

Bold Mission Thrust costs hard to calculate

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists did not literally "count the cost" when they launched Bold Mission Thrust in 1976.

But how could they? The equation for their global evangelism/missions campaign would have been complex, even without such variables as global inflation and compound interest.

For example:

• Southern Baptists gave at least \$27.5 billion to their churches during the first ten years alone.

• That generated almost \$2.4 billion that was channeled to state and national agencies through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

• More than \$873 million in Cooperative Program funds reached national agencies and institutions, not to mention contributions from missions offerings, volunteer ministries, endowments, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and Woman's Missionary Union budgets, and other non-CP resources.

So what is the cost of projects initiated by BMT? What have Southern Baptists spent that wouldn't have been

spent anyway, trying to provide every person in the world with an opportunity to hear the Gospel of Christ before the millennium is out?

The truth is, nobody knows. Just ask leaders of Southern Baptist Convention agencies.

"It's hard to measure," said Keith Parks of the Foreign Mission Board. "I tried to get somebody to put some pricetags on Bold Mission Thrust. We worked up some for the Foreign Mission Board, but we couldn't get anybody to agree to them."

"It's difficult," agreed the Brotherhood Commission's James H. Smith. "It's impossible to put a pricetag on the numbers of volunteers — such as 1100 people who helped victims of Hurricane Hugo — or partnerships between state conventions and Baptists in other states or countries."

Added Larry Lewis of the Home Mission Board: "I don't know how you would come up with a figure. Our whole agency is geared toward these Bold Mission Thrust goals."

The Sunday School Board's Lloyd Elder also eschews a dollars-and-cents approach to cost-counting. "The accomplishment of Bold Mission Thrust

demands that every Southern Baptist dare to think big and to step out in faith in the sure knowledge that God wants us to be about His business of carrying the Good News to the ends of the earth."

Fortunately, the value of BMT is easier to discuss than its cost.

"Bold Mission Thrust has had the effect of keeping us on our mission target," noted Roy L. Honeycutt of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and chair of the seminary presidents' council. "All of us are moving ahead and trying to be involved in bold missions in every appropriate way."

"With the focus of Bold Mission Thrust, Baptists have become highly sensitized to the urgency of sharing Christ with the world," said Dellanna O'Brien of Woman's Missionary Union.

"I'm convinced we have done and will do more than we would have done without Bold Mission Thrust," said Lewis. He credits BMT's emphasis on setting concrete goals.

"During any period in Southern Baptist life, we have set goals for ourselves," Lewis continued. "However, I don't recall any time when our goals were so specific and clearly visualized as having 50,000 congregations and baptizing 500,000 people per year by the year 2000."

Smith sounds a similar theme, praising the strategies that have been developed to help Southern Baptists meet their BMT goals.

"Once we kept the objective before us — the evangelization of the entire world by the year 2000 — the mission agencies began to look at new

strategies to achieve those objectives," he explained. As examples, he cited the Foreign Mission Board's emphasis on presenting the Gospel in countries that are closed to permanent missionaries and the Texas Baptist Men Organization's formation of MasterLife discipleship training classes in prisons.

"If we're going to take seriously the evangelization of the world, we've got to take seriously the new strategies the Lord may have let us in on," said Smith.

Added Parks: "The primary value for the Foreign Mission Board is that Bold Mission Thrust has caused us to work hard at trying to correlate with the missionaries and national conventions to establish a planning process to accomplish our goals."

"As we were grappling with these goals, there was the awareness of the larger context of what we were doing. We began to look at the total world, not just where we were sending missionaries. We saw one-fourth of the world untouched by the Gospel."

Consequently, Southern Baptists — about five percent of evangelicals in the United States — agreed to try to reach ten percent of the 3000 population segments in the world that have not been presented with the Gospel, targeting non-resident missionaries to spread Christ's message in countries where they cannot live. Parks said.

The enthusiasm for BMT has not been unique to mission officials, Smith says. Laypeople have gotten caught up in the need to volunteer for mission work, and missionaries have come to accept their contributions.

Broad terms for SBC unity no longer effective, professor says

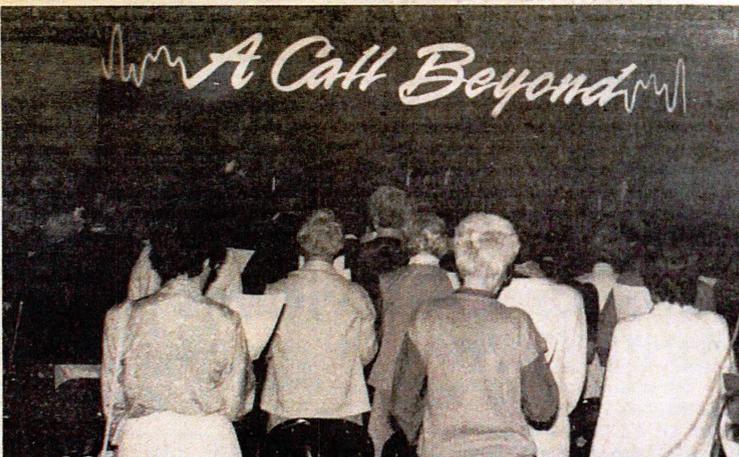
LOUISVILLE (BP) — A "genius for compromise" that historically characterized the Southern Baptist Convention has fallen victim to increased demands for doctrinal uniformity, said church historian Bill J. Leonard.

Until the current denominational controversy, the SBC stated its doctrines in terms broad enough to include "churches which reflected a wide variety of diverse theological traditions," said Leonard, professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, during the school's Denominational Heritage Week. Persons who "affirmed certain 'universally prevalent' Baptist beliefs were permitted to unite together in missionary action," he said.

Yet the SBC's lack of precision in defining doctrine also provided fertile ground for controversy and "potential schism as representatives of one particular theological viewpoint sought to

ist denomination," he said. However, the framers of the denomination's confessional statements recognized the SBC's diversity and resisted efforts to "define dogma too narrowly lest they alienate large segments of the constituency."

SBC doctrinal statements include the Abstract of Principles, approved in 1859 as a guide for faculty members at Southern Seminary, and the Baptist Faith and Message, the denomination's (See page 5)



BAPTIST WOMEN MEET — Approximately 1488 Baptist women throughout Tennessee converged on Gallinburg April 20-22 for the annual Baptist Women Get-Together. In top photo, missionary Jennie Stillman from Indonesia leads the group in singing. Below, Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Katharine Bryan, center, looks over the program with Ruth Polk, left, First Church, Lawrenceburg, and Dixie Hausser, First Church, LaFollette. Missionaries and conference leaders addressed the theme of "A Call Beyond." The theme interpretation was written by Ernest Masley, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee in Nashville.

— Photos by Lonnie Wilkey



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Editorial**Recognizing danger of drug abuse — prevention is cure**

At the March annual seminar of the Christian Life Commission, participants discussed and heard messages on "Addictions and Family Crises."

They learned, said Louis Moore, CLC spokesman, that Americans are addicted to "everything from alcohol to drugs, from sex to money, from gambling to money."

It was agreed that Christians need to deal with their own addictive behaviors and help others recover from their addictions.

Sunday, April 29, is recognized on the Southern Baptist Convention calendar as Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday. According to Atlanta pastor Nelson Price, "Addicts are good actors and actresses. And our congregations are filled with actors and actresses."

Price's comment needs to be quoted early in this editorial — because many of us feel that discussions about addictions do not apply to us.

Alcohol and drug abuse victimizes millions of families. And many times, we do not gain that knowledge until tragedy strikes. We must be alert, prepared, and able to prevent alcohol abuse.

Education is certainly one of the best preventive measures. Setting the example is more than plausible. Part of the educational and example-setting process is observing and seeking changes in programming of communications media.

Television, print media, and radio are guilty of promoting the sale and use (which easily leads to abuse) of alcohol. Paid advertising is not the only message bearer. Characters in all kinds of situations are depicted in settings that include regular and abusive use of alcohol. Homes are seldom without the alcohol presence.

Bob Terry, editor of the Word and Way, Missouri Baptists' official newspaper, in a recent editorial discussed the drug abuse problem in the United States. He reminded readers that cocaine has been declared a national

enemy, and that Americans say they are more concerned about drugs than about the national economy or world peace.

"Yet," he said, "the United States allows almost unrestricted advertising of a much deadlier drug — alcohol. In the year that cocaine claimed 2000 deaths, alcohol killed more than 125,000 in the United States."

We agree that alcohol is the single most addictive and widely consumed drug in the nation. Again, from Editor Terry:

"Despite this gruesome statistic, alcohol faces few advertising restrictions.

"Alcohol is connected to practically every major sports event. Alcohol is pictured as an essential ingredient in social gatherings and affiliated with many events that attract young people. Drinking is depicted as glamorous and consequence-free.

"The Center for Science in the Public Interests found that more than \$2 billion is spent annually to advertise alcohol in this country."

Recent news of introduction of a bill requiring strict health and safety warnings for alcoholic beverages gives us hope. Tennessee Senator Albert Gore and Massachusetts Representative Joseph Kennedy were convincing messengers in introducing the legislation. We will be interested observers as to the outcome, and we encourage Tennessee Baptists to make their feelings known to congressional representatives.

The Gore-Kennedy bills would be broad in scope. They would require warning labels that could have the effect of eliminating fifteen- and thirty-second broadcast ads because of the time taken by the warning itself. And the legislation applies also to print and outdoor advertising.

The National Association of Broadcasters has complained already about the proposals, sending a letter of opposition to all members of Congress.

The letter reminds Congress that advertising is the "sole source of revenue" for local radio and television broadcasters. Restrictions,

says the letter, would reduce the stations' ability to "serve the needs and interests of communities."

A spokesperson for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, however, has cited a poll soon after the Gore-Kennedy news showing that 73 percent of the respondents favored the print and broadcast warning labels, and 42 percent favored an outright ban.

The House is expected to hear Kennedy's bill within a bill, but as yet Gore's bill has not been scheduled in the Senate.

Despite statements from brewers and distillers that their advertising is for brand recognition — we know better. Such massive amounts of persuasion are meant to gain new drinkers — and to hold those already addicted.

Economically, alcohol costs \$130 billion annually. We have been advised to avoid drinking before or during driving, operating machinery, taking medications, or engaging in any other activity requiring judgments, and while pregnant. Isn't it logical that any product that restrictive and damaging to mental judgment is not safe for consumption?

By playing on the conscience with such reminders as "Know when to say when," brewers and distillers paint an image that they really are trying to be responsible citizens. They fail to prove that point.

But the best message is abstinence. When — is before you begin, not after you have started. It is like saying, "Don't drink too much poison. Then it won't hurt as badly."

On April 29, we urge Tennessee Baptist churches to unite and proclaim war on drug and alcohol abuse. Help the afflicted to recover. Alcohol and drugs are closely intertwined, and users (and abusers) of one easily become addicted to the other.

Churches must educate members, thus destroying that "All American" myth of the "good appeal" of alcohol and drugs. The Christian life must get involved in the war. Our national well-being is at stake — and our souls. — WFA

Churches can lead in helping care for AIDS victims

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP) — The church is uniquely qualified to help care for people suffering from AIDS and their families, an Oklahoma City physician and home missionary said.

Fred L. Loper, a national missionary for medical missions serving through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, spoke to ethics classes at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., on "AIDS and the Church."

Loper described how AIDS spreads and provided other medical facts about the disease.

"It's definitely not spread by eating, drinking, or even using the same toothbrush," he said. AIDS also cannot be spread through use of a common communion chalice, he added.

The AIDS virus can be found in all body fluids and can be transmitted through blood, semen, breast milk, and vaginal secretions, Loper said.

Doctors do not know whether infants born with AIDS contract it before birth or in the birth canal, he reported.

In the United States, AIDS most commonly is spread by use of shared needles by intravenous drug users, as well as sexual intercourse.

Studies in Africa, where the incidence of AIDS is much greater than in the United States, have shown no occurrences of the disease in children from five to 13 years.

If they do not get AIDS from their mothers, they are safe from the disease until they become sexually active — even though they are bitten by mosquitoes that also have bitten people with AIDS, he noted.

As viruses go, AIDS is a "wimp," unable to survive in most environments, including the air, desktops, and sinks, Loper said.

Unfortunately, ministry to people with AIDS is not strong, he said, adding, "It's not difficult to take care of folks with AIDS, but for the most part, we haven't made up our minds to do it."

Recently he asked a group of Baptist pastors in San Jose, Calif., if any of them had members of their congregations who had been affected by AIDS, and 90 percent responded.

Pastors and congregations should make AIDS sufferers and their families feel welcome, he urged. "We should say, 'It's OK to be here. We will help you.'"

People ought to follow the example of Christ, who touched and healed lepers, the untouchables of his day. "He is the model for me," Loper said.

Many AIDS sufferers do not have medical insurance, money, food, clothes, and housing, he said, noting those are areas of possible ministry.

"We also need to offer counseling to help families work through the issues," Loper added. He encouraged students and their congregations to minister to AIDS patients and their families through listening and providing financial assistance.

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Seminary students form group; call for end to strife

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)— Students from the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries have formed an organization named Sons and Daughters of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Their objective is to "unite, and call for an end to denominational strife, and for freedom to minister unhindered, as called by God, in order to fulfill the stated purpose of the SBC's Constitution, Article II," leaders said.

David Burroughs, national coordinator of the group, based in Louisville, Ky., said the SDSBC steering committee hopes to have hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students enlisted in the effort before the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans June 12-14.

"We include people from both sides of the current SBC controversy who feel the time has come for us to be reunited under the purpose of the Bold Mission Thrust" global evangelism/missions campaign, said Burroughs, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Letters containing petitions and guidelines for the group's prayer effort have been sent to 1100 Baptist Student Union directors on campuses across the country, he reported. The directors are asked to distribute the material to students.

The organization is not sponsored by any other group and is not part of the

Baptist Student Union organization, Burroughs stressed.

"We did not talk to anyone at the (SBC) Sunday School Board about our plans," he said. However, the idea for the group grew out of a meeting sponsored by the board and other SBC agencies, Mission '90, last December, he added.

Financial support "comes from individual donations from people who support what we are doing," he reported.

The group is non-partisan in relation to the 11-year-old SBC theological/political controversy, Burroughs said, adding, "I won't say we're not political, because we do see some changes we want made."

One desired change is "to depoliticize the presidency" of the convention, he noted: "I don't see the SBC as a democracy where the winner takes all. There needs to be representation of all groups. That includes sex, minorities, whatever."

Steering committee members from the SBC theological seminaries are Ross O'Brien of Southwestern, Tyanna Day of Southeastern, Lisa Welch of New Orleans, Robert Ernsting of Midwestern and Greg Hugurley of Golden Gate. At least two SDSBC leaders are children of SBC leaders. Burroughs' mother, Esther, is an evangelism consultant for the Home Mission Board. O'Brien's mother,

Dellanna, is executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, and his father, Bill, is a staff member with the Foreign Mission Board.

The group is enlisting state coordinators to work with the steering committee, Burroughs said.

"We have adopted several goals," he noted. "We are asking students to sign petitions in support of this movement, and we will present these petitions to our convention president, Jerry Vines, in New Orleans.

"We are calling each student to choose a denominational leader from the national convention to pray for every day and to write that person at least once a month.

"We also are urging students to make their way to New Orleans for the convention, where we will hold a 'homecoming rally,' asking Southern Baptists to secure the future home for all Southern Baptists. We are not asking necessarily that they go as messen-

gers, but if they do go as messengers, we are asking that they vote their convictions.

Burroughs and O'Brien began talking about involving students in trying to end the convention controversy shortly after an address by Home Mission Board consultant Nathan Porter at Mission '90, Burroughs said. The pair enlisted a student from each of the other seminaries and held an organizational meeting Feb. 24.

"We realize that in ten years we will begin leading the world's largest mission-minded Protestant denomination," Burroughs said. "The fight of the past 11 years is not our fight. We want to be known for cooperation in the task of world evangelization, which has been our great heritage."

The group conducted its first state presentation during the Louisiana BSU Spring Assembly, where Burroughs spoke to about 65 of 316 student participants.

Teachers needed for work in China

HONG KONG (BP)— Slow response to requests for teachers in China threatens to curtail Southern Baptist work in that country, according to officials with Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization.

Only 17 Southern Baptists applied to teach in China beginning in the fall under CSI sponsorship. The organization earlier requested 86 teachers, hoping to expand its work from the 57 Southern Baptists now teaching in China.

"The only thing that's saving the program is the 30 teachers who have agreed to stay over for another year," said Jack Shelby, CSI's Hong Kong-based administrator. "We will have to concentrate only on the schools where we have established relationships and will not be able to expand our program at all this year.

"Even in schools where we have teachers and established relationships, the number of teachers for each school will be drastically reduced."

Other Christian organizations working in China apparently are facing similar problems in finding personnel. Officials cite two main factors in the downturn of foreign volunteers: reac-

tion to last June's crackdown on student protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, and an upsurge of interest in Eastern Europe as that region opens up.

"English teachers applying in large numbers for teaching posts in Eastern Europe are apparently taking the edge off interest in China," Shelby said. "Also, many people are still afraid it's wrong to help China at this time."

Worley called as pastor of First Church, Sardis

First Church, Sardis, recently called David Worley as pastor.

This is Worley's first pastorate. He formerly served as part-time assistant to the pastor in outreach at Leewood Church, Memphis.

Ordained in 1989 at Leewood Church, Worley earned a bachelor's degree from University of Tennessee, Martin, and a master of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis.

The Hornsby native and his wife, Sherrie, have two children.

Tennesseans urged to observe day of prayer

The United States Congress has designated May 3 as a National Day of Prayer. Theme for the 38th consecutive observance is "Renewing America's Moral Heritage."

In 1952, by joint approval, both Houses of Congress called upon the President to designate a National Day of Prayer each year. Although national days of prayer have been part of the national heritage since the first one was declared by the Continental Congress in 1775, Congress enacted legislation proclaiming the First Thursday of May each year as the day of prayer on our national calendar.

According to President George Bush, in a National Day of Prayer proclama-

tion, "The great faith that led our Nation's Founding Fathers to pursue this bold experiment in self-government has sustained us in uncertain and perilous times; it has given us strength and inspiration to this very day. Like them we do well to recall our 'firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence,' to give thanks for the freedom and prosperity this Nation enjoys, and to pray for continued help and guidance from our wise and loving Creator."

J. Gordon Henry, Murfreesboro, serves as Tennessee coordinator for the National Day of Prayer. Governor Ned McWherter hosted a Governor's Prayer Breakfast in Nashville on April 25.

Tennessee missionaries on the move

Carter and Charlotte Davis, missionaries to Grenada, are on the field and may be addressed at P. O. Box 399, St. George's, Grenada, West Indies. Davis is a native of Knoxville while his wife is the former Charlotte Jones of Nashville.

Donaldson and Ina Frazier, missionaries to Nigeria since 1956, have retired from active missionary service. They served in Kaduna, Nigeria, where he was involved in Bible institute instruction and she was a church and home worker. He is a native of Blaine. Mrs. Frazier is the former Ina Sandidge of Maryville. They are living in Jefferson City.

Elton and Dottie Gray, missionaries to Japan, are in Little Rock, Ark., on furlough. Gray is a native of Loretto.

William and Gincy May, missionaries to Benin, have arrived in France for language study. Both are

Tennessee natives. May hails from Rockwood while his wife considers Cleveland her hometown.

Jim and Patsy Parker, missionaries to South Africa, are on the field and may be addressed at Kwa-Zulu Mission, 55 Highlands Road, Pinetown 3610, Republic of South Africa. Both are natives of Memphis.

Patricia Stooksbury of Knoxville and a missionary to Bolivia is on the field and may be reached at Casilla 3168, Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Mary Witt, missionary to Brazil, is in the United States and may be reached at 4700 Schubert Road, #504, Knoxville, Tenn. 37912. She is a Knoxville native.

Roy and Rebecca Worley, missionaries to Chile, are on the field and may be addressed at Casilla 551, Puerto Montt, Chile. They consider Memphis their hometown.



HOLSTON'S SPRING MEETING — In its 204th year, Holston Association held the spring bi-annual meeting April 17 at Calvary Church, Erwin. Host pastor Mike Womack, right, welcomed Clay Austin, left, moderator; and Joe Blankenship, nominating committee chairman. Several reports were given and officers were elected for the 1990-91 year. Keener Pharr spoke to the "Evangelism/Sunday School Challenge." Tal Thompson is director of missions. — Photo by Wm. Fletcher Allen

Our Readers Write

On doctrinal preaching

Recent issues of the *Baptist and Reflector* have been encouraging, especially those which included the call to theological renewal by Timothy George. He is correct — revival and doctrine go hand in hand. Who can study the great Reformation and not be overwhelmed by the place of the doctrine of justification by faith in preaching of Luther and Calvin? The First and Second Great Awakenings under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and Asaahel Nettleton were attended by protracted doctrinal preaching. It can almost be said that every lasting revival in the history of the church saw the marriage of spiritual awakening and the preaching of the great doctrines of the faith (and committed prayer for revival).

Thanks to Dr. George, we have been reminded of the necessity of Biblical-theological preaching. As he pointed out, this is nothing new for Southern Baptists. It was the late J. B. Gambrell of Texas who wrote:

"We may invigorate our faith and renew our courage by reflecting that divine power has always attended the preaching of doctrine, when done in the true spirit of preaching. Great revivals have accompanied the heroic preaching of the doctrines of grace, predestination, election, and that whole lofty mountain range of doctrines upon which Jehovah sits enthroned, sovereign in grace as in all things else. God honors preaching that honors Him. There is entirely too much milk-sop preaching nowadays, trying to cajole sinners to enter upon a truce with their Maker, quit sinning, and join the church. The situation does not call for a truce, but for a surrender. Let us bring out the heavy artillery of heaven, and thunder away at this stuck-up age as Whitefield, Edwards, Spurgeon, and Paul

did, and there will be many slain of the Lord raised up to walk in newness of life." (*Baptist Principles Reset*, [Richmond, Virginia: The Religious Herald Co., 1902], p. 247).

May "Here's Hope" revivals be blessed of the Lord and accompanied by "heroic" preaching of great doctrines of the faith.

Ben Mitchell
2521 Kingston Pike #1603
Knoxville 37919

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.

Literacy missions

As a volunteer literacy worker, I went to Upper Volta, West Africa (now Burkina Faso), three times during the Tennessee Baptist partnership. We taught people to read their Moore language. We volunteers could not understand what we were teaching, but we could teach them to read phonetically using the Laubach method.

There were approximately 150 literacy volunteers who taught during the five-year project, and about 300 people

learned to read. Career missionaries and some long-term volunteers trained the pastors to be teachers.

Now, eight years later, the Word of God is being read in the churches. They have 27 church buildings and others waiting to be built. They have pastors that can read.

I had an opportunity to return to Burkina Faso in January to help career missionary Peggy Grossman lead literacy workshops. We trained 42 teachers in two workshops and 36 were trained earlier.

Returning to Burkina Faso eight years after my first visit to train literacy teachers was a wonderful experience for me. There were students in the workshops that I had taught to read on previous visits, and there were students in the workshops which my students had taught to read. When God called me to literacy missions, I understood the message found in John 14:26. If people can read God's Word, He will teach them through the Holy Spirit how to better serve Him.

What a joy to see the excitement of those who learn to read His Word and understand the message for the first time. I have experienced this joy here in the United States as well as in Africa. Through literacy missions, we can be evangelists around the world.

Sarah Davis, director
Woodcock Baptist Center
Nashville 37206

Not silent

The April 4 issue of the *Baptist and Reflector* carried a letter from Rev. J. L. Miller that was very critical of the work of the Baptist Joint Committee. Though I disagree with all the criticisms, this letter responds specifically to the statement at the end of the letter — that this agen-

cy "remains silent" about a Health and Human Services report which "points out Baptists as contributing to suicide of teenage homosexuals because Baptists call homosexuality a sin." A simple phone call or letter inquiring whether we had in fact taken action — or reading the story on the October 1989 BJCPA meeting that appeared in the October 11 issue of the *Baptist and Reflector* — would have provided the truth.

When we received inquiries and letters of concern about the HHS "Report of the Secretary's Taskforce on Youth Suicide," a BJC staffer read the entire four-volume report.

She copied and annotated pertinent sections of the volumes for the entire staff, and, because the annual meeting of the Joint Committee was imminent, we made copies of this material for our trustees. They adopted a resolution that our executive director, James Dunn, subsequently transmitted to the secretary of HHS.

Shortly thereafter he received a phone call from a high-ranking HHS official, who happens to be a Baptist layman, and recently received a letter from the assistant secretary for health. Both communications thanked us, emphasized that the language in question was located in a background paper prepared for one of the conferences, and assured us that HHS "cannot and will not interfere in church policies."

The work described above is the kind of work for which the BJC is known: based on first-hand research, accurate, measured, eliciting positive response and dialogue. We did NOT remain silent.

Oliber S. Thomas, General Counsel
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Germantown pastor examines doctrine of ordination

By Wes Ellis

Comments in "letters to the editor" of newspapers and magazines reveal that many Baptists are not acquainted with the doctrinal stance on Christian ordination taken by our forefathers, who might be appalled at some of the positions of their spiritual descendants today.

Five general statements summarize what I consider the historic Baptist contribution on the subject: First, ordination is a public affirmation that the person ordained has been called and gifted by the Lord for a certain task or ministry. Second, it is a commissioning to do the task to which the Lord has called. Third, it is accompanied by prayer and is a pledge of prayer support. Fourth, ordination is the responsibility of the local church or group of churches. And fifth, while it does affirm the spiritual gifts of members and sets them apart for service, it has no validity and conveys no authority beyond the local church.

Traditionally, Baptists have rejected the function of ordination as elevating persons to a "clergy" class, an idea which has its roots in the Roman Catholic view that Christians are in either of two general classes: the "laity" — or common people — and the "clergy" — or "holy men." In that concept, only the "clergy" are qualified to draw near to God and to handle the "holy things" such as the Lord's Supper.

Baptists, however, believe that all believers are priests and that differences are in roles, not status. And

any member of a Baptist church may serve the Lord's Supper or baptize if authorized by the local church to do so. Historically, we have believed that.

The New Testament supports this view. Ordination, or "the laying on of hands," does not confer magical powers or elevate to a higher category of spirituality. Paul (1 Timothy 4:14) admonishes his friend not to "... neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery" (NASB). "Presbytery" refers to "elders" who commissioned Timothy to his God-called ministry, just as was done to the "Seven" in Acts 6 and to Saul and Barnabas in Acts 13. The "Spiritual Gift" was bestowed by the Lord, not the presbytery and not by means of the ceremony accompanying this (see also 2 Timothy 1:6).

In the New Testament pattern, people were ordained for specific tasks or ministries. For example, the Seven in Acts 6 were commissioned by the Jerusalem church to meet the needs of Hellenistic widows who were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. These Seven — historical forerunners of "deacons" — were certainly not "clergy" any more than the fishermen who were "apostles" were.

We can see this pattern operating in Baptist churches today. We rightly affirm, install, and commission (ordain) people for various vocational ministries such as pastoral and music. We also set persons aside for other local service such as that of deacons.

Ordination services for vocational ministers and deacons are very solemn and memorable occasions. "Worker Dedications" have the same functions and also include that of installation, but they are seldom as solemn and beautiful. We may not call them by the term, "ordinations," but isn't that what they really are? Otherwise, they have no Biblical precedent.

On a larger scale, the "appointment services" conducted by our mission boards by which new missionaries are commissioned on behalf of the churches are, in the truest Biblical sense, "ordinations."

Ordination by a local church naturally carries with it an implied commendation of such persons to other churches to which the Lord leads them. But the "credential" gives the person no authority over others and no "automatic" right to serve in that capacity.

When the new church family senses the giftedness and call to certain areas of ministry and elects, installs, or welcomes the person for that ministry, in effect it "ordains" the person anew, which is only proper since ordination is the responsibility of the local church.

Viewed in this way, ordination takes on a much larger meaning and a more solemn character in our churches. It encompasses all persons who are chosen and consecrated to their tasks after the church has gone through processes of prayer and of careful evaluation and screening.

It asserts a sense of the will of the Lord for the individuals and for the

congregation. By ordination the local church commissions persons to fulfill the will of God with the blessing of the congregation and of the Lord, and by it support and prayer are pledged.

All ministries therefore are sacred, not just those that appear to be the most prominent. This is thoroughly Baptist, and it is also thoroughly New Testament!

Ellis is pastor of Forest Hill Church, Germantown. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary, earning B.D. (Th.M.) and Th.D. degrees. He has served churches in Louisiana, Mississippi, and New York as well.

O'Guin accepts Calvary pastorate

Calvary Church, Union City, called Danny M. O'Guin, Decatur, Ill., as pastor.

O'Guin has served as pastor of Willingham Memorial Church, Ridgely; Samburg Church, Samburg; Clifton Church, Clifton; Mary's Chapel Church, Ripley; and other churches in Missouri and Illinois.

He served on the Committee on Committees and Committee on Nominations of the Southern Baptist Convention, and was an executive board member of the Illinois State Association.

Ordained in 1970 at Cottonwood Church, Ridgely, O'Guin earned an associate of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, and a doctor of divinity degree from Bethany Bible College.

Missionary to Japan aids Nashville family during crisis

By Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor
 NASHVILLE — Breaking the news of the death of a loved one is never easy.

Add the complications of a foreign land and language, and it becomes even more difficult.

But through the help of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., 71-year-old Kiyu Shikama Ohta of Otaru-Shi, Japan, was able to learn of her daughter's tragic death through her own pastor.

Tomoko Dunn, a member of Crieve-wood Church, Nashville, was killed April 13 in an automobile accident in Nashville. Her husband, Billy, and a son also sustained injuries.

Mrs. Dunn had lived in the United States since 1968 after marrying Dunn whom she met while serving in the U.S. Air Force in Japan. Mrs. Dunn had become a U.S. citizen.

After coming out of surgery, Dunn was concerned about who would break the news of his wife's death to her mother. Dunn did not want to call her because it seemed "too harsh." Plus, communication would have been a problem. Mrs. Ohta spoke no English and Dunn's Japanese is very limited.

Nor did Dunn want the news to be broken to his mother-in-law by the police or military personnel. "I wanted my mother-in-law, who is a Christian, to be notified by a Christian because I wanted her to be ministered to," he said.

Dunn asked his pastor, Joel Snider of Crieve-wood, and Paul Durham, pastor of Radnor Church, Nashville, and a long-time family friend, to help contact Mrs. Ohta. Both pastors were at the hospital shortly after the accident happened.

Durham, with only a phone number to go by (Mrs. Dunn had written her mother's address in Japanese), decided his best chance to reach Mrs. Ohta was to go through the Foreign Mission Board.

Durham called FMB President Keith Parks, explained the situation, and was put in touch with someone who gave him the names of some missionaries in Japan.

The first person Durham called was Annie Hoover, who has been a missionary in Japan for 40 years.

After Durham explained the need, Hoover assured him she would help. Recognizing the phone number to be in an area about 80 miles from her home, Hoover called a pastor there who was

like a son to her, Durham related.

In an amazing coincidence, the young man she called was Mrs. Ohta's pastor.

"It was the hand of God moving in such a way," Durham said, noting it was "absolutely unbelievable" for the first missionary he contacted "to be the one he needed."

Dunn agreed. "It was the work of the Lord," he said.

Just as amazing, Durham added, was that it took only about an hour from the time he first contacted the FMB to the time the Japanese pastor was visiting Mrs. Ohta and breaking the news of her daughter's death.

Mrs. Ohta was unable to attend the funeral of her daughter, held April 21 at Crieve-wood. Three Nashville churches, including Crieve-wood and Radnor, offered to pay the expenses to fly Mrs. Ohta and an interpreter to Nashville, but she declined because of health reasons.

Durham added that the missionary, Annie Hoover, even offered to pay for the two tickets herself until the churches could reimburse her. Hoover's willingness and unselfishness to minister to Mrs. Ohta is "proof again of God's hand" in the matter, Durham said.

As for Dunn, he has had additional contact with his mother-in-law. Dunn noted another missionary, Blake Western, called him April 18. He was with Mrs. Ohta and her pastor. Mrs. Ohta wanted to assure her son-in-law that she was being ministered to and that she had "received the blessing of the Lord."

Dunn said the missionary, interpreting for Mrs. Ohta, told him she was "amazed at how the power of the Lord can work."

Durham observed Dunn has displayed a tremendous Christian witness in the midst of personal tragedy. In addition to his wife's death, his brother, Warren, had died just days before from cancer.

Dunn, who is now out of the hospital, said he is reminded of a verse in Matthew in which Jesus said, "You are to love Me first."

"God is our first love and that's how we lived our marriage," Dunn said.

Since the accident, Dunn has discovered the lady who hit his car is not a Christian. "This lady has no one to cling to and no hope," Dunn said.

He asked for Tennessee Baptists "to pray from their hearts" that God will have the glory in this woman's life and that she will come to know Christ as her Savior.

CLC staffer accepts college position

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (BP) — Larry Braidfoot has been elected academic vice president and dean of the college, as well as professor of religion and political science, at William Carey College here.

Braidfoot currently is general counsel and director of Christian citizenship development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission in Nashville, where he has worked since Sept. 1, 1981.

Braidfoot was elected unanimously to the William Carey College posts during a special meeting of the Mississippi Baptist school's trustees, announced WCC President Jim Edwards. Braidfoot will assume his new duties in

May.

Prior to joining the Christian Life Commission, Braidfoot worked at Dallas Baptist College, now Dallas Baptist University, for nine years. There he taught courses in religion, philosophy, and political science and was president of the Faculty Council.

His publications include *The Bible in America*, *Gambling: A Deadly Game*, and *The Bible Speaks to Today's Moral Issues*.

His work with the Christian Life Commission has been concentrated in the areas of Christian citizenship, gambling, pornography, and AIDS education.



HOLSTON YOUTH CONFERENCE — Approximately 1250 youth from Holston Association attended a weekend conference April 20-22 in Gatlinburg. Top, Jamie Powell, youth minister at University Parkway Church, Johnson City, counsels with two of the approximately 80 youth who made decisions for Christ. Arkansas evangelist Rick Caldwell spoke. Below, the annual event was planned by the association's youth committee. From left, Pete Tackett, Antioch Church, chairman; Kevin Watson, Sunrise Church; Judy and Tim Bennett, Calvary Church; Lisa Russell, Mountain View Church; and Sara and Beth Walters, Grace Church.



Broad terms for SBC unity . . .

(Continued from page 1)
 official confession of faith, ratified in 925 and revised in 1963.

"During the 20th century, Southern Baptists have moved steadily, if not eluctantly, toward creedalism, all the time insisting that it was not really happening," Leonard said. SBC confessions of faith "originally used by denominationalists to preserve unity and avoid schism have become a source of division as groups debate the definition of specific dogmas," he observed.

Leonard emphasized the current denominational controversy has precipitated various attempts to interpret the denomination's confessional statements with increasing specificity. Since 1979 the already thin line between a confession and a creed "has become a particularly academic distinction," he said.

Some within the SBC have "gone to great lengths to ensure" that the Baptist Faith and Message be "interpreted in the light of the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy," he said. Others, he said, have "tried to establish their own list of non-negotiables as the basis for Southern Baptist theological unity." Still others have "attempted to clarify the meaning of the Baptist Faith and Message" by using other documents such as the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, he said.

"Intricate doctrinal definitions" have become more important to many Southern Baptists as a source of denominational unity, said Leonard, noting that cultural and denominational ties that once held the SBC together have collapsed.

Recent efforts to narrow the

theological parameters of the convention have "upset the delicate balance" that the denominations successfully maintained in former years. "By 1989, the real question was: How narrowly can the denomination define itself and still remain intact?," he said.

North American Baptists schedule Nashville meeting

"Mission North America — Facing the Third Millennium" is the theme for the 1990 North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF) meeting to be held in Nashville May 20-22.

The meeting is scheduled at the National Baptist World Center. Registration begins at 2 p.m. with the opening session at 3.

One important issue to be discussed is an executive committee recommendation that the NABF become an autonomous regional fellowship within the Baptist World Alliance. If passed, the action would move NABF from under the program umbrella of the BWA office in Washington.

An evening rally on the first day of the meeting features Bill Sherman, pastor of Woodmont Church, Nashville, as worship leader, followed by an address by T. J. Jemison, president of the National Baptist Convention.

The executive committee will propose Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler as NABF executive secretary.

Information about the program and registration fees is available by calling Kelly M. Smith Jr., steering committee chairman at (615) 228-7877.

NABF is a fellowship of several Baptist groups of North America, including the Southern Baptist Convention.

Louisiana BSU team takes 'break' in Memphis

MEMPHIS — A group of students from the "Bayou State" recently became "volunteers" for one week. A BSU team from Louisiana State University, led by Director Skip Noble, decided their spring break should be more than just a week off from classes or a trip to the beach. The 14-member team from LSU decided to spend their time constructively, doing missions work in midtown Memphis. The chairman of the BSU planning team, Ginger Griffin, had strong connections to Memphis. Her father, Robert, had recently moved from Loui-

siana to Memphis to become pastor of Peabody Church. When she contacted her dad to see if he knew of a place where they could serve, he didn't hesitate. Griffin, whose church has a relatively small group of children and teenagers, but a number of senior adults, immediately envisioned several effective missions opportunities for the BSU team from LSU. Griffin's congregation liked the idea and welcomed the mission team with enthusiasm. A church member moved in with grandparents and loaned her home to the male members of the team while the females stayed in the church's parlorium. Women in the church provided meals for the students. The BSU'ers accomplished a great deal during the week. A combination of students and Peabody members conducted a "people search" in the surrounding neighborhood, leaving tracts and a positive impression in almost 1000 homes. The BSU team also took an active role in a Sunday morning service at Peabody. And, BSU president John Vassar preached the evening message. Before coming to Memphis, Noble had sent word that the team also wanted to do some "manual" labor. Griffin relayed the request to James Kellum at the Shelby Association who was glad to oblige. Kellum arranged for the students,

along with some youth from Peabody, to spend a day removing deteriorated floor tile, sanding metal doors and posts, washing windows, and cleaning buildings and grounds at a site where the association intends to open a center for outreach in a predominantly black community. After the day's activities were completed, team members agreed their request for "real manual labor" had been fulfilled. The last evening the LSU students were at Peabody was the first night of the scheduled "Here's Hope" revival meeting. According to Griffin, it was evident the BSU'ers ministry had a positive influence on all age groups. One of those who responded during invitation time

after the service was a teenage girl who the mission team had befriended and to whom they had witnessed just two nights before. Griffin commended the BSU team for their efforts. "We are very much aware that some if not all of these students could have spent their spring break resting or vacationing. Instead they gave of themselves in surveying our community, ministering to youth and elderly alike, and raising numerous blisters as they labored at the Buntyn Street property. "And all of the ministry was done in a sweet-spirited way that fully honored our Lord Jesus Christ," Griffin said, adding he was grateful for the young people and the leadership provided by their director.



AT WORK — Members of the Louisiana State University BSU perform "manual labor" at property owned by Shelby Association.



PLANNING SESSION — Robert Griffin, pastor of Peabody Church, Memphis, discusses opportunities for ministry with representatives of the BSU from Louisiana State University. From left, Griffin, Skip Noble, BSU director; John Vassar, BSU president; and Ginger Griffin, BSU missions chairman.

Work begins on Bangalore hospital

BANGALORE, India (BP) — Ground-breaking in April signaled the start of construction on a \$400,000 addition to the Bangalore Baptist Hospital, a center of Southern Baptist mission work in India since 1971. The new wing will add 23 beds to the 100-bed hospital and increase space for treating outpatients. It will be used by private patients paying market rates for treatment, allowing the hospital to continue serving others who are too poor to pay. The aim of the hospital always has been to provide high-quality medical care to people of all socioeconomic classes and religions, said Southern Baptist missionary Rebekah Naylor, associate medical superintendent of the hospital. The new wing is considered vital for the hospital to achieve financial self-support, she added. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will pay half of the con-

struction costs. Also contributing to the project are more than 100 churches and individuals, including First Church, Dallas, which gave \$150,000.

Richard Johnson dies

Retired Tennessee Baptist minister Richard L. Johnson died March 4 in a Chattanooga hospital. He was 83. Johnson served as pastor of a number of churches in Arkansas, South Carolina, and Tennessee. He was a member of Central Church, Chattanooga. He moved to Chattanooga in 1959 and became superintendent of the East Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes where he served until his retirement in 1971. During his years in Chattanooga he served as interim pastor of 20 area churches. Johnson is survived by his wife, Clarice, and four children.

One Word More By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

I believe we Christians should hold a keen awareness of those who witness our actions. We should cultivate a performance for those who stand in the wings and applaud — or groan. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews makes a strong case for heroes of the faith. And he nails down the final peg in his argument by saying, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus . . ." These same witnesses were pioneers to man's faith in Jehovah God. "Some were tortured . . . others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated . . . wandering over deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth." Jeremiah was flung into a stinking pit. Elijah was hounded until he hated his life. Hosea lost the love of his wife and his home was a public disgrace. Amos was told to go back to the sheep. Zechariah was slain. John was beheaded. Paul was flogged, stoned, shipwrecked, imprisoned — and martyred.

Peter and most of the other New Testament leaders no doubt suffered in a similar way. But they did not relent. Somehow they had grasped the fact — all of them — that we are surrounded by "a great cloud of witnesses." They did not equivocate or compromise. They heard a different drummer and marched to His music. And before Paul ever spoke the words — they had "put on the whole armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil," armor for the soul. Tokichi Ishii did not know about Christ until he languished in a Tokyo prison in 1918, awaiting execution for murder. But he was witnessed to by a missionary, and came to know the Master. In his brief autobiography, he included toward the close these last words: "My name is defiled, my body dies in prison; but my soul, purified, returns this day to the City of God." It is strange that those who had to pay the highest price are often those who are most intense in their performance before the witnesses.



ALLEN

Here's Hope revival

Mercer church offers hope to Jackson woman

MERCER — After losing all hope, Rebecca Pairrish found it again thanks to a "Here's Hope" revival at Maple Springs Church in Mercer. A series of circumstances occurring over many months, including the deaths of her husband, Lewis, former pastor of Bible Grove Church, Jackson, and her mother; and the loss of a job, had driven Pairrish to the brink of suicide. But, at the urging of friends, she attended a "Here's Hope" revival in late March at Maple Springs Church. She knew few, if any, people at the church. After listening to the sermon delivered by Evangelist Ronnie Stinson of Kentucky, Pairrish felt led to tell him her story. Stinson saw the need and proceeded to take \$50 from his wallet and lay it on the offering plate. Stinson then told the congregation of Pairrish's depression and needs. What happened next was "a tremendous outpouring of love," said Pastor Kenneth Basham. "God moved on our peoples' hearts, the evangelist, and myself in a special way," Basham said. The congregation took up a love offering for Pairrish that totaled almost \$1400. "It was an outpouring of God's spirit. We had revival," Basham said. Since the revival Pairrish has been seeing a Christian counselor and has a different outlook on life, Basham reported. She found that "Jesus loved her and so did we," he said.

Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc.
Mother's Day Offering



*Showers of
blessings . . . Ezekiel 34:2
fall on our children
through people
like you.*



**Statewide
Goal \$950,000**

(Paid insert to the Baptist and Reflector)

Mother's Day Offering essential in work of Baptist Children's Homes

News reports in recent months have focused on the plight of homeless and abused children. Sometimes it seems as though their troubles are so overwhelming that there is no way to offer truly meaningful help.

But there is.

On Sunday, May 13, Baptist churches in Tennessee will collect a special Mother's Day Offering that will make a difference to hundreds of needy children in our state.

The gifts from this offering will provide one-third of the annual support for the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, a ministry to abused, neglected and abandoned children.

TBCH began as a single orphanage almost 100 years ago. Today, the ministry spans the state with homes from Memphis to Johnson City. Hundreds of children and dozens of unwed mothers are brought into TBCH care each year to receive loving shelter and spiritual guidance.

This work would not be possible without the support of Baptist churches from across the state. The Children's Homes has been blessed and sustained by years of prayer and sacrificial giving. Today, as in years past, mission groups from throughout the state are planning special activities to support the Mother's Day Offering. One such group, in Nashville, became active after touring the TBCH campus in Franklin.

"It wasn't until our WMU group visited the campus that we really had an idea of what happens at the Children's Homes," recalls Robbin Day, a member of Judson Baptist Church in Nashville. "Like most people, I knew that children were being helped, but seeing it first-hand helped me understand what a true mission it is."

Carol Dyer, a housemother on the Franklin TBCH campus, had given the women a tour of the campus and her cottage. She explained the daily routine of caring for eight children, and the constant challenge of blending discipline and love.

"It was a very moving experience," recalls WMU member Vivian Stephens. "We were almost in tears by the time we left. That trip motivated us to ask, 'What can we do?' And that's when we began planning our activities."

As part of their mission work for TBCH, the women made plans to coordinate an evening of activities at a cottage so the houseparents could take a well-deserved night off. They also decided to place Mother's Day Offering envelopes inside the church bulletins, and to have WMU members visit every Adult Sunday School Department in order to explain the need of the offering.

Another church created a unique way to raise money for the Mother's Day Offering. First Baptist Church of Mt. Pleasant is collecting a "mile of pennies" for the Children's Homes. A large glass jar has been used to collect coins since December. Pastor Daniel Carlen figures that at 16 cents a foot, the church has now "traveled" over three-quarters of its goal.

"We have a poster that shows a road from our church to the Children's Home, and we have been coloring it in each week to show how far we've gone," explains Bro. Carlen. "The kids have really gotten excited about this. One young man last week donated \$300."

Mission work such as this is encouraging news to Dr. Gerald L. Stow, executive director of the Children's Homes.

"We couldn't continue without the generous support from Baptist churches throughout the state," he says. "This year, the need is more critical than ever if we want to continue offering the same level of care and counseling to these special children."

For the most part, the boys and girls who live in TBCH cottage homes cannot turn to their own parents for guidance, support or even love. Through the dedication of a loving staff of houseparents and social workers, this ministry provides the counseling and spiritual guidance necessary to mend broken lives.

Tennessee Baptist churches, too, have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of these special children. The Mother's Day Offering provides a substantial part of the money necessary to provide food, clothing, shelter and a variety of counseling programs for the TBCH boys and girls.

Your Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes — with campuses in Memphis, Franklin and Chattanooga; cottage homes in Johnson City, Burrville and Kingsport; a Boys' Ranch in Millington; and alternative homes for unwed mothers in Greeneville and Franklin — are providing a new start in life for hundreds of children each year.

Simply put, this work would not be possible without the support of Baptist churches from across the state. Almost 100 years of prayer and sacrificial giving have allowed this ministry to continue.

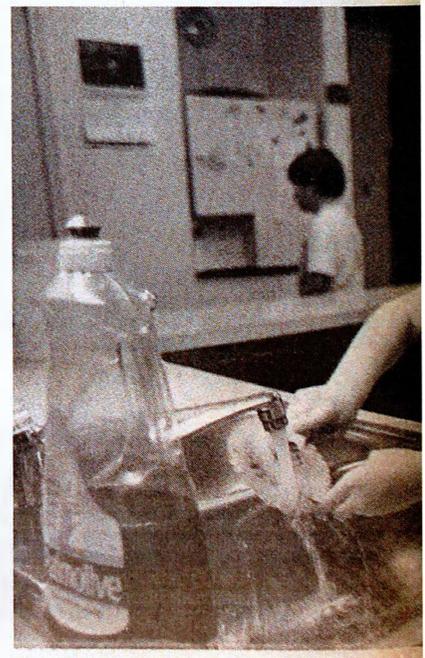
This year, the need is more critical than ever for a successful Mother's Day Offering. To help your church prepare, TBCH will provide posters, children's coin boxes, bulletin covers and bulletin inserts as requested. If your church has not ordered materials yet, please call 1-800-624-8591.

Gifts to the TBCH Mother's Day Offering may be made through your church, or directly to the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Central Office, 5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood, TN 37027.

The Boys' Ranch is the newest TBCH ministry. Located on a 224-acre farm in Millington, the ranch offers youth the challenge of working cooperatively to run a farm. Teenagers learn to deal positively with the family situations, while discovering the values of self-worth, hard work, honesty, and sharing.



A set routine is the foundation of daily living at each cottage. The children share chores each day, from doing dishes to folding clothes to making beds. By knowing what is expected of them, the boys and girls become more secure in their new environment, and they gain confidence as they learn how easily they can accomplish their goals.



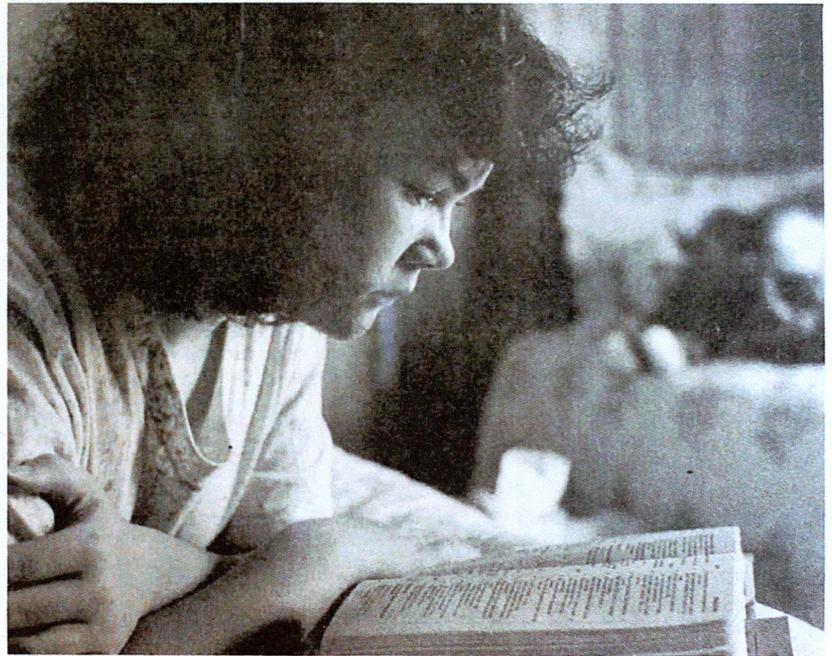


Building self-esteem is an important part of daily life at the Children's Homes. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate in after-school activities — such as track team — and to challenge themselves to meet new goals.

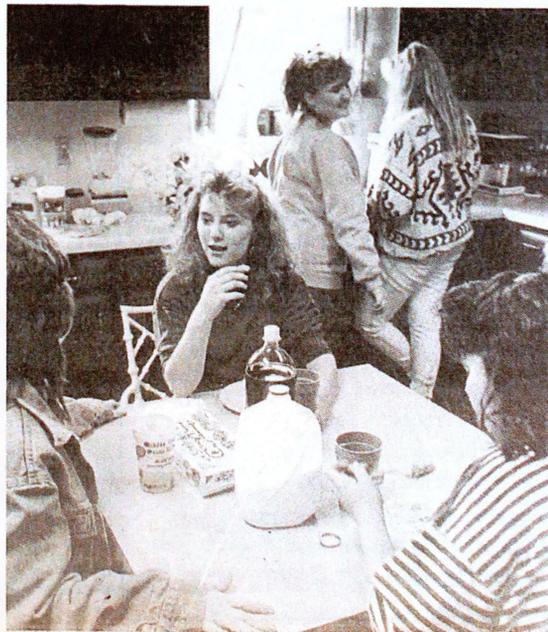


We give thanks for the young lives that are being changed on Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes campuses. Two weeks ago, photographer Jim Veneman spent the weekend at the Memphis TBCH campus. The images he captured reflect the emotional recovery and spiritual growth among our children.

Showers of blessings . . .



The teaching of God's Word is the foundation of the Children's Homes ministry. The young girl shown above chose to spend her quiet time reading Scripture. It is because of this spiritual emphasis that TBCH cannot accept government funds. Last year, 55 children came to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.



An after-school snack, pictured at left, provides a perfect time for sharing. These teenagers live in a cottage home devoted to the GENESIS ministry, one of several programs developed by TBCH to address specific needs faced by young people today.

Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc. Mother's Day Offering

Young lives can be changed through your 'Showers of Blessings'

a message from Gerald Stow, Executive Director
Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc.

Lauren cries softly to herself as she pulls the blanket over her head. Tonight, she's staying in a different house — again — and even though her sister lies sleeping beside her in the small bed, she feels very much alone.

She hasn't seen her father in months. Lauren, her sister and two brothers have been shuttled from foster home to foster home because her mother — with no job and a dependency on alcohol — is unable to properly care for them. Before the state assumed custody of the four siblings, Lauren had known how it felt to be hungry, beaten and even sexually abused.

The tale of Lauren's young life is far too common among Tennessee children. These young boys and girls have too often experienced a real drought of loving care in their lives.

Tennessee Baptists can provide a much-needed change in the lives of children like Lauren. The caring and nurturing staff of your Children's Homes provides a ray of hope in their often tragic lives. Not only do they receive emotional and physical support, but they learn about Christ. Through Him, they are led to a different kind of life.

Will you help provide refreshing showers of blessings for these young people?

Your Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes — with campuses in Memphis, Franklin and Chattanooga; cottage homes in Johnson City, Burrville and Kingsport; a Boy's Ranch in Millington; and alternative homes for unwed mothers in Greeneville and Franklin — are providing love and care for hundreds of children each year.

Please pray for children like Lauren and all the precious children and young mothers in our care. Your gifts of love and encouragement through the Mother's Day Offering will help end the drought of love and care in these children's lives.

Gerald T. Stow



A housemother offers a hug of reassurance and comfort to a teenager struggling with a problem. TBCH is blessed with a staff of devoted houseparents who give so much of themselves to the children in their care.



**TENNESSEE
BAPTIST
CHILDREN'S
HOMES, INC.**

We are a ministry owned and operated by the churches of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. We offer care, counseling and spiritual guidance to the abused, neglected and abandoned children of Tennessee. Among our programs are:

- Residential Group Care
 - Foster Home Care
- Alternative Homes for Unwed Mothers
 - Boys' Ranch for Troubled Youth
- GENESIS Ministry for Emotionally Troubled Girls
 - Emergency Placement Services
 - Transitional School
 - Independent Living Programs
 - Family Counseling

Our children need your church's help

This year, the need is more critical than ever for a successful Mother's Day Offering. To help your church prepare, TBCH will provide posters, children's offering boxes, bulletin covers and bulletin inserts as requested. If your church has not ordered materials yet, please call 1-800-624-8591. We'll be glad to forward the items to you promptly.

The Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes also welcomes church groups to visit any of the three main campuses or individual cottage homes. To arrange a tour, please contact the Regional Director closest to your church:

West Tennessee Region

Dr. Gene Gafford, Regional Director
6896 Highway 70
Memphis, TN 38134
901-386-3961

Middle Tennessee Region

Jerry D. Blasingame, Regional Director
P. O. Box 519
Franklin, TN 37065
615-377-6551

East Tennessee Region

Burl McMillan, Regional Director
6623 Lee Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37421
615-892-2722

Northeast Tennessee Region

James M. Henry, Regional Director
209½ University Parkway
Johnson City, TN 37601
615-929-2157

Central Office

Dr. Gerald L. Stow, Executive Director/Treasurer
5001 Maryland Way • Brentwood, TN 37027
615-371-2000 or 1-800-624-8591

TenneScene

... Along the southern border, from
Pocahontas to Orme, through Michie ...

Here's Hope
Jesus cares for you.

Tennessee Revivals ...

Pleasant Hill Church, Martin, will hold a youth-led revival April 27-29 with a team from Union University, Jackson. The Union drama team Impact will perform Saturday, and Majesty, of the Union singing ensemble, will provide special music Sunday.

Second Church, Dyersburg, will hold revival April 29-May 5 with evangelist Monte Shinkle.

Watauga Association reported the following revivals: First Church, Watauga, April 29-May 2, Haskel Ingram; Powder Branch Church, Johnson City, April 26-29, Jim Henry; Union Church, Hampton, April 29-May 4, Gerald McCants; Roan Park Church Roan Mountain, April 29-May 4, Allen Davis; and Immanuel Church, Elizabethton, May 20-23, Ron Barker.

The following churches in Maury Association have scheduled revivals: Santa Fe Church, Santa Fe, April 26-29, Dan Carlen; Riverview Church, Columbia, April 29, Steve Fehrman; and First Church, Mt. Pleasant, May 14-18, Benny Jackson.

The following churches in Duck River Association will hold revival the week of April 29: Cross Roads Church, Winchester; Highland Church, Tullahoma; Liberty Church, Winchester; Broadview Church, Winchester; College Street Church, Tullahoma; First Church, Hillsboro; Lincoln Heights Church, Tullahoma; First Church, Manchester; Prairie Plains Church, Hillsboro; Spring Creek Church, Tullahoma; First Church, Tracy City; and Westwood Church, Manchester.

Knox County Association reported the following upcoming revivals. All churches are in Knoxville, unless otherwise noted: Chilhowee Hills Church, May 6-9, Jimmy Jackson; Corryton Church, Corryton, May 13-16, Bill Stafford; Fairview Church, April 29-May 2, Arden Taylor; Galilee Church, April 26-29, Jim Lindsey; Island Home Church, April 26-28, Clyde Tilley; Marble City Church, April 29-May 4, Roger Hobbs; Meadow View

Church, April 29-May 2, Alan Smith; Middlebrook Pike Church, April 29-May 6, Robert McCoullough; Ridge-dale Church, May 6-9, Charles Fritts; Trinity Church, April 29-May 3, Mike Howell; Washington Avenue Church, April 29, Walter Taylor; Washington Pike Church, April 29-May 2, Bill Warren; West Lonsdale Church, April 29-May 4, Keith Hayworth; Buffat Heights Church, April 29-May 2, Doug Watterson; and Union Church, May 13-16, Brian Connor.

The following churches in Clinton Association have scheduled revivals: Royce Church, Oak Ridge, April 25-27, Lavoit Robertson; Bethel Church, Clinton, April 26-29, John Cook; Central Church, Oak Ridge, April 29-May 2; and First Church, Clinton, David Crocker, Stan Pylant.

Radnor Church, Nashville, will hold revival April 28-29 with evangelist David Walker.

Frank Houston will speak at revival April 30-May 4 at Henard's Chapel Church, Rogersville.

First Church, Crossville, will hold revival April 29-May 4. Walter St. Clair will lead the services.

Ralph Langley, Huntsville, Ala., will lead revival April 29 at Concord Church, Chattanooga.

More than 60 percent of the churches in New Duck River Association reported participation in the simultaneous revival emphasis. Participating churches are: Bethlehem Church, Lewisburg, William T. Harbin; Calvary Church, Shelbyville, Cecil Hopson; East Commerce Church, Lewisburg, Phil Glisson; Eastview Church, Shelbyville, Bob Haney; Edgemont Church, Shelbyville, Bob O'Neal; El Bethel Church, Shelbyville, Sid Maddox; Farmington Church, Lewisburg, James Haynes; Hickory Hill Church, Lynchburg, Buck Morton; Holts Corner Church, Chapel Hill, Frank Edwards; Larry Chapman, Jim McCord, Richard Lee; First Church, Lewisburg, Hoyt Wilson; Lakeview Church, Lewisburg, Wayne Cable; First Church, Normandy, Dan Knight; Mt. Lebanon Church, Lewisburg, Bob McKinney; Friendship Church, Shelbyville, Dewey Robinson; Parkview Church, Lewisburg, Charles

Williams; Rover Church, Eagleville, Jimmy Arms; First Church, Shelbyville, Homer Cates, Alford Royer, Carl Duck; Shelbyville Mills Church, Shelbyville, Jerry Winfield; First Church, Unionville, Steven Leathers; Wartrace Church, Wartrace, George Carneal; North Fork Church, Shelbyville, Tony Smith; and Short Creek Church, Christiana, Harold D. Smith, Ed Thompson, Kenneth Neil.

Churches ...

A new educational building was recently completed at Unity Church, Allardt.

Chester E. Swor, lecturer and author of *Very Truly Yours*, will speak May 6 at Temple Church, Memphis.

Former Imperials lead singer Terry Blackwood presented a concert April 22 at Parkway Church, Goodlettsville.

Members of First Church, Middleton, observed Friend Day March 25. The Lamplighters, a gospel music group from Crofton, Ky., presented a concert in the afternoon.

Members of Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain, recently voted to initiate a stewardship program designed to provide funds for the expansion of church facilities.

The congregation of Berclair Church, Memphis, will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the church and homecoming June 3. Former Pastor E. B. Bowan will speak in the morning service, and a pot luck luncheon will follow. The musical "Alleluia," featuring soloists and speakers from the first performance of the musical at Berclair Church 16 years ago, will be presented at 1:30 p.m.

"The Master's Musicians," a concert band made up of youth and adults from Grace Church, Elizabethton, recently presented a program of sacred music at Roan Mountain State Prison, and several churches in Tennessee and Georgia. The band is directed by G. S. Dicken, minister of music.

Ordinations ...

Lookout Mountain Church, Lookout Mountain, ordained Walter H. Smart as deacon in February.

First Church, Oliver Springs, recently ordained the church's former minister of youth George Husk to the ministry. Husk is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and is presently working toward a master of divinity degree at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Terri, recently served for two years as journeymen in Peru.

Marvin Wood was recently ordained as deacon at Allensville Church, Mt. Pleasant.

First Church, Madison, ordained Gregory Scott Burgess as deacon Feb. 25.

Thomas Wood was ordained to the ministry March 25 by First Church,

Selmer. He has been called as pastor of a church in South Carolina.

Clifford Cordell and Jeff Harmon were recently ordained as deacons at First Church, Dunlap.

Mount Pleasant Church, Bradford, ordained Dale Akin, Stanley Cates, Ronnie Jones, and Keanard Sellers as deacons Mar. 18.

Mike Benefield was ordained as deacon Mar. 4 at Mt. Horeb Church, Ethridge.

Leadership ...

Carroll C. Owen, retired director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Convention Ministries Department, has stepped down as interim dean of Belmont College's School of Biblical Studies and Ministry. Owen provided leadership during the new school's establishment and its first two years of operation. Owen, former pastor of First Church, Rogersville, and First Church, Paris, is now serving as pastor of Hobson Pike Church near Mt. Juliet.



OWEN

Bobby Frost was recently called as pastor of Panther Park Church, Morristown.

Bear Creek Church, Cookeville, recently called Kenneth Blaylock as pastor.

Lorraine Church, Michie, recently called Taft Neithery as pastor.

Tom McCool was recently called as pastor of First Church, Dutch Valley.

William G. Justice recently retired from the East Tennessee Baptist Hospital where he served as chaplain for 28 years.

Tom Stanton, pastor of Clark Street Church, Johnson City, served as chaplain of the day March 14 for the Tennessee House of Representatives in Nashville.

Lincoya Hills Church, Nashville, called Darryl Riden as minister of youth.

Ricky Mitchell has been called as minister of children, youth, and churchwide activities at Zion Church, Brownsville. He is a junior at Union University, Jackson.

First Church, Jacksboro, called Dillard Mynatt, a retired pastor from Gatlinburg, as interim pastor.

Donnie Wiltshire has been called as pastor of the Deaf Mission of First Church, Memphis. He was formerly pastor of a deaf mission near New Orleans, La.

Jim Snyder has been called as minister of education/youth at Broadway Church, Maryville. He was formerly minister of youth/children at Ebenezer Church, Knoxville.



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS — Medical professionals and their families who are members of the international department of Brook Hollow Church, Nashville, were honored during an appreciation day April 1. Participating were, from left, first row, Hideyuki Yamamoto, Japan, Nozomu Nakagawa, Japan, Wen Shiao, Taiwan, Guo Hui Zhang, China, Enyu Imai, Japan, Junko Imai, Japan; second row, Fumie Takahashi, Japan, Jean Kidd, U.S., Bart Kidd, U.S., Hiroko Kamijo, Japan, Takashi Kamijo, Japan, and Katherine Bean, department director.

Tennessee Baptist churches call new pastors

Bethany Church

Bethany Church, Jacksboro, recently called Ray Anderson as full-time pastor.

A native of Kingsport, Anderson was pastor of Sarpeta Church, Blackwater, Va., before coming to Jacksboro. He also served as pastor of Vernon Heights Church, Kingsport; Walkers Fork Church, Kingsport; Solomon's Temple Church, Kingsport; Lyon's Park Church, Church Hill; and Faith Church, Mt. Carmel.

He and his wife, Mary, have two sons.

Gum Springs Church

Greg Long recently became pastor of Gum Springs Church, Walling.

Ordained in 1985 at Grandview Church, Maryville, Long was formerly

pastor of First Church, New Tazewell, and minister of singles at Highland Park First Church, Louisville, Ky.

The Maryville native earned a bachelor's degree from University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Long and his wife, Susan, have one son.

First Church, Mitchellville

First Church, Mitchellville, recently called Steve Pendley as pastor.

Mitchellville is Pendley's first pastorate. He is a volunteer chaplain at Jesse Holman Jones Hospital, Springfield, and is a guidance counselor at Springfield High School.

Pendley was ordained Jan. 28 at North Springfield Church, Springfield.

He is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro.

He and his wife, Cathy, have two sons.

First Church, Doyle

First Church, Doyle, recently called Fred Davis as pastor.

Before coming to Doyle, Davis was pastor of a mission church in San Angelo, Texas. He also served as pastor of several churches in Florida, Illinois, and Tennessee, including First Church, Philadelphia; Armona and Smoky View Churches in Maryville; Ewtonville Church, Dunlap; and First Church, Loudon.

Davis attended Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo., and Charles E. Fuller Theological Institute, Pasadena, Calif.

The St. Louis native and his wife, Ann, have two children.

Union Grove Church

Randall McClain recently joined the staff of Union Grove Church, McKenzie, as pastor.

This is McClain's second pastorate at Union Grove Church. He also served Public Well Church, Martin; McConnell Church, Martin; and Calvary Chapel Church, Ridgley.

Ordained in 1974 at McConnell Church, McClain earned a pastoral diploma from Union University, Jackson.

The Tennessee native and his wife, Winnie, have two sons.

Eastwood Church

Johnny Young recently joined the staff of Eastwood Church, Cookeville, as pastor.

The Alabama native formerly served as pastor of First Church, Gordonsville; Grace Church, Murfreesboro; Grace Church, Tullahoma; and Pros-

pect Church, Fayetteville. He held pastorates in Alabama and Texas also.

Young was ordained in 1962 at Rosedale Church, Nashville, and has attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

He and his wife, Juell, have one son.

Pleasant Grove Church

Pleasant Grove Church, Greenfield, called Charles Rushing as pastor.

He served churches in Colorado, Texas, and Louisiana, and worked in missions and evangelism for several years.

Ordained in 1972 at Grays Creek Church, Danham Springs, La., Rushing attended Clark Baptist College, Newton, Miss., and Texas A & M, Beaumont.

The Louisiana native and his wife, Mary, have five children.

Bethlehem Church

Bethlehem Church, Springfield, called Robert E. LeMay as pastor in December, 1989.

LeMay was most recently pastor of Harsh Chapel Church, Nashville, for 12 years. He also served as pastor of churches in Florida and middle Tennessee.

LeMay attended Belmont College, Nashville and Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour.

Darden Church

Larry Blankenship recently accepted the pastorate of Darden Church, Darden.

Blankenship was formerly pastor of Calvary Missionary Church, Lexington. He was ordained in 1985 at New Beech Grove Church, Lexington.

The Lexington native and his wife, Brenda, have two sons.

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One Woman's View By June McEwen

A recent newspaper article claimed that the saddest time in a person's life is around age five. The writer said that this period in life is the time when one discovers that he or she is not the center of the universe. I don't know how the observers substantiate this assertion, but I do know that one of the charms of little children is their innocent assumption that they are the center of things. Watching a ten-month-old learn to stand up, to play peek-a-boo, and to expect his every need to be attended to immediately confirms the belief that infants see everything revolving around them.



McEWEN

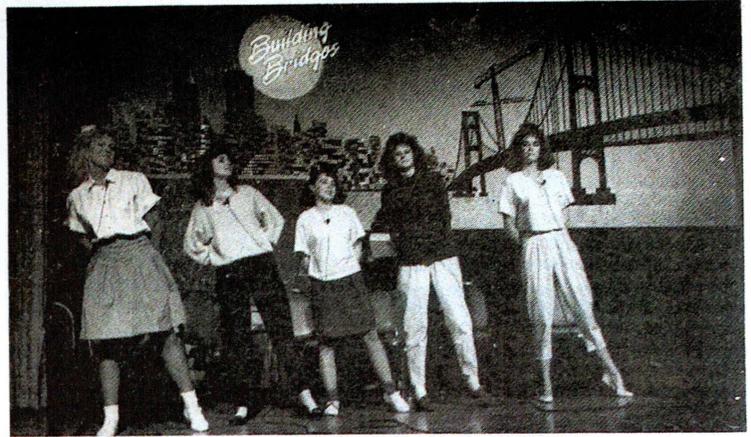
Once the human race, in an innocent and child-like way, believed that the sun, moon, and stars revolved around the earth. Like the five-year-old, the scientific discovery that the earth revolves around the sun and our planetary system revolves around some other center, and our galaxy also revolves around something is awesome, saddening, and humbling.

Now we hear from astronomers that there is yet another center, a Great Attractor, far out in the universe. This great star, other systems of stars, and

the light years of distance in space leave me as awestruck as any child upon first learning that his or her place in the family is not at its center. The Psalmist expressed his awe this way: "When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places — what is man, that you think of him; mere man, that you care for him? Psalm 8:3-4 (TEV)." In a similar vein, the Lord admonishes Job out of the whirlwind to remember his place in relation to the animals, the powerful seas, and the vast energies of nature as expressions of God's creative and controlling powers. In his writings, the apostle Paul sees Jesus Christ, God's Son, as the sustainer of all creation; the world is upheld by the word of His power.

As we contemplate the vastness of creation and the enormous energy and power of the Creator and Sustainer, we are overwhelmed with the knowledge that Christ Jesus came into the world for us individually, to save us every one. This demonstration of love removes the sadness attendant upon discovering that neither we nor our planet are the centers of everything. Nevertheless, like the hymn says, "Little children, little children, who love their Redeemer, are the jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own."

Acteens Summit draws record 1600 to Nashville . . .



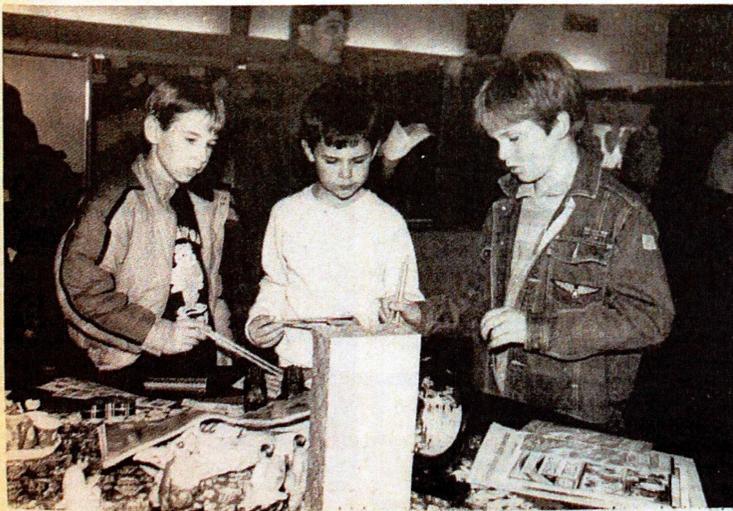
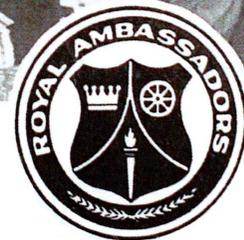
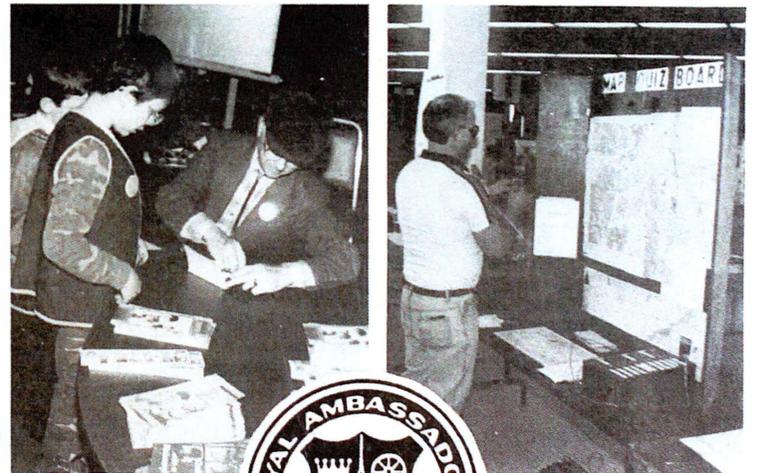
STATE ADVISORY PANELISTS — Panelists, from left, Juli Jones, Mt. Olive Church, Knoxville; LeAnn Denney, First Church, Gordonsville; Rachel Todd, Pine Ridge Church, Harriman; Alisha Fortner, Ridgeview Church, Knoxville; and Jennifer Coble, Mt. Olive Church, Knoxville, sang a song about the theme of the summit, Building Bridges, during one of the general sessions.



FROM MEMPHIS — Attending the April 12-14 event at Opryland Hotel in Nashville, from Union Avenue Church, Memphis, were, below, from left (front row), Beth Bailey, leader; Mary Francis Warnock; Becky Gentry; (back row) Beth Drumel, assistant leader; Elizabeth Warnock; Jennifer Palazzolo; Lisa Taylor; and Susie Reeder, minister of youth. At far right, Acteens and leaders learned how to help teenagers in crises during a conference led by Tony Rankin, minister of youth at Judson Church, Nashville. — Photos by Connie Davis



. . . while RA Congress attracts 1655 to Oak Ridge



ROYAL AMBASSADORS MEET — The 36th Tennessee Congress, held April 13-14 at Central Church, Oak Ridge, attracted 1655 Royal Ambassadors and their leaders. Boys not only participated in "fun" activities such as camp craft activities and RA racers, but also took part in a variety of mission activities. Top left, Knoxville native John McPherson, a missionary in Monrovia, Liberia, discusses his work. Bottom left, three youngsters from Springfield Church, Springfield, browse through an exhibit from Hong Kong. From left, Mark Dohnal, Scott Prowse, and Jarrod Rogers. Top center, Joshua McClurkan of Sylvia Church, Dickson, gets his passport stamped by Herschel Barrington, pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Clinton. Barrington represented the Foreign Mission Board at their booth. Top right, Randy Gregg, layman at Northport Church, Newport, judges one of the more than 450 missions projects entered by Royal Ambassador chapters. During the Congress there were ten first-time decisions and 26 rededications for Christ. — Photos by Lonnie Wilkey

Jesus' superior priesthood

By W. Elzie Danley, pastor; Malesus Church, Jackson

Earlier in Hebrews the author established that Jesus is the great high priest. He extended his argument and developed the concept of the superiority of Jesus' priesthood. When we remember that the writer is addressing this letter to Jews, although Christians, who had an established belief about priests and how they came by their office, the need for the argument becomes obvious.

For the Jew, all priests were descendants of Aaron through the tribe of Levi. Since Jesus was not from that tribe, but from the tribe of Judah, the author needed to give some justification for calling Jesus a priest, particularly the superior high priest. The author of Hebrews finds such justification in the story of the priest, Melchizedek (Genesis 14:17-24).

Greatness of Melchizedek (7:1-10)
We first hear of Melchizedek when Abraham was returning from his victory over the kings who had conquered Sodom and Gomorrah and had taken his nephew Lot captive. Abraham met Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, and paid him a tithe of the spoils taken



DANLEY

in the battles. Since Abraham would honor only a superior in this fashion the writer draws the logical conclusion that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham and thus as a priest he was greater than the Levitical priests who were descendants of Abraham.

It should not go unnoticed that the name Melchizedek means king of righteousness. Another note of importance is that although the Jewish priests could not be kings, Melchizedek was both priest and king. Thus, again Melchizedek can be viewed as greater than the Levitical priests.

The author gives us a hint of his purpose when he points out that Melchizedek was made like unto the son of man (v. 3). That's not to imply that he, like Jesus, was divine. No, rather it points out that his lineage was not of a priestly line just as Jesus' priestly functions were not derived from his lineage. Both Melchizedek and Jesus received appointments from God that were not for a specific time — but forever. In the history of God's people the priesthood of Melchizedek was unique. Thus, again the greatness of Melchizedek should become obvious to the readers.

Superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood over Aaron's (7:11-19)
If the writer of Hebrews was to convince his Jewish Christian readers that

they should not turn back to Judaism, he needed to logically nail down that both the Levitical priesthood and their laws have been set aside. He began to do so by pointing out that the Melchizedek-type priest is superior to the Jewish priests.

The imperfections of these Jewish priests, who were descendants of Aaron and Levi, are called to the reader's attention by implied reference to Psalm 110:4 where God had promised to set up... "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

BIBLE BOOK SERIES

April 29 Lesson

Basic Passage: Hebrews 7:1-28

Focal Passages: Hebrews 7:1-3, 11-12, 19-27

If God had a need to set up such a priest, it can only be because the Levitical priesthood was imperfect.

Having established that there is a change in the priesthood, our author suggested that of necessity the law will change also. The law could not make perfect; it only served to condemn, it could not justify. Because of the new priest's sacrifice of His life on the cross, we are able to have "a better hope" and are able to "draw nigh unto God." Thus, the writer indicated that there is a superior priest of the Melchizedek-type that has set aside both the priests of Aaron (Levites) and their law.

Superior nature of

Jesus' priesthood (7:20-28)

Jesus, this new priest (after the order of Melchizedek) was then presented as superior in comparison to the old order of priests. First, Jesus' priesthood is superior because he has the support of God's divine oath (guarantee). Again the author is apparently referring to God's promise in Psalm 110:4. The history of Israel calls attention to the imperfections of their hereditary priests who had no such guarantee.

Jesus' priesthood is also superior because it is permanent. At any given time there were many priests under the old covenant and these changed frequently because they, like all people, were subject to death. But Christ, the unique priest, lives forever and thus there is no change in His priesthood.

Jesus' character is called to our attention (v. 26) where He is described in terms that acknowledge His sinless perfection. In the reference to "higher than the heavens," the author wants us to visualize this high priest as He sits at the right hand of the Father making intercessions for us. In view of His sinless perfection Jesus does not need to make sacrifices for His sins before He can do so for others.

All of our sins can be forgiven — once and for all. He reigns on the Father's right hand forever where He makes pleas on our behalf.

Knowing and abiding

By Liz Thompson, layperson; First Church, Blountville

"If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 2:24). This verse and others in John's letter caused me great concern as a new Christian. I did not understand who he was writing to or why. Does my salvation depend on me, thinking, feeling, and acting right? If so, I have no security. As a 17 year old, I was concerned that my faith not be damaged when I went away to college.



THOMPSON

Could I travel any place or come under the influence of any person and remain true to my Lord? Could adversity rob me of faith?

This fear has diminished as I have grown spiritually. I determined to bring every question, every new idea to the Lord's attention for His confirmation or rejection. I trusted Him to teach me how His Word applied, to guide me through all unknowns, and to prevent deception from every source.

Isolation is one way people try to protect themselves, but this is not an answer for the thinker or those who travel widely. Nor is it always the answer God approves as we mature in Christ.

The question might be asked, "If I get involved, how can I keep myself from being corrupted by the world? If I expose my mind to intellectuals, how can I stay true?" I'm so glad to discover that John answers this fear, "We have an unction from the Holy One which you have received and the anointing abides in you" (1 John 2:18-21). The abiding of the Holy One means that He has settled down per-

manently. "And this is the promise, even eternal life" (v. 25).

If eternal life abides in you, you will abide in Him, and He will prevent deception. He will teach you and give you the ability to understand spiritual things (John 14:26). God still calls and anoints teachers, pastors, and others to encourage us in the faith, but there is a great need for personal discernment. Christians can become lazy, following blindly every word that comes from the mouth of a man, rather than every word that comes from the mouth of God. We need to be reminded that man

does not transmit spiritual truth to the heart without the involvement of the Holy Spirit. Man communicates from mind to mind. The Spirit communicates to the heart of man. There is no transformation unless the truth penetrates the heart. We can and do experience temporary confusion and error, but God holds possession of the heart and He promised to lead us into truth (John 14:16, 16:13). His abiding presence helps us to endure all things (Romans 8:34-39), and grow to His desired design (Philippians 2:13).

What would John say to those on college campuses across America? We are all facing Satanism, paganism, spiritism, and New Age, as well as more familiar cult religions, many who use common language to describe strange teachings. Get in the Word and talk with the Lord who is your teacher. Many of us could say, "John, I'm disgusted and disillusioned with church. Christian leaders are in conflict, controversy on every hand, sin in

high places, and now a person I trusted has become my enemy. I just don't care any more. Where is God in all this mess?"

He has not left us alone. He is in us to be our strength and wisdom, to discover truth, and to walk in it, to endure whatever living in this cursed world can throw at us. 1 John 2:19 clearly settles this haunting and reoccurring fear for me. Those who leave the faith never were of the faith. Christ has never come to abide forever in them.

"John, how do I know I am abiding in Him, that I ever came to know Him? You say everyone who is righteous is born of Him (v. 29), and I often do not behave, feel, or think righteously." This verse will cause you trouble if you fail to understand that John is talking primarily about a state of being, not behavior. In Christ I have become a righteous one. My mind is not perfected, but my heart is. The

evidence that I am abiding in Him is a desire to be like Him, a willingness to live under the tutelage of the righteous One. Are you serious about hearing and obeying, or do you avoid reading the Bible and worshipping openheartedly, hoping He will leave you alone? Do you look forward to Christ's return, or do you fear it? Do you feel the stirrings of unrest and conviction when you walk your own way?

To hear Him is to be saved from doubt and fear, deception and defeat. He who abides in you knows how to place your heart on alert when you begin to drift, or when you get so beaten down that you don't care and want to give up. Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.

UNIFORM LESSON SERIES

April 29 Lesson

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Focal Passage: 1 John 2:18-29

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Concern for people

by **Kenny Cooper, pastor; Bellevue Church, Nashville**

Today's text provides the background from which Jeremiah has been identified as the "weeping prophet." That designation, like most nicknames, had enough truth in it to make it stick. Though Jeremiah did not sit in a perpetual puddle of tears, he was quite open, and even poetic, in expressing his grief over the situation of his people. He was not a professional mourner, but a called prophet whose message was often harsh toward those whom he cared about.



COOPER

The context for chapters 8, 9, and 14 oscillates between drought and enemy invasion. One wonders if the present situation may be a drought,

but Jeremiah anticipated even greater hardship and destruction from the enemy to the north.

Concern in midst of ignored opportunity (8:18-21)

If ever a prophet cared about the people to whom he preached, Jeremiah did. Unlike Jonah who became angry over the Ninevites' repentance, Jeremiah grieved over his people's failure to repent. His grief was so profound that he was heart sick and couldn't find healing (v. 18). The pain of caring for people can be sickening.

What was yet more painful for Jeremiah was that the people didn't understand the reason for their dilemma. They cried from every community of the nation: "Is the Lord not in Zion?" How could he allow them to experience such desperate circumstances? The latter part of v. 19 interjects, however, God's question of them: "Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with their foreign idols?" (RSV). God had not left them as they surmised:

they had left God! Jeremiah understood the tragic dilemma of his fellow countrymen.

Verse 20 is perhaps a proverb which was circulated with increased frequency during the tumultuous days leading up to the invading bands from Babylon. That the harvest was past and the summer ended would be associated with the drought. Harvest is the occasion of reaping grain and summer is the season of gathering fruit. To miss both these opportunities for food is to be doomed. They were at the end of their opportunities and there was no help — no salvation — in sight.

LIFE AND WORK LESSON SERIES

April 29 Lesson

Basic Passage: Jeremiah 8:18 to 9:2; 14:1-22
Focal Passages: Jeremiah 8:18 to 9:2; 14:17-18

Seeing his people in such a state brought Jeremiah to mourning. It left him in the grip of dismay. We might ask ourselves how strongly our emotions are involved in considering our people whose lives are alienated from God. A sure sign of concern is a burdened heart.

Concern over ignored help (8:22-9:2)

In 8:21 we read the phrase familiarized by the old spiritual "There is a balm in Gilead." Balm is a reference to the resin from the styrax tree which

grew in the trans-Jordan area of Gilead. It was used medicinally and exported to other areas. Jeremiah raised the question: "Is there no balm in Gilead?" or any physician? The implied answer was "yes." If medicine and doctors are available, then why is the daughter (of Judah) not healed? The reason was that the people had not called on these resources. Jeremiah was concerned not only with their waywardness, but also their refusal to find healing in God. He wanted to weep night and day, perhaps both in grief and to give conviction to his preaching.

The mood shifts abruptly in 9:2. The prophet who lamented over his people then wanted to be rid of them. Jeremiah (though some scholars suggest this is God's speech) desired a shelter along a desert road where he might flee and be away from them. He was disgusted with their waywardness and spent emotionally. He needed a vacation from the responsibility of caring, but he did not dare take it.

Concern in the midst of ignorant religion (14:17-18)

Jeremiah's concern is further shown in this lament which suggests the devastation of war but is located in the larger context of chapter 14 about a drought. Jeremiah's weeping continued as he considered the great wound of the people. Virgin daughter is a reference to God's people prior to their ravishing by the enemy, rather than to their sinless condition.

Concern about the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of people requires the investment of oneself. We dare not merely go through the motions of religion while people are in need of "a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole" and "to heal the sick soul."

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

Eight U.S. religious leaders push alcohol excise tax hike

NASHVILLE — Eight national religious leaders have signed a letter to U.S. Senators and representatives urging them to raise the federal excise tax on alcoholic beverages as a dual means of cutting alcohol consumption and raising federal revenues.

"Historically, our nation has used excise taxes as a mechanism to promote societal goals," the eight say in their letter. "We need to do so again to curb the terrible toll alcohol is taking, a toll which far exceeds the destruction of all illegal drugs combined."

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission initiated the letter and secured signatures from Robert P. Dugan Jr., director of the office of public affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals; Melva Jimerson, acting director of the Washington office of the Church of the Brethren; Ronald J. Sider, executive director of Evangelicals for Social Action; Mary Cooper, acting director of the Washington office of the National Council of Churches;

Thom White Wolf Fassett, general secretary of the Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church; Bruce L. Olson, managing director of the Public Communications Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons); and Donald J. Wilson, associate director of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Unit of the Presbyterian Church (USA). CLC Executive Director Richard Land also signed the letter.

The religious bodies represented by the eight signers have combined memberships of more than 60 million people. The letter says federal excise taxes on beer and wine have not been raised since 1951, when President Harry Truman was in the White House. "The result has been that the real price of beer and wine has decreased compared to other commodities. Today, consumers may buy a six-pack of beer for less than a six-pack of soda," the letter notes.

"An increase in the federal excise tax on alcoholic beverages would provide much-needed revenue to reduce the federal budget deficit."

Golden Gate trustees postpone spring meeting

MILL VALLEY, Calif. — Trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary voted to postpone their annual meeting, set for April 23-25, until Oct. 8-10. Citing financial pressures, aggravated by a delay in the planned sale of a portion of seminary property and a limited agenda of essential business, President William O. Crews recommended the scheduled meeting be postponed. By mail ballot, the board of trustees accepted the recommendation.

"We regret the necessity of postponing the meeting," commented Herman

Wooten, board of trustees chairman from Elk Grove, Calif. "However, the \$25,000 savings in expenses will be extremely helpful with the seminary's current cash flow needs," he said.

Trustees will meet briefly June 13 during the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans to hear reports from the president and transact limited business.

Stevens: Leaders will catch RTVC's 'vision'

FORT WORTH, Texas — The man who shepherded the Southern Baptist Commission Radio and Television Commission from its infancy to a place of prominence in religious broadcasting predicts that "the vision" of what the agency can truly be eventually will be caught by denominational leaders. Paul M. Stevens made the prediction in a devotional message to the RTVC trustees at their spring meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, April 10.

Stevens was president of the commission from 1953 until he retired in 1979. When he took over the reins of the agency it had three employees and a budget of \$69,000. He directed its move from Atlanta to Fort Worth in 1955, and when he stepped down it was in new facilities and had a budget in excess of \$5 million.

In spite of the growth, however, Stevens said other denominational leaders, protecting their own areas of work, fought him "for every dollar." He came to the commission, he said, under the conviction that it was a missions opportunity, but other leaders refused to see it that way.

"They wanted to quarter up" the areas of ministry, he said, and knew that any money that went to the RTVC would mean it wouldn't be going to them. "They never saw us as a mission agency," he said. "They never caught the vision."

Nevertheless, he said: "There will come a day when the vision will be caught. Someone will say there needs to be one great thrust to present the Gospel, and this is the agency to do it."

Elder stresses need for church growth

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Southern Baptists must devote their energy and resources to a "Biblical pattern of church growth" in order to be faithful to the Gospel and their denominational heritage, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder said.

In an address at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Elder said church growth is "not incidental or on the parameters, but is at the central core of the Gospel itself." Elder's address was part of a Sunday School Board emphasis March 26-28 at the seminary. The event is conducted biennially to better acquaint seminarians with the board's products, services, and employment opportunities.

Church growth, Elder said, "has to do with personal conversion," which he said involves "coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of life on the terms of the Gospel set down in Holy Scripture." Scripture also requires Christians to seek numerical additions in their churches and to share the Gospel with people everywhere, he said: "In the Book of Acts and in some other places in Holy Scripture there is absolutely no apology for concern about numbers."

Midwestern trustees elect officers; to study process

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Trustees at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. approved a new religious education faculty member and elected new officers during their annual board meeting, April 9-10.

James F. Hines, associate professor of religion at Wayland Baptist Univer-

sity, Plainview, Texas, unanimously was elected as associate professor of religious education and church administration. He will assume his new teaching position July 1.

Trustees elected Richard Adams, pastor of First Church, Festus-Crystal City, Mo., chairman of the board. He succeeds J. Truett Gannon, pastor of

Smoke Rise Church, Stone Mountain, Ga., who completed three terms as chairman.

Also elected were first vice chairman Doyle Smith, pastor of First Southern Church, Great Bend, Kan., and second vice chairman James W. Jones, evangelism and Brotherhood director for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. Lowell E. Socolofsky, a layman from Bellevue, Neb., was elected to a second term as secretary-treasurer.

Following the election of officers, trustee James B. Dobbs, a Columbus, Ohio, attorney, made a motion asking the board's executive committee to study the process of electing trustee officers. Currently, officers are nominated from the floor during the spring meeting.

Dobbs said it would be helpful if a slate of officers, selected by a

First volunteers arrive in St. Croix

CHRISTIANSTED, St. Croix — The first wave of Southern Baptists have begun a six-week volunteer effort to roof 100 homes damaged by Hurricane Hugo in September 1989.

Targeted by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission of Memphis, Tenn., for continuing disaster relief assistance, about 300 volunteers are expected to participate through May, said Jim Furgerson, the Brotherhood Commission national disaster relief director.

M. B. and Cathryne Howard of Covington are the on-site coordinators for the duration of the project. Howard is the National Fellowship of Baptist

nominating committee, be made available for consideration by trustees prior to the annual meeting. This would not preclude nominations from the floor during the meeting, he added, but would make the election process "more organized" and would allow trustees time to prayerfully consider nominees.

With few dissenting votes, trustees approved the motion and instructed the executive committee to report their findings to the full board at the October 15-16 semi-annual meeting.

Upon recommendation of the board's finance committee, trustees approved a current fund revenue budget of \$3.3 million for the 1990-91 fiscal year. The seminary's administrative staff will complete expense budget planning for trustee consideration by the end of June.

Men's construction coordinator and a Tennessee Baptist Convention executive board member.

Southern Baptists have two churches on St. Croix, Grace Golden Church and Grace Central Church. Both suffered extensive damage in the hurricane and will be restored during the project.

The first week volunteers included two Tennesseans — Tom Forsyth, Humboldt, and Charles Sampsel, Harriman.

Volunteers for the second week were slated to arrive April 23. Tennesseans in that group included Richard Howard, Selmer; Ron Stone, Adamsville; and Eddie Simpson, Selmer.

Teleconference will address youth pressures

NASHVILLE — Pressures faced by today's youth will be the subject of a live teleconference May 7, at 6:30 p.m. (CDT), on the Baptist Telecommunication Network.

Teen-parent relationships, responsibilities at home, peer relationships, dating, and extracurricular activities are among the issues which likely will be covered in the two-hour teleconference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church administration and family ministry departments.

Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant in the board's church administration department, and Wade Rowatt, professor of pastoral care at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and a frequent counselor with youth and families, will respond to questions and offer suggestions for viewers to consider in the areas of discussion.

Youth, parents, and workers with youth in churches will be encouraged to participate in the teleconference, which will address problems youth encounter at school and at home, with a special segment focusing on youth suicide.

Ross, who also serves as youth minister at Tulip Grove Church in Hermitage, said the suicide rate among teenagers has increased 200 percent in the past 20 years, with an estimated 400,000 youth attempting suicide each year.

"It is essential for parents and church leaders to address the pressures and sense the helplessness causing many youth to choose not to live," Ross said.

Parents and youth will be encouraged to view the teleconference together in church groups. Teleconference leaders will guide local church groups in a parent-youth dialogue in one segment of the teleconference.

Previously telecast live teleconferences related to youth ministry have drawn up to 8000 viewers. Jimmy Hester, design editor of family ministry products in the family ministry department, will host the teleconference.

Persons interested in additional information can obtain a packet about the teleconference from the Family Ministry Department, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, Tenn. 37234.