

Baptist and Reflector

VOL. 156/NO. 12/MARCH 21, 1990

STATEWIDE EDITION

NEWSJOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION

CLC seminar focuses on money, drugs, alcohol, work, other addictions

By Lonnie Wilkey and Louis Moore
BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Americans are addicted to everything from alcohol to drugs, from sex to money, from gambling to work, and Christians need both to deal with their own addictive behaviors as well as to help others recover from their addictions, said speakers at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's annual seminar.

The seminar, which drew 222 registrants to Birmingham, Ala., March 12-14 focused on "Addictions and Family Crises."

Speakers not only addressed the more common addictions of alcohol and drugs, but also addictions to work, pornography, gambling, and family violence.

One addiction that is not being ad-

Chinese youth, scholars embrace Christianity

NANJING, China (BP) — More young people and intellectuals are attending church and becoming Christians, said China Christian Council leader Ding Guangxun (K. H. Ting) in a recent interview.

One church in Beijing reports more than 50 percent of its worshippers are young people, Ding said. Other churches are beginning Sunday Schools.

A "new attitude towards religion" is developing among scholars, he added. "In the past you could not see one article written on religion that didn't relate it to the opiate . . . the Marxist definition of religion. But today we have more and more social scientists who take a much kinder outlook towards religion.

"A growing number of intellectuals take a positive attitude toward Christian faith. I know of some who have not been baptized but who have committed themselves to the Christian faith."

ressed properly by the church today, according to one speaker, is spouse abuse.

"It (spouse abuse) is a pervasive problem, and yet many pastors, when brought face to face with the issue, tend to bury their heads in the sand," said Paul Hegstrom.

Hegstrom, who admitted to abusing his spouse for more than 16 years before receiving help, opened the first Domestic Violence Project Learning Center in Quincy, Ill., in 1985 to help domestic violence couples and dysfunctional families. There are now 17 such centers across the United States.

Hegstrom emphasized domestic violence, particularly spouse abuse, has no boundaries. "It crosses all socio-economic levels; it crosses all nationalities," he said, adding that statistics "apply to the Christian evangelical community at about the same level of frequency as they apply to the secular world.

"Religion hasn't eliminated the problem of spouse abuse," Hegstrom said.

The invisible addiction

Monsignor Joseph A. Dunne, former president of the National Council on Compulsive Gambling, said gambling is emerging as one of the most dangerous addictions of our time.

He called gambling "the invisible addiction" observing that while gamblers are not always physically identifiable they are "all around us."

Though gambling has been around for thousands of years, Dunne said, the beginning of the "gambling mania" facing America today began in 1964 when the state of New Hampshire "defied the federal government on the grounds of state's rights and established a state lottery commission, which in turn contracted a company to run its lottery."

Dunne cited the definition of gambling as defined by victims of compulsive gambling.

It is "any betting or wagering, for



TENNESSEANS ATTEND — Several Tennessee Baptists attended the Christian Life Commission's seminar in Birmingham. Among them were, from left, Bill Palmiter, pastor, Bethel Church, Greenbrier; Richard Land, CLC executive director; Jacky Williamson, and Bill Williamson, pastor, Neely's Bend Church, Madison.

self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or skill."

The hidden addiction

Dallas sex therapist and counselor Nancy Badgwell said, "Sexual addiction is alive and well in the Southern

Baptist Convention."

She observed that sexual addiction is "the hidden addiction," the most shameful and guilt-producing of all the addictions, she said.

Badgwell defined sex addiction as an "obsession and preoccupation with sex." (See page 5)

Foreign missions offering may surpass 1989 goal in rare feat

RICHMOND (BP) — Gifts to the 1989 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions will total about \$81.3 million, meeting the goal for the first time since 1981, according to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board projections.

By March 12, the agency had received about \$61.5 million in Lottie Moon gifts, toward a goal of \$81 million. Projections based on actual receipts from Baptist state conventions indicated that by the final tally May 31, the total will amount to about a 3.2 percent increase over 1988 giving.

"I certainly am encouraged the projections at this time indicate we're anticipating meeting our goal for the first time in nine years," said FMB Presi-

dent R. Keith Parks. But Southern Baptists should note the percentage increase only equals the inflation rate, he cautioned.

"I would have to acknowledge reality and say that while we're grateful for the increase, it still doesn't provide the bold mission funding Southern Baptists need if we're going to take advantage of the great evangelistic opportunities that are opening, such as those in Eastern Europe," Parks added.

The annual Lottie Moon offering is projected to fund almost half of the \$174.9 million foreign mission budget for 1990, encompassing the work of some 3800 missionaries in 116 nations. Most Southern Baptist churches receive the offering during the Christmas season, but the board keeps its books open for receipts from Baptist state conventions until the end of May.

The board bases its March projection for the offering on a survey of selected state conventions that gave the largest totals the previous year. The survey counts receipts through February. Past projections have come within one percentage point.

Pari-mutuel gambling bills languish in committee

Five bills related to pari-mutuel gambling await action in the Senate's State and Local Government Committee while promoters of a racing track in Memphis received another offer to finance a track.

The Memphis-based Tennessee Downs Inc. filed a \$40 million financing offer from a Delaware company with the Tennessee Racing Commission, reported The Commercial Appeal March 14. Memphis is the only Tennessee county or municipality which passed a referendum to allow horse

racing and pari-mutuel gambling.

Bill Bates, Tennessee Baptist Convention public affairs consultant, reported that any legislative action may be delayed during this session, which ends in April, because of the financing offer for the Memphis race track. He encouraged Tennesseans to keep fighting pari-mutuel gambling.

Two bills awaiting action would repeal the Racing Control Act of 1987, thereby making pari-mutuel gambling on horse racing illegal and eliminating the state racing commission. The bills

numbers are Senate Bill 2318/House Bill 2502 and SB 0060/HB 0186.

A bill limiting racing only to Memphis has been passed in the House but failed in this committee. The vote can be overturned. The bill is SB 0524/HB 0102.

Two other bills limit the number of referendums in counties or municipalities on horse racing.

To register their opinions, Tennesseans should contact their representatives and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee: Avon Williams D-Nashville, chairman; Steve Cohen D-Memphis, vice chairman; Ruth Montgomery R-Kingsport; Don Arnold R-Johnson City; John Ford D-Memphis; Carl Koella R-Maryville; Joe Nip McKnight D-Jackson; Robert Rochelle D-Lebanon; and Andy Womack D-Murfreesboro.

An inside look

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Editorials

SBC problems continue for too long, unabated

In February John Bisagno, Houston pastor, proposed a new coalition "of those committed to a perfect, infallible Bible." The proposal received the support of four others: Joel Gregory, Charles Fuller, Ken Hemphill, and Jim Henry.

Fuller and Henry were members of the Peace Committee. Among the four, two declined to endorse Morris Chapman's candidacy for the SBC presidency, which is being promoted by several former SBC presidents.

Gregory, in explaining his support for Chapman, said, "We will all be witnesses and jury as to what happens. We will know a year from now when the appointments are announced."

Henry, a former pastor of Two Rivers Church, Nashville, says he has "great concern for the integrity and nature of the Scriptures."

Daniel Vestal, also a candidate for the SBC presidency, said the new coalition is "very clear political strategy." It is his opinion that Chapman's candidacy comes out of a decision by "five former presidents who want him to be nominated." All these men are sincere.

Stories on these developments are carried on page six of this issue of the Baptist and Reflector. Reading the stories may help readers understand the dilemma of reporting news involving SBC problems.

Most Southern Baptists are sick of the continuing quarrel over leadership of the

convention.

Some call our problems a battle for the Bible, whether Southern Baptists believe in the infallibility and inerrancy of the Word of God. This may be true, but it certainly is exaggerated — because others do not feel that that is the problem. To insure this concept (infallibility of scripture), in Southern Baptist life, affairs, and programs, control of leadership must be maintained.

Call it by any name, what has happened in the convention since 1979 has been a contest for control.

State paper editors are among those Baptists who are exceedingly weary of the unrelenting division among us. The Peace Committee did not solve the problems.

We are a changed people. Gone is much of the fellowship that was a hallmark for more than a century. Gone is the cooperation which was the linchpin of a unique diversity, the keystone of Southern Baptist success in ministry, missions, evangelism, education. The convention has been cannibalized.

There is yet some fellowship and cooperation. But usually it is more like follow-up. Candidates are announced months in advance, seeking election to highest convention offices. Service is approached with less joy — there is a certain determination to overcome the "other side."

State papers too are weary of reporting

power struggles, and have called on the "sides" to sit down together, pray together, worship together, talk to God together, serve together, minister together, witness and evangelize together. God must weep at the energies wasted in anger and malice.

As for the Baptist and Reflector, we are studying seriously methods by which we can handle the "controversy." Stories about SBC personalities from each "side" usually have been given equal space. Developing stories are absurdly long because all facts, going back for months or years, have to be presented. Each side must be given opportunity to respond to a "charge" or a new development or statement from the other "side."

We may begin reporting these events very briefly, presenting only a kind of scoreboard. We cannot continue to use expensive and valuable space, partially underwritten by Cooperative Program funds, to give blow-by-blow accounts.

We know of no editor overjoyed at the conflict. This one for sure wants a togetherness among Southern Baptists that will expend all energies, exhaust all resources, overcome all differences, forgive all brothers and sisters — so that by all means all people have opportunity to hear the Gospel.

We believe this is the totality with which we should be concerned, and for which Christ died. — WFA

Prospective missionaries respond positively to new FMB program

RICHMOND (BP) — Prospective missionaries have responded positively to a new policy that opens Southern Baptists' foreign missionary associate program to a larger group.

"The response to the changes from a number of prospective missionaries was almost immediate," said Bill Morgan, director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Board's missionary enlistment department. "They've all been pleased with the changes."

The qualification changes, approved by board trustees Feb. 15, lower the

minimum age for missionary associates to 24 and allow vocational skills and experience to supplant formal education in some cases.

They also allow the spouse of a person with the primary missionary assignment — for example, the wife of a preacher or the husband of a nurse — to qualify for service without formal education beyond high school when other requirements are met. A substitution of experience for education also may be allowed in some primary assignments, such as mission office

secretaries, builders or even pastors who have many years of experience but lack the normally required master of divinity degree.

Missionary associates work on four-year, renewable terms. The missionary associate program seeks people with existing skills for limited-term assignments in foreign missions, whereas the career missionary program emphasizes preparation for work that spans a person's career.

In the past, some couples questioned the associate program's educational qualifications, which required husband and wife to have some college training, said Tim Brendle, associate vice president for mission personnel.

"We have a number of prospects well into their careers who have said, 'I have my degrees and my years of ministry experience, but my wife and I chose early on that she would fill a homemaker role,'" Brendle said.

These couples felt penalized when applying for missionary service, he added.

The new qualifications allow experience to substitute for formal education when possible. That means a pastor's wife with a high school diploma and demonstrated leadership ability could qualify without further education.

Since it began in 1961, the missionary associate program has moved closer and closer to the career missionary program's qualifications. The two became so similar that administrators began questioning the need for two categories.

"We decided it was time to make a greater separation between the career and associate missionary program," Brendle said. "We wanted to trade off necessary skills and experience in lieu of a formal education. The (main) question is: Can they do the job?"

HMB volunteers up in 1989

ATLANTA (BP) — The number of volunteers working through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board increased nearly 20 percent last year.

However, the HMB has a critical need for more student summer missionaries to serve this year.

In 1989, the HMB counted 48,681 volunteers working through its short-term and long-term programs for individuals and groups, an increase of 6973 from the previous year's total of 41,708.

The largest increases came in programs for adult volunteers, said Don Hammonds, director of the HMB's volunteers division. He credited the increase to better understanding in churches of the needs for volunteers and to strong state partnership programs.

State conventions with volunteer coordinator-consultants appointed through Mission Service Corps showed the greatest increases, he added.

At the end of 1989, the number of Mission Service Corps assigned was 1230, up from 1170 the previous year. Mission Service Corps is the HMB's program for adult volunteers who are willing to serve two-year

terms.

Short-term adult volunteers serving through Christian Service Corps increased to 17,204, up from 13,454 in 1988. That total includes 1025 groups and 1431 individual assignments.

Despite these gains, there are still fewer applicants for college student summer missions than there are requests for help this year, Hammonds said.

By mid-February, the number of applications received for student summer missions was running 25 percent behind the same time last year, said Bill Berry, who coordinates the HMB's student missions program.

Candidates must have completed the freshman year in college, be active members of a Baptist church and be committed Christians. Transportation to and from the field is provided by the HMB, along with insurance and a \$60 per week stipend. Housing, meals and ground transportation are provided by the local hosts.

Interested students should call the HMB's toll-free volunteer hotline: 1-800-HMB-VOLS or contact their local Baptist Student Union director immediately, Berry said.

Baptist and Reflector

Newsjournal of Tennessee Baptist Convention
Established in 1835

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Connie Davis, Assistant Editor
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Baptist and Reflector is published weekly except Christmas week by the Executive Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention, 5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood, Tenn. 37027. Subscription prices: \$6.55 individual; clubs of ten or more, \$6.25; church budget plan, \$5.56 when sent to 50 percent or more of church homes. Second class postage paid at Brentwood and at additional mailing office. (USPS 041-780).

Space forbids printing of resolutions, obituaries, and poetry. Advertising rates on request.

Baptist and Reflector holds membership with Baptist Press (BP) news service of the Southern Baptist Convention. Telephone: (615) 371-2003.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Baptist and Reflector, P. O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn. 37024.

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Southeastern trustees approve faculty-selection plan

By Marv Knox

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Trustees adopted a compromise faculty-selection process for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary March 13.

Faculty selection has been the core of controversy at the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary since October 1987, when the trustees' new conservative majority changed the way the school picks professors.

Those changes reduced the faculty's influence and gave more power to the president, who reports directly to the trustees. Trustees spoke of a need to make faculty additions reflect the conservative nature of the Southern Baptist Convention. Faculty expressed concern for academic freedom.

Subsequently, at least 18 faculty and administrators resigned or retired. Both of Southeastern's accrediting agencies launched investigations, which still have not determined the school's academic standing. The agencies have cited faculty selection as one area of concern.

The newest selection process restores some of the faculty's influence. It begins with presidential/faculty determination of a faculty vacancy and its job description.

A focal point of the plan is provision of a search committee — comprised of the president, vice president for academic affairs, three faculty members and one trustee — to propose candidates for each faculty vacancy. A nominee must get a two-thirds vote of

the committee to make the final list of candidates given to the president.

Trustees ultimately elect the new faculty member, based on the president's recommendation. The president is not required to recommend someone from the search committee's list and/or someone endorsed by the faculty. But if he does not, he must tell the trustees the faculty does not concur and provide them with the faculty's objections.

The process will be implemented for a year and evaluated at the trustees' March 1991 meeting. Vacancies already have been declared for four positions: one in Christian education, one in New Testament studies and two in Old Testament studies.

The process represents "a compromise where generous concessions were made on both sides," said President Lewis A. Drummond. "It gave faculty a very significant role in faculty selection, where their input is taken seriously. But it preserved the trustee and administration's prerogative of the election.

"It is a document completely permeated with 'shared governance.' We strove for that. It will satisfy our accrediting agencies, we hope."

"There was a swap-out — a spirit of conciliation," added trustee Chairman James R. DeLoach, an associate pastor from Houston. "The accrediting agencies and faculty have said we (trustees) do not need to be involved in the process too early, but we do need to be represented.

"There was a spirit of cooperation. We have our differences of opinion, but this is something we can live with. In the long run, it will be good for the seminary."

The faculty met the following day and affirmed "the work of the trustees in adopting the faculty-selection process." They also approved creation of a committee to draft a response to the process, to be considered at the next faculty meeting, April 18.

"I feel confident it will be a positive response," said G. Thomas Halbrooks, president of the seminary's American Association of University Professors chapter. He was a member of the seven-member special committee — three faculty, three trustees and Drummond, aided by an outside facilitator — who drafted the new selection process.

"The faculty may be moving toward the sense that this is the best we can get and that we should cooperate and make it work," Halbrooks said. "A lot

of faculty have concerns ... because of our recent past."

He referred to the March 1989 election of L. Russ Bush III as academic vice president and faculty dean, despite the faculty's unanimous objection. Trustees raised similar points during a discussion of the new selection process, asking about the possibility of an impasse, should Drummond and faculty members of a search committee disagree on candidates.

"This whole proposal says we have a process, and nobody will be elected to the faculty by executive fiat," said Jesse P. Chapman, a retired surgeon from Asheville, N.C., and former trustee chairman. "The faculty is to be consulted, and trustees are to be notified if the faculty dissents. At least they (faculty) will be involved."

"The issue is persistence and staying in the process," added Richard Hester, a faculty member on the committee that drafted the new process.

SEBTS trustees affirm doctrinal statements

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Doctrinal statements dominated several segments of discussion during Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's spring trustee meeting March 12-13.

Ultimately, the trustees affirmed the primacy of the 131-year-old Abstract of Principles as Southeastern's "sole doctrinal statement." But they also affirmed the Baptist Faith and Message, which has been the Southern Baptist Convention's primary doctrinal statement since 1963.

The issue had been placed on the agenda by actions taken at recent SBC annual meetings.

● **Abstract of Principles.** Trustees affirmed "that the Abstract of Principles be continued as our sole doctrinal statement and that it not be supplemented, amended, or replaced and that Basil Manly's The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration, Explained and Vindicated, c. 1888, interprets the arti-

cle on Scripture in the Abstract of Principles."

Basil Manly Jr., a founder of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, now in Louisville, Ky., wrote the abstract as a faith statement for that school's faculty when the seminary was started in 1859.

● **Baptist Faith and Message.** Trustees voted "that the trustees affirm the Baptist Faith and Message of 1963 and that the administration continue to publish the statement that first appeared in 1978 in the seminary catalog."

The statement in the catalog says: "Since its founding in 1950, each member of the faculty at Southeastern Seminary has subscribed to and publicly signed the Articles of Faith (Abstract of Principles) at the beginning of his or her teaching career at the seminary. Doctrinally, Southeastern is guided by the Baptist Faith and Message statement, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963."

Is chairman

Southwestern trustees tap Draper

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Trustees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary elected James T. Draper Jr. as their chairman and approved a record \$19 million operating budget for 1990-91 during their semi-annual meeting in Fort Worth March 12-13.

Draper, pastor of First Church, Wulfsburg, Texas and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was elected unanimously and without opposition. He succeeds Ken Lilly, a medical doctor from Fort Smith, Ark., who completed a two-year term.

"I don't have any agenda for the seminary except to continue to build bridges and to convey confidence in the faculty and administration," Draper said following his election. "I would hope there could be a unifying Dr. (Russell) Dilday and I have obviously differed over the years, but we've also been very open with each other," Draper said. "We maintain contact and he pretty well knows where I'm going to come down and I know where he's going to come down so I don't think we're either one

Caryville pastor dies

Herman Byrd, pastor of Lake View Church, Caryville, since 1987, died March 10 at University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville. Byrd also held pastorates in Blount, Knox, and Monroe counties. He was president of the Campbell County Baptist Pastor's Conference. Byrd is survived by his wife, Mollie, and three sons, Donald, Ronald, and Larry, all of Blount County.

threatened by that.

"Hopefully we could show that people who do have differing views can still work together," Draper added.

Also elected were Damon Shook, pastor of Champion Forest Church, Houston, vice chairman and T. Bob Davis, a dentist and member of Prestonwood Church, Dallas, secretary.

The \$19-million budget adopted by the board for 1990-91 is the largest in the seminary's history. Because of a 1.89 increase in Cooperative Program gifts for the coming year, Southwestern's total allocation will be 3.1 percent.

William Tolar, dean of the seminary's school of theology, was elected vice president for academic affairs and provost, effective Aug. 1. Tolar replaces John Newport who is retiring after 35 years on Southwestern's faculty. Newport will continue at the seminary with the title of special assistant to the president for academic research.

Jay Chance was elected vice president for public affairs. Chance, who holds the same position at California Baptist College in Riverside, is filling the position vacated by John Seelig, who retired in January.

Along with the administrative elections, the board elected new faculty members. Joining the faculty are Steve Lemke and Keith Putt as assistant professors of philosophy of religion; David Trimble, instructor in New Testament; Michael Cox, professor of music theory and composition; and David Music, associate professor of church music.

Alliance passes easy part: Hasty

ST. LOUIS (BP) — The Southern Baptist Alliance is "past the easy part," in attracting membership, Stan Hasty told the SBA membership March 9 in St. Louis at the organization's fourth national convocation.

"I have a hunch we have already attracted most if not all of the alternative congregations, those willing to identify themselves as a different kind of congregation, where their difference is worn as a badge of honor," said the SBA's executive director.

He reported 95 congregations are affiliated with the SBA, as well as 2700 individual members, giving the organization a membership of about 54,000. About two dozen congregations are listed as supporters.

The annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, June 12-14, "has the potential of changing the SBA a great deal," Hasty said. "If Daniel Vestal (the moderate presidential candidate) suffers a huge defeat — which is entirely possible — churches may be ready to move on to a new definition.

"A huge defeat for moderates has the potential of making the Alliance an

attractive place. It could be similar to San Antonio (where moderates lost the presidency by a narrow margin). After San Antonio, we gained one congregation a week for nine months. After Las Vegas (site of the 1989 convention) we have not gained a half-dozen new congregations."

"The Alliance membership figures, 'certainly modest when compared to the size of the SBC, are nonetheless significant as a barometer of the discontent among true Baptists disillusioned with the direction our denomination has taken in recent years," Hasty said.

"Yet, I am convinced our actual numbers to date represent but a fraction of those who share that discontent but who for a variety of reasons have chosen thus far not to join us."

The Alliance is strong, he said, but "this organization most likely will not grow significantly beyond its present size unless and until significant new numbers of Southern Baptists are willing to register a strong protest with the new ruling party that business as usual is not acceptable, even at the risk of being accused of disloyalty."

Our Readers Write

Work growing bold

I am a constant reader of the paper, because I want to keep up with what Tennessee Baptists are doing.

I am pleased to note that the work is still growing and the giving has not been down, amid the disturbances.

I have been a cooperating Southern Baptist for over 50 years. I am now 86 years old and I have seen many disturbances in the convention; but we came through them and continue to grow. I wish to say to Baptist and Reflector readers, "Let's continue to pray, give, and work with and for our leaders."

C. H. Petty
2626 Walker Rd.
Chattanooga 37421

Preserve relationship

Since the Baptist and Reflector already has received a number of letters on the subject of defending the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, I will keep this brief. I oppose the change proposed by our Southern Baptist Convention executive committee. It would be a terrible, unnecessary, mistake. The BJCPA has served us well.

Regardless of one's political alignment in the convention controversy, the BJCPA has been our servant. Defunding it has nothing to do with one's view of errancy, so every Southern Baptist should go to New Orleans determined to preserve this historic relationship as it has been.

Charles Parker, pastor
First Church
206 Roane St.
Oliver Springs 37840

Support needed

Tennessee Baptists need to speak up for continued support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Betty P. Donaldson
3618 Monte Vista Drive
Chattanooga 37411

Rally for life

Rally for Life '90 will be held at the Washington Monument in Washington D. C. from 2 until 4 p.m. on April 28. Every reader is invited to attend as a representative of one of the 21,000 developing children killed by abortion in Tennessee each year. If each state has one representative for each unborn child killed by abortion in that state there would be at least 1,500,000 people in Washington on April 28.

According to John 14:12-14, Christ promises He will do whatever we ask in His name. We are asking Him to end abortion by prayerfully taking the Choose Life! America message to Washington. By acting on the behalf of "the least of these," God's people will glorify Christ. A healed land is promised in 2 Chronicles 7:14 when we (my people) repent of our sins and turn from our wicked ways. Surely disregard for human life by tolerating the shedding of innocent blood in our cities, states, and nation is included in "wicked ways." These combined concepts, put into practice by you at this rally, offer great promise for change!

For more information contact: Paula Sevier, Tennessee Volunteers for Life, Box 158024, Nashville 37215; (615) 370-0027.

Ann Bennett
548E Fleetwood Dr.
Kingsport 37660

Soap for soaps

In reference to the article about Procter and Gamble and their trademark which may or may not have symbolic significance. The type TV Shows, especially during the day time, that this com-

pany sponsors are devilish. They are filled with adultery, violence, murder, deception, slander, etc. It's strange that we as Christians complain about a symbol when the real problem is the filth that comes out over the airwaves. It's a shame that a company such as Procter and Gamble sponsors such filth, and what is so ironic is that they sell soap and detergent products. They need to put on some of their own soap and clean up the soaps or better yet just take them off the air. What trash!

Mike Kemper
P. O. Box 1001
Brentwood 37024

Such programming is shown only because it is paid for by companies which produce good products — but fail in good taste. — Editor

GUIDELINES: Opinions of Tennessee Baptists on religion-related subjects are welcomed. Letters should be brief and concise, no more than 250 words. Letters may be shortened and edited at discretion of the editor. Unsigned letters will not be read or used, but writer's name may be withheld for sufficient reason. There must be at least one month between publication of letters from the same writer. Letters must not make personal attacks on the character or integrity of anyone. Writers are encouraged to write in a positive, Christian manner. Short letters are preferred. Address and phone number must be included.

Action disappoints

I am distressed by the recent action taken by the trustees of the Christian Life Commission. The greatest fear I have about the current controversy within SBC is the trend toward presenting only one point of view in our literature, our colleges, and our seminaries, and in our doctrine. Now the CLC in the case of abortion, has officially agreed to ban any viewpoint other than that of a bare majority of their trustees.

Not only has the CLC taken this repulsive action, but the SBC Executive Committee has voted to place in the CLC responsibility for being the Baptist voice in Washington. Personally, I object to Baptists as a denomination, being involved in any political lobby. But if we are going to lobby, the views presented should be that of the majority, not limited to the trustees of CLC.

To my knowledge, no reputable and independent poll has ever been taken to learn what Baptists believe on any issue or subject, including abortion, creation, priesthood of the believer, women pastors, women deacons, or inerrancy.

If CLC has become a political action committee, it should be disbanded. The CLC and Executive Committee do not have the moral or ethical right to use Cooperative Program funds meant to support missions for such purposes. CLC may not even have the legal right to use tax deductible contributions to influence legislation.

J. G. De Lacey
2791 S. Mt. Juliet Rd.
Mt. Juliet 37122

Concentrating on 'world'

I agree with the March 7 letter from Jim E. Pennington. Have we not become so involved in "stopping the evils of the world" that we are not focusing on the true mission of Christians, leading the lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ?

It was reported in The Tennessean that any of those asked to speak at the

Southern Baptist Convention cannot and shall not be of the "Pro-choice" persuasion on the issue of abortion. Singling out this one issue and focusing on it is only the "tip of the iceberg" in the total control attitude of the Fundamental/Conservativists of the Convention.

Where will the control stop? In the future, will each member of a Southern Baptist church be required to fill out a questionnaire concerning their "leanings" before attending the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention?

We are concentrating on the "worldly" social and secular issues, status, power, materialism, and above all "religion." Let's get back to the basics of witnessing to the lost world with the loving, comforting message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. By showing the world the peace, love, and understanding of our Heavenly Father, as Southern Baptists, we can again be the powerful witnesses that God intends us to be.

Mrs. E. C. Hawkins
700 Russell Street
Nashville 37206

Typical preachers

An all-out assault is being launched on the preachers in our land. The assault, for the most part, comes from secular media outside the Christian faith. But the heartbreaking fact is that more attacks are being made by some keynote speakers in our convention.

For example, this past weekend our church participated in the Youth Evangelism Conference. What an exciting event! We look forward to it every year. Now the downside. Within five minutes of his sermon, David Ring, Friday evening speaker said, "I'm not a typical preacher — Thank God." But my question is, what is wrong with the "typical preacher?" My definition of the typical preacher is a man who loves God, His church, and has a burden for lost souls. Where would this nation be without your "typical" preacher? I am glad God called me into this ministry. As for typical people, God must like them. He made mostly that kind.

On Saturday morning, Rick Caldwell, speaker from Arkansas, said, "I heard a

story about — It's a preacher's story. I don't know whether it's true or not." Was he implying that when a preacher tells a story, most of the time it is a lie? Probably not. But seeds of doubt were sown and I am confident the devil watered those seeds quite well. If young people can be convinced that the preacher's stories are a lie, they might be convinced that their preacher's "story" concerning the power of the blood of Christ to forgive sins is also a lie. I hope not.

Thank God, and may He continue to bless the ministries of men like David Ring and Rick Caldwell. But please, while God is blessing your ministries, don't sow seeds of doubt in our youth or criticize the "typical" preachers who work with and for our youth day by day.

George D. DeRousse, pastor
First Church
525 N. Main St.
Middleton 38052

A united house

It brought a sense of sadness to me when the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention encouraged us to almost totally withdraw from supporting the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

We need to present a united house, not a divided one on the Washington scene; we need to refrain from the appearance of not wanting to work with the black Baptist convention's who participate in the Committee, and cease wanting to control most of what the Lord is doing in this world. Let us be careful before we adopt the advice of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Someone is watching us!

Gary Anderson Sr., pastor
First Church
Box 126
Dunlap 37327

Prayerful support

Tennessee Baptists should continue their support for the Baptist Joint Committee.

We will join in prayer with other Tennessee Baptists.

Annie Laurie Morgan
J. C. Towers, Apt. 206
Chattanooga 37402

TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

If I wore a hat I would take it off to a large group of Tennessee pastors. They are the ones that I saw at the Youth Evangelism Conference in Nashville last week.

They were fairly easy to pick out among the more than 30,000 teenagers. They did not respond to the music in the same way as the teenagers; didn't clap quite as loud; and looked puzzled as they tried to pick up the lyrics on some of the music. But they were there sharing this experience with their teenagers, counseling them with their problems, and protecting them from the big city.

These pastors are a primary reason for the success of this conference. They have helped make it the largest of its kind in the world.

If your pastor accompanied the group from your church, express your gratitude to him. Young people are doubly blessed when they have a pastor who shares his life with them. The pastor is blessed when he has a

church that appreciates and affirms this kind of commitment.

These pastors made a sacrifice in being a part of the conference. In many cases they sacrificed a major part of a night's sleep. They shared in a conference that was not planned to meet their needs. They listened to messages that were addressing the needs of young people. But they were following the principle laid down by the apostle Paul when he declared that he was ready to become "all things to all men" that he might win some. If Paul could adjust to the Gentiles to win them to Christ, we must be willing to relate to our young people to win them to Christ.

Thank God for the messages the youth heard. They will not soon forget David Ring, even if they forget what he said. Rick Caldwell pointed them toward their mission field. This generation of Christian young people will respond to a challenge.

I hope that by the time this paper arrives every pastor has caught up on his sleep and has already marked out the dates for the 1991 Youth Conference on his calendar.

God is still at work in Tennessee.



LOWRIE

Stassen, three CLC trustees reach peaceful understanding

By Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor
BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Glen Stassen practiced what he preaches at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's annual seminar March 12-14 in Birmingham, Ala.



STASSEN

He made peace. Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., was the focus of attention at the CLC's spring board meeting March 1-2 in Nashville.

During that meeting commission members narrowly passed a resolution requesting Executive Director Richard Land "to refrain from inviting speakers who support the so-called 'pro-choice' position on abortion."

Stassen, widely known for his peacemaking efforts, was singled out for signing a petition in 1977 that was perceived by Commission member

Skeet Workman of Texas and others as a "pro-abortion statement."

Workman had favored a stronger resolution which would have required the CLC not to invite speakers who support abortion to participate in any function of the agency. It also called for asking a confirmed speaker to step down if he/she supports abortion.

Stassen expressed concern that CLC members did not call him and ask him about his views.

He released a statement after their meeting saying he is pro-life, a statement confirmed by his life.

"My wife, Dot, is a nurse who has chosen to work full time at a special school for teenage mothers who have elected not to have an abortion. She helps them nurture and care for their babies, stay in school, and plan their vocational futures.

"Our blind son, David, is extensively handicapped as a result of the German measles Dot got in the first three months of pregnancy. We did not get an abortion.

"Instead, we have tried to help

David cope with the suffering of 14 operations, including heart surgery twice, and struggle against heavy odds to grow into a bright linguist who speaks German without an accent."

At the seminar in Birmingham, Stassen, who spoke on "How to Apply Transforming Initiatives to Family Conflicts that Arrive from Addictive Behavior," met with the three commissioners of the 31-member board present at the seminar. The meeting was at the trustees' request.

The three trustees — James Wood, Georgia; William Whitfield, Alabama; and Curt Scarborough, Missouri — issued a statement after their session with Stassen.

The statement said:

"What we see in Dr. Stassen is a man whose life is pro-life. His wife and son afford him a unique opportunity to live what many profess. We appreciate his love for God and his calling to work for peace. We hope that his example in this regard will continue to be a blessing to our whole Convention.

"We understood Dr. Stassen to say that the document he signed in 1977 is not an accurate reflection of his position today. Many of us have grown in our understanding of the abortion issue in the past decade, and we believe it is important that we look beyond words and see peoples' lives."

Wood added that "the intention of the original motion was not a fine-tooth examination of each prospective

speaker, but to express concern of trustees about persons who are actively advocating a position opposite to pro-life."

The trustees said they intend to communicate their statement and their impressions of the meeting to other Commission members.

Stassen, whose address at the seminar was greeted with loud, sustained applause, said he had a good meeting with the trustees.

He noted he was pleased with the trustees' clarification that they "did not intend to judge future speakers with a fine-tooth comb."

He expressed regret again, however, that trustees had not spoken with him before. "This grief could early have been avoided if we had just talked," he said.

Stassen cited Matthew 5:23-24 which encourages talking and reconciling with one's brother.

"That's not an option; that's rule," Stassen said. — *Louis Moore of the CLC contributed to this story.*

Iron City church calls new pastor

State Line Church, Iron City, recently called Randy Nelson as bivocational pastor.

Nelson was pastor of Oak Ridge Church, Waynesboro.

He and his wife, Marilyn, have two children.

CLC seminar focuses on money . . .

(Continued from page 1)

in which everything is defined sexually or by its sexuality and all perceptions and relationships are sexualized.

"Sexual addiction is destructive to the self, to others, and to relationships," she said.

Alcoholism and drugs Sara Hines Martin, a former Southern Baptist missionary, said alcoholism creates a sense of shame in the alcoholic's family.

"Toxic shame makes a person feel shame for who he is as a person," said Martin, now a therapist in Smyrna, Ga., whose specialty is working with adult children of alcoholic families.

"The shame phenomenon says when parents do not resolve their shame it goes on from one generation to another. Shame produces addictions which further perpetuate shame in families."

Curt Scarborough of the Christian Civic Foundation of Missouri, called drinking "America's most staggering family problem." He said 33 percent of all cases of child molestation, child abuse, domestic violence, spouse abuse, and incest are related to alcohol.

Evangelist Jay Strack of Dallas, an ex-drug abuser, said the drug problem in America can be traced to the crumbling of the home, the coldness in the church, and the crisis in the classroom.

"We will not win the war on drugs without the home and the church working hand-in-hand with schools," Strack said.

Workaholics

Martin noted the ministry is geared toward workaholics. Workaholicism, like alcoholism and other addictive behaviors, is a product of and a perpetrator of dysfunctional families, producing a pattern that repeats itself through several generations, she said.

Dallas psychiatrist Frank B. Minirth described workaholics as obsessive-compulsive people who are often the first-born in their families.

"The tend to be neat, orderly, clean, very conscientious, hard working,

punctual, organized, good students, disciplined, competitive, intelligent, and intellectual rather than emotional," he said.

Another addiction which is "a massive problem" in society today is pornography, said John Drakeford, professor of counseling emeritus at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Drakeford said the flood of pornography confronting society today is due to "the large number of people who are willing and anxious to purchase pornography."

Solutions

The 18 speakers at the seminar focused not only on various aspects of addiction, but also the need for Christians to face the variety of addictive behaviors with theological depth as well as practical solutions.

Douglas L. Anderson, director of the family ministry department at the Baptist Sunday School Board, recommended eight emphases for ministry to families with addictions.

"For this particular ministry I would include the following items: enhancing self-esteem, developing self-confidence, teaching accountability, developing an inner sense of direction, encouraging self-reliance, teaching social skills, generating optimism, and teaching self-discipline," Anderson said.

Richard Land, CLC executive director, said the family in America today is "increasingly dysfunctional as it reels under the impact of societal blows and pagan parental behavior."

Land called for a reassertion of "the Christian family's unique value and place in society."

Charles Carter, pastor of Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham, said Christians must work diligently to nurture and build healthy homes.

Carter urged seminar participants to model their homes based on the kind of home Joseph and Mary provided for Jesus — one of morality, faith, obedience, and fellowship with God. — *Also contributing to this story were Susan Todd, Mary Wimberly, Karen Lowery, and Denise George.*

One Word More

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

One of the most read, best liked, and sometimes controversial Christian writers has authored several little books about the church. He's writing about the Christian church, the church that is following the precepts of Christ.

Charlie Shedd says that churches can be exciting.

In his three early books about the church, Shedd considers three main points: Bible study, prayer, money.

Surprisingly, there are some churches that have little difficulty with finance. In fact, they have success. But many others are groaning over bills and lack of sufficient income to finance their needs and programs.

What's the difference? Charlie Shedd says there are three reasons worthy of consideration. Churches without financial problems, he says, are churches where the people really pray, they consistently study the Bible — and they give their money away.

There is an important principle here, and it works for the individual Christian as well as it does for the church. Here it is: *The Lord will provide plenty of income for us when our outgo meets His approval.*

Listen to this parable.

A certain church member had heard about tithing until he said, "I'm sick of hearing about it. The Bible says God loves a cheerful giver. Since I'm not cheerful about giving a tithe — He doesn't want me to give it."

But he decided he would try tithing for a while — just to prove it, one way or another. He made a little wooden box and planned to put into it ten percent of all he earned. And he would tithing through the church on the last

day of each month.

On the first payday, he put his tithe in the box — and felt noble. A couple of days later, a friend invited him to join a tennis club. "You deserve some relaxation," he said.

But the man didn't have the money for the membership fee. "I can take it out of the box," he said, "and repay it at the end of the month." He did take the money for the tennis club — but he never repaid it.

When some neighbors asked him to spend Saturday on the lake, he wanted to go, but realized he needed new equipment to "match what the boys have." He borrowed from the tithe box.

Later he wanted a jacket that was on sale, and a pair of hunting boots. He used the tithe money again. And on the last day of the month, there was only a dollar left in the box.

He was certain God would understand how hard it is to tithe, and pledged to do better next month. God did understand. When the man desperately prayed for help in an emergency, God looked into the tithe box. "This man is entitled to one dollar's worth of help," he said to an angel. "See that he gets it."

"But Lord, that is so little," the angel responded.

"Yes," God answered. "But I promise to do better next month — if he does."



ALLEN

Fuller says Bisagno plan has 'refreshing potential'

By Dan Martin

ROANOKE, Va. (BP) — A proposal for a new Southern Baptist coalition "of those committed to a perfect, infallible Bible," has received the support of Charles Fuller, who was chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee.

Fuller, pastor of First Church, Roanoke, Va., wrote in his church newsletter March 17 that the plan, first proposed in February by John Bisagno, pastor of First Church, Houston, has "refreshing potential."

Bisagno, calling for "all those who believe in a perfect, infallible Bible to stand up and say so," linked his "historic" new coalition of inerrantists with the announcement he will nominate Morris Chapman, pastor of First Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, for the presidency of the SBC at its annual meeting in New Orleans.

The public announcement of Chapman's candidacy came during the annual pastors' school at First Church, Jacksonville, Fla., where current SBC President Jerry Vines is pastor. Chapman was introduced and endorsed by Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., whose election in 1979 signaled the start of the conservative movement.

While Fuller gave support to Bisagno's plan, he stopped short of endorsing Chapman for the presidency.

Two other pastors who in the past have avoided overt involvement in SBC politics — including another member of the SBC Peace Committee — publicly announced they support both Bisagno's plan and Chapman's candidacy.

They are Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Church, Fort Worth, Texas, and Peace Committee member Jim Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla.

"I am convinced most Southern Baptists, like myself, are weary of this struggle," Fuller wrote of the 11-year conservative-moderate battle over control of the SBC.

"I have not been part of a political coalition or counter coalition; I am not now, nor do I seek to be. I simply yearn for a widened tent of leadership and fellowship among us, but held in place by the indispensable cords of a perfect Bible and a Great Commission (the command to take the Gospel to the whole world)," Fuller wrote.

In speaking of the "tent of leadership," Fuller referred to a comment Chapman made in a statement following announcement of his nomination. "The time has come to enlarge the tent of our beloved SBC to encompass all cooperating Southern Baptists who are dedicated to perpetuating our allegiance to the Bible as the perfect Word from the perfect God," Chapman said then.

Some conservative leaders privately say they have drawn the circle of leadership too tightly, and, in Bisagno's proposal, are agreeing to be more inclusive in the appointments to key convention committees and in nomination of trustees to SBC boards and agencies.

The inclusiveness called for by Bisagno and Chapman, they point out, includes, however, only those who "hold to the inerrancy and infallibility of the Word of God."

In his statement, Fuller wrote: "His (Bisagno's) proposal has refreshing potential, presenting an alternative to one which has continued to be an ongoing collision course. No tent of togetherness can be broad enough to house all the extremes among us, but surely the cords are long enough to include all who seriously embrace the convictions, the mission and the spirit of the Peace Committee report, overwhelmingly adopted by the convention."

Fuller said he sees in Bisagno's plan the possibility of establishing a real center in the SBC. "During the Peace Committee days (1985-87) I kept feeling a real center would emerge, possibly from within the Peace Committee. It didn't. There have been

some efforts to establish a centrist group, but I have not found in those efforts the kind of a center that did not have a periphery," he told Baptist Press.

"As I see it, with each such effort there has been a periphery attached ... which I found I could not truthfully embrace. I do not believe what I view as a neo-orthodox periphery is good for our denomination's future, nor do I believe a periphery of litmus agendas can ever unite us."

The current political coalitions in Southern Baptist life — the moderates and the conservatives, as they currently are labeled — "are on a collision course. They are committed to stop what they are convinced are the extremes."

The conservatives are trying to stop liberalism; the moderates are trying to stop fundamentalism, he explained. "Stopping the extremes is what motivates them," he said.

"I have been looking for something which I felt had some promise of being a true center. I think that efforts to this point have carried either the litmus agenda (of orthodoxy) or of being such a broad tent that it preserves the neo-orthodox fringe. Neither has a chance of uniting us.

"It would seem, in the minds of some, we should all fit one of two perceived political molds or be categorized as neutral. I am not a neutral. I am not neutral about the Bible, nor am I neutral about world missions. Neither am I neutral about the essentials in Christ-likeness.

"Neutrality implies disinterest, indifference and compromise. I am not neutral. I am a dyed-in-the-wool conservative, an inerrantist, but I refuse to forfeit my independence."

While Fuller declined to endorse Chapman as president, he said he will not be "judgmental" about those who have done so, including Bisagno, Gregory and Henry.

Fuller said Recommendation Six of the Peace Committee report, adopted

by messengers to the 1987 annual meeting, requests "all organized political factions to discontinue ... organized political activity ..."

In his March 1 church newsletter, Gregory noted, "By the deepest conviction of my life and soul, I must endorse this attempt for unity with doctrinal integrity." He added Bisagno's call for a "historic new day" will "bring us to an end to this controversy; ... a new coalition to put an end to these painful 11 years."

Gregory later told Baptist Press: "In a sense we are going to have revolution or evolution. Revolution would be to repudiate the party in power; evolution is for the party in power to enlarge the tent — to use their term — to include everyone who confesses a perfect Bible."

He said, "Dr. Chapman has promised to enlarge the tent. We will all be witnesses and jury as to what happens. We will know a year from now when the appointments are announced."

In his church newsletter in early March, Henry told the Orlando congregation: "In deciding for the first time in my ministry to speak out on a presidential election, I am doing so not on the basis of personalities, but of a far greater concern, a principle, the integrity and nature of Scripture.

Another pastor, Ken Hemphill, of First Church, Norfolk, Va., like Fuller endorsed the proposal but stopped short of endorsing the candidate.

"It is my earnest prayer that this would be the year Southern Baptists can put political rhetoric, divisive titles, and character assassination behind us. I resonate with John Bisagno's call for peace now without compromise on the integrity of Scripture. I long for an end to the struggle which has burdened all loyal Southern Baptists," Hemphill wrote.

"I support an end to political factions, a move to more inclusive leadership, and a more harmonious and evangelical convention," Hemphill added in a later statement.

Vestal calls new coalition 'clear, political strategy'

ATLANTA (BP) — A new "coalition" of inerrantists and endorsements of its candidate is "very clear political strategy," Daniel Vestal said.

Vestal, pastor of Dunwoody Church in suburban Atlanta, responded after four pastors endorsed a proposal to create a new coalition around the "perfect, infallible Bible," and two of the four endorsed the conservative candidate for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Vestal, who announced in September he will again seek to be elected president of the 14.9-million-member denomination, is expected to challenge conservative candidate Morris Chapman, pastor of First Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, when the convention meets June 12-14 in New Orleans.

Chapman will be nominated by John Bisagno, pastor of First Church, Houston, who announced his "historic" new coalition "of those committed to a perfect infallible Bible," and ended his non-aligned stance with endorsement of the 11-year campaign to turn the SBC to a more conservative direction.

"Morris Chapman is going to be nominated because the five former presidents (of the SBC) want him to be

nominated," said Vestal.

"Southern Baptists don't need a college of cardinals to determine the direction. We particularly don't need a college of cardinals who go on Caribbean cruises and then come back and determine who will have a part in the decision-making process."

Vestal referred to reports four of the five former presidents elected since 1979 went on a Bible conference cruise in January, during which decisions were made regarding the conservative candidate for president in 1990.

Vestal also referred to plans to "enlarge the tent of leadership," in the SBC, a comment made by Chapman following announcement of his nomination. By that, conservative leaders indicate they mean that the circle of leadership has been too narrow and, with Bisagno's new coalition and inclusion of prominent pastors, they will be more inclusive in appointments and nominations.

Four pastors — two of whom were member of the SBC Peace Committee with Vestal — have endorsed Bisagno's call for a new coalition.

"What is happening is a very clear political strategy to 'enlarge the tent'

of leadership in the central core. The college of cardinals is reaching out to a select group of influential pastors in order to perpetuate the control of the past 11 years by enlisting fresh leadership into it," Vestal said.

"This is part of the problem. The SBC does not need an episcopate, a presbytery, a college of cardinals. We do not need to be a centrally controlled denomination by a centrally controlling group determining who can and who cannot be part of Southern Baptist life."

Vestal said Bisagno has been a close friend and noted: "I cannot speak for John in terms of his motivation; I am sure he is acting out of his own conscience. These men — Bisagno, Gregory, Fuller, and Henry — are my brothers in the Lord and in the ministry. They know my heart; they know my theological convictions. I think they know my desire for theological integrity in the institutions as well as reconciliation in the convention.

"The phrase they are using now to build their 'new coalition' is the 'perfect Bible,'" he said. "The problem is not with the Bible; the problem is

with us. We don't understand the Bible perfectly, we don't preach it perfectly, we don't live by it perfectly.

"I know myself to be a flawed, frail human being who is a sinful, selfish sinner. I need the grace of God in Jesus Christ and, praise God, I have experienced it.

"They seem to be extending their hands and their heart only to those who interpret the Bible the way they interpret it and only to those who will confess it the way they express it. This is not a broadening but a narrowing and a creedalizing. It is broadening only in the sense that a few individuals who are key and influential have been invited in.

"I offer my hand and my heart to all who have experienced the grace of God in Jesus Christ."

Vestal concluded by noting he does not want to go back before 1979 — the year the conservative movement emerged — but wants to "look to the future in a new way. I want authentic decision making and authentic cooperation. You cannot have authentic cooperation without authentic participation."

Nashville ministers encourage observance of Earth Day

By **Connie Davis**, assistant editor
Pioneer African missionary David Livingston instructed a worker to plant a tree the following day. The worker objected, noting the tree would require 100 years to mature and other work needed attention. Livingston responded that the worker should begin planting the tree immediately.

NASHVILLE — Nashville area churches are acting on calls for environmental activism.

Earth Day 1990, the international event set for April 22, and the Southern Baptist Convention's annual doctrinal study, *The Doctrine of Creation*, have coincided to draw churches into environmental issues.

Nashville Association's Executive Board adopted a resolution to encourage its 121 churches and 19 missions to observe Earth Day 1990, which is endorsed by President George Bush and 100 other countries.

Three other state associations in environmentally-sensitive metropolitan areas — Hamilton, Knox, and Shelby counties — were contacted by the Baptist and Reflector. The directors of missions reported local churches may be acting on ecological issues, but the associations had not taken official actions.

Chairman of Nashville Association's

By Soviet Baptists

Restructuring reflects perestroika

MOSCOW (BP) — In an era of perestroika in the Soviet Union, Baptists likewise are restructuring.

The Soviet Union's largest Baptist body changed its name, scaled down its statistics, abolished its general secretary post, strengthened its presidency and created three vice presidential posts responsible for activities once discouraged — and in some cases outlawed — by the government.

More than 700 Baptist delegates attended the 44th congress of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in late February, some of them traveling across 11 time zones to Moscow. They voted to rename their national body the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, a change that suggests more autonomy for Baptist unions in the various republics, observers said.

Delegates also heard firsthand accounts from Baptists in Azerbaijan and other Soviet republics with majority Muslim populations, where Christians have faced persecution.

Many Christians in these regions fear for their lives, reported Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, who attended the congress. Some Muslims have threatened to cut out Christians' tongues, he said. One Baptist leader said religious tensions have spurred 73 people in his congregation to abandon their homes; only seven have stayed.

In keeping with glasnost, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's thrust for "openness," Soviet Baptists scaled down their reported numbers from an estimated 500,000 members in 5000 churches to about 250,000 members in 3000 churches. That drops the union from the fourth-largest to the eighth-largest constituency in the Baptist

Christian Life Committee Carl Price said, "I really feel this is a positive issue that all of our people can identify with." He added that the emphasis "compliments" the ongoing agricultural conservation concerns of Tennesseans.

Price also has led his church to become involved. The pastor of Lakewood Church, Nashville, said church members need to become better educated, but are already making a difference because they garden, repair items instead of throwing them away, and conserve resources.

Price endorsed the Earth Day 1990 resource, "You Can Make a Difference." Eager to learn about the emphasis on tree-planting, Price said he has planted about 100 trees on land he owns although he realizes many will not bear fruit in his lifetime. "It's what I do instead of fishing or golf," said Price.

Price also frequents garage sales to buy used items and has begun recycling trash.

"I think it's reassuring that we're not being called in from left field, but to increase efforts we're already making," stated Price.

Marshall Gupton, pastor of Una Church, Nashville, said the church already has two projects that are improving the environment. The building and grounds committee oversees the

World Alliance, even though reports indicate union churches have baptized more than 40,000 people in the past five years.

Baptist leaders were concerned that "numbers must be true, especially for the Christian," Alexei Bichkov, outgoing general secretary, told the congress. "We felt we should correct the error, whatever the consequences."

The erroneous figure was first reported after World War II, and it may have included family members, Bichkov explained. Subsequent Baptist leaders avoided the embarrassment of admitting the mistake, he said.

The lower figure also reflects losses of Baptists, Pentecostals, and German Mennonites who have emigrated to the West, and 42,000 Pentecostals, who, in the spirit of new Soviet openness, have withdrawn to form their own denomination. Pentecostal and Mennonite churches have been part of the union since 1944 largely because of pressures created by communist rule.

Other losses, Bichkov said, include those who were baptized but fearful of being listed as church members and some who joined independent churches.

Delegates abolished the general secretary post as part of their restructuring and elected Gregory Komendant of Kiev as the new president. The union's new bylaws assign executive powers to the president formerly shared with the general secretary.

Bichkov, general secretary since 1971, was elected to one of three new vice presidencies. He will oversee education and communication. Nicolai Kolesniko, outgoing treasurer, was elected vice president for evangelism, a post that also includes missions. Both posts reflect new opportunities Soviet Baptists are exploring.

planting of trees and grass on 12 acres of undeveloped property. And its daycare center which cares for 200 children is beginning to use biodegradable eating utensils and recycle aluminum cans.

The church also renovated its drinking fountains when learning of possible lead contamination of the water, reported Gupton.

Gupton believes "simple commitments" will make a difference.

Leonard Markham, pastor, Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville, observed that the environment is "not something that Baptists and specifically Southern Baptists have dealt with. Sometimes I think we have truncated the Gospel in thinking of it in only one way, in thinking of it as salvation instead of the salvation of our world."

Opportunities for evangelism will disappear in a depleted world, explained Markham.

Members of Bluegrass Church will celebrate Earth Day with activities including planting a tree and art made by children, Markham said, adding "This is just a start for us."

Bellevue Church, Nashville, where Kenny Cooper is pastor, studied the issue during a four-session Discipleship Training course. Speakers included State Rep. Roy Herron D-Dresden, who is an ordained minister, and a representative of a recycling company.

One reason for the involvement of the church is the community's fight against a proposed dumping site for Davidson County, reported Cooper.

He believes the fight is secondary to the problem of controlling trash. The church has begun recycling copier paper and will begin using biodegradable rather than styrofoam

food containers. Some members bring their own dishes for the church's weekly meal, Cooper added, to avoid using the styrofoam.

Cooper personally has begun recycling newspapers, metal, and plastic items, which has diminished by two-thirds the four-member family's trash, he estimated.

At Nashville's Woodmont Church recently an assembly of several adult departments heard Charles Howell, president, Cumberland Science Museums and former director, Tennessee Department of Conservation.

The construction industry, the largest industry in the world, is not using environmentally sensitive methods and materials, said Howell.

During museum construction, Howell refused to allow the use of CFC-blown polystyrenes for insulation which in their manufacture emit gases that destroy the Earth's ozone layer or woods like mahogany from South American rain forests which face distinction.

He transferred his activism to his personal financial affairs. When he learned of the pollution practices of Champion Paper and Eastman Kodak, both companies located in Tennessee, Howell sold stock he owned in the companies.

The only way to love our neighbor across time is to leave them a decent place to live, observed Howell.

The Baptist and Reflector will mail to interested readers a concise list of suggestions for protecting the environment — including recycling, conservation, energy use, eating habits, transportation, and things to do. Please send a stamped self-addressed envelope. — Editor

One Woman's View By June McEwen

America's love affair with the automobile is often written about, analyzed, and puzzled over by sociologists and general observers of human nature. Some experts insist that the automobile has changed the way we live, our moral values, and our economy more than any other invention in modern times.

One alarming trend that surfaces in news stories is the violent response some drivers make when another car veers into their lane or violates driving safety or manners in some way. I suppose the psychologists will see such driving and violence as a result of stress and other pressures in modern life. But when a driver reacts by shooting someone, it is time to take stock.

Perhaps the best place to begin is to reflect on how each of us drives a car. There may be an analogy to how we drive and how we lean into life. Some people drive with great intensity, and doggedly criticize everyone else on the road.

Other people drive in a happy-go-lucky manner, behooving others to beware. Often these drivers move along accompanied by music from a

loud radio or booming tape player.

Then there is the older driver who has a very involved co-pilot. Looking straight ahead, this driver depends on information about conditions to the right and left from the co-pilot. Attentive drivers in other cars catch up on their prayers as they follow these couples through busy intersections and down the interstate highways.

The teenage driver has the advantages of excellent eye-hand coordination and the ability to respond quickly; however these advantages may be neutralized by youth's belief in indestructibility and personal immortality. Coupled with the desperate need to move very fast, these drivers present a special hazard to other drivers. Younger drivers seem to be in a hurry to meet their destiny.

Other attitudes toward life can be seen in drivers and the way they drive: this road is just for me; this is my space; you drive too slowly or too fast for my convenience. How we drive our cars and use the highways and streets can reflect how we live our lives. Are our habits and attitudes in keeping with Christian principles?

As we get behind the wheel and turn on the ignition, we need to think about how we drive and how we feel about other drivers. Do we live the way we drive? Do we need to change in either area?



McEWEN



Dr. Gerald L. Stow
Executive Director/Treasurer
Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes

God's Best Plan for Our Children's Lives

God has an ideal, a best plan, for everything. He has a best plan for our life, our marriage, our vocation, and our future. Happiness, security, and full self realization are experienced when we follow God's best plan.

Unfortunately, our first parents, Adam and Eve, forsook God's best plan for what they thought was best. God's best plan for children is to have a home made up of a loving father and a nurturing mother. Both are needed to provide the role model needed by both boys and girls in the home.

These are some of the reasons Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes seeks to

establish a normal home setting for the children we serve. A houseparent couple serves eight to ten children. They strive to make the cottage as much like a normal home as possible.

Each cottage "family" has their own transportation, attends a Baptist church of their choosing and plans cottage activities to reflect a home setting.

Many of our children have never experienced God's best plan for their lives. We do our best to help them overcome this deficiency by providing loving, caring houseparents. We also seek to model a Christian marriage and home before them. Experience has taught us that we are mak-

ing a difference.

Recently one of our girls wrote to express disappointment because her mother had not visited her at her TBCH home. She wrote, "If you don't come to see me I'm going to stay at the Children's Home forever. They love me here."

Your earnest prayers are needed for this good work. Your expressions of love through providing support for the boys and girls enable us to keep up this good ministry. Thank you for helping us provide God's best for these wonderful children.

Gerald L. Stow

Children's Homes Have Foundations of Parental Love, Understanding

Two years ago, Trevis and Delores Robertson had two children. Today, they have ten. But the young couple is undaunted by the workload generated by eight additional children.

"I know it sounds crazy, but ten kids really aren't that much harder than two," says Trevis, a houseparent at the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. "Sure there are more dishes and meals and clothes, but when a child is in crisis, there always seems to be the time."

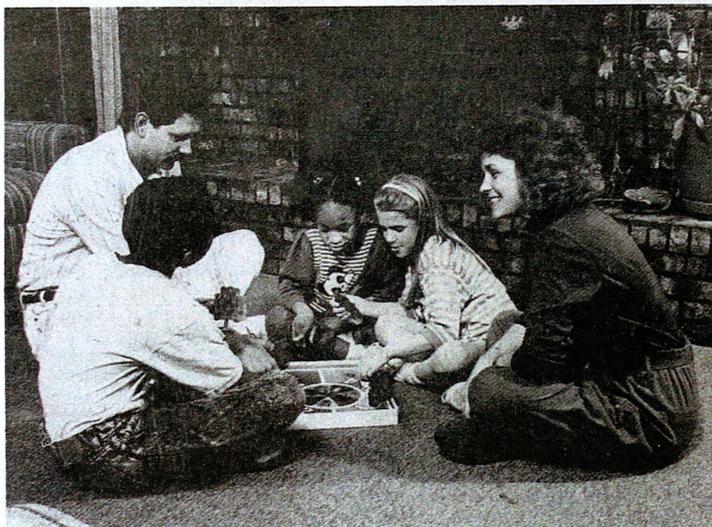
Trevis and Delores are among 32 couples who serve as houseparents in TBCH cottage homes across the state. In each cottage, the houseparents are mother and father to eight children supported by the ministry, in addition to any children of their own.

Their jobs are demanding, and require a balance of discipline, compassion, and patience.

"In each of our homes, we are blending a family unit from nine different backgrounds. The houseparents, and each child bring their own history and definition of family into the home," explains Linda Ludington, supervisor of social services for the Chattanooga TBCH campus. "It's a difficult enough task, for example, when there are stepchildren and two family backgrounds to blend. You can imagine the challenge with eight children."

In addition, many of the children brought under the care of the Children's Homes have admittedly troubled backgrounds. In some cases, the Tennessee Department of Human Services has removed the child from his or her home. So even though a child has parents, they are "orphaned by the living" because their parents cannot provide a safe and nurturing home environment.

"There are a number of reasons why parents may not be involved in their child's



Trevis and Delores Robertson, houseparents for eight children at the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, enjoy playing a board game as part of their extended family's evening activities. The Robertsons are among 32 couples who serve as TBCH houseparents. The husband and wife teams provide a loving, supportive home environment for children who have been removed from the custody of their birth parents. (TBCH Photo by Glenn Gregory)

life," says Sherry Johnson, a social worker on the Franklin TBCH campus. "We have seen parents with severe, long-term alcoholism. In some cases, a parent is mentally ill and not capable of providing care. Some of our children who have been physically or sexually abused have parents who were abused as children. So there's a whole heritage of family dysfunction."

Each child brought into a TBCH home is made to feel that he or she is an important part of the cottage family. They are given clean clothes, if needed, and taught the basics of good personal hygiene.

From the first day, the children learn the cottage routine of chores, meals, activities, and Bible study. Each child is expected to make his bed and straighten his room before eating a hot breakfast. The boys and girls take turns with chores such as cleaning the bathroom, vacuuming and dusting, setting the table, washing dishes, and folding laundry.

"A set routine is the only way to go, because the routine is a form of discipline," explains Trevis Robertson. "Before some of the kids came to us, they never had any restrictions at all. Their lives had been so

loose and with no direction.

"Once they learn what is expected of them — and that they can do it — they get a real secure feeling about living here. It helps stabilize their behavior, and gives them a more positive outlook on things."

Trevis points to the case of one nine-year-old boy in his cottage. The youth had been diagnosed as being mentally retarded.

"He was taken from his home by Humap Services because of the horrible neglectful conditions he and his brother were living in," recalls Trevis. "They had been eating from dumpsters because their mother was always asleep or drunk."

"When he came to us, he had major behavioral problems. And I wouldn't be honest if I didn't tell you that he was a challenge. But I believe that with God, nothing is impossible. So even though there were times when we felt like throwing our hands up, we just kept plugging along."

The youth became the first of six children under the Robertson's care to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. Today, his behavior is a marked change from his initial rebelliousness, and the diagnosis of mental retardation is long forgotten.

His transformation, the Robertsons believe, is not solely because he was taken from an unstructured family environment and placed in stable surroundings. More importantly, he was exposed to Christian love and guidance.

"The Children's Home is different from most agencies because we can help a child grow physically and spiritually. Children are taught by people who care about them and love them," says Trevis. "We don't just care about their life; we care about their afterlife. And that spiritual side can bring a peace and joy they'll carry with them the rest of their lives."

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On the way, it's good to visit Phillippy, Rally Hill, and Laurel Bloomery.

Here's Hope.
Jesus cares for you.

Tennessee Revivals . . .

First Church, Martin, held revival March 11-14 with evangelist Steve Hale and song leader John Broom.

Rob Finley will lead revival March 23-27 at Georgian Hills Church, Memphis.

First Church, Millington, will hold revival March 25-30 led by evangelist Don Whitt and music leader Sam McElroy, both of First Church, Milan.

Highland Heights Church, Memphis, will hold a Cambodian revival March 30-April 2 with evangelist Sok Doemg and music leader Glenn Smith.

First Church, Jackson, will hold revival March 25-27 led by Pastor H. Garrison Coltharp and Minister of Music Paul Clark.

Calvary Church, Jackson, held revival March 18-21 with evangelist Ed North, pastor of First Church, Humboldt; and music leader David Stephan, church music/youth minister.

East Ridge Church observes anniversary

East Ridge Church, Chattanooga, will observe its 50th anniversary April 8.

Former pastors and other staff members are invited to attend the service which begins at 10:30 a.m.

The morning service will include presentations by State Representative Paul Starnes and State Senator Ray Albright. Former pastor C. Henry Preston will deliver the morning message. Charter members of the church also will be recognized.

Following dinner at the church, an afternoon service will feature music and testimonies.

J. Barry Wood is pastor at East Ridge Church.

Shiloh Association reports the following revivals: Butlers Chapel, Ramer, March 25-29, Harris Counce Jr.; Center Hill Church, Counce, March 25-30, John Adams; Chewalla Church, Chewalla, March 25, Bill Spencer; First Church, Counce, March 25-30, Philip Cooper; Eastview Church, Ramer, March 25-28, leader name not available; Forty Forks Church, Bethel Springs, March 29-April 1, Vern Mehr and Roger Hatch; Gravel Hill Church, Ramer, March 25-April 1, Jimmy Garrett; Lakeview Church, Selmer, March 25-28, Randy Isbell; Mount Hermon Church, Savannah, March 25-28, Bruce Coleman; New Hope Church, Pocahontas, March 25-28, David Cooper; First Church, Savannah, March 25-28, Steve Hardwick; Second Church, Savannah, March 25-29, Eddie Alexander; First Church, Selmer, March 25-28, D. L. Lowrie; Sharon Church, Savannah, March 25-30, Cy Smith; South Side Church, Savannah, March 25-30, Mike Howard; Turkey Creek Church, Savannah, March 25-30, Ken Altom; and West Shiloh Church, Stantonville, March 25-30, Noel Edwards.

First Church, Troy, will hold revival March 25-29 led by Ben Wilkes, pastor of Trinity Church, Manchester.

First Church, Camden, will hold revival March 25-29 led by Ken Richey. Chip Leake will lead music.

Notchey Creek Church, Madisonville, held a youth-led revival March 12-15. Larry Coleman was evangelist.

McMinn-Meigs Association reported the following revivals to be held the week of March 25: New Bethel Church, Etowah, Paul Wiley; Zion Hill Church, Englewood, Pete Mullins; and Shiloh Church, Decatur, Paul Fox.

Harmony Church, Whiteville, will hold revival March 25-30 led by Robbie Howard and Ronnie Cottingham.

Holly Grove Church, Bells, will hold revival March 25-30.

Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga, will hold revival March 30-April 1.

First Church, Clarksville, will hold revival March 25-28 with evangelist George Harris.

Weakley County Association reports the following upcoming revivals: First Church, Greenfield, March 24-27, Mark Wilson; First Church, Dresden, March 25-28, Raymond Boston; First Church, Sharon, March 25-28, Kermit Brann; Long Heights Church, McKenzie, March 25-29, Roger Taylor; Bethel Church, Greenfield, March 25-30, Kelley Campbell; Jolley Springs Church, Gleason, March 25-30, Jerry Wiggins; New Hope Church, Palmersville, March 25-30, Richard Skidmore; Southside Church, Martin, March 26-April 1, Harold Cathey; Gearin's Chapel, Greenfield, March 28-April 1, R. Charles Blair; and Thompson Creek Church, Como, March 30-April 1, Leon Penick.

Western District Association reports the following revivals for the week of March 25: Bethlehem Church, Henry, Bob Copeland; Birds Creek Church, Paris, Harry Lee Morris; Jones Chapel Church, Paris, Floyd Lammersfield; McDavid Grove Church, Springville, Dennis Beal; Point Pleasant Church, Buchanan, David Brasher; Springhill Church, Paris, Terry White; Union Friendship Church, Como, Leon Penick; and West Paris Church, Paris, Dean Wallace. In addition, New Hope Church, Paris, will conclude revival led by Kenny Carr March 23.

Etter Church, Byrdstown, held revival March 18-21 led by Gary Cobb.

D. L. Lowrie led revival March 11-14 at Memorial Church, Livingston.

Gibson Association reported the following upcoming revivals: Chapel Hill Church, Milan, March 20-April 1, Union University Team; Clear Creek Church, Dyer, March 30-April 1, J. O. Smothers; First Church, Dyer, April 1-4, Ron Davidson; Eldad Church, Trenton, April 1-4, Max Walker; Fellowship Church, Milan, April 1-6, Ted Thedford; Hillcrest Church, Trenton, April 1-8, Tommy Stevens; Mount Pisgah Church, Bradford, March 28-April 1, Union University Team; Smyrna Church, Humboldt, April 1, Hyran Barefoot; Southside Church, Humboldt, March 26-April 1, King Thetford; Spring Hill Church, Trenton, April 1-3, Garry Burkacki; and First Church, Trenton, March 26-April 1, Gayle Alexander.

John McBride will lead revival March 28-April 1 at Forest Hill Church, Memphis.

Ordinations . . .

Pleasant Grove Church, Coalfield, ordained Lewis Carson, John Jackson, David Lindsay, and Larry Pemberton as deacons Feb. 25.

Jeff Emison, was recently ordained as deacon at Parkview Church, Jackson.

Beecher Underwood and Paul Brewer were ordained as deacons March 11 at Brotherton Church, Cookeville.

Concord Church, Chattanooga, recently ordained David Maddox as deacon.

Greg Johannsen was ordained to the ministry Feb. 25 by First Church, Knoxville. Johannsen will be pastor of the Holston Deaf Mission.

Tennessee missionaries on the move

Ralph and Lynda Bethea, missionaries to Kenya, are on the field in Mombasa. Bethea was born in Chicago, Ill., but considers Memphis his hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1984.

Harold and Dorothy Blankenship, Baptist representatives to Morocco, are on furlough in North Carolina. Blankenship, a native of Flag Pond, grew up in Erwin. They began serving with the FMB in 1965.

Daryl and Glenda Cox, missionaries to Liberia, are now on the field, Cox, a native of California, considers Lake City his hometown. They were appointed by the FMB in 1985.

Carter and Charlotte Davis, missionaries to Grenada, are back on the field in St. George's after furlough. Davis is a native of Knoxville while his wife hails from Nashville. They were appointed by the FMB in 1976.

Bert and Ruth Dyson, missionaries to Sierra Leone, are in Tennessee on furlough. They may be reached at 2832 Kenway Road, Nashville, Tenn. 37215. Mrs. Dyson is a native of Nashville and also lived in Tullahoma. They were appointed by the FMB in 1955.

Elton and Dottie Gray, mis-

sionaries to Japan, are in Arkansas on furlough. Gray is a native of Loretto. The couple was appointed to the mission field in 1970.

John and Florence Griggs, missionaries to Zimbabwe, are on the field in Masvingo. Mrs. Griggs, a native of Kentucky, considers Jefferson City her hometown. They were appointed by the FMB in 1962.

Ron and Jan Langston, missionaries to Zimbabwe, are on the field in Beit Bridge. Langston is a native of Memphis. They were appointed by the FMB in 1983.

Paul Martin, missionary to Nigeria, is on the field in Abeokuta. Martin, a native of Kingsport, was appointed by the FMB in 1955.

Clay and Debbie Porter, missionaries to Hong Kong, have arrived in Kowloon to begin their first term of service. Porter is a native of Newbern while his wife hails from Somerville. They were appointed as missionaries in 1989.

Randall and Betty Rains, missionaries to Bangladesh, are on the field. Rains was born in Knoxville. The couple was appointed by the FMB in 1983.

Chris and Gwen Wilkinson, missionaries to Liberia, are on the field. Mrs. Wilkinson, a native of Fayetteville, grew up in Ardmore. They were appointed by the FMB in 1982.



VOLUNTEERS TO BRAZIL — Glenn Grubb, pastor of Madison Avenue Church, Maryville, recently led a group of Tennesseans on an evangelism mission trip to Campo Grande, Brazil. It was the ninth group Grubb has led to Brazil. The group led revivals in 13 Brazilian churches. During the week there were 339 professions of faith. They were assisted during the week by Southern Baptist missionary Carl King. From left, back row, are: Carl Miller, Ed Yarnell, Warren Gladden, Bill Pearson, John Sing, John Morton, Obie Campbell, and Glenn Grubb. Second row, Elmer Hurst, Mark Hearn, Gene Gann, Clara Sillman, and Abe Sillman. Front row, Paul McCammon, Charles Earl, Carl Asbury, John Churchman, Malcolm Pollard, and Charles Ridner.

Israel's lack of leadership

By Paul S. Moody, pastor; Erin Church, Erin

The last section of Judges (chapters 17-21) depicts that time in the history of Israel when their leadership was at its low ebb. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Not only were the people making the rules as they went along, they also disregarded the first commandment which is the foundation stone for everything else. A house which is built upon a faulty base will not weather the elements and will soon begin to crack and fall. In like manner, any life which ignores the sovereignty of Almighty God is bound for a great fall. We shall see many falls in this last part of Judges.

Why were these stories included when they tell such a terrible era of God's people? Remember the Scriptures not only proclaim the glory and greatness of God, but, in an alarming truthfulness, they include the wickedness of man and his need for redemption. Some take these sections of the Bible out of context and hold them up as an example of the excesses of religion. This completely warps the purpose for which the Scriptures were given! At no time did God give ap-



MOODY

proval for the waywardness of His people. To the contrary, these misdeeds re-enforce the urgent need that man has for a Savior.

Micah, a man of Mount Ephraim, stole 1100 shekels from his mother and then returned them to her. Immediately, she had an idol made from the silver and gave it to her son for his home. Micah then appointed his son to be a priest, again violating the instructions of the Lord. When a Levite came along, Micah persuaded him to be his priest, obviously believing that now the Lord would bless him in spite of all his sins.

Throughout Israel's history she tried to mix idolatry with pure faith. And that will never work. The story of Micah and his strange ways is very familiar today. How many only use the Scriptures when they will affirm their actions? Some have been so bold as to indicate that giving money to the church insures that they will be restored four-fold! Some never assure that their words are true unless they swear upon a Bible or say, "It's the Gospel truth." Micah soon lost his priest and his expensive idol to those stronger. He could have found great profit from the Proverbs: "As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death" (chapter 11:19).

Judges 18:31 records a key to the writer's strategy in telling the disobe-

dience and sin which characterized this era: "And they set up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh." There is only one God! Everything else is a false image and to be detested. But Israel lacked true spiritual leadership and everyone "was doing it their way!" Recently we have seen how some have tried to make us believe that they have special revelations and visions from God. And many misguided, innocent people have believed their stories. But there is a solution: return to the standard. The Bible is that standard. Jesus Christ is the standard. Never follow anyone who tries to add to or subtract from that standard.

BIBLE BOOK SERIES

March 25 Lesson

Basic Passage: Judges 17:1 to 21:25

Focal Passages: Judges 17:6;

20:2-8; 21:6-7, 12-14a

The story of Israel does not improve in the last chapters of Judges! A Levite has to throw out his concubine to a group of base men of Gibeah because they are determined to enforce their homosexual desires upon the men of the house. After the poor woman is abused all night and left for dead, the Levite cuts her into pieces and sends them to all the the tribes of

Israel. He wants revenge! And all the tribe of Benjamin is reduced to just 600 men who hid in the rock of Rimmon.

There is an act of mercy in the midst of all this blood and tears. The children of Israel finally decided to keep Benjamin from extinction. Four hundred virgins from Jebesh-Gilead are given to the men and 200 from their own tribes. Blood does run thicker than water! In spite of all the hatred and sin, God's people were sometimes able to render good for evil. Although it was not very often during the times of the judges, it was evident enough to insure the mercy of God.

Could any time have been more wicked than those times? For the record, man has never really changed. Society has changed for the better, at least in the main. But man is what he has always been — a sinner. He is capable of good and evil. He is always responsible for his choices. The Lord does not hold robot strings upon him! He acts according to his own free will. There is that inherent tendency to ignore the instructions of God. The desires of the flesh are real and powerful. But their reward is death! No person or nation can bend His rules without breaking their backs. Judges is the prelude to the time of kings. There will be more order when the first king arrives on the scene, but not an end to crimes against God and man. Only one can rule over us and He is God!

Peter denies knowing Jesus

By Roger S. Oldham, pastor; First Church, Martin

Peter's denial of Jesus is recorded in all four Gospel narratives. Earlier that week, Peter had boldly proclaimed that he would never forsake the Lord. He insisted that even death would not frighten him.

The pressure to conform is a strong defensive mechanism. On the evening of Jesus' arrest, Peter faced this pressure.

Would he conform to the mob in the temple courtyard? Or would he remain faithful to the Lord? Peter's loyalty and



OLDHAM

strength were tested to the breaking point on this particular evening. Since wisdom is the ability to learn from the experience of others, Peter provides an important model for us. Let us learn three lessons of loyalty to the Lord.

First, notice that Peter shows the folly of arrogance. Spiritual pride is an awful adversary. Hannah rejoiced in the Lord when she brought her son, Samuel, to the priest. In her prayer, she had to remind herself: "Talk no more so very proudly; let not arrogance come from your mouth" (1 Samuel 2:3). Jesus never scorned the goodness of the Pharisees; but He repeatedly decried their pride. The prophets reminded the Jews to humble themselves in the sight of the Lord. The New Testament writers urged Christians to put on the cloak of humility.

Somehow, Peter missed all of this. Perhaps reflecting on his spiritual privileges, he felt that he was indispen-

sable to God's Kingdom. When Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times, Peter was stunned. He protested: "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" (Matthew 26:35). In his arrogance, he turned from depending upon the Lord to living in his own strength. He learned the difficult lesson that whoever thinks he stands is on the verge of falling (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:12).

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES

March 25 Lesson

Basic Passage: John 18:15-27

Focal Passage: John 18:15-27

This lesson needs to be relearned in our day. Judgmental attitudes prevail. Self-righteousness is the order of the day. Even in our churches, distrust, mistrust, sarcasm, and cynicism are rampant. These are simply the fruit of the deeper root of arrogance. When we forget that we are what we are only by the grace of God, we become prime candidates for a fall — just as Peter fell.

Second, observe that Peter demonstrates fear in conformance. Very few people enjoy being different. Most do not want to stand out in a crowd. Peter was confronted with this pressure on three separate occasions during Jesus' interrogation. There in the high priest's courtyard, he felt all alone. As he stood there, he made the conscious decision to blend in with the crowd.

When questioned by the young gatekeeper, Peter denied being a disciple with the simple, but emphatic words: "I am not." As the night wore on, his nerves began to fray. The inten-

sity of his second denial is captured in Matthew's account: "He denied with an oath, I do not know the man" (Matthew 16:72). About an hour later, he was confronted again. Peter was overwhelmed by his fears. Where were all of his friends? How could he be expected to stand alone? Frantically, he began to swear and curse, saying: "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!" (cf. Mark 14:71).

When we follow Jesus from afar; when we warm ourselves at the world's fire; when we surround ourselves with those who do not love the Lord, how quickly our spiritual resolve melts. Gripped by fear, we are reduced to quaking conformists, ashamed of our Lord and ashamed of ourselves.

Third, recognize that Peter received forgiveness in a glance from the Savior. This is the greatest lesson in the story. Luke reported that the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Can you feel the penetrating gaze of the Lord piercing to Peter's soul? As Peter remembered Jesus' words, he was cut

to the heart. He went out and wept bitterly in repentance.

As the Lord looks into our eyes, do we see His compassion? His love? His hurt? His sorrow? Have we stood for Him? Have we turned from our sinful lifestyle? Have we been obedient to His teachings? Are we faithful in the disciplines of prayer, Bible study, church attendance, witnessing, tithing? Are we, like Peter, warming ourselves by the world's fire? Are we following Jesus from afar? Do we break His glance by looking away?

Let us learn the lesson of forgiveness in a glance. Feel the glance of Jesus. As His gaze penetrates into the depths of our souls, let us weep the tears of repentance. Let us learn the lessons of loyalty to the Lord.

Divorce recovery workshop slated

First Church, Nashville, will host a divorce recovery workshop March 30-31 at the church located on Seventh Avenue and Broadway.

The workshop will emphasize the following issues: understanding your feelings, relating to ex-spouse and in-laws, support and friendship through small groups, determining your growth needs, relating to children, and growing through the grief process.

Louis Twyman, licensed clinical therapist, will lead the sessions.

Childcare is free to workshop participants; however, reservations must be made. The two day workshop fee is \$25 which includes registration, materials, light supper, and lunch.

For more information, contact the church at 664-6000.

Hillcrest Church calls Douglas Clem as pastor

Douglas R. Clem recently accepted the call as pastor of Hillcrest Church, Morristown.

The Kentucky native was most recently pastor of First Church, New Lebanon, Ohio. He has served other churches in Ohio and Virginia.

Clem attended Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky., and Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City.

He and his wife, Lois, have two daughters.

The supreme act of service

by Larry W. Fields, pastor; Central Church, Bearden, Knoxville

It is appropriate that we conclude this series of lessons about the Christian ministry from the Gospel of Mark with the passage about the death of Jesus as the supreme act of service and love. Every kindness, every deed, every act of service that Jesus rendered finds its fulfillment in His death on the cross.



FIELDS

For every Christian, this one event makes all the difference concerning our present life and our future destination. The story should never grow old. Each time we study this familiar event it should cause us to express our gratitude to God once again. He did something for us we could not have accomplished on our own. On the cross He paid the price to atone for all our sins. If we ever needed motivation to love and serve others in His name, the supreme example is Golgotha.

Judgment of the Romans (vv. 25-26)
The Romans had devised a cruel and painful punishment for criminals. Crucifixion was one of the most terrible executions ever devised. After the soldiers scourged and mocked the prisoner, he was led outside the city walls to be crucified.

It was not uncommon to see men dying on crosses in that day. The Romans were convinced that the

public show of a slow, agonizing death would serve as a deterrent against crime.

Usually a sign or placard was attached to the cross above the victim's head to describe his crime. Since Jesus had endured the mockery of a trial and there was no specific charge, Pilate had the sign read, "The King of the Jews." He probably did this to spite the religious leaders who had pressured him into his action.

Jesus suffered greatly on the cross. He gave up the chance of physical salvation so we could have spiritual salvation. Psalm 22 describes the suffering He went through for us.

Ridicule of the crowd (vv. 29-33)
Adding to the insult of the unbelievable physical suffering He endured were the people around the cross including the curious onlookers, the religious leaders, and one of the criminals crucified with Him who mocked and ridiculed Him.

Crucifixion was carried out in a circus-like atmosphere where the rabble of the community came out to scoff at the criminals. These actions would be similar to the heartless people who see a potential suicide victim on the ledge of a tall building and call for him to jump.

Next, He heard the familiar voices of the chief priest and scribes. They had their victory, but with their insatiable appetite for evil and cruelty, spewed out mockery, ridicule, and scorn. Our human instinct and reaction would have caused us to lose our temper and use our power to strike them dead had we been Jesus. But our Lord would not

give in to the temptation to come down from the cross. He loved us enough to face those cruel words which probably hurt as much as the nails in His hands and feet, and yet stay there out of sacrificial love.

LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES
March 25 Lesson
Basic Passage: Mark 15:1-39
Focal Passages: Mark 15:25-26; 29-39

It is tragic that the unrepentant thief was so close to Jesus, yet failed to see the truth of God's love.

Isolation of Jesus (vv. 34-36)
The only one of the seven last sayings of Jesus from the cross recorded in Mark is, "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me." Many scholars believe this is that time when Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us and felt strongly the loneliness and isolation of that transfer. This was when sin in its universal and unadulterated form penetrated His soul and He became sin itself. At that moment God's nature demanded justice. Jesus was alone, the man of sinners under the judgment of God. He had endured unbelievable suffering, but to be separated from His Father brought

death imminent and produced this expression of agony.

Rendering of the veil (vv. 37-38)
Jesus died after shouting His last words ("It is finished!" John 19:30). A dramatic and highly symbolic event took place at this moment in the temple. The huge veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the outside world was ripped in half from top to bottom (heavenward to earthward). His sacrifice on the cross opened the way for sinful men to be reconciled with Holy God. (See Hebrews 9 for more detail.)

Insight of the centurion (vv. 39)
It is thrilling to read the witness of the Roman centurion, especially when you remember that his expression of faith came without prior knowledge of Jesus and that his words could have gotten him into serious trouble with the Romans and the Jews. He could not help expressing his belief that this man was the Son of God.

Like the centurion, when we observe the life of service Jesus demonstrated culminated by His supreme act of love on the cross, we cannot help taking that first step in faith that leads to salvation.

Holston Association sponsors 'Raising Cain'

Holston Association will sponsor "Raising Cain," a conference for parents and leaders of teenagers April 21 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. at the River Terrace Hotel in Gatlinburg.

Conference topics will include "Normal teens - how they develop," "Road hazards along the way - keeping them between the ditches," "Sex and sexuality," "Communicating with teens," and "What makes a healthy family."

Paul A. Warren, medical director of Minirth-Meier Clinic Child and Adolescent Behavioral Unit (inpatient) at Wysong Medical Center in McKinney, Texas,



WARREN

will lead the conference. The conference will be held in conjunction with the association's annual youth retreat. A Gospel concert will be held April 20 at 8:30 p.m. in Mills Auditorium in Gatlinburg, featuring Highest Praise and NEWSONG. Registration for the parents/leaders conference is \$5 per person and should be made by April 18. Overnight accommodations should be made by April 6. For additional information about reservations and rooms, contact Holston Association at (615) 929-1196.

Milton church calls Holloway as pastor

Wards Grove Church, Milton, recently called Mike Holloway as pastor. He formerly served First Church, Bethel Springs; Piney Grove Church, Bolivar; and Rossville Church, Rossville, where he was ordained in 1982.

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Get-Together for Baptist Women
April 20-22, 1990
Gatlinburg Convention Center
Registration Fee — \$10 nonrefundable
deadline — April 9

GENERAL SESSIONS:
Friday — 8:00 P.M.
Saturday — 8:30 A.M.
Saturday — 7:15 P.M.
Sunday — 8:30-9:30, 9:45-11:00 A.M.

Program will include missionary testimonies, 11 conference choices, music, dramatic theme interpretations, new and "old" friends.

Conference options: Knowing and Doing God's Will; Pressed Between Two Generations; Where Is God When It Hurts; Seeing the Need and Seizing the Moment; Sharing As You Go; Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself; Hey, I'm Gifted! and missionary conferences about Inner City Philadelphia, Multi-family Ministry in Jefferson City, Mo.; The Challenge of Japan and the Excitement of Namibia.

Rooms have been blocked in name of Tennessee WMU at River Terrace Resort, 1-800-221-6005, \$53 per room. Other motels are available, but no rooms have been blocked at those. For more information, contact Tennessee WMU at (615) 371-2038.

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Compiled from Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention

Cambodia approves visas for Southern Baptists

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — The Cambodian government agreed in February to grant visas allowing Southern Baptist representatives to live in that country for the first time.

The visa approval and decision to place Southern Baptist personnel in Cambodia came during a survey visit to that country by representatives of Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization. CSI has tried unsuccessfully for three years to obtain residence visas for workers directing aid projects in Cambodia. "We're doing all we can from outside the country," said Jack Shelby, CSI's Hong Kong-based administrator. "If we're going to expand our program, we must have people living there to expedite the projects. Now is the time to do that."

CSI representatives Bruce and Gloria Carlton are scheduled to move in April from their base in Hong Kong to Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital. Carlton directs CSI's Cambodia program, which focuses primarily on health-care services.

The survey team of Shelby, Carlton, and development specialist Fred Kauffman found the situation in Cambodia "much more secure than we had anticipated," Shelby reported. "The country's stability has improved tremendously just in the last six months."

Spanish evangelicals, Jews win new rights

MADRID, Spain — Evangelical Christians and Jews gained new legal recognition and rights as the Spanish government signed a first-ever agreement with non-Roman Catholic religious groups Feb. 21, according to a report in the daily newspaper El Pais.

The agreement provides legal recognition of Jewish and evangelical marriages, offers religious instruction in different faiths in public schools when parents desire it and opens the way for non-Catholic clergy to enroll in the social security system. Catholicism has dominated Spain for centuries.

The document was signed by Enrique Mugica, the justice minister; Jose Cardona, a Baptist pastor and general secretary of the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities, representing 13 evangelical and Protestant faiths; and Samuel Toledano, representing the Spanish Jewish community.

The accord also provides an income tax deduction plan for church contributions. The evangelical and Jewish groups turned down an offer to share in the proceeds of the current "religious tax," in which taxpayers designate a portion of their annual income taxes to a specific religious or social service entity. The

In California church**Revival breaks out before 'Here's Hope' meeting**

OAKLAND, Calif. (BP) — A California church has been forced to postpone its "Here's Hope" revival because advance outreach already has brought in 1250 new converts, filling the church's sanctuary to overflowing.

True Vine Church, Oakland, will host its "Here's Hope" revival in September rather than April. That will allow the church to secure a meeting

hall large enough to seat the crowds that already are too large for Sunday services, Pastor Newton Carey Jr. says.

The 500-member True Vine Church has experienced revival before the scheduled meeting, Carey said. "How could you have a better revival than 1250 people already saved?" he asks.

The church will host a revival

meeting during the time scheduled for its "Here's Hope" revival in April but will focus on a larger "Here's Hope" meeting now scheduled for September.

"They're winning people to Christ so fast they can't even keep up with the records," says home missionary Bill Simms, who is assisting in the outreach.

Alabama's Tondera agrees to be nominated for vice presidency

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — An engineer and rancher from Huntsville, Ala., announced March 6 that he will represent Baptist laity in June as a nominee for the second vice presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. Steve Tondera, a former president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, said he agreed to be nominated because he believes the denomination is wrongly dominated by clergy from the conservative wing.

"As a layman, I will do my best to work toward returning the Southern Baptist Convention to efforts of mission and ministries and away from the control of a few for political power purposes," he said. Tondera, a part-time cattle rancher and senior engineer at Marshall Space Flight Center, is a member of First Church, Huntsville.

He was endorsed at the news conference by his pastor, Allen Wallworth, and by Daniel Vestal, pastor of First Church, Dunwoody, Ga. Tondera, who led the Alabama convention from 1987 to 1988, said he was distressed by the laity's faltering voice in the national convention.

Tondera admitted that the SBC vice presidencies are largely ceremonial posts, since appointive power lies almost exclusively with the president and the SBC Committee on Nominations. But he said his candidacy was more than symbolic. "It is an indication of the importance of the laity, and we make up about 90 percent of the convention."

Louisiana layman Boswell to be nominated

SHREVEPORT, La. — Layman and former Louisiana Baptist Convention President Raymond T. Boswell of Shreveport will be nominated for second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention at the annual meeting in New Orleans this June.

Former LBC President Scott Tatum of Shreveport said he and a group of Boswell's friends "believe Boswell is uniquely qualified because of his denominational statesmanship. He has served with humility and effectiveness in all areas of Baptist life, without being identified with any political group." The decision to nominate Boswell was reached "separate from either of the predominant political groups now in our convention," Tatum said.

When contacted by the Baptist Message, the Louisiana Baptist weekly newspaper, Boswell said that he had agreed to be nominated. "It's always an honor to be considered for denominational service," he said. "I will not be running for the office, but I will not run away from the opportunity of service."

Evangelize Romania now, pastors say

ORADEA, Romania (BP) — Western Romania's biggest needs are spiritual, not physical, according to Romanian Baptist pastors.

Poverty remains a problem throughout Romania, but evangelism is the biggest need in the western region, the pastors told a visiting Southern Baptist delegation evaluating human needs in Romania.

Many among 22 pastors at the meeting asked for help to launch a major thrust throughout Romania, especially in smaller towns and villages.

Iovan Valeriu, pastor of Talpos Church near Salonta, suggested evangelists should drive through villages announcing crusades over loudspeakers. "People would come," he said.

"Now is the strategic time to share the Gospel through crusades across the country," said one pastor. Another added: "We need to build many new churches. Now that we have the freedom to do so, we do not have the money."

More than 200,000 Baptists worship

in Romania, but many pastors are burdened with leading multiple congregations. Government restrictions on Baptists have hindered growth and outreach, and friction has developed in some areas with the Orthodox Church of Romania, pastors reported.

"After the revolution, we find there's hunger and thirst for the Word of God," said another pastor. "We need help with getting more Christian literature and help in how to teach it."

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board representatives have been meeting with Baptist leaders from Eastern European countries to determine how Southern Baptists can best help respond to evangelism and church growth opportunities in the region.

The board also has announced it will spend more than \$1 million in hunger relief funds donated by Southern Baptists. The funds will buy seeds, fertilizer and other help for farm cooperatives, plus medical supplies and equipment for a hospital and orphanage in northeastern Romania, where physical needs are urgent.

knock on doors, present residents with "Here's Hope" New Testaments and offer to point out a few key Scriptures.

If the recipient is open, the lay evangelists go through the plan of Christian salvation that is outlined in the marked New Testament.

True Vine is a predominantly black congregation, situated in a poor neighborhood of Oakland. The city is best known for its high drug-related crime rate and for being the site of the double-decker freeway collapse during last fall's World Series earthquake.

Just around the corner from the small stucco church building is the Acorn Housing Project, 750 apartments the government reserves strictly for single black women with children.

"Here's Hope" has been more appropriate than anything Southern Baptists could have done for us," explains Sallie Carey, the pastor's wife and church evangelism director. "When you see a family whose 14-year-old child has been killed in an accident, babies on crack, and you go to those families and say 'Here's Hope,' wouldn't that catch your eye?" she says, holding up one of the blue-and-gold New Testaments with the "Here's Hope" logo.

"This church has taken 'Here's Hope' to the N-th degree," says Simms. "It's just tailored to this church. I'd say it's the biggest thing that ever hit Oakland."

"This town is on the verge of a dynamic revival. Something is going to happen here."

Since November, members of True Vine have given one Saturday per month to door-to-door visitation throughout Oakland. The members