

Baptist and Reflector

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News journal of Tennessee Baptist Convention

Executive Board authorizes called meeting

At its regular meeting last week, the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention approved graduate programs in education for both Carson-Newman College and Belmont College; increased the debt ceiling for Baptist Health System of East Tennessee by \$5-million to construct a parking garage; and authorized a special called meeting to hear recommendations from the Task Force.

The board met Dec. 11-12 at the Executive Board Building in Brentwood.

In other actions, the Executive Board approved up to \$25,000 for use by its

public affairs and Christian life committee in supporting moral concerns; heard of plans for a Special Friends Camp Aug. 10-14 at Camp Carson; and divided itself into seven working committees.

Without discussion or opposition, the board approved a recommendation from its education committee that master's degree programs in education be allowed at both Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and Belmont College, Nashville.

In November 1985, messengers to the Tennessee Baptist Convention amended program statements for the three TBC

colleges to allow "for professional service degrees at the master's level in education and business, subject to Executive Board approval of specific plans submitted by the institutions."

According to the state convention vote, graduate programs will not be approved unless these degrees "meet appropriate standards of quality, financial support, and denominational service."

Carson-Newman College will offer two degrees: master in education and master of arts in teaching, beginning in June 1987. Financed by tuition, foundation gifts, endowment income, and private

gifts, the new program will be composed primarily of evening and summer courses.

College officials project an initial enrollment of 30 students.

Belmont College will offer a master's degree in education, beginning in the summer of 1987. The program will be financed by tuition and foundation support.

Belmont College began a graduate program in business administration last fall, after approval by the Executive Board at its May 6 meeting.

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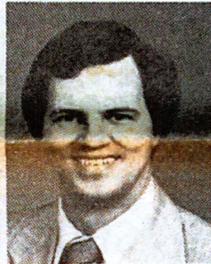
Evangelism conference features Jerry Clower

The annual Tennessee Baptist Evangelism Conference is slated for Jan. 19-20 in Nashville at Belmont Heights Baptist Church, with a concluding session especially for laypersons at the Grand Ole Opry House at Opryland. "The Power of God's Spirit" is the theme.

Jerry Clower, Baptist humorist from Yazoo City, Miss.; Ray E. Roberts, second vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention from Asheville, N.C.; Dean Nolan Finley, evangelism consultant, Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Ga.; Joel C. Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas; and Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., are featured speakers.



Jackson



Finley



Gregory



Roberts



Clower

Other messages will be presented by Esther Burroughs, evangelism consultant with women, Home Mission Board; Jerry Oakley, pastor of Springfield Bap-

tist Church, Springfield, and president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; Charles "Toonie" Cash, evangelist from Johnson City; and Jimmy Terry, pastor of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksville.

Roberts will present a Bible study in all of the sessions except the Tuesday night session at the Grand Ole Opry House, which will feature Clower giving his testimony and Nashville's Park Avenue Baptist Church choir.

Clower, who is a deacon at First Baptist Church in Yazoo City, a member of the Gideon organization, and a lay preacher, has been named "Country Comic of the Year" for nine consecutive

years. He has made 16 albums, written two books, co-hosted the TV show, "Nashville On The Road," and currently does commercials for radio and TV.

The Bible study leader, Roberts, has been a pastor in North Carolina and Kentucky, and done mission work which included the Crusade of Americas. Roberts was a missionary in Ohio and became the first executive secretary of Ohio's convention, where he served from 1954-1980.

Finley, a national evangelism consultant for the Home Mission Board, has been a youth and campus minister, and a special consultant for national student ministries for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Finley also has been a high school, college, and seminary teacher, and a missions worker.

Before becoming pastor in Fort Worth, Joel C. Gregory was assistant professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary there. He was pastor of Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Emmanuel Baptist Church in Waco, and other churches in Texas. He speaks in numerous Baptist meetings, has been second vice-president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and a member of the SBC Committee on Resolutions.

Richard Jackson has served as president of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, and has been a pastor in churches in Texas before serving the Phoenix church, where he began in 1967.

Special music in all of the sessions will be provided by Jim McNiell, gospel concert artist from St. Louis, Mo.; Verlena

(Continued on page 2)

Statistical projections show slow progress in SBC work

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE (BP)— Statistical projections for Southern Baptists this year offer encouragement for continuing progress, but programs and contributions are not increasing as boldly as might be hoped.

The most noteworthy good news for 1985-1986 is baptisms, which are projected to post an increase of 3.8 percent, or 13,341, to an estimated total of 364,412. This increase comes on the heels of three consecutive years of decreases from a 1982 high of 411,000.

Information was compiled by the research services department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, preliminarily based upon responses to the denominations uniform church letter, which contains statistical information about Southern Baptist churches for the period from Oct. 1, 1985, through Sept. 30, 1986.

Although total receipts in Southern Baptist churches topped \$4-billion for the first time in 1985-86, mission expenditures are projected to have the smallest percentage increase, 4.1 percent, since 1970.

Church membership is projected to increase by 0.9 percent, or 130,378, to a new total of 14,616,781. This compares to a 1.0 percent in 1984-85 and consecutive increases for 60 years.

(Continued on page 2)

Estimated 1986 SBC statistics				
	1985 Total	Estimated 1986 Total	Estimated Numerical Change	Estimated 1985-86 % Change
Baptisms	351,071	364,412	13,341	3.8
Church membership	14,486,403	14,616,781	130,378	0.9
Ongoing Sunday School enrollment	7,960,796	7,952,835	-7,961	-0.1
Church training enrollment	1,969,038	1,965,100	-3,938	-0.2
Ongoing church music enrollment	1,677,738	1,726,392	48,654	2.9
Ongoing WMU enrollment	1,165,240	1,186,214	20,974	1.8
Ongoing Brotherhood enrollment	573,740	569,150	-4,590	-0.8
Mission expenditures	\$610,668,080	\$635,705,471	\$25,037,391	4.1
Total receipts	\$3,886,048,305	\$4,119,211,203	\$233,162,898	6.0

TBC Executive Board . . .

(Continued from page 1)

The Executive Board approved a request by Baptist Health System of East Tennessee to increase its debt limit by \$5-million to construct a parking garage at its Knoxville facility. The garage will provide about 750 parking spaces and will be financed by the issuing of Industrial Revenue Bonds.

The debt will be paid off in 20 years from parking fees.

The board heard its third report from James Porch, chairman of the Program, Personnel, and Planning Task Force, which was created by the board in September 1985.

Porch said that the Task Force is in the process of finalizing recommendations for organizational changes and requested that a special called meeting be held by the Executive Board to consider the Task Force's recommendations.

In approving the request, the board authorized its president, Marshall Gupton, to call the special meeting. The board members amended the request to ask that recommendations be received by them seven days prior to the called meeting.

Porch said that this would be done, but he urged discretion in making judgments until the called meeting. "Please give us the opportunity to explain 'why,' since some of these will take a lot of time."

The Task Force chairman said that it will probably be after April 1, before the recommendations are ready.

In other actions, the Executive Board approved up to \$25,000 for use by the public affairs and Christian life committee "to fund its efforts in regard to parimutuel gambling, lotteries, the taxation of church property, political action committees, DUI legislation, and other issues of concern to Tennessee Baptists."

The board was told that an opportunity had occurred to hold a Special Friends Camp for retarded adults Aug. 10-14, 1987, at Camp Carson. Because of previous camp schedules, this possibility was not available until 1988.

On Dec. 11, the administrative committee had approved funding of the 1987 camp from the general fund.

On recommendation from a nominating committee, the Executive Board voted to divide itself into seven standing committees. A list of the committees is

in print on page nine of this issue of the Baptist and Reflector.

The board also was told that 10 copies of a 16MM film of the new visual, "Tennessee Baptist Convention: Together on Mission" would be produced. A videotape edition has been produced and distributed to associational offices.

The board was informed by Gerald Stow, executive director of Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, that the TBCH trustees' executive committee had agreed to withdraw the earlier request for permission to conduct a fund drive for endowment. The request had been presented to the Executive Board in September, and the board members had voted to delay action on the request until its December meeting.

Pete Ford, interim executive director for Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes, reported that TBAH directors were considering two ways of avoiding possible limitations to religious activities at the Baptist Health Care Center in Lenoir City.

Ford said that considerations include: (1) refinancing the indebtedness, or (2) constructing a chapel on a two-acre tract adjoining the facility which TBAH had purchased earlier.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Executive Board will be May 5 in Brentwood.

ACTS to feature Carson-Newman

JEFFERSON CITY — The NAIA football championship game Dec. 20 will be the first live nationwide sports event telecast on the ACTS television network, operated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Carson-Newman College will play Cameron University of Lawton, Okla., for the football championship of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

The telecast will begin at 1 p.m. EST on the ACTS network, with kickoff slated for 1:05 p.m.

Carson-Newman was 1983 NAIA football champion and 1984 co-champions.

Saturday's event is believed to be the first time that a national football championship game has been held in the state.



WORK ANNIVERSARIES — Employees of the TBC who were recognized for work anniversaries at last week's Executive Board meeting were (from left, front row) Sue Gill, Evelyn Smith, (back row) Al Shackleford, Eleanor Yarborough, and Vern Powers.

Board honors employees on service anniversaries

Five employees of the Executive Board — with a total of 50 years of service — were recognized for their service to the board during its Dec. 11 meeting in Brentwood.

The employees were honored on their work anniversaries and were presented service pins.

Vern Powers, director of protection plans, was recognized for 15 years of service in that position.

Receiving 10-year service pins were: — Sue Gill, administrative secretary in the Brotherhood department. She previously served in the student department.

Gill has announced her plans to retire at the end of December;

— Evelyn Smith, administrative secretary in the church-ministers information office; and

— Al Shackleford, editor of the Baptist and Reflector.

Recognized for five years of service was Eleanor Yarborough, program associate in the media ministries department.

Executive Board employees are presented service pins at five-year intervals of Executive Board employment.

Statistics show progress . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Sunday School, the largest program of the denomination, is projected to decrease by 0.1 percent, or 7,961, to a new total of 7,952,835. This predicted loss follows a gain of more than 100,000 last year and a total of six consecutive years of increases.

Church training enrollment is projected to decrease by 0.2 percent, or 3,938, to a new total of 1,965,100. Church training has registered a net gain of 12.2 percent over the last seven years, which include three losses totaling 1.1 percent and four gains of 13.4 percent.

The projected losses for Sunday School and church training of 0.1 and 0.2 percent, respectively, are within the normal statistical sampling error of three- to four-tenths of 1 percent. If the change increases when the final statistical report is released in February 1987, the Sunday School and church training totals could reflect gains instead of losses for the year.

The program of church music is projected to have its 21st consecutive increase, with a 2.9 percent, or 48,654, gain to a new enrollment of 1,726,392. The 1984-85 increase was 0.6 percent.

Enrollment in Woman's Missionary Union is predicted to gain 1.8 percent, or 20,974, to a new total of 1,186,214. This follows a 0.4 percent loss, one of two consecutive losses.

Brotherhood enrollment is projected to drop by 0.8 percent, or 4,590, for 1986, bringing the total to 569,150. Brotherhood previously had a 0.9 percent increase, which was one of seven consecutive in-

creases for the organization of Baptist men and boys.

The projected mission expenditures increase of 4.1 percent, or more than \$25-million, makes the 1985-86 total \$635,705,471. Annual percentage increases for mission expenditures have been between 7 and 10 percent for the last 14 years, including a 7.5 percent increase in 1984-85.

Total receipts in the SBC are expected to go over \$4-billion for the first time — with the second consecutive 0.6 percent, or \$233-million, increase predicted — to a new total of \$4,119,211,203. Southern Baptists have not suffered a decrease in total receipts since the early 1930s.

Projections for 1986 are based on information from 29,325 Southern Baptist Uniform Church Letters received in the research services department.

Clower . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Davidson, pianist from Arnold, Mo.; and Ethel R. Lunn, organist from Nashville. The Tennessee Baptist Chorale will be led by Julian Suggs, director of TBC's church music department; and Gary Rice, music evangelist from Johnson City, also will present music.

Forrest "Woody" Watkins, TBC's evangelist director, announced that the meeting is for any Tennessee Baptist who wishes to attend.

The Monday sessions begin at 2 and 6:25 p.m. On Tuesday they start at 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. and the session at the Opry House begins at 6:45 p.m.



APPRECIATION FOR GIFT — On behalf of the Executive Board, Marshall Gupton (left) expresses appreciation to Leamon and Anita Bridges for giving two acres of property in Oak Ridge. The property, located adjacent to the branch campus of Roane State Community College and State Tech, will be the site for a student center. Part-time student director at the school is Ruth Lyon (second from left).

Tennesseans prepare for overseas service

RICHMOND, Va. — Four couples with Tennessee ties were among 43 people named as missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Dec. 9 at Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church, Richmond, Va.

In addition, one Tennessee couple was reappointed as missionaries.

Mr. and Mrs. John R. Martz will live in Namibia (South West Africa), where he will start and develop churches and they will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. Martz currently is pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Townsend.

A native of Alabama, Martz is a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He has been pastor of churches in Alabama and Kentucky.

Also a native of Alabama, Mrs. Martz, the former Sarah Mays, expects to receive the bachelor of science degree from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, this month. She has been a data processing supervisor in Birmingham and a substitute teacher in Maryville.

The Martzes have two children: John Richard Jr., born in 1968; and Mary Elizabeth, 1973.

Mr. and Mrs. Larry J. Murphy will live in Togo, where he will start and develop churches and they will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. He currently is pastor of Sweat Memorial Baptist Church, Waycross, Ga.

Born in Texas, Murphy also lived in Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Michigan, and Arkansas while growing up. He is a graduate of Lake City Community College, Lake City, Fla.; the University of



Mr. and Mrs. Martz Mr. and Mrs. Murphy Mr. and Mrs. Rice Mr. and Mrs. Rutledge Mr. and Mrs. Fitts

Arkansas, Fayetteville; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Born in Nashville, Mrs. Murphy, the former Janet Harris, also lived in Arkansas while growing up. She has been a salesclerk in Fort Worth and a secretary in Dallas. She attended the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

The Murphys have one child, Larry John Jr., born in 1983.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald L. Rice will live in Ecuador, where he will promote music in churches and they will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. He currently attends Southern seminary.

An Ohio native, Rice has served as minister of youth at Second Baptist Church, Clinton. He also has served in church staff positions in churches in Indiana, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Alabama. He is a graduate of Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky., and Southern seminary.

A native Virginian, Mrs. Rice, the former Teresa Yates, is also a graduate of Cumberland College. She has been a teacher in Gary, Ind.

The Rices have two children: Michelle

Lynne, born in 1977; and Ryan Michael, 1983.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Mark Rutledge will live in Haiti, where he will work in agricultural development and start and develop churches and they will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. They are currently attending Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

Born in Murfreesboro, Rutledge considers Maney Avenue Baptist Church there his home church. He has been involved in farming in Murfreesboro and has been a cable TV contractor in Atlanta, Ga.

Rutledge, who has served as an FMB volunteer in Haiti, is the son of Don Rutledge, senior photographer for the Foreign Mission Board. He is a graduate of Andrew College, Cuthbert, Ga., and the University of Georgia, Athens.

Mrs. Rutledge, the former Margaret Wilson, is a native of California. She has been projects coordinator in Haiti for Food for the Hungry International, with headquarters in Scottsdale, Ariz., and Geneva, Switzerland. She is a graduate of the University of California, Davis.

Mr. and Mrs. Marvin E. Fitts, missionaries to Peru for 22 years before they resigned in 1981, were reappointed by the board. They will work in Mexico, where he will teach in a seminary and they will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

Since 1985, he has been associate professor of religious education at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis. She has been an assistant professor at Mid-America since 1982. Before joining the Mid-America staff, he was minister of education at First Baptist Church, West Memphis, Ark.

A Mississippi native, Fitts is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, and Southwestern seminary. Before his original appointment, he was a pastor's assistant and education worker at Temple Baptist Church, Memphis.

Born in Lucy, Mrs. Fitts, the former Jean Carlisle, is also a graduate of Union and Southwestern. The Fittses have three grown children. They will return to the field in January.

The four newly appointed couples will go to Rockville, Va., in January for an eight-week orientation before leaving for the field.

Parks offers structure for global strategy

By Bob Stanley

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — President R. Keith Parks has recommended a major administrative reorganization of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staff to "lift Southern Baptists to a whole new level of involvement in global evangelization."

His proposals; presented to the board's trustees Dec. 9, call for a new top-level International Strategy Group with the expertise and authority to plan and carry out a more effective global strategy.

He also recommended the board's name be changed to International Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to allow greater freedom of operation. The new name, he said, avoids the "considerable disadvantage" which the words "foreign" and "mission" have in the modern world.

Parks said he hopes the change in the board's name, which would have to be done in consultation with the Southern Baptist Convention, could be made without changing titles on mission properties the board owns overseas.

The reorganization, if approved by the board in February, would take effect March 1.

Parks would chair the new strategy group, with William R. O'Brien, the board's executive vice-president, as vice-chairman.

Four new vice-presidents representing the major continents where Southern Baptists have work would be members of the group. Also on the group would be a vice-president for Cooperative Services International, the entity through which Southern Baptists with specific expertise can respond to requests from countries

where missionaries cannot work.

Other members of the strategy group would include:

— A vice-president for administration and human resources, who would be re-

sponsible for worldwide policies relating to missionaries as well as those responsibilities already carried in the office of human resources.

— A director of research related directly to the president who would pull together all research activities now being carried out in various parts of the board.

— The vice-president for finance, who would be a resource member at meetings where his expertise is needed.

As part of the plan, the board would set up a well-equipped strategy room.

Area directors, now located in Richmond, Va., would live overseas in their geographic areas and have increased authority to make more decisions closer to the scene of the actual work. In addition to their field staff, the directors would maintain an associate area director in Richmond as both a channel and contact point for the home office but would return to Richmond for three of the board's six meetings each year.

"For the whole concept to work, the area director must be given full authority to act in those areas that have administrative definition," Parks explained, "and must take and exercise leadership in the application and implementation of global strategy concepts that will emerge from the strategy group."

Trustees approved a special transitional committee to work with a similar group from the staff in more specific and detailed planning for the reorganization.

Parks estimated it would take most of 1987 to implement the new plan and said 1988 likely would be the first productive year under the new structure.

As key concepts in the reorganization, Parks listed the need to define the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust campaign in measurable terms, develop strategies that would allow maximum use of available resources, free key administrators to concentrate on these strategy concerns and delegate authority to the fields to put decision-making as close to the action as possible.

Major attention at the December board meeting was focused on Parks' plan for reorganization of the board's staff to gear up for global evangelization. At Parks' request, the board elected a transitional committee to work with staff members in preparing detailed plans for the reorganization.

The 13-person committee, expected to meet early in January, includes six chairmen of the board's standing committees: Lloyd Henson of Memphis, Mary Strauss of Maryland, Bob Cochran of Virginia, Mark Cortis of North Carolina, W. W. Walley of Mississippi, and Jim Jeffries of Missouri.

Other members are Morris Mills of Tennessee, Dee Bryan of West Virginia, Sam Sorrell of Texas, Alastair Walker of South Carolina, Barbara Cunningham of Texas, Howard Baldwin of Virginia, and Bill Rowlett of Kentucky. Board Chairman Bob Smith of Texas will be chairman of the committee, and the board's two vice-chairmen, Buck Buckalew of Virginia and Claude Kirkpatrick of Louisiana, will be ex officio members.

Parks said he hopes that the staff and board representatives could bring definite recommendations in February, with the new staff alignment to take effect March 1.

CP receipts dip during November

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program receipts dipped in November but remain ahead of last year's record pace, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

November's total, \$9,672,612, was 10.2 percent behind receipts for the same period in 1985, Bennett reported. However, receipts for the first two months of the 1986-87 budget year stand at \$20,609,728, or 4.04 percent ahead of the rate for October and November of 1985.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' unified method of financing mission, evangelistic and educational endeavors worldwide.

November's Cooperative Program dip follows the best October the program has enjoyed in its 61-year history. October receipts of almost \$11-million were 21 percent higher than those for the same period in 1985, giving the Cooperative Program a fast start on its \$136-million annual goal.

EDITORIAL

The Christmas message sent 'unto you'

If a king or a president were to have a son born, we can imagine the publicity surrounding the occasion.

During the months and weeks prior to the blessed event, newspapers and television would speculate about the occurrence. TV documentaries and magazine features would highlight the historical significance of the birth and what it would mean to the future of the world.

Noted astrologers and historians would attempt to predict the coming child's influence on history.

As the birth date neared, its frequency of mention in newscasts would increase.

When the much-anticipated birth occurred, news bulletins would interrupt television and radio programs. Newspapers would hurriedly remake their front pages, or perhaps publish an "extra" edition. Anyone who had anything to do with the event or was related in any way to the new infant would be interviewed. World leaders would be asked to comment.

Within a few days, the tiny babe would be presented to the world in a press conference — no doubt dressed in the finest apparel available.

How unlike this was the birth of the King of kings and Lord of Lords!

Jesus was not born in the maternity wing of a famous hospital — but in a stable.

Jesus was not born in the political capital of Rome nor the religious center of Jerusalem — but in Bethlehem, "little among the thousands of Judah."

Jesus' birth was not attended by eminent obstetricians or pediatricians — but He was surrounded by the animals of the stable.

Jesus, as a new-born baby, was not placed in an ivory-inlaid cradle — but in a manger from which the animals ate.

Jesus was not dressed in a regal, heirloom robe — but in a common swaddling cloth.

The contrast is almost inconceivable.

Nowhere is this contrast more pronounced than in those informed of Jesus' birth. Instead of an announcement issued to emperors and governors or to a worldwide audience, Jesus' birth was announced to low-status shepherds.

The angels said it simply, "UNTO YOU is born this day . . . a Saviour."

Unto you!

The shepherds lived close to God's creation, tending their flock. They trod the hills and valleys of the earth and camped beside the flowing streams. The replenishing of the flock depended on God's miracle of procreation.

And it was to these simple shepherds that history's greatest message came "unto you!" God knew how to communicate with shepherds. After all, He had revealed much about Himself as the Great Shepherd to David (Psalm 23).

Why God chose these common shepherds to hear His supremely significant message is easily seen.

God knew that the shepherds would respond positively — going with haste even unto Bethlehem to see God's revelation to them. And, having seen the Saviour, they spread the message with such enthusiasm that those who heard of their experience received their words in wonder.

In contrast, when King Herod later heard of the event, he responded quite differently by seeking to destroy the Son of God.

Eventually it was the political and religious leaders who conspired to kill Jesus.

The message of Christmas comes again during the holiday season.

Had it first come to kings and emperors and high priests, we might assume it is aimed toward the powerful and the mighty.

But God's message is simple. And He chose to share the first "good tidings of great joy" with the shepherds.

The Saviour is for ALL people — just as the angel proclaimed.

During the next few days, there will be many questions asked about "you" and Christmas.

"What do you want for Christmas?"

"Haven't you finished your Christmas shopping?"

"Where are you going to spend the Christmas holidays?"

"How much are you going to spend on my gift?"

"Do you mind if I exchange the gift you gave me?"

But the most important question about you and Christmas is, "Do you know that Jesus Christ the Saviour has come UNTO YOU?" Jesus came to redeem you — and all the sinners of the world.

Make this Christmas a personal experience of rejoicing in the glorious knowledge that the Saviour has come — unto you!

Cicero's
comment



By the editor

"Is there a Santa Claus?" an 8-year-old girl inquired of the New York Sun in 1897.

In her brief "letter to the editor" of that renowned newspaper, Virginia noted that some of her friends were telling her there was not such a person as Santa Claus. Her letter inspired the now famous editorial (frequently reprinted in publications every Christmas) which begins with the sentence, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus."

Virginia, if you were to ask that question in 1986, there would be little doubt as to the answer.

If you could have sat with me in front of a television set on Thanksgiving Day, you would have seen gigantic Christmas parades in several North American cities and Hawaii. All of the people who lined the streets in those cities had come to pay homage to a "living" Santa Claus.

If you could walk with me today down Main Street (you pick the town), you would see hundreds of images of Santa Claus on street signs, billboards, and store window displays.

If you could see the letters and catalogues that come in the daily mail to my home, you would see many pictures and drawings of the "jolly old elf" — each testifying that he is alive and well.

If you could see the many "Santa Clauses," dressed appropriately in fur-trimmed red suits — at least one in each shopping mall — and the many children impatiently lined up to make their Christmas demands known, you would certainly know that others believe in Santa Claus.

If you could visit the department stores and see the thousands of possible gifts for Santa to deliver on Christmas morning, you would know that the 1986 merchants are active supporters of the "spirit of St. Nicholas."

If you could note the advertisements on television and radio and in the newspapers and magazines, you would determine that the advertisers believe in Santa Claus.

Yes, Virginia, in 1986 everyone seems to believe that there is a Santa Claus.

But, Virginia, our problem in 1986 is not trying to convince the world that there is a Santa Claus, but to convince your modern-day counterparts that there is a Jesus Christ!

Many in our era deny that Jesus was born to a virgin named Mary as God's Son.

They don't believe that Jesus' miraculous birth occurred — or at least isn't important.

They say He didn't have the power to perform miracles.

They believe that His life ended on a cruel cross atop Mount Calvary.

Today, Jesus is ignored or forgotten by many of the "Virginias" during this season of the year.

After all, Virginia, Christmas should actually be the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ — God's great gift to all the "Virginias" of all time!

... AND THE WHOLE
WORLD WAS CHANGED
BECAUSE HE CAME.



JOE
WILSON

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOY — Mothers carefully look over the selections, searching for just the right toys to delight their children on Christmas morning. Nashville area churches donate the toys for the Nashville Baptist Association Toy Store.

Nashville churches offer toys for needy families

Woodcock Memorial Baptist Church, Nashville, became the hub of a flurry of activity Dec. 8-12 as the host of the Nashville Baptist Association's annual "Toy Store."

The ground floor became a mini-shopping mall as needy parents "shopped" for just the right toys to make their children happy on Christmas morning.

Upstairs, the church sanctuary became a counseling area as volunteers from churches across the association talked with parents who expressed an in-

terest in spiritual counseling.

For 34 years, the association's churches have worked together to donate, collect, categorize, and distribute toys to provide children in the Nashville area with a Christmas they might not have enjoyed otherwise, according to Richard Kornmeyer, director of the association's missions development program.

Carolyn Demonbreun, director of the toy store, said she has used about 200 volunteer workers during the weeks the toys are brought in, separated, and distributed.

The ministry provides about 3,200 children or 900 families with toys, clothes, Christmas stocking stuffers, decorations, and candy each year.

"Two families come through the toy store every five minutes during the week we distribute toys (Dec. 8-12)," Kornmeyer said.

Volunteers estimated they gave away about \$150,000 worth of toys last year, and that figure is expected to be higher this year.

A family with three children usually goes home with about \$150 worth of merchandise, Kornmeyer said. Parents choose, at no cost, a large, medium, and small toy for each child.

Last year, hundreds of the "shoppers" stayed for spiritual counseling and about 120 of them made first time decisions to follow Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

For the past two years, in addition to the toys donated by church members from Nashville area churches, employees of the Baptist Sunday School Board donated enough toys to fill a large van, according to Marshall Walker of the board's office of communications.

The board also gave the toy store about 600 Good News America New Testaments to be distributed to each family.

Kenneth Culver assumes Midway church pastorate

Kenneth R. Culver recently began his pastorate with Midway Baptist Church in Whiteville.

A native of Somerville, he was once pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church there. He also served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Oakland, and as associate pastor of Rossville Baptist Church, Rossville.

Culver is a graduate of Mid-South Bible College in Memphis.

Letters to the Editor

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

Young member's view

Dear editor:

May I express my concern as a young member in our great convention? I'd like for those who seem determined to continue to fight to understand the despair the young people face as a result of this prolonged struggle.

First, having been in the full-time ministry since 1984, the only memories I have of our convention are memories of struggle, politics, and yes, even gossip. I intend to serve God in His ministry for as many years as He allows and no disappointment will stop that. However, it is disappointing to go to conventions, both national and state, and see a full house for "political sessions" and then watch as 50 percent or more leave before the missions reports, sermons, and times of inspiration. Where are our priorities?

I was ecstatic when I read of the goodwill between the Peace Committee and seminary presidents. As I read, I paused to thank God for the conciliatory spirits of the seminary presidents and the accepting spirits of the committee members (save one) and the president of our convention. I felt this was indeed a movement of God in our midst.

I then read of Cecil Sherman's resignation and desire to issue a minority report, followed by a press release from James Slatten and endorsed by Winfred Moore, basically saying that "fundamentalist" concerns had been addressed. It seems that some are enjoying the battle too much to quit.

This is not intended to be a divisive letter; I just want everyone to see this from a younger person's perspective. I do not look forward to 40 plus more years of this. We Southern Baptists need to quit polishing our armor and shooting at each other instead of attacking Satan and winning the world to our precious Lord.

Pete Tackett
219 University Parkway
Johnson City, TN 37601

Another 'autonomy' view

Dear editor:

In reply to Sandra Hack's letter on "Church autonomy" (Nov. 12), I would like to extend the following comments.

Sandra's Baptist history lesson has obviously been one-sided. Baptist autonomy of the local church has indeed been one of our key distinctives. So has our creed, the Bible.

Local church autonomy goes both ways. You can do anything you want, but you also can't expect my local congregation to ask its messengers to the associations (local, state, national) to vote to use God's money given through our church to further false doctrine (by our local congregation's definition). If you want to be autonomous, cut the financial umbilical cord. By Sandra's definition, the Mormons could all rename their local groups "Baptist" and be in good standing to join our convention. That thinking may wash at Furman, but not in the Bible.

Sandra need only read God's qualifications for an elder in 1 Timothy 3 to get His opinion about the issue. The last time I checked, God does not "call" someone to do something against His clearly revealed, written will, because it doesn't fit in with the world's view of things. However, He has been doing that since the Garden of Eden.

Joel Johnson
Rt. 3
Jonesborough, TN 37659

Three employees of HMB resign

ATLANTA (BP)— Three Southern Baptist Home Mission Board employees have resigned to pursue personal career opportunities.

Bob Duvall, who has been employed by the agency for the past six years as director of hospital chaplaincy, has become the director of chaplaincy with the Gwinnett Hospital System in Lawrenceville, Ga.

He began his denominational career in 1978 when he became chaplain to hospitals affiliated with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. He served in that position under missionary appointment by the Home Mission Board. He also has been interim pastor of churches in Minnesota and Alabama as well as serving as a hospital chaplain in Texas and Minnesota.

Loretta Hays, who has been director of employment services for the Atlanta-based missions agency since 1982, resigned to accompany her husband to a new pastorate in Lexington, Ky. She joined the board in 1981 as a secretary and previously was an elementary school teacher in North Carolina.

Ron Loftis, who joined the board as assistant director of the church and community ministries department in 1985, has become director of missions for Roberson Baptist Association in Lumberton, N.C.

Loftis began his denominational service in 1977 as a home missionary, director of Christian social ministries in New South River Baptist Association in Fayetteville, N.C. He previously was pastor of churches in that state. Prior to entering the ministry, he was a highway engineer in Fayetteville, N.C., for 16 years.

SBC leader dies in Shelby, N.C.

SHELBY, N.C. (BP) — Southern Baptist statesman and denominational leader, Forrest C. Feezor, died Dec. 2 at Cleveland Memorial Hospital in Shelby, N.C., following a brief illness. He was 94 years old.

During his 72-year ministry, Feezor was a pastor, college professor, Texas state convention executive director, evangelist, and mission supporter.

Known for his giant, sweeping handshake, Feezor was a native of Lexington, N.C., and a graduate of Wake Forest University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Called to the ministry when he was 23 years old, he was ordained by Jersey Baptist Church in his hometown.

He simultaneously preached in three churches of Liberty Baptist Association in North Carolina — Jersey, Stoners Grove, and Holloways — while teaching public school and attending college. Following seminary graduation, Feezor became head of the Bible department at William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo.

He later was pastor of Second Baptist Church in Liberty before returning to his native state in 1931 to assume the pastorate of Raleigh's Tabernacle Baptist Church. Feezor once said his greatest satisfaction came in seeing people enter into the kingdom of God and then watching them grow as Christians. During his last service as pastor at Tabernacle, he baptized 39 new Christians.

Less than three weeks before his death, Feezor was a messenger to the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in Greensboro. He was president of that convention in 1942. The following year he was called to the pastorate of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

From there, Feezor went to Waco, Texas, in 1947, where he was pastor of First Baptist Church. Five years later, he was elected executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas — the largest Southern Baptist state convention.

The "man with the booming voice" served in that capacity until his retirement in 1960. During his retirement years, Feezor was interim pastor of 20 churches in Taiwan, Texas, Minnesota, and North Carolina.

In 1973, after 30 years in Texas, Feezor returned to North Carolina, where he and his wife made their home in Shelby.

His wife, Jessica Fuller Feezor, died in 1982 after 54 years of marriage. Surviving their parents are Anne Joy Ballew of Shelby and Forrestine White of Austin, Texas. He also is survived by a sister, Arlene Spencer of Lexington, and five grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted Dec. 5 at First Baptist Church of Shelby, with burial in Cleveland Memorial Park. Memorial contributions may be made through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

Tennessee Scene

PEOPLE . . .

An ordination service was held Oct. 12 to ordain Bobby Higgs as deacon at Toone Baptist Church, Toone. Jimmy Breedlove is the pastor.

Larry Treadway was ordained as deacon of Calvary Baptist Church, Elizabethton, on Oct. 12. Ray Sorrells is pastor.

Cotton Grove Baptist Church, Jackson, ordained Lawton Wiles as deacon in October. Douglas Brewer is the pastor.

On Nov. 19, Stuart Heights Baptist Church in Chattanooga licensed Mike Ashley to the gospel ministry. Kenneth McElhaney is pastor.

Albert Nash and Kenneth Dewese were ordained as deacons of Nash Grove Baptist Church, Baxter, on Nov. 16. Russell Flatt is the pastor.

Clarence W. and Jane Marie Fox recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They are members of Alice Bell Baptist Church in Knoxville, where David Hanes is pastor.

Daniel Saffles and Bill Coker were recently ordained as deacons of Antioch Baptist Church, Athens. Dillard Brown delivered the ordination sermon. Kenneth Elkins is pastor.

North Etowah Baptist Church ordained David James, Kinzel Quarles, and Mark Stone as deacons Nov. 9. Donald Pharris is pastor of the Etowah church.

During a recent ordination service at Alice Bell Baptist Church, the following were ordained as deacons: Chris Bayless, Earl Deaver, Jack Farmer, Elmer Grimes, Gary Peterson, David Trent, and Kyle Warwick. David Hanes is pastor of the Knoxville church.

LEADERSHIP . . .

Fred Kendall II, vice-president of religious affairs at Belmont College in Nashville, began serving as interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Franklin, Ky., on Nov. 30.

Tony Griffith has been called to serve as associate pastor of youth evangelism at Guaranda Drive Baptist Church in Johnson City. Thomas E. Savage is the pastor.

Richard Osborn resigned as pastor of Samburg Baptist Church, Samburg, effective Nov. 30.

Ardmore Baptist Church in Memphis has called Henry Grady Simpson III to serve as minister of music and youth. He is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Cotton Grove Baptist Church, Jackson, has called Roger Pointdexter as youth director. A native of Sikeston, Mo., he is a student at Union University in Jackson. Douglas Brewer is pastor of the Cotton Grove church.

J. R. Sisco resigned as pastor of Hanging Limb Baptist Church in Crawford, effective Nov. 9.

Donald Morgan Bennett is serving as minister of music at Union Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, where David Drumel is pastor. Bennett is a native of Atlanta, Ga., and a graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Elmer Bailey is serving as interim minister of education at the church.

Bill Littleton is serving as minister of music at First Baptist Church, Collierville, where Gary Watkins is pastor. Previously, Littleton served at First Calvary Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo., and at Edgewater Baptist Church, New Orleans, La. He was also adjunct professor of church music at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

Macedonia Baptist Church in Ripley has called Jason Sargent as minister of music and youth. He is a student at Union University in Jackson. Jerrell Dawson is the pastor.

Buddy Carter resigned as pastor of Miston Baptist Church, Miston, effective Nov. 30.

Pastor of Bradshaw Baptist Church, Pulaski, Enos Cross, resigned.

Powell's Chapel Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, called Eric Hodge as minister of music. He began his service Nov. 30 at the church where Kevin Bennett is pastor. A native of Tullahoma, Hodge is a student at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro. Previous church staff positions include serving as minister of youth at Grace Baptist Church in Tullahoma, and as youth director at Longview Baptist Church in Unionville.

East Chattanooga Baptist Church recently called Wade Rogers as minister of music. He is a student at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Tom Sparrow is pastor of the Chattanooga church.

Jolley Springs Baptist Church, Gleason, has called Dale Joyner as youth director. Don Bullock is the pastor.

First Baptist Church, Cookeville, has called Conroy Ryan as minister of education. He began Dec. 1 at the church where Ken Altom is pastor.

CHURCHES . . .

Chamberlain Memorial Baptist Church, Chattanooga, held a note-burning ceremony Oct. 26. Edward Seanor is the pastor.

First Baptist Church of Howell, Fayetteville, dedicated their new church building Nov. 23. Joe Mayberry, director of missions for William Carey Baptist Association gave the dedication message. Dalton Warden is the pastor.



Season's Greetings

PARABLE OF THE BIRDS

It was Christmas Eve and the man's wife and children were getting ready to go to church.

He wasn't going.

"I simply can't understand what Christmas is all about, this claim that God became a man," he told his wife.

It had been snowing all day and it was beginning to snow harder as the man's family rode off to church without him. He drew a chair up to the fireplace and began to read his newspaper.

A few minutes later there was a thudding sound at the kitchen window. When he went to investigate, he found a flock of birds out in the back yard. They had been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, were trying to fly through the kitchen window.

He was a very kind man so he tried to think of something he could do so the birds wouldn't freeze.

"The barn!" he thought. That would provide a nice shelter.

He put on his coat and overshoes and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn and opened the doors wide and turned on the light.

But the birds didn't come in.

"Food will bring them in," he thought. So he hurried back to the house for bread crumbs which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn.

But the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow.

He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around waving his arms. They scattered in every direction except into the warm, lighted barn.

"They find me a strange and terrifying creature," he said to himself, "and I can't seem to think of any way to let them know they can trust me."

Puzzled and dismayed, he pondered this thought, "If only I could be a bird myself for the moment, perhaps I could lead them to safety."

If only I could be a bird myself . . .

Just then the church bells began to ring, pealing the glad tidings of Christmas.

The man stood silently for a minute, then sank to his knees in the snow.

"Now I understand," he whispered as he lifted his gaze to the sky. "Now I see why You had to become man."

By Louis Cassels

*As reported by George R. Plagenz
Scripps-Howard News Service*

"This is the story behind the story of Christmas."

EARL H. WILSON
TENNESSEE BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Share
BAPTIST AND REFLECTOR
with a friend



Tennessee/Venezuela Prayer Net Partnership

- Missionary Gene Kimler, a general evangelist in Trujillo, will have a birthday Dec. 19.
- Yantcha Rodriguez, president of Baptist Women in the area of Maturin, wants to learn English so she can work with other volunteers from Tennessee.
- Yoleida, a 12-year-old girl in Ciudad Bolivar, is a new Christian and interested in missions through GAs.
- Venezuelans willing to be trained as prison chaplains are needed in Venezuela.
- Missionaries and their families in Venezuela need prayers for their safety.

TBC seeks youth for state choir

Auditions are being accepted until Jan. 19 for the 150-member All-State Youth Choir, which will perform at the annual statewide Youth Evangelism Conference March 6-7 in Nashville.

Interested singers in grades 7-12 should contact their minister of music to apply and make their audition tape.

Participants during the last two years do not need to audition again, but do need to apply.

The following guidelines will be used to determine the approximate number of

singers chosen from each church: four from those with membership up to 500, six from those with membership of 500-1,200, eight from those with membership of 1,200-2,000, and 10 from those with membership over 2,000.

The choir members, who are selected by a specially appointed committee, will be announced Feb. 2.

Further information may be obtained from the Tennessee Baptist Convention church music department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027.

Northwest focuses on growth, renewal

SPOKANE, Wash. (BP) — The 39th annual Northwest Baptist Convention focused on the need for new churches and a greater commitment to evangelism as 460 messengers gathered at the Ridpath Hotel in Spokane, Wash., Nov. 18-20.

"Vision Northwest 2000" was the theme which provided an emphasis on expanding Baptist work in the two-state organization. Convention staff members and other leaders urged churches to begin developing strategies for making their dreams for the year 2000 come true.

Participants signed pledge cards to indicate their willingness to pray for spiritual renewal among the convention's churches and to support the beginning of a new ministry at their own local church level through prayer, financial support, and/or personal involvement.

During a miscellaneous business session, Vernon Holliday, pastor of First Baptist Church of Klamath Falls, Ore., expressed disappointment in the convention's baptism total for 1985-86, "the lowest in a long time." He moved that the convention set a goal of one baptism

per month per church or mission, noting that by the end of the 1987 church year, 4,320 baptisms would be recorded. The motion passed unanimously.

Gene Dempsey, pastor of Pinehurst Baptist Church in Everett, Wash., was re-elected to a second one-year term as convention president.

Messengers also approved a total budget of \$3,023,689, which is a 16.3 percent increase over the current budget. Northwest convention churches are expected to give \$1,568,751 of that amount in undesignated contributions. Of the portion Northwest Baptist will provide, 33 percent will support SBC causes.

David Spray accepts Parkview pastorate

David Spray accepted the call of Parkview Baptist Church, Lewisburg, to serve as pastor effective Dec. 7.

He is a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala. He also attended New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

A native of Fayetteville, he previously served as pastor of Brogan Avenue Baptist Church in that city. He was also pastor of Hughes Memorial Baptist Church, Pinson, Ala.

Kerr accepts new post

Felix R. (Bob) Kerr accepted the call to become pastor of North Athens Baptist Church. He began his ministry with the Athens church on Oct. 19.

A graduate of Clear Creek Baptist School in Pineville, Ky., Kerr also attended the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

He has served churches in Grainger, Claiborne and Knox counties. His most recent pastorate was with Euclid Avenue Baptist Church in Knoxville.



Kerr

Hamilton Co. sets budget, structure

The Hamilton County Baptist Association adopted a budget which is 15 percent higher than last year, adopted a new organizational structure, and heard Gordon Kingsley, president of William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., during its Oct. 23 annual assembly.

The meeting was held at Ridgeview Baptist Church in Chattanooga and Central Baptist Church in Hixson.

The new budget reflects a 30 percent increase in education and promotion and a 65 percent increase in evangelism and missions sections.

The new organizational structure is made up of the following programs that replace committees: mission development, stewardship, evangelism, pastoral ministries, and program and recreation.

It was noted that Rehobeth Baptist Church in Chattanooga, of which Gary Cooper is pastor, applied for fellowship in the association. A one-year waiting period is required by the association before a church is voted into the fellowship.

The past year's officers were re-elected. They are: Bill Owens, pastor of Ridgedale Baptist Church in Chattanooga, moderator; Steve Witt, pastor of Mountain Creek Baptist Church in Chattanooga, vice-moderator; Bill Plemmons, pastor of Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Chattanooga, treasurer; Arthur Brunner, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Chattanooga, assistant treasurer; and Elwood Settle, retired pastor and member of First Baptist Church in Hixson, clerk.

Davis Al Myers is the director of missions.

Chattanooga is the site for the Oct. 22, 1987, gathering at Brainerd Hills Baptist Church and East Ridge Baptist Church.

Knox County meets, honors P. Trivette

Pauline Trivette was honored for managing the Trivette Lodge at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center for Knox County Association of Baptists and a church was added during the association annual meeting Oct. 20-21.

The Knoxville meeting was held at John Sevier Baptist Church and McCalla Avenue Baptist Church.

Trivette, whose deceased husband, Lawrence, was the association's director of missions, managed for 29 years the lodge named in their honor. She is a member of Central Baptist Church, Fountain City, in Knoxville.

Tazewell Pike Baptist Church in Knoxville, of which Henry Stough is pastor, was voted into the fellowship.

Moderator Bob Burch, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Knoxville, was succeeded by Guy Milam, pastor of North Knoxville Baptist Church in Knoxville.

Other persons elected as 1986-87 officers are: Robert Sharp, pastor of Gillespie Avenue Baptist Church in Knoxville, assistant moderator; Dennis Ledden, a member of Central Baptist Church, Bearden, in Knoxville, treasurer; and Eugene Fleming, associate pastor of Cumberland Baptist Church in Knoxville, clerk.

The next yearly meeting will be Oct. 19-20, 1987, in Concord at First Baptist Church and in Knoxville at Lincoln Park Baptist Church.

The director of missions is Ted Huckaby.

Personal Perspective



By Tom Madden
TBC Executive
Secretary-Treasurer

I sincerely want to wish for each one of you a joyous, gracious, and radiant Christmas season. I want to thank you for your prayers and support throughout the years. I want to thank the Baptist and Reflector for permitting me the privilege of communicating with you each week by means of the "Personal Perspective." I count upon your prayers and support as I try to share with you from week to week.

As I come to these immediate days before Christmas, I have read again the Christmas story and focused upon John 1:14, 16. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."

While I believe it, I am still overwhelmed when I think about God becoming cradled. As R. G. Lee said many times, our Lord came "from the heights of glory to the depths of humanity." He took on the form of man without giving up His deity. I am so grateful that He did for many reasons, but one reason is it made Jesus accessible. He became flesh. He was not remote nor distant. He became Emmanuel, "God with us."

In addition to this, by being born on this earth of the virgin Mary, He became adaptable. He tabernacled among us. I take that to mean that by living on this earth, He adjusted Himself fully to the circumstances of earthly existence. He became hungry and tired and thirsty. He was tempted yet without sin. He understands when we hurt and knows of our burdens.

I am grateful for the message of Christmas because it means that our Lord is available to all of us. He has a matching strength for every weakness, a matching grace for every burden. Whether our needs are spiritual, moral, physical, or mental, we have an all sufficient Saviour Who is always available. He does not keep office hours. We do not have to make appointments. He simply says for all of us to come unto Him and He will hear us and bless us.

I am grateful for the privilege of joining with you in worshipping the new born King this Christmas season.

D.C. convention avoids resolutions

WASHINGTON (BP) — For the second consecutive year, messengers to the District of Columbia Baptist Convention opted not to deal with any resolutions during their annual meeting Nov. 13-14.

Again this year, the convention's Executive Board recommended the suspension of resolutions in an effort to promote a harmonious meeting.

Messengers gathered at Broadview Baptist Church in Temple Hills, Md., and elected Erle Cocke, a member of Briggs Memorial Baptist Church in Bethesda, Md., as convention president.

They adopted a budget of \$1,128,227. The convention is expected to give 33 percent of receipts — excluding designated mission giving — from its 71 member churches to world mission causes sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention and American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Missouri laymen organize to preserve Baptist heritage

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Seeking to "bring things back to what our heritage is" as Southern Baptists, a group of Missouri Baptists in the Kansas City area have founded an organization called "Missouri Laymen United."

Spearheaded by Jo Ellen Witt, a member of First Baptist Church of Weston, the not-for-profit corporation is at least the third such organization to surface recently. A group of Texas Baptists calling themselves "Laity for ... the Baptist Faith and Message" and a group named "Florida Baptists for Cooperation" have organized with similar goals and objectives.

Witt told *Word & Way*, news journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention, that the statement of purpose for Missouri Laymen United is "to seek to preserve Baptist heritage and principles in the Southern Baptist Convention through an informed, concerned laity working together in unity of spirit and faith."

Acknowledging that "some people might feel threatened" by the organization, Witt insisted it is designed "basically for peace. We want to get peace back within the convention."

The group held its first public forum at Second Baptist Church of Liberty, inviting "a couple of laymen from all the churches in the area where we felt like the pastors would be supportive of what we were doing," Witt explained. That meeting, which attracted more than 100 people, featured presentations by Gordon Kingsley, president of William Jewell College in Liberty; Mary Lois Sanders, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil; Wanda Haworth, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board trustee and a member of Centertown Baptist Church in Centertown; and Bob Perry, director of missions for Clay-Platte Baptist Association.

Steve Stratten, vice-chairman of Mis-

souri Laymen United, said Kingsley's discussion focused on "the background of Baptist heritage, beliefs, and tenets." He said the college president addressed

such topics as Scripture as final authority, the priesthood of believers, autonomy of the local church, and the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Stratten, an attorney and a member of First Baptist Church, Excelsior Springs, said the other three speakers shared personal observations about the current conflict within the Southern Baptist Convention and how it is hurting the cause of missions on associational, home, and foreign fields.

Witt, who is chairman of the Missouri organization, emphasized, "Laymen have got to get involved to educate other laymen. As laymen, we can do that. My job is not threatened by what we do. A pastor, missionary, or seminary professor can't do this."

Future plans for the organization include publishing a newsletter and hosting more public forums. The next two meetings, scheduled for Dec. 9 at Wyatt Park Baptist Church in St. Joseph, and Dec. 11 in the Kansas City area, will feature a discussion of the issue of inerrancy. The guest speaker at both meetings will be Ray Summers, retired head of the department of religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Witt said a future meeting, tentatively scheduled for next spring, will feature Georgia Baptist layman Norman Caverder.

'Natural' healing advocates lose Supreme Court appeal

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP) — A husband and wife convicted of reckless homicide and unlawful practice of medicine in the death of an Indiana woman have lost a final bid at the Supreme Court to have their convictions set aside. Their appeal was based in part on religious arguments.

Harry and Ellen Graham were convicted three years ago in connection with the death of Sybil Bennett, a victim of breast cancer. Before Bennett's death in September 1983, the Grahams treated her at an establishment set up in their home, the Hoosier Health House, where they also sold vitamins, minerals, and health foods.

According to the Grahams, treatment at the establishment was based on the teachings of Ellen G. White, acknowledged as a prophetess in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Both the Grahams and Bennett belonged to the same Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

In their appeal to the high court, the Grahams wrote, "Natural methods of healing are a part of the Seventh-day Adventist religion and are to be practiced by the faithful members."

Among the services provided Bennett were nutritional supplements, hot and cold compresses to stimulate circulation, and colonics enemas and irrigations for nutritional and cleansing purposes.

All the while, however, Bennett was suffering from breast cancer. When the

Grahams discovered a lesion that indicated such a possibility, they took Bennett across the state line into Ohio to consult with an osteopath who prescribed the controversial drug laetrile to cancer patients. He, in turn, instructed Ellen Graham — a registered nurse — to give Bennett laetrile injections.

For all these services — rendered over a 10-week period — the Grahams billed Bennett's husband for \$7,000.

When Bennett's condition continued to deteriorate, the Grahams finally gave up on their treatment and suggested to the patient's husband she be taken to a hospital. Within a few weeks, she died.

The Grahams were arrested in October 1983, convicted of reckless homicide and unlawful practice of medicine, and sentenced to two concurrent three-year terms in prison. Both a state court of appeals and the Indiana Supreme Court refused to review the convictions.

In their appeal to the nation's high court, the Grahams claimed the Indiana Medical Licensing Law "unduly" restricted their right to free exercise of religion. They also asked the high court to find the law vague and in violation of federal anti-trust laws.

Indiana Attorney General Linley E. Pearson disputed the free exercise of religion claim, noting the Grahams had not raised the issue in their earlier appeals. Further, he wrote, the Seventh-day Adventist Church "does not encourage its members to reject medical care."

Court rejects church's appeal of unwelcomed landmark status

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Supreme Court has rejected the claim of a United Methodist church in New York City that a municipal commission violated its religious freedom by designating it an official landmark subject to the panel's jurisdiction.

In a one-line order handed down Dec. 1, the high court upheld rulings by three New York state courts that the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission acted within the law in 1981 when it designated the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew a landmark to be preserved. As such, the once thriving — but now impoverished — congregation came under the commission's authority.

Throughout an unsuccessful five-year challenge to its unwelcomed status as an official landmark, attorneys for the church argued that the New York City Landmarks Preservation Law — enacted in 1965 — violated the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of free exercise of religion by subjecting the church to "immediate, criminally enforceable governmental restrictions" for refusing to repair the church.

In addition, church lawyers maintained, application of the law also would amount to taking church property for public use in violation of the Fifth Amendment's requirements that govern-

ment provide just compensation when claiming private property.

By refusing to hear the church's case, the high court let stand the lower panels' rulings — including a 4-3 decision by New York's highest court — that the dispute was not "ripe" for judicial review because the landmarks commission had yet to attempt enforcement of the law on the church. Further, the lower courts held, the church had bypassed appealing application of the law to the commission itself by choosing instead to take the matter to court.

Legal standing by an aggrieved party normally is conditioned in part on a showing that actual injury has been incurred and that all possible administrative remedies have been exhausted.

Throughout its dispute with the landmarks commission, the congregation has insisted it wishes to remain at the current site but is unable to raise the estimated \$350,000 needed to make the repairs required by the landmarks law. The church had wanted to demolish the existing structure and build a smaller, more functional sanctuary on the site, as well as an income-producing apartment building. The income from leasing apartments was to have been used solely for the support of the church and its ministries.

Maryland observes 150th anniversary

BALTIMORE, Md. (BP) — The annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware required an extra day — because the convention was celebrating its 150th anniversary with a gala celebration on Sunday, Nov. 9.

The convention, held Nov. 10-12 at Temple Baptist Church, Baltimore, voted to move its present headquarters from nearby Lutherville to a strategically located site in South Columbia. The convention also passed a \$2.4-million Cooperative Program budget and approved resolutions of appreciation for the work of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and affirmation for the six Southern Baptist seminaries, their presidents, and their faculties.

Pointing to the 1988 observance of the Year of the Laity, the convention elected as president David Flumbaum, a layman and college administrator from Middle River Baptist Church in Baltimore.

Headquarters for Maryland and Delaware Baptists for the past 20 years has been 1313 York Road in Lutherville. The current building is located in a heavily populated business community where building sites are at a premium.

After completing extensive studies during the past year, the Executive Board recommended sale of the York Road site, purchase of a five-acre site adjacent to South Columbia Baptist Church for approximately \$250,000, and construction of a modern office building. Offers for the current site have ranged up to \$2-million plus. If such an offer is successfully negotiated, the new building — plus cost of the site — could be constructed without the convention's requiring a financial loan.

A change in the Constitution was approved at first reading, and if approved at next year's meeting, the Executive Board will be called the General Mission Board — and the executive committee will become the administrative committee.

Of the \$2.4-million budget, 40 percent will go to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

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Executive Board divided into standing committees

The Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention was divided into standing committees during its Dec. 11-12 meeting in Brentwood.

The board members accepted a report by a nominating committee, which was composed of Paul Barkley, Ray Fowler, Marshall Gupton, Frank Kemper, Murray Mathis, Howard Olive, Jere Plunk, Carl Price, and James Robertson.

The nominating committee recommended the distribution of the 101 Executive Board members to seven committees and the chairman and vice-chairman of each committee.

As president of the board, Gupton is an ex officio member of each committee. The president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Jerry Oakley, is a member of the administrative committee, but is not assigned to another committee.

The letter in parenthesis after each name indicates the grand division of the state (east, west, middle) where the Executive Board member resides.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Administrative Committee
Fred Isaacs, chairman (E) at large
Paul Bryant, vice-chairman (W) at large
Paul Barkley (W) chairman, Education Committee
David Drumel (W) chairman, Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee
Ray Fowler (W) at large
Marshall Gupton (M) president, Executive Board
Calvin Harvell (W) at large
Mrs. Richard Hawkins (M) at large
James Hutson (E) at large
Murray Mathis (M) vice-president, Executive Board
Calvin Metcalf (E) at large
Perry Michel (M) at large
Jerry Oakley (M) president, Tennessee Baptist Convention
Jere Plunk (M) chairman, State Missions Committee
Dennis Pulley (W) chairman, Tennessee Baptist Program Committee
James Robertson (E) chairman, Christian Services Committee
Lon Shoopman Jr. (E) chairman, Denominational Cooperation Committee
Fred Steelman (E) at large
Christian Services Committee
James Robertson, chairman (E)
Frank Kemper, vice-chairman (W)
Elmer Allen (E)
Leon Bolton (W)
Raymond Boston (W)
David Brown (E)
E. V. Cullum (E)
Marshall Gupton (M)
Jim Growden (W)
Calvin Harvell (W)
Irvin Hays (W)
Lloyd Lawrence (M)
Earl C. McCosh (E) | Charles Norton (M)
Thomas D. Robinson (W)
Fate Wilson (M)
C. Reed Wright (E) | Denominational Cooperation Committee
Lon Shoopman Jr., chairman (E)
Mike Madewell, vice-chairman (M)
Mickey Basham (W)
John Bedford (W)
John Burlison (E)
Ron Davidson (W)
James Davis (M)
Lynn Eagan (W)
Mrs. Dan Farmer (E)
Tim Floyd (M)
Ray Fowler (W)
Donald Givins (E)
Mrs. James Kimbrough (M)
James McPherson (E)
Clint Oakley (W)
Kenneth Richey (E) | Paul Durham (M)
Arlis Grice (W)
Fred Isaacs (E)
Randy Isbell (W)
Mrs. Jack McEwen (E)
Don Owens (M)
Donald Pharris (E)
Carl Price (M)
Elmer Sharp (E)
Fred Steelman (E)
James Strayhorn (W)
John Lee Taylor (W)
Joe Wran (E) | State Missions Committee
Jere Plunk, chairman (M)
Hershel Chevallier, vice-chairman (E)
Paul Bryant (W)
Pat Ellis (E)
Guy Farris (M)
Clay Frazier (E)
Wrex Hauth Jr. (W)
M. B. Howard (W)
James Hutson (E)
Robert Leonard (M)
George Hill (W)
Howard Olive (E)
Bill Palmeter (M)
Fred Pinckard (E)
Arnold Porter (M)
Mrs. Jerry Trivette (E)
Emerson Wiles Jr. (M) | Tennessee Baptist Program Committee
Dennis Pulley, chairman (W)
John Holland, vice-chairman (E)
Jerry Barker (W)
Gerrald Bland (M)
James Chatham II (W)
Larry Gilmore (M)
Ronald Hicks (E)
Otis Hinton (W)
Grant Jones (E)
John Lambert (M)
Murray Mathis (M)
Perry Michel (M)
Mrs. Kelver Mullins (E)
T. M. Swingle (E)
Mrs. M. P. Turner (E)
James Walker (E)
Fred Ward (W) | Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee
David Drumel, chairman (W)
Mike Bennett, vice-chairman (M)
George Coaker (M) |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|



150 YEARS — Director of Missions Charles D. Earl (left) of Holston Valley Missionary Baptist Association presents Hoover Garland, deacon of First Baptist Church in Sneedville, a plaque commemorating the church's 150th anniversary. Carroll Owen of the TBC preached during the Sunday morning service. The city's mayor and the county school superintendent also thanked the church during the service. Carl Greene, a former pastor, spoke in an afternoon service. Don Mitchell is interim pastor.

Indian mission receives first funding in months

NEW DELHI, India (BP) — After weathering a four-month government freeze on foreign support, Baptist work in India has been freed to use \$289,000 for evangelism and health care.

About three-fourths of the money was transferred in mid-November into the treasury of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in India, known as the Indian Baptist mission, after the government approved two separate requests for the mission to receive operating funds from outside the nation.

Another request, for \$69,000, was made only after the Baptist hospital in Bangalore applied as an institution to receive funds directly from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board instead of through the mission treasury. As late as Nov. 21, the mission was awaiting the arrival of that money from the board, which sent it by special courier to avoid a telecommunications strike in the country. The hospital has been the center of Southern Baptist mission efforts in the southern state of Karnataka since the early 1970s.

Two additional requests for operating funds would carry the mission through March 1987 but have not yet been approved. Also, missionaries were planning to ask the government to allow the mission to receive funds on the basis of regular need, rather than applying beforehand and waiting up to four months for each approval, said Missionary Rebekah Naylor.

The problem began when missionaries learned in June that the Indian government was putting a freeze on contributions from outside the country. They were told they must apply in the future each time they receive Southern Baptist funds. They were told then to accept no further money from the Foreign Mission Board unless it was first approved by the central government. Approval can take up to four months.

An audit further complicated affairs of the mission, which has faced increasingly complex struggles to keep missionaries on the field with approved visas. The number of missionaries assigned to live permanently on the field has dropped from 23 in 1983 to five at present.

Naylor, the hospital administrator, must apply for visa renewal in December. Visa renewal still is pending for

David Travis, an agricultural professor at a national institution, and his wife, Glenda, who applied in June. A newly appointed missionary, pediatrician Cindy Howard, soon will apply for a visa, also. No new visas have been granted for Southern Baptist missionaries to India in six years.

To survive during the recent freeze on funds, the Indian mission curtailed and combined Baptist programs in the country so it could fund evangelism efforts and keep the hospital running. Missionary salaries, deposited in state-side banks by the Foreign Mission Board, were not affected.

The requests most recently approved were for \$150,000 and \$70,000, Naylor said. Missionaries applied for the former amount as soon as they were notified of the audit. The Foreign Mission Board finance office was forwarding the \$70,000 to the mission treasury when the mission learned it could accept no more outside money.

Located near the southern tip of India, the Bangalore hospital has been the hub around which a convention of more than 250 churches has grown. More than 200 of those have been started during the past three years.

With the newest notice under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, the mission must apply for funding each time the foreign board deposits money into the mission account. In the past, the mission has used about \$50,000 a month, including funds for the hospital.

Mitchell Jones assumes Benton church pastorate

Mitchell Jones assumed his role as pastor of First Baptist Church, Benton, on Nov. 9.

He comes to this position from the pastorate of Wayside Baptist Church in Anniston, Ala.

An Andersonville native, he is a graduate of Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Ky. He is also a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

BSSB unveils 'Genevox' as music publishing arm

NASHVILLE (BP) — Genevox Music Group was unveiled as the new name for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's music publishing department during a national church music planning meeting held in Nashville in early December.

Genevox Director Fes Robertson told church music leaders from across the United States the name comes from the words "genesis," Greek for creation, and "vox," Latin for voice.

The group will encompass the existing Broadman, Van Ness, and McKinney music imprints and labels, as well as

other imprints and labels that may be developed in the future, Robertson said.

Announcement of the name came two months after the Oct. 1 official beginning of the component, authorized by the Sunday School Board's trustees in February 1986.

Robertson said Genevox will produce music products primarily for church use at the present time but expects to provide items for school, home, and personal use as the group develops.

Printed music items are expected to include collections, cantatas, octavos, and keyboard, handbell, and instrumental music.

Additional products expected to be produced include vocal and instrumental recordings, musical instruments, and other related items.

Genevox will work cooperatively with the existing church music department, directed by Wesley Forbis, with Genevox publishing products to support and complement the church music program, Robertson said.

Union professor takes administrative post

JACKSON — Jimmy Davis, assistant professor of chemistry at Union University, Jackson, has been named administrator for the Union University/Baptist Memorial Hospital campus in Memphis.

He will assume his new duties in June.

BIBLE BOOK SERIES

Lesson for Dec. 21

The birth of Jesus

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

Basic Passage: Luke 2:1-20

Focal Passages: Luke 2:1, 3-17

"Joy to the world! the Lord is come. . . ." With these exclamatory words begins one of the world's favorite Christmas hymns.

Without a doubt, the coming of our Saviour in human form is extraordinary, phenomenal, beyond human reason. Because this is the case, we mere mortals must exercise faith in order to receive and enjoy the work of God in our lives.

Because God is God, unequaled in any sphere of thinking and existence, the birth of the pre-existing Christ is a mystery which is to be accepted or rejected.

A friend of mine who died awhile back after a bout with cancer, distributed cards to people as a testimony, as a strong witness. Printed on the cards were these words, "Don't try to understand God. If God were small enough for our minds, He wouldn't be big enough for our needs."

Even though an angel spoke to both Mary and Joseph prior to the birth of Jesus, there was not a full explanation as to how all of the events they were to experience would take place. As with any one of us, they had questions and doubts, but they accepted what little they did know and became willing servants for the unusual work of God in their lives.

Christians today must also respond to the divine works of God in and through their lives if they are to enjoy abundant living and fruitful servanthood.

One of the best series of books Southern Baptists have produced is the Layman's Library of Christian Doctrine. In his excellent contribution, What Is Christian Doctrine? John Newport com-

ments on "The Person of Jesus Christ." He lists characteristics of Jesus as described in the New Testament as "clearly" stated by the early followers of Christ who knew Jesus in the following ways:

"First, Jesus was a real man . . .

"Second, Jesus was a unique man (John 3:36) . . .

"Third, Jesus was raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Romans 1:1-6) . . .

"Fourth, Jesus was a living presence (John 14:25-26) . . .

"Fifth, Jesus was a coming King (1 Corinthians 15:24; Matthew 24:27, 36; Matthew 24:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; Matthew 24:42-44) . . .

"Furthermore, we see that the New Testament writers saw Jesus as the fulfillment of Jewish hopes for a Messiah, as the Son of God, and as the Lord of creation (Luke 1:31-33; Colossians 1:16-17). Paul and John and other New Testament writers affirmed the unique relationship of Jesus with God the Father and God the Spirit (John 14:16, 20, 26; 15:26; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6)."

Our study of the Gospel of John was interrupted during this Christmas celebration of the Incarnation because, as we have learned in earlier studies, John does not deal with the birth stories. He spends his gospel explaining Who Jesus is and why He came. Because John did accept the unusual nature of Jesus' birth and the marvelous purposes of His presence in human history, John was led of the Spirit of God to record for generations to follow information we need.

A study of all four gospels will enable the people of God to gain insight into the glorious purposes of God for the redemption of mankind and the joy Christians can have as they, like the shepherds of old, share the good news of Jesus!

As Christ is "born in us today" our proclamation can increase in its value to us personally and in its effectiveness as we share with mankind today and until He returns.



Bush

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES

Lesson for Dec. 21

Born to redeem

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

Basic Passages: Exodus 19:1 to 20:26; 24:1-18

Focal Passages: Exodus 19:1-6; 24:3-8

In fictional literature, an appealing technique features an individual assuming the identity of someone else. Perhaps this plays on an inward desire of escapism.

Classics like *The Prince and the Pauper* and *A Tale of Two Cities* are but two examples of imaginative plots involving the pleasures, perils, and perplexities of trying to live another person's life.

In our frustrations, we catch ourselves blurting out how wonderful it would be to be someone else in some other place at some other time in history — to have a better, higher existence.

However, when Jesus came to earth in human form, He became a lower, inferior presence in order to prove how much He loves us.

The incarnation event (Luke 2:6-7)

In precise detail, Luke provides us with dates, circumstances, and participants in the blessed birth of Jesus. God used a decree by a Roman emperor to get Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, so that Jesus' birthplace could fulfill His Scripture.

While the chosen couple was in Bethlehem, the world's most significant birth occurred (v.6).

The familiar events are being recreated many times at this season of the year, as pageants and tableaux remind us again of the stable, the manger, the shepherds, and the wisemen.

These precious reminders are always meaningful to Christians. No matter how many times and in how many ways we have seen them, the birth of Bethlehem's Babe brings thrilling thoughts.

The incarnation's mystery

(John 1:14-18)

As important as the Bethlehem scene is to us, there is far more to the coming of Christ than what happened in that stable. The word "incarnation" is not found in the Bible, but it has tremendous spiritual implications. It is a Latin word which literally means "clothed with flesh."

In the early verses of John 1, God used John's gospel to declare that Jesus (the "Word," Greek *logos*) was "with God" and "was God" from the beginning. Jesus existed before and was involved in all creation (John 1:1-3).

The characteristics of Jesus are described as "the only begotten of the Father" (v.14); "full of grace and truth" (v.14); One Who had seen God (v.18); and One Who is revealed by God (v.18).

Then, this eternal, all-powerful, all-

knowing Jesus chose to lay aside all this glory to come to earth in human form — "The Word was made flesh" (v.14). For a further explanation of the incarnation, read Philippians 2:5-8.

In our limited understanding, we cannot fully grasp the mystery of all that was involved in the incarnation. However, we can comprehend the results of the incarnation: Jesus "dwelt among us" (v.14); "we beheld His glory" (v.14); we received His revealed fullness and "grace for grace" (v.16); and Jesus was God's gift of "grace and truth" (v.17).

In faith, we accept with gratitude the miracle of the incarnation.

The incarnation's timing
(Galatians 4:4-7)

Although our eternal God is not subject to time, He has a great sense of timing. Throughout Biblical history, God was in the process of revealing Himself as creator, as protector of His chosen people, as intervener into individual lives, and as lawgiver.

Now, God's wisdom determined that the time was right ("fullness of time," v.4) to reveal Himself as redeemer.

In Paul's inspired letter to the Galatians, he records the steps God took to provide salvation. In God's proper time, He "sent forth His Son . . . to redeem them that were under the law" (vv.4-5). God's accurate timetable for eternity was ready for the Bethlehem birth. His divine plan was on schedule.

The incarnation's purpose
(Hebrews 2:14-18)

The key word in this passage is "reconciliation" (v.17).

The writer of Hebrews notes the power of Satan (v.14) and the bondage of sin (v.15). The seriousness of these two realities required God's drastic response in merciful reconciliation.

God sent His Son — not in the form of an angel with which we could not identify, but as a human being (v.16). In human form, Jesus "suffered being tempted," so He is able to sustain us in our temptations (v.18).

The author compares Jesus' purpose of incarnation to the Old Testament picture of a "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (v.17).

The high priest not only spoke for God and represented God, but he also offered sacrifices to reconcile sinners to God. Jesus, as our great high priest, offered the only possible "sacrifice" for our sins — Himself. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on a tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24).

Incarnation means that God was in Christ in Bethlehem's manger, on Calvary's cross, in the resurrection tomb, and on heaven's throne.

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LIFE AND WORK SERIES
Lesson for Dec. 21

A Saviour, Christ the Lord

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

Basic Passage: Luke 1:1 to 2:20
Focal Passages: Luke 1:26-28, 30-31, 38; 2:7-11, 16

Those who plan our Sunday School lesson-curriculum always provide a lesson about the birth of Jesus on the Sunday which immediately precedes Christmas. They have found most class members want such a study.

This year, no adjustment or insertion into an ongoing unit is necessary because last Sunday we finished a study of the first 11 chapters of Genesis, and we will begin this week a study of Luke's gospel which will continue through April.

Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. The lessons for Dec. 21 and 28 form a unit which our editors have entitled, "The Dawn of Hope." How appropriate! The coming of Jesus introduced a new era into the world, one which offered encouragement and a reason for optimism.

God works through people (1:26-28, 30-31)
After an angel of the Lord told Zacharias that his wife, Elisabeth, would have a child who would be great in the Lord's sight, God sent Gabriel to Mary with a similar message. The two babies, however, would be different! Mary's child would be born to her before she had any sexual relations with a man.

We often speak of the virgin birth as a miracle. The real miracle, however, occurred nine months earlier when the Holy Spirit "came upon" Mary and she became "with child."

Though God could have brought His Son, our Saviour, to us any way He desired, He chose to use a mother's womb as the channel for His entrance into the world.

Throughout history, God has chosen to work through human instrumentality. He glorifies our personhood by allowing us to share in His redemptive program for the world. One of Israel's greatest spokesmen for God said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Likewise, when He has any plan for the advancement of His kingdom, He chooses an individual or a group of people to implement it.

We must be willing (1:38)

Such a tremendous message to a young maiden must have been earthshaking! She could not absorb it! Someone joking-

ly called her the first person who ever doubted the virgin birth of Jesus! Her problem, however, was much different from those skeptics today who would destroy our faith. She found it difficult to believe God had chosen her for such an honor!

When she realized, however, that God had bestowed such favor on her, she willingly yielded herself to His will. She did not insist on a sign from heaven as Zacharias (Luke 1:18).

One of the finest traits we can possess is that of prompt obedience to that which we know God wishes us to do. One of Israel's greatest poets said, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God" and then added a phrase which explained his joy in obedience, "Thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8). The Hebrew word translated "heart" means more than the emotional part of our nature. It refers to the totality of one's personality, meaning primarily the mind and volition.

Mary's life was yielded to God and she was willing to let His will be done in her life.

God keeps His promises (2:7-11, 16)

The birth event occurred as the angel predicted. The Saviour came to meet human need. He identified Himself with the masses at the very beginning of His life. The contrast between the Saviour's greatness and His humble birth foreshadowed the basic element of His ministry. He came to redeem humanity, not to be clothed in royal apparel and placed on an earthly pedestal.

The angel promised that He would be given the throne of David. He occupies that throne now and has never forsaken it even for a moment. The expression "for ever" and "without end" means no time has ever existed when He has not been reigning. Of course, His rule is spiritual not temporal. He told Pilate that His kingdom is "not of this world" (John 18:36).

God kept His promise. Jesus is now Lord and Saviour. What He is now, He will be forever. What a message for the Christmas season!



Wood

Martin accepts call to Edgefield church

Daniel J. Martin has accepted a call from Edgefield Baptist Church in Nashville, to come as pastor, beginning in November.

Martin previously served as pastor in Tennessee and was active in both the Alpha and Dyer Baptist associations.

Coming from Louisville, Ky., he has been attending Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and serving as pastor of a church in the area.

Martin is a native of New Mexico. He is a graduate of Belmont College in Nashville.



Martin

Baptists in N.M. enjoy calm meeting

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP) — In a characteristically peaceful convention, New Mexico Baptists adopted a \$2.4-million budget, heard reports, and elected officers, during their annual meeting at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, Nov. 11-13.

The budget will be divided between state and Southern Baptist Convention causes on a 70/30 percent ratio, the same as in 1986.

The convention also authorized Executive Director Claude Cone to begin a \$2-million endowment fund for financially troubled New Mexico Baptist Children's Home at Portales. Because of gas and oil depletion revenues, the children's home currently is facing a financial shortfall for the year of about \$25,000.

Messengers also changed the bylaws of the New Mexico Baptist Children's Home, bringing it under the Executive Board. For several years, the home has operated with a separate board of directors. Under the bylaw changes, a seven-person "special ministries committee" will operate the home on behalf of the Executive Board.

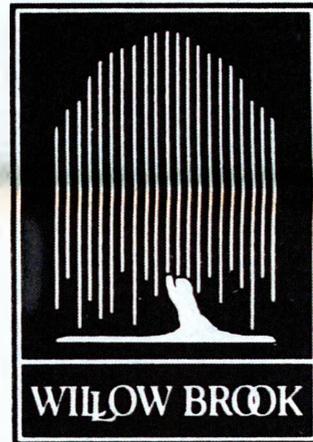
In other convention business, resolutions were adopted expressing prayerful concern for the SBC Peace Committee and SBC President Adrian Rogers, affirmed the "Planned Growth in Giving" stewardship emphasis, expressed prayerful concern for newly elected Gov. Garrey Carruthers, and opposed the establishment of a state lottery in New Mexico.

Ed Meyers, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roswell, was elected convention president.

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Asians build framework for mission exchange

By Erich Bridges

HONG KONG (BP) — Baptists from eight Asian nations and Hong Kong plan to exchange mission teams soon.

The teams, the Asians hope, not only will carry out short-term evangelistic projects and crusades in their countries but also other mission projects, perhaps involving Asian Baptist college and seminary students.

The exchange plan emerged from the latest meeting of Asian Baptist leaders interested in expanding their foreign

mission efforts, held recently in Hong Kong. Participants represented South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and two Baptist conventions in the Philippines. Korean pastor Han Ki Man is chairman of the regional group.

It was the Asians' third regional meeting since world Baptist leaders interested in international missions gathered last year at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center for a global evangelization consultation.

Besides the exchange agreement, the Asian leaders decided to do three other things:

- Establish a formal committee to meet annually to discuss and decide on strategies. The group's first meeting will be next April. The committee will be composed of the participating conventions' executive secretaries and "mission specialists" or leaders of convention mission boards, committees or agencies, and a non-voting missionary consultant from each country.

- Encourage each convention to sponsor missions promotion and education meetings, especially among pastors, and invite speakers from other Asian conventions to exchange ideas and "cross-fertilize."

- Establish a small research committee, including group leader Han Ki Man and three other Asian convention representatives plus a Southern Baptist missionary consultant, to continue studying the feasibility of a joint regional mission body. Such a regional body could evolve into a missionary sending agency. Han has named Bob Davis, based in Hong Kong, as the committee's missionary consultant. Davis is the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's specialist for evangelism and church growth in Asia.

The Asian Baptists have spent the past year discussing the merits of a joint mission agency, and some favor establishing one now. Others believe it is too early to commit to a single missionary-sending board.

The difference of opinion highlights the "different levels of development" within the various conventions, said Southern Baptist Missionary Bill Fudge of South Korea, who assists and translates for Han Ki Man in the Asian meetings.

"Some of the conventions already have a sending agency in place and missionaries on the field," Fudge explained. "Others see themselves having that potential and want to develop it in their own convention. Others do not see any possibility at this time of developing their own sending agency but think they could participate in one if it were put together on a joint basis."

The Hong Kong meeting also produced a formal statement of purpose adopted by the leaders: "The purpose of the Asian Baptist Mission Consultation Committee is to coordinate, cooperate, inform, organize, and strategize for missions in Asia and beyond. This would include the possible formation of an Asian Baptist Foreign Mission Coordinating Committee in the future if thought necessary."

Up to now the leaders have been work-



ON THE DRAWING BOARD — Korean Baptist leader Han Ki Man listens as Missionary Bill Fudge (right) interprets a colleague's comments. Han is chairman of a group of Asian Baptists planning foreign mission efforts.

ing toward a consensus of purpose, but the formal statement "nailed down very firmly what they are about," said Fudge.

Foreign Mission Board President Keith Parks, in the region for visits to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China, addressed the closing session of the meeting. Later he expressed excitement about the Asians' initiative.

"These things are happening together, where good leadership is being elected in the conventions and the desire to do missions is stimulating organization and focus," he said. "I just feel like the Lord is moving in a remarkable way among these conventions."

Baptists in Iowa hold 15th meeting

DAVENPORT, Iowa (BP) — Celebrating the theme, "Iowa... A Place to Grow Churches," Iowa Baptist messengers recently gathered for the 15th annual meeting of the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship.

During the two-day meeting at Central Park Baptist Church in Davenport, messengers approved a 1987 budget goal of \$886,988 and also adopted long-range plans for 1987-1991.

Long-range objectives include creating "a climate and a burning desire in our churches for an effective presentation of the gospel to every person in Iowa"; helping Iowa churches "establish and maintain stable and effective pastoral ministries"; helping "establish churches, missions, and other units in strategic locations throughout the state"; and encouraging and assisting churches to "provide ministries which will meet the social needs of persons in Iowa."

Among the detailed goals of the long-range plans are increasing the number of baptisms by 10 percent each year for five years, training at least 100 persons per year to become effective witnesses, and attaining a total of 100 churches or church-type missions by 1991 by starting six per year.

Terry Davis, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Clinton, was elected president.

Supreme Court sends back religious job bias case

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP) — Although holding that an appeals court decision in a religious job bias case was reached from an erroneous approach, the Supreme Court Nov. 17 affirmed that decision, sending the case back for further proceedings.

The case involves an Ansonia, Conn., public schoolteacher who claims the local school board should provide him with paid leave to observe up to six religious holidays annually. The teacher, Ronald Philbrook, is a member of the Worldwide Church of God, which requires members to refrain from secular employment during designated holy days.

The Ansonia Board of Education, in annual agreements negotiated with the local chapter of the American Federation of Teachers since the 1968-69 school year, has allowed teachers to take three days' annual leave for mandatory religious holidays. Teachers also annually receive 18 days of leave for illness, but may use accumulated leave for purposes other than illness — including three days annually for "necessary personal business." The contract agreement, however, restricts teachers from using those three days for specific activities — including religious observance — already provided for in the contract.

Philbrook contends that the school board's policy of allowing him to take additional days off without pay for his church's holy days constitutes religious discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII requires that an employer "reasonably accommodate to an employee's... religious observance or practice without undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business."

Philbrook filed a complaint in 1973 with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities and the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He proposed two alternatives — either to allow him to use the personal business leave for religious observance or to permit him to pay for the cost of a substitute teacher rather than having his salary docked.

Upon the school board's rejection of his proposals, Philbrook went to court. A U.S. district court judge, however, ruled Philbrook had failed to prove a case of religious discrimination because the school board had not placed him in a position of violating his religion or losing his job.

The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals reversed that decision, holding the accommodation obligation includes a duty to accept the proposal the employee prefers unless that proposal causes undue

hardship on the employer. The court remanded the case for consideration of the hardship that would result from Philbrook's proposals.

In delivering the Supreme Court opinion, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist said the court found no basis in Title VII for requiring an employer to choose any particular reasonable accommodation since "any reasonable accommodation by the employer is sufficient to meet its accommodation obligation." Thus the appeals court, he said, erred by requiring the school board to demonstrate the hardship of Philbrook's alternatives.

Under the appeals court's approach, Rehnquist said, "the employee is given every incentive to hold out for the most beneficial accommodation, despite the fact that an employer offers a reasonable resolution of the conflict."

As to whether the school board's leave policy constitutes a reasonable accommodation of Philbrook's religious beliefs, however, Rehnquist said the Supreme Court must remand the case to the district court for further proceedings. The chief justice said neither lower court had explicitly considered that question, thus providing the high court with insufficient factual findings.

While expressing the court's opinion that requiring a teacher to take unpaid leave for holy day observance exceeding the amount allowed by the contract agreement would be reasonable, Rehnquist said such unpaid leave would not be a reasonable accommodation if paid leave were provided for all purposes except religious ones.

Rehnquist said a factual inquiry into past and present administration of the personal business leave provisions is necessary and instructed the district court to make that inquiry.

Missionaries join prayer effort

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The 528 Southern Baptist missionaries in eastern and southern Africa are being asked to commit one day each month during 1987 to concerted prayer for world evangelization.

Focusing on the last part of James 5:16, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," each of the missionaries and their children will be asked to set aside one day each month to pray specifically for worldwide efforts to present the gospel.

Missionaries within each country also will be asked to elect a prayer chairman, circulate newsletters with prayer requests and reports of answered prayers, and use "A Concert of Prayer" as the theme for annual meetings and for prayer retreats.

Prayer commitment cards will be mailed to all missionaries and missionary dependents in the area, including those in the United States on furlough, asking for a formal commitment to the "concert of prayer."

In June, Southern Baptist missionaries in Venezuela decided to commit themselves to prayer three times daily for evangelization and revival in their country and the world. They also pledged to dedicate the first Saturday of each month to prayer and fasting.