

# Baptist and Reflector

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## Committee establishes foundation for peace

By Dan Martin

ATLANTA (BP)— Two statements that will provide the "foundation for reconciliation" in the Southern Baptist Convention — one on theology, the other on denominational politics — were adopted by the SBC's Peace Committee during its 10th meeting in early December.

Chairman Charles Fuller said the two statements "form the basis for reconciliation" in the nation's largest evangelical denomination, which has been involved in political and theological controversy for more than seven years.

Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., said the two statements were "hammered out" by the 22-member group during an "intense" meeting. He added they will form the basic foundation for the committee's report, which is expected to be unveiled in preliminary form at the Feb. 16-18 meeting of the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville.

The Peace Committee was created at the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC and charged with responsibility for discovering the sources of the controversy, making findings, and then recommending possible solutions. It must make its final report at the 1987 annual meeting of the SBC, June 16-18, in St. Louis.

The "foundational" statements, Fuller

said, came about as the committee "struggled with just what it is wanting to accomplish ... what it is supposed to do."

"I had come out of the prayer retreat (at Glorieta, N.M., in October) feeling we had moved well along in theological reconciliation and were ready to move right into reconciliation having to do with politics. We had suggestions from both sides of the house, but the committee felt something needed to be ironed out stating our basis for reconciliation," Fuller said.

The statement on the basis for theological reconciliation which the committee adopted says:

"It is the unanimous conclusion of the Peace Committee that the cause of peace within the Southern Baptist Convention will be greatly enhanced by the affirmation of the whole Bible as being 'not errant in any area of reality.'"

"Therefore, we exhort the trustees and administrators of our seminaries and other agencies affiliated with or supported by the Southern Baptist Convention to faithfully discharge their responsibility to carefully preserve the doctrinal integrity of our institutions receiving our support, and only employ professional staff who believe in the divine inspiration of the whole Bible and that the Bible is

'truth without any mixture of error.'"

The statement picks up parts of three other documents: the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement, in Article I, affirmed that the Scriptures are "truth without any mixture of error"; a 1980 SBC resolution exhorted "trustees of our seminaries and other institutions ... to faithfully discharge their responsibility to carefully preserve the doctrinal integrity of our institutions"; and the 1986 Glorieta Statement, made by the presidents of the six SBC-affiliated seminaries, affirmed "the 66 books of the Bible are not errant in any area of reality."

The Peace Committee's "foundational statement on the basis for political reconciliation," mirrors the theological statement, Fuller said. The statement says:

"It is the unanimous conclusion of the Peace Committee that fairness in the ap-

pointive process will contribute to peace.

"Therefore, we exhort the present and future presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Committee on Committees, and the Committee on Boards to select nominees who endorse the Baptist Faith and Message statement and are drawn in balanced fashion from the broad spectrum of loyal, cooperative Southern Baptists, representative of the diversity of our denomination."

Fuller said after the "foundational" statements were adopted, the committee moved into consideration of nine specific recommendations concerning political activity, presented by the five-member political activities subcommittee, which is chaired by Peace Committee vice-chairman Charles Pickering, an attorney from Laurel, Miss. (See related story.)

The recommendations, like the "foun-

(Continued on page 4)

## Liberian grand jury arraigns Senter's alleged murderer

By Marty Croll

SANNIQUELLIE, Liberia (BP)— Police were to present their case Dec. 6 in Sanniquellie, Liberia, against the man who has admitted the murder of a Southern Baptist missionary and her daughter.

Investigators were to tell a Liberian grand jury sitting in the Nimba County courthouse why Benjamin M. Morris should come to trial next month in the murders of Libby Senter and her 10-year-old daughter, Rachel.

Key evidence includes written and recorded confessions that resulted after Missionary George Senter told Morris he

forgave the man for killing his wife and child and asked Morris to confess.

(At press time on Dec. 8, the Foreign Mission Board had not been able to confirm whether or not the Dec. 6 arraignment hearing had been held.)

A verbal confession came Nov. 28 after George Senter asked to speak with Morris privately. "Looking face to face in Ben Morris' eyes, he put his hand on Morris' shoulder and told Ben he forgave him," said Bradley Brown, administrator for the 67 Southern Baptist mission workers assigned to Liberia. "It was

(Continued on page 3)

## Projections show increase in baptisms during 1986

ATLANTA (BP)— Preliminary reports indicate Southern Baptist churches baptized 364,000 new believers during 1986, ending a four-year decline in the number of baptisms reported.

If the projections are correct, baptisms reported by SBC churches will increase about 13,000, or 4 percent, over the 351,071 baptisms reported in 1985.

The statistics were announced during the annual national conference for Southern Baptist evangelism directors in a report presented by Clay Price, director of program research for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Price said his statistics were based on reports from the state evangelism directors, with all but one state reporting. He observed the data is consistent with projections expected to be released a week later by the research services department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, based on partial analysis of Uniform Church Letter reports from local churches.

The reports indicate baptisms increased in 26 of the 37 Baptist state conventions and decreased in 11 states, Price said.

Robert L. Hamblin, evangelism vice-president for the Home Mission Board, expressed gratitude to God for the increase, saying he believed it was a reversal of a trend toward a decline in baptisms.

Hamblin attributed the increase to the simultaneous revivals held nationwide last spring called "Good News America: God Loves You," saying the simultaneous revivals "obviously turned it (the trend) around."

Price and Richard Harris, director of mass evangelism for the Home Mission Board, also presented a report on results of the Good News America simultaneous revivals, based on telephone surveys of 760 SBC churches and projected to indicate results for the entire denomination.

The research estimated 145,000 persons made professions of faith during the Good News America revivals, an average of five in each participating church.

Of the 145,000 persons who professed faith during the revivals, Southern Baptist churches baptized about 103,000, an average of four baptisms per church, Price said.

Plans were projected during the national conference of evangelism directors meeting in Atlanta for another nationwide simultaneous revival effort in 1990. Theme for the 1990 campaign will be "Here's Hope: God Cares for You."

Plans were also made for a "Year of the Laity in Evangelism and Discipleship" emphasis from October 1988 to September 1989, leading up to the 1990 Here's Hope simultaneous revivals.

## New decision overturns ruling on tax status of parsonages

NASHVILLE — The state Assessment Appeals Commission ruled Dec. 2 that church parsonages are exempt from taxation, overturning an earlier ruling by State Board of Equalization Administrative Judge Kelsie Jones.

The issue was raised by Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County which added 170 residences (including 147 parsonages) to the tax rolls. Assessments for 1986 property taxes were mailed to churches in April.

The taxes would have added \$130,000 annually to Metro's funds.

In overturning Jones' ruling, the state Assessment Appeals Commission declared, "Since the courts have given a liberal reading to the exemption statute, this commission feels compelled by precedent to find the provisions of (state law) pertaining to parsonages are Constitutional."

The ruling resulted from a hearing on the matter in October.

Metro Tax Assessor Jim Ed Clary had argued that such tax exemptions violate the Tennessee Constitution, which permits exemption if residences are used purely for religious, educational, charitable, or scientific activity.

In 1984 the state General Assembly passed a law which declares that parsonages are to be exempt because they are "deemed to be used" exclusively for religious purposes. Metro had countered that this law is unconstitutional.

The commission had relied heavily on a 1966 case involving tax exemption for housing property owned by Peabody College of Nashville.

Clary has indicated that the commission's ruling will be appealed to the state Board of Equalization. If that body declines to hear the appeal, Clary said that the matter could go to the Davidson County Chancery Court.

"It's a good decision. Parsonages have

(Continued on page 3)

# Liberians pay tribute to slain missionary

By Marty Croll

YEKEPA, Liberia (BP)— Thousands of Liberians streamed into Yekepa, Liberia, three days after the murder of Libby Senter to tell each other why they felt the Southern Baptist missionary was one of their own.

Mrs. Senter, of Shelby, N.C., and her daughter, Rachel, 10, were stabbed to death in their Yekepa home Wednesday morning, Nov. 26. A Liberian, Benjamin M. Morris, admitted to the murders two days later.

George and Libby Senter moved with their two children to Yekepa six years ago as newly appointed missionaries. They long ago decided in case either died on the mission field they wanted to be buried in Liberia as a Christian witness to the people.

The Liberians paid tribute to Mrs. Senter during a wake, funeral, and burial on the grounds of Mount Nimba Baptist Church Nov. 29 and 30. They told of her willingness to identify with them by learning their language and staying overnight in their homes as she worked with her husband in surrounding village churches.

A procession of people from the Mano and Gio tribes accompanied the caskets containing the bodies of Mrs. Senter and her daughter as Liberians carried them out of the city's hospital morgue. The tribal people walked alongside the caskets for more than a mile.

"This was really a Liberian funeral, and it would please Libby because she was so close to the people," said Liberian Johnetta Minor, president of Ricks Institute, a Baptist school located in Monrovia.

Liberians started arriving at the church from throughout Nimba County for a wake lasting from 7:30 p.m. Nov. 29 until about 4 the next morning. They eventually packed the sanctuary and spilled outside onto church grounds and under a brush arbor. About 3,000 people attended the funeral service from 2:30 to nearly 5 p.m. Nov. 30, watching as the bodies were buried atop a little knoll by the church.

Among Liberians attending the funeral were Walter D. Richards, president of the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Education Convention, with which missionaries work; Charles Blake, convention executive secretary; William E. Stewart, one of the most prominent figures in Liberian Baptists' partnership with Georgia Baptists; and Victoria Dukuly, president of the convention's Woman's Missionary Union.

Dukuly, who was recovering from surgery, made the eight-hour round trip from her home in Monrovia, the capital city, just for the funeral. Instead of viewing Mrs. Senter's body, Dukuly said she wanted to remember her as happy and high-spirited, the way she was as they worked together with Girls in Action youth groups in the country.

Forgiveness was one topic the Liberians discussed widely among themselves. They were stunned as word got around that George Senter had placed his hand on Morris' shoulder, looked the accused murderer in his eyes, and told him he forgave Morris for killing his wife and daughter.

"That's a story that just amazed everybody in the area," said Bradley Brown, the administrator of the 67 Southern Baptist mission workers assigned to Liberia.

After arresting Morris as he fled toward the Liberian border, police avoided bringing him into the open when they returned him to Yekepa. They reportedly feared for his life at the hands of an angry Liberian mob.

Senter's ability to turn away anger and forgive Morris so amazed some people that they did not know what to think, and at the wake some talked as if the murder might have been God's will, Brown said.

To balance this, Brown's funeral sermon explained that children of God are to hate evil, and that the murder was done "not by the will of God but by the wicked will of a wicked man under the power of wickedness." Further, he reminded the crowd, the seeds of evil in every man's and woman's heart will grow into evil deeds if they are allowed to do so.

"But even in the presence of wickedness, which is not our Father's perfect will, we have the assurance that He is working in all things for His glory and for our good," Brown said. "He is with us and is going to get the ultimate victory."

George Senter, a Tennessean who was born in Gibson and also lived in Centerville, Prosperity, and Cookeville, was assigned to start and strengthen churches in villages around the city, often traveling away from home for a week at a time. His wife actively participated in the work.

Liberians poured out their appreciation for the Senter family and other Southern Baptist missionaries working throughout Liberia. "This was seen and heard and felt during both the wake and funeral," Brown said. Nearly all of the Southern Baptist missionaries on the field in Liberia, about 50, traveled to Yekepa for the weekend.

The wake gave an outlet for expression to nearly 30 Liberians who otherwise would not have had the chance to speak out about Mrs. Senter. Throughout the night, Liberians presented floral arrangements in the church in memorial to her. The vigil was punctuated by song, prayer, and appeals for people to give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Liberians told how Libby Senter loved the people of Nimba County. "They appreciated her effort at learning the Mano language, and the fact that she would go out regularly on Mondays and stay overnight with them, asking for no special treatment," Brown said. "She wanted to live as one of the villagers and wanted to learn new things as they did them."

One village pastor told the crowd with great emotion how his people had given her a name in the Mano language which meant "second," indicating she was only the second woman from outside their tribe who had tried to learn their language.

Other contributors thanked God for sending Mrs. Senter and prayed that He would speak through the tragedy of her death to draw people closer to Himself.

One contributor to the wake spoke of the daughter, Rachel, noting in her tribute Rachel's identification with the country. A teacher at the African Bible academy Rachel attended in Yekepa told about Rachel's answer to an assigned question, "How do you know you are a Christian?"

The teacher quoted Rachel as saying she knew she was a Christian because as she believed in Jesus Christ as her Savior, her "heart felt satisfied" — a phrase typical of Liberian speech.



**A TOWN MOURNS** — Retired Pastor Bill Tarlton, the father of murdered Southern Baptist Missionary Libby Senter, is embraced by one of many family members and friends who joined him in mourning the tragedy during a memorial service Nov. 29 at Zion Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C.

## Slain missionary's family, friends gather to grieve

By Erich Bridges

SHELBY, N.C. (BP)— Family and friends in the United States came together Nov. 29 to try to understand the life and violent death of Southern Baptist Missionary Libby Senter and her 10-year-old daughter, Rachel.

Observed by reporters, television cameras, and a community in shock, they quietly gathered at Zion Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C., the home ground that nourished Senter. Her father preached there for 16 years, and she first dedicated her life to missions there.

Current pastor Russell Fitts remembered the last time the missionary family had been in the church, 11 months before.

"Rachel and Philip came with Libby and George to stand where I'm standing, and the entire family took part in a presentation on missions in Liberia," Fitts remembered. "You could tell by the way these children, Philip and Rachel, came to the rostrum and held the banners and posters that they were thrilled to be a part of what their mother and daddy were doing."

Bill Tarlton, Libby Senter's 87-year-old father, smiled at the memory. The retired pastor, known and loved in the Shelby area for almost 40 years, had been smiling for days as he accepted condolences, answered reporters' questions, and tried to support other grieving family members. Church members say it is his nature.

"I guess we were both inclined to be optimistic and cheerful," Tarlton said of himself and his daughter, who was also known for her smile. "It's deep, it hurts, but it's over, and there isn't any way weeping or crying or wailing can bring them back. What I've got to try to do is somehow live with it."

The missionary and her daughter were found murdered early Nov. 26 at the Senter home in Yekepa, Liberia.

Tarlton and others who knew and loved Libby Senter remembered her as a determined, outgoing woman who enjoyed life, trusted almost everybody, and feared nothing. She was a tomboy as a child, played football and basketball, loved animals, and developed into an excellent student. She was valedictorian of her high school class in Shelby and earned honors at Wake Forest University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

But the characteristics that turned up most often in memories were her love of people and sensitivity to their needs.

"It didn't make any difference whether somebody was 80 or eight or one," Tarlton said. "She was especially fond of children and of old folks. She'd just go see all the old people around here, and take food or flowers or whatever we had to send 'em, and stay out with 'em till she had to come back. That was before she was grown, when she was young."

She carried that concern for people to seminary, where she studied ministry through social work. She supported herself there by working at a mental institution and later worked for a year among poor coal mining families in the mountains of eastern Kentucky.

In the mountains, Mrs. Senter once wrote, she "found overwhelming human need, few community resources, and people reluctant to use available resources."

Perhaps the most heart-rending recollections of the missionary came from Hilda Dean, a nurse in Louisville who developed a 20-year friendship with Senter during seminary days. Dean visited Senter in Liberia for a month in 1984 and planned to go again next February.

"She was the best friend I ever had," Dean said through her tears. "She wanted to be where she could serve and help people. She couldn't bear the suffering of the people. I'm a nurse, and she would say, 'Hilda, there's a lot of people out there with a lot of needs. Let's get out there and help them.'"

During her 1984 stay in Liberia, Dean helped Senter with her ministry and followed her as she visited marketplaces and homes in Yekepa, where the Senter family worked.

"The people loved Libby. They went to her if they had problems. They went to her if they needed something. They loved her. You could see it in their eyes."

As the people filed out of Zion Church in Shelby, Bill Tarlton stayed behind and spoke of George Senter. The missionary had met face to face with the suspected killer of his wife and daughter, Tarlton had been told, and had told the murderer he forgave him.

"I haven't got that far yet," Tarlton said quietly. "I might one day, too. I don't know."

## Court proceedings . . .

(Continued from page 1)

amazing. When George began to tell Morris what he wanted him to do, very soon he began to cooperate and give the facts."

In the confession, Morris said he committed the murders after Mrs. Senter intervened to prevent him from molesting her daughter. Morris, a Liberian the missionaries had befriended, had worked around the Senter's home Nov. 25 before coming back that night to ask for a place to sleep.

Brown said Morris, a 1979 graduate of Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote his confession in flawless English for the joint security office in Yekepa, a mining town in northeastern Liberia where the Senter's live. The office coordinates law enforcement between local and national police and a private security force working under the Liberian American Mining Company (LAMCO), an iron ore mining firm in Yekepa.

Morris was apprehended Nov. 27 at a checkpoint about 20 miles from the Liberian border, the day after he allegedly stabbed Mrs. Senter and Rachel. When arrested he was wearing Mrs. Senter's tie-dyed shirt and George Senter's blue jeans and was carrying shorts and shoes from the Senter home, Brown said.

Missionary Earl Williams discovered the bodies in the Senter home Nov. 26. Brown, notified in Monrovia, made the four-hour drive to Yekepa and spent most of the next six days alongside Senter working with police and making necessary arrangements.

Mrs. Senter and her daughter had been dead since between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. Williams found them later in the morning. Senter had driven to Monrovia Nov. 25 to pick up their 15-year-old son, Philip, so the family could celebrate Thanksgiving together in Yekepa.

The murder represents an isolated incident of a man who "gave himself over to wickedness," said Brown. "Liberians all over the country feel terrible about it. It has been a matter of national shock and dismay . . . an embarrassment to them." For such a thing to be done in Liberia by a Liberian against innocent persons such as the Senter's is deeply felt by all, Brown added.

Monrovia's leading newspaper, the Daily Observer, covered the funeral service Nov. 30 and published a story and a series of photos. The Observer planned

to publish the full text of Brown's funeral sermon.

Senter and his son are scheduled to leave Liberia Dec. 17 for a month-long furlough in the United States. They will arrive in Greensboro, N.C., Dec. 18, but plan to return to Liberia Jan. 19.

Two days after the funeral Senter drove his son back to Monrovia, where he attends American Cooperative School. The next day the missionary returned to his work and the Yekepa home his family has lived in for six years.

Senter told Brown one of the hardest things for him had been passing Rachel's empty room and missing her customary good-night kiss.

Before he left Yekepa Dec. 1, Brown took a few minutes to talk with Morris, who attended the Liberian seminary during the time Brown was seminary president. Morris told Brown he had repented for the murder and made peace with God.

"He seemed very remorseful, no arrogance, no expression of that kind of hatred," Brown said. During his confession, Morris had indicated he did not want to live after what he said he had done, Brown added.

Morris grew up in the Monrovia area and later moved to Yekepa, where he attended Vocational Training Institute for an education in electrical work. While Morris lived in Yekepa, Earl Williams baptized him and helped him get into seminary.

Morris put his electrical training to use when he attended the Baptist seminary and graduated with a good academic record, Brown said. He accepted a job teaching at Ricks Institute in Monrovia, a school run by Liberian Baptists.

But Morris was dismissed from that position and later left another position in a village church school. Both departures came after accusations concerning molestation of female students, Brown said.

Later, Morris told people he had experienced a change in his life and wanted to go back to Nimba County where he believed he could serve God.

Returning to Yekepa about six weeks ago, he contacted Williams. Williams tried to help him start a ministry as an itinerant evangelist and teacher in a Nimba County village. But because most of Williams' work centers around Yekepa, where he is pastor of Mount Nimba Baptist Church, Williams enlisted the help of Senter, who works with the village churches.

"Naturally Earl Williams and George Senter wanted to take him at his word, and they befriended him," Brown said. "Both were trying to help him."

Morris spent several evenings in the homes of both the Williamses and the Senter's. But then Senter found him a place to stay in Redeemer Baptist Church about three miles away. Senter spent a day building him a bed and said he would pay him for various odd jobs at the Senter home, Brown said.

The day before the murder, Senter saw Morris on the road as the missionary drove by on his way to Monrovia to get his son. He considered stopping to tell Morris he would be gone and not to go to the Senter home, but he drove on. Morris did go to the Senter home, and he worked there that day washing windows until 4 p.m. He came back later saying he needed a cooking pot. At 11 p.m. he returned a third time. Mrs. Senter apparently let him in and — as the Senter's had done in the past — allowed him to sleep in Philip's empty bedroom. The murders followed.

## TBAH directors request prayer for director search

The Board of Directors of Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes Inc. has requested prayers for God's leadership and recommendations from Tennessee Baptists as it seeks to fill the position of full-time executive director-treasurer, according to Taylor Harris, chairman of the search committee.

The position has been vacant since the retirement of Wade Darby in July 1985. J. L. (Pete) Ford, pastor of Nashville's Eastland Baptist Church, has been serving as part-time interim executive director-treasurer.

To aid those wishing to make recommendations, Harris referred to TBAH's

purpose as determined in its corporate charter:

"To provide elderly persons with housing facilities and services specially designed to meet their physical, social, psychological, and spiritual well-being, and usefulness in longer living; to operate and maintain buildings and residences; to provide for the personal and nursing care of persons of advanced age who, by reason of illness or physical infirmity, are unable to care for themselves; and to provide information on such facilities and services for churches and associations;

"To solicit, collect, receive, accumulate, administer, and disburse funds exclusively in the sole discretion of its Board of Directors to further religious, charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes, and to that end take and to hold any bequest, devise, gift, grant, purchase, lease, or otherwise any property, real, personal, tangible or intangible, or any undivided interest therein without limitation as to amount or value."

Harris added that some of the responsibilities are to plan for care of retirees and the elderly in Christian environments conducive to creative living; to promote development of housing for retirees and elderly; and to coordinate with the state convention, with its agencies and institutions, and with local churches to achieve these goals.

He noted that the executive director will manage and direct the two existing TBAH institutions: Deer Lake Retirement Village in Nashville where about 173 persons reside in 135 residential units at a 19-acre community, and Baptist Health Care Center in Lenoir City, a 102-bed nursing home.

In fulfilling these duties, the executive director reports and is responsible to the TBAH Board of Directors, which is elected by the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Harris noted that additional information was contained in TBAH's report to the state convention, which was printed in the Baptist and Reflector (Oct. 29).

Questions about the position and recommendations can be sent to Taylor Harris, P. O. Box 2757, Nashville, TN 37219-0757.

In making the announcement to Tennessee Baptists, Harris said, "Thank you for your prayers and support as we seek to serve the needs of our retirees and elderly in the years to come."

## Pinkerton to lead Clinton Baptists

Charles R. Pinkerton, pastor of First Baptist Church, New Smyrna Beach, Fla., was elected as director of missions for the Clinton Baptist Association at a called session of the executive board during the association's annual meeting Oct. 20-21.

The association also voted to purchase a building for the associational office and sell other properties.

Pinkerton, who will begin serving in January 1987, is a native of Florida and a graduate of Santa Fe Junior College in Gainesville, Fla.; Stetson University in Deland, Fla.; and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has been pastor of churches in Florida and Louisiana; president of the state pastors' conference in Florida; chaplain for athletic teams including the Jacksonville Sharks, a professional football team.

Pinkerton also has worked in Billy Graham schools of evangelism; done missions work in Honduras, Jamaica, and at home mission sites; and served in various roles in the Florida Baptist Convention.

He and his wife, Carma Overstreet Pinkerton, have three children.

In other action, the association recognized Mrs. Wayne Markham, who was associational WMU director for four years, and Evelyn Green, who was associational secretary for 26 years.

Messengers from 43 of the 53 churches in the association attended the meeting at Zion Baptist Church in Powell, and at Clinch River Baptist Church and Main Street Baptist Church in Lake City.

H. Mack Smith, pastor of Black Oak Baptist Church in Clinton, was elected moderator to succeed James McPherson, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Clinton. Other officers that were elected include T. D. Hooker Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church in Norris, assistant moderator; J. Carl Keith, a member of Bethel Baptist Church in Clinton, treasurer; Evelyn Green, a member of Bethel Baptist Church in Clinton, clerk; and Pat Long, a member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Andersonville, assistant clerk.

The association's 1987 meeting was set for Oct. 19 at South Clinton Baptist Church in Clinton, and Oct. 20 at Central Baptist Church in Oak Ridge and Black Oak Baptist Church in Clinton.



Pinkerton

## Parsonages . . .

(Continued from page 1)

always been exempt," said Louis Farrell, Nashville attorney who represents nine religious bodies in challenging the taxation move.

"The appeals commission followed the law that the state Supreme Court laid down and which Metro wants to abandon," Farrell said. "Metro wanted to go against the wishes of both the Supreme Court and the General Assembly."

Robert Taylor, attorney for the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, has been working with Farrell in the lawsuit.

The Protestant church bodies are joined in the suit by the Catholic Nashville Diocese and the Memphis Diocese.

In addition to the religious denominations involved, other Davidson County residences included are owned by the Salvation Army, Vanderbilt University, Fisk University, and Trevecca Nazarene College.

## Missouri elects interim director

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — Retired Executive Thomas W. Nelson has been unanimously elected interim executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention. Nelson, who assumed office immediately, was elected by the MBC Executive Board during a special called session.

The executive board meeting was held in Jefferson City following the Nov. 7 memorial service for the late Rheubin L. South, who died of leukemia Nov. 6, had been MBC executive director since 1975.

Prior to South's election as executive director in 1975, Nelson served 11 months as interim executive director. Nelson is best known in Missouri as the retired executive director of the Missouri Baptist Foundation, a post he held for 16 years.

# Committee approves eight recommendations

ATLANTA (BP)— Two "foundational" statements, a transitional statement, and eight recommendations have been adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee (see story on page 1).

The foundational statements are:

"It is the unanimous conclusion of the Peace Committee that the cause of peace within the Southern Baptist Convention will be greatly enhanced by the affirmation of the whole Bible as being 'not errant in any area of reality.'

"Therefore, we exhort the trustees and administrators of our seminaries and other agencies affiliated with or supported by the Southern Baptist Convention to faithfully discharge their responsibility to carefully preserve the doctrinal integrity of our institutions receiving our support, and only employ professional staff who believe in the divine inspiration of the whole Bible and that the Bible is 'truth without any mixture of error.'

"It is the unanimous conclusion of the Peace Committee that fairness in the appointive process will contribute to peace.

"Therefore, we exhort the present and future presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Committee on Committees, and the Committee on Boards to select nominees who endorse the Baptist Faith and Message statement and are drawn in balanced fashion from the broad spectrum of loyal, cooperative Southern Baptists, representative of the diversity of our denomination."

The transitional statement says:

"We believe the beginning and continuation of a process which hopefully will resolve theological issues will diminish undesirable political activity.

"In order to minimize as much undesirable political activity as possible during this process, we recommend the following: . . ."

The group, by common consent, agreed to include in the final report, a comment to "let the Bible speak for itself" on its nature, and cited the words of Moses (Deuteronomy 4:2), David (Psalm 119:160), Jesus (Matthew 5:18), Paul (2 Timothy 3:16), and John (Revelation 22:19).

Nine recommendations were presented for discussion by the Peace Committee's political activi-

ties subcommittee. Eight were adopted and one was referred back to the subcommittee "for further work." One other recommendation, which arose from the floor, was referred to the subcommittee.

The adopted recommendations are:

—**Recommendation One:** "That the members of the Peace Committee commit themselves to abstain from all overt political activities. We further request that all political constituencies cease sending emissaries to instigate overt political activities in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"That we further request the leadership of all political constituencies to respond in writing to this recommendation of the SBC Peace Committee and that they abide by the report adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, Ga., 1986, as follows:

"That the convention respectfully request there be a one-year moratorium on theological/political position meetings and a deceleration, if not a dismantling, of the political power structures, allowing the Peace Committee and SBC agency leadership to work without distraction on the theological and political problems before us during the year 1986-87.

"That the convention deplore the use of the type of intemperate, inflammatory, and unguarded language used by some spokesmen on both sides of the political spectrum."

—**Recommendation Two:** "We believe Baptist Press has sought to abide by the report of the SBC Peace Committee, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, 1986, and should be commended.

"We encourage the autonomous independent journals to abide by the report of the SBC Peace Committee . . . as follows:

"That the convention urge Baptist Press, the state Baptist papers, and the independent journals to be especially careful to be fair and accurate in reporting events in the convention and refrain from labeling and attributing improper motives."

"We further encourage them to aid the Peace Committee in the peace process by positive and accurate reporting to their constituencies."

—**Recommendation Three:** "That the Peace Committee invite the editors of the state Baptist

papers and Baptist Press to meet with the Peace Committee Wednesday afternoon, Feb. 18, 1987."

Fuller told Baptist Press the meeting will give the editors of the 37 state Baptist news journals an opportunity for a "question and answer session. We will be looking for reaction to the preliminary report, inquiry. At that point; their input could be very helpful to us in working through our report, drafting and finalizing it."

—**Recommendation Four:** "That the Peace Committee request the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to set a time in their agenda on Wednesday morning, Feb. 18, 1987, for the preliminary report of the Peace Committee and response by Executive Committee members."

—**Recommendation Five:** "In view of the fact that the Cooperative Program is the lifeline of all that we are doing as Southern Baptists, we commend our churches and state conventions for their increased giving to the Cooperative Program, and we encourage our people to continue their strong support of the Cooperative Program and urge that this trend continue."

—**Recommendation Six:** "That the SBC Peace Committee request the SBC Resolutions Committee to continue its policy of not presenting resolutions that are divisive in Southern Baptist life."

—**Recommendation Seven:** "We recommend that the president of the Pastors' Conference and the chairman of The Forum enter into a discussion concerning getting back together."

—**Recommendation Eight:** "That the Peace Committee commend the SBC president as he continues to seek input from all constituencies in the Southern Baptist Convention and exercises fairness in naming members of the SBC Committee on Committees."

The recommendations which were referred back to the political activities subcommittee were proposals having to do with the nomination and election of the SBC president and a suggestion on how to move the convention back to a more open nomination process without political party-style endorsements of candidates.

The committee also asked the subcommittee to look into suggestions of determining how "fairness" can be obtained in appointments and nominations.

## Committee establishes foundation for peace . . .

(Continued from page 1)

dational" statements, will be passed on to a six-member subcommittee that will draft the final report of the Peace Committee.

Fuller named William Poe, an attor-

ney from Charlotte, N.C., as drafting subcommittee chairman. Other members include Edwin Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston; Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.; William Hull,

pastor of First Baptist Church of Shreveport, La.; Daniel Vestal, pastor of First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas; and Albert McClellan, a retired denominational executive from Nashville.

Fuller said the "foundational" statements and recommendations do not mean the committee has completed its work on political activity. "We are by no means finished with the subjects relative to denominational politics," he said, adding politics "is now the area where we feel we need to concentrate most in preparing our recommendation to the convention."

"The political activities subcommittee said they have received numbers of requests, some of which have been on file for months, along with those submitted by (moderate-conservative leaders) James Slatton (of Richmond, Va.) and Norman Cavender (of Claxton, Ga.). Some of those proposals will be the basis for the recommendations that will come," Fuller said.

He added some of the proposals call for radical revision of convention governing principles, structures, and procedures, such as ones calling for a major change in the way appointments are made to the key Committee on Committees and another which would change the method by which convention presidents are nominated and elected.

"The committee is reluctant to recommend radical changes in the structure, procedures, and policies which have

been workable in the convention for so long," Fuller said. "The circumstances in which we find ourselves demand that we address sources of our division, but we must be careful that any changes we suggest have long-term benefits to Southern Baptists, not just expedient benefits."

He indicated the final report will include a number of recommendations in the "do and don't category" of politics within the convention. He added he has said all along there will be politics in the Southern Baptist Convention, and the task of the Peace Committee will be to help sort out the bad politics from the acceptable politics.

In his remarks concerning the December meeting, Fuller praised James Flamming, pastor of First Baptist Church of Richmond, Va., who has been elected to the Peace Committee, succeeding Cecil Sherman, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, who resigned following the October meeting.

"James Flamming proved to be a good addition to the committee, coming up to speed readily and making measurable contributions to our discussion. He is a man of conviction, anxious to represent many Southern Baptists who think as he thinks," Fuller said.

The chairman said the committee has set three additional meetings: Jan. 8-9, 1987, in Dallas; Feb. 18-19 in Nashville; and April 2-3, also in Nashville.

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## China missionary dies in Houston

HOUSTON, Texas — Maudie Albritton Fielder, who spent 35 years as a Southern Baptist missionary to China, died Nov. 27 in Houston, Texas. She was 94 years old.

Mrs. Fielder's death came two years after she made a return visit to China, accompanied by others of her family. While there she visited people she had known before she and her husband, the late J. Wilson Fielder, left China in 1948 because of the arrival of Communist forces, according to her son-in-law, L. G. McKinney Jr. of Houston.

Among those accompanying Mrs. Fielder were a son, Gerald Fielder, former missionary to Japan, now of Waco, Texas, and a daughter, Florence McKinney, who with her husband, L. G., formerly was a missionary to Hong Kong.

Mrs. Fielder was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1914 and married Fielder, also a Southern Baptist missionary, soon after her arrival in China. They served together in Honan Province, first in the city of Kaifeng and then in Chenghsien (formerly Chengchow). She worked with Sunday Schools and missionary organizations in local churches and did evangelistic visitation in the homes.

Wars, including the Sino-Japanese war, World War II, and internal disturbances in China, interrupted the Fielders' service. They left Chenghsien for the last time after Communist forces had surrounded the city.

After retiring, the Fielders continued active ministry in Waco and then in Houston, McKinney said. In Waco, they ran a boarding house, primarily for ministerial students at Baylor University, and started a Chinese fellowship in their home. After moving to Houston, the couple helped start an international department at Tallwood Baptist Church, which later developed into Japanese, Spanish, Korean, and Chinese ministries. He died in 1961.

Mrs. Fielder, a native of Bazette, Navarro County, Texas, studied music at Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Texas, and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Besides her former missionary son and daughter, Mrs. Fielder is survived by another daughter, Jean Moore of Houston, and another son, Richard B. Fielder of Wallace, W.Va.; 11 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

## Belmont commencement to feature Steve Hewlett

NASHVILLE — Tennessee Public Service Commissioner-elect Steve Hewlett will deliver the address for the Belmont College winter commencement, Dec. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in Massey Auditorium.

Undergraduate degrees will be granted to 145 seniors in arts, sciences, business, and music. With the 216 graduates in Belmont's spring commencement, the 1986 graduation total is 361.

## Gallatin pastorate filled by Phillip Allen Cooley

Phillip Allen Cooley is serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Gallatin, effective Dec. 7.

He comes from the pastorate of Lewis Lane Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky.

Cooley is a graduate of Furman University, Greenville, S.C., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

## Personal Perspective

By Tom Madden  
TBC Executive  
Secretary-Treasurer



"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

At the birth of Jesus, the angels brought greetings from God. They brought a message from God to a darkened world. As I reflect upon the greetings of the angels, I thought of several ways that it brought joy.

It brought joy because the angels' message banished fear. The message was, "Fear not." To this very day the gospel banishes superstition and fears that saturate so much of our world.

The gospel is joyous because it emphasizes the value of each person. The angels said, "unto you." The gospel is for all people. Not for one group or one nation but for all.

The gospel is joyous because it brings salvation. Jesus came into the world to save sinners and to seek and to save that which is lost.

The gospel brings joy because it gives genuine peace. Our Lord continues to give us a peace that passeth all understanding.

I earnestly pray that your Christmas this year might be the most joyful you have ever experienced.

## Texas Baptists re-elect Powell

EL PASO, Texas (BP) — Texas Baptists re-elected Paul Powell as convention president, adopted a \$65.5-million Cooperative Program budget for 1987, and reaffirmed their commitment to the Mission Texas goal of starting 2,000 new congregations by 1990 at the 101st annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in El Paso, Nov. 4-5.

More than 2,300 messengers also adopted resolutions opposing abortion on demand, drug abuse, and pornography; supporting missions efforts, particularly among Texas Hispanics; rejecting cuts in human services and legalization of gambling as means to balance the state budget; and offering prayer support to family farmers.

Powell, pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, was re-elected without opposition to a second one-year term as president of the convention.

In his presidential sermon, Powell called for Texas Baptists to "get off the battlefield" of controversy between moderate-conservatives and fundamental-conservatives that has plagued the Southern Baptist Convention and get "back into the harvest field" of missions.

"Brethren, our quibbling and politicking have gone far enough," Powell said. "It is time to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks and unite under the banner of missions and evangelism to win our state and our nation and our world to the Saviour."

The \$65.5-million budget consists of a \$60.5-million basic budget — 36.5 percent of which will go to Southern Baptist Convention causes — and a \$5-million challenge budget. Although the basic budget is the same amount as in 1986, the total budget reflects a 4.1 percent increase over the year before.

## Arkansas adopts cautious budget, adjusts CP percentage to SBC

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP) — Messengers of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention adopted a cautious \$12.3-million budget and took steps to head off a brewing financial crisis when they met for their annual meeting Nov. 18-19 at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock.

Convening under the theme, "Renewal, Revival, and Rejoicing," 1,163 messengers unanimously re-elected all three convention officers and adopted eight resolutions.

The 1987 budget represented a 0.75 percent increase over 1986 and directs 41.41 percent to national Southern Baptist causes, an increase of 0.74 percent over 1986. Arkansas Baptists have been increasing the percentage of receipts diverted to national causes by 0.75 percent each year in an effort to achieve a 50-50 distribution of mission dollars.

State convention leaders, however, foresaw a financial crisis brewing because percentage increases from the 1,275 Arkansas Baptist congregations were not keeping pace with the growing percentage sent to the national mission causes. Consequently state mission funds were being diverted to fund the national increase, with the result that the 1987 budget actually reflected a slight decrease of state programs.

Acting on a recommendation from the state Executive Board, messengers adopted a proposal which will tie future increases in the percentage of receipts diverted to national causes to the percentage increase received from Arkansas churches. The minimum increase each year will be set at 0.25 percent, and, given adequate increases, may be raised as high as 1 percent.

Messengers also adopted an Executive Board proposal to commission a task force of 100 pastors, laymen, and denominational leaders to encourage congregations to increase the percentage of their local church budgets designated for state

## Union recognizes four for service

JACKSON — The Union University Alumni Association honored four people for their service to the Tennessee Baptist college during its annual homecoming awards luncheon, Dec. 6.

Roger G. Murray Jr. received the Distinguished Alumnus Award, which is based on service to the institution. Murray, a lifelong resident of Jackson, is president and chairman of the Board of Murray Guard Inc., Jackson.

John R. DeLoach, supervisory research chemist and research leader at the United States Department of Agriculture's agricultural research service, veterinary toxicology, and entomology research laboratory, College Station, Texas, received the Distinguished Service Award. The award is based on service to mankind or distinction in one's chosen profession.

The Distinguished Faculty/Staff Award, given for long and meritorious service to the college, was presented to Joseph Blass, professor of music and director of the Union University Chorus.

Raymond Wayne Rhear, a staff member of the Jackson Clinic's satellite clinic in Alamo, received the Honorary Alumnus Award, given for outstanding service to the institution by someone who did not attend Union University.

and national causes through the Cooperative Program, the Southern Baptist unified giving plan.

In other business, messengers voted to integrate \$238,000 into the base portion of their unified budget formula for budget year 1988 to assist the convention-owned Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, in its move toward status as a four-year institution and to support a new, expanded annuity plan for ministerial retirement.

The eight resolutions adopted by messengers addressed a wide range of topics. One expressed dismay at favorable media coverage of legalized gambling without an equal emphasis on its destructive aspects. Another resolution denounced the Arkansas Legislature for enacting laws which allow liquor sales in dry counties through the licensing of private clubs. The resolution urged Arkansas Baptists to lobby their legislators for repeal of those laws.

A third resolution declared opposition to "school-based clinics" that distribute contraceptives without parental consent and offer counseling that promotes promiscuity.

Lawson Hatfield, pastor of Fordyce First Baptist Church, was re-elected president of the convention by acclamation.

## Florida retreats to 50-50 split

PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP) — Florida Baptists, meeting in annual session Nov. 10-12 in Pensacola, reluctantly retreated from their record-setting pattern of giving to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program.

After debate, messengers reduced the portion of the state convention's budget that goes to support SBC worldwide missionary, evangelism, and educational causes by one-tenth of one percent. Beginning in January, the Florida Baptist Convention will return to a 50-50 division of funds between state needs and SBC causes rather than move up as planned from 50.1 percent to a 50.2 percent share for the national convention.

Despite the reduction, the approved 1987 budget keeps Florida Baptists at the top of percentage giving among Baptist state conventions. Two other state conventions, Oklahoma and Georgia, also share funds on a 50-50 division.

Discussion of the \$21,782,139 budget dominated Florida Baptists' peaceful three-day meeting, which attracted 1,792 messengers.

Sluggish growth in giving and a pressing need to pay convention debt prompted the State Board of Missions to recommend the turnaround for the 1987 budget.

The messengers offered budget amendments and other suggestions to soften the blow of the percentage reversal, but such attempts failed.

The convention approved resolutions against pornography, lotteries, occult activities, and evolutionary teachings in public school textbooks. Another resolution thanked Patrick Anderson, a criminologist from Lakeland, for leading Florida Baptists' unsuccessful campaign to defeat a referendum on state-sponsored lotteries.

Bill Coffman, pastor of Arlington Baptist Church in Jacksonville, was elected president of the state convention.

# Newberrys anticipate return to Brazil

GORDON, Texas (BP) — A dream to be back on the mission field by Christmas will come true a few weeks late for a Southern Baptist missionary family.

Randy and Jan Newberry and their children, Amy, 15; Joey, 13; and Philip, 2, plan to return to Brazil in mid-January after the two older children finish their school semester. For them, it is a culmination of many miracles and countless prayers.

Their emotional roller coaster ride began March 27 when Philip was diagnosed as having meningitis. Doctors doubted he would live, but a miracle occurred and he did. The Newberrys told doctors people around the world were praying for Philip.

Meningitis caused poor circulation in his extremities, and that resulted in gangrene. A distinct line marked the boundary between living tissue and dead, dark, plastic-like tissue. Doctors amputated his hands and feet at that line.

Five weeks after the amputations, doctors at Children's Medical Center in Dallas became concerned about an infection developing in Philip's arm. They decided to give him an antibiotic they knew he was allergic to. An earlier dose had caused a rash, but this time he had a severe reaction. Seventy percent of his skin sloughed off, and he developed pneumonia.



**PLAYING WITH COUSIN** — Philip enjoys playing with his cousin, Erik, at the home of their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Newberry of Cool, Texas.



**LOOKING AT BRAZIL** — Philip Newberry, 2, his mother Jan, and brother Joey, 13, look at a photo album of Brazil, where they plan to return in mid-January, along with Philip's father, Randy, and sister, Amy, 15.

Doctors attached pigskin to Philip's body and his skin started growing back. Within two weeks he was recovering, marking another miracle.

Eventually Philip was fitted with artificial legs, and one more miracle occurred when he walked without crutches. Doctors told the Newberrys they had never seen a bilateral amputee — missing both legs — walk without crutches, and Philip is a quadrilateral amputee. Again, they told doctors people around the world were praying.

Stories by Eric Miller  
Photos by Stanley Leary

Seeing their son walk across the stage at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center during foreign missions week in August fulfilled their first dream.

After Philip walked across that stage, the Newberrys said, "Our next dream is that we'll be back in Brazil by Christmas." But school schedules intervened, and it will be early January before they leave Texas for Brazil.

Their first term was in Natal, Brazil, where Randy was a religious education consultant. Now he will coordinate small-church development in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Randy firmly believes it is God's will for them to return to Brazil, even though staying in the United States would appear to be easier.

Classmates are begging Amy and Joey to stay in Gordon, Texas, and Philip could get more convenient medical treatment in the United States. Once a year Philip must be brought back to the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children in Dallas for doctors to check his arms and legs. He also will have to go to a Sao Paulo clinic about every six months to be fitted with new prostheses as he grows.

The Newberrys have deep roots in Gordon. Randy moved there at 13 when his father became pastor of First Baptist Church. Jan was born there. They met at Gordon High School and got married at 18. Jan's family lives in Gordon, and Randy's family lives 30 miles away.

All of Gordon knows about Philip's brush with death, said the Newberrys' pastor, Bill Wright of First Baptist Church. Students prayed in school for Philip, as did civic clubs and churches.

The Newberrys are popular at school. Classmates this year selected Amy as the "cutest girl" in the school and Joey as "class favorite" for the eighth grade. Amy is on the drill team, and Joey plays football for Gordon Junior High. Randy has been teaching a Wednesday night Bible study for youth, many of whom are his children's classmates.

In the months since Philip became ill, Randy and Jan have lived through the stress of not knowing whether their child would live, whether his high fever had impaired his hearing, sight, or mental abilities, or exactly how they would cope with his needs. But cope they have, and as a part of that, they have developed new parenting skills.

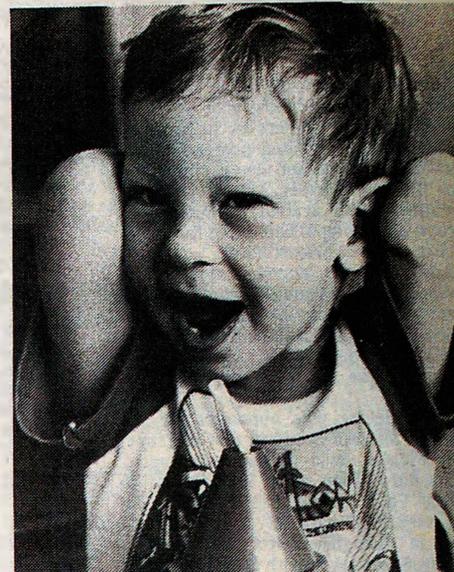
Each day Jan helps Philip strap on his artificial legs and feet. Some mothers put the shoe on the wrong foot, but Jan sometimes puts the foot on the wrong leg, Randy jokes. She helps Philip eat by attaching a clip-on spoon to his arm.

The Newberrys have to see that he has someone nearby when he's climbing steps because he must crawl up them. They also watch him near uneven terrain because he has no feeling for ground surfaces and can trip easily.

He falls harder than other children because he cannot break his fall with hands. The family must see that he does not walk in gravel because a fall on gravel would cause punctures in the ends of his arms.

Speaking at many churches in Texas and one in Florida, Randy and Jan have explained how it felt to watch a son slowly dying and then to see him recover as people around the world prayed for him.

The Newberrys cried recently as they recalled waiting through days and nights in the hospital. "We thought about if Philip died, what it would be



**BREAKFAST FUN** — Philip enjoys chocolate-flavored instant breakfast and bacon. He can pick up a cup or a drink container and drink without a straw, but a straw makes it easier — and more fun.

like without him," Jan said. "I'd think about going to the beach and how much he liked the sand and the water. He liked to run. I thought about his birthday party and maybe it would be the only one that he'd ever have."

Pictures flashed through their minds of Philip splashing in a toddler-size swimming pool and playing with his dog. There was the afternoon when Philip started walking at nine months and the times he played hide-and-seek with Joey. Amy and Joey asked God to spare Philip's life and to take theirs instead.

The weekend before he got meningitis, the Newberrys laughed at him playing in a motel pool. He would jump in and Randy would catch him and set him back on the pool edge. Each time, Philip would say, "Back, daddy, back," waving Randy to move farther from the edge.

"I remember telling Jan," Randy said, "If we lose him — Oh, we'd never lose him, because you can't lose something if you know where it is. But if the Lord takes him, we know where Philip is. He's not lost."

"If the Lord takes him," Randy said, "that will be a tremendous hurt. But that would be two of the most joyful years that we'd ever want — the two years that we had him."

During the crisis time, Randy, Jan, and William Gaventa, the physician who directs medical services for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, sat together Easter morning as Philip lay injected with nine intravenous tubes, catheters in his stomach and chest, and respirator and feeding tubes. Doctors doubted Philip would live another day.

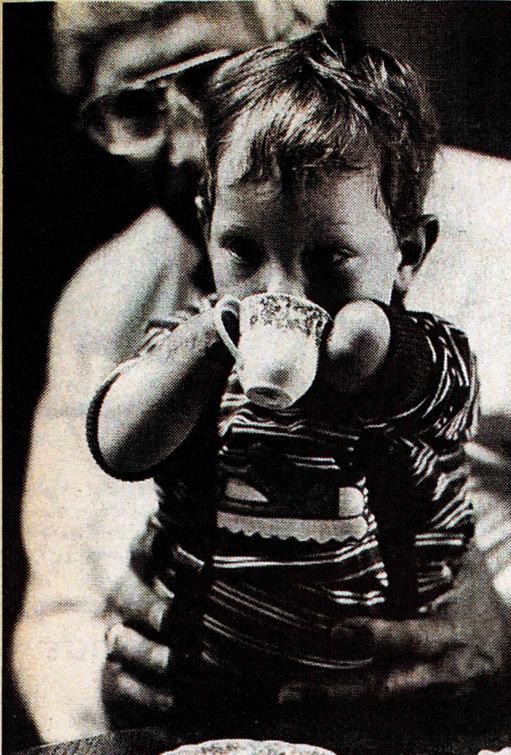
The three cried together. Gaventa regained his composure and told Randy and Jan, "Whatever happens, God is going to take care of you. His grace will be sufficient for whatever the day holds no matter what that day holds."

Months later the Newberrys met a doctor in Dallas who asked them about Philip and if they planned to return to Brazil. "We told him about everything, what Philip lost, and how well he has recovered," Randy recalls.

"The doctor just looked at me and said, 'I had an 18-month-old daughter who had the same type of meningitis, but she didn't survive. For a doctor that's real hard. ... You keep asking yourself the medical questions. What if we had tried this antibiotic or what if we had done that?'"

In Philip's case, prayer brought about a miracle that goes beyond medicine.

## Philip learns to adapt



**ADAPTABILITY** — Philip Newberry is learning to do things without hands. Here he raises a cup of Brazilian coffee and drinks it while sitting in the lap of his grandfather, Floyd Newberry of Cool, Texas.

GORDON, Texas (BP)— People in the department store stared at Philip Newberry.

The 2-year-old son of Southern Baptist missionaries Randy and Jan Newberry underwent amputation of his hands and feet after meningitis caused gangrene last April.

Randy noticed people moving around to see Philip, whose artificial legs were visible. "That poor little boy — he has no hands," someone said.

Then Philip spotted a cricket hopping across the floor. He ran over and stomped it, then stepped back, bent over, and looked at the bug. People nearby watched his actions and their look of pity changed to one of amazement.

Philip also attracted attention in an Orlando, Fla., airport waiting area when he pretended to play football. He would bend down to hike the ball. Then he would throw it, catch it, and run a minute before lying down on the floor and saying he had been tackled. Many of the people watching were amazed at all he could do.

Back home in Texas, Philip comes closer to the real thing. There he proudly wears his Dallas Cowboys helmet as his mother holds a small football upright on the floor 10 feet away. He concentrates, then runs on his knees, kicks the ball, and giggles. Inside the house, he is as comfortable without his prostheses as he is with them.

What lies ahead for a boy who lost his left arm at the elbow, his right one at the wrist, and both legs just below the knee? Snow skiing, swimming, bicycle riding, driving cars, tying shoes, dressing himself, and opening doors — Philip's parents believe he will do all those things.

They see a "strong determination in a lot of things he does," Randy says. The biggest accomplishment Philip has made since his amputations is learning to walk on the prostheses. Doctors had predicted he would have to use crutches to learn to walk. But he learned to walk in about a week without crutches.

"The accomplishments we have seen in just the last month have been exciting," Randy adds. "After several more years, I think we will be amazed at what he will be able to do."

An electronic arm may be in Philip's future, but they're expensive. A doctor in Minnesota is doing transplants of hands and feet, but transplant candidates must take risky anti-rejection drugs, and the Newberrys are leery of those.

The Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children in Dallas sponsors an organization of parents of amputees. "They get together once a month and encourage one another and just watch what the kids can do," Randy says, adding he may start a similar group in Brazil.

The Newberrys plan to return to Brazil in mid-January and live in Sao Paulo, where Randy will help start new churches.

Philip "will have a tremendous testimony, and I believe Brazilians with their tremendous love for children will just absolutely love Philip to death," Randy says.

"The thing that has amazed us is how God has allowed Philip's story to spread and to touch lives all around," he adds. "It indicates that God really does have a tremendous plan for Philip's life. It is a little bit scary to think about the responsibility that He has given us."

## Parks visits China, finds spiritual depth

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)— The Christians of China "have as much to offer us as we have to offer them," insisted Southern Baptist mission leader R. Keith Parks, back from a two-week visit to China.

Chinese Christians, he discovered, also have something many believers in the West lack — a great spiritual depth born of hardship.

"I went to China to try to learn from them," Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reported upon his return. "I feel the Christians there have learned something about the Christian experience because of what they've been through that most of us have not learned."

Parks and his wife, Helen Jean, visited Christian leaders, pastors, and churches

in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Nanjing, Xian, and Beijing in late October and early November. Accompanying them were Charles Bryan, the Foreign Mission Board's head of overseas operations, and his wife, Martha.

Cooperative Services International Director Lewis Myers and his associates, Britt Towery and Jack Shelby, also traveled with the group, along with their wives.

Southern Baptists now relate to Chinese Christians through Cooperative Services International, an office formed in 1985 to help the denomination assist Christians and others in countries where missionaries do not work. Christian missionaries, including Southern Baptists, left China early in the Communist era.

China suffered during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, and Chinese Christians suffered with their nation. Radicals persecuted intellectuals, artists, religious people, and many other groups during those years. China now openly acknowledges the period was a national tragedy.

During their visit, Parks and his wife made a point of asking individual Christians which Bible passages had helped them most during the dark days. "I think without exception they all mentioned the 23rd Psalm," he said.

But Parks found most Christians eager to talk about today's freedoms rather than yesterday's repression.

"One of the most striking things is that none of them dwell on their difficulties during the Cultural Revolution," he observed. "Under prodding they'll tell you a little bit. They all emphasize the fact that China suffered. It wasn't just the Christians suffering. All intellectuals suffered — universities, seminaries, churches. It was not directed at Christians per se."

The fact that Christians did suffer along with millions of others, however,

accomplished something the church had long prayed for. "It caused the Christians to be identified with the Chinese people," Parks said.

Parks came away from China with several other impressions:

—Growth and activity — China as a whole seems to be preoccupied with construction and forward movement. In the churches, most of the pastors "would say (they had) baptized 1,100 or 1,300 or 1,500. Every one of them was reporting those kind of baptisms," along with multiple, overcrowded worship services, Bible studies, and prayer meetings. In the cities he visited, Parks saw Bibles and hymnals in the hands of most church members.

—Openness — He said he sensed no "restriction or surveillance" among Christians or in public.

—Urgency among Christians. "I was impressed with the sense of urgency they have in training leadership, recognizing that most of their leaders are old. They've opened 10 seminaries now with a total of 500 students, roughly. . . . They are preparing for the future of Christianity in China, and they're pretty excited about that future."

—Cooperation — Chinese Christians, he said, are open to working with overseas Christians who are "willing to accept them . . . work with them on the basis of a post-denominational, post-missionary stance . . . and respond to meeting needs that they define."

Reflecting on the "cumulative experience," Parks noted, "These people, who have been through the fire and have been refined, share the quality of their experience in such an unassuming way. On occasion it would just move us to tears."

Share Baptist and Reflector  
with a friend

## Tennessee WMU team fills role as 'Good Samaritans'

A Tennessee WMU leadership team, on a "routine" assignment to western Michigan, experienced a modern-day Good Samaritan encounter.

Although tempted to "pass by on the other side" like the priest and Levite of the parable in Luke's gospel, the Tennesseans instead played the Samaritan role.

During October, the team was on its way to lead conferences in Midland, Mich. A wrong turn threw them behind schedule and time for the meeting was quickly approaching.

Within a few blocks of Emmanuel Baptist Church where the meeting was to be held, the group heard a cry for help. An elderly lady had crawled onto her porch and was pleading for assistance, according to Carolyn Outland, a team member from Murfreesboro.

The first thought, "We can't stop; we'll be late," was overtaken by a realization of human need.

The woman, Roberta Glazener, was suffering from blood clots blocking her air passages. While some team members went after blankets, one called an ambulance and another held the woman in her arms until the paramedics arrived.

Neighbors gathered and watched as the team members ministered, witnessed to the woman, and prayed for her.

In the near freezing weather, one team member removed her coat and gave it to a neighbor who stood shivering in short sleeves. When the neighbor asked, "Why did you give me your coat?" the Tennessean explained that the group had come to Michigan to teach others to minister in Christ's name.

The other neighbors gathered as the group of Southerners told them of Christ's love.

Roberta Glazener died later that day, but the last words she heard were, "Trust in Jesus. We're praying for you," Outland reported.

"Through a modern-day Good Samaritan act, the doors of the neighborhood were opened for Emmanuel Baptist Church," said Outland. "The church has received many calls asking about the Christians who helped 'Mrs. Roberta.'"

"May God help us to daily recognize the 'Mrs. Robertas' who are physically and spiritually crying out for help," she continued. "Only then can Bold Mission Thrust goals become reality and the world be touched by the love of Christ."

**BOOK REVIEW**

By Michael Davis

**Finding one's personal theology**

God's Work of Salvation by Bert Dominy; Broadman Press; 170 pages.

One of the significant contributions of the "Layman's Library of Christian Doctrine" is the way it encourages theological thinking. It helps readers to develop a way of thinking about God and the great themes of the Bible that is their own.

The foreword states it in this manner, "Christians need to have a theology of their own, not one handed to them by someone else. The Library is written to help readers evaluate and form their own beliefs based on the Bible and on clear and persuasive statements of historic Christian positions. The aim of the series is to help laymen hammer out their own personal theology."

Such an approach would do much to improve the quality of thinking about what the Bible says. For these reasons, the eighth volume in this 16-volume series should be well received by readers, especially when it is written by a well-informed author.

Bert Dominy, associate professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written about the doctrine of salvation with theological clarity. The uniqueness of Christ's death, for example, is presented with practical insight and theological sensitivity. "Jesus faced something no one had ever faced before or would ever face again. He was not a philosopher dying for a principle; nor was He a martyr dying for a noble cause. He was the sinless Son of God facing death for the sins of the world. He was about to bear the sins of the world in His own body."

The importance of Christians being equipped to communicate their faith with historical perspective and theological sensitivity is vital to our Christian witness to the unsaved and our building up on one another in a way that leads to maturity in Christ.

How would a believer answer the following questions: Has human nature become so distorted by sin that we cannot free ourselves from its effects? If so, how did God work out a plan of deliverance from this condition? How would you explain to someone that Christ is your representative and your substitute? Could you tell another person the meaning of the virgin birth? What is the meaning of the Biblical teaching concerning Jesus' intercession for us? What is eternal life? Is eternal life more than living with God forever in heaven? What's in the future for Christians and the human race?

This book will help Christians to develop Biblical concepts and insights to address these kinds of questions.

Inquiring Christians will gain a better understanding of God's work of salvation in Bert Dominy's well-written book and of the meaning of their own thinking about salvation.



**C-N WELCOME WEEKEND** — Lillian Gardner (right), associate professor of physical education at Carson-Newman College, talks with two prospective students during a recent Welcome Weekend. More than 180 students and their parents were on campus for the event which included career and educational counseling by C-N faculty members. Carson-Newman's next Welcome Weekend will be Jan. 31.

**KNBC celebrates ethnic diversity**

LEAWOOD, Kan. (BP) — Kansas-Nebraska Southern Baptists celebrated their ethnic diversity during their 1986 annual meeting in Leawood Baptist Church.

The concluding session was given over to a "praise service" devoted to the changing face of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists. Featured were soloists, choirs, and speakers from among the 21 ethnic Southern Baptist congregations in the two-state convention.

During the session, all of the 1986 officers were re-elected. John Click, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan., is president.

The 319 messengers adopted a 1987 budget of \$3,049,380. The budget provides that 29 percent — an increase of 1 percent over last year — will be sent to support Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The convention approved resolutions voicing opposition to the Kansas state Constitutional amendment allowing pari-mutuel wagering, state-operated lotteries, and public consumption of alcoholic beverages; affirming the work of the Baptist Joint Committee; affirming the findings of the report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography; and affirming the presidents of the six Southern Baptist seminaries and the SBC Peace Committee in their efforts to produce harmony among Southern Baptists.

**Minnesota-Wisconsin convenes in harmony**

ROCHESTER, Minn. (BP) — Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptists enjoyed an event that was described by outgoing President Frank Hamby as "more like an evangelism conference than a business meeting" when they convened for their annual convention Nov. 13-15.

Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn., hosted the 204 convention messengers and visitors. Messengers approved a 1987 budget of \$1,438,683. The Minnesota-Wisconsin convention will pass on 25.25 percent of its budget to Southern Baptist Convention causes, a one-quarter percent increase over the 1986 designation.

Messengers elected Larry Faus, bivocational pastor of Gospel Baptist Church in Sparta, Wis., as president.

**Tower Grove rejects EPA funds due to church-state concerns**

ST. LOUIS (BP) — Tower Grove Christian School in St. Louis declined an offer of \$250,774 from the Environmental Protection Agency to be used for asbestos cleanup funds. The school is operated by Tower Grove Baptist Church.

Tower Grove Pastor Gary Taylor cited church-state concerns as the reason for refusing the aid.

The EPA offer, made under the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act of 1984, included a \$54,668 grant and a \$196,105 loan. Tower Grove Christian School was one of two parochial schools to be offered such funding in Missouri in the latest round of EPA grants.

Tower Grove's educational and worship facilities were evacuated earlier this year due to an asbestos hazard caused by rain damage. The asbestos was removed in July, and the congregation faced a bill of \$1.8-million for its removal and for repair work on the building.

The congregation was notified in late July that the grant and loan would be offered, Taylor said and church leaders were told to respond by Sept. 1 whether they would accept the aid.

Stipulations of accepting the funding were sent to the church. The church then sought the advice of experts on the separation of church and state. Copies of the "inclusions" were sent to the Christian Law Association of Cincinnati, Tower Grove's attorney, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, and Hugh Wamble, a professor of church history at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

All church-state experts who responded to the St. Louis congregation were in agreement it should not accept aid from a government agency.

"The pressure is on us financially," Taylor acknowledged, but he said the church is not looking back. About \$230,000 in cash and \$50,000 in pledges has been raised to date through the efforts of the congregation. The church currently is working out a loan for \$1.6-million from a local bank.

"There was no question that we had to turn it down," Taylor said of the government aid. "We feel God is going to provide. The debt is overwhelming. But somehow, the Lord will take care of us."

**Criswell serves in Bogota church**

Billy Matthew Criswell is serving as pastor of Bogota Baptist Church in Bogota.

He comes to the church from Parrish Chapel Baptist Church in Bonicord, where he was an active member and served as song leader. This is his first pastorate.

Criswell is a native of Walnut Ridge, Ark.

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**Tennessee/Venezuela Prayer Net Partnership**

—These missionaries are having birthdays: Bill Cashlon, general evangelist in Caracas, Dec. 11; Dave Grossman, newly appointed general evangelist, and Tom Watson, general evangelist in Caracas, Dec. 12; and Roy Worley, newly appointed general evangelist, Dec. 16.

—Missionary Hugh Redmon is working with a committee to plan a new camp facility in Venezuela and is attending a camp site planning conference in Mexico.

—Several women need helpers as they work in drug/alcohol prevention programs with teen-agers.

—The goal of \$75-million for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions will make the work of the missionaries possible in Venezuela and in the other 105 countries where missionaries serve.

# Alabama re-elects layman, continues 'term of 18 days'

MOBILE, Ala. (BP) — After serving a term of 18 days, layman Steve Tondera of Huntsville was re-elected president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention at its annual meeting in Mobile Nov. 18-19.

Tondera, who succeeded Lewis Marler of Jasper on Nov. 1 when Marler resigned because of health reasons, defeated Glenn Weekley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jasper.

An employee of NASA and immediate past chairman of deacons in the First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Tondera also is president of the Alabama Cattleman's Association. He is the first layman to serve as president since former Mobile Mayor Lambert Mims was elected in 1970.

In other business, the 1,658 messengers passed a record budget of \$24.7-million, of which 42.75 percent will go to Southern Baptist causes. This is an .26 percent increase over last year.

Several building programs dominated the business sessions, and one of them drew particularly heavy fire from the messengers.

Bill Butler, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dora, questioned Samford University's sale and development of a 180-acre tract of land near its campus because he said the sale was executed without the convention's approval.

Thomas Cortis, president of Samford, defended the sale and another messenger moved that the convention approve the action of the Samford trustees. A standing vote was so close that a written ballot was taken, finally affirming the trustees' decision to develop the property, 420 to 371.

Two other building plans received ap-

proval: the state convention's purchase of a \$1-million, 14-acre tract in Montgomery as a potential site for a new state office building, and the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers' request for a \$1.7-million loan from the federal department of Housing and Urban Development in order to build a 50-unit retirement home in Montgomery County.

The only resolution to spark debate was one opposing the "indoctrination of humanism" in the public schools.

Mobile was the site of a recent federal court case in which more than 600 parents and teachers sued the state board of education for approving textbooks that they said omitted historical references to Christianity and advanced the religion of secular humanism. Mobile Baptists were parties on both sides of the case, which is awaiting a verdict.

The resolution at the convention prompted an amendment that the term "secular humanism" replace "humanism." Messengers refused to adopt that change but did agree to "request" rather than "instruct" the Alabama Baptist Christian Life and Public Affairs Commission publicly to oppose the teaching of humanism in the commission's dealings with state officials and agencies.

## Concord association honors retired DOM

Thomas E. Bryant Jr., director of missions of Concord Baptist Association who retired Sept. 30, was honored by the association at the recent annual meeting in Murfreesboro for his 24 years of service.

Meeting Oct. 23-24 at First Baptist Church and Westwood Baptist Church, the messengers voted to dedicate the annual minutes to Bryant.

The officers for 1986-87 were elected. Carl Allen, moderator and a member of Third Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, was succeeded by Don Edwards, pastor of Southeast Baptist Church in Murfreesboro. Other officers include Russell Richardson, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, assistant moderator; Horace Welchance, a member of First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, treasurer; and Brenda Hopper, a member of First Baptist Church in Smyrna, clerk.

The 1987 meeting will be held at Belle Aire Baptist Church in Murfreesboro on Oct. 22 and Barfield Baptist Church in Murfreesboro on Oct. 23.

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**SAFETY BELT SUNDAY** — Laurie Wright commends an arriving family at Central Baptist Church in Fountain City for wearing their safety belts. The adult Sunday School class sponsored Safety Belt Sunday on Oct. 19 at the Knoxville church.

## Utah-Idaho looks at hosting SBC

SALT LAKE CITY (BP) — The Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention seated messengers from five new churches, voted to consider the possibility of hosting the Southern Baptist Convention, adopted a record budget, and re-elected its president during the convention's annual meeting Nov. 11-12 in Salt Lake City.

Of the five new churches accepted into the fellowship, one is from Oregon, two are from Idaho, and two are from Utah. In addition, one church announced it had voted to disaffiliate with the convention for doctrinal reasons. The number of churches in the convention now is 94. Those churches were represented by 166 messengers.

A motion proposing that the Utah-Idaho convention host the SBC annual meeting in Salt Lake City was referred to the Utah-Idaho convention's Executive Committee. The motion was presented by Bailey Anderson, associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Vernal, Utah, who said he believes the convention

would be a good witness in the area and it would offer good exposure to pioneer Southern Baptist mission work.

In other business, messengers adopted a record 1987 budget of \$1,489,668, which reflects a 7 percent increase over the previous budget. Twenty-one percent of the budget will support SBC Cooperative Program causes.

Andy Hornbaker, pastor of Holladay Baptist Church in Salt Lake City, was re-elected convention president.

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## Northern Plains votes to decrease '87 budget

MINOT, N.D. (BP) — About 110 Southern Baptists from Montana and North and South Dakota re-elected their president and approved a budget decrease during the annual meeting of the Northern Plains Baptist Convention Oct. 24-25 at North Hill Baptist Church in Minot, N.D.

Gordon "Skip" Dean, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Rapid City, S.D., was chosen to serve another one-year term as president.

Feeling the pressure of a depressed agricultural economy, messengers adopted a \$1,117,250 budget for 1987, which reflects a 7.5 percent decrease from the current budget. Convention leaders explained the budget reduction is designed to help bring the budget in line with reasonable expectations for revenue. The convention currently is facing a 14 percent budget deficit. The new budget is 6.5 percent higher than income on the 1986 budget.

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**BIBLE BOOK SERIES**  
Lesson for Dec. 14

# A controversial healing

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

Basic Passage: John 9:1-41  
Focal Passages: John 9:4-7, 18-25, 35-38

Some years ago a minister told the story of a man who worked for the owner of a service station in a small town. He was not very intelligent but a hard working and devoted employee.



Bush

During a tent revival, he had a profession of faith. His first response the next morning was to tell his employer about his salvation experience and urge his boss to accept Christ also. The employer did not want to bother with Christianity so he told the employee he was not interested.

Later in the day, the concerned new Christian approached his friend again. Again the man rebuffed him and the employee replied, "Well just go on to hell and see if I care!"

Some of the men hanging around the station heard this and laughed. But, the more the owner thought about it, the more his mind and soul were bothered. He knew his employee cared for him and he sensed the intensity of his new found faith. Of course he did not want to go to hell and neither did he want to miss out on the life-transforming faith evidenced by his friend.

As someone has said, "His divine curiosity had been sparked." That evening, he inquired of the new Christian to tell him more about how to become saved. He too professed faith in Christ.

The witnessing tactic of the man left something to be desired. But his sincere concern for the spiritual welfare of his friend is commendable. Even though his new Christian faith was limited in profound theological content, it was a genuine faith. He had responded to the Spirit

of God as best he knew how and he wanted his friend to have the same life-changing experience.

In the Bible study this week, we see the innocent faith of a healed blind man in conflict with religious philosophy, religious tradition, an organized system, and human reason. All he knew was that his lifetime of darkness had changed to sight, to light (John 9:25). Apparently as he thought further about the miracle, who had performed the miracle, and as he debated with the religious establishment, his experience grew into a true belief. Later when Jesus asked him if he believed He was the Son of Man, he indicated his belief and literally kissed Jesus' hand and fell prostrate on the ground. This is what the word "worshiped" literally implies (John 9:35-38).

Back in 1917, the man who was then president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary wrote a book, *The Life In Christ*. In the chapter entitled, "The Testimony of Christian Experience," based on John 9:25, E. Y. Mullins emphasized the irrefutable power of the gospel that cannot be overcome as revealed in a genuine Christian experience. He said that Christian experience, the experience of regeneration and conversion through Christian agencies, has "evidential value in several directions."

First, "It is the supplemental link to complete philosophy. Philosophy is man reaching up towards God. Christian experience is God reaching down to man . . . Men fail to find the secrets of the world until God and God's dealings with men are considered."

Second, "Christian experience sheds light on all the unique claims of Christianity . . . Christ's place in Christian experience is the supreme matter."

Third, "Christian experience transfers the whole problem of Christian evidence to the sphere of practical life . . . Christianity does not say, "Renounce reason," but only waive your speculative difficulties in the interest of your moral welfare."

The Pharisees would not "waive" or give up their ignorance, in their spiritual blindness. Spiritual blindness is a choice with moral and eternal consequences. Physical healing is marvelous, without doubt, but spiritual healing is phenomenal because it possesses eternal life.

**UNIFORM LESSON SERIES**  
Lesson for Dec. 14

# From preaching to writing

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

Basic Passages: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30-31; 1 John 1:1-4  
Focal Passages: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30-31; 1 John 1:1-4

This is the second of three lessons which focus on three basics of our faith — the church, the Bible, and the new birth.

For centuries, the reading and study of Old Testament scrolls had been an important part of the synagogue agenda. The early Christians continued — for a period of time — to attend synagogues. When these believers began to worship separately from the Jews, they carried with them a love for God's Word.

A survey of the New Testament would indicate that the gatherings of believers also centered on Jesus Christ — His Messiahship, His ministry, and especially His resurrection.

**The "what" of the writings**  
(1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

Soon after Christ's resurrection, the gospel was spread by testimonies of the believers. They went "everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4). The travels of the apostles, especially Paul, led to the establishment of churches throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy.

In order to clarify, confirm, and correct the gospel messages as practiced in these churches, the Holy Spirit led Paul and others to write letters to these congregations. By the middle of the first century, several of these epistles (which are now a part of our Bible) had been written.

Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church to challenge untrue teachings which had risen in that congregation. Some were declaring that there was no resurrection of believers.

This passage reminds and reaffirms what Paul had preached to them during an earlier visit. His epistle and his preaching were the same (v.1). That gospel had been received and had brought salvation to the hearers (vv.1-2).

The gospel founded on Christ's resur-

rection was primary in Paul's preaching (v.3, "first of all"). He emphasized Christ's redemptive act: "Christ died for our sins," was buried, and rose from the grave, fulfilling Old Testament Scripture (vv.3-4).

The resurrection was a verified fact, Paul asserts, declaring that the living Christ had been seen by many people (vv.5-8).

The "how" of the writings (Luke 1:1-4) In the introduction to his gospel, Luke relates how he came to write this inspiring account of Jesus' life.

Luke apparently was not one of the early believers. The first indication of his involvement is found in Acts 16:10 when he uses the pronoun "we." This beloved physician not only traveled with Paul, but he was open to God's leadership to investigate and to write the gospel which bears his name and the Book of Acts.

I interpret Luke's statement that he had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first" (v.3) as an affirmation that God had revealed total knowledge to him. God obviously led Luke to find and to record God's truth, so that it could be preserved for all ages.

Luke's pen was used by God to share "perfect understanding" so that all can "know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (v.4).

The "why" of the writings (John 20:30-31)

God used four different individuals from varied backgrounds to record the gospel. Through these inspired writings, we learn much about Jesus Christ — although these accounts are not complete biographies. "There were also many other things which Jesus did" (John 21:25), so we must assume that God determined the content to fulfill His purpose.

The purpose of the gospels as God inspired them to be written is centered in the word "believe." Note John's use of this word in our passage. "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (v.31, New International Version).

Near the end of the first century, John was led to write further about the "why" of the gospel. In 1 John 1:1-4, he shares his own personal relationship with Jesus during His physical life on this earth.

This sharing by John was for two purposes: (1) that we might have fellowship with each other around the Person of Jesus Christ, and (2) that our joy in Christ might be full and complete.

God in His wisdom knew that believers in all ages needed to have His truly reliable written Word on which to base our beliefs, to study continually, and to guide our discipleship. The Bible is God's continuing gift to us. We honor it, because God uses His Word to reveal the "Who" of the gospel — our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Hixson congregation calls associate pastor as pastor

On Nov. 16, Middle Valley Baptist Church, Hixson, called Ben Mitchell as pastor. He has been serving as associate pastor of the church for two years.

Mitchell is a graduate of Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Miss., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He has served as pastor of churches in Mississippi, Texas, and Kentucky, as well as Tennessee.

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LIFE AND WORK SERIES

Lesson for Dec. 14

# God's blessing for mission

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

Basic Passage: Genesis 11:24 to 12:9  
Focal Passage: Genesis 12:1-9

Most Old Testament scholars date Abraham somewhere between 2000 and 1800 B.C.

One reason, though not the only, is that they identify Amraphel (Genesis 14:1) with Hammurabi, great codifier of ancient Eastern laws. Customs of Abraham's day, as recorded in Genesis, are consistent with facts known from other sources about life in this general period.



Wood

We have no reason to doubt the historicity of the events recorded in his life, including the act of faith by which he left his home in Ur and headed westward at God's command.

Call and promise (12:1-3)

By the time of Abraham, the post-flood world was once more a cesspool of sin. Idolatry had become rampant, and the situation was approaching, in corruption, the times of Noah. God had promised never to destroy the world again by water. The disciplinary action had not changed people's nature. The imagination of their thoughts was still continually evil.

What would God do? He started to implement His plan of redemption which was spoken of in veiled terms after Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3:15).

Choosing Abraham as the person to begin a group of people, He had a twofold goal for them. First, they would, by example, teach the world moral and ethical monotheism — the belief in one God Who was holy and righteous in character. Second, through them, a Saviour would come.

The promise God made to Abraham, when He called him to go into new land where he could accomplish the divine purpose for his life, had two main thrusts. Abraham was to be a blessing. The "thou shalt be a blessing" is a Hebrew imperative — "be thou a blessing." Further, God promised that through Abraham all the nations would be blessed. The emphasis was not on material blessings to Abraham's descendants but on the spiritual contribution they would make to the world.

Obedience (12:4-5)

By comparing Stephen's speech (Acts 7:2-4) with the Genesis account, we see that Abraham had two calls. First, God called him to leave Ur, which he did, but he then settled with the family at Haran for a period of time. After his father's death, he received another call. This time God sent him on to Canaan.

Both times Abraham did exactly what God said. Of all the virtues a life can possess, obedience stands high on the

list. One cannot be a good leader without learning, first of all, to be a good follower. This includes obeying the commands of a superior. An ancient philosopher called obedience "the mother of success and the wife of safety." The highest freedom in the world is that of learning to obey the rules. The stars in their orbits are free because they follow the courses set for them.

Another wise man said, "He who takes his orders gladly, escapes the bitterest part of slavery — doing what one does not want to do. The man who does something under orders is not unhappy; he is

unhappy who does something against his will."

Abraham, like a later saint, would have said, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Psalm 40:8). He would have agreed with the philosophy of George Macdonald, who testified that he found "doing the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about His plans."

Renewed promise and worship (12:6-9)

Traveling in a strange land, Abraham needed constant assurance. God gave it in the form of a further explanation of the promise to him. Though pagan tribes inhabited Canaan, God promised it to Abraham's seed. Nearly 500 years passed before 2-million of his descendants, under Joshua's leadership, took over the land.

The ultimate fulfillment of God's promise came, however, when Abraham's greatest seed, Jesus Christ, came into the world. Paul made much of this when he wrote, "Now to Abraham and

his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

To celebrate, Abraham poured out his heart in adoration by worshiping shortly after entering the land God chose as the arena in which He would work out His redemptive program. Though he did not understand all of the future details, he rejoiced to be a part of God's mission.

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# Missionaries to Lebanon gain credibility



**COMMITTED TO STAY** — "It looks foolish, in terms of the world, for an American to be in Lebanon," Frances Fuller admits, adding, "We think God knows what He's doing, and we think He's telling us to stay, to hang on."

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist Missionary Frances Fuller knows a young man in Lebanon who once aspired to be a Greek Orthodox priest.

Instead, he became a killer, a soldier in one of the militias fueling Lebanon's 11-year civil war. He is in his mid-20s, yet he often looks as though he is 40.

"When I take my gun and go to fight," he once told Fuller, "I can't ask God to go with me."

Lebanon's tragedy is not reflected solely in death tolls and estimates of property destruction, Fuller observed. Young people in Lebanon have lost "the last thing any generation can afford to lose. They have lost the capacity to dream."

Fuller, director of the Arab Baptist Publication Center in Beirut for the last 16 years, was in Richmond, Va., to address a recent Missions Education Council meeting attended by representatives of five Southern Baptist agencies. Her husband, Wayne, manages the publication center's business affairs.

Southern Baptist missionaries, who are among the few Americans still in Lebanon, have worked in the country since 1948. Their perseverance has yielded "a credibility that we didn't have before," said Fuller, of Wynne, Ark.

When numerous American diplomats left Lebanon and American businessmen left — even those in arms sales — "and when we endured everything with the Lebanese, when we got shot at by snipers, got caught in crossfire and got shelled, and when we risked kidnapping, we began to realize that people were responding to us in a very different way," she explained.

"If we needed to say to a person, 'God loves you,' there was credibility. For some people, we were like the evidence that God loves them."

"The Lebanese are not terrorists," she noted. "The population as a whole is a victim of terrorism," of various warring militias. And the Lebanese "feel very deserted by the world, never more than right now."

When an American or European is kidnapped in Lebanon, for example, newspapers across the world report the story. "But for every foreigner who's kidnapped, there are probably 2,000 Lebanese who are kidnapped," Fuller said. Some are detained temporarily; some are beaten or murdered. It has been a method of warfare since the civil war's outset, she said.

The Lebanese in general "have become afraid of one another. They feel they must have their own turf where somebody else can't come in and kill them," Fuller said.

"The young adults of Lebanon today didn't have any youth," she continued. "They had to grow up overnight. Almost everything they thought they could believe in and count on, they saw crumble. Many young men with high ideals and ambitions became fighters, killers, participated in massacres."

Evangelicals have not been immune to tragedy.

"I know a young woman ... an evangelical ... whose wedding invitations were already printed when her fiance was blown apart by a shell," Fuller said.

In the late '70s, Jameel Safoury, a Baptist layman known for his hearty witness to Muslims, was kidnapped and murdered by mutilation.

Even so, Baptists and other evangelicals have "something indestructible which cannot be blown up by a bomb."

They have joy. Fuller quoted one new believer's observation, "The people in the church don't have the dead eyes of people in the world."

"I have seen so many people whose faces were literally transformed when they became believers," Fuller said. Friends of one convert began to ask, "What's Maria doing that's different? She's so pretty these days."

Without being told to, they share their new faith with family and friends, knowing they may get a range of negative reactions. To new believers, however, it is akin to announcing marriage plans or some other good fortune, Fuller said.

Various militiamen, including one once-prominent militiaman now active in Baptist work, have stopped fighting after turning to Christ, Fuller said. "The attitude of people in our churches is that

war is something so vicious and so insane as to not be something a Christian can do."

Worship services in the seven Baptist churches in Beirut are another reflection of joy. They continue even when artillery exchanges shake the walls. "You never hear any halfhearted singing. They lift the roof," Fuller said. "They tend to choose the very joyous songs. You'd have to get as low as we've gotten to get as high as we get."

Fuller said she really has not battled depression in Lebanon, but rather "symptoms of stress. I have often been afraid."

Still, "we don't want anybody to feel sorry for us ever. There's never a day when we feel sorry for ourselves. We have so much spiritual reward" and "a closeness to people" compared to before the civil war when there was "no visible sacrifice in living in Lebanon" and few people "cared if we came or went."

"We think God wants to save Lebanon," Fuller said. "We don't think Lebanon is going to be lost as a base for Christian missions."

She said she believes God is working in Lebanon because of its religious freedom and the competence of Lebanese Baptists in helping produce Christian publications, broadcasts, and other evangelistic ministries for the Arab world.

Now is "exactly the right time," Fuller added, to send additional missionaries to Lebanon. She said Southern Baptists must never be ashamed if the Lebanese someday ask Americans, "Where were you when we needed you?"

## W. Va. Baptists change leaders

MORGANTOWN, W. Va. (BP) — West Virginia Baptists said goodbye to one executive director and greeted another at their annual meeting Nov. 7-8 at Calvary Baptist Church in Morgantown.

Messengers bid farewell to Thomas E. Halsell, who has been executive secretary of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists for seven years. He will retire Dec. 31. Messengers officially greeted Thomas A. Kinchen, who has been a professor at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, who will take over the executive position Jan. 1.

The convention adopted a record budget of \$1,519,076, of which West Virginia congregations will contribute \$678,965. West Virginia Baptists will contribute 25 percent of the gifts from state convention congregations — \$169,771 — to Southern Baptist Convention causes. The 25 percent is up 1 percent from CP contributions a year ago.

During the meeting, messengers adopted a resolution affirming the sanctity of human life and opposing abortion for any cause except to protect the life of the mother.

Messengers also adopted a resolution expressing strong opposition to any form of gambling.

A third resolution expressed prayerful support for government leaders, in the light of many conflicts going on in the world, as they deal with issues affecting the moral condition of the country.

Lawton Searcy, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Huntington, was elected president of the convention in a close run-off with Odel Clay, pastor of East Williamson Baptist Church of Williamson. Clay was then elected first vice-president.

## Ralph Samples returns to hometown as pastor

Ralph Samples recently returned to his hometown of Newport to serve as pastor of Point Pleasant Baptist Church.

He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Previous pastorates include Bibles Chapel Baptist Church, Midway; Warrensburg Baptist Church, Mohawk; English Baptist Church in Kentucky; and Bethany Baptist Church, Crothersville, Ind.

## Oklahoma ponders 50-50 giving split

BETHANY, Okla. (BP) — Messengers to the 81st annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma instructed their Executive Board to restudy the state convention's 50-50 division of Cooperative Program funds with the national Southern Baptist Convention.

Messengers also affirmed a May action by the Executive Board in electing William G. Tanner as executive director-treasurer of the BGCOC, succeeding Joe Ingram, who retired. Tanner, the seventh man to serve in the convention's top staff position, was elected by acclamation during the convention at Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany. An installation service followed immediately.

The 1,324 messengers re-elected Rod Masteller, pastor of Putnam City Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, as president. He was elected first vice-president last year but ascended to the presidency when Wendell Estep moved to South Carolina.

Messengers adopted a 1987 budget of \$17,746,300, the same amount as the 1986 budget and virtually the same as 1985. The 1987 budget features the same 50-50 division of gifts between state causes and the worldwide missionary, evangelistic, and educational ministries of the SBC.

Charles Graves, pastor of Nichols Hills Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, moved for the Cooperative Program study "to prevent severe negative impact" on state agencies, programs, and institutions.

Graves, chairman of the Oklahoma Baptist University board of trustees, said he fears the "economic difficulties confronting the state" and the resultant "negative impact" on church budgets could cause an "imbalance" in giving which would endanger state missions.

His motion authorizes the Executive Board "to make necessary adjustments in Cooperative Program allocations" if its study determines such a change is necessary. The motion passed about 70 to 30 on a standing vote.

Messengers also adopted resolutions opposing a state lottery and supporting the conclusions of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.

## Arizona displays cooperative spirit

PHOENIX (BP) — Messengers to the annual meeting of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention responded to the meeting's theme, "Cooperation ... The Baptist Way," by electing four officers by acclamation and adopting 11 resolutions with no debate.

Meeting in North Phoenix Baptist Church, the 534 messengers adopted a \$5.16-million budget for 1987, a 6.5 percent increase over the current year. The percentage of Arizona Cooperative Program funds sent on to the Southern Baptist Convention will increase one-half percent to 28 percent.

George Webb, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Holbrook, was elected president.

Resolutions condemned drug and alcohol abuse, opposed pornography, and addressed sex education and adolescent pregnancy. Messengers adopted a resolution criticizing "adolescent sex education programs taught from a secular humanistic viewpoint" and calling for families and churches "to educate children about spiritual insights and Christian understanding of sexuality."

An item originally presented as a resolution was referred by the Order of Business Committee to the state Executive Board without discussion by the messengers. Robert S. Campbell, pastor of Gila Bend First Southern Baptist Church, proposed that "beginning with fiscal 1988, the convention operating budget shall increase by only the dollar amount equal to that spent in the field on missions."

Messengers unanimously approved a Constitutional amendment merging the Arizona Executive Board's six standing committees into four in order to more evenly distribute the work load.