

Baptist and Reflector

Vol. 152/No. 48/December 3, 1986

News journal of Tennessee Baptist Convention

Intruder murders missionary, MK

By Marty Croll

YEKEPA, Liberia (BP)— A Southern Baptist missionary and her 10-year-old daughter were found murdered in their home in the northeastern Liberian town of Yekepa early Nov. 26.

Libby Tarlton Senter, 47, of Shelby, N.C., and her daughter, Rachel, had been dead several hours when a missionary who lives nearby entered their home and found them.

Benjamin M. Morris, a 32-year-old Liberian, admitted to the murders after Missionary George Senter, Mrs. Senter's husband, told Morris he forgave him and asked him to confess.

Morris was arrested on Nov. 27, the day after he allegedly stabbed to death

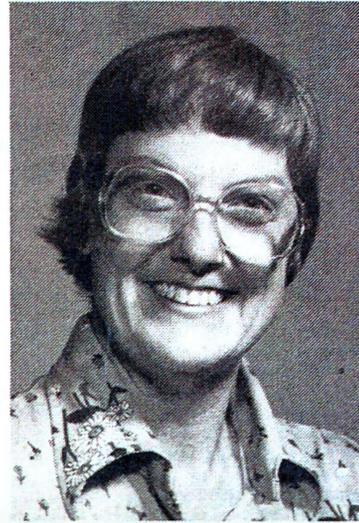
Mrs. Senter and daughter Rachel. Police and soldiers apprehended Morris at a checkpoint in Karnplay, Liberia, about 30 miles from Yekepa and 20 miles from the border of Ivory Coast.

A formal charge by Liberian authorities was expected soon afterward, but police first were seeking a written confession. A trial was expected to be scheduled after that.

Morris confessed verbally to Liberian officials the day after he was arrested that he committed the murders after Mrs. Senter intervened to prevent him from molesting her daughter.

His confession came after George Senter asked to speak with Morris pri-

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Libby Senter



Rachel Senter

'Healthy confrontation' occurs in BJCPA study

By Dan Martin

WASHINGTON (BP)— A meeting between a nine-member Southern Baptist Convention fact-finding group and the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was a "healthy confrontation," the study committee chairman said.

"We had our confrontation," said Gary F. Young, chairman of the special committee appointed by the SBC Executive Committee in September to study the relationship between the convention and the BJCPA, an organization of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada.

The committee was appointed in response to a motion introduced in the 1986 annual meeting of the SBC which called for the SBC to withdraw from the BJCPA and to establish "an exclusive Southern Baptist presence" in the nation's capital.

The two-day meeting Nov. 20-21 featured an unscheduled appearance by a U.S. senator, six religious groups who maintain Washington offices, as well as sharp questioning of the BJCPA staff on positions, leadership style, affiliations, and published writings.

Included was a briefing on BJCPA's work — which ranges from lobbying, to education, publication, research, working with governmental officials, and involvement in lawsuits, primarily at the Supreme Court level, which relate to First Amendment, religious liberty, and separation of church and state. Briefing the committee were James M. Dunn, executive director, and Oliver S. (Buzz) Thomas, general counsel and director of research services.

Young said the "confrontation was painful, but all confrontations are painful for me." He added he considers the confrontation on issues "healthy" because "it was the first time that participants in the issues were able to sit and talk about the matters that divide us."

He said the two-day meeting was "not intended to evaluate personnel. I felt it was a time to bring people who had various opinions together with the personnel (of the BJCPA) to see if we could answer some questions and clear up some of the difficulties. It was obvious after our first meeting (in October) that we were never going to be able to deal with the program of the Baptist Joint Committee until we had talked with them to try to clarify matters."

At the start of the meeting, Young told BJCPA staffers: "I hope you will not feel this is a grand inquisition. We will be asking you why you said something or wrote something. Please don't interpret that as accusations. We will be confrontive. We will ask questions and deal with some things. We are dealing with issues, and not personalities, but we are not rocks, so personalities will be involved."

Following the meeting, Young com-

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Population trends highlight need for personal response

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Five-billion people is a number too difficult to be grasped by most individuals.

Yet, on July 7, 1986, the number of people on earth exceeded 5-billion, according to the Population Institution in Washington, D.C.

And \$75-million sounds like a large number too — until it is compared to those 5-billion people.

Southern Baptist foreign missionaries are well aware of the need for greater spiritual and financial resources to meet the rapidly growing needs.

"We have no choice. We cannot say, 'I might do it or I might not do it.' We must

do it and we must do it now with all possible haste," explains Charles Collins, missionary to Guatemala.

Collins' words are underscored by more stunning statistics from the Population Research Bureau. Each hour of 1986, the population is increasing by more than 9,000. Each minute 258 people are born and 101 die.

Christianity is on the move, impressively so, according to Foreign Mission Board figures. There are Christians and Christian congregations in all 223 countries of the world. Persons who identify themselves as Christians comprise the majority in two-thirds of the countries.

But since 1900, the estimated percentage of Christians in the world population has declined from 34.4 to 32.8 percent. And the gap is widening.

Against this backdrop, Southern Baptists are being challenged on both spiritual and financial levels during the 1986 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the parallel Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The \$75-million Lottie Moon offering goal (up \$5-million from the 1985 goal and \$8.1-million more than 1985 receipts) could be reached by an average gift of less than \$5 from each of the 15-million members of SBC churches.

Despite unmet financial need on every mission field, it is the need for a spiritual commitment that is a priority during the 1986 Lottie Moon emphasis.

It is the individual commitment — to pray, to give, and to respond — which translates into the big number of the Southern Baptist mission effort.

November's gifts fall below goal

When the Tennessee Baptist Convention's books for the month of November closed during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, Cooperative Program mission gifts had reached only \$1,281,792.46, according to Tom Madden, executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Messengers to the 1986 state convention, meeting in Johnson City last month, adopted a \$22.5-million Cooperative Program budget-goal for the November 1986-October 1987 convention year. The monthly goal for the new convention year would be \$1,875,000 (one-twelfth of \$22.5-million). November's mission gifts of \$1,281,792.46 through the Cooperative Program were \$593,207.54 or 31.64 percent below the monthly goal.

However, last month's Cooperative Program gifts of \$1,281,792.46 were slightly higher than receipts for November 1985 when \$1,278,158.72 was given, the TBC executive secretary said. This is a 0.28 percent increase.

Madden observed that November closed on a Sunday of a holiday weekend, which probably meant that many churches' November receipts did not arrive in the convention office until after Dec. 1. "After our usually strong mission-giving month of October, traditionally November is comparatively small," Madden said.

Flamming to fill vacancy on SBC Peace Committee

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE (BP)— Peter James Flamming, pastor of First Baptist Church of Richmond, Va., has been elected to the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee, replacing Cecil E. Sherman of Fort Worth, Texas.

Flamming's election was announced Nov. 25 by Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, following a mail ballot of the 70-member Executive Committee.

"It was necessary for the Executive Committee to name a new member to the Peace Committee," Bennett told Baptist Press. Bennett explained the action which created the 22-member Peace Committee contained the provision that any vacancies would be filled by the Executive Committee "at its next meeting."

He explained Charles Fuller, chairman of the Peace Committee, "requested a successor be elected as quickly as possible in order to be able to participate in the next meeting. He felt if the election was delayed until the February meeting of the Executive Committee, by that time the Peace Committee would have almost completed its work."

Bennett also said the provision requires that the filling of any such vacancy maintain the (political-theological) balance on the Peace Committee.

Flamming, who says he is a "moderate" in the denominational controversy, replaces Sherman, one of the leaders of the moderate-conservative faction, who resigned Oct. 22, saying he could no longer serve on the group charged with the responsibility of determining the sources of the controversy, making findings, and then recommending solutions.

The Richmond pastor told Baptist Press that while he shares "some of the same perspectives" with Sherman, "we are very different personalities."

He added he had accepted the election "because I was asked. I think the situation is so important that anyone who really cares about the convention would be inclined to do whatever they could. I would have been pleased had they named someone else, but out of stewardship of my love for the convention, I did not feel I could turn it down."

Flamming added, "I would guess probably my main concern as a spectator or bystander during this process has been primarily mission-oriented; that this conflict not disturb our global mission and educational ministries. I think neither side is apt to support, over the long term, endeavors which they have no voice in. I would hope that some solution could be worked out so that both sides could continue to enthusiastically support our mission and educational and healing endeavors."

James Slatton, a leader of moderate-conservatives and pastor of River Road Baptist Church in Richmond, said Flamming is "a satisfactory choice to me personally. I like and trust Jim Flamming, and his commitments are all on the moderate side."

"Our original request," Slatton said, "was an identified leader among the moderates, and that, of course, Jim Flamming is not. He has not had a leadership role among moderates in the convention effort in the last seven years. He has been a moderate and at times an outspoken one, but he has not been a leader."

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, and

a fundamental-conservative leader, told Baptist Press, "I have always thought very highly of Jim Flamming while realizing we probably disagree on most issues. I have always considered him a tremendous intellect and very statesmanlike. I would suppose he would make a very fine contribution to the Peace Committee."

Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., said he offered to meet with Flamming before this week's meeting of the Peace Committee — Dec. 1-2 in Atlanta — to help prepare the Richmond pastor for the task.

Flamming comes onto the Peace Committee at a time when the group has already met 10 times and is moving toward completion of its task. The group has announced it will make a preliminary report to the February meeting of the Executive Committee and have the final draft of its report ready for release in early April.

Flamming is a native of Burlington, Colo. He is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

He became pastor of the 3,900-member Richmond congregation in 1983. From 1966 to 1983 he was pastor of First Baptist Church of Abilene, Texas. Previously, he served three other Texas congregations.

Bennett said he conferred with the chairman of the Executive Committee, David Maddox, a real estate developer in Fullerton, Calif., and with officers of the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee: James Jones, pastor of Campbellsville (Ky.) Baptist Church, chairman; Francis Wilson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Alamogordo, N.M., vice-chairman; and Frank Lady, an attorney from Jonesboro, Ark., secretary.

The four officers conducted a conference telephone call, during which they "considered a total of 17 persons. . . . After discussion and evaluation, it was unanimously agreed that the name of P. James Flamming . . . be suggested," Bennett said.

The administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee was polled. That group recommended Flamming to the entire Executive Committee, which was then polled, starting Nov. 14, Bennett said, adding he announced the results of the election as soon as possible.

Fuller also told Baptist Press he has appointed Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, and former first vice-president of the SBC, to replace Sherman on the political activities subcommittee of the Peace Committee.

Fuller said that during the December meeting the Peace Committee "will turn its attention to political matters. We have received the (seminary) presidents' proposal and have asked Southern Baptists to give that a chance. Now we can turn our attention to political matters."

Concerning this week's meeting, Fuller said he has received a copy of an eight-point proposal by Slatton, Moore, and Norman Cavender, a layman from Claxton, Ga., on ways to solve the political controversy.

"It will be given a prominent place on the agenda of the political activities subcommittee," Fuller said, adding he "cannot speak for the committee, but feel the matter will be referred to the full Peace Committee for discussion."

Missionary, MK. . .

(Continued from page 1)

vately. He told Morris he forgave him for what he had done to his wife and daughter.

"Looking face to face in Ben Morris' eyes, George expressed his forgiveness and asked Ben to make a confession," said Bradley Brown, administrator for the 67 Southern Baptist mission personnel assigned to Liberia. The conversation between Morris and Senter took several minutes and was punctuated by intermittent periods of emotional breakdown, Brown said.

"It was amazing," Brown said. "When George began to talk to him and tell him what he wanted him to do, very soon he began to cooperate and give the facts."

George Senter had driven to the capital city, Monrovia, Tuesday morning, Nov. 25, to pick up his 15-year-old son, Philip, so the family could celebrate American-style Thanksgiving holiday together in Yekepa. Philip and a handful of other missionary children attend the American Cooperative School in Monrovia, about four hours away.

Missionary Earl Williams went into the Senter's home when Rachel did not appear to leave for the school she attends with his own child. Williams, pastor of Mount Nimba Baptist Church, and his family live across from the Senter's.

George Senter, a native of Tennessee, is assigned as a field evangelist and has been working to start and strengthen churches in about 20 villages around the town. Mrs. Senter, assigned as a church and home worker, was heavily involved in her husband's work, said John Mills, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's director for work in west Africa. The Senter's had lived in Yekepa since 1980.

Born in Gibson, Senter also lived in Centerville, Prosperity, and Cookeville before moving to Virginia during his high school years. His father, A. M. Senter, who died in 1983, was a pastor in Tennessee and Virginia.

While on furlough last year, Libby spoke at the Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women "Get-together" in Gatlinburg.

Morris, a Baptist seminary graduate, had been doing odd jobs for Senter and Williams, and both men had worked with him to help involve him in Baptist work around Yekepa. But apparently he had been unable to work himself into a meaningful personal ministry in any of the churches, Brown said.

He came to Yekepa only a few months ago, telling the missionaries he had wandered from the right life but had changed, and wanted to serve the Lord in Yekepa. "Naturally, Earl Williams and George Senter wanted to take him at his word, and they befriended him," said Brown. "Both were trying to help him."

Morris had graduated in 1979 from the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary and found a job teaching at Ricks Institute, a Baptist school run entirely by Liberians, Brown said. While working at Ricks Institute, he and another seminary graduate helped in a village church ministry, but he left Ricks Institute early this year and temporarily lost fervor for the Christian life, Brown said.

Morris was originally from Monrovia but came to Yekepa several years ago to secure vocational training as an electrician, Brown said. During this time Williams baptized him as a new Christian.

During recent months Morris had visited regularly in the Senter's home, so it was not unusual that Mrs. Senter would let him enter when he came to the door at about 11 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 25, Brown said.

After the murder, Morris apparently took Mrs. Senter's keys and locked the home from the outside, Brown said. According to his own confession, Morris discarded the keys and his own clothes outside after changing into Senter's clothes, Brown said. Near the house, police later found the clothes, the Senter's passports, and some letters.

Yekepa is the country's second largest city, modern by Liberian standards and run by a concern named LAMCO, a Liberian subsidiary of several European and American iron-ore strip-mining firms.

LAMCO's own security forces are investigating the murders with Liberian police, Mills said.

Rachel Senter's death is believed to be the first murder of a dependent foreign missionary child in Southern Baptist history. Mrs. Senter's death is the 11th murder of a Southern Baptist foreign missionary since the board was organized in 1845.

The last such victim, James Philpot, was shot to death last year after a traffic accident in Mexico City. The first known victim was J. Landrum Holmes, who was killed in China in 1861 as he attempted to persuade invaders not to attack a village.

Southern Baptist missionaries murdered in the past 25 years were Archie Dunaway, killed by communist-backed guerrillas in Zimbabwe in 1978; Gladys Hopewell, murdered in Taiwan in 1973; Mavis Pate, who died in an Arab guerrilla ambush in Gaza in 1972; and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Potter, found murdered in their Dominican Republic home in 1971.

Southern Baptists have 67 personnel, including the Senter's, assigned to work in Liberia. More than 50 are on the field now, scattered throughout the nation of about 2.2-million people.

Mills described Mrs. Senter as "warm, friendly, and exceedingly efficient."

Mrs. Senter was a graduate of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; and the University of Louisville.

Before she and her husband were employed as missionary associates, she taught high school in Chesapeake, Va., and did social work in Evansville, Ind. The Senter's were home missionaries in Indiana from 1971 to 1980.

Besides her husband and son, she is survived by her father and stepmother, Mr. and Mrs. W. V. Tarlton of Shelby; a sister, Janet Tarlton of Durham, N.C.; and a brother, Edwin Tarlton of New York City.

Holston Valley meets

The Holston Valley Missionary Baptist Association gathered Oct. 23-24 at East Rogersville Baptist Church in Rogersville and First Baptist Church in Sneedville for its annual meeting.

The messengers of the member churches elected John Parrott Jr., pastor of East Rogersville Baptist Church in Rogersville, as moderator. He succeeds Gary Gerhardt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Church Hill.

The vice-moderator is David Tullock, pastor of Choptack Baptist Church in Rogersville, and the treasurer/clerk is Linda D. Williams, also a member of Choptack Baptist Church and the association's office secretary.

The 1987 meeting will be Oct. 22 at McPheeters Bend Baptist Church in Church Hill and Oct. 23 at Maple Hill Baptist Church in Rogersville.

The director of missions is Charles D. Earl.

Director 'welcomes' fact-finding effort

WASHINGTON (BP)— The executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs told a nine-member fact-finding committee he "welcomes" their investigation into the work of the religious liberty watchdog organization.

"Meeting with this committee is a plus," said James M. Dunn. "We welcome the opportunity to help you get facts ... not opinions."

The committee was appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to study and make recommendations about the relationship between the SBC and the BJCPA, which is composed of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada.

The committee was named in response to a motion introduced at the 1986 SBC, which would withdraw the SBC from the BJCPA and establish "an exclusive Southern Baptist presence in Washington."

Dunn told the committee he both supports an enhanced Southern Baptist presence in Washington.

"It may surprise some of you that you have no stronger backer for a Southern Baptist presence in Washington than James M. Dunn," he said. "Southern Baptists do need an independent presence in Washington. It has come to some realization, with Larry Braidfoot (general counsel and citizenship specialist with the SBC Christian Life Commission) spending about a week a month here.

"We are eager and anxious to magnify the Southern Baptist voice in Washington," Dunn said. "We will do what we can," to support a voice on moral issues other than the BJCPA assignment.

Dunn also told the committee he believes the BJCPA "has been doing our job," in Washington, and added he thinks "we have been doing it the way Southern Baptists and others have asked us to do it." Despite that, he said, "We are open to change."

Asked about the committee's opposition to the Constitutional amendment on school prayer, which was opposed despite a 1982 SBC resolution supporting the action, Dunn said the position taken by the staff followed a position statement adopted by the BJCPA board in March of 1982. "We were saying what the committee told us to say," he explained.

The executive also said the 1982 resolution contained "factual errors," in that it said no government official would write the prayer. Dunn said a White House briefing paper had said if the prayer were allowed, "someone" would have to write the prayers.

He added the 1982 SBC resolution was in opposition to eight other SBC resolutions passed supporting the Supreme

Court's 1962-63 decisions opposing state-mandated prayer in the classrooms. Following the 1982 SBC resolution, he said, 10 state conventions acted on the matter; nine "repudiated" the SBC document and one supported it.

Stan Hastey, associate executive director, told the committee: "There is the perception that the Baptist Joint Committee has regularly defied the wishes of the Southern Baptist Convention. But in the entire 50-year history of the organization, the only time the position of the Baptist Joint Committee ran contrary to that of the SBC was in 1982. It is not as though we have been unresponsive. On the contrary, it has been a very happy consensus across the years."

One member of the fact-finding committee, Paul Pressler, an appeals court judge in Houston, was critical of Dunn's published comments during the school prayer amendment debate. At the time, Dunn said President Ronald Reagan was "playing petty politics with prayer" and engaging in "despicable demagoguery" in regard to the amendment.

The Texas judge referred to Dunn's comments as "disgraceful conduct" and demanded an apology and assurances "you will not do that again." Study Committee Chairman Gary F. Young of Phoenix, Ariz., told Dunn he believes the statement "hurt your witness."

Dunn told the committee he regrets his choice of words in the heat of political battle.

Wesley Forsline, chairman of the BJCPA, and pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, affiliated with the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., in Minneapolis, noted Dunn's job "calls for someone who can be abrasive and a 'burr-under-someone's-saddle,'" and said of the remarks concerning Reagan, "That is one of the things that happens up here. I am not going to take it too seriously."

Pressler, however, said Dunn's remarks "hurt the Baptist Joint Committee very badly."

Forest Montgomery, general counsel for the National Association of Evangelicals, told the fact-finding committee the comments likely had a positive end result.

"The Baptist Joint Committee is sometimes admittedly fiery. They started out on the school prayer issue ... (with) rhetoric that was more exaggerated than we would have used. But it is interesting the way that worked out. Having quite plainly opposed the president on the school prayer amendment, then when the Baptist Joint Committee went to bat for Equal Access, it gave them great credibility on that school prayer issue."

Equal Access legislation, actively supported by the NAE and the BJCPA, allows secondary school students "equal access" to school facilities for religious activities as are granted to other extracurricular activities.

During the meeting, Dunn told the committee he "made a mistake" to serve as a director of People For The American Way, a First Amendment rights coalition. Dunn served one three-year term but declined a second term after criticism of the organization by Southern Baptists.

Dunn was questioned about the fact he is included in a currently available fundraising tape circulated by People For The American Way. Although several of the committee members said they had been shown the tape by Albert Lee Smith, a Birmingham, Ala., insurance executive and Southern Baptist representative on the BJCPA, Dunn said he has not seen the tape, did not know he had been included, and has never been contacted by Smith about the tape.

Young told Dunn he "regrets" that

Smith had chosen to show the tape to several committee members but had not contacted Dunn directly about it.

Pressler also questioned Hastey about articles he has written on the current strife in the SBC and his coverage of a meeting during the 1986 annual meeting of the SBC. The Texan referred to Hastey's articles as "bad reporting ... absolutely terrible journalism."

Hastey said in 13 years as a Baptist Press reporter in Washington he has "written probably 1,000 pieces. Only a very small percentage of them has ever been questioned. This (a story on the 1986 meeting) is one of these instances. But, as I tried to tell the judge that day, it was an honest mistake. I do not write that which I know to be false."

Hastey added, "I have too great a self-interest in my own vocation as a Christian and in my professionalism as a journalist to ever deliberately write falsehoods. All I would ask is enough allowance on the part of my critics is that perhaps my mistakes are honest ones ... (or) bad reporting from time to time."

'Healthy confrontation'...

(Continued from page 1)

mended the staff: "I am proud of you because you have submitted yourselves to a grueling experience. No one forced you to do it. You submitted yourselves. I commend you for your Christian spirit. I commend you for turning the other cheek. I commend you for practicing the Scriptures in your life and letting Christ shine through you."

Young added that while "forgiveness and healing are now in the process," it "does not mean the matter is already solved. But it does mean that I think solutions are possible."

The two-day meeting featured an appearance by U.S. Sen. Mark Hatfield, who told committee members that in his relationship with the staff of the BJCPA he has "felt ministered unto and not just lobbied."

Hatfield, who grew up as a Conservative Baptist, is a member of Georgetown Baptist Church, dually aligned with the SBC and with American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

He cited the Baptist Joint Committee and the Christian Legal Society for their assistance in the passage of Equal Access legislation, which allows secondary schoolchildren equal opportunity for religious activities as they have for other extracurricular activities.

The meeting also featured sharp questioning of BJCPA staffers over the joint

committee's opposition to the School Prayer Amendment, the leadership style of Executive Director Dunn, as well as Dunn's former association with the controversial People For The American Way and the writing of Associate Executive Director Stan Hastey.

Paul Pressler, a Texas appeals court judge from Houston and Executive Committee member, was critical of Dunn's comments during the debate on the School Prayer Amendment, as well as Hastey's writing in particular and the Baptist news media in general.

At one point, the meeting also featured impassioned pleas for peace.

"The times out of which these things came were highly emotionalized times of polarization," said Darrell Robinson, vice-chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church of Mobile, Ala.

"I think it is apparent, at least to me, that generally the press has been biased against the judge and the movement which he is identified with. But I see moderation and a change and a coming together like we haven't had before. I think we are growing through it," Robinson said.

"I wish that we could move on from this with reconciliation and forgiveness. I know it is hard to forgive ... But the Word tells me that God has forgiven me and He gave His Son. It wasn't easy for Jesus to forgive us on that cross, but He has done it.

"God forgets. I have a hard time forgetting, but I find that if I'll forgive, it grows less and less vivid in my mind and heart as I go on, not treasuring it and not going over and over it. So I wish we could practice this forgiveness and leave behind these things," Robinson added.

Pressler said he agreed with Robinson, but added, "I think sometimes things need to be brought to light in order that we might put them behind us. If we are not confrontational on solving problems when wrong has been done, then we will not get the problems solved."

Robinson said, "I think you are right, and this is the time to be confrontational and to resolve it and to get it on the table. Then we can leave it behind and move on to greater things. Can you do that?"

Pressler answered, "I am willing to do so, but I do think we need to know the unfairness that there has been."

BJCPA study group invites testimony

WASHINGTON (BP)— Southern Baptists who wish to comment on the work of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs may do so in an open meeting in Nashville, Jan. 20, 1987.

A special study committee, named by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to study the relationship between the SBC and the Washington-based religious liberty watchdog group, invited persons who wish to comment on the BJCPA to its next meeting, to be held in the SBC building at 901 Commerce.

Gary F. Young, chairman of the nine-member committee, said a time block from 1 to 9 p.m. has been set aside to hear from people who wish to have input in the committee's ultimate decision.

Young, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Phoenix, Ariz., said people who wish to appear must notify him in writing of their intention by Jan. 5. He can be ad-

ressed at First Southern Baptist Church, 3100 W. Camelback Road, Phoenix, Ariz. 85017.

In addition to inviting Southern Baptists to participate, Young said questionnaires are being sent to selected groups for input. Included are members of Congress recommended by members of the study committee, the SBC Executive Committee, the 42-member BJCPA, state executive directors, editors, and public affairs leaders, and a random sampling of Southern Baptists.

The committee also will meet with the 15-member Public Affairs Committee on Jan. 21, 1987, Young said.

The fact-finding committee will make a preliminary report to the February meeting of the Executive Committee and a final report to the group in the Executive Committee's business session immediately prior to the 1987 SBC annual meeting in June in St. Louis.

EDITORIAL

'We MUST Make Christ Known'

This week, Tennessee Baptists are uniting with fellow Southern Baptists around the world in participating in the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions.

This year's observance has the urgent, challenging theme, "We Must Make Christ Known."

Centuries ago Jesus declared, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This was not a casual suggestion or a "if you have time" or a "when you get around to it" — but a command: a **MUST!**

The most important concern for an obedient Christian is to make Christ known to all people in all the world. There are no options.

"We Must Make Christ Known" — not only because He commanded it — but also because almost 70 percent of the world's citizens do not know Christ as personal Saviour.

Five-billion people live in our world today. Through our foreign missionaries we are seeking to make Christ known — but so much more **MUST** be done.

As Christians, we are called to care. Less than 6 percent of the world's population live in North America, but those on this continent enjoy one-half of the world's wealth. Also, 94 percent of gospel efforts are concentrated on this 6 percent of the population.

Christians are called to commit themselves to sharing the gospel with the whole world.

The Christian's call is also a call to prayer. We are to pray daily for missionaries and for mission fields.

And Christians are called to give. Our concern, commitment, and prayers will result in the sharing of our resources. Money can go where we cannot go.

In connection with the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions, Southern Baptists will seek to give \$75-million to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. All Lottie Moon gifts are spent overseas. Nearly \$53.6-million of this year's offering will directly support more than 3,700 missionaries in 107 countries. That figure includes salaries, housing, transportation, field work budgets, medical needs, and pensions.

Another \$14.8-million will support evangelism and church development; Baptist schools, colleges, and seminaries; media and publications; hunger and disaster relief; and medical and benevolent ministries.

Another \$6.6-million will provide capital needs for strategic property, buildings, and construction.

Of interest to Tennessee is that included in this amount will be \$65,000 for construction of a multiple-use building at the Venezuela national Baptist seminary. The training of ministers is a vital part of Venezuela Baptists' visionary goal of reaching 1-million Baptist church members by the end of this century.

Similar mission needs will be met if we meet the \$75-million Lottie Moon Offering goal.

How serious are we in fulfilling the **MUST** of the Great Commission? Our true seriousness will be revealed in our concern, commitment, prayers, and gifts during the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and our response to the Lottie Moon Offering.

Ignore RM2493

An inaccurate emotion-laden petition — based on falsehoods — has resurfaced **AGAIN** in Tennessee. The petition falsely states that the Federal Communications Commission is to vote on RM2493 from Madalyn Murray O'Hair to ban religious programs from radio and television.

Here are the facts about RM2493.

In December 1974 two California men, Jeremy D. Lansman and Lorenzo W. Milam, filed a request (designated RM2493) with the Federal Communications Commission, asking a freeze on issuing licenses for additional educational television and FM radio stations to individuals or groups planning to air only religious or quasi-religious programs. RM2493 would **NOT** have prohibited religious programs.

Mrs. O'Hair had nothing at all to do with the RM2493. She **DID NOT** request (as the false petition claims) nor was she granted a hearing before the FCC.

RM2493 was **DENIED UNANIMOUSLY** by the FCC commissioners on Aug. 1, 1975. RM2493 is a dead issue — and has been dead for more than 11 years!

Even if RM2493 had been approved — which it was not — it would have had no effect whatsoever on present radio and television stations nor on present or future radio and television programs.

The official FCC statement declares:

(1) The Lansman-Milam RM2493 was **DENIED** by the commission on Aug. 1, 1975.

(2) The commission explained that it is required by the First Amendment "to observe a stance of neutrality toward religion, acting neither to promote nor to inhibit religion."

(3) The commission must treat religious and secular organizations alike in determining their eligibility for broadcast licenses.

(4) No federal law or regulations gives the FCC any authority to prohibit radio and television stations from presenting religious programs.

(5) The Communications Act (the law that established the FCC and defines its authority) prohibits the commission from censoring broadcast material and from interfering with the freedom of speech in broadcasting. The commission cannot direct any station what to present or to refrain from presenting programs on religion, and it cannot act as a judge of the wisdom or accuracy of such material. Broadcasters — not the FCC nor any other governmental agency — are responsible for selecting programs.

Although RM2493 has been settled for more than 11 years, the inaccurate petition continues to resurface periodically in churches across the state. In recent days, it has been resurrected again.

We assure you that there is no truth whatsoever to the RM2493 petition.

Please **IGNORE** the RM2493 petition.

**Cicero's
comment**

By the editor

Cicero was fascinated by the recent announcement that on July 7 a baby was born which brought the world's population to 5-billion.

I felt that magnificent milestone should not go without proper honors. Many mercenary merchants agreed to provide appropriate presents — so long as proper recognition was given.

To find the blessed baby, I went to the Population Institute in Washington, D.C. There I met Will Counts, executive director of the Counting Cumulative Columns of Classic Ciphers Center, and Fig U. Rings, Sectional Supervisor of Significant and Stupendous Statistics.

Noting that 258 new babies are born each minute, Rings searched through reams of computer sheets — 4,999,999,998; 4,999,999,999; and there was number 5-billion! The intriguing infant is Cinco Bill Yung who was born July 7 in the remote village of Arid, Famineland.

Using airlines, steamships, caravans, and pack-laden donkeys, I made the tedious trip to find Cinco Bill Yung and his family. You cannot imagine their astonishment when I arrived at their one-room hut. I had come at a bad time — the nine-member family had just sat down to a dinner of boiled tree roots.

Cinco's father, Papa Layt Yung, seemed relatively unimpressed as the interpreter explained why I was there. Papa said something like, "With six children to feed, why get excited about one more empty mouth." (It must have lost something in the translation.)

I presented the gifts:

— A 44-volume set of Engineering Encyclopedia from E. Norm Youss Publishing Co.

— A case of strained celery baby food from Colic Condiment Co. (I wish they had included a can opener.)

— One dozen diapers from the Dee I. Purr Infant Service.

— A "key to the city" of Proudville, Tenn., from Mayor Polly Tick.

— A bronze plaque noting that Cinco Bill Yung is the five-billionth person on earth. (Unfortunately the mud wall collapsed when I drove in the nail to hang the plaque.)

— Three puncture-proof tires from Les Hubbs Tire Co.

— A popcorn popper donated by A. C. Current. (I couldn't demonstrate it without popcorn or electricity.)

— A baby bottle sterilizer from N. A. Boyle Co. (They might find some use for it, even though they have neither a stove nor baby bottles.)

— A one-year membership at the Fun-time Country Club, valid when the family pays the \$2,000 initiation fee.

— A \$10 gift certificate from Rip-Off Discount Store whenever they are in Nashville, prior to Dec. 10.

— A free subscription to Landscape Lawns and Gardens.

Their response was restrained. There was some excitement however when I reached in my bag to see if all the gifts had been presented, and out fell a stale cheeseburger. Isn't it strange that some primitive people are impressed by such an insignificant thing!

CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE — 75,154

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Telephone: (615) 373-2255

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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Legal proceedings resume in appeal of SBC lawsuit

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE (BP) — Legal proceedings have resumed in the appeal of a defeated lawsuit against the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee.

Judge Robert Hall of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia ruled May 5 that the federal courts have no jurisdiction over action at the center of a suit brought by four laypeople against the SBC and the Executive Committee.

Robert S. and Julia Crowder of Birmingham, Ala.; Henry C. Cooper of Windsor, Mo.; and H. Allan McCartney of Vero Beach, Fla., had asked the federal court to interpret SBC bylaws, to direct the convention to comply with that interpretation, and to vacate the 1986 SBC Committee on Boards, Commissions, and Standing Committees.

Their suit revolves around the report of the 1985 SBC Committee on Committees, which made nominations to the

Committee on Boards. Specifically, it focuses on a parliamentary judgment by Charles F. Stanley, then president of the convention, who ruled out of order the proposal of a new slate of nominees for the Committee on Boards, which would have replaced the Committee on Committees' nominees. The plaintiffs claim their rights were violated and the bylaws broken by the procedures.

When Hall ruled the court did not have jurisdiction, the four plaintiffs filed notice of appeal with the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Later, they asked attorneys for the SBC to sign an order that would dismiss the appeal and also strike from record the decision of the lower court. The SBC's attorneys refused, later explaining, "We were not about to agree that the lower court's opinion be wiped out."

Now both sides have filed briefs with the appeals court; the plaintiffs' brief was filed Oct. 27, and the SBC's brief was filed Nov. 26. Attorneys for the plaintiffs, the lawfirm of Bondurant, Mixson, and Elmore of Atlanta, have 10 days from the latter date to file a response. Then the court will decide if oral arguments will be presented and how the case will proceed.

"The issue on appeal is whether or not the district court could hear the Crowders' suit without violation of the First Amendment," said John E. Floyd of Bondurant, Mixson, and Elmore.

"The question in this case is whether the free exercise of religion would be impaired if a secular court told the Southern Baptist Convention how it must elect its committees," said James Guenther of the Nashville lawfirm of Guenther and Jordan, attorneys for the Executive Committee. "We think the answer to that is clearly 'yes.' The lower court agreed."

Hawaii Baptists celebrate growth

KIHEI, Hawaii (BP) — Hawaii Baptists celebrated their growth during the 44th annual Hawaii Baptist Convention Nov. 6-8 at Kahului Baptist Church in Kihei on the island of Maui.

For the first time in its history, the convention's 1986 budget is expected to receive more than \$500,000 from Hawaii Baptist churches, noted Executive Director Dan Kong.

Kong also reported growth statistics for this decade: The convention had 39 constituted churches in 1980, compared to 48 in 1986. It had 59 congregations of all types, compared to 79 today. And in the past year, the convention fell just one person short of its baptism goal of 758.

Messengers to the annual meeting approved a convention budget of \$1,650,672, of which \$563,562 is expected to come from Hawaii churches. The remainder primarily will come from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The budget will include a 27.5 percent allocation to Southern Baptist causes through the Cooperative Program, a one-half percent increase over 1986.

Newly elected president of the convention is Cliff Hoff of Olivet Baptist Church in Honolulu.

Messengers approved resolutions decrying pornography, lottery, and gambling and commending President Ronald Reagan and Attorney General Edwin Meese for the report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.



NATIONAL MEETING — About 75 persons attended the Nov. 17-19 Regional Childlife Conference led by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department in Nashville. Hazel Morris, associate professor of childhood education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, led this session. The meeting was held at the TBC Executive Board Building in Brentwood.

Mississippi Baptists show 'new heart, new spirit'

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — Mississippi Baptists took their convention theme, "A new heart and a new spirit," seriously when they closed their Nov. 10-12 meeting with almost no issues debated.

The 1,759 registered messengers to the convention, which met at First Baptist Church, Jackson, re-elected by acclamation their president, Frank Gunn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Biloxi, to a second one-year term.

They passed without discussion a \$19-million 1987 budget, 26.5 percent of which goes to Southern Baptist causes outside the state. The convention has covenanted to increase the outside causes portion a half percent a year and has been doing so for eight years. The budget is a 2.43 percent increase over that of 1986.

Messengers approved no controversial resolutions. The ones which passed included honoring the late Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, the last layman who was president of the Southern Baptist Convention. They also asked Christians to continue giving a positive witness in a negative world.

The convention heard an encouraging report from its Mississippi Mission Campaign, which is endeavoring to raise a \$40-million endowment for Mississippi College, Blue Mountain College, William Carey College, and the Baptist Children's Village. Two years into the campaign, a total of \$21,694,777 has been pledged, effectively tripling the four institutions' endowments less than halfway into the campaign.

The only issue of debate concerned a motion by W. E. Green of Louin to have Clarke College in Newton handed over to him to operate as a school for ministerial training. Green was president of Clarke 1944-54 and said rumors were abounding that Clarke was about to close its doors.

Messengers overwhelmingly rejected Green's motion, substituting another reaffirming their 1980 decision to merge Clarke with Mississippi College.

Later in the day, during the Mississippi College report, President Lewis Nobles assured the messengers he had no plans to close Clarke College, the student enrollment had stabilized at about 200, and should Clarke ever get into trouble, he would recommend that the trustees hand Clarke back to the convention.

Green, in the closing session of the convention Wednesday, made a motion to

reconsider the convention action and was ruled out of order. Robert's Rules of Order requires that a person who voted for a previously approved substitute motion must ask for reconsideration. No one came forward and the matter was closed. Green said he would gather students and return later to a future convention to ask again.

Chilhowee gathers, notes gifts to CP

The Chilhowee Baptist Association noted during its 102nd yearly gathering Oct. 23-24 that the member churches gave \$96,000 more than last year through the Cooperative Program.

While meeting at Broadway Baptist Church and Grandview Baptist Church in Maryville and at Zion Chapel Baptist Church in Louisville, the church representatives elected officers for the year. They are Fred Garner, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Maryville, moderator; Robert E. McCullough, pastor of Beech Grove Baptist Church in Louisville, vice-moderator; and Bruce Yates, pastor of Armona Baptist Church in Alcoa, clerk.

Action also was taken to schedule the next annual meeting for Oct. 22-23, 1987. The director of missions is John Churchman.

Hiwassee Missionary meets in Decatur

Pisgah Baptist Church in Decatur was the gathering place of the annual meeting of Hiwassee Missionary Baptist Association on Sept. 26-27.

E. R. Gamble is its director of missions.

The officers for the new year were elected. Moderator Milfred Orgen, a member of Ten Mile Baptist Church in Ten Mile, was succeeded by Bill Roberts, pastor of Peakland Baptist Church in Decatur, which will host the Oct. 23-24, 1987, annual meeting.

Cecil McDonald, pastor of Old Pond Hill Baptist Church in Athens, was elected assistant moderator; and Annabell Orgen, a member of Ten Mile Baptist Church, was elected treasurer/clerk.

Personal Perspective

By Tom Madden

TBC Executive Secretary-Treasurer



Recently I was reading 1 Corinthians 16 and came to the second verse that reads, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

I found myself focusing upon "let every one of you." Let me share some of the impressions that come to me from this statement.

Paul was talking to the disciples in Corinth about everyone bringing a gift accordingly as God had prospered him. I surely believe that every one of us ought to share the first fruits of that with which God has blessed us. I also believe that the tithe is the beginning point of giving and the local church is the place where we are to bring it.

God loves every one of us. We all know, "that God so loved the world." Everytime I read the statement I find myself pausing to say, "God loves all of the world because He loves everyone in the world." There is not a person any place on the earth that God does not love.

Everyone needs the message of Christ. Someone has said that no one has the right to hear the message of God's love twice until everyone has heard it at least once. You and I know that this is not possible, but surely everyone in the world needs to know the love of God and deserves to have the plan of salvation presented in such a fashion that he can respond.

Still another observation is that everyone is important in the purpose of God and is needed in the work of Christ. The little lad with his fishes and loaves was important. The Gadarene demoniac was important. Every one of us can do something for Jesus that no one else can do as well. There are no unimportant people in God's economy.

Yet another observation is that every one of us is responsible to God. Each one of us, one by one, will stand before God and give an account of our stewardship.

"Let every one of you." I thank God for every one of you.

Baptists in Indiana re-elect incumbent despite challenge

CLARKSVILLE, Ind. (BP) — Messengers to the annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana re-elected the incumbent president, passed a resolution on the editor of the state news journal, the *Indiana Baptist*, and passed a record budget.

For the first time in the history of the state convention, an incumbent president eligible for re-election was challenged. Incumbent president Don Deel, pastor of Eastlake Baptist Church in

Merrillville, has identified himself as "a conservative" but says he is not aligned with any political faction in the SBC. He was elected president in 1985.

Tom Evitts, pastor of the host church, was nominated by Don Claybrook, pastor of Rolling Fields Baptist Church in Jeffersonville, who told messengers: "I thank the Lord we have an opportunity to rise above the straightjacket mentality that runs roughshod over other Southern Baptists... Tom Evitts has that rare gift of combining intellectual freedom with a soldout commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

The vote was 204 votes for Deel and 64 for Evitts.

Later Evitts criticized David Simpson, editor of the *Indiana Baptist*, for inferring editorially that his nomination grew out of an "organized, public, political effort to unseat Don Deel."

Simpson explained through the *Indiana Baptist* that the reference was to the Nov. 4 editorial. He said that the quoted phrase does not appear in the editorial. Further, some pastors, some of whom identify themselves as moderates, had met and discussed the possible nomination of Evitts. This nomination did in fact occur. Simpson concluded, "I stand by my analysis appearing in the editorial."

During the final session of the convention, a resolution was presented commending Simpson for giving "a fair and balanced picture of the theological issues facing our Southern Baptist Convention in his editorial column."

The resolution encouraged Simpson "in his editorials to continue to deal with all the issues that currently concern Southern Baptists. We thank Dr. Simpson for unapologetically and clearly rejecting the false doctrine of universalism." The resolution passed by a vote of 108-56 after lengthy discussion.

Messengers adopted a budget calling for a Cooperative Program goal of \$1,716,560. Of the goal, 32 percent will be shared with Southern Baptist Convention causes. The total budget for 1987 is \$2,322,954.

Last year's first vice-president David Wood, pastor of Floyds Knobs Baptist Church in Floyds Knobs, was re-elected over Executive Director Emeritus E. Harmon Moore. The election required two votes, with the first secret ballot vote tied at 130 each. On the second balloting, Wood came out ahead with a 128-111 vote.

Depressed economy affects Wyoming

GREEN RIVER, Wyo. (BP) — Wyoming Southern Baptists changed the way their campground is administered and approved reduced budget contributions during their annual convention Nov. 12-13 at Monroe Avenue Baptist Church in Green River.

Messengers ratified a change in the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention Constitution that reorganized the administration of the state assembly, located near Casper. The assembly previously was directed by a convention committee. The Constitutional change made the assembly an agency of the convention, with trustees who will work with the state convention staff to administer the facility.

Also approved was a 1987 budget of \$807,182. Wyoming churches are expected to provide \$261,224 of that amount, down from contributions of \$289,275. Most of the balance of the funds will be given by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Sunday School Board.

"We're faced with declining income," said state Executive Director John Thomason, explaining the reduction of Wyoming churches' share in the budget. "We're an energy-based economy, and we're way below budget this year." He pointed to low crude oil prices and shut-downs of uranium and coal mines as reasons for economic depression in the state, which affects the churches.

Nevertheless, Wyoming Baptists voted a 1 percent increase — raised to 23 percent — in the portion of their budget that goes to Southern Baptist causes through the Cooperative Program.

Messengers elected Larry York, pastor of Big Horn Baptist Church in Buffalo, as president.



NATIONAL AWARD — Paul Hall (left), associate department director of the TBC missions department, receives the annual 1986 Victor T. Glass Award "for distinguished leadership in black church relations in Tennessee" from Emmanuel McCall, director of the black church relations department of the Home Mission Board, SBC. Hall and his wife, Clara, were honored during the Associational Missions Conference Oct. 20 in Pigeon Forge. He plans to retire Jan. 31, 1987, after 16 years at the TBC.



Tennessee/Venezuela Prayer Net Partnership

—Pray for Missionary Shirley Clark, who works with women in Los Teques. Her birthday was Dec. 2.

—Pray for the two volunteers doing construction work and the four persons working on the grounds of the Baptist seminary in Los Teques Dec. 1-12.

—Visa requests for two new missionary families have not been approved by the Venezuelan government, which might restrict the number of missionaries in the country. Pray also that the visas of the current missionaries will be renewed.

Answered prayer: The health of Jeremy McDonald, son of Missionaries Jim and Jani McDonald in Puerto Ordaz, has improved greatly.

Michigan continues to increase CP percentage to SBC causes

MARQUETTE, Mich. (BP) — Michigan Baptists maintained the pace of their increasing support of the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program and elected top officers who reflect the country's ethnic and racial diversity during their 29th annual meeting Nov. 10-12 at Harvey Baptist Church in Marquette.

Messengers to the meeting approved a new budget of \$2,512,227, with \$275,124, or 28 percent, of that total designated to the SBC Cooperative Program.

Their action marked the 16th consecutive year that Michigan Baptists have increased the Cooperative Program's portion of their budget by one-half percent. Michigan churches are expected to contribute \$982,588 to their overall state budget, with most of the rest coming from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Rochelle Davis, pastor of Temple of

Faith Baptist Church, a black congregation in Detroit, was re-elected to a second one-year term as convention president without opposition. Damon Patterson, pastor of Monroe Missionary Baptist Church in Monroe, was re-elected first vice-president without opposition. Isaias Hernandez, pastor of First Spanish American Baptist Church in Pontiac, was elected second vice-president.

Hernandez's election marked the first time an ethnic person had been elected to one of the convention's top posts, said Robert Wilson, executive director of the convention. He noted the officers represent the "three largest population groups in our country" — black, Anglo, and Hispanic.

The convention celebrated the sixth anniversary of its partnership with Tennessee Baptists. Ironically, both conventions met simultaneously in the same cities where they met when each convention approved the arrangement — Michigan in Marquette and Tennessee in Johnson City.

The meeting in Marquette, which is 450 miles north of Detroit, marked only the third time in 29 years the convention has met in the state's Upper Peninsula. The meeting was attended by 264 messengers.

Those messengers approved a 1987 emphasis on planting and growing churches. They adopted a goal of 387 churches, missions, and Bible studies moving toward mission status by the end of 1987. Currently the convention has 227 churches, 39 missions, and 39 Bible studies.

New York Baptists create foundation

ABERDEEN, N.J. (BP) — Southern Baptists from New York and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut ratified a charter for their foundation, set a \$2.26-million budget, and heard positive reports during the 17th session of the Baptist Convention of New York, held at Calvary Baptist Church in Aberdeen, N.J., Nov. 6-7.

Messengers approved a charter that creates the Baptist Convention of New York Foundation. Roger Knatton, pastor of Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church in Endicott, N.Y., and chairperson of the convention's foundation workgroup, presented the workgroup's report and the charter recommendation.

The convention adopted a 1987 budget of \$4,256,312, of which 24 percent will support Southern Baptist causes through the Cooperative Program.

Reports indicated that baptisms for the year were up nearly 30 percent, to an estimated 1,479; 14 new churches were constituted, and three others were received into association fellowship.

Messengers learned the first phase of the convention's capital fund drive was oversubscribed prior to closing on the new convention office building last summer. The second phase of the drive is to raise \$143,000 by June 25, 1987. The facility, named the Centers for Missions and Ministry, will be dedicated in March 1987.

Sam Simpson, pastor of Bronx and Wake Eden Baptist churches in New York City, was elected as president.

Cumberland honors office secretary

Little West Fork Baptist Church in Clarksville hosted the biannual gathering of Cumberland Baptist Association on Oct. 27. Lometa McWhorter, associational office secretary for 15 years, was honored on her upcoming retirement.

The 1986-87 officers also were elected.

Moderator Steve Murphree, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Clarksville, was succeeded by Roy Mullens, pastor of Spring Creek Baptist Church in Clarksville. Elected as assistant moderator was James King, pastor of Maplewood Baptist Church in Clarksville. The messengers re-elected Harold Shoulters, director of missions, as treasurer. Linda Biggar, associational office secretary and member of Little Hope Baptist Church in Clarksville, was elected as clerk.

The 1987 meetings will be April 27 at Gum Springs Baptist Church in Cunningham and Oct. 26 at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Clarksville.



PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR — Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Russell Dilday (left) presents a plaque to Larry White of Brighton, a Sybil and Rufus Higginbotham presidential scholarship recipient.

Penn-South Jersey bids farewell to Ellis Bush, dedicates building

YORK, Pa. (BP)— Dedication of the totally debt-free state convention office building and a farewell to Executive Director Ellis Bush highlighted the 16th meeting of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey.

A seven-member search committee was named to seek a new executive director-treasurer. Bush has been named Bold Mission Thrust promotion coordinator for the Southern Baptist Convention. He has served in Pennsylvania-South Jersey for more than eight years. Bold Mission Thrust is the SBC plan to present the message of Christ to the entire world by the year 2000.

J. N. Evans, a retired staff member of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, will be interim executive director-treasurer.

The new state convention office is located in Harrisburg, Pa.

David Waltz, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Williamsport, Pa., was elected to a second term as president.

Cooperative Program gifts were in-

New Duck River meets, adds Lewisburg church

A church located near the planned Saturn automobile plant in Lewisburg was added to the New Duck River Baptist Association during the yearly meeting Oct. 20-21 at First Baptist Church in Lewisburg and First Baptist Church in Shelbyville.

The messengers voted Bethlehem Baptist Church in Lewisburg into the association. Lesley McClure is pastor of the church, which is also the site of the Oct. 20, 1987 annual meeting.

David Philyaw, pastor of Edgemont Baptist Church in Shelbyville and moderator during the past year, is succeeded by Jeff Haynes, pastor of Rover Baptist Church in Shelbyville.

Other 1986-87 officers are Paul Woodford, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lewisburg, assistant moderator; Evelyn Parks, a member of Shelbyville Mills Baptist Church in Shelbyville, treasurer; and Tom Summers, a member of Parkview Baptist Church in Lewisburg, clerk.

The director of missions is Robert Mizell.

creased one-half percent with 27.5 percent of the \$2,035,517 budget in 1987 going to SBC causes.

Messengers passed a resolution asking the SBC Executive Committee to study the need for simultaneous translations of the SBC annual meeting into languages other than English. Another resolution instructed the state convention executives to write the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, urging materials on abortion be prepared to express the viewpoint of the majority of Southern Baptists. A resolution also commended and affirmed Ellis Bush and his wife.

The convention reaffirmed support of the task team that is studying creation of a Southern Baptist seminary in the Northeast, approving a report by Dwight Moody, chairman of the task team and a pastor in Pittsburgh.

William Carey honors drill winner in meet

Clara Mullins of Fayetteville, the 1986 Youth Bible Drill first place winner, was honored during the annual meeting of the William Carey Baptist Association Oct. 27-28.

The meeting was held at Community Baptist Church in Flintville and First Baptist Church, Howell, in Fayetteville. Mullins is a member of Oak Hill Baptist Church in Fayetteville and won an all-expense paid trip to Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

In the election of officers, D. D. Cantrell, moderator and pastor of Lexie Cross Roads Baptist Church in Belvidere, is succeeded by J. E. Jones, pastor of Lincoln Baptist Church in Fayetteville.

Other 1986-87 officers elected were Charles George, pastor of Kirkland Baptist Church in Taft, vice-moderator; Frances Alexander, a member of First Baptist Church in Fayetteville, treasurer/clerk; and Aubrey Knois, a member of First Baptist Church in Petersburg, assistant treasurer/clerk.

In other action, the 1987 meeting was set for Oct. 26-27 at Friendship Baptist Church in Fayetteville and Macedonia Baptist Church in Ardmore.

The associational director of missions is Joe W. Mayberry.

Illinois votes capital projects, rejects shorter officers' terms

URBANA, Ill. (BP)— Messengers to the Illinois Baptist State Association adopted a 1987 budget of nearly \$6-million at Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church in Urbana.

Illinois Baptists will give 43.6 percent (\$1,948,499) of anticipated Cooperative Program receipts of \$4,469,034 to Southern Baptist Convention causes. That represents one-tenth of a percent increase over 1986.

Messengers also approved a budget of \$978,196 for their child care, maternity care, and adoption ministry, and \$755,507 for the Baptist Student Center, a dormitory facility at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Neither receives Cooperative Program funds.

Those attending the meeting reacted with prayerful concern in their opening session at the news that Sharon Sheppard, 17-year-old daughter of former state church music director Carl Sheppard, had just been struck by a car and killed near her home. Her father, for the past year music and education director at Winstanley Baptist Church in Fairview Heights, was at the convention when the news came.

Messengers, who were split evenly last year over whether they would enter into a statewide \$2-million to \$3-million capital fund drive, granted the state board of directors permission to accept special funds and build an activities building at the Baptist Children's Home and complete major renovations at the student center.

That action partially overruled an action earlier in the meeting that forbade the directors from moving forward on those capital projects or others at the state's two camps until they came up with more detailed and complete plans and presented them at a later convention.

Messengers accepted the board's recommendation that the state association staff study the feasibility of a pilot senior adult retirement facility and bring a recommendation back to the board in 1990. The recommendation includes a suggestion that the pilot facility be an 8- to 12-complex unit for persons who could pay to live there and care for themselves.

The convention rejected a Constitutional amendment that would have limited the terms of convention officers to one year instead of two. The amendment also would have made the vice-president the president-elect and the assistant recording secretary the recording secretary-elect.

Messengers approved, however, a Constitutional amendment to provide that the immediate past president

Ohio Baptists elect Davidson as president

CINCINNATI (BP)— The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio in its annual meeting in Cincinnati elected Glenn Davidson, pastor of Pisgah Heights Baptist Church in suburban Cincinnati for 15 years, as president.

The Ohio convention adopted a Cooperative Program budget for 1987, a new high of \$2,979,307, with 41.5 percent going to national and world mission causes, up one-half of one percent over 1986.

Resolutions expressed prayer support and encouragement for the SBC Peace Committee and deployed the erosion of Judeo-Christian values in the social and moral life of the nation.

become an ex officio member of the board and administrative committee for a year.

Several resolutions won the approval of messengers, including those against lotteries, child abuse, sexual activity among teen-agers, pornography, and smoking.

Other resolutions called for ethics in government; urged Christians to participate in the political process by staying informed, voting and offering themselves as candidates; and called for Illinois Baptists to celebrate in 1987 the 200th anniversary of Baptist preaching in Illinois by Elder James Smith, who traveled to Illinois from Lincoln County, Ky., to preach.

Messengers elected Dale Clemens, a former state president and pastor of Meadow Heights Baptist Church of Collinsville, as next year's president.

K. Fetterman joins Baptist Properties

NASHVILLE — Kim Fetterman has been named vice-president of finance for Baptist Properties, according to C. David Stringfield, president of Baptist Health Care System Inc.

In his new position, Fetterman is responsible for and involved in all non-hospital financial and accounting activities of the Baptist Health Care System.

Prior to his employment at Baptist, Fetterman was vice-president of finance and treasurer of Geisinger Medical Management Corporation in Danville, Penn.

Court rejects case on Christmas cross

WASHINGTON (BP)— For the second time this term, the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review a case involving a municipal Christmas display.

Without comment, the high court rejected an appeal by the city of St. Charles, Ill., to keep a cross-shaped Christmas light display atop its municipal fire station.

The American Civil Liberties Union and two of its members asked the U.S. District Court for Northern Illinois to issue a temporary restraint prohibiting St. Charles from including the three-story cross in the city's annual Christmas display. The cross was formed with strings of lights hung from the radio/television antenna and crossbar brace on top of the fire station building.

In granting a preliminary injunction, the district court ruled the cross display had "the effect of conveying an association with or tacit approval of Christianity."

The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously affirmed the lower court decision, calling the cross both a distinctly and a sectarian religious symbol.

In their attempt to convince the Supreme Court to review the case, attorneys for St. Charles called the lower court decisions a "stilted overreaction to a legitimate observance of the Christmas holiday season." They argued the cross display did nothing more than attract shoppers to the downtown area and symbolize peace and goodwill during the Christmas season.

California keeps 'Southern' name

STOCKTON, Calif. (BP) — A Constitutional move to drop the word "Southern" from the state convention's name fell about 100 votes short as a record 1,458 messengers gathered in Stockton for the 46th annual session of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

Messengers also approved wide-ranging recommendations from a special strategy committee which will provide objectives and goals for the convention as part of Bold Mission Thrust to the year 2000.

John Swartz, Escondido pastor for 18 years, was elected president after three ballots were taken in a nine-person field. Anna Jane Venosdel, of Fresno, was elected first vice-president. Larry Cain, a black pastor in Compton, was elected second vice-president.

Nevada Baptists set record budget

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP) — The largest crowd in the history of the Nevada Baptist Convention gathered in Las Vegas for the convention's eighth annual meeting and adopted a \$1.2-million budget and re-elected Jim McLeroy, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Las Vegas, as president for a second one-year term. Las Vegas pastors Cary Smith and Bob Stringer were elected first and second vice-presidents, respectively.

With the adoption of the \$1,246,850 budget, messengers voted to increase giving to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program of world mission support from 22 percent to 23 percent. Nevada Baptists have increased their percentage giving to SBC causes by at least 1 percent each year of its brief history.

In other business, revisions were made to the Constitution and bylaws. Constitutional changes increased the size of the Nevada Baptist Convention Executive Board from 15 to 18 members and increased from three to five the maximum number of messengers that churches can elect and send to the annual meeting. One key bylaw revision restructured the long-range planning committee.

McMinn-Meigs cites crisis center workers

An evangelistic service led by Bennie Creel, director of missions of Sweetwater Baptist Association, began the annual gathering of McMinn-Meigs Association of Baptists Oct. 22-23.

Tom Madden, executive director-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, also spoke at the meeting and three workers at the McMinn-Meigs Crisis Center were honored. They were Olive Hines, Fannie Payne, and Sarah Davis.

The new officers include Ray F. Brown, interim pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church in Riceville, moderator, succeeding J. E. Firestone, pastor of Cog Hill Baptist Church in Etowah.

William Henard, pastor of First Baptist Church in Decatur, is assistant moderator. Rufus Houser, a member of Central Baptist Church in Athens, is treasurer, and Bea Gardner, a member of First Baptist Church in Athens and associational office secretary, is clerk.

The Oct. 21-22, 1987 meeting will be at First Baptist Church in Englewood, and East Athens Baptist Church and West End Baptist Church in Athens.

Ted E. Davis is the director of missions.

The name change generated heated discussion, several parliamentary problems, and three time extensions. One amendment to shorten the name, but leave the word Southern in place failed to get a majority by 100 votes before the original motion to change the name to California Baptist Convention fell about the same number of votes short of the needed two-thirds.

Messengers later were notified that the same proposal to change the name would be added to the agenda of the 1987 meeting in Oxnard, Nov. 10-12.

Also approved was an \$11-million budget, which represents a 4.8 percent increase over 1986 and includes 28.75 percent to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Included in a dozen resolutions approved were those which: supported efforts in combating drug and alcohol abuse; decried school textbooks which selectively omit the part of religion in the nation's history; expressed confidence in support for William Crews, new president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, who is a California pastor; asked for the elimination of child pornography; asked the state board of education to reconsider a plan for sex education classes in the third grade; affirmed the recent immigration bill passed by Congress; and recognized and encouraged the work of a Russian broadcast organization headed by a Sacramento area pastor.

Tennessee Baptist Foundation

By Earl Wilson
President



Last Chance

For non-itemized charitable deductions The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 provided that persons who did not itemize charitable donations could claim up to 50 percent of adjusted gross income (30 percent if donation is appreciated property) in 1986. However, this benefit will expire at the end of 1986 due to the changes made in the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

The new tax law makes no changes in the rules governing the amount which can be given by those who itemize, but the majority of taxpayers fall into the non-itemizer category because they do not have enough total deductions to benefit by itemizing. In 1987 and the years thereafter, even more tax payers will become non-itemizers because many deductions will be eliminated and the standard deduction will be increased.

You might want to consider giving in 1986 property (which has been held more than six months and a day), such as stocks and/or real property, which has increased in value. You can realize additional benefits by avoiding the capital gains tax which would be due on the difference in the original cost and current market value as well as a deductible allowance for the full fair market value of the property given.

It is important that you look now, before Dec. 31, to consider the greater savings that will be realized from additional gift giving.

For more information or assistance, please write or call the Tennessee Baptist Foundation, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027.



TENNESSEE CHAPLAINS — Three Tennessee chaplains were endorsed by the Home Mission Board during the board's fall chaplains orientation. William and Linda Fox (couple on left) will serve in Fort Campbell, Richard and Linda Kenyon (center couple) serve in Tiptonville, and Richard and Susan Callaway serve in Memphis. They were among the 42 chaplains and spouses endorsed during services at Glenwood Hills Baptist Church, Lithonia, Ga.

South Carolina Baptists elect layman, woman, pastor for '87

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP) — A layman, a pastor, and a woman were elected officers during the 166th annual session of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, which also saw 2,296 messengers approve a \$21.1-million budget and voice their opinions on teen pregnancy and lotteries.

Flynn T. Harrell, executive assistant to the state attorney general and a member of First Baptist Church of Columbia, was elected president of the 690,000-member convention. Harrell is a former convention staff member and only the ninth layman to be elected to preside over the state's largest religious denomination.

Another former convention staff member, Jimmie E. Harley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Florence, was elected first vice-president. Mary Rome Foster, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Camden, was elected second vice-president.

The \$21.1-million budget reflects a 5 percent increase over 1986 in support of colleges, hospitals, benevolent homes, and missionary and evangelistic causes in the state. The budget is divided into a \$19-million basic budget and a \$2-million challenge budget. The convention raised its contribution to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget

one-half percent, to 37.75 percent of the basic budget. Half of the challenge budget will go to the national Cooperative Program.

Messengers approved a resolution recognizing the incidence of teen-age pregnancy in South Carolina as a problem of major proportions and affirming "the primacy of the role of the family and the church in the formation of the principles and patterns of life."

Lotteries also were opposed in a resolution that described them as a form of gambling which will bring problems that would cost more than the tax money generated.

Other resolutions called on pastors and churches to "intensify efforts to arouse our communities to the growing menace of pornography" and encouraged vigorous enforcement of present statutes; requested the South Carolina High School League to refrain from scheduling athletic events on Sundays; cited 275 South Carolina Baptist churches served by bivocational pastors and called on members "to provide encouragement and enhancement to bivocational ministers"; encouraged all Baptist associations, pastors, and churches "to do all they can, with God's help, to minister individually and collectively to farmers in crisis"; and went on record "deploring the manner in which the Department of Social Services along with supportive police departments and family court systems are currently handling reports of child abuse."

A later motion was approved which called on the convention's Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee to study the problems of child abuse laws and their enforcement in South Carolina and to report back to a future convention.

Shiloh assembles for 12th meeting

Steve Hardwick, pastor of Sharon Baptist Church in Savannah, was re-elected as moderator of Shiloh Baptist Association in the 12th annual meeting Oct. 13-14.

The messengers assembled at Trinity Baptist Church in Michie and Hopewell Baptist Church in Savannah.

The association's other officers were also re-elected and include Joe Jernigan, pastor of First Baptist Church in Adamsville, assistant moderator; Don Hendrix, a member of Chewalla Baptist Church in Chewalla, clerk; and J. T. Drace, pastor of Pleasant Site Baptist Church in Selmer, treasurer.

The 1987 meeting was set for Oct. 12 at Olive Hill Baptist Church in Olive Hill and Oct. 13 at First Baptist Church in Bethel Springs.

The director of missions is S. Woodrow DeBell.

Tennessean to lead committee of NABF

WASHINGTON (BP) — Russell Griffin, director of the children and youth department of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Memphis, has been elected chairman of the North American Baptist Fellowship Youth Committee.

The North American Baptist Fellowship, made up of eight Baptist conventions in the United States and Canada, is one of six regional organizations of the Baptist World Alliance.

Kentucky elects Colvin

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. (BP) — A convention with potential for discord became one of harmony when the Kentucky Baptist Convention met Nov. 11-13 in Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

A. B. Colvin of Louisville, a former long-term Executive Board employee, was elected president. Colvin received 774 votes, and Louisville Pastor Ferrill Gardner of Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church received 372 votes.

A motion calling for a one-year moratorium on resolutions — an effort to carry out the current Southern Baptist Convention peace-keeping spirit — was passed easily. No resolutions were proposed or adopted, in keeping with the action.

The report of a special committee to study liability, ownership, and dissolution provisions of KBC agencies and institutions was approved. Only one amendment was made to a long printed proposal.

The committee worked with institutional leaders and trustees to develop covenant proposals between the convention and the institutions, all of which were published by the Western Recorder, news journal of the KBC, two weeks before the convention. The covenants relate to five educational institutions, five hospitals, and the children's homes. The amendment to the proposal calls for the convention to draft additional covenant agreements with the Western Recorder and the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

Messengers studied the covenant proposals in a two-hour business session, looking individually at the agreements with the educational institutions and studying the hospital relationships and the children's home agreement collectively.

Convention Executive Director-Treasurer William Marshall said he believes the new agreements will make the ties between the convention and the institutions even closer.

A recommendation from the Executive Board to realign the Kentucky Baptist Foundation did not reach the floor of the convention because of a technicality. A messenger raised a point of order when the procedure used was found in violation of the convention's Constitution. The Constitution calls for publication of recommendations from the Executive Board in the Western Recorder at least 30 days prior to annual meetings, and this procedure was not followed.

A messenger moved that the convention president appoint a balanced committee to study the relationship between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Western Recorder, including a study of

the "balance of coverage in light of the (SBC) Peace Committee's requests." The motion was referred to the news journal's board of directors.

In a departure from recent tradition and at the urging of its Executive Board, the convention agreed to temporarily lower its financial sights in a "realistic" response to current giving patterns. The 1986-87 budget goal of \$18,189,596, was reduced to the 1985-86 level of \$17,008,157. The percentage of the budget passed on to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program was lowered from 38.125 percent to 37.5 percent.

The convention began a year of celebration at the close of the annual meeting in preparation for the 150th anniversary of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. That historic session will be held at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Nov. 10-11, 1987.

New England votes CP increase to SBC

GROTON, Conn. (BP) — New England Southern Baptists increased their giving to the worldwide missionary, educational, and evangelistic ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention to 20.5 percent of undesignated gifts during their fourth annual convention.

Messengers voted to adopt a budget of \$1,815,304, of which \$460,699 will come from the 135 affiliated congregations. Of the total contributions, messengers voted to increase giving to the SBC Cooperative Program to \$94,443, or 20.5 percent — up one-half of one percent over 1986 giving.

The convention, which was organized in 1982, now has about 15,000 members in the 135 congregations located in six states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

E. Tennessee pastors elect '86-87 officers

JEFFERSON CITY — The East Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference elected officers for 1986-87 during its recent fall meeting at Carson-Newman College.

The new officers are Calvin Metcalf of Central Baptist Church of Fountain City, Knoxville, president; Robert Dalton of Memorial Baptist Church, Hixson, vice-president and program chairman; Grant Jones of Unaka Baptist Church, Johnson City, recording secretary; and Don Mitchell of Carson-Newman, corresponding secretary.

Colorado convention approves \$3.5-million loan to pay losses

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (BP) — Approval to borrow up to \$3.5-million to pay off losses incurred by the Colorado Baptist Foundation and the Colorado Baptist Loan Corporation were approved by messengers to the annual meeting of the Colorado Baptist General Convention Nov. 4-6.

The loan, if approved by the Executive Board, would allow the convention to borrow the funds to clear out the debt incurred by the two organizations and "roll the debt up all into one payment," said Charles Sharp, executive director of the convention.

The two organizations, separate corporations operated by the convention, were set up to raise money and then to loan it to Southern Baptist churches in the state. The foundation began to experience losses as early as 1981 as a result of poor return on "over-the-counter" stock investments. The foundation assets were frozen in February of 1985.

The convention, under Sharp's leadership, has made a number of efforts to resolve the debt problem, including liquidating assets, stopping the operations of both organizations, paying demand loan account holders, and working to meet obligations of the bond issues.

"The loan authorization will allow the convention to make one payment rather than several," Sharp said. "The action will go back to the Executive Board for final action, and if it is approved, we will be talking with several agencies, banks, and others to obtain the loan."

Sharp told messengers the convention is "within 2 percent of the budget" through the first 10 months of 1986, and is "in good, good shape" financially.

In other action, messengers adopted one bylaw amendment and rejected a second.

The approved amendment makes all of the convention committees rotating, with one-third going off each year. The change, approved without opposition, was proposed by the Constitution Committee of the convention.

The second amendment, proposed from the floor, would have made the president of the convention automatical-

ly the chairman of the Executive Board. It was defeated.

A long-range plan called Colorado Vision 90, which sets the objectives of the convention through 1990, was adopted. Among its objectives are to share Christ with Colorado, with a goal of 20,000 baptisms from 1985 through 1990. There also will be an emphasis on starting new congregations with a goal of 56 new missions by the turn of the decade.

The proposal also aims at a ministry effort aimed at discipleship training, Bible study, helping in pastoral termination situations, working with families, and a stewardship emphasis.

Messengers adopted a \$2,424,000 budget, of which \$1,211,516 will come from the 220 congregations affiliated with the convention. Of the undesignated funds given by congregations in the state, 29.25 percent will go to support Southern Baptist Convention causes, an increase of a quarter of one percent over 1986 contributions.

Michael Wilson, pastor of Central Baptist Church of Aurora, was re-elected president.

In resolutions, messengers adopted a proposal calling on the churches of Colorado "to take a renewed diligence in teaching youth about premarital sex and offering moral education in place of sex education and birth control methods as is now being taught in the majority of our schools."

Another resolution urged churches to take "a renewed stance in communicating to the television networks and sponsors who are "promoting non-Christian attitudes through television."

Messengers also resolved that homosexuality is wrong and in violation of Scripture, reaffirmed a 1983 resolution against "secular humanism," and reaffirmed a 1982 resolution which opposes abortion for any reason except when the life of the mother is endangered.

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BIBLE BOOK SERIES
Lesson for Dec. 7

True light, true freedom

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

Basic Passage: John 7:53 to 8:59
Focal Passages: John 8:12-16, 28-36, 57-58

When I was a young child, it was always fun to visit country relatives. I had one problem about those visits, however. It was the darkness at night. There were no streetlights, and the walk from one relative's house to another one was dark and frightening somewhat. My childhood mind could imagine all sorts of beasts ready to jump out at me along the road.



Bush

Other than the comforting hand of my father, mother, or grandfather was the flashlight they usually carried. That beam of light was almost like a security blanket. The light cut through the intense darkness to let me see the way.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, used the example of light to help people to begin to understand something of His purpose for coming into the world. The darkness of sin in their lives made it impossible for the Scribes and Pharisees and other people to offer forgiveness to the adulterous woman. What sinners need is not condemnation but the glorious brilliance of love, acceptance, forgiveness, and hope for new life and freedom from the bondage of sin.

Biblical interpreters through the centuries have made guesses as to what Jesus might have written on the ground in front of that crowd of condemners. It has been my impression that He quite possibly wrote various sins of which the accusers themselves were guilty — lying, stealing, hating, unfaithfulness, laziness, murder, cheating, evil thoughts, not feeding the poor. Whatever Jesus scribbled in the dirt, the effect was apparently conviction because they all left, leaving Jesus and the woman.

Worshippers were familiar with the symbolism which the four large lamps represented in the Court of the Women. This area of the temple was for spectators. The light represented the pillar of fire that led the Israelites by night during the Exodus.

These lamps were not lighted on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (September-October). The absence of the lighted lamps gave Jesus the opportunity to claim that He was the Light of the world. He was and remains the Light of the world. Jesus is the only true Light that dispels the falsity of the darkness of sin and replaces it with the

righteousness of God's truth.

Mankind still has difficulty explaining the origins of life. We cannot explain ourselves and how we are made. There are those who boast they are "self-made" but in reality we are the created, not the Creator. Neither can we explain the origin of God, the Trinity. Jesus pointed this out to the religious leaders. He knew His origin and destiny but they did not. Yet, they questioned His authenticity.

People still question Who Jesus is and avoid the revelation that comes when faith is exercised. Mankind enjoys evaluating and judging each other. There is a feeling of power when we judge. The truth is, none of us really has the right to judge because we are finite sinners and the only true judge is the infinite God. Religious folk a couple of thousand years ago needed a good dose of humility and so do we today.

As I listen to political and legal leaders of our day, I am not always certain who to believe and who not to believe. Fortunately, when you and I look to Jesus we can find consistent truth, truth which is eternal and not temporary. Laws of our country are constantly being reduced, added to, completely dropped. God's laws never change. He never changes. But for the grace of God in Christ, the judgments of our sins would be eternally fatal.

An example of clear teaching, downright plain condemnation, is seen in verses 37-47. Jesus tells those stubborn unbelieving people they were "children of the devil." It is not popular for preachers and teachers to declare this to misbehaving church members in our day, but, too often Christian people act more like children of Satan than children of the Heavenly Father.

Some of the greatest hurt I have ever experienced in my life has been within church fellowships, within denominational relationships. It is also true that some of the most wonderful supportive and comforting times have been within these same person to person spiritual structures. Let us beware of these extreme possibilities so we can adjust accordingly.

The Jews claimed they were true to their physical father Abraham. However, unlike Abraham, they were not responding to the truth of God as revealed. Abraham exercised faith in God the best he knew how based on his response to what God asked him to do. Through the Son, God was asking the people to respond in faith to the Son Who truly revealed God. Here as before the people had such firm views as to an earthly kingdom that they would not listen to a description of the spiritual kingdom of God and what it would take to be a part of it.

What kind of kingdom does your church or my church represent? Compassion for sinners, passion for truth and not tradition, and concern for the physical needs of people are marks of people who follow the "True Light and True Freedom."

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES
Lesson for Dec. 7

A new community

By Al Shackelford, editor
'Baptist and Reflector,' Brentwood

Basic Passages: Acts 2; 4:32-35
Focal Passages: Acts 2:38-47; 4:32-35

The Day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 — 50 days after Passover and 10 days after Christ's ascension — is an important date in the history of Christianity.

Some theologians consider that the Christian church was established on this significant day, while others chose to believe that the "church" (Greek *ecclesia* which means "assembly") existed previously. Regardless of your interpretation, it is obvious that the events of Acts 2 gave a new meaning and purpose to the followers of Christ.

Basis of a new community (1:1-2:37)

Just prior to Christ's ascension, He told His disciples, "And, behold, I send the promise of My Father unto you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This commandment is repeated in Acts 1:4.

The disciples and many others were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, a feast denoting the first fruits of harvest and the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. It is significant that this group, which was assembled to celebrate the Feast of the Harvest, would be empowered to receive the "first fruits" of a world gospel harvest!

As the believers were gathered in "one accord in one place" (2:1), God's Holy Spirit descended in dramatic fashion, filling the believers. The Spirit's power was experienced in the group's ability to praise God in many languages. However one may interpret these "other tongues" (2:4), it prompted many nationalities to ask, "What meaneth this?" (v.12).

In response to this question, Peter preached a sermon based on Joel 2:28-32. Declaring the resurrection of Jesus, Peter urged the vast throng to "know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ" (v.36).

Birth of a new community (2:38-41)

The courageous, forthright proclamation by Peter, who so recently had denied his Lord, was used by the Holy Spirit to bring conviction in the listeners. Faced with their "pricked" hearts, they asked, "What shall we do?" (v.37).

Peter's response was to repent, to follow Christ obediently in baptism, and to receive the Holy Spirit.

It would be difficult for us to imagine the joy as 3,000 responded openly and gladly, receiving this message and following Christ in baptism.

Being a new community (2:42-47)

What were the characteristics of this new community? What distinguished it from other "assemblies"?

Doctrinal study — The teaching of Scripture was a vital part of this church. It was not an occasional occurrence, but a steadfast, continuing study of God's message.

Fellowship — The Greek word used here (*koinonia*) means far more than a handshake and idle conversation. It implies a deep caring and love bond between believers that expressed itself in positive encouragement.

Eating together — The breaking of bread (v.42,46) could be a reference to the Lord's Supper, but probably means that the believers also expressed hospitality toward one another — literally enjoying being with God's people.

Prayer — The recitation of prayers had been an important part of synagogue

worship, but the new community shared a new aspect of prayer — praying for each other with the new assurance that the Holy Spirit was involved in guiding prayers. Also, now Jesus Christ was sitting at the right hand of God, interceding for those prayer needs.

Miracles — God blessed this new community with His power, so that "many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (v.43). Such miracles were a positive indication of God's power in their lives and the new community.

Faithfulness — Note the use of the word "all" in this passage. Nothing interfered with their priority of being together.

Sharing — Experiencing a unity in Christ, it naturally followed that these believers cared for the needs of each other. They shared what they had with others "as every man had need" (v.45; 4:32-35). Items were not selfishly harbored by individuals, but belonged to all.

Praise — The chief characteristic of the new community was its praise of God. Apparently, everything done individually and collectively had the purpose of praising God.

Others' goodwill — How exciting that the believers' commitment to the new community brought favor and goodwill "with all the people" (v.47). Their commitment to this strange lifestyle must have been positive and helpful to all, not condescending.

Growth — All of these characteristics of the new community resulted in opened doors for proclaiming the saving gospel of Christ, because "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (v.47). The commitment of this community of believers to the lordship of Christ was blessed by God with the conversion of others.

As we study this church at Jerusalem, perhaps we should ask, "What meaneth this" to me and my church?

Obviously, the characteristics of this first century "new community" must be the pattern of today's churches. Look back over these characteristics in Acts 2:42-47 and make them a pattern for your lifestyle and your church.

Loudon County hears mission volunteers

Messengers of Loudon County Baptist Association heard reports from mission volunteers during its annual meeting Oct. 23-24. It was reported that 22 persons from the association served as volunteers in five foreign countries during the year.

The meeting was held at Calvary Baptist Church and First Baptist Church in Lenoir City, and New Midway Baptist Church in Kingston.

The association elected the following officers: Glenn Gamble, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Lenoir City, moderator; E. M. Sherwood, pastor of Blairland Baptist Church in Loudon, assistant moderator; Mrs. Charles E. Amos, a member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, treasurer; and Raymond C. Atwood, the association's director of missions, clerk.

The 1987 meeting will be Oct. 28-30 at Bethany Baptist Church and First Baptist Church in Loudon, and Kingston Pike Baptist Church in Lenoir City.

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LIFE AND WORK SERIES
Lesson for Dec. 7

Nationalistic pride

By Fred M. Wood
author, preacher, teacher, Memphis

Basic Passage: Genesis 10:1 to 11:23
Focal Passage: Genesis 11:1-9

One prominent Old Testament scholar suggested that chapter 10 of Genesis gives the result and chapter 11 the cause. He meant that the outlining of the places where Noah's descendants went to populate the world represented a dispersion that came after the Tower of Babel experience.

Generally speaking, the descendants of Ham went west and southwest, those of Japheth went west and northwest, while the descendants of Shem remained in the east.



Wood

Later, of course, a westward movement took place by some of the Semitic people about the time of Abraham's call from Ur of the Chaldees.

The confusion of tongues at Babel occurred while the people were still homogeneous and lived in the same geographical area.

A proud and prosperous people (11:1-4)

A great Presbyterian preacher in my city years ago was fond of alliteration. The story is told that he went to hold a revival at a wealthy little church made up of a small select congregation. With a smile, he chided them, "Oh, you proud, pious, pompous, prosperous Presbyterians." Perhaps if he were living today he might look at us and say, with a smile, "Oh, you big, blustering, boasting, biased Baptists."

When we look at the world not too long after God made a fresh beginning following the flood, the situation had become intolerable. The people were prospering materially, moving proudly from one area to another with economic expansion.

The desire to build a "tower that reached to heaven" was a symptom not a cause. They were developing a materialistic culture with a lifestyle that ignored God. Someone described them as a "high-

rise civilization," urbane and contemporary, feeling they needed no spiritual support or guidance.

The desire to "make a name for ourselves" was an attempt to be completely autonomous with a self-image that would flatter their ego and assure their importance.

A God Who demands respect

This story should always be studied in connection with the second Psalm, in which a defiant group, probably neighboring nations, had decided to oppose God's choice of a new king for Israel. They conspired and started the rebellion.

The psalmist pictures God's response by saying, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." When God saw the people in the land of Shinar rebelling against His will for them, he, too, acted with derision.

A fact we must not forget (11:8-9)

What is that fact? It is the same truth David hurled at Goliath before he threw the stone that killed him, "I will smite

thee ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel!" (1 Samuel 17:46).

How long may man go on in sin? How long will God forbear? Where does hope end and where begins the confines of despair?

We need God today in America. Our sophisticated culture would do well to hear and heed the words of a modern Christian, "I am convinced that the culmination of all our experiences, the conclusion of all our failures, the sum of all our depressions, the final product of all our problems will bring us squarely up to the significant fact of God."

Bradley County meets, elects Gerald Atkins

On Oct. 27-28, Bradley County Baptist Association gathered at East Cleveland Baptist Church and Thompson Springs Baptist Church, both in Cleveland, and at First Baptist Church in Charleston and elected Gerald Atkins, pastor of Georgetown Baptist Church in Georgetown, as moderator.

Other officers elected during the yearly meeting include Darrell Henry, pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Cleveland, vice-moderator; Marcus E. Boring, a member of Big Spring Baptist Church in Cleveland, treasurer; and Phillip Dalton, minister of youth at Valley View Baptist Church in Cleveland, clerk.

Atkins succeeds Brenton Cox, pastor of Valley View Baptist Church, as moderator.

Those gathered for the meeting also set the next meeting for Oct. 19-20, 1987, in Cleveland at Macedonia Baptist Church, Hopewell Baptist Church, and Michigan Avenue Baptist Church.

Raleigh Brady is the director of missions.

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BSSB chairman urges respect amid differences

By Linda Lawson

PICKENS, S.C. (BP) — An atmosphere in which people with diverse opinions can respect and love one another while working out their differences for the welfare of God and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board is the goal of the pastor now serving as chairman of the 85-member trustee board.

"I would like to see the harmony of a local Baptist church doing the work of the Lord with its diverse people," said Lloyd Batson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pickens, S.C. "If you do that, you can work out most anything."

Batson speaks out of long experience as a pastor helping people work out differences for the sake of the church and the kingdom of God.

He has spent almost half his life, a few months more than 30 years, as pastor of the 900-member congregation. He and his wife, Joy, moved to Pickens in 1956 shortly after he had received his doctor of theology degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

After more than 30 years of sermon preparation, writing a weekly column in the church bulletin, and serving in many denominational positions including president of the South Carolina convention, Batson says the greatest source of fulfillment in his ministry has been "daily involvement with people."

Picking up a firecracker from his desk, he illustrates his point. Last July he wrote a column about a used firecracker he had picked up on the church parking lot. "The next day I found a sack full of firecrackers on my desk. I have no idea who they came from. This is part of the special exchange between people," he says.

While Batson receives gifts, tangible and intangible, from his people, he also gives many. Wedding ceremonies, for example — he writes an original ceremony as a gift for every couple he marries.

Known popularly as the "Bishop of Pickens County," Batson has given himself to the people of his church and the community at large.

John Roberts, editor of the Baptist Courier, news journal of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, says Batson is "friend, counselor, adviser, Christian minister to the entire community. His advice is sought on a wide range of things, from serious personal problems to location of the county's best fishing places."

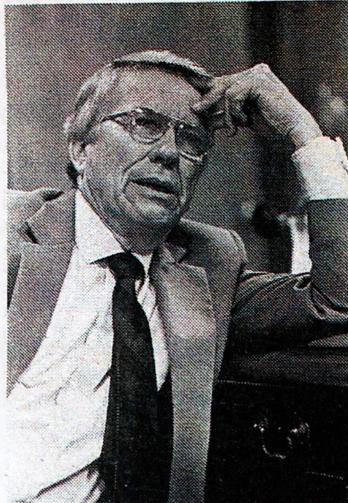
Batson also has given himself to denominational service.

He has been camp pastor at McCall Royal Ambassador Camp for one week each summer since it opened 27 years ago. He is completing his fourth five-year term as a trustee at nearby Furman University in Greenville, S.C. He has been a trustee of the Sunday School Board since 1977.

His years as a trustee of the board have made him "a bigger fan than I've ever been because I see how multifaceted it is. There is no question in my mind that the Sunday School Board is the most influential institution that exists in Southern Baptist life."

He views denominational service as part of his total ministry.

"I've learned to appreciate the multiplying of the ministry of this church. We have involved ourselves in support of the denomination and I'm a part of it," says Batson. The church has supported the denomination financially, being second in the state in 1985 in per capita giving to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program.



TENURE — Lloyd Batson, chairman of the Baptist Sunday School Board trustees, spent almost one-half of his life as pastor of First Baptist Church, Pickens, S.C.

As a trustee of the Sunday School Board, Batson served on the search committee which in 1983 recommended Lloyd Elder as president. He calls the experience "the single most pleasurable assignment I've ever had in denominational service. There were no vested interests, no candidates, no hidden agendas."

He calls Elder "a man of integrity, eminent good sense, a man of guts."

Batson has become known among trustees for his stories of life in Pickens County, stories he claims are all true and come out of "things just happening. I'm glad the Lord put a sense of humor in me. I can wake up in the night worried, think of something funny, and get purged."

A sense of humor, a conviction that differences can be resolved, and absolute confidence in the power of God give Batson an optimistic view of the future of Southern Baptists.

"While human hands handle the church, it is divine. The church belongs to God," Batson says. "I feel the same

Nolachucky meets, adds one church

One church was added to the Nolachucky Baptist Association during its annual meeting at Manley Baptist Church and Central Baptist Church in Morristown on Oct. 21-22.

Omega Baptist Church in White Pine was voted into the fellowship.

Other business included the election of officers. James Williams, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Morristown and the past year's moderator, is succeeded by Jack Arwood, pastor of Montvue Baptist Church in Morristown.

The associate moderator is Benny Keck, pastor of Buffalo Trail Baptist Church in Morristown. From Bethel Baptist Church in Morristown are the treasurer/clerk, Joyce Bruce Vile, and the assistant treasure/clerk, Alma Greene. Vile and Greene are also associational office secretaries.

Morningside Baptist Church in Morristown and Leadvale Baptist Church in White Pine are the sites of the Oct. 20-21, 1987 meeting. Glenn A. Toomey is the director of missions.



TIME FOR CHILDREN — Lloyd Batson talks with a group of RAs on Wednesday night at First Baptist Church, Pickens, S.C., where he serves as pastor.

about Southern Baptists. He's got more at stake with us than I've got.

"Southern Baptists not only will survive, they will thrive," he predicts. "It may require readjustments, even confession and renewal."

Batson's long tenure at Pickens may, in part, have been conditioned by his father, who spent 34 years as pastor of

Graham Baptist Church in Sumter County, S.C.

He notes he regularly is asked if he is still at Pickens, as though some would have expected him to move on.

"I can't get done here what needs to be done," he reflects. "I've never seen a preacher any happier than me, so I don't see any point in jumping around."

Beulah adds church, notes volunteers

A recognition of disaster relief volunteers and the addition of a church marked the yearly gathering of Beulah Baptist Association Oct. 27-28 at Cypress Creek Baptist Church in Martin and Wynnburg Baptist Church in Wynnburg.

The 25 volunteers who were recently trained brings the association's total number of disaster relief workers to 57.

The association voted Antioch Baptist Church in Hornbeak into the fellowship. The church is currently without a pastor.

Next year's officers are Mickey Basham, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Martin, moderator; Judson Lambert, pastor of First Baptist Church in Tiptonville, assistant moderator; Bill Flood, a member of First Baptist Church in Union City, treasurer; Gwen Armour, a member of First Baptist Church in Troy, clerk; and Connie White, a member of Second Baptist Church in Union City, assistant clerk.

Martin will be the site of the Oct. 26-27, 1987, meetings, which will be held at Broadway Baptist Church and Mount Pelia Baptist Church.

Robert L. Armour leads the association as director of missions.

Stewart Co. meets, welcomes church

During the Oct. 23-24 gathering of the Stewart County Baptist Association, the past treasurer and the new director of missions were honored, and a church was added to the fellowship.

Meeting at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Indian Mound and Walnut Grove Baptist Church in Dover, the association honored the late T. L. Askew, who served as associate treasurer for many years, by dedicating the annual minutes to his memory. A love offering was taken for William Lee Gray, who became the director of missions in February, 1986.

Maranatha Baptist Church in Dover was voted into the association. Herbert Smith is the pastor.

Morris Lee, pastor of Big Rock Baptist Church in Big Rock, was re-elected as moderator. Other officers for 1986-87 are C. T. Mattox, a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Big Rock, vice-moderator; Wanda Sexton, a member of Big Rock Baptist Church, treasurer; and Marcella Bryant, a member of Corinth Baptist Church in Dover, clerk.

The 1987 meeting was set for Oct. 22-23 at Midway Baptist Church in Dover and Calvary Baptist Church in Big Rock.

Madison-Chester adds one church

The messengers of Madison-Chester Association of Baptists voted a church into its fellowship while assembled in Jackson for the annual meeting Oct. 27-28.

Gathering at Madison Baptist Church and Highland Park Baptist Church, the association added Mason Wells Baptist Church in Jackson. Glen Kolwyck is the pastor.

The newly-elected officers are Alvin Giliand, associate pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Jackson, moderator, succeeding Paul Bryant, pastor of North Jackson Baptist Church in Jackson; Lewis Parrish, pastor of Bible Grove Baptist Church in Jackson, assistant moderator; and Sheri Barden, a member of West Jackson Baptist Church in Jackson, treasurer/clerk.

The association's director of missions is Herbert R. Hidgon.

The location of the next annual meeting, Oct. 26-27, 1987, is also in Jackson at Meridian Baptist Church and North Jackson Baptist Church.