

# Baptist and Reflector

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News journal of Tennessee Baptist Convention

## Messengers face host of SBC issues

By Dan Martin

ST. LOUIS (BP) — Messengers will face a host of issues when they assemble in St. Louis June 16-18 for the 1987 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

One thing which figured prominently in the last two conventions — 1985 in Dallas and 1986 in Atlanta — will be conspicuously absent: huge crowds. The last two conventions have been the largest in the history of the 142-year-old convention, with Dallas drawing 45,519 registered messengers and Atlanta 40,987.

Convention planners are preparing for 25,000 to 28,000 messengers, although some experts predict the totals could go even lower, to around 23,000 or 24,000.

They point to lessened interest in the 1987 annual meeting, smaller facilities, and the fact gatherings of the SBC in St. Louis have always featured smaller crowds.

For instance, in 1980, the last time the SBC met in St. Louis, attendance dwindled to 13,844 from the previous year in Houston, when registration was 15,760. In 1971, attendance was 13,716, nearly the same as the previous year in Denver (13,692) which is not a center of Baptist strength. In 1961, attendance in St. Louis was 11,140, down from 13,612 the previous year in Miami Beach, also not a center of Baptist strength.

However, the expected lower attendance probably will be offset by the relatively small size of the Cervantes Convention Center. One planner said St. Louis' convention center is "a wonderful place for a convention of 18,000 to 20,000, but if we go over 30,000 here, we're in real trouble." So, even with the reduced size of the convention, the facilities may feel as crowded as the mammoth meeting halls of Dallas or Atlanta.

Informed observers of the convention say the annual meeting is the object of lessened interest this year. In the previous years, political rallies, activities, and rhetoric blazed in advance of the June meetings. This year, there is a marked absence of "drum-beating" sessions by conservatives and moderates to turn out the vote.

While there have been efforts to stimulate interest in the 1987 annual meeting, they have been less than in 1986 and 1985. Some moderate forces have indicated they don't want to fight anymore, and reports are circulating some churches, which in the last two years sent their full complement of messengers, probably will either send only a token messenger or two or will not come at all.

The 1987 annual meeting is the ninth in an announced 10-year effort to turn the convention to a more conservative stance which began in 1979 in Houston.

The conservative campaign has focused on four main planks: elect a conservative president who will appoint a conservative Committee on Committees, which will nominate conservatives to places on the Committee on Boards. The Committee on Boards, in turn, will nominate like-minded people to serve in places of responsibility on the 20 boards of trust of the SBC.

If the report of the 1987 Committee on Boards is accepted, the effort to gain conservative control of the national boards will be successful, as by most counts conservatives will have a voting majority on all but one national entity. Only on the board of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., will moderates still maintain a fractional majority. That, experts say, is because Southern seminary has the largest board of

all of the seminaries (60 members) and trustees may serve two five-year terms.

Highlights facing messengers will be:

• **Presidency** — SBC President Adrian P. Rogers of Memphis has announced his willingness to be nominated for a new term as president. If elected, Rogers will be the first man in nearly 40 years to serve three terms as president.

He served in 1979, but declined a second term. He was elected again in 1986 and has announced his willingness to serve again "if the brethren want me." The last man to serve three terms was R. G. Lee, one of Rogers' predecessors at Bellevue Baptist Church, who served three consecutive terms, 1949-51. Now, SBC bylaws limit a president to two consecutive terms, although a person may wait at least one year and be elected again.

Expected to be nominated against Rogers is Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, who is not an announced candidate but has said he will allow anyone to nominate him who feels he can make a contribution to the convention. Charles Redmon, pastor of First Baptist Church of Sulphur Springs, Texas, has announced he will nominate Jackson.

• **Peace Committee** — The 22-member SBC Peace Committee will make its final report during the 1987

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## Nashville group forms PAC

By Charlie Warren

Just days after Tennessee's Supreme Court ruled that churches which spend money to present their views on referenda issues are political action committees, a group of Nashville area ministers formed a PAC to fight pari-mutuel gambling.

By organizing themselves as a PAC, the informal coalition of ministers have protected their churches from having to be considered PACs, which many consider to be a conflict of the principle of separation of church and state.

The PAC would become the legal entity through which individuals or church bodies could contribute to support anti-gambling advertising.

The Tennessee high court upheld Tennessee Attorney General Michael Cody's opinion that churches which spend at least \$250 on a referendum issue are

political action committees and must file financial disclosure statements, including the names of individuals who contribute \$100 or more.

The Nashville ministers, who represent churches from seven denominations, will work through the "independent" PAC to try to defeat a horse racing referendum in Davidson County.

The referendum will appear on the Aug. 6 ballot if supporters gather enough signatures on a petition.

The PAC is scheduled to meet again June 10 at 10 a.m. at Nashville's Woodmont Baptist Church.

In addition to noting the moral implications of pari-mutuel gambling, the group plans to try to show that the horse-racing industry would be an economic liability to the area. They hope to accomplish this through newspaper and radio advertising and through "fact sheets" on the racing industry.

On June 1, Tennessee Baptist pastors and other church leaders attended a Nashville Baptist Association event to discuss the pari-mutuel issue. Hank Hillin, retired FBI agent, told the group, "Organized crime is coming to Tennessee when we get pari-mutuel betting as sure as night follows day."

Another speaker, Larry Braidfoot, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, presented research documenting that the horse-racing industry is losing money in other states.

"How is Nashville going to be helped by a track that will probably lose money, with horse breeders that will probably lose money?" he asked.

Bill Sherman, pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church, warned the group that they will face ridicule.

"They're going to manipulate your image and try to make you look like a walleyed screaming preacher who wants to consign everybody to you-know-where," Sherman said.

(Continued on page 2)

## SBC announces emergency number

ST. LOUIS — A special temporary switchboard has been installed at the Cervantes Convention Center for use by those needing to contact those attending next week's Southern Baptist Convention.

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

Calls should not be made to the Cervantes Convention Center office, but to the special SBC switchboard. The telephone number is (314) 231-2250.

## Police discover retired editor after two-day disappearance

DALLAS (BP) — John J. Hurt, editor emeritus of the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was in good condition in Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas June 4, after spending two nights in his automobile at the edge of an eastern Dallas county pond.

Hurt, 78, apparently became lost on the evening of June 1 while returning to his home in northern Dallas from a meeting in Garland of the Dallas County Appraisal Review Board on which he serves.

He was found in mid-afternoon, June 3, by a man on horseback who summoned police.

Hurt was not injured except for insect bites and sunburn and was expected to be released soon. He was hospitalized for observation and tests after going for almost 48 hours without food and blood pressure medication.

The horseback rider said he had seen Hurt the day before beside the car and Hurt had told him he was all right and that help was on the way. When Hurt was still beside the car the second day, the rider summoned police.

Hurt, a veteran newsman who retired from the editorship of the Standard in 1977, apparently became lost after leaving a meeting of the review board which hears grievances over property appraisal.

He left the meeting in Garland and apparently made a wrong turn. Instead of

driving west to his home in northern Dallas, he drove northeast toward Rowlett. He stopped at a service station to ask directions back toward Dallas but apparently made another wrong turn and eventually drove into the edge of the pond. Heavy rains in the area raised the level of the water until the car became partially submerged.

His discovery ended a two-day search by authorities, family, and friends, and members of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, where the Hurts are members. Almost 50 volunteers of the church distributed notices about his disappearance and scoured the area looking for him.

His wife, Doris, and sons, Bob and John III, expressed their appreciation for the concern shown and the efforts of the police, church members, and media to find him.

Hurt was editor of the Standard for 11 years, 1966-77, after serving as editor of the Georgia Baptist state paper, the Christian Index.

## Duck River notes association week

Baylon Hilliard, director of missions at Duck River Association of Missionary Baptists for just seven months, tried a new approach in promoting the associational emphasis week May 18-24.

He decided to plan a tour of churches in the association.

His executive board supported the idea and suggested that the office close that day so Janet Patterson and Agnes Hankins, secretaries in the associational office, could meet the people they often talk to on the phone.

Because this was the first such event in recent years, they had no idea how to plan the tour, Hilliard admitted. They contacted each church, provided transportation from sites in the association's three counties, and tried to estimate how many vans were needed and how much food to prepare for a continental breakfast.

Hilliard reported that the 74 persons from 11 churches made new acquaintances, enjoyed a picnic lunch together, and attracted "considerable" attention as they motored between church sites in eight church vans on May 18.

## While church grieves, Mayo baby improves

M. Blake Mayo, born to Barbara Farmer Mayo during her sixth month of pregnancy and only one hour before her death May 31, is in satisfactory condition in the critical care unit at Baptist Hospital in Nashville.

The baby was delivered by Caesarean section to the mother who had been declared brain dead after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. Mayo's heart stopped beating within an hour after the team at Baptist Hospital delivered the baby.

Michael Mayo, husband and father, is pastor of Saturn Drive Baptist Church in Nashville. Barbara Mayo worked as the librarian at Wharton Middle School in Nashville. She was graduated from Union University in Jackson and the University of South Carolina in Columbia, S.C.

The Saturn Drive church family faced another tragedy only two days after Mayo's death. Church member, Steven Wheeler, 15, was killed when his bicycle slid under a car on a rain-slick street. Services were held June 4 at the Saturn Drive church.

## Court of Appeals hears SBC lawsuit arguments

By Dan Martin

ATLANTA (BP) — The appeal of a lawsuit against the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee was argued at the 11th U.S. Court of Appeals May 27.

The appeal, which has been pending for

more than a year, concerns a lawsuit filed Dec. 5, 1985, by four messengers to the 1985 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention who said their rights had been violated by rulings made concerning the election of the 1986 Committee on Boards, Commissions, and Standing Committees.

Robert S. and Julia Crowder of Birmingham, Ala.; Henry Cooper of Windsor, Mo.; and H. Allen McCartney of Vero Beach, Fla., had asked the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia to interpret SBC bylaws, direct the SBC to comply with that interpretation, and to vacate the 1986 Committee on Boards.

U.S. District Judge Robert Hall decided the suit in favor of the SBC, ruling May 5, 1986, that federal courts have no jurisdiction over the internal affairs of religious bodies and that the First Amendment shields matters of church governance, polity, and administration from civil jurisdiction.

He declined to go into the "merits of the case," noting the question of whether the rulings "were correct or patently incorrect is irrelevant because a decision as to validity of (the) rulings would involve this court in the internal affairs of the Southern Baptist Convention, a position the court cannot assume."

After Hall's ruling, the Crowders, Cooper, and McCartney appealed the decision to the 11th Court of Appeals, arguing that Hall had erred in his decision and could have decided the matter of bylaw interpretation under "neutral principles of law" without involving the court in the free exercise of religion.

During the May 27 arguments, attorneys for the opposing sides — arguing before a three judge panel — staked out the case on similar grounds.

Perry E. Pearce, an associate to former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell in the Atlanta lawfirm of King and Spalding, which represents the SBC, argued the appeals court "should affirm the lower court decision that the First Amendment prohibits courts from involvement in internal church affairs."

Jane F. Vehko, an associate with the Atlanta lawfirm of Bondurant, Mixson, and Elmore, said the district court had made an "overbroad" interpretation of the First Amendment and asked that the case be remanded to the district court for a rehearing on the merits of the case.

The appeals court panel which heard the appeal did not announce when it will render a decision, but court observers indicate a conclusion to the suit should be made within the next 90 to 120 days — by August or September.

## Nashville PAC...

(Continued from page 1)

"They're going to say, 'Don't let those preachers scramble your brains. Don't let those preachers tell you what to do. This is progressive, mature.' But you have to tell people the truth — that the purpose of pari-mutuel betting is to take your money," Sherman added. "The motive is greed, the method is manipulation, and the scheme is deception."

Another group, unrelated to the newly formed PAC or the Nashville Baptist Association meeting, is fighting the pari-mutuel issue in the courts. The Tennessee Christian Voters Alliance has asked the Davidson County Chancery Court to declare the state's horsetrack gambling bill unconstitutional.

## Immanuel honors Gaye McGlothlen

Immanuel Baptist Church in Nashville recognized Gaye McGlothlen on June 7. McGlothlen is pastor emeritus of the church and is celebrating his 50th year as an ordained minister.

McGlothlen was ordained June 8, 1937, at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church in Huntington, W.Va. He delivered a sermon entitled "Living by Faith" last Sunday at the Immanuel church, where he was pastor for 26 years.

McGlothlen recently completed the history of Immanuel Baptist Church. The book will be released later this year as the church celebrates their centennial anniversary.

Born in Ottuma, Iowa, McGlothlen is a graduate of Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Before beginning as supply pastor for Immanuel church in 1948, he served as pastor of Brookland Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.; Macedonia Baptist Church in Owensboro, Ky.; and Hebbardsville Baptist Church in Hebbardsville, Ky. He was also assistant pastor at Deer Park Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., and assistant pastor and youth director at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, Huntington, W.Va.

When he began as interim pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, he was working as an editorial associate with the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. He also served as the director of Christian education for the District of Columbia Baptist Convention in Washington, D.C.

Having served on numerous denominational boards and committees on the association, state, and national levels, McGlothlen was elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 1959.

Since his retirement in 1975, he has served as interim pastor of several churches.



McGlothlen

# CLC seeks to unify anti-abortion forces

By Tim Fields

ST. LOUIS (BP) — A diverse group of Southern Baptists have forged a statement on the sacredness of human life designed to unite forces against abortion in the 14.6-million-member denomination in spite of differing views on the controversial issue.

During the two-day consultation on alternatives to abortion sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the group also outlined steps for education and action in an effort to help stop the estimated 1.2-million abortions performed each year in the United States.

The pastors, laypeople, and denominational workers hammered out the statement — designed to set aside differences which have caused division in the denomination and to move beyond disagreements on allowances for abortion under certain circumstances — in order to call all Southern Baptists to action on the issue.

The group voted 27 to 2 to adopt the following statement on abortion:

"Human life from conception is sacred and must be protected and nurtured in all its aspects. Abortion at any stage of pregnancy is ending human life and is a grave act with tragic spiritual, emotional, physical, and social consequences. In those incidents in which this divine ideal is not fulfilled, there can be redemption in God's grace. Therefore:

—"Let us speak forcefully and unequivocally against abortion on demand

and with all vigor encourage alternatives to abortion.

—"Let us pledge ourselves to be compassionate, aggressive agents of God's grace in nurturing human life and in taking God's grace to those caught in the tragedy of abortion."

Prior to the vote, CLC chairman Lynn P. Clayton called the statement "a declaration of war against abortion that all Southern Baptists can move on."

"If we pass this statement, we can stop fighting each other over exceptions and start fighting together against abortion," Clayton added.

CLC Executive Director N. Larry Baker told participants the statement simply is an expression of participants in the consultation but will be used by the commission as "a call to concern to galvanize Southern Baptists around the abortion issue."

A major portion of the consultation involved discussion of education and ministry needs the group felt are necessary to help Southern Baptists effectively combat abortion. Suggestions included:

—More information is needed on crisis pregnancy centers operated by Southern Baptists.

—The Home Mission Board should train home missionaries or Mission Service Corps volunteers and make them available to serve in crisis pregnancy centers.

—Additional pregnancy centers need to be established by local churches or by the Home Mission Board.

—The Christian Life Commission should provide additional educational resources for Southern Baptists on the enormity of the abortion issue.

—The Christian Life Commission should put more passion into its pamphlets and other resources on abortion in order to convey the urgency of the problem and move people to action.

—The Christian Life Commission needs to develop biblically based sex education materials for children, youth, and adults which can be used in the home and the church.

—Southern Baptist agencies need to develop programs and resources which will help churches minister to women who have had abortions.

In the concluding session of the consultation, Baker told participants:

"I as executive director will be giving aggressive, highly visible public leadership to the abortion issue. I will be speaking strongly against abortion and will be calling on Southern Baptists to act in behalf of sanctity of human life."

In the concluding session of the consultation, Baker announced the following actions, which he said the commission plans to take in coming months:

—A national conference on abortion, Aug. 31 through Sept. 1, 1987, in Nashville and publication of proceedings of the meeting for distribution to Southern Baptists.

—A special October/November 1987 issue of *Light*, the commission's ethics publication, on the theme of alternatives to abortion.

—New resource guides and videotapes on alternatives to abortion for children, youth, and adults.

—The establishment of a Southern Baptist repository and information center at the Christian Life Commission to provide current information on all aspects of the abortion issue.

—National seminars in Washington in March 1988 on Christian citizenship, including issues related to abortion, and in Kansas City, Mo., in 1989 on abortion and other life-and-death issues.

## Southern Baptist ethicist defends abortion rights

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP) — A Southern Baptist Theological Seminary ethics professor defended the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing most abortions and warned against efforts to overturn the landmark ruling during an abortion rights conference in Washington.

Paul D. Simmons, who has taught Christian ethics at the Louisville, Ky., school since 1970, joined other scholars and activists at the conference, which explored scientific, ethical, and legal perspectives of abortion rights.

The meeting was sponsored by Americans for Religious Liberty, a group formed in 1982 largely by individuals who withdrew in protest from the older Americans United for Separation of Church and State after a bitter dispute. The splinter group's stated objective is "preserving the American tradition of religious, intellectual, and personal freedom in a secular democratic state." Listed on the organization's 27-member board of directors is one Southern Baptist, Baylor University church-state scholar James E. Wood Jr.

Speaking at a news conference before the meeting, Simmons praised the Supreme Court's 1973 ruling in *Roe vs. Wade* for "getting the government off our

backs in matters of procreative choice" and for limiting "the intrusion of the state into our bedrooms." The decision had the effect of declaring that "the family, not the courts nor the Congress, was the proper forum for deliberations and determination of reproductive issues," he added.

Simmons also lauded the high court for protecting freedom of conscience and religious pluralism. "For free church Protestants," he said, "the decision was an exercise in the Protestant principle of soul competence or liberty of conscience. Conscience was regarded as both the necessary and sufficient constraint in deciding about abortion in the early stages of gestation."

In an abstract of his address to the conference, titled "Fetal Personhood and the Abortion Debate in Biblical Perspective," Simmons said the Bible "does not support an absolutist position against abortion," adding, "Its teaching about personhood is far more complex than is assumed by anti-abortion evangelicals and their theocratic approach to public policy issues runs counter to Protestant and biblical perspectives on soul competence and religious liberty."

He also said proponents of an absolute ban on abortion as contained in several pending constitutional amendments ignore the difficult choices faced by women with problem pregnancies, including those that involve rape, incest, and severe fetal deformity. What is at stake in such situations, Simmons said, "is whether or not persons are permitted to work against God or with God in making choices about the continuation of pregnancy under adverse circumstances."

Trustees of Southern seminary recently questioned whether the 50-year-old professor ought to be dismissed. But the trustees' academic personnel committee concurred with seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt "that there are no grounds for dismissal of Dr. Simmons," based upon the Abstract of Principles, the seminary's guiding document.

The full board of trustees agreed but went on record expressing "concern with Dr. Simmons' position" and requesting Honeycutt "to encourage him to moderate his public involvement in this issue."

## Baptists in Texas assist Saragosa tornado victims

SARAGOSA, Texas (BP) — Baptists provided disaster relief immediately to victims of the tornado which nearly leveled the west Texas town of Saragosa, killing 29 people and injuring 121.

Jerry Bob Taylor, manager of the Circle Six Baptist Encampment near Stanton and regional disaster relief director for Texas Baptists, led a crew of four volunteers from Westside Baptist Church in Odessa in feeding breakfast to about 100 people in the disaster area the morning after the tornado.

The only churches in the community were Catholic and Seventh-Day Adventist, but "Baptist disaster relief volunteers go wherever people are hurting to minister in the name of Jesus," said Bob Dixon, director of the emergency task force for Texas Baptist disaster relief.

Because the quick response of local volunteers met the needs of the disaster victims, the Texas Baptist disaster relief mobile unit was not requested, said Dixon.

Disaster relief volunteers from First Baptist Church of Pecos, 25 miles away, mobilized immediately, said their pastor, Gary W. Boyd. At the hospital, some volunteers assisted tornado victims and their families.

Others, using a 40-foot enclosed trailer van, began around-the-clock feeding operations to storm victims, utility and cleanup crews, and law enforcement officials. They issued rain gear and flash lights and then began collecting loads of food and clothing. Other churches used First Baptist Church of Pecos, as a collection point.

The church has set up a food and clothing bank and is taking applications for assistance. During the first two days after the tornado, about \$13,000 was col-

lected through the Baptist Saragosa Relief Fund set up by First Baptist of Pecos. Three days after the storm, volunteers from the church were helping rebuild homes of disaster victims.

"First Baptist, Pecos, also set up committees for counseling, which will be one of the primary needs of disaster victims after they have buried their loved ones," Boyd said. "In many ways, that's when the real ministry starts."

Dixon said Texas Baptist volunteers would be available to help in cleanup and rebuilding.

Meanwhile, Richard Faling, chairman of the Texas Baptist Family Assistance Task Force, was in nearby Balmorhea surveying needs of disaster relief victims and families who have taken disaster relief victims into their homes.

## Offering tops \$69-million

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Receipts for the 1986 Southern Baptist Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions topped \$69-million, representing more than 92 percent of the \$75-million goal.

When the financial books closed May 31, Southern Baptists had sent \$69,412,195.09 to help finance foreign missions work in 110 countries around the world.

Receipts for the 1985 offering totaled just over \$66,862,000. The difference represents a 3.81 percent increase in giving, "roughly comparable to inflation," said Carl Johnson, Foreign Mission Board vice-president for finance.

To reach the 1987 goal of \$75-million, Southern Baptists will be called on to increase their giving by about 8 percent. The 1987 goal was decreased in early May from the original \$81-million to \$75-million, maintaining the previous year's goal.

As they announced the decision, Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union leaders expressed regret that the goal had to be decreased but cited the need to be realistic.

## Editorial

# Messengers prepare for 1987 convention

If messengers to the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis June 16-18 would adopt the theme of the convention as the theme of their lives, our beloved convention would soon return to the twin rails of the track that has historically kept us moving together in harmony—missions and evangelism.

This year's theme, "To know Him ... to make Him known," taken from Philippians 3:10, stands as a challenge for Southern Baptists everywhere. If messengers who gather at the Cervantes Convention Center in St. Louis would prayerfully refer to it each time they face a vote, perhaps God Himself would intervene to bring harmony and peace and establish a new covenant with His people called Southern Baptists.

Experts predict that about 25,000 to 28,000 messengers will register this year. If that's true, it will be a drastic drop from the last two years (40,987 in Atlanta's SBC '86 and 45,519 in Dallas in '85).

This could be good or bad. If people are staying home because they have lost interest in the convention's business, that's bad. If they have come the past few years just to vote a "party ticket," whether conservative or moderate, we'd just as soon they stay home.

Logistically, it will be good if the numbers are down. The Cervantes Center can't handle 30,000 or more. If 40,000 Baptists register, there will be a lot of angry Baptists and the business sessions would reflect it.

Speaking of business, God has blessed Southern Baptists again this year by sending us a Church of Christ preacher to assist with parliamentary procedure. C. Barry McCarty, a certified parliamentarian, assisted last year and Adrian Rogers, Tennessee pastor and SBC president, wisely enlisted his service again this year. McCarty will keep us on target in a fair and gracious manner if he follows the pattern he established last year.

All eyes are on the election of a president. This has been true every year in recent years. The fact that an incumbent president can no longer be re-elected without a challenge reflects the tragedy of our current controversy.

Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, will not be re-elected without facing at least one other nominee. It's a shame SBC politics have so polarized us that we feel we must try to topple the incumbent.

It has been announced that Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, will be nominated for the top SBC office.

We would like to see each messenger vote his or her conscience in this and all business matters instead of sticking to a party-line vote.

The Peace Committee will present a full report and recommendations during the convention. Knowing Baptists like we do, we predict many will be unhappy simply because they didn't have time to examine it in advance. The committee, for whatever reason, made a serious mistake by not releasing the report prior to the convention.

Nevertheless, we pray that the committee report will be a giant step toward bringing healing to the SBC.

Another major consideration is a recommendation to continue SBC ties with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. An effort was made last year to defund the BJCPA. This year's recommendation, from the SBC Executive Committee, will make some structure changes in SBC participation in the BJCPA, but funding will remain intact.

We applaud this recommendation. The BJCPA has provided a strong voice in Washington for many years. We'd hate to see it weakened. The BJCPA has helped Tennessee Baptists several times in recent years regarding court cases.

No doubt, there will be challenges to the nominations of the Committee on Boards and the Committee on Committees again this year. That's OK. It's healthy, as long as people who speak to the matter avoid mudslinging.

Who knows what resolutions will be presented this year? Tennessee's own Tom Melzoni, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Oak Ridge, has the dubious honor of being chairman of the Resolutions Committee. We don't envy him. It's a tough job. Perhaps Melzoni and his committee will try to de-politicize the resolutions and keep them as positive as possible. If not, the world will be laughing at us.

During the convention, messengers will have opportunities for inspiration as well as conducting business. Many fine messages will be proclaimed.

Highlighting the final day will be an address by world-renowned Baptist Evangelist Billy Graham (11:10 a.m., June 18). He will speak on "Making Christ Known Through World Evangelization."

May his message so inspire the SBC messengers that the convention theme will penetrate their hearts and spread to every Southern Baptist everywhere.

If we could truly know Him, then we would get our act together and make Him known in our neighborhoods, our communities, our states, our nation, and around the world. (CEW)

## Great opportunity

After the 1987 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention becomes history and St. Louis returns to normal after the invasion by Baptists, another meeting of perhaps even greater significance will occur.

Tennessee's own Union University in Jackson will host the Southeast Regional Conference on Prayer for Spiritual Awakening, July 9-10.

Meeting together at Union, Baptists from across the southeastern United States will explore ways to usher in Holy Spirit-directed spiritual awakening by tapping the unlimited power of prayer.

"Conference leaders desire to see a great move of God in holy revival," said John Adams, vice-president for religious affairs at Union. "The conference will focus on prayer for spiritual awakening in the nation and around the world."

The conference is jointly sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, the evangelism department of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and Union University.

This conference has the potential of bringing spiritual renewal in the lives of those who participate. Such renewal could spread to churches across Tennessee and the southeastern United States. It could bring sweeping revival to Tennessee Baptists and even go a long way toward restoring peace, unity, and evangelistic fervor to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Tennessee Baptists should take advantage of a regional meeting of this magnitude being available within the state. We urge our readers to pray that this meeting will truly result in spiritual awakening. We further urge Tennessee Baptists to contact Union or the TBC evangelism department for information about registering. (CEW)

## PAC fights gambling

Davidson County ministers, including many Baptist pastors, have formed a political action committee to fight the horsetrack referendum that is likely to be on Nashville's ballot on Aug. 6. (See story on page 1.)

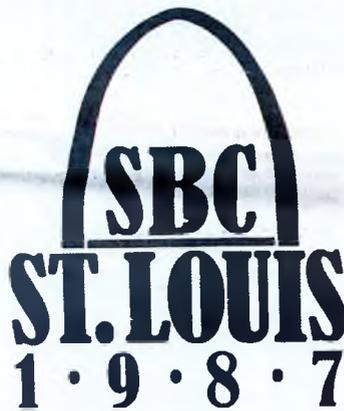
This is a good move in many ways.

It sidesteps the separation of church and state issue that surfaced recently in the lawsuit involving 13 Jackson-area churches. After Tennessee Attorney General Michael Cody declared that churches which spend \$250 or more on a referendum issue are political action committees, the Jackson churches refused to file the necessary disclosure forms and took the state to court.

Now, the Tennessee Supreme Court has agreed with Cody, ruling against the churches. The churches have decided to appeal to the United States Supreme Court, but in the meantime, all churches face a dilemma. Are they to remain silent while pari-mutuel gambling gallops into their communities? Are they to accept the title, "political action committee," file the proper forms, and throw away the long-held principle of separation of church and state?

According to the Davidson County ministers, the answer is "NO" to both questions. By forming an informal coalition of "like-minded" citizens, church groups can fight the gambling issue without any individual church having to become a PAC.

We believe by working together, these "like-minded" citizens will be even more effective than they would have if the individual churches had each done its own thing. (CEW)



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Charlie Warren  
Associate Editor

Connie Davis  
Assistant Editor

### Baptist and Reflector

Mona Collett  
Church News Assistant

Doris Elliott  
Advertising

Rita Gambill  
Production Assistant

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

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# Letters to the editor

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

## The Lord's instructions

Dear editor:

Before our blessed Lord Jesus went to the cross, He left with His disciples and with us some important instructions in the form of a commandment.

It is found in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for the other."

It is obvious that in the last few years in our beloved convention, we have not seriously lived by this our Lord's commandment to us. It is my strong belief that we cannot and will not honor our Savior nor receive His full blessing until we turn back to His guidance and live accordingly.

Frank Pollard recently got my attention when he said, in effect, we are positioning ourselves according to what Scriptures we are emphasizing. I believe he is correct but I also believe that deep down in our hearts we want to honor our blessed Lord's commandment to us.

Our Lord also says in the commandment: "By this (i.e. love one for another) all will know that you are My disciples." My fear is that the converse is presently true. We are not showing much love for each other and the world may be wondering to whom we belong.

Our convention, some say, is being purified theologically. There is a thin line between purifying a convention and

wrongfully purging the saved, which can lead in some being dis-enfranchised which may eventually lead to non-reconcilable groupings. Beloved, let us stop this direction before it is woefully and tragically too late!

It is my strong belief that the time has come for servant role/mediating leaders to lead Southern Baptists.

Paul H. Mason  
5784 Central Church Rd.  
Douglasville, GA 30135

## Paramount issue

Dear editor:

The status of the Bible is the paramount issue facing Southern Baptists regardless of all of the rhetorical smoke.

Inerrantists believe the Bible is truth while moderates say the Bible has truth but facts differ with parts of the Bible. Differences concern context rather than translations. Differences are about long passages as well as scattered words and phrases.

Moderates claim interpretation is the issue. Yet, interpretations can only be compared when everyone uses identical data. Thus, "interpretation" is a misused word. Neither can extrapolation be called interpretation.

Until very recent history, nobody considered Scripture as anything but truth.

Then came the modernist theologian. "Higher Criticism," "Redaction Criticism," etc., are based on theoretical assumptions of Bible error and seek support by physical evidence or rationalization. Such unwarranted suppositions necessarily treat Scripture as human documents rather than God's Word. More simply, such theories place God in an image of man's finite concept.

If the Bible is not inerrant, Christianity becomes only another philosophy - expressions like "God's Word," "The Bible says," etc., completely lose significance.

I am tired of the legalistic, courtroom-manuevering-type arguments opposing inerrancy by super-egotistical theologians - whose arguments are common to many cults.

The vast and overwhelming majority of Baptists believe the Bible to be "WHAT IT SAYS IT IS - GOD'S WORD." There is much room for interpretation after we wholly and completely acknowledge the Bible to be inerrant.

The Bible must be recognized for what it is - God given and God protected.

Bill L. Pope  
30 Crestview Dr.  
Hixson, TN 37343

I'm not sure many moderates would agree with your "interpretation" or "extrapolation" of what they believe. (editor)

## Thoughtfulness for interims

Dear editor:

Although my husband no longer serves as a regular pastor, he does interims or supply work for many churches. Some churches have contributed greatly to his effectiveness as an interim pastor by doing a fairly simple thing. They provide a place where he could stay overnight or a place where he could relax or study.

Most churches without a pastor have an empty parsonage. It probably already has a stove and refrigerator. With the addition of a bed, two or three chairs, and a few cooking and serving dishes, their interim can spend more time on the church field. He can do more visiting, his wife feels welcome to come with him, and he will not be so dependent on the church members for meals. He will develop a greater feeling of belonging.

I am sure some interim pastors already live near the churches they are serving, but most do not. It is for the do-nots that I am suggesting a little bit of home-away-from-home.

We were very grateful to Cedar Hill and to First Baptist of Jamestown for their thoughtfulness in this regard.

Mrs. John Tullock  
General Delivery  
Delano, TN 37325

## Answered prayer

Dear editor:

Only God could have answered prayer for the editorial page and Brother Tom Madden's message on the next page of the May 27 issue of the Baptist and Reflector.

I have prayed for someone to show in simple language the truth of the money-grabbing preachers and the true messengers of the gospel, the Southern Baptist churches.

Then, Brother Tom comes along and puts the healing balm on it all. We thank God for you. Keep up the good work.

Jimmy Griffin Farmer  
2706 Thicket Rd.  
Soddy-Daisy, TN 37379

## Change the pledge

Dear editor:

A question for Flag Day 1987: Is it time to add one word to the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag?

In 1954, Congress added two words: "under God."

In 1987, Congress could insert the word "constitutional" before the word "republic" in the pledge. That addition seems to be an appropriate bicentennial action as well as a clarification for future generations.

Is it time for all Americans to pledge allegiance to "the flag of the United States of America and to the constitutional republic for which it stands"?

Southern Baptists in Congress could lead the way.

Dick Jensen  
P.O. Box 11113  
Memphis, TN 38111

## I vote 'no'

Dear editor:

It is my intention, given an opportunity, to vote in opposition to pari-mutuel wagering in Davidson County.

The reason: I am much too self-righteous, sometimes, not to believe that I have been ordained to keep the conscience of the public on some issues of vital moral and social importance.

O. Meredith Smaw  
1612 Sixteenth Ave. South  
Nashville, TN 37212

# Church training programs enhance baptisms, giving

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP) - Recent research shows that churches with church training programs have a higher percentage of Sunday School membership, a greater baptism rate, and give more dollars to convention causes than churches without church training, said Steve Williams, a growth consultant in the church training department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Speaking to a group of state church training directors attending midyear meetings in Williamsburg, Va., Williams said a church with a membership of 300 to 499 and a church training program enrolls about 71 percent of its members in Sunday School.

"A church of the same size without church training has only 57.5 percent enrolled in Sunday School," Williams said. This represents 23.5 percent more of their resident members enrolled.

Williams said the information came from the 1986 Southern Baptist Uniform Church Letter statistics and was compiled by the Sunday School Board's research services department.

Johnnie Hall, Tennessee Baptist Convention church training department director, who attended the meeting for state church training directors, reported that he believed Tennessee statistics would reveal the same information.

"If you've got your members in discipleship training and doctrinal study, you will see growth in all these areas," stated Hall.

The report by Williams also noted that a church of 300-499 members which does have church training had an annual average of 2.7 baptisms per 100 resident members annually, while a church of the same size without church training had 2.1 baptisms per 100 members.

In other words, Williams said, churches of that size with church training programs

have a 29 percent higher annual baptism rate per 100 than those without.

Likewise, a church of 300 to 499 members without church training gives 8.9 percent of its undesignated receipts to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget. Those with church training give 10.1 percent of their dollars to Southern Baptist causes, which is a 13.5 percent higher rate than those without.

The research project studied eight size categories of churches ranging from under 100 members to more than 2,000, and in each category churches with church training came out ahead in Sunday School enrollment, baptisms, and Cooperative Program giving.

Williams said about 14,000 churches out of about 37,000 in the Southern Baptist Convention did not report church training in 1986.

The task is also great in Tennessee, acknowledged Hall, citing that about 950 or 21 percent of the more than 2,800 churches in the state do not have church training.

He believes that church training can meet the greatest needs of the broad spectrum of churches.

Hall is excited about the new start project in 1987-88, which will be led by the state department in coordination with the BSSB.

"We are not going in to hard sell a program," but rather talk about ways to "help a church be on mission" and share new program offerings, Hall said.

BSSB Church Training Director Roy Edgemon sees a strong discipleship program leading to the attainment of the Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust goal of sharing the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000.

"Evangelism is based on knowledge and understanding of the nature of God, and without a solid base, we are not going to share the wealth of faith," he said.

## Bill Marr accepts call to Nashville

Bill Marr has accepted the call of Lincocya Hills Baptist Church in Nashville to serve as pastor.

Born in Detroit, Mich., Marr is a graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City. He has post-graduate degrees from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.



Marr

Previous church staff experience includes serving as pastor of First Baptist Church in Oviedo, Fla.; as pastor of Starke Lake Baptist Church in Ocoee, Fla.; as interim pastor of White Plains Baptist Church in Scottsville, Ky.; as summer youth director at Boulevard Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va.; and as associate pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.

Marr served in several capacities while he was a pastor in the Greater Orlando Baptist Association.

He will begin his new pastorate June 21.

# Brotherhood members build playgrounds at state camps

By Mike Day and Herschel Wells

When 12 men from Milan and Memphis gathered at Camp Linden, Linden, in the fall of 1985 to wrestle treated pine posts, dig holes, and mix concrete, they didn't realize they were helping fulfill a dream.

The dream belonged to Jim McDonald, business office director for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, who envisioned the construction of a playground at each of the Tennessee Baptist camps.

McDonald shared his dream with the state Brotherhood department. Kenny Rains, an associate in that office at that time, began to discuss the possibilities of seeing the dream come true with Brotherhood leadership throughout the state.

That fall several laymen gathered in Shelby County Baptist Association to further explore the possibilities. They began research into types of construction, types of playground equipment available, and the cost of such a project.

Herschel Wells, art director at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, and George Fulghum, a civil engineer and member of First Baptist Church in Memphis, joined their skills to develop specific plans, drawn to scale, for the project.

McDonald reviewed the drawings and decided to proceed with the project. It was a relatively easy decision because Camp Linden would gain a \$20,000 playground for just the cost of materials and playground equipment (\$5,000).

During the fall of 1985, men from Memphis and Milan spent approximately 1,000 man-hours constructing the playground at Camp Linden.

The men who participated in the Linden project were: Wade Watts, Robert McDaniel, Bill Hill, Otis Bills, Richard Agee, Al Bateman, and Fred and Kevin Heuck, all from Highland Heights Baptist Church in Memphis; Bruce Harrison from First Baptist Church in Milan; George Fulghum and Floyd Pafferson from First Baptist Church in Memphis; and Herschel Wells from Second Baptist Church in Memphis.

In the spring of 1986, Royal Ambassadors from Memphis returned to Camp Linden to waterproof the timber and sand the rough spots.

The Linden project was so successful,

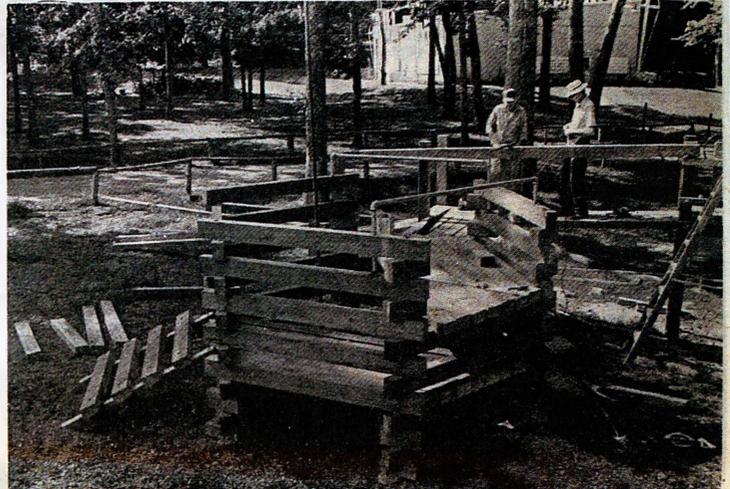
McDonald decided to pursue the dream — part two. Recent visitors to Camp Carson in Newport know that part two of the dream has been realized.

The Camp Carson project became a missions project supporting the Michigan/Tennessee sister-state missions relationship. Several members of Orchard Hills Baptist Church in Novi, Mich., the site of a Tennessee volunteer mission project in 1984, traveled to Tennessee to work on the second playground.

Rodger and Ila Cameron, Bill and Barbara Jones, Chris and Vernon McCord, and Phil Eckland, all of Orchard Hills Baptist Church, were joined in their work by Bob and Bona Bauman, Winston and Dorothy Dickey, and George and Maxine Fulghum, all from First Baptist Church, Memphis.



**HAMMERING, NAILING, AND MORE** — Builders (from left) Robert "Skeeter" McDaniel, George Fulghum, and Floyd Patterson work on Camp Linden's playground.



**ALMOST READY, KIDS** — The playground at Camp Linden nears completion.

# RA leaders organize first statewide fellowship group

The organizational meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Fellowship of Royal Ambassadors Leaders, the first known state-wide group of RA leaders, was held May 8-9 at Belmont Heights Baptist Church in Nashville.

It will join the fellowship groups of the Tennessee Baptist Men's Fellowship,

which include a medical-dental fellowship, veterinary fellowship, and construction fellowship. The groups cooperate with the National Baptist Men's Fellowship sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis.

The state fellowships are directed by the Tennessee Baptist Convention Brotherhood Department.

Bob Davison, program associate of the Brotherhood department, explained that the purpose of the fellowship is to provide

interaction among RA leaders and to form a mission action group.

The RA leaders who gathered from across the state, adopted bylaws for the fellowship which allows persons who are currently not RA leaders to become members if they plan to become leaders in the future. Also Brotherhood leaders or church staff members who help direct the RA program may become members.

During the meeting the leaders also practiced rope activities, such as repel-

ling, and games that test the initiative and trust of persons playing them. They also discussed how to make spiritual applications through games.

The following officers were elected for 1987-88: Frank Green of Northport Baptist Church in Newport, president; Max Thomas of Central Baptist Church in Chattanooga, vice-president; Pam Souther of Central Baptist Church in Chattanooga, secretary; and John Bobbitt of Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville, mission action coordinator.

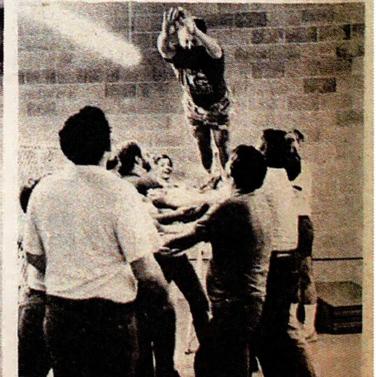
The annual meeting for all of the state fellowship groups is Feb. 19-20, 1988, at the TBC Executive Board building in Brentwood.



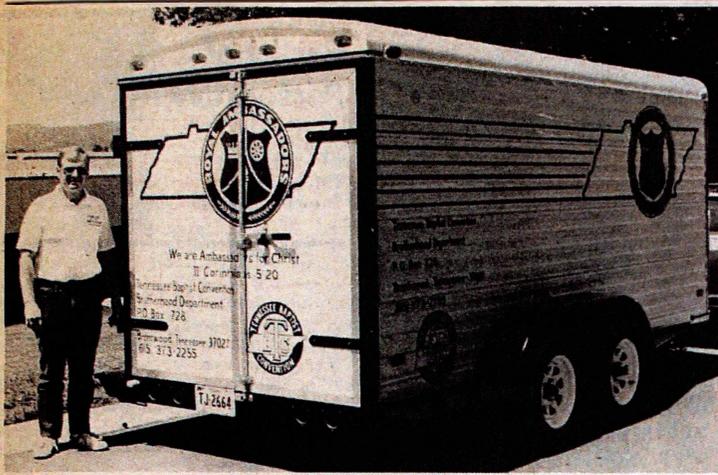
**ROPE BRIDGE** — Frank Green of Northport Baptist Church in Newport crosses a two-line rope bridge with the help of Bob Davison, of the TBC Brotherhood department.



**CHARTER MEMBERS** — These 18 RA leaders, assisted by the TBC Brotherhood department workers, formed the new Tennessee Baptist Fellowship of RA Leaders.



**TRUST DIVE** — George Tinsley, RA leader from New Providence Baptist Church in Clarksville, dives into the arms of other leaders as he participates in a trust game.



**THANKS, BOYS** — RAs and counselors across the state raised \$5,004 and gave it to the 1987 RA Congress offering which was partially designated for a new RA equipment trailer. Bob Davison, of the TBC Brotherhood department, has it filled with camp equipment in preparation for the summer RA camps.

## Four summer music workers lead musicians across state

Four students have been appointed summer music workers in Tennessee by the Tennessee Baptist Convention church music department.

The students will be assisting churches and associations by teaching music theory, vocal techniques, and new literature to choirs, leading music during worship services, leading and teaching music in Vacation Bible Schools and camps, and working as staff members during the children's and youth music camps sponsored by the TBC church music department.

The students, who began working June 7, receive lodging, food, and a love offering from the churches and associations they assist.

The 1987 summer music workers follow. Grace Cosmiano, a senior at Union University in Jackson, is studying piano, and also plays the flute, handbells, xylophone, organ, and bells.

Her home church is First Baptist Church in Bolivar, where she was the youth choir accompanist and a member of the handbell choir. She also has served as a summer youth worker at Smyrna Baptist Church in Burlington.

Matt Plunk is studying music and biology at Union University. He plays the trombone and is a member of the University Singers, University Symphonic Band, Pep Band, and Lambda Chi Alpha All-Sing Group. Plunk is a recipient of the Semper Fidelis Award for Musical Excellence.

At his home church, First Baptist Church in Carthage, Plunk was active in the music ministry. This is Plunk's second year to serve as a summer worker.

Tim Spencer, who sings and plays the trumpet, studies music at Union University.



**MUSIC HELPERS** — The state summer music workers who will be assisting churches and associations are (from left) Tim Spencer, Tina Swaggerty, Matt Plunk, and Grace Cosmiano.

The former state RA president has coordinated the music for the RA Congress and Tennessee Baptist Men's Fellowship meeting in 1987.

At Union University, Spencer is a member of University Singers, University Chorus, and the ensemble, "Covenant." Spencer's home church is First Baptist Church in Collierville, where he was a member of the handbell choir, instrumental ensemble, men's quartet, and other aspects of the music program.

Tina Swaggerty is a senior at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, studying church music. Swaggerty sings, plays the piano and organ, and is a member of the college's A Cappella Choir and handbell choir.

Her home church is Black Oak Heights Baptist Church in Knoxville, where she was a youth and children's choir leader and a member of the young adult ensemble.

## Belmont College to host ministers' conference

NASHVILLE — Belmont College in Nashville will be host to the 35th Annual Middle Tennessee Summer Ministers' Conference June 29 through July 2.

The conference, sponsored by Belmont College and the Golden State Missions Offering, will feature four main speakers, including Jimmy Terry, pastor of the Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksville; Tom Smothers, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Joe Richardson, a counselor in the personnel department of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville; and Norma Stevens, professor of education at Belmont College.

Smothers will teach the book of Malachi, which will be the featured book in the 1988 January Bible Study.

Richardson will address the topic of stress and the role of the pastor.

Stevens will lead the program for the ministers' wives during the conference.

Conference activities will begin with registration from 3 to 5:30 p.m. in the Maddox Hall lobby. Sessions are planned for mornings and evenings, with afternoons left open for visiting or sightseeing.

The program also will feature six Tennessee pastors, including Billie Friel, pastor of First Baptist Church in Mount Juliet; Rick White, pastor of First Baptist Church in Franklin; Bob Norman, pastor of Clearview Baptist Church in Franklin; Bob Mowrey, pastor of Park Avenue Baptist Church in Nashville; James Porch, pastor of First Baptist Church in Tullahoma; and Bill Wilson, pastor of Brentwood Baptist Church in Brentwood.

The cost of the week is \$25 for husband and wife or \$15 per individual.

To register or for more information, contact Belmont College Office of Religious Affairs, Nashville, TN 37212.

## Venezuela draws 16 to serve

Sixteen Tennesseans will be going to Venezuela as a part of the Tennessee/Venezuela partnership. Since the partnership began in November 1985, 360 persons have participated.

All 16 volunteers first will attend the annual missionaries' meeting in Rubio.

H. Eugene Cotey, pastor of First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, will serve from June 17-26 as the main speaker of the meeting. His wife, Jean, also will attend.

Six members of First Baptist Church in Clarksville and the eight-member Baptist Student Union summer missionary team will lead Vacation Bible School for the missionaries' children and youth during the annual meeting.

The Clarksville team will serve from June 15 to July 3.

The BSU summer missionaries and the BSU director and his wife accompanying them will travel from the annual meeting in Rubio to the seminary in Los Teques where they will do maintenance work and lead activities in churches such as puppetry and music. Then they will participate in the national Baptist youth camp west of Valencia. The BSU team will serve from June 15 to August 11.

The Clarksville team includes Rufus B. Harris, Patsy Buckner, Beth Atkins, Robert and Velda Fort, and Anne Goodlett.

The BSU team members are Maurice Hays, BSU director at Jackson State Community College in Jackson, and his wife, Glynda; John Argo of Memphis State University in Memphis; Tony Bullington of Cleveland State Community College in Cleveland; Clay Mason of the University of the South in Sewanee; Michelle Nation of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City; Melissa McCarthy of Carson-Newman College; and Catherine Reed of Union University in Jackson.

Persons interested in serving should contact Clarence Stewart, TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37027.

## FBC, Nashville, Belmont establish Paschall chair

The H. Franklin Paschall Chair of Biblical Studies and Preaching at Belmont College in Nashville was established on June 7 at First Baptist Church in Nashville, where he was pastor from 1956-83. Belmont College and the Nashville church will jointly direct the program.

The recipient of the chair, which is endowed by more than \$250,000, will be a pastor who will serve on the Belmont College faculty. The person will teach in the college's department of religion, speak in chapel, meet informally with student groups, and counsel students preparing for full-time Christian service.

Charles Page, pastor of First Baptist Church in Nashville; William Troutt, president of Belmont College in Nashville; and Paschall spoke at the June 7 ceremony establishing the chair during the church's morning worship service.

The church committee which directed the establishment of the chair included Martin Bradley, chairman; Ed Jennings;

Walter Harwood; James Harrell; and Wilborn Strode.

## TBC offers option for drill, speakers

Youth may attend an At-Large Youth Bible Drill/Speakers' Tournament if they cannot attend their regional competition, announced Mary Allen of the Tennessee Baptist Convention church training department.

The at-large tournament will be July 6 at 10 a.m. at the TBC Executive Board building in Brentwood.

Youth are eligible to attend if they have completed competition in their associations and if the director of missions in the association notifies the church training department no later than June 19.

The State Youth Bible Drill/Speakers' Tournament also will be held on July 6 at the Executive Board building during the evening.

## Countywide crusade draws 250 decisions

Maury Baptist Association sponsored a countywide crusade May 10-15, that resulted in more than 250 decisions. Twenty-six churches around Columbia were involved in the effort. The Jerry Drace Evangelistic Team from Jacksonville, Fla., led the crusade.

While speaking in schools, Drace and his team saw 117 students respond. An additional 142 made public decisions to rededicate their lives.

Drace was assisted by Ken and Lois Holland of Nashville, who provided music during the crusade. Kellye Cash, reigning Miss America, shared her testimony and song at the assembly at Central High School on the closing night of the crusade.

Elmer Crosby, director of missions for the Maury association, comments that, "The Greater Columbia Crusade gave us a sense of victory as the community of faith in Maury Baptist Association."

Send the B & R to a friend

## Tennesseans graduate from Southern seminary

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Thirty-one Tennessee students were awarded degrees and three received diplomas from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., during the school's 159th commencement May 22.

The Tennessee students were among about 290 persons to receive degrees from the schools of theology, church music, Christian education, and social work. The Boyce Bible School, a division of the seminary, awards diplomas to students without college degrees.

The Tennessee graduates included the following:

Doctor of ministry — James Edward Lankford of Decatur.

Master of arts in Christian education — Kenneth Clay Long of Kenton, Rebecca Mathis Peters of Knoxville, Karen Denise Roberson of Whitwell, Sherri B. Sangster

of Bristol, Timothy Wayne Whipple of Cleveland, and Netette Leatherwood Measels of Dandridge.

Master of church music — Leslie Diane Berg of Hermitage, Ray Igean Calfee of Cleveland, Warren Gene Nighbert of Hendersonville, James Paul Taulman of Nashville, and Jana Kay Hall Wolfe of Antioch.

Master of divinity — Clyde Thomas Angel of Elizabethton, Thomas Lee Baines of Lebanon, Brian Bernard Courtney of Loudon, David Wayne Henry of Cross Plains, Russell Allen Irwin of Knoxville, James Grady Ivey of Winchester, Pamela Yvonne Luncford of Leoma, Joseph Robert McAfee of Daisy, Gary W. McEwen of Memphis, Richard W. O'Bryan Jr. of Dyersburg, Barbara Ann Oliver of Elizabethton, Jackie Caro Pippin of Elizabethton, Judge Eugene Pippin of Knoxville, John Graham Raynor of Madison, and Phillip Lee Steffey of Kingsport.

Master of social work — Marsha A. Winifred King of Murfreesboro and Melanie Kay Wilson of Brentwood.

Master of theology — Ernie Dewey Elder of Memphis and Marc Alan Jolley of Cleveland.

Graduates of the Boyce Bible School include:

Diploma in Christian ministry — Jimmy Stephen Bingham of Cleveland and Grover W. Westover III of Jackson.

Diploma in Christian education — Judy Woody Bingham of Cleveland.

## ETBH names head of pastoral care

KNOXVILLE — Dick Denson joins Baptist Hospital as director of pastoral care. Denson was formerly chairman of the department of ministry and pastoral care at an Army hospital in Colorado.

Originally from Henderson, Texas, Denson is a graduate of Howard Payne College in Brownwood, Texas, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Denson has served as director of the Institute of Creative Ministry and Marriage and Family Counseling Center in Fort Hood, Texas, director of clinical pastoral education at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Denson's military chaplaincy career also includes posts in West Germany and South Vietnam.

Denson has served as an adjunct professor at George Washington University, the New York Theologic Seminary, and the department of psychiatry of the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta.



**ABTS SERVICE** — Hoffman C. Harless (right), a member of Crieveview Baptist Church in Nashville, receives a distinguished service plaque for serving eight years as a member of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary. Presenting the award is Arthur L. Walker Jr., secretary-treasurer of the commission which is co-sponsored by the SBC and the National Baptist Convention. Walker is executive director, treasurer of the SBC Education Commission.

## Strongs celebrate NOBTS degrees

Tommy and Shirley Strong of Linden attended graduation at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary May 16 in New Orleans to celebrate with both of their children's families.

Their son, Thomas Strong, and their son-in-law, Jeff Collier, both received NOBTS degrees but the similarities don't stop there.

The Strongs' daughter, Melodie, met Collier through the Baptist Student Union at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro. Likewise, Thomas Strong met his wife, Jana, at the BSU at Union University in Jackson.

The two NOBTS graduates felt called into the ministry through the Royal Ambassador program.

Though they applied a year apart for seminary housing, one couple's apartment was just one floor above the other. Their wives both worked and both took seminary classes.

One difference is that Strong earned the master of divinity degree and Collier received the master of religious education degree.

Tommy Strong, who is manager of Camp Linden in Linden, and his wife Shirley, described the couples as "truly Tennessee Baptist families."

## NOBTS graduates six Tennesseans

NEW ORLEANS, La. — Six Tennesseans were graduated during the May 16 commencement ceremony of New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Tennessee graduates follow.

Doctor of ministry degree: Robert Hartman Jr., national student ministries consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, and James R. Chatham II, associate pastor of Germantown Baptist Church in Germantown.

Master of divinity degree: Steven Rhea Thornton of Memphis, Timothy Edd Miller of Columbia, Barry A. Clingan of Chattanooga, and L. Thomas Strong III of Linden.

## Personal Perspective

By Tom Madden,  
TBC Executive  
Secretary-Treasurer



"He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10).

Daniel, perhaps a man of some 75 years of age, had risen to a post of high influence in the Babylonian empire. The nobles of Babylon were envious and determined to bring about his downfall.

They were unable to find any flaw in him and agreed that the only way they could overthrow him was on religious grounds. They knew he prayed three times every day. They tricked the king into passing a law which enjoined every man abstinence from prayer during a space of 30 days. Every offender would be thrown into a den of lions.

Knowing that the decree was signed and it was unlawful to pray, living by principle and not by policy, Daniel still opened his windows toward Jerusalem and prayed three times a day.

As I read the old story again, the same story that my dear mother used to read to all eight of us children as we gathered around her, I raised the question, "What does the open window symbolize today?" Let me share with you some of the symbols that came to my mind. Still others may come to your mind.

One was that of courage. There were other windows in his house that he might have prayed from and not been seen. He could have closed the shutters and prayed and they could not have seen him. Still, even on his knees three times a day, he prayed to God in the freshness of the dawn, in the spring of the noontide and in the shadows of the evening.

The open window symbolizes that Daniel placed a spiritual reality over against the fleeting endurance of Babylon. While Babylon was real, Jerusalem, representing the kingdom of God, was even more real. Jerusalem stood for things that had deeper meaning and more lasting worth.

The open window reveals a belief in a spiritual fellowship. Daniel communicated daily with his headquarters. He believed in personal contact with God.

One final suggestion that the open window symbolizes is another and better life beyond the present. Daniel, kneeling before the open window, rejoiced in the forward view that beyond this life was a better life. In all probability, Daniel was never permitted to return to the city of his childhood: but when the hour of his release came, we may be sure that his soul found its way to a better Jerusalem that he had been facing during all his exiled years.

As I think through this experience, the question keeps probing me, "Are my windows open toward Jerusalem? Have I closed them? Have I allowed some sin to shutter my windows excluding God's light?"

Let me challenge my heart and perhaps yours, to keep your windows open.

## French elect Baptist

PARIS — Louis Schweitzer, pastor of the Rue de Lille Baptist Church in Paris, has been elected general secretary of the French Protestant Federation. He will assume the post July 1. The federation includes Lutheran, Baptist, Reformed, and other denominations.



## Tennessee/Venezuela prayer net partnership

—Two missionaries celebrate birthdays this week: Jim McDonald, general evangelist in Puerto Ordaz, on June 11, and Ben Kirby, general evangelist in Guanare, on June 16.

—H. Eugene Cody, pastor of First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, and his wife, Jean, will leave June 16 to go to Rubio where they will participate in the annual meeting of the missionaries in Venezuela.

—Five persons from First Baptist Church in Clarksville will lead Vacation Bible School for the missionaries' children during the annual meeting for the missionaries.

—Eight Tennessee BSU members leave June 14 to work in Venezuela for eight weeks leading VBS, doing construction, and sharing in evangelistic efforts.

# Pethel shares joy for music composition at C-N

By Cynthia Day

JEFFERSON CITY — In the field of music, performance is the most popular form of expression. To many, the composition of a piece of music seems an esoteric enterprise, even a mystery.

However, for James Pethel, associate professor of music at Carson-Newman College, composing music and teaching composition is almost a daily part of life.

"I don't think composition should be thought of as being a special activity," said Pethel, a full-time faculty member who has had more than 120 of his compositions published by six major publishing houses. "Like performing, it's a means of expression, which should be a part of a musician's life one way or another."

Pethel has recently been honored with two special awards for his creative contributions to music. This spring, the Knoxville Music Teachers Association named him Composer of the Year for 1987. Earlier this year, Pethel received the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers' Standard Award, which is presented to composers whose works have special prestige. In 1984, he was the first recipient of Carson-Newman's Research and Creativity Award.

Though he considers writing for the organ to be his strong suit, Pethel also composes for piano, solo voice, and choral groups. His published works include numerous anthems, vocal solos, two collections of piano pieces, two collections of organ pieces, and two collections of piano-



**CREATING A COMPOSITION** — James Pethel, associate professor of music at Carson-Newman, helps composition student Connie Cruze with one of her musical compositions.

organ duets co-authored with his nephew Stan Pethel.

When Pethel was very young, his brother bought a pump organ and taught him to play — one chord at a time. By age 6, Pethel was performing popular and religious music by ear. He continued to develop his talent by playing in churches and at tent revivals, as well as taking

private lessons.

During adolescence, Pethel's focus shifted from music to athletics, but in junior college, his interest in music revived. Pethel then enrolled at Carson-Newman, where he met A Cappella Choir director Charles Jones, whom he credits as a major influence on his career.

After completing his master's degree,

Pethel returned to Carson-Newman as a faculty member in 1962. Today he teaches classes in organ, piano, theory, and composition at the college. Pethel's interest in composing led to the establishment of a composition program at Carson-Newman in 1980.

The program gives students with creative ability for writing music the opportunity to develop their talent. Pethel meets individually with each composition student. Although the composition lessons are primarily taken by music students, the program is open to any student who can demonstrate adequate ability and preparation.

Three composition students have had their works published as a result of studying with Pethel.

One of Pethel's students, Connie Cruze, a junior music education major from Knoxville, recently finished her ninth composition, a piece symbolically titled "Renewal Three." Written for three instruments, the work expresses Cruze's feeling about three months which she spent as a summer missionary in South Carolina last summer.

By integrating composing into her musical training, Cruze and other students validate Pethel's assertion that composition should not be considered an extraordinary undertaking.

## Shorter College elects Jordan

ROME, Ga. (BP) — James D. Jordan, president of North Greenville College in Tigerville, S.C., since 1981, has been elected president of Shorter College in Rome, Ga.

Jordan, 54, was recommended unanimously to the Shorter board of trustees by its presidential search committee, following review of 58 applicants and on-campus visits of five finalists.

Jordan will succeed George Balentine, who accepted the pastorate of Hayes Barton Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., last October, following four years at Shorter.

The new president taught at Georgia Southern College in Statesboro for 12 years before going to North Greenville College. He also taught at Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, N.C., and the Oxford College of Emory University in Atlanta.

The native of Charleston, S.C., is a graduate of Furman University, Greenville, S.C.; Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.; Duke University, Durham, N.C. He studied on a Fulbright Scholarship at the University of Strasbourg in France during 1955-56.

North Greenville College is affiliated with the South Carolina Baptist Convention. Shorter College is affiliated with the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia.

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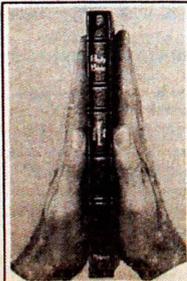
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**BIBLE BOOK SERIES**  
Lesson for June 14

# A song of the Law

By Marvin P. Nail, pastor  
Whittitt Chapel Baptist Church, Nashville

Basic Passage: Psalm 119  
Focal Passages: Psalm 119:1-14, 105-112

Perhaps you remember the song honoring mothers which begins: "M is for the million things you gave me." The song went on with a line for each letter in the word "mother." Such a poem is known as an acrostic. Psalm 119 is something like that.

This psalm is the longest in the Bible with 176 verses divided into 22 sections containing eight verses each. Within each section, each verse begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Also, the 22 sections represent each letter of the Hebrew alphabet identified by its heading. Within each heading each verse begins with the letter identifying that heading.

That probably sounds like more technical information than you really wanted to know about this psalm. However, I said all of that to emphasize the intricate testimony to the value of the Law of God in facing life!

Each of the 22 sections of the psalm is a complete meditation or prayer concerning the importance of the Law in the life of the believer. Though it was written concerning the Law of Moses, it very fittingly describes the whole body of Scripture. Any one of us could profit from using a section of this psalm to begin each time of our personal Bible study.

You will understand that it is not possible to cover the entire psalm in this week's study. However, I hope you will take the time to read it through. We will concentrate our study on three sections of the psalm.

### The joy of obedience

Like children who continually question the rules laid down by their parents, the children of God seem to want to question the Law of God. It has always been so. From the beginning in the garden, mankind has questioned God's demands. We, like they, rebel against His commands over and over again. It is as though we don't think God's way is necessarily best for us. It is as though we think we know better.

But we eventually discover for ourselves that God's way is always the best way. We learn that we could have saved ourselves a great deal of pain and sorrow if we had only obeyed.

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Nail

From time to time, some of us make the fresh discovery that obedience brings a blessing. The psalmist (vv. 1-8) extols the blessings of obedience to God's Law. He sees what obedience means to the life of the believer. With that in mind, his discovery becomes a prayer that God would help him to be obedient. It is similar to the prayer of the man who cried out to Jesus, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

### The delight in His Word

The second section of the psalm (vv. 9-16) contains some of the best guidance by example that one could give any young person. He begins in verse 9 with a question which he then answers throughout the section. "How can a young man keep his way pure?" I must admit that as a pastor I am not asked that question often enough. Usually I am consulted only after people have made a complete mess of their lives by trying to make their own rules.

Verse 11 is one of the best known passages in this psalm. It has been the motto for countless Christians who have felt the need to commit Scripture to memory. Many of you may remember from the days when you were a junior in Sunday School. Much more emphasis was placed on Scripture memorization in those days than now.

My teacher used Jesus as the example of the value of committing Scripture to memory. He taught us that that was the way Jesus was able to fight off the temptations in the wilderness. Each temptation, Jesus countered with a passage from Scripture.

More than just memorizing Scripture, I am convinced that Jesus and the psalmist had something else in mind. Even the heathen can memorize and quote Scripture. A child of God can take its message to heart so that it guides all that he does.

### The assurance of His guidance

The final section we shall look at in this lesson deals with the guidance Scripture provides for everyday life. This meditation comes from the heart of a person who knows the assurance of God's help in time of trouble.

He has obviously gone through some trying times. He speaks of his affliction and of the snares set for him by his enemies. He speaks of the dangers which lie in wait for him on the paths of life. But he also speaks of the fact that the Word of God lights his path so that he may stay away from disaster (v. 105).

Some see in this lengthy psalm a song of praise of the Word of God. The writer of these 22 meditations always directs our attention to the proper goal of praise. This psalmist consistently praises God. He praises God for His mercy in giving us His Word. He praises the Lord for revealing His truth to us.

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## UNIFORM LESSON SERIES

Lesson for June 14

# Human sin and divine wrath

By William L. Palmer, president  
Harrison Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour

Basic Passage: Romans 1:18-32  
Focal Passage: Romans 1:18-32

The Apostle Paul had declared that "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16). The "gospel" is his theme. The gospel is "good news." The good news is that Almighty God has sent His only begotten Son into this world in order that men lost in sin might not die eternally, but in Jesus live eternally.



Palmer

Yes, men are lost in sin. The men of the world are guilty before God. Guilty men are under the wrath of God. God is "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (v. 18). The "wrath of God" is against "men who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

The very nature of God, Who is holy, cannot tolerate sin. Charles Hodge wrote, "The punitive (punishing) justice of God is an essential attribute (inherent quality) of His nature. This attribute renders (makes) the punishment of sin necessary, and is the foundation of the need of a vicarious (substitutionary) atonement (forgiveness) in order to the pardon of sinners. This doctrine the apostle assumes as a first principle, and makes it the basis of his whole exposition of the doctrine of justification."

The doom of impenitent unrighteousness is absolutely certain. The word reveals that God's wrath is against all ungodliness. God's wrath is against all unrighteousness. God's wrath is revealed against men who "suppress" the truth in unrighteousness. Such men know the truth but suppress it by their unrighteous living. The wrath of God is seen in the inevitable punishment of sin.

In verses 19 and 20 we see that men are given the opportunity of knowing God through nature and through conscience. Men have no valid reason for the ignorance of God. I believe that in each man is that instinctive revelation which affirms that God is. God in His works has given sufficient light to expose men to His reality.

Napoleon, on a warship in the Mediterranean on a starlit night, passed a group of his officers who were mocking at the idea of God. He stopped, and sweeping his hand toward the stars, said, "Gentlemen, you must get rid of those first." Men who reject "His eternal power and Godhead ... are without excuse."

In verse 21 we learn that men are guilty before God when they do not glorify Him as God and when they are not thankful to Him. Men are in trouble when they trust in their own imaginations and when they allow their hearts to become darkened. Verse 22 says, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

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a man becoming a fool. A man becomes a fool when he allows his ideas, his opinions, and his speculations to become the standard and law of his life. Anytime a man looks into himself and not out to God he is a fool. That man seeks to live a self-centered life rather than a God-centered life.

The result of self-centeredness and willfulness is idolatry. A man's conceit invariably leads to idolatry. Man is a worshiper. Men apart from submission to God, worship the works of their own hands (themselves). The root of sin is in men putting themselves in the place of God.

When we come to this point, people want to know, "Are the heathen really lost?" Let me tell you that I believe that the heathen are really lost. If they are not lost, we have no real reason for missionary endeavor. Jesus Christ did not come into this world to die on Calvary's cross just to make bad men good or good men better. Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." That men are lost is the motivating factor for our witnessing.

The Bible tells us that "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11). All men need God, and Jesus is the only way to God. This life is man's chance. This life is man's opportunity.

When men are determined to go their own way and to reject the revelation of God in Christ, the inevitable consequence is eternal separation from God. When men refuse to accept the revelation of God, He gives them "up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts" (v. 24). This passage is very descriptive. "Lust" is a reaching out after personal pleasure. "Lust" is a desire for self-gratification. I believe that some of the saddest words of the Bible are in verse 24: "God ... gave them up."

Where there is sin, there is judgment. When a man sins, it is easier for him to sin again. The more he sins, the easier it is for him to sin more. A man in sin brings sin upon himself. Again in verse 26 are those sad words, "God gave them up." These succeeding verses reveal the awful lengths to which sin leads human life.

In spite of our knowledge and our sophistication, we see the evidence of sin on every hand: adult and juvenile delinquency, abuse, addiction, alcoholism, and sex perversion. As a result of men desiring to go their own ways, God gave them up to lust and perversion.

The only answer to sin is Jesus.

### Seven Angolan churches cooperate in missions

LUANDA, Angola - Baptist churches already active in missions in Angola's capital city, Luanda, have formed an association.

The seven self-supporting churches support seven missions and several preaching points. Each gives 20 percent of its income to the Angola Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program, and they have voted to encourage each other to give another 10 percent to the new association. Four of the churches are less than 2 years old.

Luanda's population is more than 1-million and increasing rapidly.

LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES

Lesson for June 14

# A missionary church

By Johnny M. Johnson, pastor  
Trinity Baptist Church, Clarksville

Basic Passage: Acts 11:19 to 14:28  
Focal Passages: Acts 11:19-24; 13:2-3; 14:26-27

This is the beginning of a new series of lessons on the spread of the gospel. The model for a missionary church, the doctrines of the church on mission, and the commitment to the bold mission will be the focus of our attention as we continue Acts. We begin by examining the account of the church at Antioch.

Neil Armstrong uttered words that were heard around the world, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." He became the first person to set foot on the surface of the moon. Today there are still people who doubt that Armstrong actually strode across the lunar surface. These people ignore the evidence and continue to live as if the reality of this historic event were a fanciful creation or a theatrical production.

Sadly, there are those who dismiss the missions obligation of the local church as the imaginative creation of a denominational executive. Our passages today show that the local church is to be involved in the bold mission our Lord has given to His people. If the Bold Mission Thrust of our convention is to become reality, every church must follow the biblical example of Antioch in obedience to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.



Johnson

areas. Now he proceeds to give us a glimpse of the continuing missions effort of the young church.

The good news was spread as Christians were scattered during the persecution that arose over Stephen. Some went northward along the Mediterranean coast to the area of Phoenicia, the city of Antioch, and the isle of Cyprus. These may have been Hellenistic Jews who had come to Jerusalem, found Christ, and then returned to their homes.

While some of the scattered Christians witnessed only to Jews, some of them were "preaching the Lord Jesus" to Greeks as well (v. 20). We have seen previously that God is no respecter of person. Again we find that when Christians shared with Gentiles "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number" of people turned to the Lord (v. 21).

The mission supported (11:22-4)

The news of numerous conversions among the Gentiles soon reached the church in Jerusalem. The church dispatched Barnabas, a respected Jewish Christian from Cyprus, to evaluate the

situation and help the cause of Christ. When Barnabas came on the scene, he "was glad" (or "was graced") when he "saw the grace of God" operating mightily in Antioch (v. 23).

True to his name (Barnabas means "son of encouragement") he encouraged the people to be steadfast in faithfulness to the Lord. The church at Jerusalem offered support, in the person of Barnabas, for the mission effort. We see how cooperation among churches enhances the mission to evangelize the world.

Missionaries sent (13:2-3)

Barnabas remained in Antioch where a great harvest was being reaped for the kingdom of God. He sensed that something great was afoot and was led to seek out Saul of Tarsus, persecutor turned preacher, to assist in the ministry at Antioch. Saul, also called Paul, and Barnabas were called out by the Spirit and sent out by the church.

As the church was worshipping, the Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (v.2). God called out missionaries from the local church gathered at Antioch. Barnabas and Paul were called out by the Spirit and sent out by the church.

Missions celebrated (14:26-27)

Paul and Barnabas journeyed about the Gentile world telling the story of salvation

in Jesus. Multitudes of Jews and Gentiles heard the good news, believed, and were saved. Eventually the missionary duo returned to Antioch and gave a full report of "all that God had done with them" (v. 27). Surely the report of the mighty working of God through His missionaries was met with praise and joyous celebration.

Whereas the church was at first propelled into the mission field by persecution, now missionaries are set apart, sent out, and strengthened by submission to the Holy Spirit. The missionary activity of Paul and Barnabas began in the church, was launched from the church, was supported by the church, and they always returned to the church. The Holy Spirit continues to work in and through the local church to accomplish the bold task of evangelizing the world.

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The mission spreads (11:19-21)  
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**BROADMAN**

# Stark victim's wife displays strong faith

By Greg Warner

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Barbara Kiser didn't waste any time forgiving the Iraqi fighter pilot who killed her husband. One day after Steve Kiser and 36 other crewmen on the USS Stark were killed by an Iraqi missile, Kiser sent a letter of forgiveness to the pilot who mistakenly fired at the Navy ship.

The letter was to be delivered to an official of Iraq's government, said Nevin Alwine, pastor of San Pablo Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., where the Kisers are members.

Included with the letter is a copy of the New Testament in Arabic in which Mrs. Kiser marked Christ's words on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Although the widow has not talked with reporters since the May 17 tragedy, she has called Alwine from the Persian Gulf every day since the attack to assure church members she is coping well. Her calls have "greatly comforted" the congregation, the pastor said.

For six weeks Mrs. Barbara Kiser and her 5-year-old son, John, have been in Bahrain, an island nation in the Persian Gulf, where the Stark frequently docked during its planned six-month tour of duty. The young family often followed Steve Kiser, an electronics mate, overseas in order to spend as much time with him as possible.

The morning of the deadly attack, which has been labeled accidental by the U.S. and Iraqi governments, Kiser and her son waved goodbye to their husband and father as the guided-missile frigate left Bahrain's port.

Alwine, who said he has been inspired by the widow's handling of the tragedy, said Mrs. Kiser has the strongest faith of any woman in San Pablo Baptist Church. "If you want to see what a Christian is really like, look at Barbara," he said.

When Mrs. Kiser told Alwine her husband had been "called home" to heaven, she said, "Rev. God doesn't make mistakes." Although she would not presume to explain everyone's loss that way, Alwine said, she is confident God can use the tragedy for good.

"As a matter of fact, Steve's dad, who has been an agnostic all his life, became a Christian three nights ago," the pastor said. The elder Kisers live in Elkhart, Ind.

Before his death, Steve Kiser tape-recorded a devotional to send to his parents. Mrs. Kiser, who had not yet mailed the tape, played it during a memorial service aboard the Stark a few days after the attack.

The San Pablo congregation planned to hold a memorial service for the 36-year-old sailor after Barbara Kiser returned with his body. The 300-member church is located near Mayport Naval Station, home port for the Stark.

The Kisers are among several Baptist

## Four Tennesseans receive degrees

WAKE FOREST, N.C. — Four Tennesseans were among the 164 recent graduates of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

Receiving the master of divinity degree was William Lynn Peters of Smithville. Earning the master of divinity with religious education degree were Anderson Dale Orr of Nashville and Sharon Janette Walters of Johnson City.

Karen Denise Metcalf of Knoxville received the master of divinity with Christian education degree.

families in the Jacksonville area who were deeply affected by the Stark tragedy.

Randy Pierce, 28, never saw his 4-week-old son before the sailor died aboard the Stark. His 21-year-old wife, Diana, a member of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville Beach, was recognized as the youngest mother in the church on Mother's Day. Pierce, a data systems technician on the Stark, and his wife also have a 3-year-old daughter.

Capt. Glenn Brindel, 43, skipper of the crippled ship, is a member of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville. Brindel has been deeply troubled over the deaths, friends said.

Navy families play a significant role in many churches in and around Jacksonville, which hosts three naval bases. Pastor Alwine conducted a service aboard the Stark with Navy Chaplain Robert Lewis before the ship left Jacksonville in February.

Lewis, a chaplain for several smaller ships in the Mayport-based Practical Destroyer Squadron, had served aboard the Stark and knew many of the 220 crewmen, including Steve Kiser. A

Methodist who attends San Pablo Baptist Church regularly, Lewis hosted the Kisers for dinner in his home before the ship left port.

"This hit me particularly hard," Lewis said. "I see the faces of the people I ministered to. I'm not concerned about Steve, because he's with the Lord, but the others I'm not so sure about." Because of progress he had made ministering to the Stark's crew, Lewis said he considered going with the ship on its Persian Gulf tour until one Stark crewman encouraged him to stay home. The crewman was killed.

"But for the grace of God, I could have been there," Lewis said. Lewis is scheduled to accompany another group of ships to the Persian Gulf in a couple weeks. Because of the grief felt among seamen on other Navy vessels, particularly in the Persian Gulf, the chaplain has asked to stay with the ships longer than normal.

"Through all of this, the Lord is going to get the glory," Lewis said. "It hasn't whipped us, because He is still on the throne."

Lewis was one of three or four chaplains who waited with the families of Stark crew

members in a community center on the Mayport base while the list of survivors came in. Although most received good news, Lewis had to tell the wife of Joseph Watson, 25, that her husband was not on the list, but was reported missing.

Lewis waited with Diane Watson for an hour until a Navy casualty-control officer arrived with official word of the sailor's death. But the officer also needed help, Lewis recalled. "He said, 'Chaplain, I can't tell her. You're going to have to do it.'"

Chaplain Franklin Johnson, a Navy lieutenant stationed at Jacksonville's Naval Air Station, also had to deliver a death message to a crewman's family. The wife had suspected the news and took it calmly, Johnson said, "but there's still that blow."

Other chaplains from beyond Mayport helped in the painful notification process, Johnson said, so that each was asked to make only one call and could try to establish a pastoral relationship with that family.

Johnson, a Titusville, Fla., native who attends Crown Point Baptist Chapel in Jacksonville, said even though military families are aware of the dangers, "it doesn't make it any easier, because a loss is a loss."

One of the families' struggles is trying to find a reason for the deaths, Johnson said, "particularly in this case where it is such a tragic accident."

Even Stark crewmen who survived have to deal with their unique grief, Johnson said. One sailor who sought counsel from the chaplain had been transferred off the ship two hours before the Iraqi missile exploded in the Stark's sleeping quarters.

"Everybody in his section was killed, and if he had been there he would have been killed," Johnson said. The seaman was deeply shaken, Johnson said, "but he had a very profound sense that there was a reason he was spared."

While 1,100 Navy personnel and families joined President Ronald Reagan in a nationally televised memorial service at Mayport Naval Station May 22, Johnson helped lead a smaller simultaneous service for Jacksonville residents near city hall.

## Book Review

By Michael Davis

### Let doubts lead to God

Asking the Hard Questions, by B. Eugene Hines; Broadman; 127 pages.

Sooner or later, many Christians come to the point of realizing that they became too certain about many things too early in their lives. They begin to search for answers to the difficult questions they face and to seek for solutions to the complex problems they know so well.

Eugene Hines' new book is written with such persons in mind.

What is said in the introduction should be noted: "This book is not for everyone. It is for those who are troubled and those who are searching. It is for those who want to look into the depths and heights of their Christian faith for guidance in the hard questions of the Christian life. It is even for those who are not Christians at all but are troubled by some of the hard questions that trouble Christians as well."

Those who are compelled to doubt, not in spite of their Christian faith, but because of it, will be strengthened by the distinction that is made between the doubts of the skeptic and the doubts of the believer. The Christian trusts the Lord with all that he is.

"It is this trust, this faith," says Hines, "that can be tested and strengthened in times of doubt and searching. Doubt can be the exercise of the muscles of faith. At no other time in our lives are we more required to exercise faith than when we are just not sure about everything."

The questions dealt with are not an easy escape from responsibility or an intellectual exercise or a matter of rationalizing what is hard to accept. Serious questions are raised in each chapter that lead to a desire for obedience and faith in God.

Consider the focal question of chapter 6: "Why did I do it?" This question is an opportunity for Hines to help his readers accept the reality of God's love and forgiveness.

He writes: "There is nothing in your power that will erase the sin you have committed. Nothing will call back your cruel words. Nothing you and I can do will completely undo the hurt we have caused. No lever or button we control can ever turn off the flow of mean, self-centered impulses that course around our minds and hearts. But there is a Father waiting

in the road for us to come to ourselves, realize that we need His forgiveness, and ask for it."

The nine chapter headings indicate the scope of this small volume. They are: "Is it OK to ask questions?" "Why isn't there proof?" "Is there a morning after?" "Why does nothing work?" "Why can't I stop sinning?" "Why did I do it?" "Why am I so lonely?" "Does science contradict my faith?" and "How am I supposed to live in this world?"

This book will help people to vent their own questions, those not dealt with in these pages. It contains principles that can be related to many perplexing problems. Hines has given expression to profound insights that are refreshing to read and challenging when they are applied.

## Interpretations

### The rejected Christ

By Herschel H. Hobbs

"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (John 6:66).

Except for the events near the close of Jesus' life beginning with His royal entry into Jerusalem, John's gospel parallels the other three only in the account of the feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-20). He does this to set the background for his account of the collapse of Jesus' Galilean ministry. From its beginning the crowds followed Him in Galilee.

After Jesus fed the 5,000, the people tried to make Him a political-military Messiah, a role He rejected (6:14-15). The next day, in effect, they wanted Him to be a "bread messiah" (6:25-26). Again, He rejected.

Jesus sought to lead them from the idea of material bread to spiritual salvation and sustenance (6:27-50). Identifying Himself as "the living bread which came down from heaven," He spoke of that bread as "My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (6:51). Of course, Jesus spoke in spiritual terms of His

redemptive death. But their crass minds thought of cannibalism (6:52).

Pressing the point, Jesus spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood in order to have life in Him (6:53-58). He spoke of spiritual union with Him through faith. But still their fleshly minds failed to grasp the truth. So that they asked, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (6:60).

Finally, "His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (6:66). "Disciples" means learners, or pupils. When used of believers it means Christians.

In this passage it simply means those who heard Jesus teach. Some did not receive Him as Savior (6:64a).

When Jesus refused to be the kind of Messiah they demanded, they rejected Him as the Messiah He was. Never again did crowds follow Him in Galilee.

Jesus asked the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou has the words of eternal life" (6:66-67).