

Baptist and Reflector

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Newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention

Executive Committee acts on pornography, lawsuit

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE (BP) — A question of ecumenical involvement bracketed the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's fall meeting Sept. 21-23 here.

During the early moments of the meeting, Executive Committee President/Treasurer Harold C. Bennett reported on his recent visit with Pope John Paul II. And one of the final items of business was a 26-24 vote to put the question of the EC staff's ecumenical involvement before the committee next February.

Bennett was one of 27 non-Catholic U.S. religious leaders who met with the Roman Catholic leader Sept. 11 in Columbia, S.C.

"I felt that under God's leadership I should be part of that meeting," Bennett said. He reported telling the pope about Southern Baptists' goals for world evangelization, describing Southern Baptist mission work in 111 countries, and insisting that the cause of Christ would be improved if relationships between Catholics and missionaries in those countries were improved.

Bennett explained the appropriateness of participation by the SBC — the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination — in a meeting that addressed the status of Christianity in America; the Baptist Faith and Message statement's affirmation of Christian cooperation; and assurances by SBC Foreign Mission Board officials that his participation probably would not hurt but could help the work of missionaries on foreign fields.

The maker of the motion to review EC staff participation in ecumenical events said Bennett was trapped in "the pope's

PR extravaganza." Kenneth R. Barnett, a pastor from Lakewood, Colo., said Bennett, by virtue of his position, cannot act as a private citizen at such meetings and maintained "all Southern Baptists were affected" by Bennett's participation.

In other matters, committee members:

- Expressed opposition to "the practice of hotels and motels which offer sexually explicit in-room movies to their guests." The measure was approved in response to a motion presented at the SBC annual meeting this summer in St. Louis that requested leadership in "a nationwide boycott of Holiday Inns Inc., because of their involvement in the pornography industry."

Members of a subcommittee that studied the issue learned Holiday Inn was not named in the statement because of the potential for a lawsuit, since not all Holiday Inn facilities offer sexually explicit movies. However, the EC statement also affirmed the "Resolution on Pornography" that was passed at the St. Louis meeting that said the "Holiday Inn chain is the largest offender" of offering in-room sexually explicit movies.

- Authorized Bennett, in his capacity as EC president and treasurer, to take the "Crowder lawsuit" to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary. The suit was filed Dec. 5, 1985, by four messengers to the 1985 SBC annual meeting who said their rights had been violated by rulings made concerning the election of the 1986 Com-



SITTING UP FRONT — Charles W. Sullivan, left, pastor of First Baptist Church, Leasboro City, presided at last week's meeting for the first time since his election last June. Seated with Sullivan is Harold Bennett, president/treasurer of the committee.

mittee on Boards, Commissions, and Standing Committees.

U.S. District Judge Robert Hall decided in favor of the SBC and the Executive Committee May 5, 1986, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. The plaintiffs — Robert S. and Julia Crowder of Birmingham, Ala.; Henry Cooper of Windsor, Mo.; and H. Allen McCartney of Vero Beach, Fla. —

have appealed to the 11th U.S. Court of Appeals, where oral arguments were made May 27.

"We expect affirmation of the lower court's decision, and that will end the matter unless the plaintiffs should decide to carry the case to the Supreme Court," said EC attorney James P. Guenther of Nashville. Bennett reported the commit-

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Two counties face showdown

Memphis betting vote set for Oct. 8.

By W. Fletcher Allen

Action toward showdown votes on pari-mutuel betting is heating up in at least three Tennessee localities — Memphis, Williamson County, and Rutherford County. Baptist churches are playing a vital role in opposing the move for legalized gambling.

Opponents to pari-mutuel betting in Memphis (Shelby County) are encouraged by trends revealed in recent media polls, according to John Bomar, pastor of Capleville Baptist Church.

The vote in Memphis, Oct. 8, is the first to come since Davidson Countians narrowly defeated betting Aug. 6. Polls in the Memphis area 60 days ago showed that from 60 to 70 percent of the voters would vote "yes" in the referendum.

Since then, says Bomar, who is chairman of the Christian Life Committee for Shelby County Association, more and more voters are changing their minds. About a week ago, a television poll showed pro-gambling voting had slipped to only 51 percent.

And last week the same station polled the public again, only to find the gap being narrowed even more. The poll showed

that only 47 percent favored legalized betting with 31 percent against, with 22 percent undecided.

David Drumel, pastor of Union Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, and chairman of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee, also has been very active in leading the opposing forces against betting.

Drumel said, "I give tremendous credit to the black pastors of Memphis and their churches for their efforts to defeat the gambling vote. They see it (gambling) as helping nothing."

Drumel has used his church newsletter to remind readers of the unsavory and debilitating side of gambling.

Bomar said those involved in the fight against gambling are feeling "better" about the upcoming referendum.

COMAG (Coalition of Memphians Against Gambling) helped sponsor a full page advertisement in a recent issue of the Commercial Appeal, a major Memphis daily paper. There have been spots on 10 radio stations, and television ads will be purchased for Oct. 5-7, if there is sufficient funding.

COMAG has been raising and giving

money through TAG (Tennesseans Against Gambling), a PAC organization. A brochure has been used, modeled after the leaflet used in the recent Davidson County referendum that narrowly defeated the gambling proposal.

Bomar also is encouraged by "the tremendous swing of black churches against gambling," adding that "this is a significant move."

Rutherford County faces the gambling challenge on Nov. 17.

Rutherford was to have a rally yesterday (Sept. 29). Recent organization named a steering committee of James Avaritt, pastor of Bellwood Baptist Church (Independent); Murray Mathis, pastor of Third Baptist Church, Murfreesboro; and Charles Mullins, pastor of Kingswood Heights Church of Christ.

Avaritt was named chairman of a PAC (Political Action Committee) that was organized at a countywide meeting Sept. 22 at Third Baptist. Forty-four pastors were present, said Mathis, representing more than 50 churches.

He said there were 52 laypersons at the meeting. Mathis invited Bill Sherman,

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No answer yet

Phil Roberts, pastor of the International Baptist Church, Brussels, Belgium, who was elected TBC evangelism department director by the Executive Board on Sept. 11, is still considering the call.

Jere Plunk, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church, Knoxville, and chairman of the state missions committee which nominated Roberts, said at press time, "Brother Roberts still has not made his decision."

Plunk added that the committee "appreciates the continued prayerful concern of Baptists around the state.

"At this time," he said, "we are still awaiting Phil Roberts' reply. We are confident that he is seeking God's direction before replying."

Plunk said, "The committee will report to Tennessee Baptists as soon as a decision is reached."

Editorials

Where are the heroes? Right here

Some twenty years ago, a United States government official said that a high proportion of the most-gifted young Americans was being "immunized" against any tendencies toward leadership.

John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare during the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, said that unless there was a change, government would be making more and more of the decisions that should be made by private individuals.

His remarks, part of an essay called "The Anti-leadership Vaccine," appeared in an annual report of the Carnegie Corporation.

He said the immunization against leadership tendencies begins with society itself, and is augmented in colleges and universities. "The conditions of life in a modern, complex society are not conducive to the emergence of leaders," he wrote. "The young person today is acutely aware of the fact that he is an anonymous member of a mass society, an individual lost among millions of others."

Was Gardner right? Have you heard lately the question, "Where are our heroes?" Have you asked the tough questions about honesty and integrity in public life?

Gardner thought that even the brightest

students of that era would be "carefully schooled to avoid leadership responsibilities."

"Very few of our most prominent people take a really large view of the leadership assignment. Most of them are simply tending the machinery of that part of society to which they belong.

"Any question that cannot be dealt with by one of the special leadership groups ends up being dealt with by government. Most Americans value the role played by non-governmental leadership in this country and would wish it to continue. In my judgment," he said, "it won't continue under the present conditions."

We don't profess to know all of the answers to Gardner's poignant idea. But there are some things we can point to that would shed a little light on the topic.

The theory about "immunization against leadership tendencies" is valid. We must face up to the possibility that he was at least partially right.

There is a dearth of leaders. A few are still with us, and a few more come along with each generation — but as for real leadership, with national abilities, unquestionable qualifications, it is debatable.

For example, why is it so difficult to get the best we have to engage in national and statewide

leadership elections? Where, indeed, are the heroes?

In the Christian sense, heroes are not manufactured, but nourished by institutions and family that care for them spiritually, mentally, and physically.

Tennessee has three colleges — Belmont, Carson-Newman, and Union — that provide the best kind of education and training — the quality atmosphere of Christian teaching and equipping.

We sat in on a recent meeting of Belmont College's trustees. We were impressed with the vision expressed by that body, and the enthusiastic planning evidenced by college leadership. A testimony of involvement by the president of student government strengthened my belief in sound Christian educational institutions.

We are certain that Carson-Newman and Union, and all of Tennessee Baptists' institutions that deal with young lives, have the same high ideals and motives.

So it is not true now, as it perhaps was in Gardner's 1960s, that all academia fails to educate the leaders. We are doing that with students who could well qualify as leaders of the best sort.

And these who get this kind of education will not lack the confidence to lead. They might not know all the answers, but neither will they be "nervous Nellies." — WFA

What do we do with wisdom?

The First Book of Kings tells us that David's son Solomon was established on the throne to consolidate. And we read in 1 Kings 3 some very exciting words:

Verse 5: "That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked him, 'What would you like me to give you?'"

How did Solomon answer? In a Middle Atlantic state within a period of two weeks there were three big "winners" of the state lottery, each winner claiming more money than he could dream of. One received \$5.5-million, and two others got \$1-million each.

In Canada about two years ago, a modest couple received more than \$11-million as lottery winners. Did Solomon ask for riches? It's like that story we have all heard. A genie tells a fortunate

person that he can have two wishes. Immediately the person answers, "For my first wish, I want all the wishes I desire." That was not Solomon.

What did Solomon ask for? Verses 8 and 9 tell us: "Solomon answered, 'Here I am Lord, among the people you have chosen to be your own . . . So give me the wisdom I need . . . and to know the difference between Good and Evil . . .'" Perhaps Solomon should have asked for the will to do good, and only good.

God answers Solomon in verse 12: "I will do what you asked." Prayer, though, is not always asking, and prayer is not asking always. Solomon listened when he prayed.

We know what happened to Solomon, but listen to a thought from Ecclesiastes 10, "Dead flies can make a whole bottle of perfume stink,"

Solomon wrote, "and a little stupidity can cancel out the greatest wisdom."

Is he telling us that wisdom is to no avail when we neglect prayer and common sense?

How then should we live? Colossians 3 has some advice for us: "You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits upon His throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God!"

There is a verse in Proverbs that helps: "Every man's way is right in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the heart."

That is what we do with wisdom. — WFA

Coalition asks court to affirm rights of churches

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP) — Led by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a coalition of church bodies has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to affirm the constitutional rights of churches to participate in public referenda without registering as political action committees. Thirteen Jackson churches, including nine Tennessee Baptist Convention churches, are involved in the matter.

The church groups' views were communicated to the high court in a friend-of-the-court brief written by BJCPA General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas and Loyola (Los Angeles) Law School professor Edward M. Gaffney Jr. The brief was filed Sept. 23 on behalf of the BJCPA, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Christian Legal Society, and National Association of Evangelicals.

Appealing to the First Amendment's protections of freedom of religion and speech, the brief asked the nation's

highest court to review and reverse a decision earlier this year of the Tennessee Supreme Court. That ruling upheld a Tennessee law requiring churches to submit to the state detailed financial disclosure statements if they spend more than \$250 annually urging voters to support or reject any issue put on the ballot for public approval or disapproval.

The brief noted that several other states have similar laws, none of which has been tested in court, making the Tennessee case one of "first impression." If the high court were to agree to hear the dispute, the decision in the case could have nationwide application.

The thirteen Jackson churches were found to have violated the Tennessee Campaign Financial Disclosure Act by sponsoring paid advertisements opposing a liquor-by-the-drink referendum proposal. Nine of the 13 congregations are affiliated with the Tennessee and the Southern Baptist conventions.

The August 1984 referendum proposal to allow liquor-by-the-drink sales lost by

40 votes. Later that month, the state attorney general issued an opinion that the churches were political action committees as defined by the law and were subject to filing the financial disclosure forms.

Instead, the churches challenged the provision of the law defining them as political action committees. Although a trial court first ruled against the churches, a state court of appeals reversed, declaring the law unconstitutional. Later, however, the Tennessee Supreme Court overruled the appellate court, holding the law applies to churches.

In their brief to the nation's high court, Thomas and Gaffney argued that application of the Tennessee law to churches "severely chills the ability . . . to advance their positions on a wide variety of public policy matters." The "religious autonomy and integrity" of churches are threatened, they wrote, "when the government seeks to regulate a religious body."

Appealing to the First Amendment protection of free exercise of religion, the

Thomas-Gaffney brief argued that application of the law to a religious body "distorts that body's religious message by communicating to the public that it is not a religious group acting religiously, but simply another political interest group acting out of characteristically self-interested political considerations."

Additionally, and "even more seriously," the argument continued, "the Act has had a chilling effect on the prophetic ministry of religious bodies" in Tennessee.

The brief also argued churches should be exempt from the law on free exercise grounds unless Tennessee could demonstrate "it has utilized the least restrictive means of achieving a truly compelling governmental interest."

The Tennessee law provides a blanket exemption for the news media in deference to the freedom of press guaranteed in the First Amendment.

The Supreme Court is expected to decide whether to hear the Jackson churches' appeal sometime after it convenes for a new term Oct. 5.

Committee acts on reports, recommendations . . .

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tee has spent about \$185,000 on the case.

● Voted to print the 1987 SBC Christian Life Commission minority report to the convention's annual meeting in the 1988 SBC Annual. The action followed an SBC motion that the minority report — made by 12 of 31 CLC commissioners — be printed in the 1987 SBC Annual.

However, the minority report was not included in the 1987 book "because the copy for the Annual was sent to press prior to the regular meeting of the Executive Committee." SBC Recording Secretary Martin Bradley of Nashville reported he noted the minority report among the proceedings of the 1987 SBC meeting: "I attempted to maintain consistency in the way the business matter was reported. . . . I picked up what I believed to be the essence of the report."

Arguing in favor of including the text of the report in the next Annual, SBC President Adrian P. Rogers of Memphis said: "The convention did vote to hear the minority report. It did happen. This needs to be a matter of record."

● Proposed a bylaw revision regarding the SBC parliamentarian. The current

bylaw 11, "Parliamentary Authority," merely notes Roberts' Rules of Order (latest revised edition) is the SBC parliamentary authority.

The proposed revision renames the bylaw "Parliamentary Authority and Parliamentarians." It states, "The convention president, in conference with the vice-presidents, shall select a chief parliamentarian and assistant parliamentarians, as necessary, to advise the presiding officers of the convention on matters of parliamentary procedure."

The proposal also notes the parliamentarian must have sufficient knowledge and experience and must be certified by at least one of the two national parliamentarians' associations.

● Asked the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee to re-examine its request to amend the policy on exhibits at SBC annual meetings to allow exemptions for non-affiliated but predominantly Southern Baptist seminaries. The original request would have allowed Luther Rice Seminary, Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary to operate exhibit booths at

SBC annual meetings.

But EC members voted 40-20 to send the request back to committee for further study. Included in that measure was a proviso ensuring those three schools exhibit space at the 1988 SBC annual meeting, if the policy change is approved. The proviso was offered because the exhibit reservation's November deadline comes before the next EC meeting in February.

Two SBC agency heads spoke against a policy change. Arthur Walker of the Education Commission cited a potential for lawsuits by potential exhibitors who might be turned down. Lloyd Elder of the Sunday School Board said the "larger issue" is a question of whether the SBC is going to take a societal or convention approach to its work. He also warned a change would mean the convention would be "inundated by 30 publishers" who also would want exhibit space.

EC member Paul Pressler, a Houston judge, countered that lawsuits, a societal approach, and other publishers "have nothing to do with the issue. The issue is three schools' right to have a booth at the Southern Baptist Convention."

● Accepted a report from the EC public relations workgroup that the seven-member panel "is studying the Baptist Press news releases from April 1, 1987 to Feb. 1, 1988, to determine balance in the news releases." Workgroup Chairman Julian Motley, pastor from Durham, N.C., said the intention of the study "is not to imply any imbalance but to address a concern held by many Southern Baptists."

In another move related to the denominational news service, EC members responded to an SBC motion calling for a new study of the Baptist Press structure. Their recommendation noted "conclusions derived from a study of the structure of Baptist Press in 1982 are still considered valid, and . . . an additional study should not be made."

EC members also approved a motion

instructing the Baptist Press staff to send members all Baptist Press releases.

● Heard a challenge from SBC President Rogers urging Southern Baptists to end their bitterness toward one another. The pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis said he perceives bitterness as a "very real problem in Southern Baptist life" in the wake of the convention's theological/political struggle.

Citing bitterness is a source of hostility and evil speaking, Rogers said, "I don't want in our Southern Baptist Convention for us to be doctrinally straight and organizationally clicking and not to be filled with the love of the Lord Jesus."

He called for Southern Baptists to remove bitterness through repentance. He also urged them to hold true to their convictions: "Let's contend for what we believe. Let's be strong. Let's be courageous. But God forbid that we have any bitterness or hostility. God cannot bless us if we do."

● Heard a report from Peace Committee chairman Charles Fuller and named Perry Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, La., and David Maddox, layman from Fullerton, Calif., as replacements for two members who resigned.

Fuller said the Peace Committee did not draft a creedal statement and is not a "watchdog" group.

● Appointed a five-member study committee to determine the spending of \$448,400 designated for public affairs in the 1987-88 SBC budget, deciding the authority of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Public Affairs Committee, SBC.

● Proposed a \$145.6-million goal for the 1988-89 Cooperative Program unified budget.

(Editor's note: Detailed reports will be in next week's Baptist and Reflector concerning Charles Fuller's report, the public affairs funding study, and the 1988-89 budget goal.)

Baptist groups send mixed messages to Senate on Bork endorsement

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)— In the aftermath of the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee's endorsement of Supreme Court nominee Robert H. Bork, mixed messages have been sent to the U.S. Senate as to whether the Southern Baptist Convention has endorsed the nominee.

Immediately following the Aug. 20-21 PAC meeting in Nashville, the SBC Executive Committee staff — under instructions from the PAC — sent a letter to all U.S. senators informing them of the PAC's adoption of a resolution "to strongly urge the Senate Judiciary Committee and the United States Senate to confirm" Bork's nomination.

Enclosed with each letter was a copy of the PAC's full resolution, in which the committee identified itself as having been "duly elected and appointed to represent Southern Baptists on First Amendment concerns, particularly church-state issues, religious freedom issues and those issues relating to the 'right application of Christianity to the life of the nation.'"

But in a letter to members of the Senate, BJCPA Executive Director James M. Dunn wrote: "Please don't be misled. The Southern Baptist Convention has not endorsed Judge Robert Bork."

"While some groups have deliberately attempted to make the 7-5 vote of the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee appear to be an official action of the convention and your office has received notification to this effect, you need to be fully informed."

"Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, said he has reviewed SBC annuals since 1845 many times and cannot recall any other time when the SBC or one of its agencies or committees has publicly supported by name the confirmation or election of a candidate for public office. However, in 1976, the convention adopted a motion which 'reaffirmed the long tradition of non-endorsement of any political candidate.'"

In his letter, Dunn went on to state, "The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is the Washington-based agency

that serves nine Baptist conventions and conferences including the Southern Baptist Convention and we have taken no action regarding Judge Bork's nomination."

Les Csorba III, a PAC member from Alexandria, Va., said he thinks action by Adrian Rogers, SBC president, would clarify any confusion about the PAC resolution on Bork's nomination.

"I know he (Rogers) supports our efforts and that he plans to do something," Csorba said. "I think that it is necessary if this is truly a Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee resolution that it receive the support of the head. That would clarify a lot of the confusion which has existed between the Baptist Joint Committee and the Public Affairs Committee if the head of the denomination would make a statement."

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, told Baptist Press that as a private citizen he does support Bork's confirmation. "As an individual, I have already written both of my senators and encouraged them to confirm Judge Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court."

He said he believes his letter was on the letterhead of his church, not the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I am deeply grieved that in America since *Roe vs. Wade* that lives have been taken from some 20-million pre-born babies," Rogers said. "This is not a mere political or academic matter with me. I do not look at it dispassionately. We are dealing with life and death."

Rogers, who is a PAC member but was not present at the August meeting, continued, "Yet, on the other hand, I realize how careful we as Southern Baptists must be to maintain our integrity in the public arena. Perhaps the (PAC) resolution could have been framed in such a way as to accomplish its purpose without being quite as specific and could have spoken more specifically to principles, rather than a specific person."

"I do feel that the weight of our Southern Baptist pronouncements certainly lines up behind what I have heard and read about Mr. Bork," Rogers said.

Referendum coming up . . .

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pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church, Nashville, who helped defeat a recent referendum in Davidson County.

Sherman talked to the Rutherford County group about the Davidson County effort and answered questions about strategies in the successful campaign to defeat the move to legalize pari-mutuel betting.

There were at least 20 Concord Association churches represented at the Sept. 22 meeting, Mathis said.

Mathis and Avaritt presented the PAC position on a radio show later last week. "We had 20 minutes to talk about it," he said. The Rutherford PAC group is called Rutherford County Citizens Against Pari-Mutuel Gambling.

Mathis said Fred Hobbs, state representative from the 49th district, has made a "strong statement" opposing legalized gambling, though he supported the action which allowed the vote to be held. Hobbs justified his action because citizens have a right to vote on issues, he said.

Carl Brown, a Rutherford County commissioner and a member of Third Church, has also come out on the PAC side. Sheriff Truman Jones, member of Southeast Church, also is supporting the citizens against gambling.

Claude O. Cockrell Jr., businessman who is heading the drive to legalize

gambling in Rutherford County, proposes to build a \$108-million horse racing center near the I-24 and Almadine Road interchange, according to news sources.

He was quoted as telling Sherman to "keep his nose out of our business." Sherman responded that he would help the PAC group whenever they asked him. And to Cockrell's remarks that the gambling opponents had little chance of defeating the referendum, Sherman and Concord Baptist leaders seem to be optimistic.

"We expect a big turnout at the Sept. 29 rally," Mathis said.

Meanwhile, no date has been set for a referendum in Williamson. Proponents for gambling there claim a "big change in numbers" of undecided voters.

Proponents, according to a spokesman, are seeking "a live, televised debate on the topic" at the Williamson County Courthouse. Election officials say it will take five days to verify petitions for betting, which have not yet been turned over to Election Commissioners.

After verification, which would include at least 920 signatures of county residents, the registrar has five days to call an Election Commission meeting. It may be decided this week.

Williamson Countians Against Gambling has hired a consultant, Judy Davis, who works out of a Franklin office. A funding campaign is scheduled.

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.

Questions investigation

I was shocked to read in the Sept. 22 issue of the Commercial Appeal that the Shelby Baptist Association (SBA) had moved to investigate the "doctrinal, soundness" of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, due to that church's call of a woman pastor.

Southern Baptist churches are "locally autonomous" that is each church is free to decide issues of its congregational life without interference from some other level of church government. Baptist associations and conventions are assemblies of autonomous congregations who cooperate voluntarily for the purposes of missions, evangelism, education, etc. Baptist associations and conventions were never intended to be vehicles by which autonomous local churches would be disciplined. Resolutions of such bodies are not binding on the conscience of individual Baptists or Baptist congregations.

The tragedy gripping Southern Baptist life today is that there are those strident presumptuous enough to believe that they have a God-given mandate to discipline the conscience and practice of sister Southern Baptist churches.

The real issue here is not women in the ministry but the freedom and local autonomy of a Southern Baptist church. Prescott Memorial would be within its rights to tell the Shelby Baptist Association to mind its own business! But, knowing the people at Prescott, I believe they will be more kind to their inquisitors than their inquisitors will be to them.

James W. Watkins, pastor
Elk Creek Baptist Church
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Taylorsville, Ky. 40071

Word stirs emotions

When God began to create, did He create "instantaneously" within six days about 7,000 years ago or "gradually" by the process of evolution over millions of years ago?

The greatest threat to creationism or interpreting Genesis 1-11 literally comes from the field of geology, not liberal theology. Because Lyell's view of uniformitarianism dominates scientific thinking, many regard Genesis 1-11 as a myth. A minority of thinkers including biblical literalists would favor Carrier's view of catastrophism which would support the view of creation week and the stories of the flood, Exodus, Joshua's extra long day, and Hezekiah's sun moving backwards.

When we inquire about human origins, we look to the biblical record which explains why God created man and to the archeological record which explains how, when, and where God created man. But did God use the process of evolution to create man as the physical and the archeological evidence suggests?

The word evolution stirs our emotions. Some reject the idea of evolution because it challenges the traditional view of creation. Others accept the idea evolution as the process by which God creates. The Greeks were the first to postulate the concept of evolution. The 18th and 19th century naturalists and scientists merely re-discovered and re-defined the original Greek concept of natural causes.

Does it really matter whether God created instantly or gradually as long as we acknowledge Him as our Heavenly Father and receive His Son as our Savior and Lord? We need to move from a doctrine of God and Son to a relationship with God and Son. Being a theist is not the same as being a Christian.

Jim Pennington
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Johnson City 37601

The crumbling cookies

As a boy, one of the highlights of the December season was when Mom would get out her Christmas cookie-cutters and begin to produce those sugary delicacies. All of the family would gather around the stove sniffing the aroma. For my brother

and me, crunching on Mom's cookies would be the most tasteful event of the year.

Using cookie-cutters was permissible for my mother at Christmas, but God forbid that we as Southern Baptists become a convention that advocates cookie-cutter Christianity. The tragedy of making cookies this way is that there is no distinctiveness or individuality. They all look and taste the same. Yet there are some among our leadership who possess this mindset. They seem to reject those who are not "cut" precisely to their official recipe.

Instead of a Peace Committee we now have an unofficial "Cookie Committee." They are busy fabricating Baptist cookies that endorse Bork for the Supreme Court, fire Baker from the Christian Life Commission, and reprimand Bennett for meeting with the pope. Even our Home Mission Board has recently joined in this cookie construction mania.

I'm not sure we really want peace ... just conformity. We're like the people in Jeremiah's day who said "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." How can we be interested in peace? We're too busy baking cookies.

One day it will be too late for us. The lost world will stand next to our casket, and with tongue in cheek say, "That's the way the cookie crumbles."

Converts or cookies, which will it be? Our mission is to reach people for Jesus Christ, not to make identical Baptist Oreos. Let's give our cookie-cutters away. My mom could use some more.

Daniel Martin
Edgeland Baptist Church
700 Russell St.
Nashville 37206

HMB employees asked to affirm Faith and Message statement

ATLANTA (BP) — Professional-level employees of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board have been asked by President Larry Lewis to affirm the Baptist Faith and Message statement.

Lewis made the request Sept. 22 in a one-page memo to the board's 138 elected staff members.

The memo, which was accompanied by a copy of the doctrinal statement, calls on employees to read the item carefully "and if there are areas you cannot in good conscience affirm, make an appointment with my secretary so we can discuss the matters of concern."

"If I do not hear from you," Lewis concluded, "I will assume you are in full agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message statement and will report so to the Southern Baptist Peace Committee."

The move reflects action taken by board members during their July 29 meeting as they forged new doctrinal guidelines for employing elected staff members and missionaries.

In his memo, Lewis referred to that board action by saying the directors also had instructed the administration "to review the theological positions of our present professional staff and appointed missionaries to assure their theological stance is in harmony with and not in any way contrary to the Baptist Faith and Message statement."

Following the July board meeting, Lewis told Baptist Press if any staffer has a "little problem" with the statement, it does not mean the individual will be terminated. "If, on the other hand,

The end times

This present world is under divine judgment. It is temporary and impermanent; it is passing away. This is the verdict of Scripture, not the verdict of man. The prophetic word of God sounds the alarm, warning men everywhere of the coming end of the world and the final day of judgment.

Jesus spoke of another world that is yet to come, however, and assures all who follow Him that they shall have eternal life in that permanent and imperishable city of God called the new Jerusalem.

As He sat upon the Mount of Olives, His disciples asked Him, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" Jesus responded by foretelling the end of the age, saying that the day of the event is now known to men or angels, but that men are to watch and be ready so as not to be overtaken by surprise.

The Bible has much to say about the end of the world, and the attitude and the outlook of the Christian should be in harmony with it. The individual enters this world for only a short season and is no more. He brings nothing into it and leaves in the same condition he came in — empty-handed.

Therefore, the Christian, having no enduring title to anything in this world, should regard material things very lightly.

For him the world is a place of change and decay — impermanent and insecure.

Today's tycoon may be tomorrow's pauper. Many political leaders are soon forgotten. The grave gobbles up all men's hopes of immortality on this planet, leaving in the books of history mere vestiges of what a few men said and did.

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CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE — 70,362

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J. Plaster accepts call to Decatur pastorate

First Baptist Church in Decatur has called Jerry Plaster to the pastorate.

Plaster is a graduate of Clear Creek Baptist College, Pineville, Ky.

He previously pastored First Baptist Church, Tellico Plains; Pond Hill Baptist Church, Niota; and First Baptist Church, Riceville.

Plaster's ministry will begin on Oct. 4.

CLC members move to regulate programs

NASHVILLE (BP)— Abortion is justifiable only "when the developing child represents a clear and present danger to the physical life of the mother," Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission members declared during their annual meeting Sept. 16.

The abortion statement, part of a broader recommendation regarding sanctity of human life, was one of several measures commissioners approved in a move to regulate staff activities and programs of the ethics agency.

They also withdrew two pamphlets on the role of women and set guidelines for materials that will replace them; adopted a statement on AIDS; restructured the CLC budget to give greater priority to anti-abortion efforts; created a guideline giving commissioners greater editorial input on pamphlet series; asked for a study of the procedure of conducting business by telephone, including the election of staff members; and suggested a study of the feasibility of twice-yearly, rather than annual, meetings.

All the measures to regulate administrative procedure were passed the day following a motion to dismiss N. Larry Baker as executive director failed by a 15-15 vote. Most of the regulatory moves were approved by about a three-to-two margin.

The sanctity of human life statement — which addresses both abortion and euthanasia — declares, "Human life, from fertilization until natural death, is sacred and should be protected, not destroyed." It decries abortion, infanticide, and "active" euthanasia.

The statement calls on staff: to give anti-abortion and anti-euthanasia concerns highest priority in budget and personnel assignments for at least the next two years, to assist the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in developing alternatives to abortion for women facing a problem pregnancy, to oppose infanticide and euthanasia and to refrain from releasing any materials produced by the commission that are not consistent with the policy statement.

Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, failed in an attempt to substitute a statement on abortion passed by a diverse group of Southern Baptists during a CLC-sponsored abortion consultation in June.

"The (June) statement from St. Louis goes beyond exceptions" to abortion, Wade said. "With this (St. Louis) guideline, I can talk and counsel with people and work towards alternatives to abortion. The St. Louis statement will help Southern Baptists. It is a beautiful statement." He said that since the St. Louis statement denounces abortion but does not mention exceptions for abortion, it provides an opportunity for broad support.

Gary Crum, a professor of health services at George Washington University in Washington, said the CLC policy statement contained in the recommendation is "more prophetic, more specific, and more directive to the staff."

The motion on the role of women withdrew "Issues and Answers: Changing Roles of Women" and "Critical Issues: Women in Church and Society" from circulation. It also called for CLC staff to produce new materials on women's roles by September 1988. The new materials are to reflect the 1984 Southern Baptist Convention resolution titled "Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry."

That SBC resolution interprets Scripture as excluding women from pastoral leadership and says "God's delegated

order of authority" includes "Christ as the head of man and man as the head of woman." It also states that "women are not in public worship to assume a role of authority over men lest confusion reign in the local church" and "to preserve a submission required because the man was first in creation and the woman was first in the Edenic Fall."

Skeet Workman, homemaker from Lubbock, Texas, who originated the motion to withdraw the literature, said the pamphlet on changing roles of women contains inaccurate statements: "The pamphlet says the Equal Rights Amendment was designed to guarantee constitutionally that equal rights under the law would not be denied anyone because of sex, and that is false. The No. 1 reason of the women's rights movement was the passage of the ERA, which would lead to legalization of homosexuality, abortion, and many other things . . ."

Workman took issue with the pamphlet on women in church and society, particularly for its statement that some women have suffered discrimination in churches. "I think if this brochure were given to a young homemaker in a Southern Baptist church and she reads it,

she will begin to get the idea that there is discrimination among us as Southern Baptists," she said.

Wade and Don Blanton, an engineer from Bel Air, Md., pleaded with commissioners not to base their actions on the 1984 resolution, noting resolutions are not binding on SBC institutions. "As Baptists, we are not governed by resolutions; we are governed by Scripture," Wade said.

Focusing on AIDS — acquired immune deficiency syndrome — commissioners adopted a statement that commended the staff "for their efforts to date in this regard" and urged increased energy in the development of materials on AIDS.

"We call upon the CLC staff to produce literature which sounds a clear call to sexual purity, not simply from health concerns, but because of biblical, ethical principles," their AIDS statement says. Previously, they passed a committee recommendation concerning development of new audiovisual and printed resources on AIDS.

Abortion re-surfaced during an administrative committee discussion of the 1987-88 CLC budget. That budget — \$1,040,600, which includes SBC Cooperative Program income of \$795,100

and \$150,000 from the sale of ethics resources — was approved. Internally, the administrative committee took \$20,000 from two general line item accounts to create a new line item account giving priority to initiatives on abortion and euthanasia.

In an unprecedented move, the CLC promotion committee asked for and received permission to review and respond to "future printed materials in pamphlet series" prior to their publication.

In other business, commissioners:

- Approved a response to the SBC Peace Committee from the CLC executive director that confirms the executive director and professional staff of the commission have been and will continue to be committed to work within the framework of the Baptist Faith and Message Statement.

- Authorized a Cooperative Program request of \$984,855 for 1988-89. The request includes a 5 percent price index adjustment and a special request of \$150,000 for establishing a CLC office in Washington. The establishment of a Washington moral concerns office was encouraged by an SBC Executive Committee fact-finding committee that studied the work of the Baptist Joint Committee.

- Approved a request to the SBC for approval of a proposed change in the CLC program statement that would remove language requiring the agency to work through the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs when working on Christian moral concerns in Washington.

- Voted to give the CLC Distinguished Service Award to Doug and Evelyn Knapp, missionaries to Tanzania, and to Samuel T. Currin, U.S. attorney for the eastern district of North Carolina and chairman of the SBC Public Affairs Committee.

The Knapps were cited for their 23 years of work in agricultural missions and race relations, as well as for the 14,409 baptisms during the 1986 church year in the remote Kyela District of Tanzania.

Currin was nominated for the award by Crum as an addition to the CLC executive committee's nomination of the Knapps. Crum cited Currin's active leadership in the fight against drugs and pornography.

- Approved a statement commending President Ronald Reagan for his role in reducing the federal government's role in abortions.

- Authorized annual seminars in Kansas City, Mo., for 1989 on "Life in the Balance" and Birmingham, Ala., in 1990 on "Combatting Moral Problems" and annual conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist conference centers in 1988 on Christian moral concerns.

- Approved conferences or consultations in the coming year on abortion, pornography, gambling, race relations, and medical ethics.

HMB endorses 27 chaplains to varied ministry roles

DECATUR, Ga. (BP)— Newly endorsed chaplains were commended for being faithful to God's call to ministry during a ceremony at Columbia Drive Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga.

Although friends and family members may equate chaplaincy as a secondary ministry to a pastoral calling, chaplains actually fulfill their spiritual obligation through another important avenue of service, said Gerald Palmer, vice-president of missions for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"Going into the field of chaplaincy does not signify 'leaving the ministry' if you previously have served in some pastoral role. You are individuals on a mission for Christ and his church, representing Southern Baptists as you serve around the nation and the world," he added.

Twenty-seven chaplains were endorsed during the ceremony at the suburban Atlanta church. They join 1,858 other chaplains who serve "in every imaginable situation around the world," said Huey Perry, director of chaplaincy for the agency.

The board does not appoint chaplains as missionaries but endorses them to the employing agencies. In addition to the endorsement, the board provides them with pastoral and professional support through personal ministry, seminars and conferences.

The chaplains, who are paid directly by the institutions they serve in industry, prisons, hospitals, and the military, minister throughout the nation and in the 17 foreign countries.

During the service Carol Mitchell, an Army chaplain stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., shared her struggle in obeying God's call to ministry.

She explained how she felt called by God to the ministry while in high school, but there were no role models for the profession. Following careers as a high school instructor and a military intelligence officer, she was forced to come to grips with God's original plan for her life.

"I did not wake up one morning and

decide that I wanted to be in the middle of Southern Baptists' controversy over women in ministry, but neither could I deny that calling," she said. "I never felt I was going against what I was taught in relation to women and ministry, and I am a Southern Baptist right down to my roots. But I could not deny God's call."

As a newly endorsed chaplain, Mitchell said, she is proud to represent Southern Baptists and to extend a helping hand to people in spiritual need in the military.

Royce Ballard, chaplain at Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans, also shared his testimony during the ceremony. The hospital has previously supplied chaplaincy services through its clinical pastoral education program, but Ballard is the first staff person to serve in that capacity.

Ballard told how, after 14 years of marriage and a successful business career, he experienced a divorce. "It was during that extremely painful time following my divorce that I discovered anew the grace and love of God in my life," he said.

In his closing remarks Ballard, who has served as a pastor for the past decade, called for a sense of unity throughout the denomination and asked for a spirit of love to prevail.

"As we see each other broken and hurting, regardless of our theology, let us minister to each other in that grace and love," he said.

Volunteers to work in Venezuela camp

A six-member team from Central Baptist Church, Fountain City, in Knoxville, and a 12-member team from Judson Baptist Church in Nashville will be doing construction work in October in Venezuela to support the Tennessee/Venezuela partnership.

The volunteers bring the total to 738 persons who have participated in the partnership since it began in November 1985. It is coordinated by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The teams will be working at Campo de Carabobo near Valencia, the new Baptist encampment.

Traveling Oct. 3-16, the team from Knoxville will include John Bolton; James Hull; William Rosenbalm Jr.; Ronald Mouser, minister of education; Jerry Trivette; and Franklin Stidham.

The team from Nashville will be traveling Oct. 12-23 and will include Johnnie and Phyllis Hall, Gregg and Lisa Hall, Lonnie Atkinson, James and Maurice Ault, Edward and Joanne James, Keith and Cathey Norton, and Rick Burton.

Persons interested in serving should contact Clarence Stewart, TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024.

Association to investigate church

The Shelby County Baptist Association's executive board voted to investigate the "doctrinal soundness" of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church in Memphis during its monthly meeting Sept. 21.

Vaughn Denton, pastor of Kirby Parkway Baptist Church in Memphis, presented a resolution asking for the investigation following the church's action to call Nancy Hastings Sehested as pastor Aug. 23. He said he was a spokesman for numerous area pastors.

Sehested, who is associate pastor of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., will begin serving Nov. 1.

The voice vote on the resolution included no negative votes, but a number of abstentions. The association's credentials committee, which is chaired by Ken Storey, pastor of Germantown Baptist Church in Germantown, is to report its findings at the association's annual meeting Oct. 19-20.

During discussion, Fred Wood, pastor emeritus of Eudora Baptist Church in Memphis and a member of the credentials committee, asked what should be the guide for doctrinal soundness. He referred to the Bible's directive that women cover their heads when they enter a place of worship and asked if the association is prepared to "disenfranchise every church that allows its women in bareheaded?"

Claiming that he is not a part of a fundamentalist take-over group, Denton stated that the church "for years has been out of step with the association and out of step with the Bible."

"We do recognize the autonomy of the

local church, but at the same time we have to guard the autonomy of the association," Denton said.

He hopes the church will reconsider its decision to call a woman as pastor. He is not against a woman serving in other full-time church staff positions.

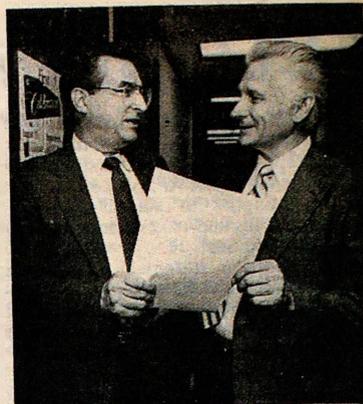
"If they don't reconsider . . . , we should vote to not seat their messengers" at the annual meeting, Denton concluded.

In a report in the *Commercial-Appeal*, the daily Memphis newspaper, Sehested said during a telephone interview from her home in Decatur that it was a shame the association didn't bother to meet her before their vote.

"My hope is the association will reaffirm its commitment to all its member churches, and reaffirm historic Baptist principles of the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of every church to call whom they sense God has chosen for them."

Tom Walsh, vice-chairman of deacons of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, said, "We believe we're a doctrinally sound church and we'd be glad to discuss that with anyone."

On Sept. 22 Memphis female clergy released a statement supporting the church's election of a woman pastor. — Connie Davis



DISCUSSING GAMBLING ISSUE — Gerald L. Stow, left, and Frank Ingraham, are two Williamson countians who oppose pari-mutuel betting, an issue which may be put to vote soon. Stow is executive director of the TBC Children's Homes, and Ingraham, who is coordinating the county effort, is an attorney and one of Tennessee Baptists' members of the SBC Executive Committee.

One Word More

By W. Fletcher Allen

She clicked the control button and another slide flipped into focus.

"That's Mukoma Station," she said, and in a somewhat subdued tone she added, "you can see that it's at the end of the line."

The color slide, profuse with blue sky and deep greens of a typical East Africa landscape, showed the audience a "compound" of small buildings huddled at the end of a long and dusty road. Hills — even mountains — abounded nearby and far on the horizon.

In the interminable moments that followed her remark, you could almost hear the hushed appraisal of those who listened and looked, saying, "Godforsaken."

No, no, no, Godforsaken, anything but Godforsaken! God birthed that place, Mukoma, end of the line. True, it is miles and miles away from the main road. True, it is the last stop on that rocky trail of endless bumps, and devoid of modern "entertainment."

And God planned the strategy for it, including a group of people who would come there someday from a land called America, the USA. He put it in their hearts to count all as garbage except the love of Christ for all men, even those whom He placed in the same Mukoma.

He knew there will be Silas the pastor, and Marta, his wife, who would be a nurse at the small clinic that Christians would build there. He knew that Stan and Marlene Lee would come there someday (He also knew when that would be), and Bob and Alice Snyder — teaching and preaching and ministering through their giftedness.

And He knew there would be a nurse from Columbia, Tennessee.

I don't suppose there was anything too different about Katrina Knox when she was growing up with her family on that Columbia farm. I don't know that there was anything to mark her as distinguished or special.

But she was marked, marked for service. She probably climbed trees and

jumped rope and drank plenty of fresh milk and inhaled fresh air and sunshine.

She also got a headstart on what God intended for her — by giving her heart to Jesus Christ. And He touched her.

Well, back to the slide show. It was Katrina who showed the slides. She was trying to tell the audience something about her life as a missionary to Rwanda. She could have used a half day because she really cares about those people.

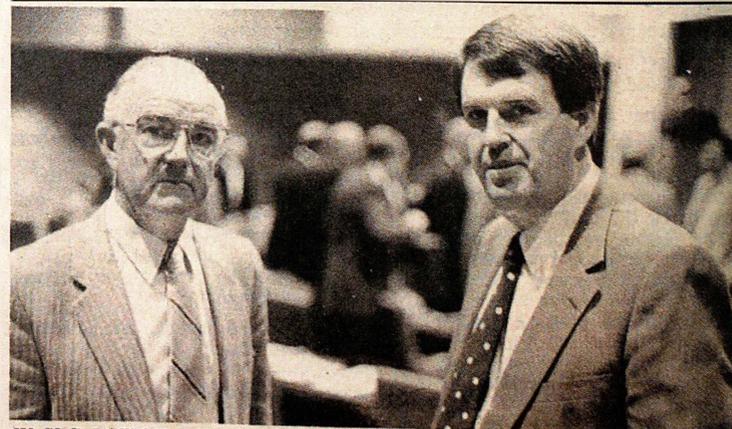
She shared with the people that she was returning to Rwanda in just four days. "You know," she sighed, "I am really eager to get back home."

Home? Some of us probably thought. Home is 30 miles down the road in Columbia. Incredulous to think, it was, that home could be a place where you have to struggle for enough water, where electricity is more than a luxury, it's a rarity — where you are 27 hours away from family by air.

I don't think that's her idea of family or home. You see, she, like most missionaries far away from "home," are more than content to love people who are dirty and smelly and hurting and forgotten.

Katrina was there at Mukoma when I was there in January. She was bright and enthusiastic about the prospects of ministry. She had intended to go to Rubura, Burundi, a place where they had prayed for a nurse for seven years. She got sidetracked when the government closed the doors — but God sent her on to Mukoma.

She flipped another slide. The audience forgot about that dusty road. She talked about love and people and how good it was to be going home.



IN SBC ACTION — Joe B. Warwick, layman from Knoxville, and Don Whitt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Milan, Gibson County Association, took part in last week's Executive Committee meeting. They are two of Tennessee Baptists' five committee members.

GA-las feature missionaries

Six regional Missions Adventures GAlas for girls in grades 3-6 will feature missionaries as a part of the meetings sponsored by Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union based in Brentwood.

The Oct. 17 activity at Camp Carson will feature Beverly Smothers, director of Christian social ministries for Holston Baptist Association. Also on Oct. 17 a GAla will meet at Ridgeway Baptist Church in Memphis and feature Karen Gross, who helps direct the Migrant Mission Center in Hope, Ark. An Oct. 24 meeting will be held at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville where Bill and Frances Skinner, missionaries in Paraguay, will speak.

A meeting also on Oct. 24 at Dogwood Lodge in Chattanooga will include a presentation by Glen Petree, director of Christian social ministries for Clinton Baptist Association. The GAlas on Oct. 31 will feature Betty Roaten, missionary in Uruguay, at Camp Linden in Linden; and Bill and Cindy Black, missionaries in the Gatlinburg area, at Camp Ta-Pa-Win-Go in Elizabethton.

The meetings, which will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 2 p.m., will include games and missions activities.

An adult needs to accompany each six girls and each participant should bring a sack lunch. Drinks will be provided. The registration fee is \$3 and should be made two weeks prior to each GAla at Tennessee WMU, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024.

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Baptist and Reflector
subscription to a friend

Margaret Hutson dies

Margaret Hutson, the mother of James Hutson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Rockwood and member of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board, died Sept. 24 at Harriman Hospital in Harriman. She was 90 years old.

The funeral was at First Baptist Church in Rockwood on Sept. 25 and burial was at Jacksboro Cemetery in Jacksboro or Sept. 26.

Memorial donations may be made to the church's organ fund at First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 54, Rockwood, TN 37854.

Specialist analyzes church conflict

Following is the first in a series on church conflict. — Editor

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE (BP) — A Southern Baptist church that avoids or ignores congregational conflict is permitting a potential crisis of effectiveness to encroach on its fellowship, according to a church administrative specialist.

Change, which frequently results in conflict, is inevitable, said Joe Stacker, who believes nearly every conflict situa-

tion is manageable.

Stacker, director of the church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said substantive and interpersonal differences that result in congregational conflict are manageable if church members will deal with each other redemptively in the spirit of Christ.

"With tolerance and redemptive release of emotions, churches can get through situations which are potentially explosive," Stacker noted. "Jesus confronted conflict in the church, and we

can't totally avoid it today.

"I think baptisms would double and missions giving increase significantly if churches would learn to deal with conflict," he said.

"People need to get their eyes off themselves and start doing the Great Commission.

"Our churches spend too much time on non-biblical concerns," he said.

"They lose sight of their mission and objective while alienations break down the church family relationships."

Almost any situation in a church, including growth, can result in conflict, Stacker claimed. For instance some church members do not want their churches to grow because of the changes that certainly will occur in organization and relationships.

Major or minor incidents and events can cause conflict. The addition of staff members, budget difficulties, disciplinary words directed at the child of a member, the color of the carpet or just two people sharing the same space all can cause the spark that starts the fires of conflict, he noted.

How the conflict started, what caused it and how to manage it are key questions which can result in growth and new unity or a divided congregation and broken fellowship, Stacker said.

He identified three divisions into which conflict can be classified. First, intrapersonal conflict is inside a person. If ignored or mishandled, it eventually will spill out into the life of the church.

Second, interpersonal conflict is between two people, such as when they are more worried about who will get top-billing for some project or event.

Third is substantive conflict, Stacker continued, which is a difference of opinion over ideas involving facts and values. Ironically, this is the easiest kind of conflict to solve, unless some interpersonal conflict develops out of the problem-solving process. Sometimes what appears to be a conflict over a substantive matter is a smoke screen for some personality conflict between members, he said.

"The most dangerous way to deal with conflict is to ignore it," Stacker said. "When you deny the reality of conflict, it

generally deepens while going unresolved. Avoidance also is unacceptable."

A more effective way to deal with conflict is to defuse it by honestly addressing the problem, making suggestions to people who are involved and then waiting to see the reactions. Another method of dealing with conflict is confrontation, where a person in a leadership role has enough influence to mandate a decision and negotiate a conclusion.

When conflict first appears, the pastor and other church leaders should research the problem to determine the issues and who is involved, he said.

"Three common ways to deal with conflict are fright, flight, and fight," Stacker explained. "Many persons either freeze in fear or run away as quickly as possible. We need to take a stand and negotiate.

"Church leaders need to realize that conflict was no stranger to Christ," he said. "We need to know how to manage conflict and live within the opportunities it brings. Successfully resolving congregational conflict can teach tolerance, redemption, and release of emotion which could have exploded and injured many."



Tennessee/Venezuela prayer net partnership

—Pray for the missionary kids who have begun the school year. Some are attending international school, others attend boarding school.

—Venezuelan home missionaries celebrating birthdays are: Eunice Moran on Oct. 4, and Enrique Montoya, Caroline Sanchez, and Joel Cruz all on Oct. 6.

—Pray for the 12 seminary faculty members who are preparing to teach the first full curriculum year. Work loads are increased due to the greater number of course offerings.

—Continue to pray for visas to allow new missionaries to work in Venezuela.

Workshops set on campcraft

Adults wishing instruction for Royal Ambassador campcraft work may be trained at Camp Carson in Newport Oct. 8-11 or 9-11 and at Camp Linden in Linden Oct. 22-25 or 23-25.

The Adult Campcraft Workshops will enable the participants to teach boys and adults campcraft skills and their biblical applications.

Training for the basic and standard campcraft levels and a new offering, the American Red Cross course in multimedia first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), will be held Oct. 9-11 and Oct. 23-25 and cost \$45 per person.

The advanced campcraft level and a new adventure recreation course, which is a unity, confidence, and trust building course using rope activities and initiative games, will meet Oct. 8-11 and Oct. 22-25 and cost \$60 per person.

The workshops begin with lunch and close following lunch on the last day.

Pre-registration is due Oct. 2 for the Camp Carson workshops and Oct. 9 for the Camp Linden workshops and can be made through the TBC Brotherhood department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024.

Language leaders set conference

The annual Language Leadership Conference will be held Oct. 16-17 at Camp Linden in Linden and feature Oscar Romo, language missions division director at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta, and William Rutledge, immigration and refugees consultant for the language missions division, HMB. Persons involved in ministries for persons who speak other languages or working with them are invited to attend.

Other session leaders include James Rose, church media library department consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville; Elias Pantoja, national student ministries consultant at the BSSB; Don Mauldin, adult work director in the church training department, Tennessee Baptist Convention in Brentwood; and J. C. Carpenter, missions department program associate, TBC.

Directing the conference is James Redding, missions department program associate, TBC. Presiding at the sessions, which will begin Friday at noon and end Saturday after lunch, will be Fuad Shorosh, multi-ethnic catalytic missionary in Hamilton County Baptist Association; S. B. Park, pastor of the Korean Baptist Church of Memphis; and James Keilum Jr., missions program director of Shelby County Baptist Association.

The program will also include recreation.

Travel and conference expenses will be paid for participants. Persons should register by contacting the TBC missions department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024.

Personal Perspective



By Tom Madden
TBC Executive
Secretary-Treasurer

A few days ago we celebrated the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States. As I have reflected on that historic document several thoughts have come to me.

An initial observation is that, while we cherish the document, our freedoms will not continue automatically because they are beautifully written out on a parchment. Our liberties must be protected and perpetuated forever by loyal Americans who understand the price paid for them initially and for the continuing sacrifices made over the two centuries.

Perhaps a word ought to be said about the Bible. While in the same sense we love God's inspired Word, just to revere it isn't enough. We need to know God's Word, and then share its message with unsaved friends and our lost world.

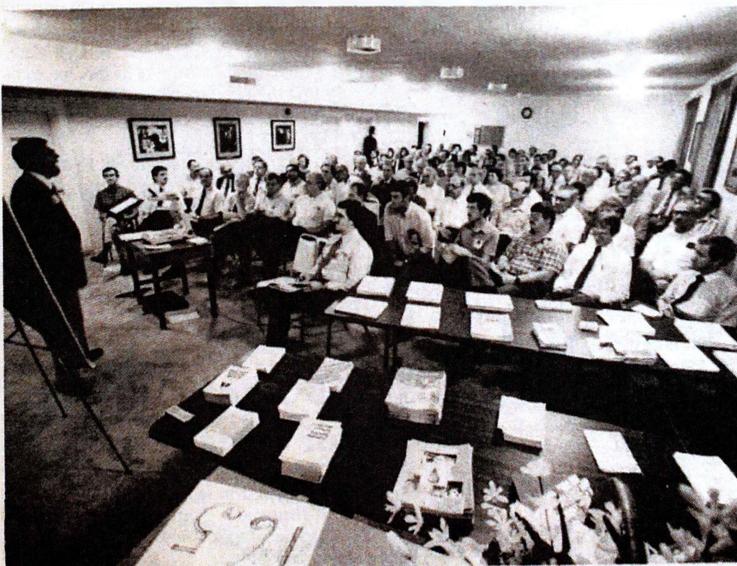
I have thought too of how our new nation could not be molded and fitted into the Old World framework of kings and monarchies. We have to have freedoms and democracy and thus came a completely new document that could not be contained by the Old World concepts.

Our Lord said, "No man putteth a piece of new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent" (Luke 5:36). Neither could they put new wine in old wine skins. This also applies to the new life our Lord brought to us. It could not be fitted into the old skins of Pharisaism and legalism.

Nicodemus tried to do it and couldn't. Our Lord said he had to be born again. Saul of Tarsus could not fit the Christian way of life into his old ways. It is no wonder he would later write that we are "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

As we thank God for the Constitution and pledge to learn more of its meaning, let us also share the Christ who gives it meaning.

Write for information
about the B & R
60-day free trial offer!



PART OF 900 — Those receiving training as Sunday School general officers were a part of 900 persons that gathered at the Regional Sunday School Leadership Training Conference at Central Baptist Church, Fountain City, in Knoxville Sept. 14-15. It was the fourth of the seven meetings held across the state and offered 22 different areas of training.

Thomas explains church concerns to IRS

WASHINGTON (BP)— An initially hostile discussion of tax provisions relating to churches ended on a positive note during the first meeting of a newly created Internal Revenue Service advisory panel on tax-exempt organizations.

Members of the Commissioner's Exempt Organizations Advisory Group began by criticizing Internal Revenue Code provisions that relate to churches. But after hearing concerns raised by a Southern Baptist church-state attorney, IRS Commissioner Lawrence Gibbs and other panel members indicated a desire to work with church representatives on

reconciling issues of mutual concern. Drawing early criticism were provisions that exempt churches from filing informational tax returns and protect churches from intrusive tax audits. One member charged that the provision exempting churches from filing information returns violates the First Amendment's establishment clause, while another suggested all churches should have to file annual information returns.

An IRS official also criticized churches' potential political involvement. He said since campaign contributions are not deductible but church contributions are,

he is concerned churches could become a "national channel for channeling money into political campaigns."

Discussion within the group also charged Congress with limiting IRS ability to investigate churches. IRS officials told the panel that without legislative changes, abuses of the tax law by churches would continue.

Following the initial round of discussion, Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, was given an opportunity to respond.

Thomas began by criticizing IRS failure to include even one church representative on the advisory group, which is made up of tax-law experts.

"I am both surprised and disappointed that no representative of churches is on this advisory committee insofar as church concerns are a major item on your agenda," Thomas said. "I want you to know that churches are sensitive to the concerns that have been expressed around the table. We recognize the government's legitimate interest in preventing fraud, private inurement and other misconduct."

But Thomas cautioned the group against intruding into the internal financial affairs of churches.

"The First Amendment provides churches with protections against government intrusion and entanglement that are not available to secular organizations," he said. "Therefore, any change in existing law must be done carefully. We don't want to move precipitously in an area of law that has been carefully crafted over several decades."

Thomas told the committee that churches are concerned about public perception of misconduct by religious organizations. "Don't confuse mainstream religious America with what went on at the PTL Club," he said. "The vast majority of religious organizations are in

perfect compliance with the tax codes. Also expressing concern on behalf of churches were Gary S. Nash, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board and Secretary of the Church Alliance, and Seidre Halloran, associate general counsel for the United States Catholic Conference.

"We want to be constructive, but we do not want to be looking in from the outside," Thomas concluded. "We need to be involved in the process."

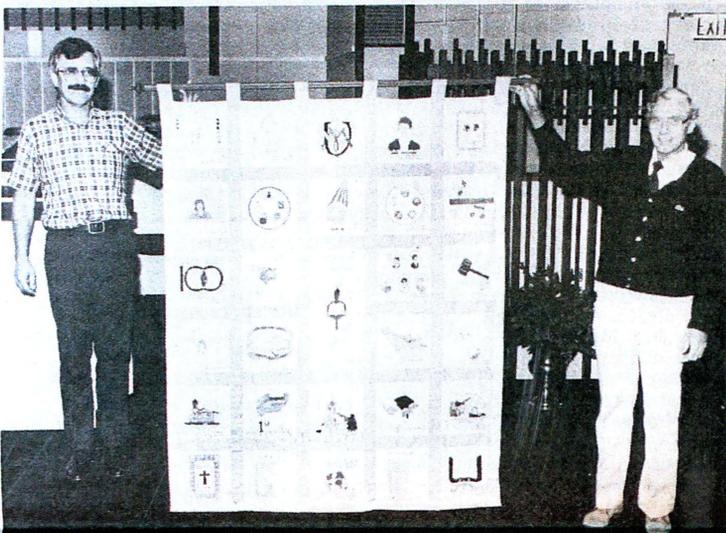
Following Thomas' remarks, Commissioner Gibbs expressed his appreciation for the input and his desire for the IRS and the religious community to begin a "constructive dialogue" on issues of mutual concern. "I think we have ended on a very positive note," Gibbs said.

Several advisory group members also expressed their support for involving churches in deliberations with the IRS. Thomas told the panel: "We've done this kind of thing before. The process we went through in solving the integrated auxiliaries problem is an excellent model for an ongoing dialogue between the IRS and the religious community."

After the meeting, Thomas sent a letter to Robert Brauer, IRS assistant commissioner for employee plans and exempt organizations, suggesting the creation of a study group comprised of representatives from the IRS, Treasury Department and churches to explore the various questions raised during the advisory group's meeting.

Thomas told Baptist Press he is confident current law contains adequate safeguards to protect the general public from what he called charlatans.

"There are plenty of laws currently on the books prohibiting mail fraud, fraudulent solicitation, the use of a tax-exempt organization for personal gain, and the like," he said. "We don't need to invite the IRS into church business meetings in order to solve the few problems that exist."



CENTENNIAL BANNER — Recognizing 100 years of the Southern Baptist Convention's Woman's Missionary Union, a WMU centennial banner was presented to First Baptist Church, Crossville. The church celebrated its 75th anniversary on Aug. 16. Pictured are Bob Spears (left), associate pastor, Carl Yarnell Jr., pastor.

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Workshop to prepare leaders of drama/puppetry/clowning

A Drama/Puppetry/Clowning Festival Leadership Workshop to prepare directors and other adult leaders for the 1988 festival will be held Oct. 24 at the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board Building in Brentwood.

It will be led by Ev Robertson, drama specialist for the Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation department. The workshop will be directed by Eleanor



Robertson

Yarborough, program associate in the TBC media ministries department.

The program will include direction in script and performance material selection, preparation and design, rehearsals, and will feature performance demonstrations.

The 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. meeting costs \$25 per person and \$20 per person if more than one from a church attends. Lunch and program materials will be provided.

Persons wishing to register should contact TBC media ministries department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024, by Oct. 14.

TBC sets training for construction

A brick/block layers' school for volunteer construction workers will be led by the Tennessee Baptist Convention Brotherhood department Oct. 2-3 at Camp Linden in Linden.

The school will begin at 7 p.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m., include two meals, and cost \$10.

Persons may contact the TBC Brotherhood department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024, for more information.

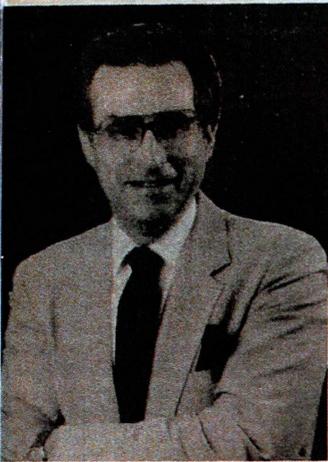
Bishop accepts call to Signal Mountain

Jack C. Bishop Jr. recently accepted the call to the pastorate of Signal Mountain Baptist Church in Chattanooga.

Bishop is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and holds a master of divinity and doctor of ministries degrees from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

He previously served six years as associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Kingsport.

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Gerald L. Stow
Executive Director/Treasurer
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"I want a Daddy and a Mommy that I don't have to share with eight other kids." Such a statement is not uncommon among the children that we serve. This is why it is important to find good foster homes for these children. Yet, in the Middle and East Tennessee regions of our state, we have less than a dozen foster homes.

Paul reminded Timothy, "and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II Tim. 3:15. Paul spoke to Timothy about his rich heritage in the faith. More especially, he spoke about his heritage in the scripture. It is obvious that Timothy had grown up in a godly home in the midst of Christian instruction. You could be the family that

God would use to bring the same influence in the life of a boy or girl.

Frequently, we receive a call from the Department of Human Services requesting that a child be placed in foster care. All too often we have to say, "Sorry, we do not have a home available." When this happens, we feel a sense of loss because we miss the opportunity to have a spiritual ministry in the life of a child. By the willingness of those Baptist families who will open their heart and home to a child, what greater home missions can be rendered than this, to invest love, time and resources in the life of a child. The average length of care for all our children is 15 months. For some, the time could be much longer, for others, one or two months. But, what a joy to know that

you used your influence to help a boy or girl through a rough time in his or her life.

Pharaoh's daughter said to Jochebed, "Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." Ex. 2:9. The great payday for foster Mothers and Dads will be the day when Jesus says, "Well done. . . as oft as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." To apply as a foster family, contact the campus nearest you. Investing your life, love and resources with a child or youth is an investment in eternity.

New TBCH Logo Reflects Loving Support Of Our Homes

As the needs of today's children have changed, so have the many ministries of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. We are pleased to introduce a new logo which is reflective of our expanding works.

When this special agency of the Tennessee Baptist Convention was founded in 1891, our primary purpose was to provide a home for orphans. At that time, most of our children were of preschool age. Today, a majority of our children are adolescents who are not orphaned. Instead, they are in need of a stable home environment because of any of a number of troubles in their own homes. Sometimes their mother or father is in jail, or has a drug or alcohol dependency, or is physically abusive.

These children have special needs which go far beyond the necessary provisions of food, clothes and shelter. We believe our primary mission is to provide a loving, spiritual environment. Years of hurt and neglect require the patience and care that is available only in a nurturing home.

Since the children who come to us have such widely varied needs, we have created many different programs to serve them. Our infants and preschoolers receive care in our foster homes. This is perhaps the greatest need in our ministry- for more Baptist families to open their homes to these needy children. We are very blessed by the foster families who give so generously of their time and their love. But, there are many, many



more children we have to turn away every week because we simply don't have the families to provide care.

Our school age children are placed in one of our group homes. Our main campuses in Chattanooga, Franklin and Memphis, and single homes in Burrville and Johnson City all provide care in a group home environment. Eight children live in each home cottage with their house parents. These small family units work much better than our former dormitory system, simply because we are able to more

closely provide a family unit for each child.

However, with eight children in each home, it is understandably difficult for the house parents to always give the extra time and attention a child may need. For this reason, some of our older children are placed in our foster homes. The one-on-one attention is sometimes the extra edge that makes a real difference in a child's life.

We have also expanded our ministries to assist unwed mothers. It is of crucial importance that young women be provided an

alternative to abortion. We offer care and support to women who wish to place their infants with Baptist families through the adoption branch of our agency, as well as to those who wish to keep their babies.

As you can see, our ministries today encompass so much more than simply providing room and board. For that reason, we are pleased to introduce our new logo- a symbol of the love that extends throughout all the work of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. We love our children unconditionally, whatever their age or heritage or troubled past. It is our hope that whenever you again see our "scribbled" house and heart, that you'll be reminded of the children and the love that are the foundations of our work.

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BIBLE BOOK SERIES

Lesson for Oct. 4

God creates the world

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

Basic Passage: Genesis 1:1 to 2:3

Focal Passages: Genesis 1:1-3, 7-11, 25-27; 2:2-3

One of the great promises and attractions of the Christian faith is the opportunity to begin again. This lesson begins our trek through God's Word as revealed in the Bible. Some weary of the journey. But those who continue to the end are always rewarded in abundant measure.

One trip through the Bible is never enough. Each time we make our way through the Book, we find new pockets of treasure which we didn't notice before. It is truly a "perfect treasure" of wisdom from God.

In books like Genesis we find unexpected richness. It is a primitive story told in very simple language. But it is filled with profound insight into the beginnings of things.

God creates the universe

Almost every little child asks his parents, "Where did I come from?" That is when the parents' first gray hair begins to appear. But that question is as old as mankind. We have always wondered about the origin of things.

The writer of Genesis wonders too, and God answers his question with Himself. The first verse of the Bible takes us to the source of it all. God was in the beginning before anything else was. Being alone and being all powerful, God created all things.

For some reason there are those who want to believe that the writer skips millions of years in this story. Some have indicated that during those missing years, the age of the dinosaurs and other creatures played out their span. It seems that they gather that the "formless void" must have been something else before then.

However one may interpret the first two verses, the teaching of Scripture is that God started with nothing but Himself. Into that void He cast light.

I am convinced that there was more to that light than something like sunlight for it had not yet been created. I prefer to think of it as the light of God's revelation. Indeed, everything God has ever done has been a revelation of Himself. Where He reveals Himself it is truly day and where there is no revelation from God is more surely night.

The firmament or "expanse" which God creates next is what we call the atmosphere. In former days, mankind understood that the earth was more or less flat with water underneath (so they could did wells) and water above the sky (so that rain could fall when God opened the windows of heaven). The firmament, our atmosphere, kept the water off. From

that point we can see all of the earth begin to appear as they had come to know it.

God creates life within the universe

Once the earth and sky are in place, God begins to make preparation for life on the earth. He does this, first of all, by causing all sorts of plant life to grow. These plants had within themselves the power to reproduce.

But even plants cannot live without light. So God places the sun, moon, and stars in the sky to cause the plants to be able to grow.

Next He fills the sky and seas with creatures. Then God moves on to create the creatures that move about on the land. These forms of living things are given the power to carry on life also.

God puts mankind into the created order

Like a father getting a new home ready for his family, God lovingly crafts the earth and all the universe. After everything else is prepared, God comes to the crown of His creation who will make the earth his abode and place of dominion.

Only this portion of God's created order is created in the image of the Creator. Whatever being created in the image of God means, it surely doesn't mean that He looks like us. Surely it means that there is something about our nature that is like His.

We have been "fearfully and wonderfully made." Unlike the other forms of life who must go through their seasons and act on instinct alone, mankind is given the ability to reason and make decisions. We sometimes refer to this as having the freedom of choice.

After creating mankind (notice that He creates man as male and female) God gives them their orders. We often refer to the closing words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew as the Great Commission. But verses 28-30 also contain a great commission.

God commissions the first of mankind upon the earth to produce after their kind. He also tells them to take charge of the things of the earth. He concludes by telling them that He has given them all they need for the task. His command reminds us a great deal of the Great Commission.

God pronounces the goodness of His creation

God's acts of creation are divided into six periods which are called days. At the completion of three of those days of work, God pronounces that what He has done is good. At the end of His work He declares that it is all "very good." Everything that God does is good.

When God declares that something is good it seems to indicate that it is doing what God put it here to do. That might be a lesson to us. We cannot be righteous or good unless we are busy doing what God put us here to do and be.

After God completes this phase of His work He rests. For the Israelites and for the Christians this is the motive for our own "sabbaths." We sanctify one day each week as holy unto God.



Nail

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES

Lesson for Oct. 4

Abraham's origin and call

By John N. Meadows, professor
Union University, Jackson

Basic Passage: Genesis 11:27 to 12:9

Focal Passage: Genesis 11:31 to 12:9

What a breath of fresh air this week's lesson is! After reading of the debacle at Babel one doubts that man will ever fulfill the original intent of God. But then there is Abraham! Through him God initiates a bold plan of redemption that eventually culminates in the coming of the second Adam to reverse the curse brought on by the first Adam.

A study of the life of his patriarch tells us why he was called the Lord's "friend" (Isaiah 41:8); why he was given prominence in the roll call of the faithful (Hebrews 11); and why he was revered by the Saviors (e.g., John 8:52ff).



Meadows

The call

It is not necessary that we understand the precise means by which the Lord "called" Abraham, but there is no doubt that the Lord spoke and that Abraham heard. A skeptic once railed at a new pastor, "What's this 'call' business? Did you hear a voice out of the sky?" The pastor replied, "No, my ears heard nothing - but my heart did!"

What called Abraham's heart away from the idolatrous culture of which he was a part (Joshua 24:2)? In addition to the call itself, the death of Haran may have been a sobering event wherein the Lord reminded Abraham and Terah, his father, that they had departed from the faith of their fathers (11:28). Also, the migration of multitudes of people from southern Mesopotamia in that time may have been another factor in Abraham's decision to leave. In other words, God worked in history to move Abraham toward the land of Canaan.

Why did Abraham heed the call? Was motive a factor? Did Abraham obey the call in order to have a great name and be a great nation? Or did he follow because he wanted to be a blessing to the world? Abraham obeyed the Lord in order to achieve all three "I will" parts of the promise (12:2,3), but the overall manner of his life thereafter indicates that trusting service was the governing reason in his decision.

Clyde T. Francisco once said, "God is concerned about why we do what we do. You may not go to jail for what you're thinking, but you could go to hell for it!" Ambition is not necessarily wrong; it is what we do with it that makes a difference. Do we want to be "godlike" or "like gods"?

The cost of the call

Following the Lord costs the follower. Abraham's reward would be great - but only after surrender. In fact, he surrendered for the rest of his life! He was wealthy in Ur and later in Haran, but he was not in the will of God until he burned his bridges behind him, leaving his family and a comfortable life to sojourn amid the uncertainties of Canaan. God might have called others, but only Abraham obeyed.

We can empathize with Abraham - sur-

render is no easy thing. Leaving everything to go to a place one has never seen could be considered "downright ridiculous." Abraham had to give up country and kindred. Such is faith's unrelenting demand: give up that to which you cling for that which is yet to be, give up your known for the Lord's unknown. An evangelist once stopped the invitation hymn, "I Surrender All," and commented: "This hymn bothers me because I can only sing 'I Want to Surrender All.'" Did he speak only for himself?

The purpose of the call

Why did God begin a new nation with Abraham? The answer is that through Abraham and his "sons" the fallen earth would learn something it could never realize on its own: the true nature of God. "General revelation" is a term used to describe those things about God that can be discerned by a reasoned consideration of the created world, that which we "ought" to know (Romans 1:20). "Special revelation," however, denotes that which we would never know about God without His specific revelation to us. What Abraham's world knew was not enough. With Abraham, God began to create a people through whom He would reveal Himself in a special way - a redeeming way.

Abel, Enoch, and Noah had worshiped the Lord, but none of them had been the beginning point of God's assault on evil. God had worked with them as individuals. With Abraham, God worked on behalf of the world (12:3). It is significant that when Abraham arrived in Canaan he built an altar at the oak of Moreh (12:7). The place was most likely a Canaanite "sacred place," but Abraham's altar pointed to the true and living God the Canaanites needed to know.

"Sons of Abraham" are found today among the families of the earth, multitudes who know the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ and are called out, like Abraham, to be a blessing to the earth. Abraham's tent and altar are symbols of the lifestyle of this "new people of God." The tent says we are sojourners here and not too closely attached to this world; the altar says that wherever we dwell we want God to "pitch His tent" with us. And he does (John 1:14)!

Belmont notes top enrollment

NASHVILLE - Belmont College's enrollment has reached a record high of 2,677 students, up 13.2 percent over last year.

A total of 2,555 undergraduate students are attending Belmont this fall. Of the 122 graduate students enrolled this year, 97 are taking classes in the Jack C. Massey Graduate School of Business and 25 are participating in the new master's in education program.

President William E. Troutt said much of Belmont's success has come from the support of Tennessee Baptists. "I'm especially grateful to the pastors for recommending so many fine people to us," he said.

Although 66 percent of Belmont's undergraduate students are from Tennessee, the college has students from 46 states.

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LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES
Lesson for Oct. 4

Believing in Jesus Christ

By William F. Northcott, associate pastor
West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson

Basic Passages: Galatians 1:1-24; 2:15-21
Focal Passages: Galatians 1:4-7; 2:15-21

The lesson today is the first in a series of 13 based on Paul's letters to the Galatians and Philippians.

The gospel of salvation (Galatians 1:4-5)

In a world characterized by global tensions, insatiable greed, unbridled lust, wanton materialism, and escalating anxiety, the Bible clearly brings good news. Paul declares that Jesus, according to the will of God, gave Himself that we might be delivered from the destructive and evil forces of worldly structures and powers.



Northcott

Ralph Waldo Emerson says that things are in the saddle and ride mankind. Our world is upside down. We are possessed instead of possessors. We are greedy. We are afraid. We are worried. God deliver us! According to Paul, that is possible through faith in Christ. When Christ really gets inside of us, our perspective is transformed. We are delivered from worldliness. We live in a new sphere. The old address is self-centeredness. The new address is Christ-centeredness. But let us beware because "in this present evil world" the love of God is often crucified.

Paul concludes his greeting with an ascription of glory to the Father. We are not surprised. After all, Paul is a beneficiary of Christ's liberating power.

The threat counterfeit faith
(Galatians 1:6-7)

The epistle to the Galatians is written in the heat of battle. False teachers, known as Judaizers, had begun to preach another gospel which is really not the gospel at all (1:6-7). The issue revolved around the scope of the gospel (good news). For whom is the gift of salvation intended? According to the Judaizers, Christianity is an extension of Judaism. Jesus, they maintained, is the Messiah of the Jewish people. It follows logically, that before a person can become a disciple of Christ, that person must first be or become a Jew. Paul sees this view as an untenable and irreconcilable marriage of

law and grace, and he will not have it. For Paul, the gospel is for everyone, and salvation depends upon the grace of God and the exercise of the individual's faith in Christ, irrespective of race or creed.

A key word in Paul's theological vocabulary is grace. The word has been defined in many ways, but perhaps the best definition is that grace is something we need but do not deserve. The sinner needs but has done nothing and can do nothing to deserve the love, forgiveness, and acceptance of God. In Christ, God's greatest gift, the sinner is given the privilege and opportunity of experiencing a qualitatively different life. Saul of Tarsus experienced this revolutionary truth on the Damascus road. In that crucial event, Saul is transformed into Paul. He speaks and writes from the base of his own experience. He knows but one gospel and it is the gospel of grace.

The futility of legalism
(Galatians 2:15-19)

In these final verses of the focal passage, Paul develops the theme of the letter - salvation by grace through faith alone. Paul's basic argument is that the Jews are just as much in need of salvation as are the Gentiles. Paul tried the way of legalism and found it lacking. If it could not save him, it could not save them.

Verse 16 is the first appearance of the word "justified," another term Paul uses to refer to the experience of salvation. The word means that a person is "put right"

with God, and in Paul's view, there is only one way that can happen - through faith in Christ.

After all is said and done, there are only two kinds of religion. They have been aptly called "a do religion" and "a done religion." Some people, like the Judaizers, are inclined to add conditions and stipulations to the gospel (v. 16). "Do that or don't do this," they pontificate. Obviously, actions are important, but they are important as the "fruit" of salvation and not the "root" of salvation. Any approach to "a do religion" will eventuate in futility.

Christianity is "a done religion." Christ has done everything necessary for the redemption of the lost person. It only remains for the lost person to exercise faith in Christ. Care must be taken, however, so as not to minimize the importance of Christian actions and attitudes. There is an inextricable relationship between "being" and "doing." Jesus recognizes this when He talks about trees and the kind of fruit they bear. The word "faith" refers to a response of the total person to Christ.

It is the willingness to stake one's life on the truth of Christ. It involves the head, the heart, the hands, and every other fiber of our being.

Verses 17 and 18 continue the theme of the futility of legalism. While these verses are not easy to interpret, they should likely be understood as an effort by Paul to underscore the absurdity of the idea that Jews are made sinners because of Christ. The truth is that the impotence of the law to save focuses both the sinful condition of certain Jews and the power of Jesus to do what the law cannot. In verse 18 Paul expresses his incredulity that persons who experience salvation by grace can ever return to the way of legalism. In Paul's experience, the way of legalism is a dead-end street (v. 19).

The way of Christ, on the other hand, is the way to freedom and eternal life. Paul walked both roads, and as one commentator put it, "the way of legalism left him knowing how far he was from God. The way of grace brought him to oneness with the loving Father."

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Associational meetings to involve members

Pressing crowds, a blitz of media coverage, bright spotlights — the very nature of the Southern Baptist Convention brings a certain electricity and vibrancy. A little less glamorous, perhaps, but no less significant are the annual meetings of Southern Baptists' 1,200 associations.

Gavels all across the country will bring these associational meetings into session this fall, signaling the beginning of involvement for countless Southern Baptist church members. More Southern Baptists will become denominational decision-makers at associational annual meetings this year than at even the largest Southern Baptist Conventions in history. Business at annual meetings ranges from electing associational officers to approving associational budgets to bringing new churches into the associational fellowship.

One key person helping to keep these meetings on course is the associational moderator. According to J. C. Bradley, director of the Home Mission Board's Associational Administration Department, an associational moderator fulfills two primary purposes. First, the moderator presides over the associational annual meeting and other called associational meetings. Second, the moderator encourages fellowship and mutual care among the association's member churches. A Baptist association has been described as a "family of churches." The moderator's role is to encourage this "family" spirit of unity.

With one elected in each association, moderators are men and women of all ages and backgrounds. One person currently serving as an associational moderator is no newcomer to denominational life. He has served as a college professor; a state paper editor; a state convention leader in Sunday School, church training, and Brotherhood; a denominational researcher and statistician with the Sunday School Board. Most recently, he has served as executive secretary of the Executive Committee of

the Southern Baptist Convention.

He is Porter Routh of Nashville. He is currently retired. He is still busy.

After serving with the denomination professionally for about 40 years, Routh is committed more than ever to the Baptist association — the "grassroots of Southern Baptist life," as he describes it.

Thus, when he retired in 1979, it was only natural for Routh to "do what I really wanted to do." He became more involved as a volunteer in First Baptist Church, Nashville, and his home association, Nashville. Nashville association is composed of 30 churches and missions with 95,000 Southern Baptists. It covers six geographical counties.

Couple addresses pitfalls of frantic mate searching

By Terri Lackey

RIDGECREST, N.C. — Single adults who discover themselves in that status after divorce or death of a mate should not desperately campaign to find another mate, but should let it occur naturally, a married-again couple leading a seminar here said.

"Don't be desperate. Obsession is wrong. With obsession goes good judgment, with good judgment goes good morals, with good morals goes self-respect, and without self-respect, self-esteem goes by the wayside," said Dianne Swaim, who with her husband, Gordon, led a dating and relating conference at the National Single Adult Labor Day Conference held at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center Sept. 4-7.

Dianne Swaim is a single adult special consultant at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark. Dianne and Gordon married (each for the second time) about a year and a half ago after they met when he visited the church where she was working, she said.

"You need to be happy as single adults before you can be happy as married adults," said Dianne Swaim.

About 14 percent of the 65-million single adults in America say they are happy with their single life, but 86 percent "think of getting married again sometime," she said.

C-N's K. Coffey to attend meeting

JEFFERSON CITY — Carson-Newman College Professor Kitty R. Coffey will be one of two delegates representing Tennessee at the 51st annual meeting of the House of Delegates of the American Dietetic Association (ADA) in Atlanta, Ga.

The meeting will be held Oct. 15-18 followed by the 70th annual meeting of the ADA Oct. 19-23. Coffey currently serves as a member of the ADA bylaw committee and was recently appointed chairman of the ADA position and policy development committee.

Coffey, coordinator of the college's department of home economics, directs the ADA program for students pursuing academic requirements to become registered dietitians.

An organization composed of 56,000 dietitians and nutritionists, the ADA seeks to promote optimal health for the population through quality dietetic practice, education, and research.

Director of missions for the Nashville Baptist Association, Carl Duck, says it is a "great honor" to have Routh serve as a volunteer in the association. Duck continues, "Porter Routh's wealth of experience, his knowledge of Baptist life, his commitment to the Lord, to the church, and to the association is an inspiration and a challenge."

This is the first time in more than 50 years that the moderator of the Nashville Baptist Association has been a layperson. Because of this distinction, Routh is committed, in his role as moderator, to encouraging more laypeople to become involved in associational missions. Good lay representation in the annual meeting can be built upon to create greater par-

ticipation in the association's day-to-day life, Routh believes.

According to Duck, "I hope other laypeople will take a cue from Porter Routh and see that involvement in the association extends one's influence and ministry beyond the local church. As laypeople become involved in the association, it's good not only for them, but also for the churches and certainly for the association."

Associational annual meetings are the time at which associational leaders may be most visible, but these leaders, and other associational volunteers as well, are busy year-round. According to Robert Wiley, director of the Home Mission Board's Associational Missions Division, "The annual meeting is a great time for laypeople to learn more about their association, to participate in some strategic decision-making, and to commit themselves to be involved in the association the rest of the year. I'm planning on being at my associational annual meeting this year. I wouldn't miss it!"

SBTS gets rare Bible

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — While a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ralph Winders paid a dollar for a copy of the Hebrew Bible, picking out the oldest-looking book he could find in a box of used Bibles outside a professor's office.

Fifty years later, the Mississippi Baptist minister has returned the Bible to the seminary as a treasured relic.

Published in 1521 in Venice, Italy, the complete Hebrew Bible predates the 1524-25 edition which became the "textus receptus," the authoritative Hebrew text for most English translations, including the King James Version. The Bible is the second published by Daniel Bomberg. Two Orthodox Jews, the sons of Baruch Adelkind, edited the text.

As a student, Winders did not know any of that when he browsed through a box of used Bibles outside the office of Hebrew Professor Kyle Yates. Yates frequently ordered Bibles from a Chicago bookstore to provide inexpensive copies of the Scriptures for his students.

Winders, who already had bought his Hebrew Bible a year earlier, "just took a dollar to buy the oldest-looking book I had ever seen."

The Bible remained an unidentified treasure until Winders contacted Southern seminary Old Testament Professor Page H. Kelley about two years ago. Kelley, with the aid of the American Bible Society, traced the origin of the Bible and then encouraged Winders to donate it to the seminary because of its value for research and teaching.

At the seminary's convocation opening the fall semester, Winders and his wife, Ginny, presented the 466-year-old Bible to the seminary in honor of Yates, who taught at the school from 1922-1942.

A 1939 graduate of the Louisville, Ky., seminary, Winders now is a part-time chaplain at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson, where he and his wife are members of Colonial Heights Baptist Church.

Winders' Bible, one of only six known copies of the 1521 version in the United States, will be housed in the rare-book section of the seminary's library, building on the James H. Haldman Collection of 200 rare Bibles donated to the seminary in 1981.

Belmont week draws Jones

Peter Rhea Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., reminded students of their blessedness during Belmont College's Spiritual Emphasis Week Sept. 2-4.

Jones used three of the Beatitudes to show students how they are blessed by God. "Christians are the people of the blessing," he told an overflowing crowd in Belmont's Massey Auditorium. "We need to feel this blessing in order to become all that we can become," Jones said.

He quoted Matthew 5:5, in which Christ said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," to show students of one of their blessings. "Meek does not mean a coward," Jones said. He said people should "strive to be as meek as Moses," and that the blessings would fall on those who are gentle and humble.

"The meek are those who have surrendered their lives to God, and they are blessed," Jones said.

He also reminded students of the blessings placed on the "pure at heart." Jones said to be pure at heart is to be "single-minded" in dedication to Christ. "If you are pure at heart, the promise is that you will see God." He told them also that God blesses those who work for peace.