

Baptist and Reflector

Vol. 153/No. 46/November 18, 1987

Newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention

Peace prevails at 1987 state convention

By W. Fletcher Allen

NASHVILLE — A near-record number of Tennessee Baptist Convention messengers approved a \$23,850,000 Cooperative Program budget, elected an unopposed president by acclamation, passed an Executive Board recommendation for new facilities, and avoided conflict in a peaceful 113th annual meeting last week.

Unofficial registration of 1746 messengers at Radnor Church here was close to last year's all-time high of 1794.

Kenneth P. Story, pastor of the 4000-member Germantown Church,

Shelby County Association, was the only nominee to succeed Jerry Oakley as convention president. He was nominated by Grant Jones, pastor of Unaka Avenue Church, Johnson City, who, by coincidence, was the last unopposed convention president. Jones served in 1974, one of the few presidents elected without opposition.

Herbert Higdon, director of missions, Madison-Chester and Crockett associations, Jackson, defeated Verlon Moore, pastor of Hilldale Church, Cumberland Association, for vice-president. William D. (Bill) Fox, pastor of First Church,

South Pittsburg, was unopposed as second vice-president.

Madden to retire

At the Wednesday afternoon organizational meeting of the new Executive Board, Tom Madden announced his retirement as Tennessee Baptists' executive secretary-treasurer. "I want to serve you and Tennessee Baptists in this

capacity until April 1989," he told board members. "Announcing my retirement now will allow you more than a year to seek a successor. At that time I will reach mandatory retirement age (70).

"In the meantime," Madden said, "I pledge to give every ounce of my strength for this convention, to build the new (Continued on page 5)

Messengers approve \$4-million building

By Charlie Warren

NASHVILLE — Messengers to the 1987 annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention last week approved a \$4-million construction project which includes a new building at the Executive Board offices in Brentwood and renovation of the existing building.

A hand vote, following a presentation and discussion, endorsed the project by a decisive margin.

The new building will include a conference center that will accommodate meetings involving 10 to 300 people. A dining hall will provide for 250 people, served by a warming kitchen that later can be expanded to a full food service kitchen.

The exterior of the new building will complement the existing building, according to the report of the Executive Board's Program, Personnel, and Planning Task Force.

The two-and-a-half story addition, which includes 34,000 square feet, will provide office space for the Baptist and Reflector, Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes, Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Tennessee Baptist Foundation, and Woman's Missionary Union. This will allow expansion for Executive Board programs in the existing building.

James Porch, chairman of the Task Force and pastor of First Church, Tullahoma, reported that about half of the \$4-million needed for the project was "on hand" in the form of some property south of Franklin which was given to the convention by Woman's Missionary Union, unappropriated funds and reserve funds in the TBC budget, and interest from operating funds.

He explained that the remainder of the needed funds will be drawn from a line of credit at 0.5 percent below the prime rate. This can be drawn as needed and payments will be at 90-day intervals, according to Porch.

He noted four sources from which Tennessee Baptists could repay the debt: unexpended budget funds, day to day gifts, appropriations from the Golden State Missions Offering, and, if needed, a line item could be added to the general budget.

During discussion of the project proposal, E. E. Carrier, pastor of Oak Grove Church, Gray, asked if current TBC programs will be deprived if interest earnings are used for the new building. He also asked, "If the economy turns sour and income is reduced, is there an emergency plan to care for the programs now established as well as the building program?"

Tom Madden, TBC executive secretary-treasurer, responded that "we are very careful" not to budget all of the interest earnings, that there are safeguards built into the accounting procedures to protect against overspending, and "we have some (Continued on page 3)



CONVENTION OFFICERS — Ken Story (center), newly elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, is flanked by Herbert Higdon, first vice-president, and Bill Fox, second vice-president.

Tennessee Baptists elect Story 1987-88 president

By Mona Collett

Messengers to the Tennessee Baptist Convention elected Ken Story to serve the 1987-88 presidential term. Nominated by

Grant Jones, he was elected by acclamation during the Wednesday morning session. Also elected were Herbert Higdon, first vice-president, and Bill Fox, second vice-president.

Presiding President Jerry Oakley noted that Story was one of two convention presidents elected by acclamation. Jones, who serves as pastor of Unaka Avenue Church in Johnson City, was the other.

Story presently serves as pastor of Germantown Church, Germantown. The Paducah, Ky., native is a graduate of Union University in Jackson, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary. Former pastorates include Pleasant Grove Church, Covington; French Quarter Chapel, New Orleans, La.; and New Hope Church, Paris.

Denominational service includes tenures on the TBC Executive Board and Union University's board of trustees. Active in Shelby County Baptist Association, Story has been moderator, as well as president of the pastors' conference.

Higdon, nominated by Bill Bates, in-

(Continued on page 5)

CP enjoys strong start

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program enjoyed its best first month in October, when receipts topped \$11-million, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

The Cooperative Program is the denomination's unified budget, which finances missions, evangelistic, and educational projects around the world. It operates on a fiscal year that begins Oct. 1 and ends the following Sept. 30.

October receipts totaled \$11,004,930, Bennett reported. That makes it the best October in the 62-year history of the program, and the seventh-best month overall, he said.

The monthly receipts were \$67,815 more than receipts for October 1986, for a gain of 0.62 percent, he said.

That increase is several points below the current U.S. inflation rate. However, the comparison is misleading, because the October 1986 receipts were unusually high for that month — 21 percent over the total for the same period the previous year, Bennett noted.

The Cooperative Program goal for the current fiscal year is \$140-million. Receipts for the current fiscal year must average slightly more than \$11.7-million for each of the remaining 11 months if that goal is to be reached.

Editorials

A calm, memorable, but exciting convention

Tennessee Baptists have just finished their 113th Annual Meeting. It was a good one.

Kindred spirits met at Radnor Church in Nashville. There was good will and peace, and actions were taken which will have long-lasting impact on our convention.

First, some plaudits. Pastor Paul Durham and his capable staff at Radnor were superb hosts. While they could not invent parking spaces, they did everything else possible to make passengers comfortable. They were always smiling, kind, considerate.

Durham even managed to surprise messengers by providing two special guests. Tennessee Governor Ned McWherter and Nashville Mayor Bill Boner spoke to us briefly, without bringing up politics.

President Jerry Oakley and vice-presidents Hoyt Wilson and J. C. Parrott provided sound leadership as they moderated the meeting. Parliamentarian Arthur Walker assisted ably, without intruding.

The messages and the music were outstanding. And Tennessee Baptists should be proud of Oakley, James Porch, and Katharine Bryan, three of our own who rang the bell as speakers. Add to that trio Franklin Paschall who filled in at the last moment for snowbound Harold Carter, and several Tennessee Baptists who led a series of devotionals.

Apparently most messengers were determined to prevent brush fires of dissension from breaking out. When large groups of people meet (especially Baptists) there is always that potential. But calm and quiet prevailed. Though there were differences of opinion, there were no quarrels.

We heard rumors of problems, as usual. But nothing like that happened. In fact, the secular news media seemed disappointed. Because there was absence of controversy, the convention did not receive much news coverage from the outside. What a shame!

Now, what did we do?

We approved overwhelmingly recommenda-

tions from the Executive Board that will allow the Program, Personnel, and Planning Task Force to continue developing a conference center and new building in Brentwood — along with renovation of the current building. In use since August 1969, our facilities are stretched to the limit.

What Tennessee Baptists have done is to say — it's time to get on track with the facilities that we need to do the work of servanthood we have been called to do. Since the Executive Board Building was occupied eighteen years ago, the task of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, through its Executive Board staff, agencies, and auxiliaries, has expanded greatly. Equipment, though more sophisticated, takes up huge amounts of space in the offices.

There has been a longtime need for a conference center.

Now, with this bold plan, we can move forward. There will be adequate space for all three divisions within the new Executive Board staff structure, the four agencies, Woman's Missionary Union, and a modern conference center. The center will be used for meetings, conferences, training, and other occasions.

As the Task Force continues its work, Tennessee Baptists must continue to be involved through prayer, active planning, and caring support. The ten-member group, comprised of a cross-section of Tennessee Baptists, includes Chairman James Porch, Raymond Boston, Marshall Gupton, Mrs. Richard Hawkins, Calvin Harvell, Ronald Hicks, Fred Isaacs, James McCluskey, Fred Steelman, and Mrs. Jerry Trivette. They have been hard at work for almost two years.

Groundbreaking for the new conference center could be only a few weeks away. Plans call for completion by 1989.

But pride and participation in the development of the Baptist Center should not divert our

attention from other accomplishments of the 113th Annual Meeting.

We elected a president who had no opposition. This is almost unheard of, and it is a vote of confidence in the quality leadership and ability of Ken Story. If he leads the convention as he leads Germantown Church, in evangelistic fervor and "hands on" actions, we will continue to grow as a spiritual force in Tennessee.

We handled potential problems with common sense and Christlike attitudes. There was an abiding feeling of cooperation.

We approved our largest ever Cooperative Program budget — the sound of the "ayes" seemed to indicate determination to meet the budget, in addition to voting to approve it.

Messengers approved a motion asking the Southern Baptist Convention's Public Affairs Committee not to endorse nominees for political office, but refused to discuss a potentially inflammatory resolution dealing with Shelby County Association and Prescott Memorial Church. The resolution supporting Shelby County's action could have caused fireworks. Messengers supported the Committee on Resolutions' decision not to bring it to the body for a vote.

So there we are. Another convention over, and another year to be busy for the Lord before we meet as the 114th convention in Jackson. This meeting was the second largest in our history, 1745, compared to last year's record 1794.

We have proven that even in days of discord within the Southern Baptist Convention, it is possible to conduct the Lord's business without acting as if He is a stranger.

Every department, agency, institution, auxiliary — every entity involved in Tennessee Baptist Convention plans and programs has a vested interest in keeping the spirit we found so dear at Radnor. These next twelve months can be our best. — WFA

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

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

Tom Madden — a servant

In April 1989, Tom J Madden will close out a distinguished decade as executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. He announced his retirement last week at Wednesday's organizational meeting of the Executive Board.

Madden took office on January 1, 1979, and has led Tennessee Baptists remarkably well. While he would not want such accolades, he deserves them.

He explained to the board that he would reach his seventieth birthday during April 1989, which means retirement. He will have served ten years and four months, and has filled well many other

assigned and elected positions prior to his becoming executive secretary.

In making his announcement, Madden pledged to the board to do his best "with every ounce of energy I have" and to lead the convention to the successful completion of the new Conference Center.

Tom Madden is a man who is much admired as a Baptist statesman, a Christian leader, a caring and compassionate gentleman. He has led us well, and his announcement leaves enough time for a successor to be chosen without undue haste. Typical of his style, he continues to place convention interests at the top. — WFA

T. B. Maston's son dies in Fort Worth

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Thomas McDonald Maston, son of T. B. and Essie Maston, died Nov. 10 in Fort Worth of cancer at age 61.

T. B. Maston, professor emeritus of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in

Fort Worth, Texas, is best known as a pioneer in Christian ethics and race relations.

"Tom Mc" was born with cerebral palsy. He required assistance in every function. The Mastons dressed him, fed him, cleaned him, put him to bed, and got him out of bed every day of his life. Although Tom Mc could not talk, he was able to communicate through two simple symbols meaning yes and no.

Essie Maston has devoted her life to caring for Tom Mc. T. B. Maston often has said his wife had the ability to succeed in almost any profes-

sion she chose. She deliberately gave up a teaching career to care for her invalid son.

Frank Page, pastor of Gambrell Street Church, Fort Worth, and Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, conducted the funeral service Nov. 12. Elder had developed a special relationship with the Maston family while pastor of Gambrell Street and later as executive vice-president of Southwestern seminary.

Tom Mc is survived by his parents and a younger brother, Eugene, who lives in New York.

Ask about our
trial plan

Resolutions avoid action on PAC, Shelby County

By Connie Davis

NASHVILLE — Tennessee Baptist Convention messengers voted not to reconsider the action of the Resolutions Committee which rejected a proposed resolution affirming the action of Shelby County Baptist Association to expel Prescott Memorial Church in Memphis for calling a woman as pastor.

The committee also declined to present three other resolutions submitted by messengers, adopting instead only one resolution expressing gratitude.

The convention, however, supported an issue raised in two of the proposed resolutions. Both resolutions had urged the Southern Baptist Convention Public Affairs Committee to refrain from endorsing persons for a political office. The messengers instead adopted a motion by Don Dixon, pastor of Highland Church in Tullahoma, who presented one of these

resolutions. The motion requested that the TBC express to the Southern Baptist Convention Public Affairs Committee "its support for the historic Southern Baptist polity of non-endorsement of persons for political office."

The motion passed with few dissenting votes following discussion on the convention floor. Dixon proposed that if "we . . . say nothing" the policy is "endorsed by our non-vote."

Bruce Maples, minister of music and education for Ridgeview Church in Chattanooga, who presented one of the resolutions on the issue, spoke for the motion. Mike Adams, pastor of First Church in

Union City, spoke against it, saying that the action is "beating a dead horse."

When asked by a messenger why the Resolutions Committee did not clear the resolutions on this issue, Ray Newcomb, committee chairman and pastor of First Church in Millington, responded that the proposed resolutions address SBC rather than TBC issues and that the committee was trying to "keep peace within our convention."

The resolution affirming the vote of the Shelby County Baptist Association to disfellowship Prescott Memorial Church was presented by Ben Mitchell, pastor of Middle Valley Church in Hixson.

When making the Resolutions Committee report to the convention, Ray Newcomb referred to the TBC Constitution and Bylaws which states that the "convention shall have no ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the churches or associations cooperating with and contributing to the objects of the convention" as the reason for the committee's action on the proposed resolution affirming Shelby County Baptist Association.

Newcomb also commented on a proposed resolution on the autonomy of the church presented by Bruce Maples that did not clear the committee. Maples submitted a resolution earlier on affirming non-endorsement of political candidates.

"We feel that we all believe in the autonomy of the local church, local association, the autonomy of the state, the autonomy of the Southern Baptist Convention; therefore, we brought no resolution on those grounds," said Newcomb.

The single resolution, adopted unanimously, thanked the Committee on Arrangements, Radnor Church in Nashville; Jerry Oakley, TBC president and pastor of Springfield Church in Springfield; the TBC staff; members of TBC committees, boards, and agencies; the city of Nashville; the new media; the TBC public relations department; the Baptist and Reflector staff; and God for the success of the convention meeting.

The TBC Resolutions Committee is a standing committee that has 15 members who are nominated by the Committee on Committees. The members serve three years.

Paschall calls messengers to discover 'divine yes'

NASHVILLE — Carrying the Oval Office's "Just Say No" campaign one step further, Franklin Paschall urged Tennessee Baptist Convention attendees to say yes to Christ, for that is the only way to have a full life.

Retired from the pastorate of First Church, Nashville, Paschall spoke during the Wednesday evening session of this year's convention. He substituted for Harold Carter, who was unable to meet his program slot due to weather conditions in Baltimore.

The "divine yes," said Paschall, is found in the person of Jesus Christ, the Christian experience, and the mission of the church. Asking "Who stands at the head of nature and grace?" Paschall stated the divine yes is in the affirmation of all of God's promises.

Offering his solutions to the Southern Baptist Convention's controversy, Paschall professed that "all Scripture is inspired by God." It's time to "let the Bible be the Bible," he said. "No one has the authority or the credentials to whittle it away," declaring some parts are true and some are not, he continued.

Paschall went on to say that he believes there are no professors in the SBC who cannot subscribe to this standard of belief. While the Bible may vary in geology, geography, biography, etc., these studies are used within the text for vehicles of expression, he said.

At best, the SBC is headed in the direction of legalism, Paschall said, and at worst Pharaohism. Preachers who preach only on what not to do may give the impression that if church members get straight on a few moral behavioral points, they then would be qualified to judge others, Paschall told the group, which was largely comprised of pastors. "We are children of God by grace through faith, not by church membership or behavior," he reiterated.

"The only basis for Christian unity is Jesus Christ," said Paschall. Therefore the fellowship of any Baptist group cannot be based on a stance on abortion or any political position, he said.

Commenting that he was active in the SBC when the pendulum swung to the other side, Paschall said 50 percent of people attending state and national conventions would return home mad. Now that the pendulum has swung the other way, 50 percent of those attending conventions still return home mad, he summarized.

The priesthood of the individual must be protected, as well as the autonomy of the church, according to Paschall. "Don't try to make churches conform to any political viewpoint," he pleaded. "The Baptist Faith and Message," he said, stands on its own, not on political props.

Returning to his main idea of the divine yes, Paschall emphasized the mission of the church. Holding the Great Commission in a position of primary importance, he told his listeners to let the world take care of any business it can do as well as the church.

Saying "our day is not so different as the beginning of this country," Paschall acknowledged that there is fear of the spirit of democracy, but went on to say democracy cannot work "apart from an informed, educated citizen."

Among the many yeses involved in Christianity, Paschall closed with two, the will to follow and the will to love.

Bryan instructs messengers to serve one another in love

By Mona Collett

NASHVILLE — While occupations such as nursing, teaching, waitressing, even driving a dump truck, captured Katharine Bryan's imagination in her dreams as a child of what she would be when she grew up, the idea of studying and training to be a servant did not occur to her.

The executive director-treasurer of Tennessee's Woman's Missionary Union addressed Tennessee Baptist messengers in the Tuesday afternoon session of last week's convention. There were obvious role models for other occupational considerations, but none seemed too anxious to do menial labor — one job description given in Webster of a servant — Bryan continued.

Pondering the lack of servant role models, Bryan points out that in the Old Testament servants were spoken of in

third person (he and his servants), while in the New Testament, Jesus speaks directly to servants and instructs them by love to serve one another.

Rendering her own definition, she said a servant is "something we are totally committed for someone else to be." The role of servant is resisted, says Bryan, because the servant exerts primary energy for the benefit of the master; the servant is never in charge; and everyone wants to do important things to change the world and believes that "surely someone else will take care of the menial tasks."

Had someone advised Bryan in her early life on how to prepare to be a servant, she might have been enlightened on several points. The total time of a servant belongs to the master. The servant must be ready to do anything to help the master. Servanthood is a high risk occupation, and one must be willing to do or say anything and go anywhere the master asks. The servant must be aware of the attitudes and sense of caring involved.

"Servants on Mission," the 1987 TBC theme does not ask if Tennessee Baptists are willing to be servants, says Bryan. "It assumes that we already are."

Referring to the Bible, Bryan says the "Holy mission manual" outlines our mission. "We must be about our Master's work," she says. Following Jesus' example we are to serve one another in love, she added noting that He did not come to be served. "At the very soul of our Master is the role model for what we are to be," Bryan said, giving the illustration of the woman at the well.

Meeting the woman at the point of His need, Jesus gave her the opportunity to serve Him first, said Bryan making the point that "we must not be guilty of being so holy that others can't serve us."

Building . . .

(continued from page 1)

very flexible terms for renegotiating" loans for the project.

Benny Keck, pastor of Buffalo Trail Church, Morristown, asked if the \$4-million figure is a ceiling or "could it conceivably go higher?"

Porch answered that the figure is based on projections from the architects and since no construction bids have been submitted, the \$4-million amount was simply an estimate.

Charlie Boggan, pastor of First Church, Newport, noting that the "modern technological age allows us to decrease considerably our use of space and also personnel," asked why the present facilities are overcrowded.

"Is there not a better way in which we can address the overcrowding issue, especially in this technological age, instead of building additional office space?" he asked.

"The vast majority of people in our Executive Board offices and in our institutional offices are people who work with people," Porch responded. "The vast majority of their time is 'folks' time."

"There's only so much in Baptist life you can deal with on computers," he added. "We have a very sophisticated program of computers at Brentwood that are used and will be updated, but in our study, we did not find there were any areas at this time where we could cut down on personnel."

Other questions dealt with the building's handicapped accessibility, parking facilities, and space for a new family ministry department.

Porch noted that the plans for 300 parking spaces, compared to the present 156 spaces, should be adequate for the immediate future. He also noted the building will be fully accessible to handicapped people.

Bruce Maples, a messenger from Ridgeview Church, Chattanooga, noted that the family ministry department was given the smallest amount of space in the architect's drawings and with the growing needs of families, such a program may need more space.

Porch noted that the area was planned according to a formula based on projected personnel needs for that department, but added that there is flexibility for future expansion.

The Task Force will continue working on plans for the project, including receiving bids from construction companies. The entire project, including the new building and renovation of the existing building, is expected to be completed in 1989.



PERFORMING A MENIAL TASK — Katharine Bryan upgrades the role of servanthood by offering the noble motive of love as the basis.

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.

Welcome appreciated

As messengers from Prescott Memorial Church, Memphis, to the recent Tennessee Baptist Convention, we wish to express our appreciation for the scores of pastors and other messengers who went out of their way to show their support for our pastor and church.

Having been disfellowshipped after 71 years as a cooperating member of Shelby Baptist Association because we called a female pastor, we did not know what kind of reception to expect at the state level. We encountered a tremendous outpouring of love from our brothers and sisters across the state. We were especially touched by the warm applause which greeted Rev. Sehested when she was introduced among other new Tennessee church staffers.

We are proud of our pastor, and proud to be a part of Tennessee Baptists, working together in the service of Christ.

Betty Dawson
Tom Walsh, messengers
Prescott Memorial Church
Memphis 38111

Age-old battle

From several recent articles and letters it appears there is still a "battle for the faith" going on among Southern Baptists. It is the age-old battle against rebellion, a fight for the hearts and minds of Christians, and, the future.

The weapons are clear, vs. muddled, thinking. To cite an example from the 10-28-87 issue, I see Nancy Sehested quoted as saying, "Are we going to say to that world, 'No, not all things are possible. A woman cannot preach.'" Of course the implication is that Shelby County Baptist Association erred in withdrawing fellowship from the church that called her, and she is attempting to solicit an emotional response, perhaps even imply that those making the decision were bigoted and prejudiced.

My reply: no, Nancy, ALL things are NOT possible. But what did the Holy Spirit mean by those words? He meant that all things that are the will of God are possible. When we have a clear and unmistakable teaching right in the Bible, we do not even have to pray about the matter. God is not going to change His mind, and, I might add, revise His written Word.

I hate to use this analogy, but I have heard homosexuals use exactly the same logic Mrs. Sehested used in her argument, implying that God is liberal with His love, so much so, that all things are acceptable in this "new age" of unlimited grace. But this is the world, not heaven. God expects us to work within the position He has placed each of us, using His methods. If I am a slave, Paul did not say for me to claim my liberation as a free man — he told me to be a better slave.

Whether a woman or a faculty member at Wake Forest, we must all guard against rebellion and learn to be submissive to the Lordship of Jesus, the Holy Scriptures' teachings, and those entrusted with authority over us. God has a purpose for every man and woman. We need to find that purpose in His will and His written Word, being careful that we do not use

our own personal definitions of equality, independence, and justice. God's nature — and that of the Bible — is not flexibility, it is forgiveness. Is following the Bible too much for the Lord to ask of us? Or, should the tail wag the dog? Do we really believe the Bible, or is it — to paraphrase a Southeastern professor — too "stifling" and "oppressive"? Only questions, my friends. God bless the Baptists.

Cecil R. Morelock
1382 East Center Street
Kingsport 37664

Spread the Gospel

I'd like to write the leaders of the SBC and ask, "Sirs, is your God too small?"

Oh, how it hurts my heart (how it must distress God), to see Christians squabbling among themselves concerning the inspiration and/or interpretation of the Holy Scriptures! Do some of us think the Bible and its teachings will not survive without the SBC setting down dogmatic rules regarding what the Scriptures say? Where would we as Protestants be today if not for free thinkers like Martin Luther who nailed his thesis on the door in Castle Church, and who under the guidance of the Holy Spirit read Scripture for himself?

Lowly woman that I am (second class citizen and Christian as some would have me believe), I believe my God can accomplish His plan even if He has to use a female! Did not Naaman find a cure for his leprosy through a poor slave girl?

Seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance, let's look at Acts 5 (KJV). Imagine Gamaliel speaking to the SBC: "... if this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight God."

Do you remember Peter's reply when this council earlier told him "... not to teach in this name ..."? Read Acts 5:29-32.

Yes, sirs, your God is too small. My God is able to use anyone, male or female, black, white, anyone, for spreading the Gospel!

Mrs. Dorothy Haynie Forlidas
1303 Shawhan Terrace
Chattanooga 37411

Accepting God's Word

Somebody needs to say it: The Holy Spirit never leads contrary to the Word of God, regardless of a person's claim. Any person who makes a claim of the Holy Spirit's leadership in something that is in direct contradiction with the Word of God is misled, mistaken, and deceived. A common opinion today seems to be "anything goes" if the person claims to feel "led of the Lord," regardless of what the Bible says on the matter.

As believers we are free to follow the Holy Spirit's leadership, but you can be sure of one thing, He will never lead a person contrary to what He has already said in the infallible, inerrant Word of God which He inspired men to write in the first place.

The controversy over the ordination of women would end abruptly if people just accepted the Word of God for what it is: the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God. This was never a problem in our convention when the Bible was accepted for what it says and as the TRUTH which is to be believed and practiced. Because a woman cannot be scripturally ordained that doesn't make her a "second-class Christian," as some have expressed it, or deny any woman a place or opportunity for "ministry."

I'm committed to stay with the Word of God regardless of men's opinions and actions, for one day I will give account to the AUTHOR of this Word for what I have believed and declared concerning it.

Herschel Woodburn
7236 Bonny Oaks Dr.
Chattanooga 37421

The bond of love

I would like to express my appreciation to those who have spoken out against the recent actions of Shelby County Baptist Association. I agree that the day this association expelled Prescott Memorial Church for electing a woman as their pastor is a black mark against Baptists in general.

Who among us Southern Baptists have the right to say what the Lord's will is for our brothers or sisters? Are we not reverting to the ways of the Pharisees who set their own rules and regulations to be followers of Christ?

I believe by the statements made by Prescott Church member Tom Walsh, that their church prayerfully sought the Lord's will for the life of their church. Also, by statements made by Rev. Sehested, I believe the Lord is truly working through her and has called her to preach at this church.

We, as individuals, must realize that there will always be differences in opinion regarding the interpretation of the Bible, and we are not to judge or condemn one another if that interpretation is not exactly as our own. "We are one in the bond of love," and by this love, we can work together for our Father who made us all and calls us each to do His will.

Renee Franklin
802 Oxford Hills Drive
Maryville 37801

Not so impeccable

In regard to your eulogy of Jack Harwell and Randall Lolley in the Nov. 4 issue of the Baptist and Reflector, weren't you a little in error to give such blanket praise? You called Randall Lolley an "impeccable Baptist leader and Christian gentleman." I do not question that he is a Christian or a gentleman. I do question that a preacher who would, for any reason, offer a dedicatory prayer at the opening of a brewery is an "impeccable" Baptist leader.

I went to school with Randall Lolley. I never met Jack Harwell, nor have I ever read anything he has written, but if he said to Lee Roberts some of the things Lee Roberts says he said, then he is indeed a prophet, a prophet like Hananiah of Jeremiah 28, a false and mistaken prophet who misquoted God.

My conservative brethren and I are not for silencing prophecy nor conscience. We are opposed to paying for the preaching of what we do not believe.

Don Strother, pastor
University Parkway Church
Johnson City 37601

You are right. No one is completely free from fault or blame. The editor used the word "impeccable" in the sense of one who strives to be faultless.
— Editor

Distressed over rumors

I have been distressed since our Executive Board meeting in September, when Phil Roberts was called as evangelism director of our state convention. I never expected members of the board to become rumor-mongers, but that is exactly what happened. I know of five

rumors spread and all five have been proven false. There was other innuendo about personal matters that were totally unchristian. As yet, I know of no apology to him. We have hurt the good name of a very fine, brilliant, dedicated Christian gentleman and servant of God.

Further developments have disturbed me in that he did accept the position, but it was not reported. He then declined because of a feeling that support for him eroded, and a time schedule was presented that he felt was impossible for him. If time is of such essence, what shall we do now? Can the future director be on the scene by January?

I honestly believe that it was 96 percent political. In the 13 years I have served in the state, there has been a constant increase of political intrigue in the TBC. Like the hagfish, it is sapping the vitality of our convention. If you aren't familiar with a hagfish, look it up in a dictionary.

In this last paragraph, I want to deal specifically with one rumor; namely, that the fundamentalists tried to push Phil Roberts into the position. That is a boldface untruth. I submitted his name without receiving one phone call, letter, contact, or conference. The search committee was the finest I have ever served with in 40 years of committee work in the local church, association, state and national conventions. They were above politics. I honestly believe the search committee sought and found and did the will of God.

Clay Frazier
245 St. John Road
Morristown 37814

Good news needed

I am not sure if I can stand much more "negative" news from the Baptist and Reflector. I realize your responsibility to inform us of current happenings, trends, problems, debates, and so on. It just seems that most of the news grabbing the headlines of the front pages is depressing. Other articles make me feel ashamed of our SBC.

Is the cause of Christ being promoted by the weekly airing of the conventions' "dirty laundry"? I feel we are becoming as Baptists a mired people instead of an inspired people. The headlines lend some credence to this: "CP misses budget goal," "Texas association drops church for 'heterodoxy,'" "First Church, San Antonio dismisses Walker as pastor," "Southern Baptist ethicist defends abortion rights," "Trustee collapses, dies during HMB meeting," and "Preachers counter charges of 'politics' on ACTS."

The list could go on, and in all fairness I could list recent articles of a more positive nature. The point is, are we Baptists going to move forward with the banner of the cross or are we going to be stumbling blocks to the world?

I am so worn out by the incessant political feuding in the SBC. If half the energy of these "leaders" were channeled to Bold Mission Thrust, then the world might be reached by 2000. Also, much could be done to stop abortion, end world hunger, house the homeless, quell hatred and prejudice of our fellowman, and truly become good stewards so that one happy day we can hear the Savior say, "My good and faithful servants!"

Michael V. Johnson
7620 Yellow Pines Dr.
Harrison 37341

Thanksgiving letters

Tennessee Baptists are encouraged to share their Thanksgiving thoughts this year. The letters page in the Nov. 25 issues will be devoted to short letters of gratitude and thanks. In 50 words or less, write a conclusion to this statement: "I am thankful because ..."

Peace prevails at annual meeting...

(Continued from page 1)
facilities — and I will always be ready to serve Tennessee Baptists any way I can.”

The board accepted Madden's 1989 retirement date.

Madden referred to the new Conference Center building to house four agencies and the WMU, and renovation of the present Baptist Building in Brentwood. The convention on Wednesday heard a 30-minute report on the plans from James Porch, chairman of the Program, Personnel, and Planning Task Force and approved recommendations to construct a conference center, a new building for Baptist Foundation, the Baptist and Reflector, Baptist Children's Homes, Baptist Adult Homes, and Woman's Missionary Auxiliary, and renovation of the Brentwood building.

Building to begin

Construction costs will not exceed \$4-million, according to the Task Force, and construction companies are being interviewed. A selection may be made within a week or two, and groundbreaking can take place in January or perhaps December. Construction will be adjacent to the current building on Franklin Road. (See separate story, this issue.)

Also at the Wednesday Executive Board meeting, Dennis Pulley, pastor of First Church, Ripley, was elected to succeed Marshall Gupton, who was ineligible to serve again as president. Murray Mathis, pastor of Third Church, Murfreesboro, was re-elected vice-president. Carl Price, pastor of Lakewood Church, Nashville, was elected recording secretary.

Other actions

In other actions, the Tennessee Baptist Convention:

- Heard Belmont College President William Trout announced a Thomas J Madden Scholarship for ministerial students, four-year, all expenses paid.

- Increased the budget by 6 percent and increased the Southern Baptist Convention share to 37.25 percent, up by a fourth of a percent.

- Heard welcome statements from Governor Ned McWherter and Nashville Mayor Bill Boner.

- Passed only one resolution, the traditional appreciation.

- Approved a motion to ask the Southern Baptist Convention's Public Affairs Committee to refrain from endorsement of nominees or candidates for public office; approved a motion to have a TBC study of a program of mental retardation work, and a committee to report in 1988.

- Returned to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee several suggested changes, asking the committee for further study.

- Honored Baptist Building retirees Glenn Yarbrough, Paul Hall, and Woody Watkins. (Only Yarbrough was present.)

- Received from the Committee on Arrangements: Hyran Barefoot, Union University president, 1988 Convention preacher, and Raymond Boston, alternate; Belmont Heights Church, Nashville, as 1990 host church.

- Re-elected Wallace Anderson as statistical secretary and Pat Porter as registration secretary.

- Approved without change the Committee on Committees report and the Committee on Boards report.

- Heard major addresses by Convention President Jerry Oakley, Katharine Bryan, James Porch, John Bisagno, Emmanuel McCall, Franklin Paschall (for Harold Carter), and Jack Stanton.

- Don Peek's Committee on Credentials was not challenged. A rumor that a motion would be made to prevent seating of



GREETING GOVERNOR — Paul Durham (center), pastor of Radnor Church in Nashville which hosted the convention, presents to Gov. Ned Ray McWherter (left) a cup of crumbled vanilla wafers relating to one of his campaign slogans, as Jerry Oakley, TBC president, looks on.

Prescott Memorial Church of Memphis messengers failed to materialize.

Executive Secretary Tom Madden welcomed all new pastors and church

staff members as they introduced themselves to the messengers.

Missions giving increases

In the Executive Board report, it was noted that all missions offerings were up in Tennessee Baptist work. The Golden State Missions Offering was up by 15 percent, or \$817,049.02; Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions, up 12 percent, to \$2,003,477.90; Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, up 7 percent, to \$4,966,256.12.

The 1986-87 Cooperative Program budget, completed Oct. 31, totalled \$22,018,222.02, missing the goal by 2 percent. The convention's receipts from all sources was \$34.8-million.

More than 500 Tennessee Baptists went to Venezuela on partnership trips, with about \$500,000 expended by the volunteers and their churches. About \$200,000 was spent by individuals and churches involved in Michigan partnership work.

This year's budget goal of \$23,850,000 reflects an increase of 6 percent over 1986-87.

In his president's address, Oakley reminded his listeners that the Tennessee Baptist Convention is "a family of churches who by choice have united together to do God's work." This means mutual support, caring, and loving, he said.

He referred to the great diversity of Tennessee Baptist churches, pointing out that each emphasizes the ministry best suited to them.

Family of churches

Though we are different, Oakley said, "If we have any foundation but Jesus and His Word, we will fall and great will be our fall. We are a family of churches united to do God's work. He instructs us through His Word and His Holy Spirit concerning our task. That defines the Tennessee Baptist Convention."

In his Convention Sermon, Porch asked messengers to take a hard look at themselves and the convention. "Are we always as we appear to be?" he asked.

Porch urged messengers to be honest with each other, and he asked the churches to "really be real to each other."

Pointing out that "we are in the midst of a great identity crisis," Porch, pastor of First Church, Tullahoma, said confession is in order. Hope for reconciliation in this crisis, he said, "will only become reality provided we first begin to trust each other and become real to each other."

Once we begin to know each other as we really are, Porch said, God will act in and through us.

Officers...

(Continued from page 1)

terim pastor of First Church, Whiteville, defeated Verlon Moore, pastor of Hilldale Church in Clarksville, for the first vice-president post.

Serving as director of missions for Madison-Chester and Crockett County Baptist associations for the past five years, Higdon was pastor of Lockeland Church in Nashville.

Other pastors are First Church, Dyer; Scenic Hills Church, Memphis; First Church, Celina; and Allen Church, Brownsville.

Denominational service includes terms on the TBC Executive Board, Union University's board of trustees, and several committees in Gibson County Baptist Association.

The Parkin, Ark., native was graduated from Union University in Jackson, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Bill Fox was also elected by acclamation to the second vice-president position. He was nominated by Bill Morris who serves as pastor of Robertsville Church in Oak Ridge.

Fox has served as pastor First Church, South Pittsburg, since January of 1983. Former pastorates also include Trace Creek Church, New Johnsonville; First Church, Antioch; and Ramah Church, Watertown. He was also associate pastor of First Church, Franklin, Ky.

A native of Leoma, Fox was graduated from Belmont College in Nashville, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

On the state level, Fox has been a member of the TBC and Kentucky Baptist Convention executive boards. He was on the board of trustees for Baptist Health Care System Inc., and president of the pastors' conference for Nashville Baptist Association. He also served terms as moderator of Truett Baptist Association and Kentucky's Simpson Baptist Association.

Wallace Anderson was re-elected as recording and statistical secretary of the convention, and Pat Porter was re-elected as registration secretary. Tom Madden, executive secretary-treasurer of the TBC Executive Board, also serves as treasurer of the state convention.

Enrique and Pilar Damaso, Venezuela Baptist leaders, spoke several times to messengers about the partnership work, bringing greetings from Venezuela churches, and appreciation for Tennessee Baptists' role.

Part of the Executive Board's report on Wednesday, presented by President Marshall Gupton, included a recommendation for the program of Family Ministry.

The Task Force at its March 27 meeting, adopted a separate Family Ministry program as part of the new organizational structure.

The Wednesday recommendation, passed by the messengers, included in the statement of purpose a ministry for youth and for senior adults. Pre-marital counseling was deleted from the statement of purpose. Other ministries left in the statement include family ministry services of marriage and family enrichment, parent enrichment skills, and ministries to single persons.

Another resolution, not brought to the convention messengers for a vote, was made by Ben Mitchell, pastor of Middle Valley Church, Hixson. Mitchell's resolution offered support for Shelby County Association's disfellowshipping of Prescott Memorial Church, Memphis, after the church called Nancy Sehested as pastor.

Ray Newcomb, resolutions committee chairman, said the committee sought to promote harmony (see separate story). Mitchell appealed to the body for a vote, but was turned down.

At a dinner Tuesday night, Carson-Newman College trustees honored Cordell Maddox for his ten years as the school's president, and announced initiation of the Maddox Scholarship for church vocational students. They set a goal of \$100,000 for the scholarship fund.

Most of the recommendations presented by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee related to TBC Standing Committees and the Executive Board, i.e., participation of institution and agency heads in the selection process, tenure of committee member service, etc.

Motions discussed

Though the recommendations were discussed at length, and apparently one or two could have been approved without debate, the entire package was returned to the committee for further study. Raymond Boston, pastor of First Church, Dyersburg, made the motion to refer.

Boston said it now takes about 516 persons to fill all boards and committees. "The average tenure of church staff members and pastors is shorter than one three-year term," he said. "We need to be careful and study these recommended changes. Let the committee report to us next November." After a short discussion, the motion carried.

The motion concerning the Public Affairs Committee's endorsement of a Supreme Court nominee was not reported out by the resolutions committee. (It was originally a resolution.)

Don Dixon, pastor of Highland Church, Tullahoma, who brought the original resolution, then offered a motion that "the Tennessee Baptist Convention express to the Public Affairs Committee, SBC, its support for the historical Baptist tradition of not supporting political nominees." The motion carried by voice vote.

Next year's Annual Meeting will be held Nov. 15-17 at the Civic Center in Jackson.

Share
BAPTIST AND REFLECTOR
with a friend

Pastors' Conference explores discipleship

By Charlie Warren

FRANKLIN — A crowd of Baptist preachers gathered in the new sanctuary of First Church, Franklin to hear cries for unity and revival and to focus on discipleship and the lordship of Jesus Christ.

The Franklin church was host to the 1987 Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference. Richard D. White, pastor of the church, was president of this year's conference.

"What's important about the Christian faith?" asked Charles T. Carter, pastor of Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham, Ala.

"Arguing, fighting, and beating each other over the head with the Bible is not what Christianity is all about," Carter said. "I believe every syllable in this Blessed Book (the Bible), but arguing and fighting and debating about the Bible and Bible doctrine is not what Christianity is all about."

Instead, he said, the major issue is the lordship of Jesus Christ. Christ's lordship, according to Carter, demands an acceptance of other people, other denominations, and other races. It also demands stewardship and a commitment to reaching the world with the gospel.

Carter noted there are some issues that Southern Baptists alone will never resolve. He said the fight against drug abuse, pornography, and other social issues requires cooperation with other Christian groups.

"We need our brothers in Christ and they need us," Carter said. "If they say without reservation, 'Jesus Christ is Lord, they are our brothers and we need them. God forbid that we ever think we have a monopoly on the kingdom of God. God Almighty doesn't wave anybody's denominational flag.'" Carter continued.

He noted that if Southern Baptists are serious about Bold Mission Thrust, they must reach out to people of other races.

"If we deny the hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ because of the pigmentation of their skin," Carter charged, "our gospel is radically decimated."

He noted that Southern Baptists have the financial resources to win the world to Christ in our lifetime.

In another message from John 15, Carter suggested some keys to discipleship and effective Christian living.

"The key to effective Christian living is fruit bearing," Carter stated. "The key to fruit bearing is abiding in Him (Jesus)."

"The key to abiding in Him is daily obeying Him," Carter continued. "The key to obeying Him is loving Him."

He noted that if we love Jesus Christ as we should, we will love each other.

"What the world needs to hear from our state convention meetings is, 'Those dear Tennessee Baptist brethren love each other with all their hearts,'" Carter added. "We preachers need to be each other's best friends. The folks in the Bible stoned people, but they didn't stone each other."

Sid Nichols, pastor of Mt. Hebron West Church, Elmore, Ala., also sounded the need for unity.

"One of the greatest barriers to evangelism today is the fighting, arguing, and lack of unity in our churches," Nichols said. "An arguing church can never be a reaching church."

He said a spiritually seized church is an arguing church, a blaming church, a blind church, and a negligent church.

He noted that the only way such a church can become a reaching church is through a "breath of God" revival.

In a message on "life saving tensions," Ron Lewis, president of Church Growth



PREACHING TO PREACHERS — Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church, Memphis, and SBC president, preaches to a full house at the 1987 Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference at First Church, Franklin.

Designs, Nashville, noted the futility of denominational controversy.

"I don't want to pick any fights, but in all of our battles in this denomination, the man in the streets could care less," Lewis said.

"He's looking for someone to help get his kid off of drugs. He's looking for someone to help him with the alcohol problem in his life. He's looking for someone to help him get his marriage back together," Lewis explained.

"He's looking for someone to help his wife with depression. He's looking for somebody to reach out a hand in love and take him under his arm and love him without some manipulation or some purpose attached to it. He's looking for someone who cares because he's underpaid. He's looking for somebody who cares because his life is broken."

Lewis noted that everyone in church related work will face tension and pressure in their lives. While some of it is harmful and negative, he said some of it can be positive, helpful, and is even scriptural.

He suggested the pressure of a deadline (John 9:4), the pressure of a life purpose (John 12:27), the pressure of concern (Matthew 9:35), the pressure of love (2 Corinthians 5:20), and the pressure of faith (Hebrews 11:6) are pressures that motivate us to effective Christian service.

"The constraint of love puts a burden on your life," Lewis said. "There are some times when you ought to lay awake at

night worrying about lost souls."

Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church, Memphis, and current president of the Southern Baptist Convention, preached on the question from the Book of Job, "How can sinful man be justified before a Holy God?"

Focusing on "synthetic salvation," Rogers noted the three wrong answers given to Job by his three friends: demonism, humanism, and legalism.

In the area of humanism, Rogers noted five men who "have poisoned this generation" and who "rule the world from the grave."

According to Rogers, Charles Darwin poisoned the scientific world, Soren A. Kirkegard poisoned the theological world, Karl Marx poisoned the political world, Sigmund Freud poisoned the psychological world, and John Dewey poisoned the educational world.

"There is no way to calculate the damage done by the teaching of evolution," Rogers said regarding Darwinism.

"It takes more faith to believe the monkey story than to believe the Word of God," Rogers said.

He noted that the correct answer discovered by Job was that there had to be a mediator between God and man.

"On bloody Calvary, Jesus Christ took sinful man and Holy God and through the cross, God and man were reconciled," Rogers concluded.

Harper Shannon, associate to the executive secretary and director of

evangelism for the Alabama Baptist Convention, led a Bible study at each of the conference's three sessions on the Book of Malachi, the 1988 January Bible study for Southern Baptists.

Shannon replaced Gray Allison, president of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, who was scheduled to lead the Bible study, but was forced to cancel due to emergency back surgery. "There's more in Malachi than Malachi 3:10," Shannon said, referring to a popular verse on tithing. He called Malachi "a neglected study."

He said the book is about Jehovah's love for Israel and Israel's failure to love God. Malachi, "the Hebrew Socrates," explores six oracles built around the questions of the people.

Malachi brought the people back to a proper understanding of God, according to Shannon. Malachi also dealt with the judgment of God, he noted.

The pastors also heard reports and words of appreciation from Carroll Fowler, director of missions for the Northland Baptist Association in Michigan, Tennessee Baptists' sister state; and Enrique Damaso, vice-president of the Venezuela Baptist Convention and president of the Venezuela Baptist Pastors' Conference. Tennessee Baptists have a partnership relationship with Venezuela Baptists.

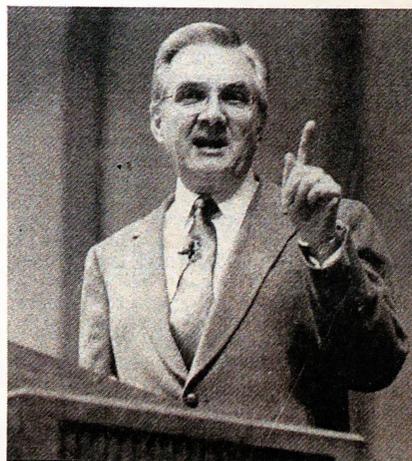
Both expressed appreciation for the support and volunteer efforts of Tennessee Baptists and both requested prayer support.

Fowler requested prayer for the 21 new Baptist congregations that were started in his association last year, for the need for pastors throughout Michigan, and for the financial need for the support of two missionaries in Michigan.

Noting a "campaign of prayer to Satan" from believers in spiritualism in Venezuela, Damaso said these satanic prayers are focused on bringing harm to the families of Baptist pastors in Venezuela. He asked for prayer for protection for these families. He also requested prayer for the many churches in Venezuela which are without pastors.

Other speakers were Franklin Paschall, retired former pastor of First Church, Nashville; and Terry Taylor, pastor of Beaver Dam Church, Halls.

Bucky Phillips, minister of music at First Church, Sevierville, directed the music for the conference and arranged for special music.



STUDY ON MALACHI — Harper Shannon, associate to the executive secretary and director of evangelism for Alabama Baptists, leads Tennessee's pastors in a study of Malachi.



PASTORS' OFFICERS — Ray Newcomb (left) of First Church, Millington, is the new president of the TBC Pastors' Conference. The other officers are Tom Mooty (center) of First Church, Wartburg, secretary, and Fred Ward, First Church, Huntingdon, vice-president.

WMU begins centennial celebration

By Connie Davis

BRENTWOOD — About 650 persons gathered for the 99th annual session of Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union which, included events to launch the centennial celebration and the election of a new president and recording secretary.

Carol Pharris of Etowah was elected president succeeding Judy Trivette of Knoxville who had served the maximum five-year term. Ruth Agee of Lebanon was elected recording secretary, replacing Nancy Tilley of Jackson, who also had served the full term.

Both new officers received a unanimous vote.

Meeting at Brentwood Church in Brentwood on Nov. 9, the members of the centennial committees were presented along with Rosalie Phelps of Paris, author of the history of the state organization, Give Me A Mountain, which was released at the meeting. Also the state centennial celebration was announced, which will be held April 8-9 at the Nashville Convention Center.

Missionary messages

Patsy Davis, missionary to Venezuela, reported on the results of the three-year partnership with Tennessee. She extended "a very special thank you for permitting God to use you in Venezuela," citing the work of volunteers who trained Venezuelan WMU leaders.

"He (God) can reach the 1-million persons in Venezuela," she said, referring to the goal of Venezuela Baptists to grow from 8,000 to 1-million by A.D. 2000.

"He (God) can open the doors of our government in Venezuela," she said, explaining that nine missionary couples are awaiting for visas.

"He (God) can take care of my dad so that I can return in January."

Davis also encouraged the members to be willing to let their children serve as missionaries.

The Tennessee Baptist Convention missionary-in-residence, Charlie Hawkins of the Philippines, said that "nothing would be the same today" in Southern Baptist life without the WMU and the Cooperative Program.

He told of a community of 200 families living on an island that asked Baptists for help after 150 children died of measles. Hawkins explained that Baptists not only helped them, but told them about God.

"We must find new methods and new ways of communicating that old story."

He called the convention to keep its "eye on the original purpose" of the SBC, which is "communicating the gospel."

Janie House, who serves in Zambia, shared an experience even though she was "ashamed and embarrassed" about it. On an unlit road one night in Zambia she hit a pedestrian while driving her car. The man died and the legal ramifications have not been resolved, but House declared that her experiences reveal the "sheltering, sustaining character of our God."

She related her fear concerning herself, her mission family, the Zambian Baptists, and the police. A missionary friend helped her when she reminded House that everything that happens to a child of God passes through the hands of God. The last policeman she saw also helped her because he comforted her while identifying all her fears. She reported that the case may take two more years to resolve and asked for the group's prayers.

A panel discussion involving missionaries was led by Katharine Bryan, executive director of Tennessee WMU.

Ruth Dyson, who serves in Sierra Leone, said that the prayers of members of her home church, Woodmont Church in



GA INTERVIEW — Katharine Bryan (center), state WMU executive director, interviews Girls in Action Elizabeth Perkey (left), of Central Church, Fountain City, in Knoxville, and Kacy Chenoweth of First Church in Nashville.

Nashville, helped her when she and her husband, Bert, left Nigeria after 29 years.

Meeting a missionary at Camp Linden in Linden impressed her as a child, said Janie House, and Mike Pennington of Venezuela also said experiences at the camp affected his life.

Thanking the crowd, James Kellum, home missionary in Memphis, reported that about 200 WMU members helped him in his work.

Other speakers

Helen Fling, former president, recording secretary, and past promotion associate in new areas for WMU, SBC, and past WMU president of the Baptist Convention of New York, addressed the group. She spoke on the ministries of intercession, multiplication, and cooperation.

Fling reminded the assembly of the many members who are "struggling and lonely" and have "no one to pray for them or with them."

She called the women to work with "pastors dubious about our organizing" so that the "missionary base" of every church can be developed. The members also must demonstrate ministry themselves, she advised. Fling reported that a woman in Missouri who made a long-term commitment to a Yugoslavian family who came to live with her, said she had been repaid a thousand times.

Tom Madden, TBC executive secretary-treasurer, paid tribute to Judy Trivette, state WMU president, for her service on the TBC Executive Board, the Program,

Personnel, and Planning Task Force, and other board committees.

Madden noted the sacrifices made by women for missions, even "when our women are pushed aside and overlooked."

He declared that even Brentwood is a mission field, adding that 80 percent of its population is unchurched. Madden also asked the members to help churches support the Cooperative Program.

Ken Altom, pastor of First Church in Cookeville, spoke on the "Lord of the breakthrough" based on 2 Samuel 5.

After David prayed, Altom related, "God assured David of victory and gave him a vision of how the battle would be fought."

David also learned that his real enemies were not the people of Israel or Judea, even though they had been warring among themselves, but the Philistines, he shared. Altom called Baptists to cooperate together and "move forward against the real enemies of evil and sin and Satan.

Referring to Christians who "settle for the mediocre" instead of "being committed to excellence," Altom concluded, "Missions is what we're made for."

Mary Ellen Garrett, missionary-in-residence at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in Ridgecrest, N.C. and former missionary in Burma, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria, shared several short messages.

If it weren't for women who shared their experiences with Jesus including being the first to see Him after He defeated



ACTEENS PANELISTS — The 1987-88 Tennessee Acteens Advisory Panelists serving at the annual session were (front row, from left) Andrea Waller of First Church in Bolivar, Sheri Edgington of Fall Creek Church in Nolene, Dacia Hall of First Church in Martin, (back row) Elizabeth Wallace of First Church in Andersonville, Regina Flatt of Nash Grove Church in Baxter, and Amy Rushing of Shiloh Church in Kingston.

death, "we wouldn't have heard yet," Garrett said one woman speculated.

She reported that because one person pursued an idea which became the jet immunization gun and because one person funded a pilot project, smallpox was eradicated throughout the world.

WMU president

Judy Trivette, a member of Central Church, Fountain City, in Knoxville and WMU president for the past five years, asked the members to consider what the future would bring the organization in another 100 years.

She reported the findings of a study of persons over the age of 95. The persons said that they would reflect more, risk more, and do more things that would live beyond them.

WMU members should remember the lives of past members like Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, and Mildred Golden, for whom special mission offerings are now named, contended Trivette.

Risking pays off though it is never easy, continued Trivette. The missions programs "reached heights our founding mothers never dreamed of."

She submitted that her life is the result of persons who are willing to invest in WMU.

For her service the executive board gave Trivette a quilt made by WMU members of Unity Church in Jacks Creek.

Election

In addition to the president and recording secretary, eight regional vice-presidents were elected as the members unanimously adopted the report of the nominating committee. The vice-presidents are Dorothy Clendenin of Paris, northwestern region; Jonnie Neal of Lexington, southwestern region; Carolyn Outland of Murfreesboro, central region; Carol Gilmer of Centerville, south central region; Ann Davenport of McMinnville, north central region; Carol Martin of Signal Mountain, southeastern region; Ruth McNabb of Johnson City, northeastern region; and Dottie Kelly of Sevierville, eastern region.

Annual report

Katharine Bryan, executive director, announced the state's associations and churches that had received distinguished and standard WMU awards for the 1986-87 year.

She also reported that Tennessee giving to the 1987 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions was up 12 percent, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions was up 6.9 percent, the 1986 Golden State Missions Offering was up 14.6 percent, and receipts for the 1987 state offering were up \$68,000 over the same period last year.



CENTENNIAL CEREMONY — Judy Trivette (behind banner), outgoing WMU president, leads the ceremony that included the lighting of a torch by Nashville Margarette Babb (right of torch), state centennial chairman, as Carol Pharris (right of Babb), next WMU president, and the state staff watch from the platform.

Baptists bury legend: Porter Routh, 1911-87

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists buried a legend Nov. 10, 1987.

Porter W. Routh's family, colleagues, and admirers celebrated the life — and grieved the death — of a Baptist Christian they called statesman, giant, theologian, friend.

Routh, 76, died Nov. 7 in Nashville following a brief illness. He was executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee from 1951 until his retirement in 1979.

More than 300 family and friends gathered at First Church of Nashville, Routh's spiritual home for 42 years. Pastor Charles Page told them: "We celebrate

the homegoing and coronation of Dr. Porter Routh. . . . He has given us the kind of lifestyle that has been an inspiration to us. This is a time of celebration, a time of victory."

Franklin Paschall, pastor emeritus of the church and Routh's neighbor for 32 years, recited Scriptures that reflected his friend's life and faith. He noted one that particularly related to Routh's faithfulness to God and witness of Christ: ". . . and they are there that testify unto me."

Albert McClellan, Routh's associate at the Executive Committee through the decades, painted a picture of an intense, hardworking man who loved his work.

challenges, and Baptists.

"The first time I saw Porter, he was hard at work at a Linotype machine," McClellan said, reflecting back 50 years to Routh's days as a reporter for an Oklahoma City newspaper. "I tried to get his attention and could not, his concentration was so strong. I later worked with him for 28 years, and all those years I saw that same intensity and love for his work."

McClellan succeeded Routh as editor of the Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma Baptists' weekly newsjournal, in 1945. "Porter always was a man of not too many words," he said, describing both Routh's habits and the way Routh introduced him to the work of the Messenger. When McClellan traveled to Oklahoma City for an orientation just before he was to take over the newspaper, Routh talked to him for about 30 minutes and then left town for the week, confident his successor had the wherewithal to get the job done.

Later, when the duo was together at the Executive Committee, McClellan said, "The way he conducted staff meetings was to stand at my door and talk about a problem and then leave it in my hands, like he did that first newspaper."

But McClellan also painted a portrait of a man who came to the office at night during his vacations to read his mail and dictate responses. "The man was profoundly interested in his work. It never left his mind, and that was why he did so well

at it," he said.

"For him, a problem never was a problem. It was a challenge," McClellan added, describing how Routh would study an issue and patiently listen as colleagues discussed possible solutions. "Then he would suggest a changed word or two, and everybody would be happy — at least as happy as you can be in Southern Baptist life."

He finally noted how Routh was happiest at the grassroots level of Southern Baptist life. "The crowning work of his life, in a sense, was not the Executive Committee nor the Baptist World Alliance, but the Nashville Baptist Association" which elected him moderator for this year.

"Less than a month before he died, when he was sick, when his voice was weak, he stood and presided over that (the association's) annual meeting," McClellan said. "He was faithful to the end. That was my friend, Porter Routh."

"Porter W. Routh was one of the greatest Christian statesmen I have ever known," said Harold C. Bennett, Routh's successor at the Executive Committee. "His commitment to the denomination and Southern Baptists was beyond question. I counted him as a close personal friend and a strong prayer supporter."

"He will be missed. Southern Baptists have greatly benefitted because of his ministry over 46 years."



PAUL AS AN EXAMPLE — John Bisagno outlines characteristics of the Apostle Paul that made him an effective servant throughout his life.

Bisagno outlines elements basic to Christian service

NASHVILLE — Nothing is as important as being "God's instrument of grace" in the lives of other people, John Bisagno told those attending the Tennessee Baptist Convention. The pastor of Houston, Texas' First Church spoke during the Wednesday morning session of this year's convention.

Using the Apostle Paul as an example, Bisagno outlined elements present in a life that make an effective servant.

Commenting on modern technology, Bisagno says "we know more than anyone has ever known." But there is also more crime than there has ever been, he adds. "Science has made the world a neighborhood but not a brotherhood."

Listing humility as the first element of Paul's life characteristic of his Christian witness, Bisagno said that in a success oriented world, it is much more desirable to be associated with success.

Instructing listeners to be clean, usability is another key element according to Bisagno, who added that since sin is so accessible in today's society that is becoming more acceptable.

Noting that Paul was God's instrument everywhere he went, Bisagno stressed availability in service.

While Paul wanted to be a missionary to the Jews, God directed him to the Gentiles, Bisagno explained, emphasizing the Christian's need to be pliable.

Exercising ultimate expandability, Paul counted nothing too dear to inhibit his witness for Jesus Christ. Bisagno made reference to the Scripture in 2 Timothy where Paul says, "I have fought the good fight."

In closing, worldwide evangelist John McCarter was quoted as saying "If I take care of the depth of my ministry, God will take care of the breadth."

"Calvary is the only thing of ultimate eternal value," Bisagno added.



JURY STILL OUT — James Porch urges messengers to take a look at themselves in a time when religion is under great scrutiny. Porch delivered the convention sermon on Tuesday evening.

TBC notes lost keys

A set of "lost" car keys was found last week during the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Annual Meeting at Radnor Church.

The keys, on an "Upper Room" keychain, may be identified and picked up at the Public Relations Office, Baptist Building, Franklin Road, in Brentwood.

Emmanuel McCall tells of Old Testament 'Rambo'

By Mona Collett

NASHVILLE — Speculating on why heroes become heroes, Emmanuel McCall offers the sound of a name such as Rambo or Shamgar as a determining factor.

in Atlanta, Ga., McCall delivered the message during the Wednesday afternoon session of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. He is director of the black church relations department for the HMB.

Biblical heroes are "persons of faith who do unusual things," says McCall. Shamgar is his hero, not because of an impressive name, or the way he looked, or even because he did away with 600 Philistines (Judges 3:31). While he is only

mentioned in two verses in the book of Judges, Shamgar is a hero of McCall's because he "saw a need and took what he had to meet it."

Titling this brief account "A Man and a Stick," McCall expounded on Shamgar's step in faith as he killed the Philistines with an ox goad to save the Israelites. Going after armed Philistines with only a stick would appear to be a foolish effort. But as McCall told his listeners, the power was not in the stick but in God.

"Jesus' stick was a cross," he preached to convention attendees, instructing them to remember that they too have been given a stick by God. "Use your stick," he told them.

Stanton calls conventioners back to evangelism efforts

Expressing the same weariness of the Southern Baptist controversy that had already been expressed by others behind the podium at the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Jack Stanton said he hopes "we'll quit playing games and get on with the business of evangelism."

From Bolivar, Mo., Stanton, who is director of the Institute of Evangelism, addressed those attending the final session of the convention on Thursday morning.

"We are responsible for winning this world" which has nine times more lost people than when Jesus walked on earth, he told the group.

During his ministry, Jesus never lost sight of the individual, said Stanton. God made man with will, intellect, and emotion, he continued. Man got dissatisfied, he said, passed on sin to generations to follow, who have grown increasingly further from the ideal life God created.

Instructing the group on their role in

bringing the world back to God, Stanton told the pastors. "You're not the whole cheese." Put laymen and Godly women to work, he told them.

It costs to serve mankind, Stanton affirmed. It cost God His Son and Christ His life.

Christian maturity takes time, said Stanton, as does evangelism efforts such as the Billy Graham crusade he described, during which 1,000 decisions were made in one day. While Graham had only preached for one day, others had been preparing for three years for the event.

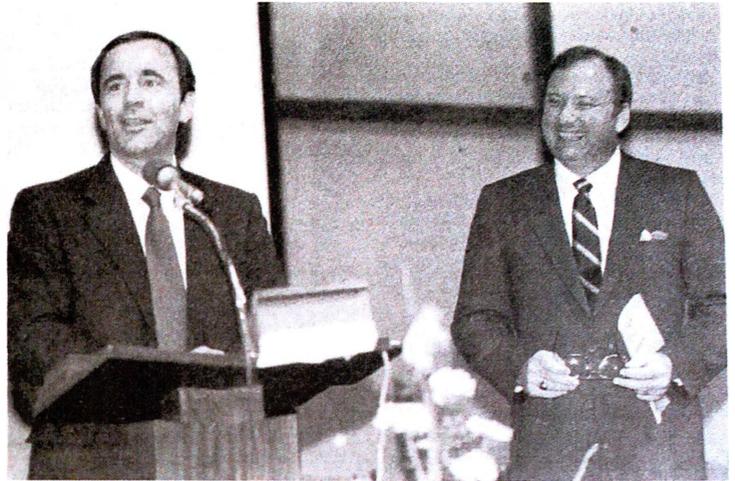
God has given everyone manifestation of the Spirit, according to Stanton, who encouraged his listeners to use their own uniqueness to do what no one else can.

Stretching the boundaries of worship beyond gathering in a designated place at a specific time each week, Stanton presented the idea of those who believe that worship is the bringing together of all daily activities and offering them up.

Viewing the TBC



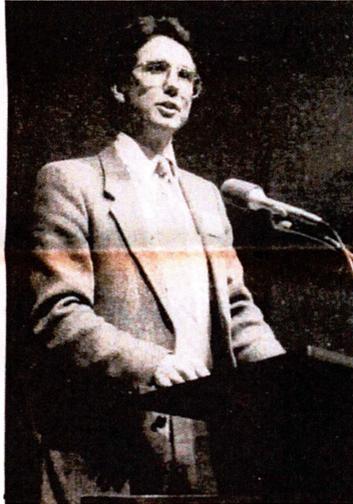
ANNUAL EVENT — The TBC Chorale, made up of church music workers and directed by Julian Suggs, TBC church music department director, continued its tradition of participating in a convention session.



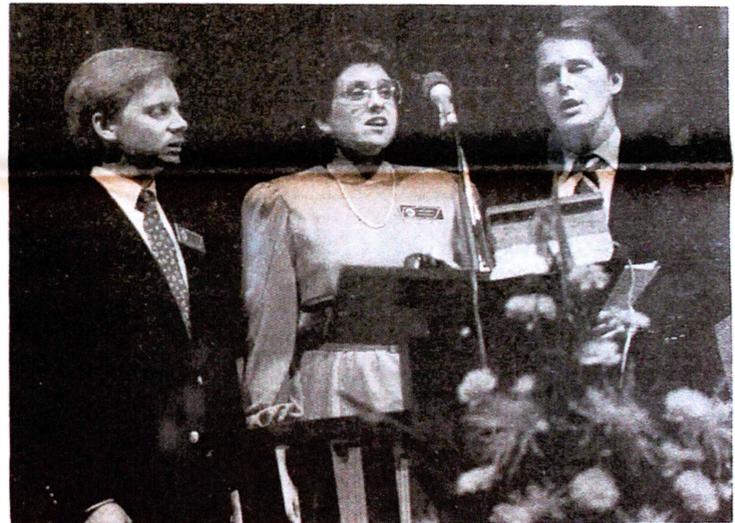
VISIT FROM MAYOR — Nashville Mayor Bill Boner (left) welcomed the messengers and presented Jerry Oakley, TBC president, with a key to the city.



GRACIOUS — Enrique Damaso (left), vice-president of the Venezuela Baptist Convention, thanks Tennessee Baptists for their assistance through the Tennessee/Venezuela partnership. "God will repay you and bless you," Damaso said. Mike Pennington (right), a missionary to Venezuela, interprets his comments into English.



COMMITTEE REPORT — Leonard Markham, pastor of First Church in Sweetwater and chairman of the TBC Committee on Boards, presents the committee's recommendations for persons to serve on the Committee on Committees.



TRIO — Musicians (from left) Ron Alley, TBC church music department program associate; Leanne Robbins, church music department secretary; and Bob Alley of First Church in Murfreesboro, sang during the convention meeting.



ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT — Tennessee Baptists' executive secretary-treasurer Tom Madden, right, made official his intention to retire at the end of April 1989. Madden told the Executive Board of his plans at the Wednesday board organizational meeting. Board President Marshall Gupton expressed the board's appreciation for Madden's role in convention progress.



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS — "Our strength is found in our diversity. Together we can reach all corners of society for christ," said Jerry Oakley, TBC president, during his message which followed music by the choir of Springfield Church in Springfield, where he is pastor.



GLORY MUSIC — Paula Kinney, Christian music artist from Nashville, presents her rendition of "Upon This Rock," during the Pastors' Conference.

Creationism dispute erupts in Missouri

By Bob Terry

ST. LOUIS (BP) — A long-simmering dispute at Missouri Baptist College broke into the open in mid-October when the St. Louis Post Dispatch printed an article charging that three professors were being forced out by the school for teaching evolution.

According to the story, Leroy Madden, chairman of the department of natural science and professor at the Missouri Baptist Convention-affiliated school for 17 years, is being forced out for refusing to teach creation science.

Former history professor Douglas Herman charged he was denied reappointment for the current year when he refused to "describe certain biblical stories such as the Garden of Eden and Noah's Ark as accurate historical accounts."

Professor of religion Larry Davis, who reportedly disagrees with the administration's interpretation of Scripture, also has been told his contract will not be renewed after the current academic year.

Missouri Baptist College President Patrick O. Copley expressed surprise at the story.

"I thought everything was smooth," he said in an interview with Word and Way, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention. "I didn't know this was an issue."

Copley denied that any professor had been fired or that any actions had been set in motion to dismiss any professor.

"Around the end of September, Dr. Madden wrote a memo indicating he did not intend to seek reappointment to his teaching position next year," Copley explained. "He said he had trouble with

creationism. I accepted his memo and thought that was it."

Copley said the decision not to renew Davis' contract had nothing to do with the creationism issue. Copley described Davis as a popular teacher and said no complaints about Davis' teaching had ever been filed by students.

The Missouri Baptist College president declined to comment about the charges by Herman except in off-the-record statements. Missouri Baptist College does not have a tenure system for faculty. Instead, the school issues contracts to the teaching faculty.

In an interview with Word and Way, Madden renewed his charges he was being pressured out of the college because of his stand about teaching evolution.

He said pressure to teach "creation science" has been growing for about a year and a half. But he indicated the issue came to a head following two letters from Gary Taylor, pastor of Tower Grove Church in St. Louis. In one of those letters, Taylor wrote, "Unless there are some changes, I cannot in good conscience continue to support Missouri Baptist College."

Last year Taylor became involved in the school's academic program, objecting to a history textbook used in one of Herman's classes which described the earth as billions of years old.

The most recent letters followed a complaint by a former student at Tower Grove Christian School concerning a zoology textbook that begins by depicting "periods of time interspersed with pictures of animals in the process of evolution."

Copley downplayed Taylor's role in the controversy. "Gary called and shared a

concern. I told him to put his concern in writing. Gary did but he kept a low profile. There was no pressure from him," the president continued.

Taylor said that at the time of his call, Copley was unaware evolution was being taught in the science classes and creationism was not being emphasized.

"The president told me he would check into this and asked me to write him a letter. In fact, he asked me to make it a 'hot' letter because that would help him in his conversations with the faculty," Taylor said.

The next day Copley met with the science faculty. Following that meeting, he called Taylor to assure him that all of the professors believed in creationism. However, Copley did indicate there might be trouble with one professor, Leroy Madden, the Tower Grove pastor recalled.

A decision was made to secure new textbooks "which would be more acceptable to Baptists" and to correct an imbalance in library holdings on the topic of evolution and creationism. Taylor said information furnished him by Copley indicated the library had only 18 volumes supporting creationism and 48 volumes dealing with evolution.

The decision to emphasize creationism and downplay evolution in the science classes was made during the summer of 1986, Copley explained.

Copley said when he uses the term "creationism" he means a "basic simple understanding that God did it."

Madden said that was not what the president told him or other science faculty members they had to teach. "I've always taught that God created all that is,

that God sustains all that is, and that He continues to do so. Evolution does not deal with creation. Evolution organizes the changes that have occurred after creation into an understandable form," Madden asserted.

Madden said he was instructed to teach creationism with its views that the earth is between 6,000 and 10,000 years old and God placed dinosaur bones in the earth to confuse men but there were no such things as dinosaurs. He said professors were instructed to teach that evolution is an incorrect theory and that creationism is right.

"I cannot teach that with any kind of intellectual integrity," said Madden, who holds a doctorate in chemistry from Oklahoma State University and a bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "That is not right in a science class. It is a case of science against a non-science."

Copley acknowledged the charge that professors had been replaced in the religion department and the history department. He said the school was consciously attempting to present a conservative Christian view. He attributed the school's recent growth in enrollment to increased support from conservative Christian groups.

Longtime trustee Margaret Hartung has resigned from the board of trustees in protest over the school's policy. Mrs. Hartung, a member of Third Church in St. Louis and a former college professor, protested the violation of academic freedom as her reason for resigning.

North Carolina meeting attracts record crowd

By Larry E. High

GREENSBORO, N.C. (BP) — North Carolina Baptists turned out in record numbers Nov. 9-11 at the Baptist State Convention to elect new officers, conduct business, and hear reports of convention work.

Among their actions, 5,638 messengers — the most ever registered for an annual meeting — elected three officers endorsed by the "Friends of Missions" organization; adopted resolutions affirming the administration, staff, faculty, and student body of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the staff and work of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; approved a \$28-million Cooperative Program budget for 1988; and accepted an invitation to enter into a five-year mission partnership with Baptists in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The record registration was attributed to unusually high interest among North Carolina Baptists in the election of convention officers for the coming year. In the weeks preceding the 157th annual convention session, six candidates publicly announced their intention to seek the post of convention president or vice-president.

Ted Stone, a Durham drug rehabilitation advocate, was the first candidate nominated for the presidency being vacated by William Poe of Charlotte who

served the maximum two-term limit. Stone was nominated by Henry Cook, pastor of Beulah Church of Statesville.

Ned Mathews, pastor of Parkwood Church in Gastonia, was nominated by Dale Lawson, pastor of Mulberry Church of Charlotte.

The final nomination was made by W. Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern seminary and a member of Wake Forest Church in Wake Forest, who proposed Leon Smith, pastor of First Church in Goldsboro.

Messengers elected Smith by a wide margin on the first ballot, giving him 62.3 percent (3,375) of the tabulated votes.

Gene Watterson, pastor of First Church of Shelby, was elected first vice-president. Helen M. Cashwell of Raleigh was elected second vice-president.

Statements expressing "support and affirmation of the present administration, faculty, staff, and student body of Southeastern seminary" and proclaiming

"gratitude and support for the staff and the work of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs" were among five adopted resolutions.

The Southeastern seminary resolution encourages trustees "to maintain the rich Baptist heritage and tradition that has been part of Southeastern seminary's own heritage and tradition."

In the resolution concerning the Baptist Joint Committee messengers opposed "efforts of the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee to disrupt the work and witness of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs."

The \$28-million Cooperative Program budget for 1988 will again be divided 64.5 percent for North Carolina ministries and 35.5 percent for national and international ministries related to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Adopted recommendations from the convention's general board included a proposal to accept the Foreign Mission

Board's invitation to help establish 1,000 new churches in the Sao Paulo, Brazil, region between 1987 and 1992.

Richard Hicks, pastor of Edgewood Church in Winston-Salem, presented a motion requiring Baptist State Convention computers to be programmed so that no list of pre-registered messengers to the annual session could be printed until two working days prior to the convention meeting.

He said pre-registered messengers from his church and other congregations had received materials in the mail from the "Friends of Missions" organization prior to the convention's opening session Nov. 9.

Speaking to the motion, Executive Director Roy Smith reported that following an intensive investigation "we satisfied ourselves that our integrity is intact."

Smith said the list of names and addresses of pre-registered messengers was not released by Baptist building employees. In conversation with leaders of "Friends of Missions," Smith said he was told the group obtained the information through their own efforts and was assured the list was not gained through the staff of the Baptist building.

As a response to Hicks' motion, Smith reported that in the future the list of pre-registered convention messengers will not be printed from Baptist building computers until after the convention.

John Lewis, retired pastor of First Church of Raleigh, moved the Hicks motion be postponed indefinitely since it appeared the list did not come from the Baptist building and that the executive director had taken steps to ensure it could not be released prior to the convention session. The motion to postpone was adopted.



Tennessee/Venezuela prayer net partnership

—Venezuelan home missionaries celebrating birthdays: Rosalia Martinez on Nov. 19 and Jose A. Rodriguez on Nov. 23.

—Iglesia Bautista Salem has begun a discipleship program with the goal of increasing its membership to 200,000 by the year 2000. This church is also planning toward a medical clinic for their community.

—Missionaries Tom and Iris Watson are involved in an apartment ministry. Pray that doors will open literally and figuratively for this ministry.

—The Chinese congregation currently meeting in the building of Iglesia Bautista Bethel is looking for another meeting location. This congregation is also in need of a pastor.

Baptist and Reflector
keeps you informed.

Georgia Baptists ask Harwell to reconsider

By Jim Newton

SAVANNAH, Ga. (BP) — Georgia Baptists defeated attempts to investigate charges against Mercer University, denied a customary second term to incumbent president Clark Hutchinson, and asked Christian Index Editor Jack Harwell to reconsider plans to retire early.

Moderates controlled almost every major vote in the Georgia Baptist Convention's annual meeting, which attracted a record 4,863 messengers to Savannah.

Messengers approved a motion expressing their "profound gratitude and appreciation" for Harwell's 21 years as editor of the Christian Index, the convention's weekly newsjournal, and "respectfully requested" that he reconsider plans to retire early at age 55.

The motion, made by T. L. McSwain of Augusta, also asked a review board appointed by the Christian Index committee in August of 1986 be "dismissed to preserve editorial freedom and integrity."

Harwell had announced plans in October to retire after the review board threatened to fire him if he wrote one more editorial it considered unacceptable. In Savannah, he told a cheering, standing crowd that in the light of the affirmation he had received, he would accept the invitation to reconsider his retirement, subject to negotiations with the Index board of directors and the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Hutchinson, pastor of Eastside Church in Marietta, narrowly lost a bid for reelection. It was the first time, convention officials said, that a convention president eligible for a traditional second term was not re-elected.

By a margin of only 51 votes, Jim Pitts, pastor of First Church in Valdosta, was elected president of the 1.2-million-member convention. Pitts received 2,109 votes to Hutchinson's 2,058.

Earlier, Pitts had preached the convention's doctrinal sermon, stressing such Baptist distinctives as the authority of the Bible, autonomy of the local church, priesthood of all believers, religious liberty, and separation of church and state.

In nominating Pitts as president, Peter Rhea Jones of Decatur said a vote for Pitts is a vote for Baptist freedom. "He supports all Southern Baptist work, including Mercer," Jones said.

Pitts said in a news conference he was shocked and stunned by the election. He had no idea he would be nominated as

president until after his sermon, he said. His election was considered a victory by Mercer University supporters.

Earlier, a motion asking for appointment of a special nine-member committee to study "matters of concern" at Mercer was voted out of order by the convention.

Ben Hatfield, retired pastor of First Church of Alpharetta, Ga., had moved that the convention's budgeted funding to Mercer be continued on the condition that Mercer cooperate with the proposed study committee. That committee would have been given authority to study matters of concern at Mercer and report back to next year's convention.

Tom Conley, pastor of Northside Drive Church in Atlanta, argued the motion was "out of order" since the convention had two hours earlier adopted the \$29.1-million budget that allocates about \$2-million to Mercer. Conley said the motion addressed "funding that has already been decided by this convention."

Hutchinson, turning to professional Parliamentarian Barry McCarty of Elizabeth City, N.C., ruled Conley's point of order was "not well taken." McCarty, a Church of Christ minister who has served Southern Baptist Convention presidents Charles Stanley and Adrian Rogers, said this was the first time he had been employed as certified parliamentarian for a statewide Baptist convention.

When Conley asked messengers to vote on sustaining the president's ruling, Hutchinson's ruling was overturned, thus making Hatfield's motion out of order.

In a surprise announcement, Maurice Crowder of McCaysville withdrew a motion to change the convention's bylaws to limit nomination of trustees to people active in Baptist churches. Mercer has for many years had non-Baptist trustees.

During the report of the convention's nominating committee, moderates challenged three nominations to the committee on order of business, the Executive Committee, and the Christian Index committee but were successful in only one challenge.

The convention voted to substitute Bill Young, pastor in Avondale Estates, for Fred Powell, senior associate pastor of First Church of Atlanta, as member-at-large on the Executive Committee. Powell previously had been quoted in the media as opposing Mercer University and announcing the Atlanta church was withholding contributions to Mercer.

In another action, the convention adopted a motion deploring a recent mailout attacking Mercer's president, staff, trustees, and students. "This is not the way to deal with problems in our convention," said Robert J. Rutland of Lithonia, who later was elected a Mercer trustee.

He was referring to a mailing to 6,000 Baptists by Lee Roberts, a Marietta mortgage banker who teaches a Sunday School class at the church where Hutchinson is pastor. Roberts charged Mercer President Kirby Godsey with theological heresy, and with permitting "drunkenness, immorality, and debauchery" on the Mercer campus.

Godsey called Roberts' charges "the most scurrilous, vicious attack" ever leveled against Mercer, and responded to each charge in a presentation to the convention. Messengers responded with a standing ovation. Godsey said the real issue was control of the university by what he called "political fundamentalists."

Receipts from the convention's newly approved \$29.1-million budget will be divided on a 50-50 percentage basis between Georgia Baptist causes and worldwide Southern Baptist endeavors,

with half the receipts going to the national convention's Cooperative Program unified budget.

During an unrelated pre-convention session, the Georgia Baptist Women in Ministry Conference presented its annual "churchwoman of the year" award to Nancy Sehested, pastor of Prescott Memorial Church in Memphis, and former associate pastor of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga.

Personal Perspective



By Tom Madden
TBC Executive
Secretary-Treasurer

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12).

As we approach the Thanksgiving season, I want to share some thoughts about giving thanks.

How sad it must be for those who do not believe in our Lord. They know no one to whom to be thankful. They cannot lift their faces to God and be grateful for His providence, love, and grace. They do not have a faith which dares to follow Him in the dark.

On the positive side, how good and blessed it is to pause and reflect on the blessings and benefits God bestows on us and how we can express our gratitude to Him for our life and health, for the love and fellowship of loved ones, and the friendship of friends. We must thank Him for our material blessings, for our church, for salvation, and for this marvelous nation in which we live.

We give thanks because we perceive the personality of God. One does not give thanks to a machine. We respond to the love of a good God whose reality we know, whose benevolence we never question and whose loyal devotion we trust.

I know you join with me in asking God to help us to be unselfish in the use of the manifold blessings poured out on us and to express our gratitude not only with our heart and lips but also in the life we live.

Campbell County adds a church

During the annual meeting Oct. 19-20 at Lake View Church in Caryville, First Church in Jellico, and Indiana Avenue Church in LaFollette, the Campbell County Baptist Association added a church and approved the purchase of a car for its director of missions.

Stinking Creek Missionary Church in LaFollette, of which Floyd Slover is pastor, was added to the fellowship.

The messengers re-elected its officers which were W. H. Longmire, pastor of East Jacksboro Church in Jacksboro, moderator; Don Reynolds, pastor of Glade Springs Church in LaFollette, assistant moderator; and Nila Sellers, a member of Indian Creek Church in Jacksboro.

The next gathering will be at East LaFollette Church in LaFollette, First Church in Caryville, and Glade Springs Church on Oct. 17-18, 1988. Ralph Cordell is the director of missions.



— IN CONCERT —

Highland Baptist Church — Pulaski, Tennessee
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Attention: Youth Workers and Youth Groups — Be there early. First 1,200 will be admitted. No admission charge, but a love offering will be taken.

Dwight Mercer, Pastor Rick Ezell, Evangelist

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Missouri Baptist Convention notes numerous milestones

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP) — The 1987 annual meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention was marked by a record attendance, adoption of a record 1988 budget, election of three officers by acclamation, and the installation of a new executive director.

Among resolutions adopted by Missouri Baptists was an affirmation of continued Southern Baptist involvement in the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, opposition to political endorsements by Baptist entities, and opposition to Missouri involvement in a multi-state lottery.

A total of 3,344 messengers and guests gathered at First Baptist Church of Springfield for the Oct. 26-28 meeting. Adoption of a \$15.5-million budget for 1988 includes a Cooperative Program allocations budget of \$14.75-million. Southern Baptist causes will receive 35.375 percent of the total income, an increase of almost 0.19 percent over the current budget.

The installation of MBC Executive Director Donald V. Wideman highlighted the convention's opening session. Missouri Gov. John Ashcroft, addressing the opening session, offered "personal congratulations" to Wideman, who has been executive director since May.

In memory of Wideman's predecessor, Rheubin L. South, messengers voted to rename the annual state missions offering the Rheubin L. South Missouri Mission

Offering. South, who was executive director nearly 12 years, died of leukemia shortly after last year's annual meeting. South's widow, Verna, attended this year's annual meeting and helped unveil a formal portrait of South, which will hang in the Baptist Building in Jefferson City.

Missouri Baptists' resolution related to the Baptist Joint Committee declared messengers "restate our desire for the Southern Baptist Convention to maintain its role in the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; express our belief that Baptists' joint witness in our nation's capital has been beneficial to Missouri and Southern Baptists and to the American public; and regard this proposal (by the SBC Public Affairs Committee) for withdrawal to be inappropriate and its stated reasons to be unsatisfactory."

The resolution opposing political endorsements, a response to the Public Affairs Committee's recent endorsement of U.S. Supreme Court nominee Robert H. Bork, stated, "Baptists have historically refrained from endorsing or opposing can-

didates for public office but have openly supported or criticized actions of public officials which impinge on Baptist principles and interests." It emphasized messengers "disapprove of a Baptist entity's endorsement of any person for a civil office: local, state, or federal."

The multi-state lottery resolution affirmed the MBC executive Board's authorization of a lawsuit "challenging the Constitutionality of Missouri's participation in a multi-state lottery."

The election of officers included the unanimous selection of President Charles Hufft, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church, Springfield; First Vice-president Jim Joslin, director of missions for Greene County Baptist Association; and Recording Secretary Marilyn Coble, a member of Green Trails Baptist Church, Chesterfield. In the only race for a convention office, Lee Beaver, a member of Edmundson Road Baptist Church, St. Louis, was elected second vice-president.

One Word More

By W. Fletcher Allen

All things considered, it probably was no accident — nor even a miniscule coincidence that so many words spoken during last week's Convention referred to servanthood.

It was uncanny that time and time again, the presentations, the personal references, the aside remarks, the films and stories — mentioned servanthood.

Think about it. "After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred of the Philistines with an oxgoad; and he too delivered Israel." That was Emmanuel McCall's man, Shamgar, who took it upon himself to be a servant of God, and tiring of Phillistine badgering, he cleared them from the land.

"All the little Rabbits don't live in St. Louis." This was Jack Stanton's way of reminding us that one of his heroes was a lady who changed from recalcitrant to eager disciple — once she met Rabbit, the drug addict, who had prayed for a deliverer, and unbeknownst to herself, she was the deliverer. Trusting a tract in his hand, she gave him the first step toward status in God's kingdom, brought him to church and salvation. She became a servant. So did Rabbit.

"No one ever told me about being a servant when I was growing up. Menial servants always had jobs to be done, and did what they were told to do, I was told. I realized there were few role models for

servanthood." That was Katharine Bryan, talking about the difficulty in learning to be a servant. She reminded us that the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve. (She found her role model.) A servant, she reasons, is what we are absolutely, totally, committed for someone else to be.

"This facility will enable the Tennessee Baptist Convention to respond to the needs of people, to be the kind of servants needed in the world today, to help our staff to develop the attributes of true servanthood." That was James Porch, discussing how a building, when planned and developed and used properly, can be used as a center for, and exponent for servanthood style living — as improbably as it may seem.

"Science has made the world a neighborhood, but it has not made it a brotherhood. We don't have to be educated, we don't have to have degrees, but we can be clean, usable — when we make Him the Lord of our lives." That was John Bisagno talking about servanthood in the marketplace, and learning to be expendable for the cause of Christ.

"There I was at this service, and everyone was feeling good. The singing was great. I noticed one old man near the front, really banging out the music. I studied him, and then notice he was holding his hymn book up-side-down." That was Governor Ned McWherter with tears glistening in his eyes (no, he's not a Baptist), as he urged Baptists to help him teach people to read and write. "Let's do this one thing for everybody in Tennessee," he asked.

And there were words and messages and photos of servants at the Children's Homes, the Adult Homes, the hospitals, the churches — oh, all that we do as Tennessee Baptists should be in the attitude of servanthood. When we model our lives after the Master — it will not be foreign to us.

There was also Shamgar, not making excuses, just picking up his oxgoad and getting to work as a servant, listening to God's instructions. As Katharine Bryan said, it is time for each of us to be totally, absolutely, committed — servants.

Remarkable it is that we heard so much about servanthood.



Allen

Holston Valley elects officers

Messengers of Holston Valley Baptist Association elected officers during its annual meeting at McPheeters Bend Church in Church Hill and Maple Hill Church in Rogersville.

Meeting on Oct. 22-23, the group installed the following officers for the next year: David Tullock, pastor of Choptack Church in Rogersville, moderator, succeeding John R. Parrott, pastor of East Rogersville Church in Rogersville; Dennis Hilton, interim pastor of Howes Chapel Church in Rogersville, assistant moderator; and Linda D. Williams, associational secretary, treasurer/clerk.

Charles D. Earl is the director of missions and the Oct. 20-21, 1988, meeting will gather at Persia Church and North Fork Church in Rogersville.

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BIBLE BOOK SERIES
Lesson for Nov. 22

God's covenant, plan

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

Basic Passage: Genesis 15:1 to 17:27
Focal Passages: Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-2, 15; 17:10, 18-20

The promises of God have always seemed difficult even for the faithful to believe. In our generation, even those promises that are written in Scripture and have been proven for centuries seem hard to accept. I suppose everyone has his/her own reason for having those doubts.



Nail

Imagine what it must have been like for a man like Abraham. He had no Scripture to use as a reference point. He had no "great cloud of witness" to which he could go. He had only the voice of God in his soul. But that was enough.

The incredible promise

We noted in chapter 12 the promise God made to Abraham about the great nation that was to come from his family. At that time, Abraham accepted the promise. But some years later, he seemed to be having second thoughts.

God was not angered by Abraham's faltering. Neither is He angered by ours. Instead, God was quick to come to Abraham with assurance and strength.

The children Abraham had expected from God had not yet come. He seemed to think he had misunderstood God's promise. It was a staggering one anyway. Maybe that was too much to expect from God.

At that point God did something to strengthen Abraham's faith. We might have expected Him to go ahead and provide what He had promised. That is what we would like for ourselves. But God's purposes and plans are always brought about "in the fulness of time."

On this occasion God strengthened Abraham's faith in the promise by stating the promise again. That was all Abraham needed. A most marvelous response comes in 15:6. This is the essence of faith. It is what Paul described in Romans 4:17-21 and what the writer of Hebrews applauds in chapter 11.

You have perhaps heard or used the expression "cutting a deal." Well, at this point God and Abraham "cut a covenant." It was customary, when a covenant was sealed between two parties, that they divided an animal in two and walked between the pieces as though sealing it in blood.

Abraham was commanded to cut several animals in two and God alone passed between the pieces. This was God's promise of grace to Abraham.

Abraham's solution to God's problem

Abraham and Sarai were old. Sarai was long past her childbearing years. God's promise seemed to be little more than a dream if Sarai was to have been the mother of children. It was no longer possi-

ble for Sarai to bear children.

As we often do when we think about the incredible promises of God, Abraham figured out a way to solve God's problem and let Him off the hook. Surely God had not meant exactly what He said.

Sarai gave Hagar, her servant, to Abraham as a wife to bear him children. This was not uncommon in that day. It was linked to the belief that children were a sign of God's blessings. Hagar did conceive of Abraham and bore him a son named Ishmael.

As soon as the conception had taken place, Sarai and later Abraham realized it was less than the best solution to the problem.

God's more excellent way

Abraham initially pleaded with God to let Ishmael be the chosen one. He had no other offspring and he was getting older daily and beyond the time for becoming a father.

We begin to see at this point what many say is true about Scripture in general. God appeared to Abraham again in chapter 17 to reiterate the promise. If you will look back at the promise in chapter 12 and then in 15, you will see that the promise becomes more and more specific.

This may be related to Abraham's growing spiritual maturity which enabled him to understand the promise better. This is an example of what has been called progressive revelation.

Abraham is now led to understand that his offspring which is to be the beginning of a great nation will actually be a child of Sarah.

At first Abraham laughs at this notion. He may not be laughing at God so much as laughing at his own understanding of the revelation of God. It did seem rather incredible. Sarah was almost as old as he.

God was prepared to give him a sign of the promise. Before this God had made all the steps in the process. He had required almost nothing of Abraham other than his faith. Now it was time for Abraham to seal his side of the covenant.

God can do all sorts of things to His creation without their consent. But God will not do anything in our hearts without our full participation. Abraham was commanded to put his faith into practical terms through the rite of circumcision. He had to act on his faith.

Far too many "believers" want to keep their faith on a purely "spiritual" level. That means that they want to limit themselves to prayer and worship at church. They don't want to put their faith into practice and accept some of the pain of the cross.

To be a believer one must be willing to put into action what we have learned of God. We must be prepared to take up a cross of our own and do what is necessary to reach our dying world.

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES
Lesson for Nov. 22

Joseph as deliverer

By John N. Meadows, professor
Union University, Jackson

Basic Passages: Genesis 39:1 to 41:57; 47:13-27
Focal Passages: Genesis 41:38-44, 46-52

Joseph's life is a "rags-to-riches" story. But it is more than a story. It is record of God's sovereignty at work in the crucible of adversity.

It is a splendidly told account of a young man who faced reality and came out of some terribly trying "pit experiences" with his faith intact. It is a narrative about the providence of God that turned the evil of Joseph's brothers into the very means by which they, the elect family of Jacob, would escape the death by famine.



Meadows

It is also our story, reminding us that redemption from the beginning to the end is in God's hands.

Sold into Egyptian slavery, Joseph eventually became the overseer of the estate of his owner, Potiphar. His refusal to yield to the temptation of Potiphar's wife resulted in his being incarcerated, but even "in the clink" he refused to let his passions rule over him. He overcame bitterness and revenge and before long was running the jail.

While there he interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker. He asked the butler to speak a word on his behalf when he was restored to a position of service. The butler did remember Joseph — two years later — to the Pharaoh who desperately sought someone to decipher his doubly disturbing dreams.

Joseph interpreted the dreams as a prediction of seven years of agricultural plenty, followed by seven years of severe famine. Because of his insightful interpretation and sound administrative advice (all that from a "young" man!), Joseph was appointed "Director of Food Resources" in the Egyptian government, second only to Pharaoh in power.

In the Joseph story, God is very much in the background. There are very few direct references to His intervening activity compared to what we find in other Genesis records. When He is mentioned, however, the reference is theologically profound.

The polytheistic Pharaoh observed that Joseph possessed the "Spirit of God" (41:38). He is one of many in Scripture who said far more than he knew (cf. John 11:49-52). From the lips of a pagan came the truth that wisdom is a gift of God. His Old Testament insight points eventually to the New Testament recognition that excellence in Christian leadership is a gift of God and not a product of human ingenuity (James 1:5).

Note that Joseph was not perfect. Unlike Jacob and Isaac who married within the family, he accepted as wife the daughter of an Egyptian priest whose god was not the God of his fathers. Why is there no mention of an effort to contact his father?

Joseph named his first son "Manasseh," which derives from a verb that means "to forget" and is associated with acts of wilful neglect or desertion. He gave a godly rationale for his action, but it is probable that Joseph was more caught up in the way of Egypt than he realized or would admit.

Did he survive the onslaughts of hatred, sensuality, and imprisonment only to fall at the feet of success? Whatever the explanation, we know that God had not forgotten Jacob — and would see that Joseph remembered him as well.

Why didn't God keep Joseph out of prison? The answer can only be that He did not choose to work that way. That's the way we would have done it. Likewise, had it been left to us, we would have found some way other than Calvary whereby the world would be redeemed. It has been said that God does not allow His actions to be calculated by men, not even His own men. Nor is He a dotting deity of pious history who makes everything "sugar and spice." Indeed, it is altogether possible that a decision to obey God will put a person in the path of catastrophe!

How did it come about that a slave rose to be second to Pharaoh? For one thing, he was helped by a friend. That the friend was slow in responding may have been an advantage: Joseph was given time to confront the nemesis of purposelessness during those two years in prison.

Second, he was ready when opportunity came. He shaved and dressed before he faced Pharaoh. He would be his best — and would cleverly recommend himself to Pharaoh for the post of administrator (41:33).

Third, credit can go only to God. In the final analysis Joseph's exaltation (a more biblical term than "success") is the outworking of divine providence without which he would have been nothing more than a victim of parental zeal, youthful ego, and family enmity. It was a miracle of timing that brought Pharaoh and Joseph together just as famine coiled to strike Pharaoh's Egypt and Jacob's Canaan.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace. Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face.

Church calls Carlen

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A native of Illinois, Carlen served in pastorates in Ohio and Texas before moving to Tennessee.



Carlen was graduated from Criswell Bible College in Dallas, Texas. He has attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and is presently enrolled in the external studies program at Belmont College in Nashville.

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LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES
Lesson for Nov. 22

Fellowship in ministry

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

Basic Passages: Philippians 1:1-11; 2:19-30; 4:10, 14-23
Focal Passages: Philippians 1:3-8; 4:14-18

"The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat" is an immediately recognizable phrase. Used for years to introduce a popular television sports program, the slogan captures the polemic of emotions which frequently characterize athletic competition.

These feelings, however, are not unique to the world of sports. Regardless of your station in life, you likely have experienced "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat."

Many professing Christians live more in the valley of defeat than on the mountain of victory. They know too little about "victorious Christian living," the theme of this teaching unit.

Beginning with this week's lesson, consideration will be given over the next several weeks to four keys which combine to unlock the secret of victorious Christian living. They are (1) fellowship in a shared ministry; (2) sharing Christ in difficult circumstances; (3) growth in Christlikeness; and (4) experiencing joy and peace.

The remembrance of fellowship (1:3-5)

Three words are important in any discussion of the church: *ekklesia*, *apostello*, and *koinonia*. The first, *ekklesia*, means "called out," and underscores the divine origin of the church. The second, *apostello*, means "sent out," and refers to the mission of the church. The third, *koinonia*, often translated fellowship, emphasizes the special relationship that Christians have with one another. It was this kind of relationship that Paul and the Philippians shared.

The epistle to the Philippians pulsates with joy. In fact, it has been referred to as the epistle of joy, the word "joy" or one of its derivatives occurs 16 times in this brief letter of four chapters.

While the epistle opens with an identification of its author, Paul, and his colleague, Timothy, it immediately moves to an affirmation of prayer, characterized by gratitude and joy for the Philippians Christians.



Northcott

The relationship Paul had shared with the Christians in Philippi was amazingly positive. They had shared their lives with him, and had worked alongside him in spreading the gospel (v. 5).

The word translated "fellowship" (KJV) is translated in other versions as "participation" (NASV), "partnership" (RSV), and "helped" (TEV). A form of this word occurs several times throughout the letter. According to one commentator, the basic meaning of the word is "to have something in common with someone else or to share." Paul and the Philippians had much in common: one Lord, one Spirit, one salvation, and one ministry. In addition, Paul may have been thinking about the prayerful and financial support the Philippians had given him after he had departed Philippi (4:15).

The gospel of Christ is intended to be a shared ministry. What an impact our churches could make on their communities if we could internalize this wonderful truth. Too often, however, our Christianity is functionally segregated. It is something we do on a certain day at a certain place at a certain hour. How long, O God, before we realize that the call to faith is a call to action — a fellowship of ministry!

Source of fellowship (1:6-8)

In this section, Paul affirms his con-

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fidence in God's ability to finish the process of human redemption. One is reminded of the popular little song that declares, "He's still working on me to make me what I ought to be..."

One writer observes that "Paul was always careful to combine human perseverance with divine preservation." Salvation is not a one way street. The street may have been built by God, but God's grace and man's will must come together on the street in order for the journey to begin and continue.

The "day of Jesus Christ" (v. 6) is a reference to the Parousia, the return of Christ. Paul lived, as should we, in expectation of the imminent return of the Lord.

Verses 7 and 8 reflect Paul's tremendous affection (the word *bowels* in verse 8 refers to his deep feeling) for the Christians at Philippi. This fellowship had its source in their shared grace. When Christians are filled with the love of God, there is room in their hearts only for love for their brothers and sisters in Christ. It is "meet" (right) for us to think and feel that way (v. 7).

Support of fellowship (4:14-18)

The Philippians had continued to bless

Paul's life even after his departure from Philippi. Their blessings took the shape of compassionate concern (v. 14) expressed in tangential ways (vv. 15-16). "They helped him to carry his burden by means of their material gift, their fellow-feeling and intercession, their interest and their willingness to make sacrifices, and so they had a share in alleviating his hardship in captivity."

How different verses 17 and 18 sound from the message of popular television preachers. "Not that I seek for the gift," says Paul. Though the generosity of the Philippians had surely made life better for Paul, his primary interest was neither with his needs or the size of the gift. Rather, Paul realized that participation in mission support always enriches and enlarges the spiritual capacity of the giver (v. 17).

The gift from the Philippians, brought by Epaphroditus, fully completes the needs of Paul. Indeed, in Christ, Paul has everything he needs. However, the gift was welcomed and appreciated as an offering pleasing to God. Whenever we support people and programs that extend the ministry of Christ, God is pleased.

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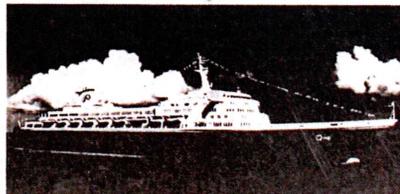
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Battle against obscenity winnable, experts say

By Tim Fields

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — A proliferation of hardcore and child pornography which is devastating lives and destroying families in America can be stopped by thorough education, careful planning, and aggressive citizen action, four anti-pornography experts say.

The anti-pornography activists addressed a two-day conference of 150 Southern Baptists from four states and other church and community leaders, sharing stories of human tragedy linked to the production and consumption of pornography.

The conference, sponsored by the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, also provided resources for par-

ticipants to launch anti-pornography campaigns in their local communities.

Alan Sears, who directed the United States Attorney General's Commission on Pornography which reported its findings in July 1986, told participants the commission found there was almost no comparison between the material found in pornography outlets in 1968 by a similar government commission and the much more explicit material sold today.

Sears, now legal counsel for Citizens for Decency through Law, said, "Pornography has grown from a relatively small industry selling hundreds of million of dollars worth of materials each year to a multibillion-dollar industry which now has outlets in nearly every community in the United States where it is not controlled by law enforcement.

"In 1968 and recently, studies show that

the largest category of consumers of all forms of pornography in America is 12- to 17-year-old children," he pointed out.

Sears said the pornographic materials which now fall into the hands of children are not the photos of pin-up girls that were occasionally seen on the walls of service station garages in 1968.

For example, he said, "There is now a whole series of best-selling video cassettes available in Mississippi and elsewhere that deals with the theme of incest. These videotapes, which are purchased or rented by parents and even teen-agers, deal with sexual relations between mother and son, brother and sister and extended family members including aunts, uncles, and grandparents.

"Other materials are even more explicit," Sears said. "I personally, with my staff, went into a store in Times Square,

and we counted 45 different types of animals which were shown engaged in sexual acts with human beings.

"We also analyzed materials in 16 pornography outlets in six major cities. The overwhelming themes of the material commonly available in America today are degradation and humiliation of women and children and the rape myth which says that every woman alive secretly harbors a desire to be taken by force," he said.

Victor Cline, a clinical psychologist with the University of Utah, said he is counseling with a growing number of children who are becoming pornography addicts by calling dial-a-porn 900 numbers from their own home telephones and listening to erotic pornographic recordings.

Cline said one teen-age boy, after listening to a dial-a-porn recording, went to a day-care center operated by his mother and raped a 4-year-old girl.

Rob Showers, executive director of the National Obscenity Enforcement Unit of the U.S. Department of Justice, told conference participants, "The fight against obscenity and child pornography includes two of the top seven criminal justice priorities of the United States Department of Justice as declared by the Attorney General last March."

Showers said this places pornography on the same level of concern as drugs and terrorism.

"One of the difficulties in fighting pornography is the relative lack of awareness among the general public and among law enforcement officials and prosecutors as to the gravity and harmful effects of this ever-increasing plague," he said.

Showers also cited a lack of understanding about current laws related to pornography. "The Supreme Court categorically stated that obscenity has never been protected by the First Amendment or any part of the Constitution and is not protected today.

"Yet, if you polled the citizens of this country, they would believe that it is protected. Even in law school for many years this myth was perpetuated," he said.

Showers said the legal definition of obscenity as defined in Miller vs. California came down to a three-point test. "That basically can be defined as patently offensive sexual conduct that substantially throughout the material lacks serious value and, therefore, violates community standards," he explained.

Showers called on conference participants to join with the Christian Life Commission and other organized groups to learn how to fight pornography.

"Citizens are the primary moving force in changing laws and attitudes in this country," he said.

"Citizens sent more than 200,000 letters to President Ronald Reagan on the pornography issue, which is more than on any other issue," Showers said. "This has had a lot to do with changes we are now seeing."

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