

# Baptist and Reflector

Vol. 153/No. 50/December 16, 1987

Newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention

## Board names committees, approves loan

By W. Fletcher Allen

When Tom Madden, executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, reported to the TBC Executive Board Thursday morning (Dec. 10), he had good news.

Madden told the 100-member group from churches all across Tennessee that Cooperative Program giving for the first ten days of December showed a dramatic increase over November. Last month's giving total of \$1,144,322.21 was a decrease of more than ten percent compared to 1986.

But — the good news is that as of that morning, December's giving was already more than November's total — a hefty \$1,433,935 with almost three weeks to go.

Briefly, other top items receiving attention and action from the Executive Board include:

- Approval of four recommendations from the Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee which appropriated funding for use in opposing lotteries, pari-mutuel betting, taxation of church property and other moral issues; expressed thanks to those who worked to defeat betting; to encourage legislators to consider repeal of pari-mutuel gambling laws; and to hire Bill Bates as interim consultant on public affairs.

### Michel to chair Search Committee

Executive Board action last week named a committee to seek a successor to Executive Secretary-Treasurer Tom Madden Tennessee Baptist Convention, and named Perry Michel as chairman.

Under TBC bylaws, the board's 19-member Administrative Committee conducts the search and presents a nominee. Considering that number unwieldy, the Administrative Committee selected nine of its members as the Search Committee.

Michel's committee requests that complete resumes of nominees be sent to the chairman at his Nashville church office:

Dr. Perry Michel  
Belmont Heights Baptist Church  
P. O. Box 121053  
Nashville, Tenn. 37212

Others on the committee include James Hutson, vice chairman, Rockwood; Raymond Boston, Dyersburg; Lon Shoopman, Madisonville; Murray Mathis, Murfreesboro; Calvin Harvell, Memphis; Michael Bennett, Nashville; Dennis Pulley, Ripley (ex-officio); Fred Isaacs, Cosby (ex-officio).

Criteria for a format in the selection process is being developed by the committee with input from the Executive Board. The committee suggests that nominations would be acceptable after the format is decided and made public.

- Golden State Missions Offering gifts up thus far, \$677,600.

- Approval of the entire slate of committee assignments from the Nominating Committee (listed elsewhere in this issue).

- Selection of Larry M. Kirk as program associate, Missions Department. Kirk is pastor of Liberty Grove Church, Madison-Chester Association.

- Heard and approved report from the Administrative Committee to sell the 128-acre Peytonsville Property, income to be used for the new building in Brentwood.

#### Search Committee named

- Heard a report from the Administrative Committee naming a search

### Evangelism meeting Jan. 18-19

## Conference emphasizes laity

The "Year of the Laity in Evangelism" is the theme of the 1988 Tennessee Baptist Evangelism Conference, which will be held Jan. 18-19 at Belmont Heights Church in Nashville and culminate in a final session especially for laypersons at the Grand Ole Opry House at Opryland.

Featured speakers include Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Ga.; Dale Cross, associational evangelism department director of the Home Mission Board; Jess Moody, pastor of First Church in Van Nuys, Calif.; and Billy Baskin, pastor of New Way Fellowship Church in Miami, Fla. Baskin will lead the Bible study sessions.

Gene Riley, music evangelist of Saginaw Valley Church in Saginaw, Mich., will present special music. Ken Story, pastor of Germantown Church in Germantown and president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; Tom Madden, executive secretary-treasurer of the TBC; Joe Stacker, church administration department director at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville; Doyle Pennington, a consultant with the Home Mission Board; Phil Hoskins, president of Fellowship of Vocational Evangelists of Tennessee, of Kingsport; and Charles Page, pastor of First Church in Nashville; also will speak.

The conference, which begins at 2 p.m. on Jan. 18, also will feature music by Frank Charton, former TBC church music department director, of Fayetteville, Ga.; Steve Shirk, music coordinator of the Fellowship of Vocational Evangelists of Tennessee, of Knoxville; Julian Suggs, TBC church music department director; and the Tennessee Baptist Chorale led by Suggs.

The Tuesday evening session at the Grand Ole Opry House will feature messages by Moody and Baskin; a testimony by Pennington, who was the

committee for a successor to Executive Secretary Madden, with Perry Michel, Nashville pastor, as chairman.

- Approved a motion from Task Force chairman James Porch to borrow \$2 million from Sovran Bank to help finance the new building construction.

- Heard reports from the Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee concerning the search for a public affairs consultant, and from the State Missions Committee on the search for a director of evangelism.

#### Warren recognized

- Recognized Charlie Warren, who is joining the Baptist Sunday School Board as Home Life editor after nine years as associate editor of the Baptist and Reflector.

- Heard an update from the Program, Personnel, and Planning Task Force Chairman Porch.

- Heard reports from seven standing committees, the three Tennessee Baptist colleges and school, WMU, Tennessee Baptist Foundation, and other work of the convention.

- Received a report that Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes now has title to Deer Lake, Nashville, for use as retirement housing.

- Heard a report that a 12-member committee has been named to study the feasibility of convention program for retarded adults.

- Approved a motion for a called

(Continued on page 3)

first Mission Service Corps volunteer to be assigned by the Home Mission Board; and special music by Riley and combined choirs from several area churches led by Suggs.

Lewis, HMB president since June 1, 1987, was president of Hannibal-

associational work in the Chicago and Greater Detroit areas. He has also served as a pastor and a public school teacher.

Having held the position of pastor of First Church in Van Nuys, Calif., since 1976, Moody founded and was president of Palm Beach Atlantic College in West Palm Beach, Fla., from 1968-72 and was



Baskin



Cross



Lewis



Moody

LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., from 1981-87. Before that he served as pastor and in other staff positions in churches and was director of religious education for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey from 1971-74.

Dale Cross has served the HMB since 1977. Prior to that he directed Baptist

professor of preaching there until 1976. He also served as a pastor and evangelist.

Billy Baskin has been pastor of three churches, two of which he founded.

During the conference, which is sponsored by the TBC evangelism department, a nursery will be provided for children five years old and younger.

### Committee seeks suggestions

A new committee assigned the responsibility of seeking a director for the Tennessee Baptist Convention evangelism department met Dec. 10 and approved the following request:

"The TBC Evangelism Department Director Search Committee requests the prayers and input of any interested Tennessee Baptist. Please send, as soon as possible, personal statements and resumes to chairman J. Arnold Porter, 100 Murphree Ave., Centerville, TN 37033, or Tom Madden, TBC executive secretary-treasurer."

Porter requested anyone wishing to make a recommendation to send the information by Jan. 15.

Members of the search committee are Porter, Ray Fowler, M. B. Howard, Robert Leonard, James McCluskey, Fred Pinckard, and Emerson Wiles Jr. Hershel Chevallier, chairman of the state missions committee, is an ex-officio member.

## Editorials

# A good way to maximize evangelism

Much more important than the beauty and treachery of snow that has become an accepted part of Tennessee Baptists' Evangelism Conference is the 1988 Conference theme.

Details of the January 18-19 meeting are on page one, this issue of the *Baptist and Reflector*. Jokes and tall tales abound concerning snow, ice, and slippery roads when the Evangelism Conference is discussed.

But in a month, about two thousand Tennessee Baptists, mostly pastors, will gather to listen and discuss evangelism. There will be a few laymen and perhaps visitors from out-of-state present as we meet with Belmont Heights Church in Nashville.

Thoughts and prayers will be turned to evangelism. Specifically we will major on "Year of the Laity in Evangelism."

Tennessee Baptist Convention's Evangelism Department has secured some of the best speakers and leaders for the meeting. They will be well-equipped and adept in addressing the topic. They will bring soul-stirring and well-prepared messages. They will present soul-searching options.

Larry Lewis, Dale Cross, Ken Story, Tom Madden, Joe Stacker, Doyle Pennington, and Jess Moody are known well for their involvement in evangelism. Others, perhaps not so well known but just as gifted, will pour out their hearts. The music will touch us deeply.

As much as we would like to identify this conference as a fellowship occasion — by our own actions — we should bury that temptation. Fellowship is an integral part of any Baptist gathering, but in this meeting, soul winning is foremost.

Who are the lost people of this world? Where are they? Tennessee? How do they act? How do they appear to us? When will they be called from among us? How may I help — no, no, how MUST I help, be involved?

For this one meeting, every person should be present with a sense of awe, ready to be inspired, to be challenged, to be accused of lackadaisical methodology in witnessing, to be humbled — and

to be willing to get up from our knees and go to the lost people (they have names and places).

The temptation for many is to be hesitant at the door. Even if we can bring ourselves to the meeting place for prayer and assignments, we may still "dread" the going out, the knocking on the door, the fear of not knowing what to say or do when someone answers.

We need not only courage, but encouragement. No doubt, the speakers at the meeting in January will tell their listeners HOW to witness, to evangelize.

The right people must be there. There will be humor, there will be joy — but there has to be in

our desires — messages sent from God to give us the divine imperative: GO!

The challenge of witness and evangelization is not only to learn how to knock on the door with confidence, but to know how to live along the way.

We will get that knowledge at the Evangelism Conference in January if we are there, and if we listen with itching ears.

The best Christmas present Tennessee Baptist pastors can give their people is an irrefutable reason and challenge to witness and evangelize. A giant step toward that end is participation in the Evangelism Conference. — WFA

## Stability in 'laboring together'

A week prior to the Executive Board meetings last week, the Tennessee Baptist Convention had some orientation sessions for new trustees of convention agencies and institutions.

Special emphasis was put on acquainting the "rookies" with who we are and what we are about as Southern Baptists in Tennessee. They were introduced to the participatory way we do things as Baptists. They learned that they, the trustees, indeed have authority and responsibility in our process.

In a message about relationships, Tennessee Baptist Convention President Ken Story reminded them that diversity can become divisiveness if we permit it. "Our strength comes in the power of the Spirit of God," he said. "We must not be overcome by our attitude of 'my-ness.' We must

not be too concerned about 'my own little corner.'

"Laborers together" implies team work, he told the group. "We are laborers together with God," the convention president said, but the program is God's.

Following President Story, James L. Sullivan, authority on Baptist polity and retired president of the Sunday School Board, noted that Southern Baptists are the "miracle of the religious world — because of their continued warmth and stability. We must never lose either."

Trustees felt that warmth and stability, that power of God in the Spirit, that selflessness and harmony, when the meeting was over. When these attitudes carry over into daily living and care of duty, we have something worth keeping and using. No doubt, trustees at previous orientations had the same kind of feelings. — WFA

## Leading pastors urge others to set example in evangelism

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA — Pastors of 70 churches which led the Southern Baptist Convention in baptisms last year urged pastors and denominational executives to become role models in personal evangelism for Baptist laypeople to follow.

The 70 pastors participated in a five-hour "think tank" on evangelism sponsored by the personal evangelism department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Three Tennessee Baptist pastors participated in the think tank. They were Paul Durham of Radnor Church, Nashville; A. Ray Newcomb of First Church, Millington; and John L. Shepherd of Bethlehem Church, Oneida.

"We're here to listen to you, to get your advice," said Howard Ramsey, director of personal evangelism for the Atlanta-based Home Mission Board. "We want your ideas on how other churches in the denomination can do what your churches have done — baptize more than 100 persons per year," Ramsey said.

The 70 pastors invited to the "think tank" averaged baptizing 180 new converts per church, Ramsey said. They were representative of 218 churches in the denomination which reported 39,286 baptisms last year.

In contrast to the churches invited to the think tank, the vast majority of churches in the denomination are not as effective in evangelism, Ramsey said. Last year, 35,359 churches baptized 262,107 persons, an average of 7.69 converts per church, compared to the 180 per

church averaged by participants in the think tank, Ramsey said.

To give the Home Mission Board advice and suggestions on how other churches can be motivated and led to increase their level of baptisms to more than 100 per church, the 70 pastors divided into nine small groups, spending four hours each brainstorming ideas on what could be done.

During the report time from the small groups, the most often-repeated idea was that pastors and Baptist leaders must become role models who set examples for lay people in the churches to follow.

"The pastor is the key to winning people to Christ, and he must be involved personally in soul winning himself," said Joe Rich, pastor of Bayshore Church, LaPorte, Texas.

Shepherd, from Oneida, said the associational director of missions needs to play a more active role in providing leadership training to teach lay people on the local level to be more effective in personal evangelism. Shepherd suggested that their job titles be changed to "associational director of missions and evangelism" to indicate the priority of evangelism.

Other suggestions offered included the need for denominational leaders to be role models, better methods for discovering and classifying prospects for evangelism, more recognition of churches that are doing a good job in evangelism, better reporting of baptisms by state Baptist papers, and state evangelism directors who devote full time to evangelism.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Fred Isaacs, chairman; Ray Fowler, vice chairman; Paul Barkley, Michael Bennett, Raymond Boston, Hershel Chevallier, Calvin Harvell, James Hutson, Margaret Kimbrough, Mike Madewell, Murray Mathis, Calvin Metcalf, Perry Michael, James Porch, Dennis Pulley, James Robertson, Lon Shoopman Jr., Fred Steelman, Ken Story.

# FMB appoints couples with Tennessee ties

RICHMOND, VA. — Four couples with Tennessee connections were among 30 persons named missionaries and missionary associates by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Dec. 8 at Mount Vernon Church in Richmond.

Michael and Pamela Owen Osment will live in Taiwan, where he will start and develop churches and they will be involved in outreach ministries.

Osment is pastor of a church in Raeford, N.C. He considers Temple Church in Memphis his home church.

Osment was graduated from Capital University in Columbus in Ohio, Ohio State University in Columbus, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

He has been a purchasing director for companies in Dallas, Texas, and Memphis. He also has been youth minister at Temple Church in Memphis, and activities director at a church in Selma, N.C.

Pamela Osment also considers Temple Church her home church. She has been a clerk/typist in Memphis, secretary at Temple Church and churches in Franklinton and Smithfield, N.C., and choir director at a church in Selma, N.C.

The Osments have two children. Percy and Rhonda McCord Johnson will live in Israel, where he will be starting and developing churches and they will lead a variety of outreach ministries.



The Osments



The Johnsons



The Nickersons



The Browns

Johnson is pastor of a Spanish mission and minister to international people at a Baton Rouge, La., church.

He graduated from Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru) in Lima, the Universidad Nacional Agraria (the National University of Agriculture) in La Molina, Lima; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He has been a seminary-sponsored summer missionary in Ohio and an assistant to the minister of internationals at South Main Church in Houston, Texas.

Rhonda McCord Johnson is a graduate of Louisiana College in Pineville. Mrs. Johnson has been a secretary in Baton Rouge and a librarian assistant in Alexandria, La. Recently she was a library associate at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

The Johnsons have two children. Victor and Janice Yawn Nickerson will live in Equatorial Brazil, where he will be starting and developing churches and they will be involved in outreach ministries.

Nickerson is a pastor and an insurance agent in Gainesville, Fla. He is a graduate of St. Johns River Community College in Palatka, Fla., the University of Florida in Gainesville, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Nickerson also has been pastor in Worthington Springs, Fla.

Janice Yawn Nickerson attended Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City. She graduated from the University of Florida, and Southeastern seminary. She was an insurance agent and office manager in Gainesville.

The Nickersons have two children.

Donald and Elsie Word Brown were appointed as missionary associates, which is a four-year appointment for persons between 35 and 60 years old. They will serve in Israel, where he will be pastor of an English-language church and they will be involved in outreach ministries.

Brown is pastor of a church in Downsville, La.

He attended Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. He was graduated from East Texas Baptist College in Marshall, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has been pastor of churches in Converse, Coushatta, and Thibodaux, La.

Elsie Word Brown is a graduate of Clarke College, a division of Mississippi College in Newton.

Mrs. Brown was a secretary at Mid-America seminary when it was located in Little Rock, Ark.; a pastor's secretary in Jackson, Miss.; a church financial secretary in Biloxi, Miss.; and a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board summer missionary in Oklahoma.

The Browns have two grown daughters by his late first wife, Margaret Smith Brown.

The Osments and the Browns will attend a seven-week orientation in Rockville, Va., beginning in March. The Johnsons and the Nickersons will begin their orientation in January.

## Executive Board names committees ...

(Continued from page 1) meeting in 30 days to approve a contract for the new building and to hold groundbreaking (provided no delays in securing proper permits and clearance).

### Kirk selected

Larry Kirk, the newly-elected associate in the Missions Department, has been assigned to church extension work, and will work also with associations. He is the first TBC associate to have new church work as a specific assignment.

Since an appraisal some months ago, land prices in the Peytonsville farm area have slumped somewhat, but "we should still get a good deal," according to the Administrative Committee. The committee authorized Executive Secretary Madden to handle the sale.

Income from the land sale will be used along with the \$2 million loan from Sovran Bank to construct the new building which has been approved by the convention. The loan is an unsecured line of credit for the construction project. Money for the project will be borrowed from the \$2 million as needed, and interest will be paid only on the amount borrowed.

### Prime interest rates

Interest will amount to one-half percent

below the Federal Reserve Board prime rate. The loan will be repaid in ten years. The construction project, developed by the convention-assigned Task Force, has convention and Executive Board approval. It provides a conference center and new building for agencies and WMU, and renovation of the present Executive Board Building on Franklin Road in Brentwood.

To assist Perry Michel on the Search Committee for a successor to Madden, the Administrative Committee named James Hutson, pastor of First Church, Rockwood, vice chairman. Others on the committee include Raymond Boston, pastor of First Church, Dyersburg; Lon Shoopman, pastor of First Church, Madisonville; Murray Mathis, pastor of Third Church, Murfreesboro; Calvin Harvell, pastor of Eudora Church, Memphis;

Michael Bennett, attorney from Nashville; with Dennis Pulley and Fred Isaacs, ex-officio and voting members. Pulley is pastor of First Church, Ripley, and president of the Executive Board. Isaacs, a layman from Cosby, is chairman of the Administrative Committee, which has the assigned responsibility to act as a search committee.

### Format to be developed

The Search Committee will begin work by determining a format for the process. First step, according to Chairman Michel, is to send questionnaires to Executive Board members for ideas on the format.

The committee asks that nominations in the form of resumes be sent to Michel at his church office. The committee will be ready to receive nominations in the near future. The address: Dr. Perry Michel, Belmont Heights Baptist Church, P.O. Box 121053, Nashville, 37212.

A second special committee named by Isaacs will be responsible for honoring Madden upon retirement in April 1989. Heading the committee is Ken Story, pastor of Germantown Church, Germantown, and TBC president. Other members

are Fred Steelman, Red Bank Church, Chattanooga; James Porch, First Church, Tullahoma; James Robertson, Sharon Church, Knoxville; Calvin McCall, Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville, all pastors; and Margaret Kimbrough, Nashville.

Porch, chairman of the Task Force, reported that bids for construction of the new building will be opened at the Brentwood office on Jan. 14. The bids will be studied by a sub-committee and architects. He said the entire Task Force will be assembled on Jan. 15 to approve a contractor.

If these meetings come as planned, the Executive Board will come together to award the contract. Notice was given for the called session at the Dec. 11 meeting. A 30-day notice is required by convention bylaws.

### Evangelism director search

In another matter, Hershel Chevallier, chairman of the State Missions Committee, named a Search Committee to secure a director of evangelism. Arnold Porter, pastor of First Church, Centerville, is chairman. Others include Robert Leonard, Nashville layman, vice chairman; James McCluskey, pastor of Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville; Fred Pinchard, Cleveland layman; M. B. Howard, Covington layman; Emerson Wiles Jr., pastor of First Church, Fayetteville; and Ray Fowler, pastor of Highland Heights Church, Memphis.

This committee will seek a successor to Forrest Watkins who retired. Another State Missions search committee presented a nominee to the Executive Board at its September meeting, and Phil Roberts was approved on a split vote with 18 board members abstaining. After accepting the position from his home in Europe where he was working and studying, Roberts later declined because of the time frame for beginning the TBC work.

In other action, the Executive Board heard a report from Jerry Oakley, immediate past TBC president on appointments he had made for a committee on

retarded adult work feasibility, as directed by action at the Annual Meeting.

Oakley said, "This committee must advise the convention as to the direction we should take in this area of concern." Richard Patton, pastor of First Church, Portland, is chairman.

Others include Ted Huckaby, Knoxville; Gary Carver, Chattanooga; Linda Maynard, Sparta; David Tydings, Bluff City; Jack May, Memphis; Libby Laida, Clarksville; M. B. Howard, Covington; Frank Kemper, Kenton; Nancy Swegan, Murfreesboro; John Compton, Mt. Carmel; and Matt Tomlin, Jackson.

The Executive Board also recognized Virginia Todd on retirement after almost 27 years with the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home, noted growth at TBCH and Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes, and Carson-Newman College, Union University, Belmont College, Harrison-Chilhowee School; programs of the hospitals; and a report from Fred Steelman, chairman of a committee to find a public affairs consultant — Steelman said his committee hoped to have a nominee to present at the May 10 Executive Board meeting.

## C-N Eagles reach national finals

Tennessee Baptists have a team in a national football championship game — again.

The Carson-Newman Eagles earned the right to play in the finals Saturday at Lawton, Okla., by upsetting Mesa College last Saturday 21-7.

Carson-Newman will play against Cameron University which won over Pittsburg State (Kansas), 20-10, also in an upset. The teams will play for the NAIA Division I title. Last year, the same two played, with the Eagles winning the championship 17-0.

Information about the title game Saturday is available at Carson-Newman.



**CHAIRMAN** — Perry Michel, pastor of Belmont Heights Church and board member, speaks to board on work of Search Committee he will chair.

# 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.

Readers are reminded that letters about Christmas are encouraged. The letters portion of the **Baptist and Reflector** for Dec. 23 will be Christmas letters. Please write your letter about the meaning of Christmas — perhaps touching on a personal happening. Letters should be shorter than usual, limited to 150 words on: "Christmas is . . ." We will use as many as possible. — Editor

## Gratitude expressed

We would like to use this forum as a means to express our deepest gratitude to Tennessee Baptists for their prayerful concern for us and our son, Kerry, since his accident in June.

We have been overwhelmed by the love shown through cards, letters, visits, and phone calls. The multitude of expressions reminded us over and over that God's people were praying and that God has promised to honor the prayers of His people, and He has.

Six months after the accident, Kerry is walking with the aid of a cane, and so many of the serious complications that could have occurred did not. We are grateful for the skilled care of the medical

**praise, honor, and glory for the recovery that has taken place.**

Of course, there is still healing that needs to come. We covet your continual prayers for Kerry that God will continue to bring restoration to his body.

God promised that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." We claimed and still claim this promise — even the effectual fervent prayer of hundreds of Tennessee Baptists!

Thank you for ministering to us during our time of need.

Sincerely,  
Becky and Fred Steelman  
4000 Dayton Blvd.  
Chattanooga 37415

## Cooperative Program helps

I am thankful because of the Cooperative Program! Our congregation is located in a needy area, characterized by unemployment, poverty, crime, homelessness, and drugs. We recently applied for \$4,000 in funds from the Home Mission Board to support East Nashville Cooperative Ministry, which helps alleviate some of this community's problems. With Christian sensitivity, they answered our request.

Daniel J. Martin  
700 Russell St.  
Nashville 37206

## God is omnipotent

I awoke suddenly a recent morning — with what may seem an unbiblical theological thought. (Re: Dec. 2 letter with name withheld).

I had been wondering how I could share with Baptist and Reflector friends the joy I have found in sharing Christ's love with Internationals (Buddhists, Christians, atheists, Confucianists) in a conversational English class I'm teaching at my church. We have been having the Christ-

mas story as our devotional before we begin.

On public television I heard and saw a most beautiful presentation of the old, traditional Christmas carols and the Hallelujah Chorus, presented by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir! And I thought — "If my International friends heard my Jesus sung about in this way, what a beautiful reinforcement to the story of the birth of my Savior!"

Now I know what Jesus meant in Mark 9:38-40 and Luke 9:49-50. I may not always understand all the mysteries of God, but He is omnipotent! He works in miraculous ways as evidenced by Jesus' virgin birth.

Dorothy H. Forlidas  
1303 Shawhan Terrace  
Chattanooga 37411

## Wake up spiritually

I have read with amusement and disgust the letters to the editor over the past few months. I have refrained from responding for a number of reasons, but now I feel that I must.

Dear Christian brothers and sisters, we don't have time to bicker and argue over trivial political discrepancies! We have a specific task to do. We must quit telling the Holy Ghost what He is doing, and allow Him to work in us and through us.

As Romans 13:11 says, ". . . it's high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." We need to WAKE UP spiritually, get on fire for God, reach those lost souls around us, and stop this childish bickering among the brethren! Only then will we be pleasing in the sight of our God. As we stand <sup>right now</sup>, we are nothing more than Satan's instruments of discord. Let's declare war on Satan instead of each other!

Mike Bohner  
Minister of Music/Youth  
North Athens Baptist Church  
P.O. Box 408  
Athens 37303

## He's not crying

The Nov. 25 issue seemed to be filled with the liberal side, so I'll add some balance.

I, for one, will not cry over recent personnel departures from Southeastern Seminary. There are hues and cries about freedom and politics, but not a word about ethics and integrity.

I find a total lack of integrity that our seminary leaders would run around the country over the last few years trying to convince the average layman that they really did believe the Bible, but just didn't like that code word "inerrancy." They loudly claimed that there was not a theological problem, but a political problem.

The real truth comes out now that a new set of trustees are on the board. It is finally admitted that there is not a single faculty member at Southeastern that believe the Bible is without error. Almost the same situation is true at the other seminaries. Where is all this fairness, balance, and diversity they all talk about?

The scenario here in the Southern Baptist Convention was on the same script as 70 years ago in the Northern Baptist Convention. The seminaries quietly go liberal and lack the integrity to tell the bill paying layman about it. When it has gotten so bad that Joe Layman finds out about it, the seminaries have turned out enough pastors that they have a majority vote at convention meetings. So the only final recourse is for the real Bible believers to leave the brick, mortar, and libraries to

the "certain men who crept in unawares" (Jude 4).

It will be a blessing, if those who have changed their minds about the Bible and its teachings are the ones who have to start over, instead of living off the previous donations of those they have excluded in the past.

Joel Johnson  
Rt. 3  
Jonesboro 37659

You seem to infer that seminary presidents claim to believe in the Bible when they really don't. Such a charge is ludicrous, harmful to the reputation of Christian leaders, and demands absolute proof. — Editor.



**RESOLUTION OF THANKS** — During the Dec. 11 session of the TBC Executive Board in Brentwood, Calvin Metcalf (right), a member of the administrative committee and pastor of Central Church, Fountain City, in Knoxville, read a resolution which was passed thanking Charlie Warren, who is leaving his post as associate editor of the **Baptist and Reflector** after eight years to take the editorship of the Baptist Sunday School Board's **Home Life** publication.

## Union honors six during homecoming

**JACKSON** — The Union University Alumni Association, during its annual homecoming awards luncheon Dec. 5, honored six people for their service to the college.

The Distinguished Alumnus Award, based on distinction in one's profession and for bringing honor and recognition to Union University, was shared by four alumni who each serve as a college president: Bob R. Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University; Thomas F. Boyd, president of Lambuth College; William E. Troutt, president of Belmont College; and Russell R. Tuck Jr., president of California Baptist College.

The Distinguished Service Award, based on service to Union University by an alumnus of the institution, went to Robert E. Cloar, a resident of Dyersburg, who attended Union in 1929.

An active member of First Church of Dyersburg, Cloar has been a supporter of Union University for many years. He is one of the major contributors to the new School of Business Administration on the Union campus.

The Distinguished Faculty/Staff Award, presented for long and meritorious service to the college by an employee, was awarded to Mrs. Rose Melton, who has served Union University for 20 years. She has performed duties as national defense student loan bookkeeper, library secretary, business office secretary, and secretary to the dean of religious affairs.

## Personal Perspective



By Tom Madden  
TBC Executive  
Secretary-Treasurer

*"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:5,6).*

John the beloved was thought to have been more than 90 years of age when he was given the Revelation. He was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos. He had served God for some 70 years. He could have been bitter. He could have spent his time weeping. Instead, he burst out in this expression of praise.

Among the thoughts included in this verse are:

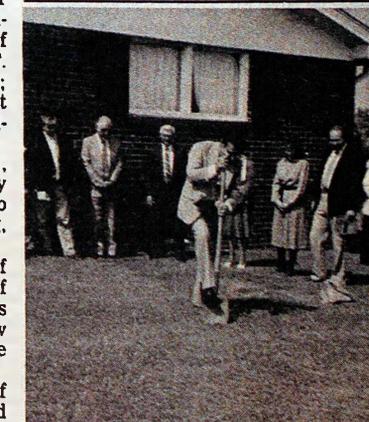
**Liberation** — He states that God keeps on loving him and had washed, or loosed him, from his sins. The word "wash" has in it the meaning that it frees from guilt. Another way to put it would be that our Savior, through His continuing love has liberated us from our sins in His own blood. John indicates God's love for us by the extent of His sacrifice.

Not only has God liberated us but He has elevated us to kingship, "hath made us kings and priests." A king rules. We are masters of circumstances, passion, and pride. We are to have dominion over self. Paul is one example of this kingship when he writes from a dark, cold prison cell, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice."

Because of liberation and elevation, we come to express our adoration. "Unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." I have often wondered that if what the angels chorused at our Lord's birth, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the Highest" may be but a slight glimpse of that large heavenly chorus, where 10,000 times 10,000, and thousands and thousands sing in the land beyond as they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, the song of deliverance and redemption.

The climax of liberation, elevation, and adoration is in humble service. "Unto Him . . . be dominion."

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and let me do all I can to help bring it to pass.



**NEW BUILDING** — Rivergate First Church in Hendersonville, recently broke ground for a new 10,000-square-foot building. Facilities will include a 450-seat auditorium, Sunday School rooms, a fellowship hall, and kitchen. Lloyd Bardowell is the pastor.

# Subcommittee begins study of public affairs funding

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE (BP) — A seven-member subcommittee of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee began a study of convention funding of public affairs during a two-day meeting in early December.

The subcommittee, according to chairman Scott Humphrey of Alexandria, Va., has a "very narrow assignment: To study the details of the funding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Southern Baptist Convention Public Affairs Committee."

The subcommittee was appointed during the September meeting of the Executive Committee, following a request of the newly reconstituted Public Affairs Committee for clarification of which organization is to receive public affairs funds, the BJCPA, a coalition of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada, or the PAC, an 18-member standing committee through which the SBC relates to the BJCPA.

The question of who oversees the funding came about after messengers to the 1987 annual meeting of the SBC adopted the report of a fact-finding subcommittee that revised the bylaw governing the membership of the PAC, and suggested the group work in conjunction with the BJCPA but also assume added responsibilities.

The SBC action did not address the

question of which group gets the funding, but at the first meeting of the newly reconstituted PAC, questions arose as to who has control of nearly \$475,000 allocated for the work of public affairs in the convention.

Since the September meeting of the Executive Committee, when the study to clarify the funding dilemma was ordered, the PAC met again. In October, the PAC voted 8-4 to recommend that the SBC "dissolve its institutional and financial ties" with the BJCPA and requested \$485,200 "to fund and staff" the PAC "as an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention ... beginning Oct. 1, 1988 ..."

Humphrey said the study subcommittee's responsibility is "to clarify the funding process in light of the action taken by the convention." During its early December meeting, the study group concentrated on the action of the annual meeting rather than focusing on the subsequent events.

Humphrey said a key point in the report of the fact-finding subcommittee — which was adopted at the 1987 annual meeting — is the wording of a paragraph in which the Executive Committee recommended "that the Southern Baptist Convention continue to relate to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs through the Public Affairs Committee ... and that this relationship be in keeping with the bylaws of the Southern Baptist Conven-

tion and the program statement of the PAC as adopted by the SBC."

The Virginia layman said the key words being studied by the funding subcommittee are "continue" to relate to the BJCPA, but "through" the PAC.

The subcommittee spent a great deal of its December meeting studying the specific actions of the fact-finding committee, watching a videotape of the presentation during the St. Louis convention, and reading minutes of the two

meetings of the PAC, seeking to determine the intent of the fact-finding subcommittee and the convention in regard to funding.

Humphrey said the funding subcommittee hopes to come to some conclusions about the matter and to formulate a recommendation to be presented to the program and budget subcommittee of the Executive Committee when it meets to conduct budget hearings in late January 1988.

## Other Executive Board action

# Committee acts on moral issues

The Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee took strong action Dec. 10 on several moral issues.

The committee, a standing committee of the Executive Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention, passed four recommendations which were approved by the Executive Committee in the two-day meeting.

Chaired by Michael Bennett, Nashville attorney and member of the Executive Board, the committee made these recommendations:

- That the Executive Board be requested to appropriate up to \$25,000 from the General Fund for the use of this committee to fund its efforts in regard to pari-mutuel gambling, lotteries, the taxation of church property, political action committees, DUI legislation, and other issues of concern to Tennessee Baptists.

- That the Executive Board express appreciation and gratitude to pastors and lay people of all churches throughout the state who have worked tirelessly over the

last several months in efforts to defeat pari-mutuel gambling in counties and cities throughout Tennessee.

- That the Executive Board send letters to each Senator and member of the House of Representatives asking them to consider legislation repealing pari-mutuel gambling.

- That the Executive Board renew its agreement with Bill Bates to act as interim consultant on public affairs issues, until such time as the search for a permanent consultant is completed.

All four items were approved by the board as presented by the 16-member committee.

It was noted at the PACL Committee meeting that a bill has been drafted in the Tennessee legislature for the repeal of pari-mutuel gambling, and should be filed in January. It was also reported that the State Attorney General has ruled lotteries to clear the way for approval.

# Williamson County defeats betting by 68 percent of vote

By Fletcher Allen

Williamson Countians pushed their anti-betting vote last week almost to the 71 percent "no" margin garnered earlier by their neighbors in Rutherford County.

When the tallies were made Dec. 8, Williamson became the third county in Middle Tennessee to vote against pari-mutuel horse track racing by a margin of 68 to 32 percent "no."

This means that the issue of pari-mutuel betting at horse tracks cannot be put on a Williamson County ballot again for at least four years, according to Tennessee law. Rutherford County voters turned down pari-mutuel betting 71-29 percent on Nov. 17.

Earlier, Davidson County (which includes Metropolitan Nashville) voted against betting by a narrow margin. There is some talk already from racing and betting supporters to circulate petitions for a second referendum in Davidson County early next year.

The only place where gambling has won is Shelby County (Memphis), where the referendum supported pari-mutuel betting at the tracks by more than 60 percent. After that Oct. 8 vote, Gov. Ned McWherter appointed a Tennessee racing commission to supervise race track operations that include pari-mutuel betting.

The Memphis area thus becomes the only place in Tennessee thus far where pari-mutuel betting is legal — and there can be only one such horse track in each Grand Division.

Williamson County defeated the betting issue by more than two to one. The final vote was 9641 against betting, and 4519 in favor. Thirty-six percent of the registered Williamson voters participated.

A concerted campaign by opponents to gambling, including Baptist churches, helped defeat the proposal. Leaders of that group, Williamson Countians Against Gambling, said that it is apparent that

Middle Tennessee people do not want race track gambling.

Proponents of the referendum failed to separate the issue of horses and gambling. Many opponents said they "loved horses" but that gambling, not horses, was the issue.

Frank Ingraham, Baptist attorney and a leader of WCAG, said he was not surprised in the victory over pari-mutuel betting. "We have demonstrated what the people of Williamson County really want," he said, "a county where homes are important and our traditional values are upheld."

Ingraham said that WCAG would probably continue to be active in opposing pari-mutuel betting. He said the group planned to stay mobilized.

While Rutherford County churches were highly organized in opposing the gambling issue, Williamson County had diverse participation. Many churches were involved — but were not closely organized.

One of the rallying points used by WCAG was that no location had been indicated for a track, and no developer had been named. This mean, they said, that voters would not know where a track would be built — nor who would build it. Proponents said both items would be decided by the new Tennessee Racing Commission.

In a separate action, the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention meeting Dec. 10-11 voted to register gratitude to churches and pastors who had worked to defeat pari-mutuel betting referendums, and to urge all Tennessee state legislators to support a move to repeal the law enacted earlier this year allowing county and metropolitan referendums upon petition.

Several legislators have indicated such a move is likely, but probably would not affect Shelby County where it was approved.

# 1988 Venezuela volunteer needs

1988 Dates	Specific tasks	Needed
January-May	Construction teams, churches, camp, seminary	7 to 10 per team for 12 days
Jan. or Feb.	Construction, Campo Carabobo, Valencia	2 block-layers and 6 assistants
Feb. 5-16	Music workshops	
Feb. 8-19	Construction of cabins, Campo Carabobo, Valencia	8-12
Feb. 29-March 11	Construction of cabins, Campo Carabobo, Valencia	8-12
March 15	Stewardship workshops	3
March 21-April 1	Construction of cabins, caretaker house, Campo Carabobo, Valencia	8-12
April 4-15	Church construction, Naguanagua	8-10
Mid-1988	Stewardship workshops	3
July 23-Aug. 1	Tennessee/Venezuela Health Care Project, Valencia and Maracaibo	
Aug. 19-30	Partnership Evangelism Crusade	60 teams (3 or 4 each)
Sept. 16-27	Venezuela volunteers leading four day meetings in 30 Tennessee Baptist churches	15 teams (1 bilingual and 2 Spanish-speaking per team)
Sept. 28	Stewardship training retreat, Los Teques	2
October	Continuing Witnessing Training Workshops	3
Oct.-Dec.	Construction teams	7-10 per team
Nov. 15-17	Venezuela leadership attending Tennessee Baptist Convention, Jackson	

# Successor remembers BSSB head T. L. Holcomb

By James L. Sullivan

NASHVILLE — As much as T. L. Holcomb appreciated the Sunday School Board, he never aspired to be its head.

He was first and foremost a pastor, and even after 18 years (1935-53) at the board, he still yearned for the pastorate. He felt that when one stepped out of the pastor's role to take any other position, regardless of what it was, he was stepping down.

Holcomb's interest through the years in the board's work led him to election as a trustee from Oklahoma, where he was pastor of First Church, Oklahoma City.

In 1934, the move was on to select the successor to the aging I. J. Van Ness, who had led the board since 1916. Two names of possible leaders emerged. Supporters for each candidate stood firm, and they were about evenly divided. Debates, and even arguments, continued. But the impasse seemingly could not be broken.

Holcomb did not get to attend that important trustee meeting in March 1935 in Nashville. He had started out by car, with his wife driving. He never drove a car himself. In Memphis, they had a wreck, and Mrs. Holcomb was hospitalized because of injuries. Holcomb, of course, remained with her.

Without his knowledge or consent, another board member proposed

Holcomb's name as a "dark horse" in an effort to break the impasse. His approach worked. Holcomb was elected, and the presiding officer sent a wire to notify him.

Holcomb was flabbergasted. In fact, he was so shocked by the action of the board that he turned to a nurse to say, "Roll in another bed for me. I'm in worse shape than my wife is."

He had never dreamed of such a responsibility, but he was a godsend for the hour. At age 52, he was at the right age, with experiences in churches both East and West, and he was acceptable to persons in both geographic areas. He was inclined at first to reject the offer, but seeing the strategic denominational responsibility placed on him and after much prayer, he could not decline.

The problems Holcomb faced immediately were staggering. The South, where major Southern Baptist strength had been from the first, was changing from an agricultural to an industrial base. The transition was shattering. Community schools were being changed into consolidated ones, breaking up thousands of community centers where Baptist churches were located.

The Great Depression was still in full swing, and unemployment was rampant. All over America, Ph.D.'s were driving

taxicabs for want of better employment. Banks had been closed with assets frozen until the government could control the financial condition of the country.

Then World War II began and with it came the disbursement of choice Baptist youth to the defense of the country. Technically trained board employees were conscripted, and work had to be carried on in certain areas with inexperienced workers. In addition, paper shortages were so acute that some publications had to be issued without cover jackets. But Holcomb's health was good, his faith unflinching, and his patience enduring. Baptist work under his leadership grew rapidly, against all odds and reason.

It was Holcomb's humor which saw him through the most tense moments. He was a person who could laugh at himself, and he did so often.

I remember his telling about the time he went to speak at the Baptist assembly in Virginia. He had checked into his room before going on to the meeting.

Soon after, C. Oscar Johnson, longtime pastor of Third Church, St. Louis, was assigned to the same room and had wondered who his small roommate was. Johnson, whose weight neared 250 pounds, began the opening message at the meeting by saying, "I don't know who my

roommate is, but when I looked at his coat hanging in the closet beside mine, I concluded he must be a Boy Scout." No one laughed about that comment any more than Holcomb did.

On another occasion I saw Holcomb break the tension of the moment by telling of one of his own mistakes when he was a pastor performing a wedding.

His wife had fussed at him because he always wrote out the names of the bride and groom and carried a reminder note with him into the ceremony. She felt he ought to memorize them, so he decided he would try. He was concentrating so much on the name of the bride, a Miss Legg, that in the ceremony he asked the groom, "Will you take this woman you now hold by the leg to be your lawfully wedded wife?" The tensions of the moment vanished as the crowd burst into laughter, and Holcomb had accomplished his purpose by laughing at himself with them.

T. L. Holcomb was a giant of a man who lived in a very small body. But he led Southern Baptists to giant steps forward and upward in his day.

James L. Sullivan became the fifth president of the Sunday School Board in 1953 and served until his retirement in 1975. He succeeded T. L. Holcomb who headed the institution 1935-53.

# Home Mission Board forecasts drop in baptisms

By Joe Westbury

HONOLULU (BP) — Southern Baptist baptisms for 1987 could plummet to their lowest level in nearly a decade if projections by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board are on target.

The year-end forecast, announced during the annual conference for Southern Baptist state evangelism directors, predicts baptisms will drop 5 percent, to 344,000 conversions to faith in Christ. That figure is the lowest since 336,000 baptisms were registered in 1978.

The projections were based on information supplied by the directors and will result in a net loss of 19,000 baptisms from the 363,124 reported in 1986, said Clay

Price, HMB program research director.

That was the year Southern Baptists conducted national simultaneous revivals and reversed baptisms from a four-year decline. Conversions for 1986 were up 4 percent, or nearly 13,000, from the 351,071 reported the previous year.

The data is a more optimistic projection than that expected to be released by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, which bases its report on partial analysis of actual reports from local churches, Price said. Based on information from the denomination's 37,000 churches, the Sunday School Board is predicting the drop to be as high as 6 percent.

If projections are on target, 1987 will be the denomination's second lowest year for baptisms since 1950. That was the year Southern Baptists broke the 350,000 barrier by reporting 376,000 baptisms, Price noted.

Baptisms consistently remained above 350,000 for the next 26 years, until 1977 when the denomination reported a decline to 345,000 conversions. The 1980s have been a generally declining decade for baptisms, he said.

"When looking at baptisms by age-groups, one of the most promising challenges for Southern Baptists will be adults in the 30-to-59 age group. They now account for 20 percent of all baptisms, but will gain 14-million members between 1980 and 1990," Price said.

"Half of all Southern Baptist baptisms tend to occur for persons between the ages of 12 to 29 — a portion of our population now in decline. That's not to say

that's the reason for this year's drop, but it should be a warning to a denomination that has a tendency to baptize its children," he noted.

Reaction was varied to the projection, but most directors credited the 1986 Good News America simultaneous revivals as the greatest reason last year's baptisms had reversed the denomination's four-year decline.

"Last year we registered 105,000 conversions in our simultaneous revivals. The lack of such an emphasis this year is clearly the reason for such a decline," said Robert Hamblin, HMB vice-president for evangelism.

Hamblin faulted the denomination for "emphasizing other things rather than reaching people for Christ."

"We must have a compassion for the lost," he said. "We must pray for those individuals and for ourselves to be effective witnesses. The No. 1 priority with God should be the No. 1 priority with Southern Baptists — to win the world for Christ."

Hamblin then called for all pastors and church staff members to examine

whether they are personally involved in soul-winning and to mobilize their laity in the challenge.

Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers, who attended the meeting, was "deeply disappointed and grieved by the report."

"We need to bring all our energies to a burning focus on soul-winning and evangelism," Rogers said. "Even in our very best years — not our worst — our record for baptisms is appalling. We are doing so little with so much."

California evangelism director Bob Kendig, a former Tennessee evangelist, noted Southern Baptists "have lost the vision that a lost person is going to hell."

A subtle invasion of universalism theology — "the idea that we're all going to heaven by different routes" — has infiltrated Southern Baptist ranks and been embraced by a growing number of Sunday School teachers, he maintained. "You won't ever hear it being called by that name, but you'd be surprised where it shows up among grass-roots Southern Baptists."



**EDUCATION BUILDING** — David Tullock (left), pastor of Choptack Church in Rogersville is pictured with Tommy Stanton, former pastor of the church. The congregation recently dedicated the new educational building in the background. The building was built debt-free with members of the Choptack church making donations.

## Hungarian MasterLife begins with pastors

DEBREZEN, Hungary — Seventy-eight Hungarian Baptist pastors attended a MasterLife workshop as part of their annual pastor's conference. Many of the pastors said they hoped to begin the program in their churches.

The decision to produce a Hungarian edition of MasterLife came two years ago after Baptist representatives attended a workshop in London.



**REMINISCING** — Former members of the Baptist Student Union at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, (from left), Ralph Lee, a 1958 graduate; George Plumley, 1951; and Al Newlin, 1957, visit at the recent anniversary dinner which drew about 100 persons, celebrating 50 years of student ministry.

## Executive Board members get committee assignments

Members of the Executive Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention, were assigned positions on seven standing committees during the Dec. 10-11 meeting in Brentwood.

Board members accepted a report by the nominating committee, which was composed of Dennis Pulley, Murray Mathis, Carl Price, Ray Fowler, Howard Olive, Jim Growden, Irvin Hays, Bobby Turner, and Emerson Wiles Jr.

The nominating committee recommended the distribution of the 100 Executive Board members to the seven committees, and recommended chairmen and vice-chairmen for them as well.

President of the board Pulley is ex-officio member of each committee. Ken Story, president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, is a member of the Administrative Committee.

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

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| <p><b>Administrative Committee</b><br/>                 Fred Isaacs, chairman (E)<br/>                 Ray Fowler, vice-chairman (W), at large, State Missions Committee<br/>                 Paul Barkley (W), chairman, Educational Committee<br/>                 Michael Bennett (M), chairman, Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee<br/>                 Raymond Boston (W), at large<br/>                 Marshal Chevallier (E), chairman, State Missions Committee<br/>                 Calvin Harvell (W), at large<br/>                 James Hutson (E), at large<br/>                 Mrs. James Kimbrough (M), at large<br/>                 Mike Madewell (M), chairman, Denominational Cooperation Committee<br/>                 Murray Mathis (M), vice-president, Executive Board<br/>                 Calvin Matcalf (E), at large<br/>                 Perry Michel (M), chairman, Tennessee Baptist Program Committee<br/>                 James Porch (M), at large<br/>                 Dennis Pulley (W), president, Executive Board<br/>                 James Robertson (E), chairman, Christian Services Committee<br/>                 Lon Shoopman, Jr. (E), at large<br/>                 Fred Steelman (E), at large<br/>                 Ken Story (W), president, Tennessee Baptist Convention</p> | <p>Fate Wilson (M)<br/>                 Reed Wright (E)<br/> <b>Denominational Cooperation Committee</b><br/>                 Mike Madewell (M), chairman<br/>                 Mrs. James (Margaret) Kimbrough (M), vice-chairman<br/>                 Mickey Basham (W)<br/>                 John Bedford (W)<br/>                 John Burleson (E)<br/>                 Ron Davidson (W)<br/>                 James Davis (W)<br/>                 Lynn Eagan (W)<br/>                 Mrs. Don Farmer (E)<br/>                 Tim Floyd (M)<br/>                 Donald Givins (E)<br/>                 James McPherson (E)<br/>                 Clint Oakley (W)<br/>                 Kenneth Richey (E)<br/>                 Lon Shoopman, Jr. (E)<br/>                 Truman Spurgin (W)<br/> <b>Educational Committee</b><br/>                 Paul Barkley (W), chairman<br/>                 Mancrief Jordan (E), vice-chairman<br/>                 David Barholmaw (W)<br/>                 Bill Daley (E)<br/>                 Houston Inman (M)<br/>                 John Laida (M)<br/>                 John Langlois (M)<br/>                 Calvin Matcalf (E)<br/>                 Lamar Moore (M)<br/>                 Mrs. Kelter (Mattie) Mullins (E)<br/>                 Bill Northcott (W)<br/>                 James Porch (M)<br/>                 Larry Reeves (E)<br/>                 Frank Samuels (W)<br/>                 William Sealeman (M)<br/>                 Ray Sorrells (E)<br/>                 Paul Williams (W)<br/> <b>Public Affairs and Christian Life Committee</b><br/>                 Michael Bennett (M), chairman<br/>                 Arlice Grice (W), vice-chairman<br/>                 George Cooker (M)<br/>                 David Drumm (W)<br/>                 Paul Durham (M)<br/>                 Fred Isaacs (E)</p> | <p>Randy Isbell (W)<br/>                 Mrs. Jack (June) McEwen (E)<br/>                 Bob Mowrey (M)<br/>                 Don Owens (M)<br/>                 Donald Pharris (E)<br/>                 Carl Price (M)<br/>                 Elmer Sharp (E)<br/>                 Fred Steelman (E)<br/>                 James Strayhorn (W)<br/>                 Joe Wren (E)<br/> <b>State Missions Committee</b><br/>                 Herihel Chevallier (E), chairman<br/>                 Howard Olive (E), vice-chairman<br/>                 Doug Baker (W)<br/>                 Paul Bryant (W)<br/>                 Pat Ellis (E)<br/>                 Guy Farris (M)<br/>                 Ray Fowler (W)<br/>                 Wrex Hauth, Jr. (W)<br/>                 M. B. Howard (W)<br/>                 James Hutson (E)<br/>                 Robert Leonard (M)<br/>                 James McCuskey (E)<br/>                 Bill Palmier (M)<br/>                 Mrs. Don (Carol) Pharris (E)<br/>                 Fred Pinckard (E)<br/>                 Arnold Porter (M)<br/>                 Emerson Wiles (M)<br/> <b>Tennessee Baptist Program Committee</b><br/>                 Perry Michel (M), chairman<br/>                 Mrs. M. P. (Bobby) Turner (E), vice-chairman<br/>                 Jerry Barker (W)<br/>                 Gerald Bland (M)<br/>                 Tom Gatton (E)<br/>                 Larry Gilmore (M)<br/>                 John Holland (E)<br/>                 Ronald Hicks (E)<br/>                 Otis Hinton (W)<br/>                 Bruce Hullette (E)<br/>                 Larry Kirk (W)<br/>                 Murray Mathis (M)<br/>                 Jerry Oakley (W)<br/>                 Dennis Pulley (W)<br/>                 T. M. Swingle (E)<br/>                 James Walker (E)<br/>                 Fred Ward (W)</p> |
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## One Word More

By W. Fletcher Allen

A news brief crossed my desk this week. The story, out of Mombasa, Kenya, tells about a congregation that began meeting inside a shipping container — and later became a church.

Shanzu Baptist Church was organized by 128 members into an official body while meeting under a shade tree. The story told how the tree made a much more comfortable meeting site than the shipping container. Southern Baptist missionary, Ralph Bethea, from Memphis, once recorded the container "church" temperature at 137 degrees.

The story from that Indian Ocean port, Mombasa, triggered a three-year-old memory that shocked my mind and reshaped my thinking.

It was summer 1984. As part of a fact-finding team, four of us were in Burundi, making some decisions with the Foreign Mission Board about a Maryland/Delaware partnership with Baptists there.

From 20th century USA, from modern and metropolitan Baltimore, to the tiny African nation of Burundi — it was instant culture shock. In science fiction, it would be called time warp, a wrinkle on the face of an eternal clock.

Deprived and neglected, too small to impact hardly anything in the modern world, devoid of natural resources — Burundi sits there, ignored by the world.

Burundi — Africa's Switzerland. Burundi — the massive peaks almost push the sun back. Burundi — limited opportunities for the people — but, oh, how those Baptists love the Lord! The pastors put their lives in jeopardy when the government says to register. They sign their names on the official list, tell where they live and where their churches are.

A decade ago, in a violent and bloody uprising, thousands were killed. Baptist pastors and lay leaders were on the frontlines. Like lightning rods, they attracted a great deal of attention, because they had a cause.



Allen

Of course it is hard to explain your loyalty to God — who rules without being political. But, if He challenges for your undivided devotion and loyalty, if He indeed is a being who is supreme — then He is a threat to a government that is consummate.

The pastors were on the "purge" list. Many were killed. One — a prominent and respected leader — escaped by hiding in a casket. Praise God for Paul Sandugo!

But, as dazzling as that story is to my memory, I am thinking about a tree amidst scrawny shrubs, nubby grass, surrounded by desolate sands in the middle of nowhere.

We hurtled down a trail, widely accepted by missionaries and local populace as a road, on our way to that "nowhere" place — a station called Nyakarama.

The van was very insecure on that trail, and we were as shaken up as any stateside milk shake. Fred Sorrells, missionary from Texas and our driver, stopped abruptly at the insistent waving of a pair of dusty pilgrims.

They talked with great animation. Fred laughed and cried, listened and replied.

The two men, he said, had gotten tired of walking 20 miles to church each Sunday — with family. "They decided to hold a worship service under the lone tree nearby to where they live," said Fred.

"They were the only two there that first Sunday," he said, "but they sang and prayed and talked about the Bible."

"Hey, listen," he said with a milewide grin, "the next Sunday they were joined by 98 folks who wanted to praise God too!"

I think that's where enlargement campaigns got started.

## Singleton serves Grace pastorate

Mike Singleton began his ministry with Grace Church in Knoxville on Oct. 15. He is a native Knoxvillean.

Along with his pastoral duties, he will serve as director of the church's mission sight at Beaver Creek Estates.

Singleton is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He has served as pastor of several churches in East Tennessee.

## Virginia names committee to study divinity school

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The Virginia Baptist General Board has named a committee to study the possibility of establishing a divinity school at a Virginia Baptist college or university.

The action was taken in response to a motion passed by the Baptist General Association of Virginia during its annual meeting Nov. 10-11, asking the board to consider the feasibility of supporting such an institution.

Recent changes at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., which some Virginians fear might diminish the quality of theological education there, and changes at the other five Southern Baptist Convention seminaries apparently sparked the motion.

A similar proposal is being examined by the Southern Baptist Alliance, a coalition of moderate Southern Baptists.

The Virginia board approved nominations of Chairman Neal T. Jones and Randal T. Almarode, chairman of its education committee, to a five-member panel that will present a preliminary report to the board in April and final report next October.

Instructions to the study committee also asked it to focus on four questions:

Are any of the colleges or universities interested in such a program? What financial commitments would be required to operate such a program? What would be the source of the funding? How would such a divinity school differ from the six existing Southern Baptist seminaries?

Before agreeing to the proposal, some board members expressed concern that the cost of supporting another Virginia Baptist institution is beyond the association's financial means.

"We have all the institutions our resources can handle," said Robert D. Lynch, pastor of First Church of Gate City. "We need to be very careful in reacting to something that might be very costly."

Four colleges are affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia: Averett College in Danville, Bluefield College in Bluefield, Virginia Intermont College in Bristol, and the University of Richmond.

Although religion courses are maintained as part of the curriculum at all four schools, none of them has a graduate program in religion. The University of Richmond, the oldest, largest, and most affluent of the schools, is thought to be the

most likely site for a theological institution.

Study committee chairman Michael Clingenpeel, pastor of Franklin Church in Franklin, met briefly with committee members, who agreed to hold the committee's first meeting Dec. 14.

## C-N gives extension plans

JEFFERSON CITY — Spring classes for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's extension program will begin Jan. 18 on the campus of Carson-Newman College. The courses are open to anyone with a college degree.

Two courses will be offered during the spring semester.

"Preaching from the Gospels" will be taught by Raymond H. Bailey, professor of Christian preaching at Southern Seminary. The course will examine communication techniques utilized in the gospels and the preparation of sermons drawn from them. The class will meet 1-4 p.m. on Mondays in room 221 of the Henderson Humanities Building.

"Jeremiah" will be taught by Donald W. Garner of the Carson-Newman facul-

ty. When asked what effect the study by the Southern Baptist Alliance might have on his committee, Clingenpeel said: "We're aware other groups are looking at the possibility of starting a divinity school. I assume we'll review what other groups are doing."

The Book of Jeremiah will be studied in the context of the decline and fall of the Southern Kingdom. The class will meet 5-7 p.m. on Mondays in room 221 of the Henderson Humanities Building.

Registration for the courses will take place at the first meeting of the class of Jan. 18. Late registration will be accepted on Jan. 25.

Credit for the courses may be transferred to any Southern Baptist Convention seminary. Tuition will be \$110 per course. A one-time matriculation fee of \$10 will be required of students who have not previously taken classes at Southern seminary.

For further information contact William Blevins, Carson-Newman College, P.O. Box 1900, Jefferson City, TN 37760.



**COLLIERVILLE BREAKS GROUND** — First Church, Collierville, celebrated with a ground-breaking service recently for a Christian outreach center. The 32,000-square-foot facility should be completed in late 1988. Gary Watkins is pastor of the 2000-member congregation.

## Rural U.S. offers potential for churches, expert says

By Pat Cole

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Despite the dwindling number of family farms, "a lot of room" remains for church growth and new churches in small-town and rural America, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board specialist on rural ministries reported.

"There's a false notion that rural America is being depopulated," said Gary Farley, associate director of the board's rural-urban missions department. More people are living in rural America now than at any other time in history, he noted.

Farley was a keynote speaker at a small-church conference in November at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. The conference, jointly sponsored by the seminary's Dehoney Center for the Study of the Local Church and the board, was designed for pastors and other leaders of churches with fewer than 300 members.

"We need to win the cities," Farley declared, echoing a frequent missions emphasis, "but there are 61.4-million people living in rural areas or in small towns."

The family farm crisis has forced many rural people out of agriculture, Farley acknowledged, but he said many former farmers have taken up new residences in small towns or in the fringe areas outside small towns.

He also addressed some of the changing economic and population trends which he believes will significantly impact rural America and its churches in coming years.

Noting the family farm has "been in a crisis" for much of the 20th century, Farley predicted family farms will con-

tinue to be replaced by corporate farms. Some farmers, he said, will contract to grow crops for corporations, and others will seek new occupations.

"A lot of people will change their way of living and a lot of churches that have been farm churches will become factory worker churches or weekender churches," he said.

Farley also foresees a reorganization of communities, noting regional trade centers will become the economic focal points in some parts of rural America.

Many small towns, he explained, will begin to function as suburbs of the regional trade centers, while some rural communities will begin to be defined as neighborhoods.

Farley believes an interest in rural revitalization by the federal government will prompt developers to invest more in rural America. Retirement communities will spring up along lakes and other recreational attractions in rural areas, he added.

Large manufacturing plants will locate in small towns strategically located near interstate highways, causing unprecedented population growth, he said. New automobile plants near Spring Hill, Smyrna, and Georgetown, Ky., are examples of this pattern, he noted.

As a result of such trends, "there will be more churches and more diversity," said Farley. "We're going to have to do church differently."

Rural and small-town churches present exciting opportunities for ministry, he stressed. Ministers in those areas "can plant their lives and have significant impact on people because of the relationships that exist there."

## Belmont master's speciality targets teachers of gifted

NASHVILLE — Belmont College has added a new speciality to its Master's in Education program to prepare teachers to teach talented and gifted children, according to Robert Simmons, dean of the Belmont School of Humanities and Education.

The new program, the only one of its kind in middle Tennessee, will allow teachers to meet the current employment requirements set by the state for teachers of gifted children. With additional hours of study, the teachers can go on to earn a master's degree in education with a specialization in teaching gifted and talented children.

This will be the seventh specialization in Belmont's Master's in Education program, which began in August. The new speciality is unique because it does not group teachers of gifted and talented children with those who teach "special" students, including handicapped and tarded children, said Emily Stewart, Tennessee director of programs for gifted and talented children.

"In Tennessee it's unusual for gifted and talented programs to be separate from special education training," Stewart said.

Courses required in Belmont's Talented and Gifted Program of Study have been scheduled in the late afternoon and early

evening to make the program convenient for area teachers who are already working, but would like extra training to qualify them to teach gifted children, said Norma Stevens, professor of education. The new program will begin in January 1988.

Courses involved in the total program include "Introduction to the Talented and Gifted," "Methods of Teaching the Talented and Gifted," "Contemporary Issues in Education," and several hours of practicum and performance appraisal.



**CROSS STITCH PORTRAITS** — Barbara Mitchell was honored by Baptist Book Store in Chattanooga recently. Mitchell is pictured with family members Rick and Emily and examples of the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong graphs she designed. The Mitchells returned to the Philippines Nov. 9 to continue their work as Southern Baptist missionaries.

## Guatemalan Baptists start radio station

LAS CASAS, Guatemala (BP) — Guatemalan Baptists and missionaries dedicated a new shortwave radio station recently to broadcast the gospel to more than 100,000 K'ekchi' Indians in northern Guatemala and southern Belize.

Radio K'ekchi' is in the remote town of Las Casas. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board provided funds for equipment and construction of the station's studio. K'ekchi' Baptist Association will pay operating costs and provide staff for the station.

The K'ekchi' people have been responsive to the gospel, missionaries report, and more than 100 churches of K'ekchi' Baptist Association are thriving. K'ekchi' Baptists have dedicated themselves to baptizing 100,000 K'ekchi' people by the end of this century.

David Daniell, a Southern Baptist mass media specialist who works in Mexico City, moved to Las Casas recently for a one-year assignment to help Guatemalan Baptists develop Radio K'ekchi'.

## St. Vincent Baptists organize convention

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent — Eleven years of Southern Baptist missionary work reached a "crowning moment" on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent when the St. Vincent Baptist Convention was formed there in November.

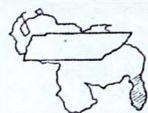
Orvell and Suzan Bryant, St. Vincent's only Southern Baptist missionaries, have started three of the four Baptist churches there, disciplined three national pastors, and directed them to a Baptist Bible institute during their 10 years as missionaries.

## Parkview calls pastor

Parkview Church in Jackson recently called Jimmy Breedlove as pastor.

Breedlove is a graduate of Union University in Jackson.

He is presently enrolled in the seminary extension program at the Jackson school.



## Tennessee/Venezuela prayer net partnership

—Missionaries celebrating birthdays this week: Roy Worley, a general evangelist in language school in Costa Rica, on Dec. 16, and Gene Kimler, a general evangelist in Trujillo, on Dec. 19.

—Venezuelan home missionary celebrating birthday: Alexander Montero on Dec. 21.

—Pray for the more than 8,000 new converts in Venezuela and for the churches who are discipling them. Plans are to baptize 500 on Dec. 19, in Maracaibo.

—Pray for the Capernaum Church, presently meeting in a tent. They hope to begin construction in January 1988, of a new building on their property. Isaias Rojas is pastor.

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# Special education group gets special attention

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE — While one group of special education writers reviewed plans for a specifically targeted resource kit, another group was planning a new magazine with a broad approach to special education.

The different approaches of recent writers' conferences conducted by the Sunday School Board's special ministries department reflect changes in the concepts for work with special education areas, according to Woody Parker, special education section manager.

The Special Education Leadership Magazine to be introduced in October 1988 will be a quarterly publication to guide ministries to a wider range of special education categories than the department has dealt with previously.

Meanwhile, the Special Education Resource Kit which will be available in October 1989 will have a reduced target audience from the Special Ministry Resource Kit Sunday School/Church training which it will replace.

In general, the section is planning an

expanded role to deal with blind and visually handicapped, mentally handicapped, emotionally handicapped, multiple handicapped, learning disabled, physically disabled, and gifted and talented, Parker said.

He pointed out that most special education materials until now have been limited to the blind and visually handicapped and mentally handicapped areas.

"Churches need help in reaching people in all seven categories," Parker said.

The magazine and the section's focus will relate to a broader concept of special education which will include all seven categories, he said.

The magazine will be aimed at teachers, pastors, ministers of education, and parents of the seven target groups, explained Gene Nabi, special education consultant.

"Pastors need to know how to deal with special needs and how to provide programs," Nabi said.

"We need to convince people that special education persons have the same spiritual natures as anyone else. Through it all, the gospel needs to be the center of our message," he told writers enlisted for the magazine.

Materials for Sunday School, church training, church music, church recreation, and other areas where churches could provide more ministries for the target groups will be included in the magazine, according to Wayne Bowen, special education editor.

The magazine will present a philosophy of mainstreaming special education per-

sons with other church groups such as Sunday School classes when possible, Nabi said.

The Special Education Resource Kit represents a change in age level focus and limits the target group for the kit.

The current kit provides materials for mentally handicapped and deaf and focuses on children's level resource.

Bowen said deaf ministry will no longer be included in the kit. Materials for deaf persons will be provided by the language section of the special ministries department.

The resource kit will be changed to a multi-age level rather than oriented to children's materials.

"Most of the people using the materials are adults but the kit has focused on children's materials," Bowen said.

While many mentally handicapped programs use children's curriculum materials, the adults need resource materials and activities which are appropriate for their age level, Bowen said.

The resource kit will provide age-level suggestions for the Sunday School Convention Uniform Series curriculum. Resources also will be provided for church training.

## Tennessean assists work in Portugal

MATOSINHOS, Portugal — When Carey Bates' father and sister came to Portugal, the missionary put them to work.

Missionary Bates scheduled four concerts for his sister, Dodie Davis, an alto soloist from Knoxville. She is the wife of Walter Davis, pastor of Parkway Church.

One of Mrs. Davis' concerts was in a women's prison. Bates had his father, Ben, from North Little Rock, Ark., share a testimony during each concert.

His father also spoke in a men's prison. In all, 12 inmates made decisions for Christ. Father and sister also participated in a half dozen worship services.

Bates, whose hometown is Memphis, does student work in the Lisbon area. His wife, Lynne, also is a Memphis native.

## Everett Hills calls

### Mark Drake as pastor

Mark Drake accepted the call of Everett Hills Church in Maryville and began his pastorate there on Nov. 15.

He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

For the past six years Drake has served as pastor of Ridgecrest Church in Memphis.

He is a native of Georgia.

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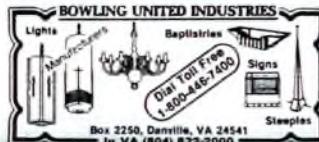
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- Graceland Baptist Church, Memphis — Contact Keener Ragsdale
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  - First Baptist Church, Winchester — Contact Bob Brown
  - Union Baptist Association, Sparta — Contact Ray Maynard
  - First Baptist Church, Dresden — Contact James Gaines
  - Holiday Heights Baptist Church, Hendersonville — Contact Gene Cane
  - Lincoln Heights Baptist Church, Tullahoma — Contact Bill Smith
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**BIBLE BOOK SERIES**  
Lesson for Dec. 20

## The birth of Jesus

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

Basic Passage: Matthew 1:18 to 2:12  
Focal Passages: Matthew 1:18 to 2:2, 9-11

For many people this week will either be "Ho, ho, ho!" or "Ho hum." Those who are going to get into the Christmas spirit have probably done so by now. Those who have not caught the spirit have probably just gotten bogged down with the details of the commercial side of the season.

It is true of far too many people that the Christmas season is a matter of buying and receiving gifts, of twinkling lights, of parties, and of Santa Claus. In our lesson this week we are called to remember the origin of this season of joy.



Nail

### The discovery by Joseph

Betrothals in the first century lasted as long as a year. During this time the couple was considered legally married though they did not live together. This was a time of separation from each other. It was a time to prove one's commitment to the other before the consummation of the marriage.

It was during this time that Joseph discovered Mary to be expecting a child. He knew that he was not the father which could only mean that she had been unfaithful to him and played the harlot. Because of that Joseph could have publicly disgraced her and had her stoned.

But Joseph was a compassionate man and had a love for Mary which would not let him sentence her to such a fate. Instead, he decided to have a quiet divorce and leave her with her family.

What else could he do? She had obviously been unfaithful to him. Could he afford to have his own reputation in the community ruined by her actions? Should he allow himself to become a laughingstock of the town? Surely he must protect himself. What if it were someone in your own family? What would you do?

### The revelation to Joseph

Before Joseph had an opportunity to take any steps in this matter he had a life-changing dream. An angel appeared to him to explain the continued virtue of Mary in spite of what appeared to be true.

The angel also explained to Joseph much of what he had explained to Mary earlier. This child, far from being a disgrace, was to be God's blessing on the whole earth throughout all time. He was to be the supreme fulfillment of the long ago prophecy of Isaiah.

What a staggering dream! What an incredible revelation! But remember, Joseph was a devout man. He was able to

## McDaniel announces early retirement

DALLAS — James C. "Pat" McDaniel, executive vice-president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, is taking early retirement for medical reasons and will move to Topeka, Kan.

President Darold Morgan and Treasurer Harold Richardson are sharing additional direct administrative responsibilities until a successor is named.

McDaniel came to the Annuity Board Aug. 1, 1977, from Topeka where he was executive director of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists. He also has held positions with the Baptist State Convention of Michigan and the Home Mission Board.

recognize the hand of God in what was happening. For that reason, he did as he had been told in the dream. He went through the final process of making Mary his wife. But he abstained from contact with her until after the birth of the child Jesus.

### The discovery of the wise men

The wise men were not Jews. They were from a country far to the East which is not named in Scripture. They were not students of the Hebrew Scriptures. They studied the stars because they believed them to tell of the events of the future.

In those stars they had seen a new brightness. To them such an event signaled that somewhere in the world a king had been born. Then their search began.

They searched the writings of the nations around them until they found information about which country was expecting a king to be born. They found it in the Hebrew Scriptures. They read that the Jews were expecting God to send a king to rule over them. So they came to the capital of Judea to find him.

They followed the heavenly light until they came to the place where the young child was with Mary. In those humble surroundings these great men from other lands bowed and worshiped the child Jesus and gave Him their treasures.

The gold was a fitting gift for One born to be King. The frankincense was appropriate for One Who would be a priest like none before Him. And the myrrh was sadly fitting as well. It spoke of a death to come for this One. It was a death which we often overlook at Christmas because of the joy of the baby. But it was a passion which made the birth meaningful to all the world.

### The revelation to the wise men

Before they had found the king they sought, the wise men had gone to the house of Herod who was then ruler of the area. At first, they thought the child would be his son. They learned that it was not so.

When Herod heard of the birth of a king he became frightened and jealous. The history of this Herod shows him to have been very jealous of his throne. He had even executed many members of his own family out of fear that they would take away his throne.

Herod asked them to come and tell them where the child was, supposedly so that he could go and pay homage to Him as well. We learn later that his purpose was far less honorable. In fact, he hoped to destroy the child.

The wise men also had a dream. In that dream they were warned by God of the danger to the child if they gave Herod the news he wanted. Though they were not described in this text as righteous like Joseph, they too listened to the voice of God and returned home another way.

At this Christmas season may we be reminded of the value of each life born into this world. May we try to see in the face of each child a source of God's blessings on the whole world.

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**UNIFORM LESSON SERIES**  
Lesson for Dec. 20

## Visit of the Wise Men

By Rice A. Pierce  
Deacon and Sunday School teacher, Goodlettsville

Basic Passage: Matthew 2:1-12  
Focal Passage: Matthew 2:1-12

Matthew wanted to acknowledge Jesus' Jewish roots. But he also wanted to reveal His reception by the world — homage from afar, hostility at home. Such would be the fortunes of the new faith. Matthew says that Jesus was not the sole possession — or spiritual prisoner — of the Jews. Right away at Messiah's coming, a group of Gentiles came asking about Him so they could worship Him.



Pierce

Matthew, writing especially for Jewish readers, followed tradition and wrote from the standpoint of Joseph. Luke, with a broader target audience of Gentiles, as well as Jews, wrote from Mary's point of reference. Matthew traced Jesus' lineage back to Abraham. Luke traced back to Adam, the father not just of the Jews but of all mankind. Matthew's mention of the Gentile Magi and the early threat of Herod would strike a prophetic note concerning the history of this new faith.

### A birth in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1a)

How simple and matter-of-fact the account given by the ex-tax collector reads! Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, not in the Bethlehem of Galilee seven miles northwest of Nazareth. This Bethlehem in Judea was the scene of the life of Ruth and Boaz and the birthplace of David. Ruth was David's ancestor, as David was Jesus'. Bethlehem meant "House of Bread." Thus the Bread of Life (John 6:35), the true Manna from heaven, was born in this House of Bread.

Jesus was born in the reign of Herod the Great — great builder, great schemer. He was a great sinner who killed one of his wives, her mother, and several of his sons. His jealousy and agitation over possible rivals to the throne was boundless. Jesus was born about 5-6 BC, and Herod died a horrible death some two years later. At the time of Jesus' birth and the later visit of the wise men, rumors spread of a plot to place Herod's brother on the throne.

### Visitors from afar (Matthew 2:1b-2)

Jesus' visitors from the East were Magi (astrologers). No New Testament evidence says they were kings or that there were three of them or what their names were. Throughout the world, men felt that the time was near for a great deliverer to appear. The Jews especially felt this. These Magi could have been quite aware of Jewish expectations. By the calculations of these astrologers, the brilliant star they saw from their eastern land signaled the arrival of a great One. Would not God's providence give them guidance in announcing such a momen-

tous event in humanity's history?

At any rate, these Magi arrived in Jerusalem asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Two years after Jesus' birth (see Matthew 2:7, 16), surely people should be able to direct them to Him, but they couldn't.

### An agitated Herod (Matthew 2:3-8)

Imagine Herod's terror and distress when wise men from afar came to Jerusalem looking for the new King of the Jews! And when Herod trembled, the whole city trembled. It was impossible to know how the murderous, near-insane Idumean (Edomite) would react to such a report. Herod was smart enough to go to the right people — chief priests and learned scribes — to find where the Scriptures said that Messiah would be born. They pointed to the precise place for the answer — Micah 5:2. Herod's frantic search was over. He secretly asked the Magi when they had first seen the star (see v. 16).

Herod sent the wise men on their way to Bethlehem (v. 8). He charged them to report back to him after they found the child. He wanted to worship the new King himself!

### Homage from the Gentiles (Matthew 2:9-12)

The star which had guided the wise men from the East went before them. It came to rest at the place where young Jesus was. In joyous ecstasy, the Magi entered the house and found the child with Mary. Instantly they fell down and worshipped Jesus. Then they took gifts from their "caskets" and presented these to Jesus.

Matthew was deeply impressed with the fact that foreigners — Gentiles — would take two years to come and worship mankind's new Lord and King. The chief priests and scribes would not even travel the few miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to find out about the possibility of so great a deliverer being born. These leaders would go on to reject Jesus while Gentiles more and more embraced Christ. Herod and the earth's powers opposed Jesus from first to last.

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LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES

Lesson for Dec. 20

# Jesus Christ: servant

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

Basic Passages: Luke 2:1-14; Philippians 2:5-11  
Local Passages: Luke 2:7-11; Philippians 2:5-11

A young lieutenant who was a party in an 1858 expedition observed about the Grand Canyon, "This region . . . is . . . altogether valueless. It can be approached only from the South, and after entering it there is nothing to do but leave. It . . . shall be forever unvisited and undisturbed."

When Abraham Lincoln spoke in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in 1863, one newspaper reporter wrote: "We pass over the silly remarks

of the President; for the credit of the nation, we are willing that the veil of oblivion shall be dropped over them and that they shall no more be repeated or thought of."

Approximately 2000 years ago a baby was born in the little town of Bethlehem. Hardly anyone noticed. After all, babies are born every day.

What do these stories have in common? In each instance, the historical importance of these events was overlooked. The Grand Canyon is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the United States. The Gettysburg Address is probably the most memorized speech ever spoken. And the birth of the babe in Bethlehem actually split history into B.C. and A.D. It is the event we celebrate at Christmas.

During this season of Christmas, let us be sensitive to the Christ event — an event which comprehends the babe of Bethlehem, the obedient Son of God, and the exalted Lord.

The babe of Bethlehem (Luke 2:7-11) The shepherds were the first to recognize and understand the true meaning of Christmas. After their fears had



Northcott

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been settled by the angel's announcement of good news, they went to Bethlehem to see "this thing" which the Lord had made known to them.

We live with busy schedules. We can identify with the wag who said:

*Since we travel by jet,*

*The impression I get*

*Is that things are decidedly humming.*

*Since we're faster than sound,*

*When we get on the ground,*

*If we'll listen, we can hear ourselves coming.*

Our already busy schedules are accelerated at Christmas. If we are not careful, we can rush by Christmas and miss its truth. Let us determine, like the shepherds, to see "this thing" which the Lord has made known to us.

"And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child" (2:17). Christmas will mean much more to us if we will share Christ with those who are in darkness. The writer of the fourth gospel describes the birth of Christ by saying that the true light has broken into a world of darkness (1:5) and has the power to enlighten every man (1:9). As followers of Christ, we extend the light of Christ. Jesus said about His disciples: "You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14,16).

The humiliation and exaltation of Christ (Philippians 2:5-11)

The magnificent theological statement of this section was likely birthed in

*Pews, pulpits, baptistries,  
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response to bad news. Paul had learned that the church at Philippi was experiencing internal rumblings because of petty jealousies stemming from inordinate concern about honors and rewards (4:2). It is against that background that Paul presents a threefold picture of Christ. We see the Lord in His original glory, in His humiliation, and in His exaltation.

"He existed in the form of God" (2:6).

The Greeks had two words for form. One of them referred simply to shape and appearance. The word used here, however, "suggests that the form of the object is the expression of what it really is." Paul is affirming that Jesus was of the same nature and essence of God. It is his way of declaring the divinity of Christ (we are reminded of the prologue of the fourth gospel; see John 1:1-14). Christ, therefore, had every right to equality with God. Though this was His privilege, He "emptied Himself" (gave us His divine rank) and assumed the form of a servant (literally a slave). Unlike Adam and Eve whose act of rebellion was motivated, at least in part, by the desire to be as gods (Genesis 3:5), Christ, Who was God, became man and humbled Himself by dying on a cross in order to redeem lost humanity.

"Let this mind be in you," Paul says. A different translation has: "Have this attitude in yourselves" (NASV). Paul is challenging us to be like Christ. In Christianity, "the disposition is everything." Jesus had the mind of God. His singular obsession was to do the Father's will. This, to Jesus, was more important than equality with God; it was more important than a comfortable life free from suffering, ostracism, and humiliation. The end result, as it always shall be ultimately, was glorification. Through His humiliation, Christ has been exalted and given the name Lord — a name which is above every name and at which every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father (vv. 9-11).

The babe of Bethlehem, the man of sorrows, and the crucified and resurrected Christ lives eternally as the exalted Lord. Let us bow down and worship Him in a new and special way during this Christmas season.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board needs a video production/maintenance engineer to work in its Richmond, Va., headquarters. The job requires experience in location and multi-camera studio production. Installation, operation and maintenance of all in-house videotape production and post-production equipment. Minimum 5 years experience preferred. Excellent work environment and benefits. Qualified applicants should send resumes to:

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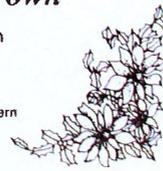
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# Couple teaches others to sing about Christ

By Eric Miller

PANAMA CITY, Panama (BP) — Shifting his efforts from football to choir was a providential decision for Southern Baptist Missionary Ed Steele.

When he was in junior high school, Steele loved football. But he had curvature of the spine, also known as scoliosis, and doctors warned him football would seriously injure his back.

So he dropped football and joined a choir. This change of direction in Steele's life moved him to the launching pad for overseas missionary work.

God used Steele's musical ability to place him and his wife, Kathy, in Panama, where Steele promotes music throughout the country. He teaches music in Baptist Theological Seminary in Balboa, conducts a music camp each year, teaches Indians how to sing hymns, starts choirs in churches, and strives to demonstrate the value of music in spreading the gospel.

It all started when Steele was 13. A choir director in a Baptist church in Moore, Okla., noticed his musical talent, gave him voice lessons, and had him sing solos. Steele won several singing contests and began directing a small church choir near Norman, Okla.

Pursuing a career in music, he earned a bachelor's degree in music education at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and a master's in church music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

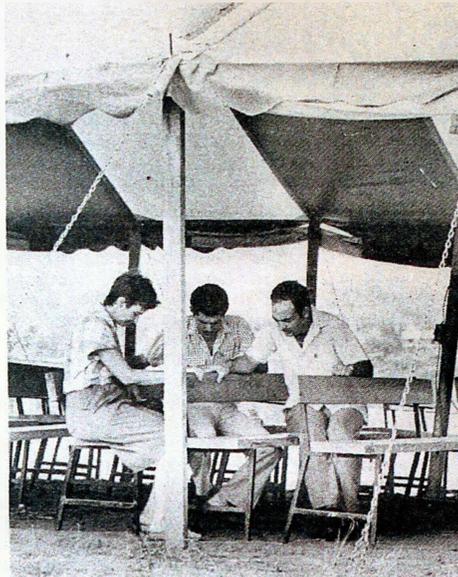
He felt a call to missions during his senior year at OBU. He struggled with the call and surrendered when he sensed God saying, "Why not give me your life voluntarily, rather than have me chase you down? Better to surrender with joy, now!"

Three years passed before he was willing to talk to his wife, Kathy, about his call to missions. Meanwhile, she had experienced her own call. They applied for missionary service and were appointed to Nicaragua in 1978.

But political unrest made Nicaragua unsafe, and in 1982, the Steeles, both 35, and their children, Kristi, 9, and David, 7, moved to Panama. He's the only Southern Baptist music missionary in Panama.

One unusual aspect of Steele's work is his music promotion among Indians who live on islands along Panama's coast. About 50 of the 300 islands are inhabited and have 12 Baptist churches and eight missions.

Steele travels to the islands several times a year. Leaving home in a taxi at 4 a.m., he boards a small airplane and reaches the islands by 7:30 a.m. The plane's doors and windows aren't air-tight and rain has



**PRAYING AT 'CHURCH'** — Kathy and Ed Steele pray with Panamanian Pastor Jose Martinez (center) in a tent church in Panama. The three pray before visiting homes to invite people to attend worship services.

soaked him. Once, a luggage compartment door flew open, almost spilling his luggage into the ocean.

He "island-hops" by way of a "kayuco" — a motor-powered canoe made from a dug-out log. Once he moved to the rear of a kayuco to relieve the driver during a three-hour ride. However, he was much heavier than the driver and water rushed in over the sides, almost sinking the canoe.

The Indians — who live in grass huts and use coconuts for money — speak Kuna. Steele uses a translator to translate from Spanish to Kuna. He lectures on music, explains the purpose of worship, provides cassette tapes and photo-copied hymnals, and teaches new hymns.

Each year on the mainland, Steele conducts a week-long music camp that draws about 70 participants from 20 churches. He and other music teachers provide training in music and worship, music and evangelism, hymn direction, theory, sight singing, voice and playing the guitar, flute, and piano.

Camp choirs are formed, and Steele shows participants the importance of music in worship by having them join hands and sing.

"There is a unique dynamic that happens," he says, "when you get a group of people — after having really had an experience of worship — to close a service out and join hands and sing 'We're One in the Bond of Love.' It unifies us so we can really focus in on God."

Music is useful for outreach in Panama because "Panamanians, like most Latins, love music," Steele says. Some Baptist churches there have musical groups that perform on church steps. "You can get a crowd instantly," Steele notes, "because people may not want to stop to hear a preacher, but they will stop to hear the music," which contains spiritual messages.

He helps churches start choirs, but only after someone in the church agrees to become the choir director.

Some churches have no hymnals, and the congregations sing three or four hymns — all by memory. "With the same few choruses, worship degenerates and there is a loss of teaching and training," he says. For these, he provides a 20-page hymnal.

Only 15 percent of the Baptist churches in Panama have a trained or semi-trained music director. The Baptist seminary has a theology degree with an emphasis in music and Christian education, but no music degree.

Having a music degree program at the seminary and a trained music director in every Baptist church are among Steele's goals, he says. He also would like to see an internationally recognized Christian composer rise up among the Panamanians.

Steele and his wife are working on these goals together. "I try to help Ed and work with him in

whatever way I can," Mrs. Steele says. She has taught piano and played while he directed seminary choirs.

They work together on outreach and ministry. They started a Spanish-speaking adult Sunday School class in an English-speaking church. Teaching the class was a "real blessing," she recalls, "because we were able to work basically with new Christians who were very hungry to grow and anxious to learn about the Bible."

The Steeles also began a home Bible study in a middle-class Catholic neighborhood. The people there have "never had the chance to read the Bible," he notes. "So we get together, read and study the Bible, and they come with questions. They are so hungry with a deep hunger."

Mrs. Steele, who has taught several sessions of the MasterLife discipleship development program, doesn't miss opportunities to tell people about Christ. She has witnessed to people in waiting rooms and in restaurants. She witnessed to a Panamanian woman when the woman asked her about the Christian magazine she was reading while the two shared a park bench. The woman didn't become a believer in Christ, but Mrs. Steele feels gospel seeds were planted.

"Some of my favorite people to witness to are taxi cab drivers," Steele says. He uses cabs frequently and has learned that cab drivers are lonely and want to talk to someone.

This allows him to explain how people can receive salvation through Christ, using the Gospel of John. He tells the driver: "Belief in this is like me getting in this taxi. I really believed you could have gotten me here but I didn't really show that you could until I got into your taxi. That same kind of faith — as we accept Christ — can really change our life and give us eternal life."

Steele has worked with the Panama convention's radio and television commission, especially in follow-up consultation with people who received gospel messages through the commission's media programs. The Steeles also have encouraged their children to sing for congregations, and their daughter is helping teach songs to children.

Steele's life took on a new direction when he dropped football. He not only has won contests for singing, but also for writing songs. He has written or arranged more than 30 songs, including several that were for friends' weddings. He has released a studio-recorded cassette tape titled, "Go Tell My People." He can play the piano by ear and occasionally has accompanied vocalists in songs he's never heard.

The Steeles' music ministry is making an impact. Mrs. Steele says, because music is "a language that breaks barriers — whether cultural or social — and opens doors for the gospel to be shared."

## Prison hostages include Baptists

ATLANTA (BP) — Three Southern Baptists were among the 94 hostages held recently by Cuban detainees at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary.

Most of the hostages are employees of the penitentiary. The uprising is blamed on a U.S.-Cuban pact that will return 2,500 refugees to Cuba and will allow 25,000 Cubans a year into the United States.

Southern Baptist hostages are Timothy Sizemore, U.S. public health service officer who is a dentist at the penitentiary, from Conyers, Ga.; Jim Riley, prison hospital pharmacist from Riverdale, Ga.; and Carl Gates, chief psychologist for the penitentiary, also of Riverdale.

Gates was among four randomly chosen hostages who were released Nov. 29. Sizemore and Riley remained captive until Dec. 4, when all the hostages were released.

Sizemore's wife, Julie, commented "Our faith in God has sustained us throughout this entire ordeal." The Sizemores are members at Trinity Church in Conyers.

Mrs. Riley, a member of First Church of Riverdale, chose not to spend her waiting time at the prison. She and her two children tried "to keep things pretty normal at home."

The support of friends and fellow church members was a comfort to all three families.

"Everyone has offered their prayers for the hostages," said Mrs. Riley.



**TIME FOR CHILDREN** — While visiting door-to-door, Ed Steele takes time to talk with children.