark., was elected vice-president over Wendell Estep, pastor of Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany, Okla.

Tennessean Jack May, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Memphis, nominated Hinson.

Richard Blair, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, was elected secretary-treasurer by acclamation.

WMU elects McCullough

Marjorie Jones McCullough was elected president of Woman's Missionary Union during the Monday morning session of the organization's annual meeting in Atlanta June 8-9, held prior to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting.

McCullough's election came when the report of the nominating committee was approved without opposition. Ken McCullough, her son from Ft. Bragg, N.C., led the dedicatory prayer.

Pattie Dent of Holly Springs, Miss., also was elected as recording secretary for her first term.

McCullough had served as Tennessee WMU president from 1980-82 and Tennessee WMU acting executive director-treasurer in 1984, succeeds Dorothy E. Sample, who has served for five years and was not eligible for re-election.

The newly elected national WMU president is scheduled to speak at the 1986 Tennessee WMU annual meeting Nov. 10 in Johnson City.

Currently living in her birthplace of Alexandria, La., McCullough is a graduate of Louisiana College in Pineville and the Carver School of Missions and Social Work (now Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville).

McCullough had served on the WMU staff in Louisiana and Kentucky before her appointment as a missionary to Nigeria in 1955. She also served as executive director of WMU in Ghana.

From 1964-69 she was national director of Girls' Auxiliary for WMU, SBC, Birmingham, Ala., and was re-appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1969 as a WMU worker in Brazil.

In 1974, she moved to Tennessee and married Glendon McCullough, who was executive director of the SBC Brotherhood Commission in Memphis until his death in 1978. She adopted his four children, all of whom now are married.

A full report of the WMU annual meeting and a press conference with McCullough will be in next week's issue of the Baptist and Reflector.

Baptist leader supports anti-hunger legislation

WASHINGTON (BP)— In the aftermath of the celebrated "Hands Across America" fund-raising event, a variety of anti-hunger groups are joining hands in support of legislation intended to provide more assistance for the nation's hungry.

"The Hunger Relief Act of 1986," a

Knight joins staff at Baptist Hospital

NASHVILLE — Joanne Bolton Knight has been named a vice-president of Nashville's Baptist Hospital.

Knight will be responsible for long-term care and geriatric programming, home health care, utilization review, discharge planning, and social services for the 750-bed hospital.

Founder and president of Home Health Services of Tennessee and Home and Health Services, which have merged into the Baptist Health Care System, Knight also worked with Baptist officials to develop ContinuumMed, the hospital's equipment and supply outlet.

A graduate of Stetson University, Deland Fla., Knight was formerly chairman of the Commission on Aging for Fort Collins, Colo.

Microphones . . .

(Continued from page 1)

tist Church in Mobile, Ala.

"First, we wanted to do everything we could to give the people an opportunity to participate in the convention process," he says. "Second, we wanted to do everything possible to assist the president and the Committee on Order of Business to recognize people at the microphones in some type of orderly manner."

The microphone system, especially the monitors at each mike, also is designed to resolve a problem at recent conventions — monopolization of individual mikes by groups with particular political affiliations, he adds.

"In times past, we've heard that people have ganged up and monopolized mikes. With our monitors, we will eliminate anybody with one point of view from monopolizing a mike," he promises.

The new microphone system was developed in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, notes Convention Manager Tim Hedquist, who oversaw the project.

He notes the system particularly is well suited for conducting business from more than one location, such as the four meeting halls which will be in use in Atlanta.

"With this system, the microphone which is next in order to speak to a motion may be recognized," he explains. "Previously, persons in overflow halls were second-class citizens. Because the chair could not see a light come on their microphone, they could not be recognized to speak."

"This year, not only will we have microphones in overflow halls, but we also will have closed-circuit TV cameras so that all messengers can see every speaker from every microphone."

One-time cost of the system is about \$30,000, which can be recovered through rental of the equipment to other groups, Hedquist reports, noting it can be adapted for a variety of types and sizes of meetings.

comprehensive anti-hunger bill, will provide nearly \$1-billion in additional money for fiscal year 1987 to expand and improve food assistance programs. The legislation does not call for any new federal programs but focuses instead on strengthening the "safety net" already in place, an approach supporters hope will enable the bill to survive the budget-trimming mood in Congress.

Included in the legislation, S. 2495 in the Senate and H.R. 4880 in the House, are proposals which would:

- Increase participation in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children. While the program now serves 3.3-million people, an estimated 7-million additional women and children eligible for the assistance fail to receive it. The program serves "nutritionally-at-risk" pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under age 5.

- Increase food stamp benefits and improve communication with eligible persons about the availability of such assistance. Studies indicate about 41 percent of those eligible for food stamps do not receive them.

- Improve the nutritional quality of the School Meals Program while reducing the cost of school breakfasts and lunches.

- Increase participation in nutrition programs for the elderly.

Robert Parham, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, praised the legislation as "another weapon in the American arsenal aimed at eliminating hunger." If the bill becomes law, he pointed out, more than 10 times the estimated amount of money raised by "Hands Across America" will go to assist those at risk to hunger.

Parham urged Southern Baptists to contact their elected representatives in Congress to express support for food assistance programs designed to strengthen the network of services already in place.

Crowds register

ATLANTA — As of 3:30 p.m. Monday, 27,564 messengers had registered for the 1986 Southern Baptist Convention here.

While that total is short of last year's record 45,431 messengers, experts predict this year's registration will be near or above last year's before the end of the convention this week.

This year's total at 3:30 p.m. is about 1,000 below the total at the same time last year, when 28,500 had registered.

Before last year, the record was 22,872, set in Atlanta in 1978.

Lottie Moon tops \$66-million

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists contributed \$66,862,113.65 to the 1985 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

The offering, Southern Baptists' largest ever, will help support nearly 3,700 Southern Baptist missionaries overseas. It totaled 95.5 percent of the 1985 goal of \$70-million.

The shortfall of \$3.1-million was less than anticipated. Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board analysts had feared final receipts, calculated May 31, might come up as much as \$3.6-million short.

Mission planners budgeted the entire \$70-million goal last year, but the shortfall will not affect personal missionary support. It will require cuts in overseas capital budgets, which fund missionary housing and cars, church construction, and other needs.

The 1981 offering was the last to surpass its goal. The 1986 goal will be \$75-million.



TBREA OFFICERS — Members of the Tennessee Baptist Religious Education Association, meeting May 8-9 at Montgomery Bell State Park for their annual retreat, elected as officers (from left to right) Ted Taylor of First Baptist Church in Lenoir City as program vice-president; Donald Mauldin of the TBC church training department in Brentwood as promotion vice-president; Hollis Marshall of First Baptist Church in Greeneville as secretary-treasurer; and Conroy Ryan of First Baptist Church in Sevierville as president.

Louie Newton dies June 3

ATLANTA (BP) — Louie D. Newton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1946 to 1948, died June 3 of pneumonia at Georgia Baptist Medical Center in Atlanta. He was 94 years old.

Newton, who was pastor of Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta for 40 years, was the oldest living former SBC president when he died.

Born in Screven County, Ga., in 1892, he was a graduate of Mercer University in Macon and Columbia University in New York.

He was publicity director for the SBC's "75 Million" campaign to pay debts owed by hospitals, schools, and agencies. The same year, 1919, Georgia Baptists purchased the Christian Index from private interests and named him editor.

Following the death of his pastor at Druid Hills, Newton, who was chairman of the deacons, was offered the ministerial post. He became pastor on April 1, 1929.

His reputation spread as he hammered on the familiar Baptist themes of the day — anti-liquor, anti-pornography, anti-slot machines — and by protesting to every president from Franklin Roosevelt to Richard Nixon for sending envoys to the Vatican. He was a founder of the Georgia Temperance League.

Newton was chairman of the SBC's finance committee for 25 years and vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance. He also was a co-founder of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Newton's weekly radio program, on

which he and his wife interviewed notables, ran every Sunday for 57 years until his death.

The Louie D. Newton Center for Extended Care, adjoining Georgia Baptist Medical Center where he died, is named for him, as is a cottage at the Georgia Baptist Children's Home in Palmetto. The Baptist church on the Mercer campus was renamed Newton Hall in his honor.

His wife, the former Julia Carstarphen of Macon whom he married in 1915, died in 1969. Survivors include two daughters, Eden Elizabeth Gurein and Sarah Catherine Robertson, both of Atlanta; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Chaney resigns university post

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP) — Charles Chaney, president of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., since Dec. 1, 1983, has resigned that position, effective June 30. He will remain at the university as special assistant to the chancellor and dean of the Courts Redford School of Theology and Church Vocations.

The change in roles was requested by Chaney because he felt the demands of the presidency required him to move further away from his major vocational commitment.

"I have had a strong conviction," Chaney told the Missouri Baptist school's trustees, "that my primary calling had to do with making disciples of Jesus Christ, the planting and growth of churches, and training others to do those things."

Chaney, a native of Texas with professional experience in Texas, Illinois, and Kentucky, came to Southwest Baptist University as dean of the Redford School of Theology in 1981. He was vice-president for academic and religious affairs in the fall of 1983 and became president in early December of 1983.

Chancellor James Sells will continue as chief executive officer and also will be responsible for the work of the office of the president. Trustee Chairman A. L. Palmer said it will be several months before a new presidential search will be established.

Sample leaves legacy of focusing on people

By Carol Garrett

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — "I'm like Will Rogers. I never met a person I didn't like," Dorothy Sample says as she reflects on her tenure as national Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union president.

Sample's five-year term ended this week when new officers were elected at the WMU annual meeting in Atlanta.

A love for people has been the focus of Sample's presidency. "I think the greatest joy I've had has been seeing so many women all around the world in Woman's Missionary Union," she says.

Meeting those women has helped Sample realize the importance of giving God what you have, however ordinary your gifts may seem, and being willing to be used by Him, she notes.

"I do believe that whatever any of us do, with God as the power in our lives, it will be something through which He will work. And there will be multiplication somewhere," she explains.

Women involved in WMU today are the result of "those who have gone before us letting God use them and multiply their efforts," she says.

For Sample, becoming WMU president was a matter of being willing to be used.

"When I was nominated, the human part of me didn't really want to be president. I had just gotten where I wanted to be professionally. I still had two teen-age children, and I was just at a place where



Dor Sample — outgoing WMU president

I thought things would be comfortable," she recalls.

But she remembered a philosophy that began to develop years before as she hesitated to take an associational WMU job.

"I remembered a little verse in Ezekiel that said God looks for someone to stand in the gap. Somehow that just stuck with me. If you are the person to do

a job, don't worry about those who could do it better, just go ahead and do what you can do," she says.

"Doing what she could do" has meant seeing the annual operating budget of WMU increase from \$5.2-million to almost \$9-million, revising the structure of the WMU executive board for greater effectiveness, and helping direct the construction of a new national headquarters building.

"I think the building is one of the highlights of these five years. It's going to make a real difference in the rest of our history," she says.

Sample's focus on people led her as president to strengthen the "dual leadership" of WMU. "I think the genius of WMU has been the involvement of the laywomen. In other words, it is an organization of laywomen. We must maintain the partnership of those who professionally do WMU and the laywomen who really get the job done in the churches," she explains.

WMU must continue to minister to those laywomen, Sample said, "if we are going to bring these people along to be involved in missions. We've also got to

minister to them where they are so they can take their eyes off themselves and be involved in ministering and witnessing to others."

She is confident WMU will stay true to its purpose of missions. "I just want us to keep doing what we've been doing for almost 100 years, but do it better, more effectively, and involve more people so there will be more praying, giving, and going than ever before," she says.

Now that her term is over, Sample hopes to have more time for involvement in her Flint, Mich., church's WMU. People will continue to be her focus as she teaches and uses her doctorate in psychology to do mission action in her community. She also plans to have a time of spiritual, emotional, and physical renewal.

After five years of "standing in the gap" as national WMU president, Dorothy Sample is ready for whatever the future holds. "I feel that you don't have to really push to know the Lord's will. It just unfolds. All you have to do is be available. And then things will happen to you that you would never have dreamed possible," she says.

Priest loses final court bid

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP) — A Roman Catholic priest rejected by his church for a Veterans Administration hospital chaplaincy has failed to convince the U.S. Supreme Court his rejection violated the First Amendment ban on an establishment of religion.

Joseph J. Turner, 54, a retired military chaplain who had two tours of duty in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam conflict, had claimed he was denied the position at the hospital in Coatesville, Pa., because of discrimination based on age and religion.

Turner contended his church's regulation that all chaplains be approved by its Archdiocese for the Military Services "condones and fosters church interference with affairs of government." Most establishment clause cases, lawyers noted, center around challenges to governmental policies that allegedly interfere with church doctrine or polity.

Turner's lawyers, in a written brief asking the high court to review the case, stated that in their client's failed application for the chaplaincy post, "the government abdicated its responsibility ... to the church."

The priest claimed the current head of the military archdiocese, Archbishop Joseph Ryan, "maintained contrary political beliefs" to Turner's, a factor that combined with his age led to his rejection.

In earlier proceedings, Turner's challenge had been turned aside by a pair of lower federal courts. In the key lower ruling, a U.S. district court judge held that religious denominations, not the armed forces, must certify candidates for chaplaincies.

In holding against the priest last year, Judge James McGirr Kelly of the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania ruled, "For this court to decide who may or may not represent a certain religion would be ... to go to the heart of religious organizations and their beliefs and impermissibly interfere in their operations. I cannot conceive of any greater interference or entanglement a government could launch than to dictate who may or may not represent a religious faith to its flock."

Kelly's opinion was affirmed in March by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

Rogers...

(Continued from page 1)

Rogers, required a substitutionary blood atonement and the blood had to be innocent blood.

"No son of Adam could ever qualify," Rogers stated. "The Bible says that for by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, and by another man's obedience, many are made righteous. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

"If Genesis 3 is a myth, John 3 is a farce," Rogers declared. "No Adam or any son of Adam could die on the cross for my sins."

The Memphis pastor said that the new birth is a greater miracle than the virgin birth, because it takes more of God's love and grace. "The creation was no trouble for God. The virgin birth was no trouble for God. The only time God had trouble was at Calvary," Rogers said in concluding his sermon.

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Peace Committee to ask for 'intercession' year

ATLANTA — The Peace Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention is recommending that 1986-87 be a "Year of Intercession" within the denomination, "with periods of prayer, prayer rallies, and similar emphases for reconciliation and restoration in SBC life and work."

The committee, which was created by the 1985 SBC in Dallas, met Sunday night (June 8) to finalize its Tuesday night report to the convention. Additional recommendations from the 22-member Peace Committee would have the convention to "respectfully request there be a one-year moratorium on theological/political position meetings and a deceleration, if not dismantling, of the political power structures" during the next year.

"The call for a moratorium is in no way an effort to muzzle anyone or to ask anyone to compromise their convictions," said Charles Fuller, chairman of the committee.

"We are not just asking Southern Baptists to declare the moratorium, we are offering something in return," the chairman added.

The committee is also recommending that the convention urge Baptist Press, the state Baptist papers, and the autonomous independent journals to be especially careful to be fair and accurate in reporting events in the convention and refrain from labeling and attributing improper motives."

Another part of the Peace Committee's report was a request that "our newly elected SBC president; the Committee on Committees; the Committee on Boards, Commissions, and Standing

Committees to be especially mindful of fairness in all appointments and nominations so that they are representative of the convention."

The committee's report to the convention told of plans to hold a retreat at which the committee members would be joined by SBC agency executives and seminary presidents.

Fuller said the Peace Committee's 11-page report was approved unanimously by the 20 members present at the Sunday night meeting.

"Our task in the coming year will be to attempt to work through a definition of the legitimate parameters of our diversity," Fuller said. "There is no question that a certain amount of legitimate diversity is good, healthy, and wholesome, but it is also obvious there is a limit to how far our diversity can stretch without deteriorating our fellowship."

BTN multiplies SBC watchers

NASHVILLE (BP) — The ranks of Baptists keeping a watchful eye on this year's Southern Baptist Convention likely will be increased greatly over past years because of coverage by BTN, the Baptist Telecommunication Network.

Reports received a month prior to the June 10-12 annual meeting in Atlanta indicate people at a minimum of 500 sites will be tuned in to see what develops during the convention.

Last year's BTN audience was estimated to be about 20,000 by Joe Denney, director of the telecommunications department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Denney said the number of viewing sites could go as high as 1,000 this year, with a total audience which could surpass the number of messengers in Atlanta. The entire program of the 1986 SBC will be carried on BTN with an unscrambled signal, permitting anyone with a satellite receiving antenna to watch the proceedings.

Interpretations

Greetings from Rome

By Herschel H. Hobbs

"There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers" (Philemon 23-24).

In closing this letter, Paul sends greetings to Philemon from those who were with him in Rome.

He begins with Epaphras. This is fitting since Epaphras had come from Colossae to Rome to enlist Paul's help against the Gnostics who troubled the church there (see Colossians 1:7). He was probably the pastor of the Colossian church.

Whether or not he was actually a prisoner is debated by interpreters. Paul could have used the word as a metaphor, though this is not certain. Since Paul had liberty to receive all who came to him (Acts 28:30), it is difficult to understand why he would be arrested.

Marcus is the Latin spelling of Mark (Colossians 4:10). Mark had proved himself to Paul following the apostle's rejection of him at Antioch (Acts 15:37-40; 2 Timothy 4:11).

Aristarchus had traveled to Rome, probably in his role as his servant (Acts 27:2), and is still with him (Colossians 4:10). Since he and Epaphras are both called "fellow-prisoners" with Paul, it could be that they accepted voluntary confinement in order to stay with him.

Lucas is Luke, who also traveled with

Paul to Rome (Colossians 4:14). Later as Paul approached death, he wrote, "Only Luke is with me" (2 Timothy 4:11). Luke was faithful to the end!

Demas is also mentioned in Colossians 4:14. Colossians and Philemon were taken to Colossae at the same time. Sadly, in 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul notes, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

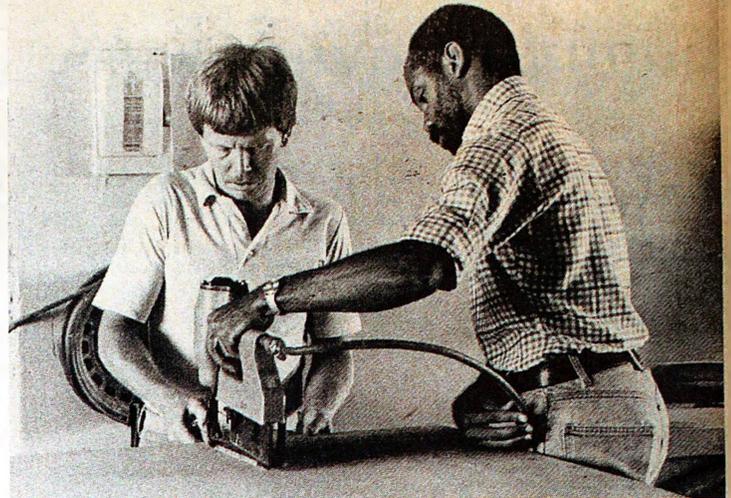
Paul ended the letter where he began. He prayed that Philemon may be supplied with divine grace. He would need it if he granted Paul's pleas for Onesimus.

Baker, Clanton take new posts at Baylor

WACO, Texas (BP) — Baylor University Historian Eugene W. Baker has been named special assistant to the president and press secretary, effective June 1.

In the newly created position, Baker will serve as a spokesman within the office of the president and direct the operations of the office of public relations.

Also, Public Relations Director David Clanton is being named to the new post of project director, innovative technology for teaching, also effective June 1. In this position, Clanton will plan for the establishment of advanced technological programs to enhance instruction within the university.



PUTTING IT TOGETHER — Milton Williams (right) works with Missionary Phil Flournoy as they finish construction of a chapel building in Brazil.

Black missionary discovers no 'identification' problem

By Mike Chute

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP) — As hard as they try to identify with people overseas, Southern Baptist missionaries rarely are mistaken for nationals. Everything being equal, missionaries cannot change their skin color, which usually is white.

In contrast, Milton C. Williams Jr., a semester missionary, was sometimes mistaken for a Brazilian because his skin is black.

Williams, now back in Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., laughingly recalls how Brazilians would ask him to translate for his red-haired, blue-eyed sponsor. But Missionary Philip Flournoy, who grew up in Brazil as an MK (missionary kid), speaks Portuguese fluently. Williams does not.

A few blacks have ministered in Brazil, but veteran missionaries think Williams was the first black semester missionary to serve in Rio de Janeiro.

Pioneering in the "white world" is nothing new for this Virginia Southern Baptist. His pioneer spirit developed in the Williams home where open-minded parents allowed their children to participate in activities among whites. Raised on the "other side of the railroad tracks," Williams acknowledges such activity "took me out of my black peer group." But he believes it broadened his perspectives.

Williams was nurtured through East End Baptist Church of Suffolk, Va., a Southern Baptist church. He describes East End as the "cultural center for the black community" of Suffolk and calls it a "typical black Baptist congregation."

However, East End also is different from most black Baptist congregations. It is one of about 40 black churches in Virginia that support the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

His pioneer spirit was displayed at Virginia State University, where he started the first Baptist Student Union on that traditionally black campus. He went on to become president of the National Baptist Student Retreat, sponsored by Southern Baptists for black students.

His pioneering attitude further was encouraged by a black pastor, C. J. Word, who told Williams: "You were born black, you'll die black. There's a 90 percent chance you will pastor black congregations. So you will lose nothing by

attending a white seminary."

With that advice, Williams became one of 65 black Americans studying at Southern seminary.

Williams' pioneer spirit has continued at Louisville's Hurstbourne Baptist Church, where he is the only black member and sings in the choir.

"God has blessed me to be involved in both worlds," Williams says of such pioneering. "I've been a member of black and white congregations and understand how both operate. How many blacks, how many whites can say that? I truly believe it is a blessing from God."

Williams feels that blessing continued through his missionary stint in Brazil. His job of building chapels gave him the opportunity to see Brazil. He had opportunities to preach wherever he went. He sang in English and Portuguese. He spoke at youth rallies. He saw what God is doing in Brazil.

Financed by fellow Southern seminary students, Williams' work in Brazil also afforded time for personal reflection. But it was not necessarily a time for answers, only possibilities. There is the "possibility" of missions for his life after the Brazil experience.

"This opportunity has been priceless. I don't have a friend who can say he has done this," Williams said as he prepared to leave Brazil. "I really don't know what God has in store for me. I can only prepare myself for whatever possibilities come up; that's why I am at Southern. That's all I can do. I trust God for the rest."

Out of the 3,600 Southern Baptist missionaries around the world, only three are black, says Willie Simmons, manager of the black church relations section of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Only 25 of the 6,000 volunteers overseas last year were black.

In April, board trustees approved an endowment fund of \$10,000 to help black students enter seminary and do volunteer mission work overseas.

The fund is for blacks who feel a "definite call to foreign missions" but are financially unable to attend seminary or do overseas volunteer work, Simmons says.

The SBC has about 1,000 predominantly black churches and 250,000 to 275,000 black Southern Baptists. "With that many black Southern Baptists, we should have more than three black career missionaries," Simmons says.

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Baptist and Reflector

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Baptist and Reflector (USPS 041-780) is published weekly except New Year's week by the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention at Brentwood, Tennessee 37027. Subscription prices: \$6.55 individual; clubs of ten or more, \$6.25; church budget, 10.9¢ per family per week when sent to 50 percent or more of church homes. Second class postage paid at Brentwood, Tennessee, and at additional mailing office.

Space forbids printing of resolutions and obituaries. Advertising rates on request.

Member of Baptist Press (BP) news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Baptist and Reflector, P. O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027.

News Journal of Tennessee Baptist Convention
Tom Madden, Executive Secretary-Treasurer

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Letters to the Editor

Letters on any religion-related subject are welcomed. Letters of over 300 words will not be used. Other letters may be shortened at the discretion of the editor. No unsigned letters will be printed, but writer's name will be withheld for sufficient reason. Letters must contain complete address and telephone number. Letters must not make personal attacks on the character or integrity of individuals.

Why don't they leave?

Dear editor:

The report of our SBC Peace Committee states that we have those among us who question many parts of the Bible.

Baptists in America began with a very small number of mostly middle and lower income people with very little formal education. The pastors worked at secular work and pastored the churches, accepting whatever the church could do for them. Most of our churches were started and pastored by these men, majority of which did not have college and seminary training. Along with those who did have higher education they loved the Lord, they loved His churches, and they believed and taught the Bible. Upon this very foundation our convention has grown in numbers, in organization, in wealth, and in influence around the world.

Due to the success, our publishing house, our schools, hospitals, and children's homes have the greatest mission program of any religious group anywhere. The secret of our growth has been that we have built on a solid foundation, God's Word, the Bible.

Our past leaders — B. H. Carroll, George Truett, R. G. Lee, and Ramsey Pollard, just to mention a few — were men who believed and taught the Bible.

If we have among us those who have learned so much that they cannot accept all of the Bible as God's message to man, why then don't they just leave our schools and churches, stop accepting the salaries paid them by Southern Baptists, and begin their own organization, as a few have already done? Why do they insist on destroying the foundation on which we have built so great a work?

Ben H. Knisley
7328 Fairview Road
Corryton, TN 37721

Can the SBC minister to God?

Dear editor:

A lesson from the Old Testament applies to the SBC meeting in Atlanta.

Ahaz, king of Judah, and Pekah, king of Israel, involved their nation in a civil war. Two hundred thousand captives were taken from Judah to become servants to the desires of Israel. Oded, a prophet of the Lord (serving on a peace committee), denounced the fighting and the slavery and declared the fierce wrath of the Lord was upon them.

Because Israel and Judah had turned away from God and followed their own agenda, they walked out of the Temple and neglected the worship of God. They suffered the consequences at the hands of the Assyrian army and became an object of horror, astonishment, and embarrassment. Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah with his first actions designed to bring honor to God.

I pray our convention at Atlanta will not be a repetition of history. If we continue to follow our agenda of name-calling, slandering, and fighting for power and control, then we have in essence turned our backs on God. We will remain as objects of horror, astonish-

ment, and embarrassment to the cause of Christ in our world. Our fighting is destroying the credibility of our witness. There can be no winner if we lose God's blessing on our convention.

"My sons, do not now be negligent, for the Lord has chosen you to stand in His presence, to minister to Him, and to be His ministers and burn incense to Him" (2 Chronicles 29:11, RSV).

May all messengers to the SBC go as ministers to God! May our new president's first action be designed to bring honor to God! I pray God's grace will allow us to be His ministers rather than be opponents in a civil war.

Jess Love
2635 Nolensville Road
Nashville, TN 37211

SWBTS changed my life

Dear editor:

I am graduating this semester from Southwestern Baptist seminary with the master of divinity degree, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Dilday and the faculty. The last four years I have been fortunate to come under their influence and to learn from them. The change in my life has been great. May I enumerate some of these changes.

After having attended classes at Southwestern for four years I am a more Biblical minister and Christian. I have a much greater respect for the Bible and the revelation it gives. The professors have taught me to treasure it, deal with it honestly, and to bring my life and ministry into harmony with it. My days as a student have given me a hunger and thirst to know God's Word.

Dr. Dilday and the faculty have taught me what it is to live like Christ. How blessed of God I am to have been able to learn of Christ from these men! Living out and internalizing the truths of the Bible as a daily experience has been the theme interwoven through every class. The Christian example of the faculty has been a source of inspiration and a compelling force to be like Jesus.

The last change I will mention deals with the area of ministry. I have received a good preparation for ministry both academically and spiritually. God, through Southwestern seminary, has begun to mold me to serve Him. I realize, as I graduate, that my preparation has not ended — it is just beginning. But what a foundation has been given to me in the last four years!

Thank you, Dr. Dilday. Thank you, professors. Thank you, Southern Baptists. I hope in the years to come that my service may be worthy of this great investment.

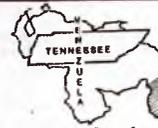
Scott Langston
1106 West Oak
Denton, TX 76201

Tim Pirtle accepts Newbern pastorate

First Baptist Church in Newbern has called Thomas Pirtle as pastor. He will begin June 22.

Pirtle attended Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark., Bethel College in McKenzie, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

Previous pastorates include churches in Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee. He comes to the church from Central Baptist Church in Martin.



Tennessee/Venezuela Prayer Net Partnership

—Pray for these missionaries celebrating birthdays this week:

Jim McDonald (June 11), who is currently in Houston, Texas, with his son, Jeremy, who is ill;

Ben Kirby (June 16), who is returning from furlough this month to his work as a general evangelist in Caracas;

Durward "Butch" Strickland (June 17), who began language school in Costa Rica in April;

Ron Adams (June 17), who began serving as a general evangelist in Valencia in January.

—Pray for the health concerns of Stan and Charlotte Parris and their family in Maracaibo and their preparation for furlough in August.

—Pray for the preparations for the "Get Together" event of Venezuelan Baptists in Maracaibo July 23-27.

—Pray for Mike and Linda Branscom as they await medical test results on their daughter, Amy.

Texas court faces decision on church site's tax status

DALLAS (BP) — A Texas state district court will decide if a church under construction is a place of worship when it hears a case involving First Baptist Church of Richardson, Texas, and the Dallas County Appraisal District.

The appraisal district claims the Richardson church was not using its facilities as a regular place of worship when the tax year began Jan. 1, 1985. Therefore, facilities should not be tax exempt and the church is liable for about \$100,000 in taxes. The case is scheduled to go to trial in July.

Church leaders contend that the facilities have been used for worship, and the church should be exempt from paying 1985 taxes. Construction on the church's new \$13-million plant at Central Expressway and Arapaho Street began about two years ago. The appraisal district exempted the church from 1986 taxes.

"The case can have far-reaching effects on the establishment of new missions if money given for missions is required to be diverted to government coffers in the form of property taxes," warned Attorney Gary Nash, a member of the church's finance committee.

Roy Armstrong, a lawyer for the appraisal district, contended until the church is completed and used for regular worship services, it is not exempt from taxation.

Oswin Chrisman, a lawyer represent-

ing the church, said he has never heard of a church that has been taxed under similar circumstances.

Armstrong said, "There really aren't any cases like this that have been decided under the property tax code."

Ken Nolan, administrative assistant for the appraisal district, said, "I guess it's going to have to come down to a (judicial) interpretation of what constitutes a place of worship and when it becomes a place of worship."

Under the Texas property tax code, religious worship is defined as "individual or group ceremony or meditation, education, and fellowship, the purpose of which is to manifest or develop reverence, homage, and commitment in behalf of religious faith."

To obtain property tax exemption, a church must show that its property is used primarily as a place of regular religious worship and is reasonably necessary for engaging in religious worship.

Nash said the Texas Supreme Court ruled in 1951 on a case involving a claim that a charity hospital in Houston did not qualify for a tax exemption because its new medical clinic was still under construction.

The court ruled that without the construction work, there would not be a clinic and, therefore, the construction qualified as use of the property for charitable purposes.

Baptists aid Chernobyl evacuees

KIEV, USSR (BP) — At least two Baptist pastors and the members of two Baptist churches are among a reported 90,000 people evacuated from the area surrounding the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster site in the Soviet Union.

Soviet Baptists have been doing their share in helping the evacuees, said Grigorij Komendant, assistant superintendent of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Ukraine, in a telephone interview with European Baptist Press Service. Some evacuees are staying in Baptist homes.

"It is not necessarily the case that believers have gone only to believers," Komendant pointed out. "Some believers are staying with non-believers and some non-believers are with believers. It wasn't discussed whether someone was a believer or not."

More than 20 people have been reported killed as a result of the April 26 mishap. Komendant said he was aware of no Baptist casualties. About half of all Bap-

tists in the Soviet Union live in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, where Chernobyl is located.

Offerings to assist the accident victims have been received in Baptist churches both in the Soviet Union and in England, Komendant reported. Officials of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and All-Union Council will discuss uses of such offerings during a Baptist World Alliance Council meeting in July in Singapore.

"The problems of possible after effects and relocation of displaced persons are of continuing concern" to Baptists, said Archie Goldie, director of Baptist World Aid.

Komendant described the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident as both perplexing and instructive. "Certainly the situation is hard to understand. It shows quite clearly how dangerous the world is today. There are no borders. There could be no local atomic war. We should pray for peace."

Reports from Southern Baptist agencies

Annuity Board

In 1985, the Annuity Board experienced a record year of growth and outreach. Total assets managed by the board grew in 1985 to \$1,689,798,415, an increase of more than \$250-million over 1984.

Sparked by a sharp rise in the stock and bond markets, the Balanced and Variable Funds posted significant gains. The Balanced Fund earned 21.7 percent in 1985. The Variable Fund's compound annual increase was 31.7 percent based on a unit value of \$5.40 on Dec. 31, 1985. The Short Term Fund earned 9.1 percent and the Fixed Fund earned 11.75 percent.

The board paid \$43,747,325 in retirement benefits to 15,127 annuitants in 1985, compared to 14,011 annuitants receiving \$36,212,973 in 1984.

An open enrollment period in October and November for the Church Term Life and Comprehensive Medical Plans was the most successful promotion in the board's history. A record 9,434 Southern Baptist pastors and church personnel joined the plans without having to provide evidence of good health. The number of members in the medical plan reached a 15-year high and the volume of life insurance in force reached an all-time high.

Foreign Mission Board

Nearly 3,600 Southern Baptist missionaries in 106 countries concentrated on evangelism and starting churches in 1985, but also helped Southern Baptists respond to human needs worldwide in a greater way than we have ever done in any period of our history.

A record 158,626 baptisms were reported last year by overseas Baptists related to Southern Baptist mission work. Membership for Baptists overseas topped 2-million for the first time, a gain of nearly 5 percent during 1985.

Overseas Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries expanded their efforts in crisis ministry during 1985. They provided, for example, immediate and long-term aid after a tragic earthquake in Mexico and after a volcanic eruption and mudslide in Colombia. Hunger relief in Africa expanded and educational and evangelistic efforts in tense areas of the Middle East continued. Southern Baptists contributed a record \$11.8-million toward relief efforts, up 64 percent over record gifts of \$7.2-million during 1984.

The number of overseas Baptist churches increased to 15,635, nearly 6 percent over the total for 1984, when there was a 9 percent gain. Counting churches, chapels, and preaching points, there are 32,969 worship locations.

Home Mission Board

At the end of 1985, there were 3,636 home missionaries serving in all 50 states of the nation plus Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

The board's missionaries start eight to 10 new churches each week. Assisting them in church starting is a church loan program which loaned more than \$23-million during the past year for purchase of new church sites and construction of new and existing buildings.

In a related area, the Home Mission Board spent more than \$5-million on specific evangelism activities to help churches, associations, and state conventions reach people for Christ.

In addition to the record number of missionaries on the field, the board also has another 1,778 chaplains who are officially endorsed by the board, but paid

Editor's Note: At every Southern Baptist Convention, the agencies are required to give an annual report to the convention. Here are a few highlights from the written reports which are being presented in Atlanta this week.

by the institutions they serve in industry, prisons, hospitals, and the military. An additional 49,000 Southern Baptists served as volunteers last year for varying amounts of time to make immeasurable contributions to Bold Mission Thrust.

During the past year all missions and volunteer personnel reported 67,793 professions of faith; 32,852 additions to churches; and 4,586 decisions for special service.

Sunday School Board

Statistics which illustrate the scope of church literature production at the Sunday School Board are:

—More than 150 editors, assistant editors, and manuscript assistants are involved in the production of 700 issues of approximately 175 periodical titles each year.

—More than 500 Southern Baptists write curriculum used in Sunday School, church training, and church music programs each year, while more than 3,000 annually contribute articles, study course books, and other types of church literature helps.

—Literature produced by the board was sent to all 50 states and approximately 50 foreign countries in 1985. The board serviced 460,263 orders for shipping 151.4-million pieces of literature weighing 14.8-million pounds last year.

Five goals cited of literature produced by the board: providing Biblically based literature for churches; providing resources to assist in reaching people for Christ and training Christian disciples; strengthening the total life and work of churches; building a strong sense of denominational identity and unity among local autonomous churches; and supporting the worldwide kingdom mission of Southern Baptist churches.

Golden Gate Seminary

Approximately 900 students representing 37 states and 17 foreign countries were enrolled during 1985-86 at Golden Gate and its off-campus centers in Garden Grove, Calif., and Portland, Ore. This was an increase of 4.8 percent.

On May 30, 1986, Golden Gate awarded 131 degrees during the 38th spring commencement exercises.

During the past year, a new site was acquired, for the Southern California Center, which will enable re-location from its leased space and the construction of new facilities.

Franklin D. Pollard, Golden Gate's president since May of 1983, resigned in March to become pastor of First Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss. The seminary's board of trustees named Harold K. Graves as interim president.

Midwestern Seminary

Close to 700 students representing 35 states and seven foreign countries were enrolled during 1985-86 at the campus and at four off-campus centers in St. Louis and Springfield, Mo., Tulsa, Okla., and Little Rock, Ark.

During commencement exercises May 31, 1986, a total of 108 persons received degrees. This total included the first graduates from Midwestern's off-campus center in St. Louis, Mo.

Midwestern continues to expand its

program and facilities. The master campus development plan, approved by the seminary trustees in 1983, was revised and is underway. The plan provides a new teaching/learning center, a full-service student center, and 12,000 feet of new classroom space.

New Orleans Seminary

A two-story, 119,000-square-foot building purchased in 1981 is being renovated to serve as a student center and office building. The construction comes at a time when New Orleans seminary is continuing to experience record enrollment levels. During the 1984-85 academic year, 2,704 students were enrolled in programs at the seminary, a 3.1 percent increase over the previous year.

Seminary trustees, meeting in March, adopted a record \$6.2-million budget for the fiscal year beginning Aug. 1, 1986. The new budget reflects a 3.62 percent increase over the current budget. It includes 4 percent salary increases for faculty members and permanent staff employees.

The seminary's radio station, WBSN-FM 89, has expanded its Christian witness with a power increase to 10,000 watts from 250 watts. The stereo signal now reaches thousands of households in south Louisiana and Mississippi.

Southeastern Seminary

With 183 graduates in its May 1986 commencement, Southeastern seminary alumni now number 6,112, scattered across the United States and encircling the globe.

During the 1985-86 academic year, Southeastern seminary has enrolled more than 1,400 students in its seven degree programs. The seminary also offers classes in an off-campus center in Shelby, N.C., and evening courses.

Southeastern students come from 38 states and seven nations.

The budget recently adopted by the board of trustees for 1986-87 totals more than \$5.9-million, with approximately 68 percent of the total coming from the SBC Cooperative Program. Because of the strong support of the convention, Southeastern students pay only a small portion of the cost of their theological education.

Southern Seminary

Southern Baptists expressed confidence in Southern seminary through significant financial contributions to the 3,500-student institution. More than \$3-million in major gifts was given to the seminary in the first quarter of 1986. The Alumni Fund topped its 1985 goal of \$150,000, reaching over \$161,000. Twenty-one new endowed funds were established, the largest number ever in a single year.

Further affirmation of the seminary's work came with a dramatic rise in the seminary's enrollment. Total enrollment for the 1985-86 academic year was about 7 percent higher than the previous year. The number of entering students for the spring semester increased 50 over last spring, producing a 14 percent rise in total enrollment for the 1986 spring semester compared to 1985.

A major academic change took place when Monday-only classes were resumed after 40 years. This shift allowed

many active ministers in Kentucky and surrounding states to continue their seminary education one day a week while continuing in their place of service.

Southwestern Seminary

In its 78th year, Southwestern seminary is preparing 5,070 men and women for ministry, while planning for the needs of the 1990s.

Southwestern, the largest seminary in the world, is this year training 4,071 men and 999 women in schools of theology, religious education, and church music. While 4,427 of those students study on the main campus, another 643 train at Southwestern's three off-campus centers and Spanish-language component.

Upward 90, a \$50-million project, calls for enhancing every area of seminary life. By 1990, four buildings will have been renovated and a conference center constructed, academic programs will be better related to current needs of churches, and personal student development will be heightened.

Seminary External Education

Introduction of a new course design and progress on three curriculum levels highlighted the 35th year of joint extension efforts by the Southern Baptist seminaries. The programs of the Seminary External Education Division served a total of 8,112 students.

Approval has been granted by the seminary presidents to open a seventh Seminary Studies program this fall in Nashville on the campus of Belmont College. Existing programs are in Baltimore, Chicago, Jackson, Tenn., Little Rock, New York City, and Orlando. The non-duplicating enrollment in the six programs came to 238 during the academic year which ended last July.

Enrollments through the Seminary Extension Department carried the work of the division into all 50 states and 24 foreign countries. They included 6,034 students attending classes in 358 extension centers and another 1,840 students studying by correspondence through the Independent Study Institute.

Southern Baptist Foundation

Growth in assets during the year was the result in large measure to the increase in individuals served. Total assets as measured by book value reached a new record high of \$39,670,562.21 on Sept. 30. Net additions during the year totaled \$2,409,233.77.

Income produced by foundation assets increased by \$275,967.86 over the previous year to \$3,817,534.60. This was the most income ever produced for Baptist institutions, boards, agencies, and individuals. Annual yield on average assets was 10 percent which was up slightly from the previous year.

Overall investment performance was best evidenced by the increase in the unit value of the General Investment Fund operated as a pool for smaller accounts. The assets of the fund appreciated 19 percent and produced income of 8.4 percent. The total return was, therefore, 27.4 percent in a fiscal year which ended Sept. 30.

American Seminary Commission

The Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary continues to emphasize the importance of a strong scholarship program at American Baptist College of the American Baptist Theological Seminary, a

black Bible school co-sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc.

The SBC provided 140 scholarships of \$1,100 each to ABTS students in 1985-86. The scholarships were provided under guidelines adopted by the commission in 1979 when the program began. Each recipient must be endorsed by his or her home church for preparation in a church-vocation program.

Also, the commission joined with National Baptist Convention trustees to establish a memorial scholarship to honor George E. Capps, former associate director of the SBC Education Commission. Capps, who died last June, provided staff support for the ABTS commission.

More than 150 students enrolled at ABTS last year. In addition, the institution's extension program enrolled 629 students.

Brotherhood Commission

Last year marked the beginning of a two-year implementation period by the Brotherhood Commission staff of major changes in the Brotherhood program which will go into effect in the local churches in October 1987.

Major adjustments call for Royal Ambassadors in grades 10-12 to become High School Baptist Young Men with Royal Ambassadors then to include boys only in grades 1-9, divided into Lads (grades 1-3), Crusaders (grades 4-6), and Pioneers (grades 7-9). Curriculum planning, program development, and promotion of Royal Ambassadors and High School Baptist Young Men will be handled by the newly formed Children and Youth Department at the Brotherhood Commission.

Another new area of work at the commission, the adult department, has the responsibility for curriculum planning, program design, and promotion of a new program for Baptist Young Men and Collegiate Baptist Young Men; a revised Baptist Men's program; and a new program for Senior Baptist Men.

Although 1985 was a year of tooling up for the future, solid gains still were made during the year in many areas of Brotherhood work, including an increase of 0.9 percent in enrollment, up 5,537 to 573,740, the seventh consecutive year of growth.

Christian Life Commission

The Christian Life Commission during the past year worked through local churches, associations, and state Baptist conventions to maintain a unified witness related to Christian ethics.

Special conferences were held during the year on apartheid, peace with justice, hunger, and race relations. The agency broadened its work with state Baptist convention Christian Life Commissions or their counterparts and with more than 1,500 Christian Life Committees in associations and in local churches.

The commission worked closely with other Baptist bodies to coordinate the denomination's emphasis on hunger education and action. In 1985 Southern Baptists contributed a record \$11,830,146 to world hunger relief funds of the Foreign and Home Mission boards.

The agency spearheaded opposition to state-sponsored lotteries and other forms of legalized gambling through testimony before a U.S. Senate subcommittee and before state legislative committees and citizens' groups in 12 states.

Education Commission

An emphasis on Christian leadership in the 21st century continued to be the major concern of the Education Commission. Nearly 700 educational and

religious leaders attended the National Congress on Leadership in the 21st Century, June 4-7, in Gatlinburg. The national meeting, co-sponsored by the Education Commission and the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, placed a special emphasis on the unique and distinctive role and mission of Christian higher education in preparing those individuals who understand the emphases of Christian leadership.

The 69 educational institutions sponsored by Baptist state conventions and the SBC continued to grow as more than 193,000 students enrolled in these schools during the 1985-86 school year. Of these students, 21,385 were preparing for careers in church vocations including almost 3,900 who were training for careers as home and foreign mission volunteers.

Financial support for educational institutions climbed in 1985. The 17 state conventions sponsoring schools and the SBC contributed \$82,972,668, an increase of \$2,302,671 over the previous year. Of this amount, \$851,481 was given as an addition to endowment funds.

Historical Commission

With the occupying of its own facilities in the SBC Building January 1985, the agency has made great strides in creating a world center for the study of Baptist heritage and in producing materials to communicate this heritage.

The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, owned and operated by the commission, opened its doors Feb. 4, 1985, and has served a broad spectrum of researchers, including the Southern Baptist Convention's attorney and the Southern Baptist Peace Committee. Through its library and archives, the commission is collecting and preserving for study and research resources essential for documenting the history, life, and work of Southern Baptists.

In celebration of the 140th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention, the agency installed and dedicated a historical marker at the site of the formation of the SBC in Augusta, Ga.

The production of a videotape series, "Making History," was completed. These tapes have been used by local churches and associations and have been telecast on the Baptist Telecommunication Network.

Radio-TV Commission

The second year of the Radio and Television Commission's ministry to homes through the American Christian Television System (ACTS) has been one of reorganization, stabilization, and expansion. June 12, 1986, marks the second anniversary of the network.

The permission of the SBC Executive Committee to launch a \$10-million campaign over five years has been the key to stabilizing the network's financial situation. It has been able to operate in the black since November. Almost \$2-million of the base five-year goal of \$10-million has been accomplished this year.

La. children's home elects J. Williams

MONROE, La. (BP) — John R. Williams of Baton Rouge, La., has been named superintendent-treasurer-elect by trustees of Louisiana Baptist Children's Home Board in Monroe. He will become superintendent-treasurer upon the retirement of Wade B. East next Jan. 17.

Williams has been director of government relations for the Louisiana Bankers Association since 1982. He will join the home's staff in September, working with East until January.

lion has been accomplished this year.

Expansion has been dramatically demonstrated in the adding of full power television stations in Birmingham, Ala., and New York City. The cable home growth has achieved 3.9-million, with a potential of 10,530,000 persons who have access to ACTS through cable.

The Radio and Television Commission continues to be the largest producer of public service radio programs in the nation. Its radio "Baptist Hour" and various musical formats are broadcast 6,329 times each month across the nation and on the Armed Forces Network.

Stewardship Commission

This last year for the Stewardship Commission might well be characterized by the new emphasis of Planned Growth in Giving. Not only has the launching of this emphasis been our primary concern but also the words, Planned Growth in Giving, describe the condition of our agency.

The effectiveness of our work in Stewardship Development Promotion is shown as gifts of Southern Baptists continue to grow faster than inflation. Cooperative Program receipts have experienced the best "real" gain against inflation in many years.

Together We Build continues to set the standard for fund raising in Southern Baptist Convention churches. Every other means of fund raising is less efficient, costs more, and produces less. The fact that the Stewardship Commission's program is copied by all is our greatest compliment.

Baptist Joint Committee

The Washington, D.C.-based public affairs agency works to inform, represent, and advise cooperating Baptist bodies in the area of religious freedom, as guaranteed by the Constitution's First Amendment. Whether through contacting congressional offices, filing briefs in court cases, or providing news coverage of governmental activities, the Baptist Joint Committee staff serves as the Baptist link, in the nation's capital.

During the past year, the Baptist Joint Committee worked to remove a section in a proposed federal tax reform plan that would strip church annuity boards of their tax-exempt status. The office also worked with legislators to retain charitable gift tax deductions for taxpayers who do not itemize deductions on their income tax forms.

The committee filed friend-of-the-court briefs in cases challenging appointment of a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, supporting equal access to public secondary school facilities for student religious groups, and opposing the practice of sending public schoolteachers into parochial schools at taxpayer expense.

Woman's Missionary Union

Preparations for celebrating the first century of work in 1988 and implementing new strategies for the second marked the activities of Woman's Missionary Union during 1985-86.

In an effort to broaden its appeal to a wider Christian audience, WMU introduced a new line of products this year. Called New Hope, this new line will carry products that relate to missions, but are targeted to a general Christian market. Other WMU products are directed to a mostly WMU audience.

A major step forward in unified curriculum planning was made as plans were completed for both the 1987-88 and 1988-89 activities, products, and units of study for church and associational WMU organizations. This double planning put WMU on the same schedule used by all missions education agencies.

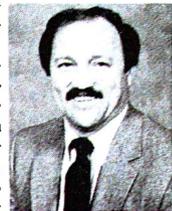
Huntingdon church calls Fred J. Ward

First Baptist Church in Huntingdon has called Fred J. Ward as pastor. He began May 4.

Previously pastor of Unity Baptist Church in Jacks Creek, Ward also has served Mercer Baptist Church in Mercer as pastor.

A graduate of Union University, Jackson, Ward is a native of Madison County. In Madison-Chester Association of Baptists, Ward has served as director of evangelism, moderator, president of the pastors' conference, chairman of the youth committee, and a member of the search committee for the director of missions.

Ward also has worked in several large companies as purchasing agent and manager.



Ward

Union announces preachers' school

JACKSON — The annual West Tennessee Summer Preachers' School has been scheduled for July 7-11 at Union University.

The school will feature a week of doctrinal, Biblical, and practical studies for pastors, church staff members, and their wives. Participants from throughout west Tennessee and several adjoining states are expected to attend.

Leading the conferences will be Curtis Vaughan, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; James Barry, senior consultant for pastoral ministries for the church administration department of the Baptist Sunday School Board; Walter Jackson, director of supervised ministry experience at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; and David Vickery, assistant professor of psychology at Union University and director of the Behavior Health Clinic.

Following the theme, "Joy in the Morning," Barry will address the subject, "The Joy of Preaching Christ." Jackson will address "The Joy of Ministering Christ." Vickery will lead seminars for pastors' wives entitled, "Joy, Joy, Joy." Vaughan will lead a study of the Book of James.

The cost of the conference is \$15 for each individual and \$25 per couple. The fee includes all meals, study sessions, and lodging on the Union campus.

TBC historians set June meeting

JOHNSON CITY — The annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Historical Society is set for 10:30 a.m. June 28 at the Sinking Creek Baptist Church, Johnson City.

The program will feature an address by historian W. Fred Kendall, old hymn singing, Baptist authors' fair, a business session, and exhibits about local and national church history.

Participants will tour the oldest church meeting house in Tennessee, the Sinking Creek Baptist Church (located on highway 91 between Johnson City and Elizabethton). Participants also will tour the restored 1776 Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church Cemetery in Washington County.

Tennessee Scene

LEADERSHIP . . .

Jeff Fairbanks has joined the staff of White Oaks Baptist Church in Chattanooga as summer youth director. He is a senior at Bryan College in Dayton. James Harris is interim pastor of the church.

Royce Armstrong has been called as minister of youth for the summer at Lincoya Hills Baptist Church in Nashville. Armstrong is a recent graduate of Belmont College and is employed part-time by the Baptist Sunday School Board, in his hometown of Nashville. Stephen Playl is the pastor.

Towering Oaks Baptist Church in Greeneville has extended a call to Dennis Shumate to serve as associate pastor, leading music and youth. David H. Foster is pastor of the church.

Ray Moss has accepted the call from Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville to serve as minister of outreach. T. Jerrell Sutton is the pastor.

Dan Lawler has been called as interim pastor of New Home Baptist Church in Martin.

Alan Smith has resigned as minister of

music at First Baptist Church, Troy, to accept a position with First Baptist Church, Portageville, Mo.

Eugene Leamon has resigned as pastor of City View Baptist Church in Knoxville, effective June 25.

Micki Jones has joined the staff of First Baptist Church, Camden, as summer youth worker. S. Ray Jones is the pastor.

Dale Denning has resigned as minister of music-youth at White Hall Baptist Church, Trenton, where J. Mike Kemper is pastor.

Pastor of Eldad Baptist Church in Trenton, Kelly Campbell, has resigned. He is moving to Texas and will attend seminary there.

John Farmer has resigned as pastor of West Side Baptist Church in Trenton. He is moving to Virginia.

Nicky Harcrow resigned as pastor of Latham's Chapel Baptist Church in Milan. He assumed the pastorate of an Alabama church June 1.

Bobby Mullins resigned as minister of youth at First Baptist Church, Milan, to become minister of youth at Boulevard Baptist Church in Memphis. Miles F. Boyd Jr. is pastor of the Memphis church.

Michael A. Ketterer is serving as minister of music and activities at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Morristown. Mark S. Hearn is the pastor.

White Hall Baptist Church in Trenton has called Hugh Callens as interim pastor.

Dennis Williams is serving as youth minister for First Baptist Church, Bradford. William F. Northcott is the pastor.

First Baptist Church, Dyer, has called Tim Meadows to serve as minister of youth. Jerry Legg is the pastor.

Ralph Samples has resigned as pastor of Warrensburg Baptist Church in Mohawk.

REVIVALS . . .

Richard Wakefield, pastor of First Baptist Church in Cabool, Mo., led revival services at First Baptist Church in Tiptonville April 28 through May 7. There were nine professions of faith, one addition to the church by letter, and several rededications. The music was directed by Ron Green, music and youth director at the Tiptonville church. A. Judson Lambert is the pastor.

Frank Shivers of Columbia, S.C., led revival services at Paynes Baptist Church in Estill Springs May 11-16. Robin Smith, music director at the church, served as music evangelist. There were eight professions of faith, one commitment to full-time Christian service, and numerous rededications at the church where Duane Brown is pastor.

Community churches gathered in Middleton April 27 through May 2 for a Homecoming '86 Crusade. Randy Isbell

of Hopewell Baptist Church in Savannah served as evangelist and Wiley Zinn from Decatur, Texas, served as music evangelist. Results include eight professions of faith and 15 rededications. Churches in Hardeman County Baptist Association that participated include First Baptist Church of Middleton, Porter's Creek Baptist Church, New Bethel Baptist Church, Brint's Chapel Baptist Church, Pocahontas Baptist Church, West Memorial Baptist Church, Hebron Baptist Church, Essary Springs Baptist Church, and Saulsbury Baptist Church.

Harold Tallant, staff evangelist at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., recently led revival services at Stevens Street Baptist Church in Cookeville. There were five professions of faith, one addition to the church by letter, two commitments to full-time missions, and many rededications at the church where Michael M. Christian is pastor.

Revival services at Hilldale Baptist Church in Clarksville, were led by Evangelist Jay Strack and Music Evangelist Jack Price. There were 32 professions of faith and six additions to the church by letter at the church where Verlon Moore is pastor.

CHURCHES . . .

Piney Grove Baptist Church, Henderson, celebrated their 150th anniversary May 25 in conjunction with their annual decoration day. Dennis McMahan is the pastor.

PEOPLE . . .

Luther and Ruby Youngblood were honored for their 50th wedding anniversary with a reception on May 30, at Madison Heights Baptist Church in Madison. John Humphrey is the pastor.

Carlie and Nellie Cinnamon celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on May 30. Guy M. Milam is their pastor at North Knoxville Baptist Church in Knoxville.

Mildred and Earl Cronan recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They are members of Parkway Baptist Church in Knoxville, where Walter H. Davis is pastor.

Ooltewah Baptist Church held an ordination service for Robin Scott on May 4. Burl McMillan, superintendent at the Chattanooga campus of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes gave the charge to the candidate. Larry Williams, pastor of the Ooltewah church, preached the sermon.

Union announces date for seminary studies

JACKSON — Registration and start of fall classes for the Seminary Studies Program on Union University's campus are set for Sept. 15, according to John D. Adams, Union's vice-president for religious affairs.

The program, sponsored by the six Southern Baptist seminaries, was established on Union's campus in 1980. A student may take up to three courses and earn up to nine hours of credit per semester toward a master's degree at any of the six seminaries.

For more information, contact Adams at Union University, Jackson.

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Church helps couple heal several kinds of scars

By Connie Davis

Though grappling with the admission, the young minister still honestly admits sometimes feeling angry with God as he tries to work through his questions about his son's death.

Bob Thurman can explain that God called him to serve Salem Baptist Church in Halls near Knoxville as minister of education and youth. Both he and his wife, Karen, had worked hard, and he was scheduled to graduate last December from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

He also can explain why he and Karen received thousands of cards and dollars from individuals, churches, and employees of General Electric, where Karen worked in Louisville.

He can even explain why members of Salem Baptist Church drove to Louisville to visit them, why the church secretary called daily for months, and why the Knox County Association of Baptists offered to collect a love offering for them before they had even gotten to know any of these people.

"God's love through His people in time will help," explained Thurman, referring to the one thing he cannot explain.

"The best day of our lives turned into the worst day of our lives," says Thurman.

Last November he and Karen were driving from Louisville to Knoxville to



IN HONOR AND MEMORY — The Thurmans presented to their church this book, *The Flames Shall Not Consume You* by Mary Ellen Ton, a minister's wife who was critically burned. The book was given in honor of the church members and in memory of Robbie, the Thurmans' son who died in a freak car accident.

look for housing. They would begin working at Salem Baptist Church Jan. 1.

A tractor-trailer rig ran them into the median of the interstate near Berea, Ky. Thurman pulled into a weighing station

for rigs to locate the rig or a state trooper. As he drove up the ramp he steered the car into the grass to avoid a hole in the asphalt.

Their car ran over a thin rod of a reflector post in the grass. Even though he was only going 5 or 10 miles per hour, the post sliced through the gas tank of the car, ruptured it, and created a spark that became an instant inferno. The Kentucky troopers described the accident as "freakish."

Their 5-week-old son, Robbie, died in the fire. Thurman received second- and third-degree burns over 27 percent of his face, shoulders, arms, and hands. Karen was burned over 35 percent of her body.

The Thurmans' painful five-week hospital stay in Louisville included the scrubbing of the burn areas until they would bleed. They also underwent counseling with the Christian counselor.

Now, seven months later, Thurman still undergoes physical therapy for his hands and he and Karen wear stretchy elastic body suits to lessen scarring as their skin heals during the next year. Then they may have some cosmetic surgery.

After one month at his new job, Thurman is regaining his stamina and working almost a full day. He and Karen are encouraging their friends to talk about Robbie. They may be able to display his picture when they have another child, Thurman added.

Thurman praised the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's insurance program which insured him because the church voted to begin his salary when they learned about the accident. He noted that after just three weeks, his medical expenses totaled about \$50,000 not including Karen, who was still insured by her employer.

Special thanks, though, should go to Salem Baptist Church, according to Thurman. Pastor John Holland left the evening of the accident to be with them at the hospital in Louisville. He was a part of a memorial service honoring Robbie the next week for the Thurmans at the burn center while a simultaneous service was being held at the church.

One way Thurman thanked the 1,600-member church for the financial support, visits, and other contacts was to speak during a worship service through an amplified phone message. The members reported that it was a very emotional service.

"We knew that Salem was a very special church when we accepted the call here. People have time and time again proved that to us," said Thurman. "We probably never would have had this kind of relationship with a church if we hadn't had the accident."

Bob and Karen Thurman are in the process of healing — physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Guenther calls for trustees to shoulder responsibility

By Bob Terry

ST. LOUIS (BP) — "The laid-back good old boy trustee was never helpful and today he is absolutely unacceptable," said James P. Guenther, attorney for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Speaking in St. Louis to a conference of administrators and trustees of institutions affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention, Guenther said, "Executive directors and presidents — those people are hired hands. Trustees hold the real power. In the eyes of the law and in the minds of Baptists, trustees are in control

of the institutions."

Guenther told the trustees they can either see that an institution is well managed or they can watch it go into bankruptcy. Trustees determine whether an institution ministers as intended or becomes perverted from its cause.

Trusteeship in religious organizations too often has been seen as an honorary position, Guenther said. Meetings consisted of mutual expressions of appreciation where everything and everybody was the best and the administration was without flaw.

Guenther challenged the trustees to

"act like trustees." A trustee is a corporate director who requires that corporate affairs be managed in a legal manner. A trustee also is a fiduciary which implies scrupulous integrity in financial affairs. Civil law also imposes upon trustees a heavy duty to be faithful to the trust granted him or her, the attorney explained.

He said trustees should master the charter and bylaws of the institution, the business and financial plan of the state convention, the program assignment of the institution, the relationship of the institution to the state executive board and to the churches, and how to act according to Baptist polity.

Guenther outlined recommendations for trustees serving Baptist institutions.

First, recognize conventions must exercise "necessary and prudent" control while allowing institutions to be managed by trustees. "This is a balancing act which requires the constant scrutiny and the best wisdom we can all muster," he said.

Second, avoid tunnel vision. He asked the trustees never to get so caught up with their institutions that the churches feel cut-off from that which they helped initiate.

Third, be committed, hard-working trustees. Guenther said leaving institutions in the control of trustees assumes committed and hard working trustees. He called that conclusion "a big assumption that has not always proven to be valid."

"As trustees, you are a key element in our system of checks and balances," he told his listeners.

Fourth, pursue old-fashioned Christian virtues such as honesty. Not only must trustees be honest, but institutions must be honest. Quoting Reinhold Niebuhr, Guenther said, "No individual is ever as evil as the group of which he is a part."

"I have known trustee groups to agree to tell a corporate lie when every single

member of the trustee body was personally committed to truth-telling," he continued.

Fifth, deal with government with "clean hands." Guenther cautioned against "knee-jerk reactions" saying, "We ought to conserve our resources and fight government when it is necessary and when the cost of the fight is worth the principles. But by all means, we should deal with government with clean hands."

Sixth, be tolerant with one another. The strength of a trustee body is in its combined judgments, he explained. That means trustees must be patient with one another as they practically work through all the necessary decision-making steps.

Seventh, exercise Christian stewardship. Guenther said trustees need to be increasingly sensitive to the trust and sacrifice conveyed by those who gave the dimes and dollars which make the institution possible.

Eighth, do not be grand. "Remember the humility of Christ," he urged. "The public resents hypocrisy."

Ninth, "operate in the sunshine." Guenther asked the trustees to act in ways which will build up the confidence earned by the institution with the Baptist constituency. "There are no secrets in Baptist life," he declared.

Tenth, maintain a proper relationship between the trustee body and the chief executive officer. Trustees are responsible for policy, he explained. They do not manage the day-to-day tasks of the institution. The chief executive should be given a strong hand, he contended, but should be held accountable to the trustees for the welfare of the institution.

"It is not the president, not the faculty, not the hospital administrator. You, not they, are ultimately responsible," Guenther reminded the Missouri trustees. "You are responsible for them. They are not responsible for you."

Baylor aids Thailand school

WACO, Texas (BP) — A multi-million-dollar educational facility will be built in Lampang, Thailand, thanks to Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and the U.S. Agency for International Development in Washington.

Baylor, a Texas Baptist school, and the agency's American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Program joined forces to help fill a request made by the American-Thai Foundation for Education for the facility.

The foundation was formed in 1983 to advise Lampang College of Commerce and Technology in matters of the school's development and to help locate sources of funding for scholarships, equipment, and buildings from governmental agencies, foundations, corporations, and private philanthropies.

The program granted \$850,000 for the Lampang facility. Because labor and construction costs are so inexpensive in Thailand, the funding is equivalent, in Thailand, to receiving about \$5-million in U.S. currency, said Nirund "Nick" Jivasantikarn, president of Lampang College of Commerce and Technology and current president of the Lampang City

Council. Jivasantikarn received his bachelor's degree and doctorate in education from Baylor.

At present, there is no college or university in Lampang Province, populated by 700,000 people throughout 6,000 square miles. The facility will be the first of its kind in Lampang Province and will be the largest construction project ever undertaken in the city of Lampang, capital of the province.

If a pending request is approved for a second facility — a classroom and lecture hall building — the two new facilities will form Lampang College, which will be the first four-year college in Lampang, Jivasantikarn said. In addition to providing a four-year college degree, the new college also will provide continuing education courses, he said.

Lampang College now provides only high school education, vocational education, and a two-year college program.

The architectural designs will be started immediately, with construction scheduled to begin in December. Plans are to finish construction by December 1987.

BIBLE BOOK SERIES
Lesson for June 15

Esther becomes queen

By Mike McGinnis, pastor
Central Baptist Church, Chattanooga

Basic Passage: Esther 1:1 to 2:23

Focal Passages: Esther 1:10-12; 2:1-2, 4-7b, 16-17

Esther continues, along with the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, with the theme of the providential care of God.

It is interesting that in the Book of Esther there are no references to the deity of Israel. God is neither addressed nor acknowledged.

There are several possible reasons for this. First, it displays the low ebb that Israel had reached in her spiritual life. Second, it displays God's faithfulness. God does not desert His people. He remains faithful to His covenant of grace even when Israel's faithfulness wanes. Third, God is seen working through His natural order, supernaturally fulfilling His divine purpose, even amid ignorance of His people. This is often the case. God is active even when we do not recognize His presence and His power.

The first two chapters of Esther introduce three of the four major characters of the entire book.

Chapter one introduces us to Ahasuerus, the heathen king of Persia. Several characteristics of Ahasuerus are worth noting. First, note his prestige. It should be understood that Ahasuerus is not the name of the man, but the title. It means, "high father" or "venerable king." As the word Caesar is a title and does not identify the man, so Ahasuerus does not identify this Persian king in secular history. Most identify Ahasuerus as Xerxes the King of Persia. He is the one who actually brought the kingdom of Persia to its zenith. Xerxes reigned over a kingdom from India to Ethiopia.

Verse two says, "King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne . . ." The language indicates the meaning of this phrase is that Xerxes sat "securely" upon his throne. He was the greatest ruling monarch of his day.

Second, note his power. Chapter one tells the story of a great banquet given by Xerxes. The banquet revealed the wealth, the luxury, and the regal character of his oriental court. Its purpose was obvious. He had called in all of his princes and all of his rulers from every corner of the kingdom in order to win their wholehearted support for the military campaign to capture Greece and to make himself the supreme ruler of the world. History reveals that he almost succeeded in that attempt. Had not God already predicted that the operation would eventuate in failure, I believe he would have succeeded (cf. Daniel 7-8).

Third, note his pride. Xerxes wanted all to know that he was able to pay for the war he was contemplating. He readily displayed his great wealth. Verses 4-8 paint the picture of a proud ruler flaunting his wealth. It was a gaudy display.

Last, note his perverseness. The banquet was pagan from beginning to end. It was a godless thing. It was a vulgar display by this godless monarch. However, his perverseness is best displayed in his desire to bring Queen Vashti before his guests. History reveals that in his drunken stupor, Xerxes requested that Vashti appear naked before the princes and rulers. In his perverseness, he had no regard for the modesty of his queen. Her refusal to respond to his request was certainly not inappropriate. Yet, be-

cause of his tremendous sense of pride it angered him deeply.

There are no apparent spiritual lessons to be found in the story of Xerxes' banquet. What you see is God introducing us to a pagan, heathen court where decisions are made that affect the world.

In this chapter, it looks as if God is left out. Yet the message of the Book of Esther is that God is overruling all circumstances. He is going to accomplish His own purpose. In Ezra, God is sovereign over King Cyrus. In Nehemiah, God is sovereign over King Artaxerxes. Now in Esther, God continues to be the sovereign ruler of all the universe. No earthly monarch will thwart His divine intentions.

Next we are introduced to a second main character: Mordecai. He will play a dominant role throughout the book. Two important characteristics should be noted about this man.

First, note his condition. Mordecai had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. When Persia defeated Babylon, these captives became the possession of the Persian Empire. Mordecai, along with his countrymen, had been stripped of their prestige and position. Therefore, as a captive in Persia, Mordecai is insignificant as an individual. Yet, God will choose to use this insignificant man to accomplish great things for Israel.

Second, note Mordecai's lack of commitment. There were strong and anti-Semitic feelings among the Persian people. Mordecai was very sensitive to these sentiments. Therefore, as we are introduced to Mordecai, he is warning Esther not to reveal her nationality. This silence is tantamount to a denial of her religion, because religion is the thing that has identified these people down through the years. The moment Mordecai advocated the denial of their nationality, he denied his religion.

It would have been interesting to stand back and observe Mordecai as he waited outside of the court of the harem to learn how Esther fared. Unlike Ezra and Nehemiah, Mordecai was not conscious of the providential care of God. He had simply carried out the best plan he could devise. Therefore, one could imagine the nervous, uncomfortable Mordecai as he walked back and forth waiting for a word concerning the success of his plan. He was gripped by fear, doubt, and frustration.

The final major character is Esther herself.

Since God is omitted in the Book of Esther, it makes sense that prayer is never mentioned either. Yet the heathen king is mentioned 192 times. As already established, the Book of Esther introduces the heathen, Persian ruler as all powerful. Yet, it is apparent that he is not all powerful. God is the one orchestrating the events to bring about His perfect plan.

In the case of Esther, God perfectly permitted all of the events by His providence. Her entrance into the beauty contest and her acceptance by the man in charge of the contestants were all ordered by God.

After placing Esther in a strategic in Israel.

After placing Esther in a strategic use of Mordecai. Mordecai was a strong and able man. This is displayed in his ability to direct Esther even after she is married to the king.



McGinnis



Garner

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES
Lesson for June 15

Jeremiah's Temple sermon

By Don Garner, assistant professor of religion
Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City

Basic Passages: Jeremiah 7:1-15; 26

Focal Passages: Jeremiah 7:1-4, 8-10; 26:7-9, 12-14

Jeremiah's "Temple Sermon" is a classic text worthy of thoughtful and prayerful reading.

Jeremiah's proposal (7:1-4)

The prophet took up a position outside the Temple when people were coming to worship God there. He challenged those people of God to change their worship experience so that God could work His will with them.

The people of God, self-satisfied and self-deceived in their self-serving religion, were sentencing themselves to ultimate spiritual ruin. Jeremiah called for a fresh and vital worship to replace empty ritual.

Jeremiah's predecessors (7:13)

Do not overlook the fact that Jeremiah was far from being the first prophet with this message! In fact, all four of the eighth century prophets much earlier had called for a renewal of real religion in Israel.

Amos (5:21-24; 8:4-8) bitterly spoke of God's disdain for religious observances that do not produce an end to the worshiper's own injustice and ungodly greed. Hosea (4:1-10) blamed the blatant violation of the Ten Commandments by the people (4:1-3; compare Jeremiah 7:9) on the religious leaders who failed to give God's people the proper spiritual nourishment and guidance (4:4-10). Like Amos, Isaiah (1:10-17) was used by God to reject sarcastically all the trappings of a "religious" people who are not willing to cease doing evil and learn to do good. And Micah (6:6-8) gave that clarion call to a true worship of God which goes beyond ritual observances to embrace justice, steadfast love, and a humble walk with God.

Jeremiah here at the Temple added his voice to generations of preaching about what real relationship with God means. Over the decades with His people, God "spoke persistently" (7:13) through His messengers without significant response. Jeremiah declared an old message; but it needed a new hearing.

Jeremiah's preaching (7:5-15)

Jeremiah used the biggest word in the Bible - "if." To restore their broken relationship with God, the covenant people would have to change. "If" they changed, deliverance would come. "If" they did not, certain calamity of God's judgment would come. "If" we commit our lives to Jesus, then redemption comes to us. "If" we choose not to do so, then separation from God is our final fate (see Romans 6:20-23).

But people do not want to take responsibility for the consequences of "if-then" decisions. We want to blame our fate on God or on others. Or, like Jeremiah's audience, we trust in false hopes and deceptive expectations of what we would like to happen.

The people of Judah had come to believe - and were counting on the fact - that Jerusalem and the Temple were safe, never to be destroyed by an invader. Their false idea is now called the "inviolability of Jerusalem" doctrine. "God could not let us be destroyed - we are His chosen people. And this is God's hometown, too, since He lives in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. He surely won't

let us be lost."

They had Scripture prooftexts they quoted (Isaiah 31:5; 37:33-35; and others) to justify their presumptuous belief as true. Micah (3:9-12) had told them that it was just such wrong notions of false security that would keep them from turning back to God and being saved.

Now Jeremiah tried to shock them into reality by picturing their beloved Temple as a den of iniquity destroyed like the worship center at Shiloh had been.

Jeremiah's point applied today

Ritualized religion is spiritually bankrupt because it does not yield changed lives. True and valid worship makes us into different people.

It is crucially important for some of us Baptists to admit that empty and ritualized religious observance is not limited only to congregations with "high church," formally liturgical, and so-called "cold" worship services. Even our more "heated" and rambunctious, informal, and "old-time religion" meetings fall into a ritualized pattern or script that we all have memorized.

The content of worship is what counts between a worshiper and God. And that content of worship must be distinguished from the format or form or style of that worship. A preacher is "evangelistic" not because he yells loud and pounds the pulpit (style), but because he presents God's saving work in Christ and calls persons to it (content).

The people of Jeremiah's day had confused form with content. The Pharisees of Jesus' day also confused form with content. Too many of us today make the same mistake.

The real and crucial question is: "Is this observance I'm doing really worship - honest-to-God true worship of the heart? Does it affect my relationship to God? Do I now see my relationships to others in a new light?"

But the question we tend to answer about worship services is: "Do I like the order of service or the preacher or the music or the color of the carpet (or the absence of carpet) in the sanctuary?" It is our nature to focus upon all of these external trivialities (form) and ignore meaning (content). Certainly, all of these externals can be conducive and even crucial to worship; but we must never confuse any of these with the essence of worship itself.

The externals of our religious behavior are easier to focus upon, are not as threatening in calling us to change within, and are seen by men. But it is the internal changes, very private and sometimes difficult conversions, which place us in the right relationship to God.

Jesus told the Pharisees: "You tittle mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith; those you ought to have done without neglecting the others" (Matthew 23:23).

Senior center opens

TAIPEI, Taiwan - Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary has opened the first floor of a new student dormitory as a place for ministry to the many elderly people living in the local community.

During the first two days of operation at the Evergreen Activity Center, two people accepted Christ as personal Saviour.

LIFE AND WORK SERIES:
Lesson for June 15

The Lord's second coming

By Danny Bush, associate minister
First Baptist Church, Oak Ridge

Basic Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
Focal Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

For a variety of reasons the subject of our Lord's second coming has been a source of differing opinions and heated discussions. This ought not to be. Most, if not all, of our experiences as wayfarers in the faith are not filled with volumes of information. We move from moment to moment, hour to hour, day to day, month to month, year to year, life to life by faith, not sight.



Bush

Ask any Christian and he or she will most likely agree that we are saved by the marvelous grace of God as we place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Often, in the continuing process of salvation as we learn more about God and attempt to live the Christlike life, there comes the temptation to outguess God or to, in a way, force His hand.

This behavior, although not always deliberate, is typically human. We like to be in control. We like to have the answers to physical and spiritual riddles. When answers are not readily available, we either doubt, come up with theories or answers on our own, or trust God for the unknown.

Trusting God for the unknown is hard for us finite creatures. From the beginning of mankind, our unwillingness to trust God for what is not understood has been a primary reason for our downfall. The kind of fruit in the Garden of Eden that God did not want Adam and Eve to eat is not important. The point then and the point now is that God is the infinite eternal Creator-Redeemer. Whose ways are not our ways and Whose thoughts are not our thoughts. We mortals, created by Him, must trust in Him for our physical and spiritual existence.

Verses one and two of 1 Thessalonians 5 seem to be clear as the nose on one's face. The time and details of the return of Christ are simply not ours to know! Look at Matthew 24:36 where Jesus said only the Father knows the hour of the second coming. The whole point of Matthew 24-25 is to describe the surprise nature of the Lord's second coming and the way in which the followers of Christ should be living at that time - watching in readiness for the return, using the gifts we have to honor God, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison, pointing mankind to Christ.

In the same spirit as Jesus spoke of the return, Paul also urged Christians to be actively alert, dependent not on earthly security of peace, and busy giving encouragement to each other and sharing in the building of each other's Christian character.

Argument among Christians is one of the best tactics the father of sin has in his already doomed attempt to overthrow the kingdom of God. Just as idle children not involved in constructive play or helpful learning can get into all kinds of mis-

chief, so Christians can find themselves debating, analyzing, and criticizing when they are not active in doing the things of God. Christians who are serving the Lord in the loving way He has taught us to serve are preparing in the best way for His return. They are also helping people who do not know Christ as personal Saviour to get ready.

I look forward to the return of Christ. Don't you? There are so many hurts, disappointments, sorrows, and problems without solutions in this existence. Thank God a better day awaits all who believe God whether they are alive when Christ returns or have already gone to be with the Lord.

Meanwhile may we faithfully reach, teach, and minister to mankind. We can do these things joyfully because the Lord has come and shown us how and because He is present and working in us through the Holy Spirit as we let Him.

Tennesseans earn SWBTS degrees

FORT WORTH, Texas - Twenty-three Tennesseans were among the 442 people receiving degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary May 9.

William Hardy Jr. of Nashville received the doctor of education degree. Receiving master of divinity degrees were Bill Alexander of Memphis, Douglas Brown of Ooltewah, Charles Carothers of Jackson, Jeffery Flowers of Parsons, Steven Haney of Memphis, Richard Jenkins of Bruce, David Price of Williston, Mark Ragsdale of Union City, Jeffrey Seat of Smyrna, and Randall Stephens of Knoxville.

Walter Brown of Powell, Randal Sharpe of Bluff City, and Henry Simpson III of Middleton, each earned the master of music degree.

Master of arts in religious education degrees were awarded to Joann Dotson of Philadelphia, Sarah Double of Knoxville, Debbie Harned of Nashville, William Poole of Springfield, James Walker of Morristown, and Philip Wilson of Church Hill.

Kenneth Hunsberger of Memphis and Karen Simons of Greenfield received master of arts in communications degrees.

Donald Fortner earned the associate in religious education degree.

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BOOK REVIEW
By Michael Davis

Strategies for faith marathon

Running the Race by Judson Edwards; Broadman; 159 pages.

Judson Edwards does not claim to be a specialist in running. What he does claim, however, is an identity with his neighbor who is committed to running despite her uneven "camel" running style.

His own honest confession is: "I have much more in common with my cameloping neighbor than I do with Alberto Salazar or Bill Rodgers. But I am a full-fledged runner, nonetheless."

Edwards is a running enthusiast who has written a good book from the vantage point of the running imagery in Scripture. He has selected metaphors that appear in Psalms, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ecclesiastes, Hebrews, Philippians, and Galatians and related their insights to strategies for Christian living.

Readers will appreciate the way Edwards has succeeded in his efforts to avoid a "Jogging for Jesus" approach. This book is filled with sound theology and wise application.

Consider his application of the running passage in the Book of Hebrews: "Those the writer of Hebrews mentioned ran valiantly and passed the baton to their children and grandchildren. They, in turn, lived the faith, wrote songs and poems, worshiped in their own way, ministered as they could, and passed the baton to the next generation. And the relay has continued to this day."

Edwards develops this interpretation

by introducing the strategy of "picking up the pace" in the marathon of faith. Edwards knocks by experience what it means to pick up the pace in a race.

"But that achievement pales beside the accomplishment of those people who pick up the pace spiritually. I stand in awe," he writes, of the husband and wife who, in mid-life, decide to serve as foreign mission volunteers. "I applaud the woman who, after raising her children, enrolls at seminary to sharpen her theological perception. I marvel at the commitment of the millionaire who drops out of the rat race to build homes for poor people."

This is a book that will appeal to runners and non-runners. Christians will have the opportunity of seeing themselves in their journey with God. Indeed, they will be led to see that their Christian pilgrimage is also a marathon of faith that requires discipline and carefully planned strategies.

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Couple stays in Ethiopia despite typhus, sacrifice

By Art Toalston

MERAGNA, Ethiopia (BP)— "You couldn't buy this experience with money," says Southern Baptist volunteer Linda Barnett.

But who would want to buy a near-fatal case of typhus?

A close call with death has not tarnished her experience as a volunteer nurse in Ethiopia.

She and her husband, Clyde, of Owensboro, Ky., work at the Southern Baptist feeding center at Meragna, a remote village overlooking vast canyons north of Addis Ababa. Mrs. Barnett, who left a job as a pediatrician's nurse to take the volunteer assignment, sees as many as 130 patients a day, six days a week, in the feeding station's clinic. Barnett, a former fireman who also owned a used car lot, does much of the administrative work.

Parents of three grown children, they had been in Ethiopia six months when their third grandchild was born in March.

"I don't guess you're ever in the center of the Lord's will on this earth. There's always something you could do," Mrs. Barnett says. "But I feel I'm as near to the center of the Lord's will as I'll ever be in this life."

"At home you always have this nagging feeling that, no matter how much you go to church or what you do, it's never enough. That feeling's not here. What you do makes a difference."

Mrs. Barnett's bout with typhus, several weeks after they opened Meragna's feeding station last October, pushed her temperature to 105 degrees. For nine days, she was in bed and did not eat.



PRIVILEGED VOLUNTEERS — Living in primitive conditions and working among hungry Ethiopians is a "once-in-a-lifetime privilege" for Clyde and Linda Barnett.

Deciding something had to be done, Barnett sent an Ethiopian worker on horseback on a six-hour ride just to make radio contact with missionaries.

She was airlifted to a hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, and, after a day and a half, to a hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. For three days, doctors doubted she would survive.

"We just prayed and that was all," Barnett says.

As nine more days passed, Mrs. Barnett gained strength. "Five days are blank to me," she says. "I think I'm alive today because many, many prayers were answered. The Lord isn't

finished with me yet." After several weeks of recovery in Addis Ababa, she returned to Meragna.

At Meragna, the Barnetts and a team of six Ethiopian Christians provide rations of grain, milk powder, and cooking oil to about 25,000 subsistence farmers and their families who are anxiously waiting to see whether summer rains will nurture an ample late-fall harvest.

The Barnetts are concerned because half the children they have examined in recent weeks have shown a weight loss or no weight gain.

The grip of drought "is not as severe as it was but most of them still need help,"

Mrs. Barnett says.

Until April 1985, the Barnetts never talked about or considered missions-related work. They had seen many news reports about the Ethiopian famine, but one Saturday just before bedtime, they watched a segment about a teen-ager whose mother had died from starvation and whose father was near death. The youth was seeking help for a brother just a few months old.

"We just stood there and watched it," Barnett recounts.

The next day, after returning from church, Mrs. Barnett leveled with him: "I need to go to Ethiopia."

During church all she had thought about was that young man in Ethiopia.

When Barnett laughed, his wife was perplexed. "He's usually more sensitive than that," she says. But he had felt the same need.

"I'd stayed awake most of that night," he recounts. "Just couldn't get it off my mind. It just seemed like the Lord kept dealing with me: 'This is something that you need to do.'"

"It was like there wasn't any choice about what we were to do," Mrs. Barnett says. "There was never any question from that moment on."

They sold their home and business. "It just seemed like they didn't matter anymore," Barnett says.

Within three months they were in volunteer orientation at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center near Richmond, Va., preparing for their stay in Ethiopia.

"I don't think we'd be content with a 9-to-5 job anymore," Mrs. Barnett says.

"Wherever we go," Barnett adds, "it's not our decision anymore."

Convicted Baptist preacher seeks forgiveness of others

By Tim Nicholas

GULFPORT, Miss. (BP)— Rick Edwards, former pastor of Pass Road Baptist Church, Gulfport, Miss., once had a billboard proclaiming that he was "Shaking the Gates of Hell," but for the past several years, Edwards has done his shaking from the inside.

Edwards just completed two years as a federal prison inmate for his part in a drug smuggling attempt. He had been sentenced to three years in prison and fined \$10,000 and was placed on five years probation after pleading guilty to conspiring to smuggle cocaine and leaving the U.S. without declaring \$115,000 in cash to Customs officials.

Now Edwards is back home in Gulfport, hoping for the same forgiveness from this fellow Baptist that he feels he has received from God. He was released from a New Orleans halfway house April 25, after serving time at the Fort Worth Federal Correctional Institution, and later at Eglin, Fla., Prison Camp which is closer to his home.

While in prison, Edwards worked highways, picking up trash and cutting bushes. Eventually, he worked himself into a job driving a taxi inside Eglin Air Force Base. He also worked himself back into a preaching ministry.

"I've never been in a place where opportunities for evangelism were so abundant," says Edwards. "People were going to hell, lives being destroyed. I wasn't sharing the Word." Edwards met with some other Christian inmates and "asked them to pray for me that I'd get

things straight with God," he says.

"Once I knew He had forgiven me and I'd forgiven myself, I began to preach with power." He went to the chaplain, asking for an all-inmates worship service on Wednesday evenings. "We started a church," he says, with Edwards as inmate pastor.

Concerning his crimes, he says: "I did a stupid thing, it's that simple. I had become so fleshly in my life, (I believed) I could do no wrong."

While preaching at Eglin, Edwards says a number of men made professions

of faith and he was able to baptize them at First Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. But he notes, "God's anointing and the power to be used again did not come until I confessed my sin before God."

Being open about being a Christian in prison is tough, he says. "You live under a microscope by other inmates as well as staff. But there is something I can't put a handle on, something about being locked up away from the world and able to spend time with God. You come to know Him in a more dynamic way."

Black churches in Los Angeles explore basics of Sunday School

LOS ANGELES (BP)— Proclaiming the gospel and evangelism — not programs — are keys to developing a Sunday School. Leroy Gainey, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Syracuse, N.Y., told Sunday School leaders here.

Gainey told the leaders of 19 Los Angeles-area churches to rely on the basics of Sunday School principles to establish a strong Bible study in their churches. The New York pastor led the opening worship session of the first Sunday School training clinic exclusively for black churches.

Later, Bill Crider, minister of education, First Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Miss., told members of Opportunity Baptist Church that Sunday School is the means to implement the Great Commission.

"Sunday School provides the plan for the Great Commission," Crider said.

Black churches are beginning to develop Bible study, discipleship, and evangelism to reach blacks as well as others in their communities, said Sid Smith, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board consultant for black church development.

That interest led to the Los Angeles clinic patterned after metro enrollment-training clinics conducted by the Sunday School Board and state conventions, Smith explained.

About 10 to 15 percent of black Baptist church members are involved in Sunday School. A focus of black church development is to incorporate Sunday School into the lives of church members, Smith said.

While working in construction in New Orleans out of the halfway house, a mission church, Cathedral Baptist, extended a call for him to be associate pastor. He turned the offer down because he did not feel led of the Lord to take it and he intended to come home.

"This is where I fell and I want to give God every opportunity to restore me in the community," he says.

Edwards says being in prison taught him success is more than the achievement of things. "Prison has taught me it is being the right person. Through this God has restored my home. My marriage is stronger than ever."

He also believes he has matured. "I think my preaching is totally different," he says. "I know that Jesus is the most exciting thing in my life."

He preached his first Sunday out at New Hope Baptist Church, a black congregation in Gulfport, and was to sing at his home church of Salem in Carthage in early May.

Edwards says his first revival came out of being in prison. People he had won to Christ told the pastor, who is a probation officer himself, about him. The revival was scheduled to be held May 18-22 at Northeast Baptist Church, Sarasota, Fla.

Edwards knows that some Baptists will believe that he is a changed man and others will not. He will likely remain under the microscope for a while. But he also knows that "It's not what I say, it's how I'm going to have to live."

—Tim Nicholas is associate editor of the Baptist Record, news journal of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.