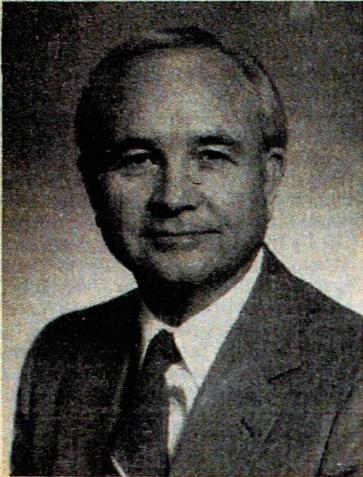


Baptist and Reflector

Vol. 153/No. 12/March 25, 1987

News journal of Tennessee Baptist Convention

TBAH directors elect Pete Ford to top post



J. L. (Pete) Ford

J. L. (Pete) Ford, pastor of Nashville's Eastland Baptist Church, was elected executive director of the TBAH since September 1985, devoting part time to those duties while continuing as pastor of Eastland Baptist Church, where he has served for more than 21 years. He now will devote full time as director of TBAH, effective May 18.

Ford has served as interim executive director of the TBAH since September 1985, devoting part time to those duties while continuing as pastor of Eastland Baptist Church, where he has served for more than 21 years. He now will devote full time as director of TBAH, effective May 18.

As executive director, Ford will serve as the administrative officer of the corporation and provide leadership to the directors in developing and engaging a ministry to senior adults. He also will oversee the affairs of TBAH institutions, including Deer Lake Retirement Village, Baptist Health Care Center, and institutions for which TBAH may become responsible.

In addition, he will administer the fiscal responsibilities of TBAH. The job description for the position, which was approved by the directors during the called meeting, states that the executive director "shall be an advocate for elderly adults" and "shall keep abreast of the changing trends which relate to ministry with elderly adults."

Art Mason, one of five directors on the executive director search committee, reported that the committee met five times and had numerous telephone conversations. He noted that they received 26

resumes and interviewed three people before reaching a unanimous decision to recommend Ford.

After his election, Ford pledged to help "establish the confidence and faith of Tennessee Baptists in our program."

Before becoming pastor of Eastland Baptist Church, Ford was pastor of Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson; Woodbury Baptist Church, Woodbury; and churches in other states.

A native of Kentucky, Ford is a graduate of Union University, Jackson; (Continued on page 2)

Senate sends gambling bill back to Calendar Committee

At the request of its supporters, the Senate version of the horse track gambling bill was referred back to the Senate Calendar Committee last week, when the bill's backers realized they were short of the 17 votes needed for passage in the Senate.

While the action deferred the bill "indefinitely," the matter could come up again this week, according to Bill Bates, public affairs consultant for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

He said the committee could meet early in the week and reschedule the bill for a vote as early as Thursday (March 26) or the bill could die in committee.

The delay followed a proposed amendment to the bill which would require a statewide referendum before any county or city could hold a local referendum on the issue. The amendment never came to a vote.

Sen. Frank Lashlee, sponsor of the amendment, said the gambling bill is not a local issue. "It's of statewide magnitude," he said.

Lashlee also stated he intends to place the amendment on the bill if it returns to the Senate floor.

The original bill, SB 1077, sponsored by Sen. Carl Moore of Bristol and Sen. Steve Cohen of Memphis, would have legalized pari-mutuel gambling in any of Tennessee's 95 counties or any city of 100,000 or more people if approved by a local referendum.

It limits the number of tracks to one in each of Tennessee's three grand divisions. In addition, it establishes the Tennessee Racing Commission, appointed by the governor with the consent of the House and Senate, to regulate horse racing and

pari-mutuel betting, grant racing licenses and approve track locations following each referendum.

The bill further requires persons to be at least 18 years old before they are allowed to place bets.

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed its version of the bill, HB 1068, sponsored by Rep. Jimmy Naifeh of Covington and Rep. Cliff Frenley of Franklin.

In the event that the Senate version passes with the proposed amendment requiring a statewide referendum, the bill would have to return to the House for concurrence.

Robbers injure one person in Memphis church break-in

By Connie Davis

One person was injured slightly in an armed robbery and shooting March 16 at Capleville Baptist Church in Memphis during a Monday night Bible study.

Three parolees, arrested March 18 in connection with the crime, were "high on cocaine," authorities said.

The gun-waving men were "hollering and jumping around," said one of about 30 persons attending the study at the church in southeast Shelby County.

The robbers forced the church members to lie on the floor and fired a shot that grazed Police Lt. Curry Todd, a member of the church. The men then took purses, billfolds, rings, keys, watches, necklaces, and other items valued at about \$4,500.

Authorities recovered \$635, some of the items belonging to the members, and a 22-caliber pistol in a dumpster located in the apartment complex where the men were arrested. A telephone tip from a woman led to the arrests.

Arrested were Dwayne Williams, 19; Tyree Taylor, 21; and, according to Juvenile Court records, Alvin Freeman, 16; all of Memphis.

Authorities said all are being charged with assault to murder and robbery with a deadly weapon.

"We're going to be back next Monday. The Lord kept care of us then, and He'll do it again. I guess the lesson might have been to teach us to be more careful," said Don Terrell, who along with his wife, Virginia, were leading the study.

John Bomar, pastor of the 300-member church, reported that the congregation took action March 18 at its Wednesday night meeting to commission six to eight special deputies through the Shelby County sheriff's department. The church members would serve voluntarily during every evening meeting and probably every other meeting at the church.

Bomar explained that the church is (Continued on page 2)

Morris faces death by hanging

SANNIQUELLIE, Liberia (BP) — A sentence of death by hanging was pronounced March 19 for Benjamin M. Morris, a Liberian found guilty of murdering Southern Baptist Missionary Libby Senter and her daughter, Rachel.

But Morris has appealed and has been granted another trial during the October term of the Supreme Court, said Bradley Brown, chairman of the 67 Southern Baptist missionaries working in Liberia. Brown said he heard the news over national radio station ELBC.

In pronouncing the sentence, Circuit Court Judge Timothy Swope said the evidence was overwhelming against Morris, and in keeping with Liberian law, Morris should be hanged from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 6, Brown reported. Swope directed the sheriff to prepare for hanging proceedings, awaiting a death warrant to be issued by President Samuel K. Doe.

Morris, 32, was arrested Nov. 27 near the Liberian border with Ivory Coast after Senter, 47, and her daughter were

found dead in their Yekepa, Liberia, home. He later confessed orally and in writing that he killed the two after Senter tried to prevent him from molesting Rachel. Senter was from Shelby, N.C.

A 15-member jury convicted Morris March 6 after hearing five days of testimony from nine prosecution witnesses and Morris. Morris admitted in court to the murders. But departing from his confessions, he claimed Senter's husband, George, had hired him to commit them. Under further questioning, Morris contradicted himself on the dates involved. Jurors returned a verdict in less than 30 minutes, indicating they dismissed Morris' accusation, Brown said.

The court proceedings have "engendered widespread interest," Brown said. Some of that interest grew out of the much-publicized forgiveness George Senter expressed to Morris just before Morris' initial confession. In published reports, the missionary has attributed his ability to forgive Morris to prayers offered in his behalf by Southern Baptists.

Baptists mobilize relief for Ecuador

By Marty Croll

QUITO, Ecuador (BP) — Southern Baptist missionaries and Ecuadoran Baptists set up warehouse space to receive about 40 tons of food, blankets, clothing, and tools from Southern Baptists as they mobilized earthquake relief.

A three-member disaster relief team headed by Cameron Byler from the Baptist Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, was scheduled to leave Miami with the provisions by commercial cargo jet March 24.

Ecuadoran Baptists and missionaries will distribute food in Quito, where many of the thousands left homeless are living with relatives. They plan to use food distribution as a way to share the gospel.

The disaster team also will work with two missionaries who set up a communications center in Lago Agrio, a town east of the affected area. The team will be examining the need for additional volunteers from state Brotherhood organizations, who could help rebuild homes and schools.

Officials said 1,000 people were either dead or missing after two powerful quakes shook mountain snowcaps loose and sent water, mud, and debris sliding into river valleys March 5 and 6. Sludge and floods inundated entire villages, swept away whole sections of road, and snapped the country's most important oil line as the overflow rumbled down the eastern face of the Andes Mountains and into the Amazon River basin.

Missionary Larry Doyle, chairman of Southern Baptist mission work in Ecuador, said he flew into Lago Agrio March 10 to survey the needs. Accompanying him were Missionary Jim Tye and Jim Godsoe, a volunteer on special assignment with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Doyle returned to Quito, but left Tye and Godsoe to set up a relief coordination center in the town.

After a drive into the area closest to the quake's epicenter, Tye and Godsoe reported that Ecuadorans were still afraid to go back inside their homes more than a week after the tremors. They were sleeping outside in the rain and under makeshift shelter.

Most of the people Doyle talked to were settlers who had moved from the more populous western sector of the country, nearer the Atlantic coast, into the area around the eastern oil fields. They had built farms and ranches as the oil industry grew.

Ford...

(Continued from page 1)

Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, with a master's degree in social studies; New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary; and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. His doctor of ministry project was on ministry to senior adults.

He has served as moderator of Madison-Chester and Nashville associations, on the Committee on Boards for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, as a trustee for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, and on the TBAH board of directors.

"When the mudslides came, they just lost everything," Doyle said. "The ones I talked to were going back toward the coast, to Quito or to Guayaquil."

Officials used Lago Agrio as a staging area where refugees were fed and loaded into planes bound for Quito. Many of them walked for days from villages off the main road before being airlifted by helicopter. Southern Baptist missionaries worked with other Christian groups to provide nightly worship services and spiritual counseling at the Lago Agrio airport.

Doyle said he knew of one family of 14 that walked toward a main road from deep in the interior. They had eaten nothing for two days and had no money to buy food. They came with only the clothes they were wearing and the children were barefoot. The woman was carrying a baby on her back. They were given oatmeal at the relief station in Lago Agrio as they awaited a transport plane.

Baptist work in the area continued, Doyle said. The nine churches and other preaching points in that part of the country are located northeast of the damage. One of the two biggest churches in the region is located in Lago Agrio, where Missionaries Garreth and Elaine Joiner work.

Robbers...

(Continued from page 1)

located one mile from the city limits in an isolated area.

He added that the Wednesday night attendance was one of the largest in recent years. "They weren't going to be scared away from their church at night," he declared.

"It's simply a sign of the times," Bomar said. "We've discussed for the past 10 years the time when we'd have to have armed security."

Bomar added that the church is thankful for many things after the Monday evening event, especially that the children of those attending the study were not harmed. They were being kept in a building just a short distance away.

Todd, a 17-year Memphis police officer, said one of the robbers took his billfold, which contained his police identification and badge.

"He told me he was going to shoot me if I didn't lie down and stay quiet," Todd said. About a half-minute later he heard the shot and felt the bullet graze him.

Todd assumed he had been shot because the robber had identified him as a policeman.

Terrell said he believed the shot was intended to scare, not wound. He said the bullet went through a folding partition, glanced off a baseboard, and apparently ricocheted off Todd, lying nearby.

To help the church members deal with their fears, Bomar planned a special Sunday morning worship service.

The church's annual "Respect For the Law" Sunday was already scheduled for March 22. During the Sunday School hour, members, including third graders and older, gathered to hear the "Peacemakers," a quartet of Memphis policemen. Bomar asked Lt. Todd to speak during that session.

The worship hour featured testimonies by persons affected by the events of the last week.



Adams



Hendricks



Porter



Hughes

Conference to draw 500 students

About 500 students from across the state will assemble in Nashville to investigate the theme, "I Am the Vine, You Are the Branches," at the State Student Spring Conference April 10-12.

The program will include special speakers, the commissioning of Home Mission Board and Baptist Student Union summer missionaries, and recognition of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's student department director on his retirement.

Activities will be held at First Baptist Church in Nashville, except for the Sunday morning commissioning service, which will be held at the Baptist Sunday

School Board.

William L. Hendricks, professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Nathan Porter, national consultant for disaster relief/domestic hunger/migrant ministries, Home Mission Board, from Fort Worth, Texas; and Milt Hughes, editor of *The Student* magazine for national student ministries, Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, will speak to the students. Darrell Adams of Louisville, Ky., will lead special music.

The state BSU president from Union University in Jackson, Kris Thacker, will preside over the meeting, which will include the annual election of state officers.

Glenn Yarbrough, TBC's student department director, will be honored for his service in Baptist student work for 38 years. He will retire Sept. 15.

The 32 BSUs in Tennessee are supporting 51 summer missionaries for 1987 that will be commissioned during the conference.

A former foreign missionary nurse from Richmond, Va., Mary Saunders, and Alejandro Garcia, the BSU intern at Union University participating in the Tennessee/Venezuela partnership, also will speak.

Other special music will be presented by students that form a conference choir, "The Servant Singers" of First Baptist Church in Martin, "Master Key" of Nashville's Vanderbilt University BSU, and "Son Rise" from the BSU at Cleveland State Community College in Cleveland.

Seminars, regional meetings, and a volleyball tournament also are planned for the conference, which will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and end at noon on Sunday.

Students wishing more information about the conference should contact the TBC student department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027.

McCluskey's mother dies in Knoxville

Reita McCluskey, mother of James McCluskey, pastor of Wallace Memorial Baptist Church in Knoxville and former Tennessee Baptist Convention president, died March 20 at the Hillcrest Beverly nursing home in Knoxville.

She was 83 years old and a member of the East Chattanooga Baptist Church in Chattanooga.

The family received friends at Wallace Memorial Baptist Church after the March 22 morning service and on March 21 at Rose Funeral Home in Knoxville.

The graveside service on March 23 at Greenwood Cemetery in Chattanooga was led by Jay McCluskey, her grandson and pastor of North Cleveland Baptist Church in Cleveland, and Earl Wilson, president and treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation in Brentwood.

She is survived by son, James; a daughter, Patsy Humphreys, of California; seven grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Memorial gifts may be given to the Gideons.

Pastor dies in accident

Williams A. Plemons, pastor of Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Chattanooga, died following an automobile accident March 17 in Chattanooga that injured his wife, Vivian. Another person also was killed in the accident.

Mrs. Plemons is in good condition in Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga. She is financial and office secretary for Hamilton County Baptist Association in Chattanooga.

A native of Tennessee, Plemons had served as pastor of Hickory Valley-Day-spring Baptist Church in Chattanooga for over 25 years, prior to accepting the Woodland Heights pastorate.

He was treasurer of the association, having served in that role for several years, and was a volunteer chaplain at Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga.

The funeral was led by David Myers, director of missions for the association, at Valley View Chapel of Lane Funeral Home in Ooltewah on March 20.

In addition to his wife, survivors include one daughter, Carol Ann Plemons, Chattanooga; two sons, Larry S. Plemons and Allen L. Plemons, both of Chattanooga; one brother, Albert Sidney Plemons Jr., Chattanooga; one sister, Martha Jean Gibson, New Mexico; three grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Waldron Road mission conducts first services

Waldron Road Baptist Chapel in LaVergne held their first worship services March 22.

Sponsored by the Mount View Baptist Church, Antioch, the new mission congregation will meet in temporary facilities until land is purchased for a building.

According to Ralph Duncan, pastor of the Mount View church, 300 families live in the Dove Creek/Blakemore Estates area, and 500 additional homes will soon be built in that general community. There is not a church of any denomination in the area.

Carl Clark, longtime deacon, and Sunday School director at Mount View has been named superintendent of the new mission.

Committee asks Mercer to expel coeds who pose

ATLANTA (BP)— Mercer University has been asked by the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee to expel any student who poses for Playboy magazine.

The appeal came in a resolution passed by the Executive Committee, March 10, despite a statement by Mercer's president that such an expulsion might be illegal.

Mercer, a 5,200-student school affiliated with the Georgia Baptist Convention, has been front-page news in Georgia since Playboy listed it as one of the "top 10 party schools" in the nation. Early in March, a Playboy photographer went to Macon, where Mercer is located, hoping to photograph Mercer coeds for an October issue on students from those 10 schools. Secular news reports indicated 25 Mercer girls volunteered to pose, five of them nude.

Several members of the Georgia Baptist

Executive Committee demanded to know why Mercer President R. Kirby Godsey had not "taken a strong stand" and threatened expulsion for any student who would pose for Playboy.

Godsey responded: "We deeply regret the Playboy issue. It was not initiated by Mercer. We have objected to this inclusion as a 'top 10 party school.' We have talked with students. We have encouraged them not to pose.

"However, we must face civil rights laws which state that anyone 18 years old is an adult. ... It will be an act of civil disobedience to expel a student who poses. ... We have not decided that is the better course of action. ... Obviously, Playboy hopes we will expel a student and bring about a lawsuit, to give them the kind of publicity they seek.

"We made it clear that Playboy could not come on the Mercer campus, and they

have not," Godsey said. "We cannot control actions of adult students off the campus."

Executive committee members also grilled Godsey about recent issues of the student newspapers, The Mercer Cluster, which carried ads for the Playboy photographer and for condoms. Some wanted the editor fired, others wanted the administration to set policies about what students could publish.

Godsey replied: "We consider a student newspaper to be a laboratory for journalism students. But in the last few days, we have drawn up new guidelines which make a distinction between advertising and editorial matters. And we will not allow ads for such items as alcohol, firearms, contraceptives, etc. I find these entirely unacceptable. I regret what happened."

Godsey insisted Mercer has an

"underlying commitment to Christianity and to Georgia Baptists. I believe we are making a strong Christian witness on our campus."

Trustees also were asked to consider keeping Tift College property in Forsyth, Ga., "in the Georgia Baptist Convention family," if Tift is closed.

Tift is a Georgia Baptist female college that has struggled with dwindling enrollment. In February of 1986, Tift trustees asked Mercer to absorb Tift into its program and the merger was approved, effective in June of 1986. Mercer made a pledge to make a "good-faith effort" to keep Tift open at least one year.

In November of 1986, Mercer announced Tift would be closed in June of 1987, when enrollment would be down to 82 students on campus. In the last 30 days, Tift alumni and businessmen in Forsyth have protested the closing and formed "SavTift," an organization to stall the closing and reclaim the property from Mercer.

In the March 10 Executive Committee meeting in Atlanta, SavTift representatives were present but were not allowed to address the committee. The committee approved a report from its own administration committee, which pointed out once "money or property of any kind" is given to Mercer, by charter it is to "be controlled exclusively by the board of trustees" of Mercer.

That resolution urged Mercer trustees to "look favorably at making the Tift College campus available for Georgia Baptist Convention use ... if Tift College is closed."

Dangeau announces room rate changes

The room rates for the Large Church Stewardship Seminar at Fall Creek Falls State Park May 28-29 have increased slightly, reported O. M. Dangeau, the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program/stewardship department director.

The increase is from \$33 to \$36 for a single and from \$45 to \$48 for a double.

"It is the policy of our state parks to periodically undergo rate changes. We hope that this doesn't inconvenience anyone," said Dangeau.

He reminded persons attending the seminary designed for leaders from churches with budgets of one-half-million dollars or more, to send the \$35 registration fee before April 28 to the TBC Cooperative Program/stewardship department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027.

Oklahoma convention cuts CP allocations to SBC

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)— Oklahoma Baptists' board of directors voted unanimously March 17 to temporarily adjust the division of Cooperative Program gifts between state and national ministries.

The change, recommended after months of study by a special committee, increases the amount utilized for Oklahoma missions to 56 percent and reduces the amount forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention to 44 percent. It is effective as of Jan. 1, 1987.

Oklahoma has been one of only three state conventions to divide Cooperative Program gifts evenly, 50-50, between state and national conventions. Florida and Georgia are the other state conventions. The new plan implements an immediate procedure to return Oklahoma to the 50-50 division as quickly as possible.

"We must strengthen for now our own Judean ministry that we ultimately can do more in the uttermost parts of the world," said Bob Hammons, pastor of First Baptist Church of Seminole, who headed the special study committee that was requested by messengers to the state convention last November. "Not to make the adjustment means we would ultimately do less in the uttermost," he said.

Bill Tanner, Baptist Convention of Oklahoma executive director-treasurer who boarded ship as Oklahoma's economy scraped bottom, said: "I detest the fact we have to back down. But we also

have to be practical in what we have to do.

"We are in a serious, critical situation," Tanner said before the vote. He said the state had "picked the pockets" of all its reserves.

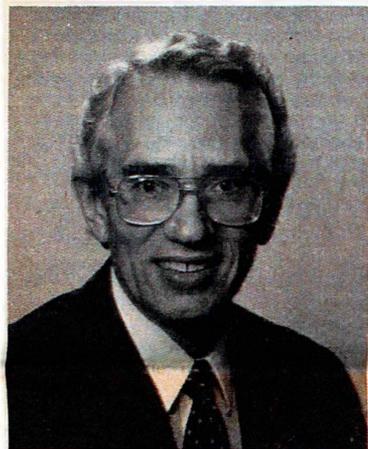
While Oklahoma was increasing the percentage of Cooperative Program gifts it forwards to the SBC from 43.5 percent in 1980 to 50 percent in 1985, Oklahoma churches actually were decreasing the percentage of their gifts they forwarded to the Cooperative Program from 10 percent to 8.9 percent.

On top of that, Oklahoma's economy, based on agriculture and oil, was flying high in the late 1970s when the state's Baptists began their trek to a 50-50 division. The past five years of agricultural depression and crashing oil prices clobbered the state's economic base at the same time Baptists kept reaching for the 50-50 goal.

The 44 percent Oklahoma Baptists will forward to the national Cooperative Program still stands as the third-largest percentage shared by any state convention.

Under the new plan, favorable circumstances will allow a return to 50-50 by 1994. Increases of 1 percentage point to the SBC will be made for each increase of 10 percent in dollars received from Oklahoma churches, not to exceed 1 percentage point per year.

A minimum of one-fourth percentage point increase will be made each year.



Glenn Brown

Oklahoma elects Brown as editor

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)— Glenn A. Brown, associate director of planning and promotion for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma since 1973, was elected editor of the Baptist Messenger by state convention directors March 17.

Brown will assume duties as the seventh editor of the 75-year-old Oklahoma Baptist news journal April 1.

Brown succeeds Richard McCartney who resigned in January to become executive vice-president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth, Texas.

An Oklahoma convention employee since August 1971, Brown was religious education department associate secretary and church training director until moving to the executive office in 1973. For the past 14 years he has been state stewardship director and church administration consultant.

Oklahoma Executive Director-Treasurer Bill Tanner, who recommended Brown to the convention's administrative committee, which recommended him to the full board, said Brown is a man "who knows and understands Oklahoma Baptists."

Born in Porum, Okla., Brown grew up in Shawnee. He attended Oklahoma Baptist University and graduated from Tulsa University. He earned a master of arts degree in educational psychology from the University of Oklahoma.

He has been minister of education and music at several Oklahoma churches.

Check-writing changes alter CP

NASHVILLE (BP)— Modifications in the way several state Baptist conventions write their Cooperative Program checks continue to play havoc with the denomination's monthly unified budget totals.

National Cooperative Program receipts for February were \$10,030,797, or \$852,617 below receipts for the same period last year, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

February receipts were 7.83 percent behind receipts for February 1986, Bennett said. However, receipts for the first five months of the current year are almost \$54.1-million, or 2.5 percent over receipts for the same period of the 1985-86 fiscal year.

The February monthly deviance primarily is the result of changes in Cooperative Program check-writing procedures in several state Baptist conventions, Bennett explained. In

January, some states started writing bi-monthly checks to the national Cooperative Program, rather than the monthly checks that had been the norm.

The positive aspect of this change is that the national Cooperative Program will receive funds based on actual receipts by the state conventions, rather than estimated receipts, he said. The negative aspect — which came about in February — is that until the system gets on-line, some of the conventions' second checks each month do not arrive at the Executive Committee in time to be tabulated with that month's totals.

That was the case in February, when a check from one of the denomination's largest state conventions did not arrive at the Executive Committee that month, producing a 75.3 percent decrease for that state, compared to the previous February.

Editorial

A tribute to a great editor

Editor's note: While the *Baptist and Reflector* is without an editor, the paper will not have an editorial page unless some issue in *Tennessee Baptist* life demands an editorial comment. However, in this, the first issue that Al Shackleford's name does not appear on the masthead below, we use this page to pay tribute to his 10 years as editor.

Alvin Cicero Shackleford, known as "Al" by all but very casual acquaintances, began his new duties last week as vice-president for public relations for the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. Thus ends his 10-year tenure as editor of the *Baptist and Reflector* — a decade of service to Tennessee Baptists.

We believe Tennessee Baptists have lost a spiritual and editorial giant who was loved and respected by Baptists all across the state. Of course, we have not lost him really. Al himself has been quick to point out that he will still be a Tennessee Baptist — his membership continues at Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood, and his love for Tennessee Baptist work didn't diminish when he moved from the state level to the SBC level.

His new role, which includes the directorship of Baptist Press, the denomination's news service, is seen by SBC leaders and observers as a key position, especially in these days of crisis in the SBC. His election itself was controversial. He was elected by a 32-26 vote of the Executive Committee. Ironically, very little opposition was directed toward Al, his orthodoxy, or even stands he has taken through the years. The opposition appeared to be that he was not the choice of fundamental-conservatives.

His work will be carefully scrutinized in the months and years ahead. Tennessee Baptists need to support him with their prayers.

His 10 years of service as editor of the *Baptist and Reflector* have been characterized by fairness and openness.

Fairness

Often during his editorship, critical issues faced Southern Baptists and/or Tennessee Baptists that created serious differences of opinions. Al always tried to present, as objectively as humanly possible, both sides of every issue. When he quoted someone

on one side of the issue, he tried to balance it with a quote from someone with the opposite viewpoint.

Editorially, Al made many comments through the years regarding fairness. Here are a few excerpts from his editorials on the subject:

"Our selection of articles does not always reflect our opinions. Obviously, this cannot be true, since many articles quote opinions of individuals who do not agree with each other!

"The 'Baptist and Reflector' has an obligation to print the news that is of interest to Southern Baptists in Tennessee. This causes us to print articles which are not in agreement with the convictions of the editor, the staff, or the Board of Directors.

"An illustration I often have used is, 'Just because we print an article that a man has died, it does not mean that we wanted him to die — or that we killed him.'

"We make no apology for printing controversial articles. It is my conviction that Baptists are mature enough to face their problems and to talk and to pray themselves to a consensus solution. We pledge to you our desire to bring you the news — good news when we can and bad news when we have to — as completely and as accurately as possible."

When Al began as editor in November 1976, he immediately introduced the "Letters to the editor" feature in the B&R. He sincerely believes that the opinion of a seemingly insignificant Baptist church member in some unheard of Baptist church somewhere is as important as the opinion of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He printed every letter received as long as it met the requirements stated at the beginning of every "Letters to the editor" column. Following is an editorial comment of Al's that sums up his regard for the opinions of all Baptists:

"A 'letters to the editor' column is a vital and necessary part of any paper, and especially is this true of a Baptist state paper. Baptists are correctly strong on the concept that each Baptist has the right to be heard — or to be read."

Openness

Al's commitment to fairness stands right up there with his desire for openness and honesty. The door to his office was always open to any Baptist who had a question about something going on in Baptist life or who had a complaint about the B&R or about anything Baptists were doing. His deep desire was for Baptists to be informed. He lived by the axiom, "Tell the truth and trust the people." The following observations reflect his desire:

"Baptists are strong on the belief that every member can be trusted with the truth. Nothing should be withheld under the concealing cloak, 'The people won't understand.'

"Although Baptist state papers are often accused of doing just the opposite, it is our purpose to continually highlight those great aspects of Baptist life that unite us. Unification does not always come by ignoring problems, but by facing them. We believe there is no problem or need on this earth that Tennessee Baptists — with God's help — cannot deal with adequately, if we know of that challenge.

"The 'Baptist and Reflector' does not belong to the editor, the Baptist building, or the Executive Board, but to the Baptists of Tennessee. It is your paper."

Some of Al's accomplishments as editor further reveal his news philosophy. He was committed to quality, timeliness, and accuracy.

When Al became editor, the B&R was printed in a newsmagazine format. Al introduced the present tabloid format. What that means to the reader is that there is more space available for Baptist news and information at a lower cost. The quality and appearance of the paper also improved.

In 1980, Al worked through the Board of Directors to bring typesetting into the B&R office. Before, the entire paper had been typeset by an outside typesetting establishment — at outside typesetting establish-

ment prices. When we began setting type ourselves, it saved Tennessee Baptists thousands of dollars each year. It also gave us better control of the final product — thus improving the quality. Another advantage was the ability to hold the paper open until only a few hours before printing to allow us to get the most current news to our readers.

Another of Al's accomplishments that helped with timeliness was the ability to receive news from Baptist Press and other news sources through a telephone modem into our computer-typesetter. This allowed us to get Baptist news that happened on Monday into our paper that was printed Monday night. Tennessee was the first state paper to do that, thanks to Al.

Editorial stands

Al was bold in his editorials. Yet, even there, he attempted to be fair.

Among other things, he stood for the Cooperative Program and missions at every level — foreign, home, state, associational, and in the local church. He strongly supported Tennessee's links with Burkina Faso, Venezuela, and Michigan. He advocated better salary and benefits for church staff members. In addition, he editorialized about proper, healthy relationships between the church and its staff. He stood for separation of church and state.

He used the editorial page to keep messengers informed about issues likely to surface at state and national conventions and to evaluate the annual meetings after they occurred.

He spoke out against pornography, immorality, gambling, alcoholic beverages, and any legislative issue that advocated such.

Since gambling is an issue in Tennessee even this week, here are a few of Al's comments on that subject:

"Gambling is wrong because it is a violation of a fundamental principle of Christianity and democracy — the worth of the individual. Our nation was founded on the concept that every person is of value; that every person can achieve as a result of his abilities and service. The empty appeal of gambling is getting something for nothing.

"Gambling is known to be addictive. Wherever gambling exists, credit accounts and bankruptcies increase; and unfortunately, the hardest hit are those in the lower income brackets. Financial strains bring family problems.

"Gambling is a sin against God. It mars His greatest creation — a human personality. Gambling breaks at least two of God's Ten Commandments. It is stealing, because it is taking something from someone else without paying for it. It is coveting. The whole concept of gambling is a person's desire to get something that he has not earned and does not deserve."

Al's editorials always revealed his commitment to God, to the good news of Jesus Christ, to the authority of the Bible, and to the local church.

Staff relationships

Those of us who have served with Al on the B&R staff appreciate his ability to be a friend as well as a boss.

He has expected the best from each of us and encouraged us to settle for nothing less than our best. When we have messed up occasionally, he has not had to reprimand us because he sensed that we knew we had erred and already felt miserable about it.

He gave us freedom to do our jobs to the best of our abilities, yet he was always there to lend a hand when we needed advice or assistance.

Under his leadership, we always worked hard, but there was a camaraderie that encouraged laughter even under the pressures of deadlines.

We also have cried together. We will never forget the strength and support Al gave to us and to family members when Bobbie Durham, editorial assistant, died tragically in a car accident in January 1981.

For all of these things and more, Al, we pay tribute to your 10 years as our editor and pledge to you our prayers as you follow God's will. We will miss your mark on the pages of the *Baptist and Reflector*. CEW

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Fred Isaacs, chairman; Paul Bryant, vice-chairman; Paul Barkley, David Drumel, Ray Fowler, Marshall Gupton, Calvin Harvell, Mrs. Richard Hawkins, James Hutson, Murray Mathis, Calvin Metcalf, Perry Michel, Jerry Oakley, Jere Plunk, Dennis Pulley, James Robertson, Lon Shoopman Jr., and Fred Steelman.

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.

Save the ears

Dear editor:

I would like just once to attend a Youth Evangelism Conference where the sound engineer is not deaf! Please excuse me if I seem a bit bold. The Lord has His spirit on our Youth Evangelism Conference.

Only heaven can record the good that comes from filling the great Vanderbilt Gymnasium twice with youth from all over the state. It truly is a wonderful stewardship endeavor — from the Cooperative Program funds expended to the time and talents of our convention personnel in the planning and execution of the conference.

We also have a responsibility to be good stewards of the hearing ability of our youth. I am well aware that as a rule youth tend to listen to loud music. Time will tell of the irreversible damage done to the hearing of our youth. Do those who plan the convention have a responsibility to be good stewards of the hearing of our youth? I submit they do.

Just because youth listen to loud music, should the volume of the sound reinforcement at the conference be loud also? I don't complain about the music. Frankly, I could have enjoyed all of it, save the volume.

I realize the sound engineer can't please everyone. But when the volume reaches the pain threshold that's too loud and poor stewardship besides. Now I don't complain without a solution. Just turn down the volume! Let's save the "ears" of our youth.

Elwood D. Doss Jr.
123 University Street
Martin, TN 38237

Road to authoritarianism

Dear editor:

Thank you for printing my last letter in which I had mentioned but did not state what the inherent danger of fundamentalism is.

Fundamentalism is leading the Southern Baptist Convention down the road to authoritarianism. This prospect threatens our Baptist heritage of religious freedom.

While theology and morality are important to each of us, fundamentalism is often preoccupied with these to the exclusion of other aspects of Christian life. But the controversy in the SBC is neither theological nor morality. Instead it is power and who has it.

The controversy will not go away by just praying, loving, and talking. It will cease when no one group tries to dominate. The alternative is continual division and ultimately a denominational split.

Many SBC employees, pastors, college personnel, and church workers are deeply concerned but they are afraid to speak up because their jobs and careers may be in jeopardy. So the task falls on laypeople, like myself, who are freer to speak up. I just want to do my part to bring about peace and unity again.

As to the five points of fundamentalism, one is essential, one is not necessarily so, and the other three are a theological mine field. My heart wants to accept and believe them, but my mind has questions. But a person can believe these five points

and be as moral as a Pharisee, and still not have a saving relationship with Jesus.

I know and understand the fundamentalist viewpoint, the sincerity of their convictions, and their sense of commitment to purify the Baptists of "humanism" and "modernism." But most Baptists, even conservatives, would not want fundamentalism as a way of life.

J. E. Pennington
Rt. 2, Box 107J
Johnson City, TN 37001

Called and chosen

Dear editor:

I am writing about a letter written by John Gubicza which came out in the March 11 issue of the Baptist and Reflector which was titled "Women in the pulpit."

When we are in Christ Jesus "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:13).

You know who gives me the right to stand in a pulpit, being called and chosen by God and the Lord Jesus Christ — His works, cross, blood, and name.

"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Corinthians 14:38).

Read Acts 2:17-18.
Norma Jean Simms
146 Cox Circle
Greeneville, TN 37743

AIDS and judgment

Dear editor:

There is a parallel between the AIDS victims and the lepers of the New Testament. Both experience loneliness, rejection, and religious judgment. Both are isolated from society and church.

To many Christians, AIDS is interpreted as "God's expressed judgment upon homosexual behavior." In my opinion God does not punish particular persons or people with a lethal disease.

AIDS is a consequence of sexual promiscuity. In Romans 1 and 2, Paul is concerned about homosexual and heterosexual abuse. Paul includes non-sexual abuses such as envy, gossip, greed, disobedience, etc. It is wrong to state that Paul is singling out judgment upon homosexuals.

In Romans 3:23, Paul states that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are all under God's judgment; we all suffer from irresponsible choices.

Southern Baptist churches must not close their doors and Christians must not close their minds to the victims of AIDS. Jesus Christ reached out and ministered to the lepers. Let us as Southern Baptist Christians minister to the needs of the 20th century lepers, the AIDS victims.

Rhonie F. Black
Southern Baptist Theological
Seminary
P.O. Box 1226
Louisville, KY 40280

H. Gregory to speak to Historical Society

The Middle Tennessee Baptist Historical Society will meet April 6 at 7 p.m. at the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board Building, Brentwood.

Harold Gregory, director of missions for the Nashville Baptist Association for 37 years before he retired, will speak on "Acorns to Oaks," which is also the title of his book about the history of the Nashville association. The meeting is open to the public.

New coalition attacks Koop

WASHINGTON (BP) — A new coalition of conservative, "pro-family" groups and individuals has been organized to counter U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's approach to combating AIDS through sex education in public schools. Seven Southern Baptists are among the 55 founders of the coalition.

Headed by founder and president of Eagle Forum, Phyllis Schlafly, the Coalition for Teen Health criticized Koop at a March 13 news conference at the National Press Club for launching what Schlafly called a "massive" effort to set up clinics in schools across the nation to dispense condoms to public schoolchildren.

"Some people are trying to use panic about AIDS" to launch such an effort, she said at the news conference. Primary among them, she emphasized, is Koop, the nation's chief public health official. In the past, Koop has been praised by conservatives for advocating conservative positions in the current administration.

That perception of the surgeon general changed, however, with his November 1986 report to the nation on AIDS and a speech several weeks later at the annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters. In his report and speech, Koop advocated "basic sexual education" for American schoolchildren, beginning during the elementary years.

In a March 2 letter, the 55 founders of the Coalition for Teen Health asked Koop to urge children and young people to abstain from sexual activities until a commitment is made "to a monogamous, lifetime marriage." Additionally, they urged Koop to call on state legislatures to enshrine that principle in law.

Replying to the letter, Koop wrote March 11 that he always has advocated "a monogamous and mutually faithful relationship" and that those who are unmarried should practice abstinence. But

he reiterated the position that those who choose not to abstain or to practice monogamy should "take every precaution to protect themselves and their partners against infection."

Southern Baptists who joined Schlafly in forming the new coalition and in confronting Koop were Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas, and his wife, Dorothy; Nancy and Anne Pressler, the wife and daughter, respectively, of Paul Pressler, a Texas appeals court judge, Houston; former U.S. congressman Albert Lee Smith Jr., an insurance executive from Birmingham, Ala., and his wife, Eunice; and Ed McAteer of Memphis, founder and president of The Roundtable.

Personal Perspective



By Tom Madden
TBC Executive
Secretary-Treasurer

I found myself focusing upon the last two verses of the ninth chapter of Hebrews recently. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:27-28).

Each one of us has a reservation. The appointment is with death. Ahead of every one of us, unless our Lord returns, is the experience of death.

God hides the future from us so no one of us knows how we will die, but even if we avoid an accident or illness, eventually our bodies will wear out. I believe this is what Paul was talking about when he wrote in Corinthians, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved" (2 Corinthians 5:1). Eventually our human body will not be physically able to make a home for our soul and then God will transfer our soul to a house not made with hands.

There is in these verses a theme of release. We will be released to eternal joy, to no limitations, and will not be subject to discouragement or depression. The writer is talking about the believer. A believer is one born physically and born spiritually and only dies once. The lost person is born once and dies a physical death and also a spiritual death. For the Christian, Christ took our place on the cross and died for us.

A third observation in these verses is that our Lord will return. He will appear a second time without sin and unto salvation. The early Christians believed that every day could be their last day and every worship service could be their last worship service. They had a firm conviction that history was moving towards a consummation and this added a beautiful sense of urgency to every day. Our Lord is going to return. There will be the last worship service and the last invitation and the last soul saved and then our Christ will return.

Our last thought is that of retribution or judgment. For the Christian it will be that of reward. For the lost person it will be that of being condemned forever and eternal punishment. For the saved it will be reward for what we have done for our Lord since we accepted Him as our Saviour. Our sins will be buried in the forgiveness of God.

Pastors to meet in Jefferson City

The subject of forced termination will be addressed by Bruce Grubbs of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville at the April 30 spring meeting of the East Tennessee Pastors' Conference.



Grubbs

During the meeting at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, a panel of pastors and a director of missions will share ways to improve understanding and communication among pastors.

The panelists will be Frank Hawkins, First Baptist Church in Kingsport; Tom Melzoni, Central Baptist Church in Oak Ridge; Bruce Robinson, West Lonsdale Baptist Church in Knoxville; and David Myers, director of missions, Hamilton County Baptist Association.

Guy Milam, pastor of North Knoxville Baptist Church in Knoxville, will also speak.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m., end at 3 p.m., and will include lunch.

Mexicans go to Honduras

MEXICO CITY — Mexican Baptists' new missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Javier Valenzuela, left for Honduras in January to begin their work in that country.

The move marks a new beginning for Mexican Baptist foreign missions.

Home Mission Board hears challenge to reach cities

ATLANTA (BP)— A plan to win America's cities to Christ was greeted with unanimous support from directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

Highlights of the new emphasis call for extending the board's Mega Focus Cities program of evangelizing the nation's metropolitan areas, starting more black and ethnic churches, adding evangelism personnel in major cities, and creating ways to finance church buildings and sites.

The new direction is a response to action taken during the board's October meeting, when directors asked the agency "to explore to the fullest" reaching America's cities with the gospel, explained Bob Banks, interim chief executive officer.

The evangelistic thrust, unveiled during a banquet attended by 230 HMB directors, spouses, and staff members, was backed with a media presentation compiled by the agency's research and metropolitan missions departments and evangelism and missions sections.

"Never has the challenge in the cities been greater. They are filling up with people from every country and from every religion in the world — the world has come to us," Banks stressed. "We have no time to lose. The cities await the message of Jesus, and may I suggest that unless we are successful in reaching our cities for Christ, we will lose America. Even our foreign mission enterprise may be in jeopardy in the days ahead."

The board will boost awareness of the need to reach the cities during its report to the Southern Baptist Convention in June. It also will reinforce the plan at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Centers this summer.

In a report on the cities, board members were introduced to the process by which the agency hopes to evangelize the 44 metropolitan centers, where 51 percent of the nation's residents live. Each of the cities targeted have at least 1-million residents, said Larry Rose, associate director of the metropolitan missions department.

The nation's two largest cities — New

York and Los Angeles and their suburbs — contain more than 30-million people, equal to the combined populations of eight Southern states where the denomination has 17,000 churches.

Yet, only 500 Southern Baptist churches

exist in those cities — one for every 63,000 people — while the eight states have one church for every 2,000 residents, said Clay Price, director of program research for the research division.

Mega Focus Cities, a program to evan-

gelize the cities that was to be phased out in 1991, has been extended through the year 2000 under the new emphasis. The renewed program unites the board's missions and evangelism sections under the joint goal of reaching the cities for Christ.



OVERCOMING ARTHRITIS — Pam Harrell, an occupational therapist at Baptist Hospital's ArthritisCare Center, explains how a built-up handle on a toothbrush protects joints by easing stress on the hand.



EFFECTS OF ARTHRITIS — Nancy Castner, program manager of Baptist Hospital's ArthritisCare Center, shows how arthritis affects a person's joint.

Baptist Hospital opens arthritis center

NASHVILLE — Baptist Hospital has opened the ArthritisCare Center, a new treatment center here for patients affected by America's number one chronic

condition.

"Arthritis strikes one out of every seven Americans. It is an extremely painful condition which has far-reaching effects

on the lives of the people with arthritis and on their families as well," said C. D. Stringfield, president of Baptist Health Care System, Inc. in Nashville.

"In recognition of this, our new comprehensive treatment center is one of the first in the nation to bring inpatient and outpatient arthritis care together in one location," he said.

Physicians John S. Johnson, John S. Sergeant, Joseph W. Huston, and J. Thomas John Jr., whose specialty is rheumatology, serve as medical directors of the new center.

"There is often a sense of frustration and loss of hope among people who have diseases characterized by arthritis, because they often are difficult to diagnose," Sergeant said. "In addition, patients often have to travel to several different locations for prescribed treatment."

"We will be offering at the ArthritisCare Center education and family programs, counseling, physical therapy, occupational therapy, medical care, and surgical care all in one place," Sergeant said.

The newly constructed ArthritisCare Center outpatient facility is located on the first floor of the Baptist Medical Plaza. In addition, the center includes a wing of patient rooms.

The ArthritisCare Center at Baptist Hospital also serves as a treatment and referral source for physicians who want to include some or all of its services for their patients.

In addition, people with arthritis who do not already have a physician or want more information, may contact the ArthritisCare Center at 2000 Church Street, Nashville, TN 34236.

Gatlinburg missionary speaks

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Missions and risks go together, according to Bill Black, a Southern Baptist home missionary who serves as a resort minister in Gatlinburg.

Too often, he said, Christians would rather "play it safe. We never risk ourselves outside of our buildings."

Black, a speaker for the recent home missions emphasis at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville: Ky., pointed out that "the gospel has to do with risks." The goal of missions, he said, "is

to get people to take the risk of becoming a different kind of people."

Black, who serves with his wife, Cindy, at Gatlinburg Resort Ministries, believes the risk element in resort missions "is what makes it exciting."

Resort ministers, he explained, risk being misunderstood by both Baptists who support missions and by those persons who are being reached. Black said he often gets teased about "suffering for Jesus" on the ski slopes because people do not understand the purpose behind his efforts.

On the other hand, rejection by non-Christians is also a constant risk because "the leisure lifestyle is self-redemptive through self-pleasure, and it is so different from the typical Christian work ethic."

Still, he insisted, ministers must take the risk of going beyond tradition where few guidelines exist. Seeing lives change is worth the risk, he observed.

"You never know what you are going to find, but you go," he said. "We must risk ourselves in Jesus' name."

J. Harvey accepts position at BSSB

NASHVILLE — James Earl Harvey has been named January Bible Study consultant in the Sunday School department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Harvey was pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Glendale, Ariz., from 1974 until assuming the new position in February.

He previously was pastor in New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Harvey is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Norman; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

Chattanooga couple moves to Iowa, assumes home missionary duties

Two Chattanooga natives have been appointed missionary associates to Iowa by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

Bill Spencer II, currently director of

missions for the Bethel Baptist Association in Linden, Ala., will serve as director of missions for the North Central and Metro Iowa Baptist associations. His wife, Wanda, currently a part-time secretary with the Linden association, was appointed a family and church worker.

Spencer has served as pastor of several churches including Eldad Baptist Church in Trenton, Nashway Baptist Church in Jackson, First Baptist Church in Gibson, First Baptist Church in Charleston, and Underwood Baptist Church in Florence, Ala. He also served as associate pastor and minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church in Trenton.

He is a graduate of Union University in Jackson and the University of North Alabama in Florence.

Wanda Spencer has served as associational mission study director for the Woman's Missionary Union of Bethel Baptist Association in Linden, Ala., as well as associational media director for the association. She helped organize the association's 1985 World Mission Conference.

The couple has three children.



Wanda and Bill Spencer

Buddhist mother accepts Christ

SINGAPORE — A Buddhist mother accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour after hearing a message on heaven at the funeral of her 10-year-old son, who died from leukemia.

The son had become a Christian earlier and had requested a Christian funeral.

Southern Baptist Missionary Charles Carroll of Fort Worth, Texas, preached the funeral message and later won her to Christ.

Missouri elects Wideman to top executive position

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — Donald V. Wideman was unanimously elected executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention March 17 during a special called meeting of the convention's Executive Board.

Wideman, currently pastor of First Baptist Church of North Kansas City, Mo., will assume office May 11. He will succeed interim executive director Tom

Nelson, who has served since Nov. 7, 1986. Nelson was elected following the Nov. 6 death of Rheubin L. South, the convention's executive director from 1975 to 1986.

Convention President John Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church of Independence, presided over the called meeting, which lasted less than one hour. Search committee chairman Wally Jones presented a report from the 11-member

search committee that reached its recommendation after 10 meetings and 534 hours of work during the past five months.

Jones, pastor of Fee Fee Baptist Church in St. Louis, said the committee received 32 nominations for the position.

"The more the committee talked with Dr. Wideman, the more impressed we were," Jones said. "The final meeting with Dr. Wideman explored in depth his personal convictions about the issues confronting Baptists today — theologically, socially, and denominationally. ... We believe Dr. Wideman will start well as executive director and, even more important, he will wear well."

Questions raised during the executive board discussion included concern over Wideman's comments as 1984-85 Southern Baptist Convention second vice-president. He stated publicly at that time he was denied opportunity for input prior to appointments made by Charles Stanley, who then was SBC president.

"Don's position in all of this was never a controversy with Dr. Stanley nor with the conservative theological position," Jones responded. "The concern was strictly one of procedure — that by bylaw requirement, the officers of the convention were to participate in certain processes. ... As we looked at the record, we never found at any point where Dr. Wideman either by language or by inference indicated anything but the most proper posture in regard to Dr. Stanley

and the whole matter."

Jones added the situation "was a very, very powerful illustration of Wideman's ability to deal with the principles rather than the personalities."

Prior to Wideman's current pastorate in North Kansas City, which he has held since 1973, he has been pastor of Liberty Manor Baptist Church, Liberty; First Baptist Church, Oakville; and Oakland Baptist Church, DeSoto, all in Missouri.

A native of St. Louis, he is a graduate of Southern Illinois University and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Among his Missouri Baptist offices are president and recording secretary of the Missouri Baptist Convention; president of the state Pastors' Conference; chairman of the convention's recent Strategic Planning Committee; a member of the state Executive Board, serving as chairman of the church program committee; and trustee of both William Jewell College and Baptist Health Systems.

In addition to serving Southern Baptists as SBC second vice-president, Wideman has been a member of the SBC Committee on Committees, Committee on Boards, and chairman of the local arrangements committee for the 1984 annual meeting. He also has been a trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a member of the executive council for Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary.

SWBTS trustees add faculty, commend Dilday for statement

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary elected four faculty members, adopted a record \$18.79-million budget and approved a two-track master of divinity degree program at their spring meeting March 9-11.

The board also unanimously commended seminary President Russell Dilday for his role in the "Glorieta Statement" issued by the six Southern Baptist Convention seminary presidents Oct. 20, 1986.

Trustee James T. Draper Jr. introduced the resolution expressing "appreciation to the president for his leadership in the Glorieta Statement." Draper said Dilday had been instrumental in presenting the statement and has "not equivocated from it."

In the Glorieta Statement, the six presidents pledged to help bring an end to the current controversy in the SBC.

New faculty include James C. Denison, instructor in philosophy of religion; Raymond E. Higgins II, instructor in Christian ethics; James T. Spivey Jr., instructor in church history; and Dennis K. Parrish, instructor in communications.

Denison, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Mansfield, Texas, earned the bachelor of arts degree from Houston (Texas) Baptist University, the master of divinity degree from Southwestern, and is currently finishing his doctor of philosophy degree at Southwestern.

Higgins, pastor of Purmela Baptist Church, Purmela, Texas, was previously a special project coordinator for the

SBC Christian Life Commission and Home Mission Board. He earned the bachelor of arts degree from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and the master of divinity degree from Southwestern. Baylor University, Waco, Texas, will award him the doctor of philosophy degree in August.

Spivey, associate pastor of Morningview Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., spent six years in the U.S. Army and was later an Army Reserves chaplain. He holds the bachelor of arts degree from Auburn (Ala.) University, the master of divinity degree from Southwestern, and the doctor of philosophy degree from Oxford University, Oxford, England.

Parrish, producer/director of on-air promotion for the ACTS network of the SBC Radio and Television Commission, has been an adjunct teacher at Southwestern since 1985. He earned the bachelor of arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, and the master of arts in religious education and master of arts in communication degrees from Southwestern.

Changes in the master of divinity degree plan create three new courses, increase requirements in three others, and establish an optional non-language track.

New courses are "Biblical Hermeneutics," a two-hour course for first-year students; "Use of Biblical Language Tools," a two-hour course for the non-language track; and "Pastoral Care of Grieving Persons," a two-hour course.

Requirements in both church history and systematic theology will increase from four hours to six. Also, a two-hour foundations of education class will be required.

MDiv students will complete 92 hours of requirements for a degree, an increase of four hours. Students in the new track will replace language classes with 10 hours in designated electives and the two-hour course on using Biblical language tools.

The 1987-88 budget of \$18.79-million is 2.5 percent larger than the current year's budget of \$18.33-million. It includes a 1.5 percent salary increase for faculty and staff.

Soviet Baptist officials report release of 25 Baptist prisoners

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Twenty-five Baptists are among the prisoners released recently in the Soviet Union, according to two Soviet Baptist officials who visited the United States in March.

Alexei Bichkov, general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, and Michael Zhidkov, a union vice-president and director of their educational division, made the report.

The two men said they have talked with several of the Baptists recently released, including Anatol Redin, a pastor from Rjazan, south of Moscow. He and the others will be resuming their church work, Zhidkov reported. The two Baptist officials said they have sent telegrams or telephone messages to many released prisoners and have visited personally with others.

The men also said Soviet officials have removed from the government code two articles related to alleged "anti-Soviet behavior" under which many religious people have been imprisoned.

Over the past several years, contacts

have increased among churches and leaders of the various Baptist groups, they say.

The All-Union Council represents most of the registered churches, those who have filed required papers with the government. Many prisoners are from non-registered churches in a second organization, the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. Now a third group is emerging — churches registering with the government autonomously. Until the last several years, this was impossible.

Seventy-five churches have gone from non-registered to autonomous registration, Zhidkov said.

One Baptist pastor released from prison told Bichkov that at one time he would have been "excommunicated" for talking with All-Union Council officials; now he can visit them without being reprimanded.

The encouraging signs of prisoner releases and increasing contacts among Baptists comes as Christians in the Soviet Union prepare for the celebration in 1988 of 1,000 years of Christianity in what is now the Soviet Union. Baptists are included on a committee with Russian Orthodox representatives to plan special projects for the year.

Baptist evangelist Billy Graham has expressed hope that he can be with them in 1988, but specific plans have not been announced, the Soviet Baptists reported.

Other possibilities include international conferences, release of books by Christian theologians and historians, and celebrations in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and Vladimir.

The Orthodox Church also has received permission to print 75,000 Jubilee editions of the Bible. Baptists will receive a portion of that printing, but they do not know an exact number, Bichkov said.

Wilbur Lamm dies

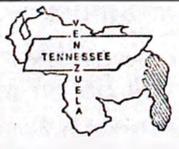
NASHVILLE (BP) — Wilbur C. Lamm, who at one time was the only editor of Southern Baptist adult Sunday School materials, died March 16, at the age of 66.

Lamm was editor of Convention Uniform Series Sunday School materials for adults for almost 30 years from 1955 until he retired in March 1984 due to health problems.

He was instrumental in broadening the options for Southern Baptist adults with the addition of materials for young adults, senior adults, and lessons for the deaf, as well as teacher materials. Lamm designed and edited the first adult Vacation Bible School materials and helped develop both the Life and Work Series and the Bible Book Series.

He began his work with the board following eight years as professor of Bible and Greek at North Greenville Junior College, Tigerville, S.C.

Lamm, a native of North Carolina, was a graduate of Campbell College in Buies Creek, N.C., and earned a bachelor of arts degree from Wake Forest College in Winston-Salem, N.C. He received master of theology and doctor of theology degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.



**Tennessee/Venezuela
Prayer Net Partnership**

—Men from Cookeville, Sparta, and Mt. Juliet will leave March 30 to share their witness in Venezuela and do maintenance work at the Baptist center in Caracas.

—The Venezuelan Christians need prayer as they continue to grow in their faith and develop leadership skills.

Answered prayer: A camp site has been purchased and the land is being cleared so construction can begin.

Home Mission Board plans state paper supplements

ATLANTA (BP)—The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has announced plans to tell the stories of the agency's 3,637 missionaries by producing Missions/USA supplements to Baptist state papers.

The new effort of increasing Southern Baptist awareness of missions in their midsts was unveiled by Bob Banks, interim agency president, during the March board meeting in Atlanta.

"Across this nation we have witnessed the ongoing ministry of home mis-

sionaries," Banks said. "In many ways, they are the best kept secret among Southern Baptists. Hardly a day passes that I do not see and hear of home missionaries who are giving their all in missions and evangelism."

To reach a larger audience of Baptist lay people, Banks said the agency would begin in September a pilot project involving three Baptist state papers. Stories and photographs from Missions/USA, the board's magazine, will be printed and distributed as supplements inserted in the state papers.

During a five-month test period, the supplements will be produced in the Baptist Standard in Texas, the California Southern Baptist and the Biblical Recorder in North Carolina. Slated for September, October, January, February, and March issues, the venture will immediately reach a combined readership of

477,000 in California, North Carolina, and Texas. The supplement will dovetail local and national home missions stories and will appear as a four-page insert in tabloid papers and an eight-page insert in magazine formats.

The board is considering expanding the

supplement, which will appear once monthly in each of the papers, to the remaining 34 state papers with a combined readership of nearly 2-million as funds permit. Banks said the Home Mission Board would be hosting Baptist state paper editors for a briefing in September.

C-N adds associate degree

JEFFERSON CITY — Carson-Newman College President Cordell Maddox has announced the addition to the college's curriculum of an associate of arts degree in Christian ministries.

Beginning with the 1987 fall semester, Carson-Newman will merge its present Bible School program into a college credit program of basic preparation in the area of Christian ministries. The new program will be primarily an evening and extension program.

The associate degree program will serve ministers who want to improve their pastoral skills, as well as persons who desire professional training for the ministry, but who currently do not plan to complete a baccalaureate or seminary degree. Laypersons interested in religious studies which will enhance their personal growth or their participation in local church ministries also will find the program beneficial.

"The curriculum is well-defined, yet flexible in that it allows for a diversity of

goals for individual students," said Maddox.

"The beginning of the associate of arts degree program represents a natural progression of the work we have been doing with the Bible School," said William J. Purdue, director of the Bible School.

Since 1979, this division of the college has offered non-college-credit courses through its diploma program in Christian ministry. Students enrolled in the Bible School prior to fall 1987 may continue to earn credits toward the diploma or transfer to the associate degree program.

All work completed in the associate of arts degree program may later be counted toward a baccalaureate degree. The associate of arts degree will require 66 semester hours of study, 36 of which will be in general education.

According to Roy Dobyns, vice-president and academic dean, the program has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The new program will be housed in the religious studies division of the college.

Persons interested in further information about the program may contact William Blevins, chairman of the religious studies division, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, TN 37760.

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By Arnold Carl Westphal

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Unreportable Statistics: caring cannot be measured by numbers alone



Gerald L. Stow
Executive Director
and Treasurer

Tennessee Baptist
Children's Homes

"And there are many other things that Jesus did..." (John 21:25)

Quite often it is my privilege and responsibility to report various statistics of our Children's Home. In fact, the most often asked question is "How many

children are at the home?" The most important statistic, however, may never be reported. I call it the unreportable statistic.

One such unreportable statistic happened this week. A young lady who had been in our Jennings Ministry at Memphis several months ago was forced to leave her home. Questions in her mind must have been many: Where will I go? Who will take me in? Who will understand? She ended up at the door of the Jennings Building at the West Tennessee Baptist Children's Home. She was warmly greeted by our houseparents. After some prayers, tears and Christian

guidance, a solution was found and the young lady was on her way. This experience will not be found in any reports, but God recorded the love and compassion shown by our TBCH staff.

Another unreportable statistic took place recently when a father called to ask for help with his daughter who had become pregnant out of wedlock. The family spent some time visiting with our staff and later decided not to use the services of TBCH. The father expressed deep appreciation for the help given to his family in this crisis. This experience will not be entered into the statistics for the week or

the month, but was certainly noted by our Lord. As a crucial time in the life of this family, TBCH stood with them at the crossroad of family crisis.

At the present we are caring for 247 persons through the various ministries of TBCH. These are reportable statistics, but how thankful we are to God for the many unreportable times we can share God's love with those in need. You make all this possible by your faithful support to TBCH. Begin now to pray about your involvement in helping us reach our Mother's Day offering goal of \$720,000.

WEST TENNESSEE

Daily log relates personal touch of love

At the Memphis campus each set of houseparents keeps a daily log of the important happenings in regard to the children. These are later discussed in a weekly Cottage Team meeting in which a broad base of support is utilized to minister to children having special difficulties. The following is a notation taken from one of these logs. It reveals the deep hurt of a child and the loving response of a caring houseparent. (In respect for privacy, the names have been changed.)

"Keith woke us up having nightmares about his mother. He had found out that she was moving down in Mississippi and would not be able to see him very often. He was crying before he went to bed. He later had nightmares that something was going to happen to his mother. Keith was really crying and upset. Bob talked to Keith and hugged him for five minutes. While Keith sobbed, Bob prayed with him. Then Keith was all right and went back to bed."

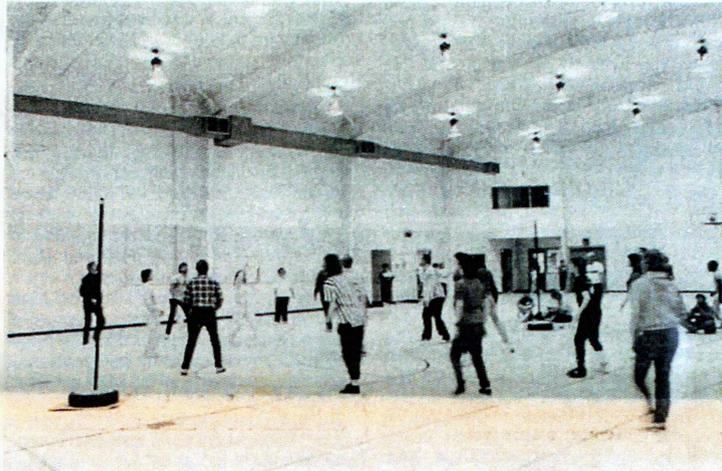
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Volleyball is a major part of the activities on the Chattanooga campus.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Youth challenged by marathons

On a recent Saturday, the entire campus was divided into two teams. For the next eight hours, we played a marathon basketball game with everyone—children and staff—on campus participating. The goal of the afternoon was to score as many points as possible. The Reds scored 187 points and the Blues scored 175 points. The next Saturday afternoon we played volleyball for five hours. The Red team scored the most points again with a total of 189. The Blues finished with 171 points.

The activities program is a

'Evening of enchantment' enjoyed

The Gregg Activities Building on the Franklin campus was turned into an "Evening of Enchantment" on February 14. Our staff provided a delicious meal for all the youth in grades 6 through 12. As the evening approached, the boys visited a local florist to pick up corsages for the girls they were taking to the banquet. Upon arrival at the

"laboratory" for the enhancement of the total child. We seek to build up each facet of the child's life—his spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and social being. The child and young person is encouraged to find himself and push beyond his limits even as our Lord did. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:54)

As we learn more about ourselves through activities, we learn more about relating to others in the Franklin home.

banquet, the youth had their pictures taken in front of a backdrop made by three of the youth.

Seven of the youth entertained those in attendance with a skit about famous couples. Several staff present related to the group about their proposal. The evening climaxed with a devotion on love.

EAST TENNESSEE

Sunday school class provides food, and good fellowship

The Adult I Sunday School Department of Red Bank Baptist Church in Chattanooga provided supper and fellowship for all the children on the Chattanooga campus on February 28. Their purpose was two-fold. They provided an evening of rest and relaxation for the houseparents, while they had fun and fellowship with the children.

The big event for the evening was the volleyball tournament between children and adults. (Don't ask the adults who won!) Needless to say, a large number of the adults from George Smith's Sunday School Department were worn to a frazzle.

These adults are good sports and outstanding Christian role models for the children. Their goal of building relationships with the children continues to be realized as they minister in love to the children and staff.



BIBLE BOOK SERIES
Lesson for March 29

Jesus appears in Galilee

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

Basic Passage: John 21
Focal Passages: John 21:3-6, 12-19

The Gospel of John has always been one of my favorite New Testament books. I wrote a book called *Invitation to the Feast* which was published by Broadman Press. There is a section (pages 23-25) which deals with the 21st chapter of John. Since the material in the book is appropriate for this week's lesson, I will repeat it here.

"Arthur Pendenys once was quoted in the *New York Times*: 'A good meal makes a man feel more charitable toward the whole world than any sermon.' Our lord surely had this thought in mind as He prepared breakfast on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias.

"You can find and read the story of our Lord as breakfast chef recorded in John 21:1-14. He knew that Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and two disciples not named had been fishing for a long time, and they were, no doubt, tired. After all, they had been out all night without catching a thing. They were hungry, weary, and confused. The gospel writer relates that the risen Christ prepared breakfast for those tired fishermen.

"The thought is beautiful — the Son of God as a chef, a servant. Jesus was practicing what He taught and preached. 'And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant' (Matthew 20:27). Jesus was concerned with the physical needs of His followers then, and He is now. But spiritual matters are His primary concern.

"John does not record any of the Master's parables in his gospel. He is eager for us to know Who Jesus is and how faith in Him gives eternal life. This gospel was written about A.D. 90. John reflects back on that breakfast he and six other disciples had with the Christ. So vivid an experience did John have that he even numbered how many fish were caught. After Jesus yelled to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some!' they obeyed, and those bone-weary men caught 153 fish!



Bush

"Jesus had revealed Himself to the disciples before this breakfast appearance. Why were they somewhat confused and why were they back in the same old rut? In 21:12, John states that the disciples knew it was the Lord standing on the shore. And yet, they were doing the same old things.

"We 20th century disciples must be kin to those early disciples. Even after Christ has revealed Himself to us, we continue denying His power to make the situation different. Like those seven disciples of old, we miss the point of what the kingdom of God is all about.

"Christians have gotten out of their beds many a morning, had breakfast, and then gone through the day with little or no follow-through in spreading the gospel, the good news. This is true, even though people who need the Bread of Life are around Christians every day.

"William Hull, in his commentary on the Gospel of John (*The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Volume 9, p. 373), wrote: 'To Jesus, however, men were more than sheep or fish. To fish for fish is to take them from life into death, whereas to fish for men is to take them from death into life (cf. Mark 1:17).'

"Mark states that Jesus said to them: 'Follow Me and I will make you become fishers of men' (Mark 1:17, NASB). 'Come with me, and I will teach you to catch men' (Mark 1:17 GNB/TEV). When did Jesus speak these words to the disciples? He had given this same invitation to several of these same disciples by the same seashore about three years before this on-the-shore breakfast. And here they were putting the physical aspects of life ahead of spiritual. Does that behavior sound familiar?"

It could be that if both clergy and laity focused their attention more often on how their individual lives were counting for Christ, they would have less and less time to worry about or criticize one another (see verses 20-22).

John ends this gospel emphasizing that it was not possible to record all the works of Jesus. This same Jesus can work mightily through you and me if we will humble ourselves and pray and boldly witness and minister to people.

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES
Lesson for March 29

Before the council

By W. Fred Kendall II
vice-president for religious affairs
Belmont College, Nashville

Basic Passages: Luke 22:31-34, 54-71
Focal Passage: Luke 22:54-71

Peter may have been on the right or wrong side — but he never straddled the fence.

For example, Peter was the only disciple who dared walk on water to go to Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 14. Where were the other disciples? They remained in the boat and trusted the security of the boat built by human hands.

The men trusted in what they could see.

They did not trust the supernatural, miraculous power of the Lord enough to get out of their "conventional" boat and walk on the water as He had done.



Kendall

Peter's denial (Luke 22:54-62)

When Jesus was arrested, the disciples fled (Matthew 26:56). But, again, Peter was the only disciple (the possible exception was John) to return and follow Jesus when He was being tried in the house of the high priest. Peter may have followed Him "afar off," but he followed Him, which took tremendous courage.

While in the courtyard of the high priest, three people claimed to recognize Peter as a disciple of Jesus. Peter strongly denied each time that he even knew Jesus. It was then that the cock crowed, as Jesus had predicted (Luke 22:34).

Then, Jesus looked at Peter. It was a look of hurt — but of deep love. Peter wept bitterly.

Judas also "repented" when he betrayed the Lord (Matthew 27:37). But his repentance was not genuine. Judas only regretted what he had done. There was no change of heart in Judas. Instead of committing suicide, Judas could have done what Peter did — turn to the Lord in true repentance and faith. Think what a trophy of grace Judas would have become.

Tears alone are not sufficient when we sin against the Lord. But the tears of this strong, proud fisherman revealed something great about him — he deeply loved the Lord. The tears revealed what was in his heart when he had entered the courtyard.

Peter had risked his life to follow Jesus, especially since he had wounded one of

the men who came to arrest Jesus in the garden. But Peter had lost his nerve. He did not however, lose his faith in Jesus Christ.

Before anyone casts a stone at Peter, we must remember that Peter at least tried to follow Jesus. The other disciples fled.

Jesus knew what was in the heart of Peter. One of the first things Jesus wanted to do after His resurrection was to see Peter, which He did (Luke 24:34). Later, Jesus forgave Peter and recommissioned Him by asking Peter if he loved Him three times — to cover every denial (John 21).

A tremendous fear of every person is failure. Jesus focused upon this human trait in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25). The one talented man buried his talent because he was afraid. Peter did not "bury his talent." He may have failed sometimes, but he was never on the fence.

This gives every Christian hope. Which one of us who is serious about living the Christian life has not launched out in some mission for Christ and lost our nerve? Which one of us has not needed to take a stand for our Lord and failed to do so? Some have not even wept.

Failure is extremely painful, but failure for the Christian need not be final. All we need to do is turn to the Lord, repent, and place our faith in Him. He will forgive and recommission us.

No person wants to fail, but there are great lessons to be learned in failure, as Peter later revealed in the inspired Biblical books he wrote.

Peter was slowly transformed by the Lord into a strong leader. It took years to turn "sand" into a "rock."

Abused by soldiers (Luke 22:63-65) The Temple guards abused Jesus. They blindfolded, smote, and blasphemed Him.

One of the tragedies of human life is that there is so much brutality in our world. Many people cannot be entrusted with power over others. The Philippian jailer was transformed from a jailer who beat prisoners into one who bathed the backs of Paul and Silas after Jesus Christ became His Saviour and Lord (Acts 16:33).

Political and theological questions (Luke 22:66-71)

The religious leaders asked Jesus: "Art Thou the Christ?" This was an attempt to trap Jesus into saying He was a king (Messiah), which would have caused the Romans to think He was attempting to lead an insurrection against Rome. Jesus did not answer the question. He knew their minds were made up to kill Him.

Jesus described Himself as the "Son of Man." He stated that he would eventually assume power. He would be seated at the right hand of God, and those accusing Him would have to stand before Him.

Then the leaders asked: "Art Thou then the Son of God?" This question was designed to entrap Him as a blasphemer. Jesus would not deny His relationship with His Father. He answered: "Ye say that I am."

Those questioning Jesus were then ready to put Him to death.

Peter became a key leader in the early church. He was characterized by great courage, strength, faith, and spiritual power. In 1 Peter 5:1, he wrote that he was "a witness of the sufferings of Christ."



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| Mon. April 6, 7:00 P.M. | Church History Drama Directed by Fran Powell |
| Tue. April 7, 7:00 P.M. | Rev. Robert L. Sheffield |
| Wed. April 8, 7:00 P.M. | Rev. Roy W. Babb |
| Thur. April 9, 7:00 P.M. | Rev. James H. Powers |
| Fri. April 10, 7:00 P.M. | Rev. W.C. Kirk |
| Sun. April 12, 11:00 A.M. 2:00 P.M. | Reception Following Service Rev. Daniel J. Martin Lunch Following Service Song Praise Service |

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LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES
Lesson for March 29

Obeying the Master

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

Basic Passage: Luke 16:1 to 17:10
Focal Passage: Luke 17:1-10

Robert E. Lee sent a memo to Stonewall Jackson, "At your convenience, see me on a matter of not much importance." That night, during a downpour of rain, Jackson appeared at Lee's door. "You wished to see me, sir." Startled, Lee said, "Gracious, Jackson, I said at your convenience, not on a night like this."



Wood

The subordinate looked at his superior and said, "Your wish is my command, and this officer delights in prompt obedience." When we accept Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, we assume an inescapable obligation to follow our Master's orders.

The lesson this week concludes a six-unit study on "Values of the kingdom." Comparing Luke and John, we conclude that Jesus, during His last six months, came to Jerusalem for a three-month ministry. It probably started immediately before or during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Encountering increased hostility, He withdrew across the Jordan for a brief ministry in Perea. He left when He received word of Lazarus' sickness, which resulted in death. After raising him, Jesus withdrew northward for a brief ministry and joined a party of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for the Passover.

The events chosen for study this week probably took place during the brief Perea ministry. Scholars find difficulty locating a general theme in this material, but none is necessary. There is a series of remarks from Jesus reflecting His urg-

ing the people to be completely dedicated and obedient.

The title chosen by our editors is excellent - "Obeying the Master." Though "positive thinking" is usually best, let us summarize with some negative exhortations based on the Scriptures.

Never offend a weaker person (17:1-2)
The "little ones" probably refers to young Christians though, of course, the principle can apply to any weak person. Our liberty in Christ is a wonderful thing. We are freed from the shackles of a legalistic approach to right and wrong. This, however, places on us an awesome responsibility.

The English expositor G. Campbell Morgan had a sermon entitled "The limits of liberty." Paul told the Christians at Corinth that all things "were lawful" for him but all things "were not expedient" (1 Corinthians 10:23). We must never cause others to stumble by our careless living.

Never hold a grudge (17:3-4)
A proper understanding of forgiveness is important. Jesus focused on the one who had been mistreated. That person should immediately go to the offender. To sit and sulk can only bring an unhealthy attitude. If a person has hurt you, tell that person. Perhaps the act was unintentional. If the person apologizes, forgive him or her immediately.

A great Christian of another generation, speaking of forgiveness, said that "the word is not used with the thin significance of effeminate emotion. The forgiveness of the New Testament is not emotional, but motional; not pathetic, but energetic; not a matter of cheap tears, but of sacrificial service. It is more than pardon, it is chivalry. It is more than the withdrawal

of the sword, it is the conversion of the sword into a ploughshare. It is the destructive transformed into the constructive, and employed in positive culture.

"And such a spirit, by the teaching of the Master, will assuredly keep the road open for a sinful brother's return, and we shall be called 'the repairers of the breach, the restorers of paths to dwell in.'"

If one is weak and repeats the sin but asks forgiveness, do it again and again and again! Holding a grudge hurts the holder more than the "holdee."

Never give up faith (17:5-6)
God had spoken in various ways in Old Testament days, but in Jesus Christ He had inaugurated a new era in His dealing with people. The New Covenant introduced a new element.

Love must predominate. Jesus showed us the greatest example of it in His life and death. We must never lose faith in the fact that love can win any victory. To live the way He lived and care as He cared may "nail us to a cross," but it will raise us up again in victory. Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt! Cling to faith beyond the forms of faith!

Never become too proud (17:7-10)
Even when we have obeyed complete-

ly, we have only done our duty. The greatest Christians are unconscious of their greatness.

When asked the secret of his greatness as a Christian, William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, blushed. He said, "I have never thought of myself as great, but if there is one secret to my life, this has been it. God has had all of me there was to be had. There have been many people with far more ability, but I resolved long ago God was going to have all that there was of William Booth."

The existence and work of the Salvation Army testifies to the dedicated obedience of a truly great Christian. May we go and do likewise!

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Terrorists give God a bad name

Editor's Note: Following is the first of a three-part series exploring the relationship between terrorism and religion.

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE (BP) — The 1980s have not been good for God's reputation.

Of course, religious traditions relate that Jesus healed the sick and lame, Jehovah created and loved mankind, and Allah dictated a code for living. But now their followers are killing, maiming, and frightening thousands of innocent people.

In Northern Ireland, Protestants and Catholics battle it out. In Lebanon, Muslims blow up Christians while Christians shoot Muslims while Jews retaliate from across the border in Israel. In India, Sikhs kill for a homeland, as do Jews and Muslims in Palestine. And in the United States, Christians bomb abortion clinics.

How, in God's name, can people do these things to each other?

"Religion involves emotion; strong religion involves strong emotion. If you believe strongly you act; you participate in the world, try to change it," explains Glenn Igleheart, Southern Baptists' former interfaith witness leader and now state director of missions in New York.

"Terrorism in most major religions is

justified by either a Scripture tradition or theological premise based on a holy writing or the leaders of the faith," adds George Braswell, professor of world religions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Every religion has had its terrorists that either fight within it or outside of it."

Despite terrorism's public identification with religion — How many times has a reporter on the nightly news said, "Responsibility for the incident has been claimed by the such-and-such religious sect . . ." — its motives usually are broader than faith alone.

"There are in each religion plenty of people who try to use the predominant religion of the country to justify political steps they want to take under any circumstances. Therefore, religion becomes an excuse for terrorism rather than a reason," says George Sheridan, regional interfaith witness coordinator for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

That is understandable, because "the hopes and political aspirations of a nation entwine themselves with the religion of a people," explains Larry Braidfoot, director of Christian citizenship development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"The religion of a culture has an enor-

mous amount to do with the hope of a culture," Braidfoot says. "One of the things that happens with any terrorism is that political and social frustration which issue in violence wind up getting sanctioned by the religion of the people."

That phenomenon is bound up in what Sheridan calls "crisis of cultural identity," where factors such as religion, nationalism, politics, economics, and social/ethnic culture blend together and produce violence.

Religion sometimes is the spark that sets this dangerous mixture aflame, says Braswell, noting the "authoritative power" of many religions throughout history has stirred up violence over issues that were economic, political, and social as well as religious.

Consequently, religion and culture "enhance and constantly refine each other," Braidfoot explains. The source of terrorism cannot be blamed exclusively on one or the other. However, religion is dynamite in the hands of the cultural terrorist: "When religion sanctions or is interpreted as sanctioning terrorism, it raises it to a level of intense energy it might not have without religion. Religion gives terrorism a sense of moral passion, a sense of conviction that would not be possible for a non-religious person."

The problem often is compounded by a "mood or psychology of desperation," adds Braswell. That is seen in what Igleheart calls "a confrontational style of facing society."

Minority peoples, such as groups in the Middle East, who are denied certain rights over many years, embody this mood, Braswell says: "A problem such as the Palestinian situation breeds generation after generation of discontent. They have no opportunity any day of their lives but to hear, 'We've been treated this way; we have no rights.' And so they form militias; that's all they know. And they are justified by all they've been taught."

Braidfoot describes this as "not a sense of hopelessness, but a real sense of scarcity of options." Terrorists seem to have developed "pessimism about gradualism — social reform brought about gradually through an electoral process — a pessimism about the ruling powers bringing about change."

"If there was complete hopelessness," he says, "there would be no terrorism."

That thought produces both good news and bad. The good news — hope apparently remains a part of the fabric of humanity. The bad news — terrorism is bound to continue. And God will get His share of the blame.

Crisis conferences offer occasion to learn, hope

By Tim Nicholas

ATLANTA (BP) — The jokes are getting grim.

A Natchez, Miss., geologist told a group of Baptists recently that in addition to AIDS there is now a problem called RAIDS — "Recently Acquired Income Deficiency Syndrome."

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, along with state conventions and local associations, is sponsoring a series of crisis conferences for farmers, oil industry workers, and ministers.

Both American farmers and oil industry workers have been hit with economic reversals represented primarily by drops in farm and oil prices. Mississippi Gov. Bill Allain in his recent state of the state address said farm and oil problems account for 2 percent of the state's unemployment.

In meetings held in Mississippi — others are scheduled in Missouri and Louisiana — the speakers, some victims of the crisis, said people in crisis need friends.

Bob Neill is a self-professed "back-slidden Baptist" from Leland, Miss., an almost-former farmer who is writing a book, his second, called, *How to Lose Your Farm in 10 Easy Lessons and Cope With It*.

After telling 95 participants at the meeting in Cleveland, Miss., about his attempted suicide, Neill talked about how a person begins to feel desperate: "You

get to the point where you think the God that makes it rain and makes it dry must have something against (you) personally. When a fellow thinks God doesn't love him anymore, he's near the end of his rope."

Neill said he had been a Christian for 15 years and an active church member before his financial setbacks. "This may happen to you," he told the farmers. A person "may feel isolated from family, friends, and God. When you hear Fred has problems and ain't gonna get financed, you cannot be a friend in the good times only."

Neill said nothing can be done on an individual basis "about the way the government's messed up Fred. But you can go down there and take him a ham. He ain't gonna be as much fun to talk to as he used to be — but that's when he needs you. If he's got to the point where he believes God does not love (him), he's got to see God through you."

Another speaker to the farm group meeting in Clarksdale, Miss., and in Greenville, Miss., echoed Neill's sentiments. Methodist Minister Milton Boyd, outlining his various farming disasters, said, "I thought about blowing my brains out. I thought about shooting some others. . . but I knew I had to meet my Master on the other side."

Boyd said Americans are becoming too individualistic to help each other out of binds: "And we farmers are the world's worst. We must be community. We must come back to when the barn burns down everybody comes over to raise a barn."

He added: "Who owns the land? God owns. We tend."

In an interview at an oil crisis meeting in Natchez, Miss., the wife of a geologist admitted, "Other people feel uncomfortable around us."

Kitty Kyzar, whose husband, John, has been laid off and now is doing independent consulting, said it does not hurt her to tell others that her husband is unemployed or that they cannot afford to go out to eat as often as before.

"What hurts is that people stop inviting," she admitted. "I'd rather them ask me so I can say we can't go this time, please ask us again. In other words, don't disassociate."

Kyzar said parents need to tell children exactly what is going on in the family so that when other children ask, "Why doesn't your daddy go to work anymore?" they will understand.

"When things get bad and we don't know where to turn, we read the Bible and pray together," said Kyzar, among whose three children, one, Russell, is in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, planning for a foreign missions career in Costa Rica.

Longtime family farmers Leroy and Dorothy Johnson, who live near Shelby in the Mississippi Delta, just handed back 1,600 acres and their home place to the federal land bank because they could not make payments.

"You get kind of numb and have to close it off, maybe don't participate in church as much because you have enough to handle. You center down on your own," said Mrs. Johnson, who, with her husband, is a member of First Baptist Church of Clarksdale.

The Clarksdale crisis meeting was the first they had attended. "It's definitely good for us," said Leroy Johnson, who began 38 years ago as a sharecropper and graduated to renting, then owning, land. "Farmers are usually silent people as far as their own problems are concerned."

"We knew that without the Lord we wouldn't come through this," said Mrs. Johnson.

"I don't care how strong your faith is, you're still going to walk with that pain everyday," she added. She said non-farmers do not seem to understand. They seem to believe the only change is that some farmers who once were wealthy are now in financial reversals. "At 60 years of age, we're too old to retrain or find another job. Others don't understand that farmers have lost that way of life," Mrs.

Johnson lamented.

Added her husband, "This country stands to lose something precious."

Career loss is "a major wound that takes time to heal," explained Stan Rushing, a pastor turned counselor. "After the stages of grief — shock and numbness, then guilt and despair, then gradually acceptance — I'd add a final stage where you become a wounded healer . . . the best healer of all."

Rushing told the groups, "A loving presence can heal in ways that words can never do. The greatest resource available is God's outrageous grace. Nothing in all this world, not a farm crisis or any other crisis, can separate us from the love of our Lord."

Gary Farley, associate director of rural-urban missions at the Home Mission Board, told groups about various denominations offering help for farmers. He said he hoped to get agricultural missions groups to discuss domestic problems.

But Farley said: "There are no immediate solutions. I don't see anybody really smart enough to get us out of this mess. We need prayer."

Last week's Bible Puzzle answers

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"A man shall be commended according to his wisdom" (Prov. 12:8).

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