

Baptist and Reflector

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STATEWIDE EDITION

NEWSJOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION

Maurice Graham released from Kuwait Homecoming with family in Tennessee

Word came Sunday night of Maurice Graham's release from Kuwait by the Iraqi government. Graham, a Shelbyville native, should be reunited with his wife Laurie and their two sons in Nashville by the time this paper is distributed. The following story from the Foreign Mission Board is the information that was available at press time.

— Editor

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND (BP) — Southern Baptist worker Maurice Graham was heading home from Kuwait Dec. 10 to spend Christmas with his family.

"There's been a bunch of prayers and a big answer to them," said Dwight Graham of Winchester, after receiving news that his younger brother's four-month ordeal in Iraqi-occupied Kuwait had ended. Maurice Graham's wife, Laurie, talked with him soon after his post-midnight arrival Dec. 10 in Frankfurt, Germany.

"He's tired, he's worn out," Dwight Graham said when he was informed. "He's been under a tremendous strain." And he was recovering from the flu when he left Kuwait. "We know he's safe now. We're just waiting to see him."

After reunions with his wife and sons Peter, 13, and Aaron, ten, in Nashville, Maurice Graham likely will "pick the phone up and call Mom and Dad," J. V. and Ruby Graham in Shelbyville, then get some rest, his brother speculated.

On Monday, officials hoped to arrange for Graham to finish his journey home Dec. 10, in time for his wife's birthday that day.

Graham joined some 175 Americans and 150 other westerners on an Iraqi airliner that left Kuwait and Iraq Dec. 9 bound for Frankfurt.

Their exodus from Kuwait and Iraq came three days after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's announcement that all foreign "guests" should be freed. Iraq's National Assembly added its formal approval Dec. 7 in a meeting on the Muslim Fri-

day sabbath.

For most of the freed American hostages, the journey home resumed Dec. 10, aboard a flight scheduled to arrive around 5 p.m. at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. Two representatives of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board were to have met Graham there and help with arrangements for the final flight in his return home to Tennessee.

According to board officials, Graham has expressed a desire for a time of privacy with his family after returning to Tennessee. If and when Graham is ready to talk about his experiences after Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, he will contact the media, officials said.

R. Keith Parks, Foreign Mission Board president, issued a special call to prayer Dec. 3 for the release of Graham and other foreign hostages, coupled with a letter-writing campaign to Saddam Hussein via the Iraq Embassy in Washington. In November Parks urged Southern Baptist churches to make Dec. 9 a day of prayer for resolution of the Mideast crisis.

Graham, a Shelbyville native, and his wife, of Hutchinson, Kansas, were Southern Baptists' first full-time workers in Kuwait. They and their sons had been in Kuwait less than three months when Iraqi troops stormed the country in the early morning hours of Aug. 2.

The family took refuge with U.S. Embassy personnel after Iraqi troops entered their apartment several times the day Kuwait was seized. The Grahams began holding nightly prayer services at the U.S. Embassy compound and Graham

became the unofficial embassy chaplain, providing counsel or a listening ear to anyone who asked.

Iraqi troops cut off water and electricity to the embassy after the United States defied an Iraqi order to close the embassy by Aug. 24. A skeletal crew of some ten diplomats remained there along with Graham and an undisclosed number of other Americans who had taken refuge there.

Laurie Graham and her sons left Kuwait Sept. 12 as part of the evacuation permitted for American and other Western women and children. They have resettled in a home provided by a Nashville church.

The Grahams were in Kuwait to do youth and music work with the National Evangelical Church, where 28 ethnic groups worshiped each week. The English-language church is affiliated with the Reformed Church in America. A remnant of the church remains active and has embarked on various humanitarian ministries in Iraqi-devastated Kuwait. Before going to Kuwait, the Grahams had had to leave Liberia because of the civil war there.

According to the U.S. State Department, Ambassador W. Nathaniel "Nat" Howell and several other staff members at the beleaguered U.S. Embassy in Kuwait will remain there until all Americans who want to leave Kuwait have done so. An estimated 725 Americans remained in Iraq and Kuwait Dec. 10 and another evacuation flight was scheduled for Dec. 11.

However, a number of Americans may elect to remain in Kuwait, such as those married to Kuwaitis or longtime residents there, a State Department spokesman said.

Howell attended Court Street Church in Portsmouth, Va., as a youth. His mother, Josephine, has been a member of the congregation 65 years. Howell also was active in the Baptist Student Union during his studies at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.



GRAHAM

Meeting in Brentwood

Board votes to trim debt on TBC Baptist Center

By Wm. Fletcher Allen

The debt on the Baptist Center in Brentwood was sliced by more than \$200,000 last week as the Executive Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention, met to organize for 1990-91.

Few major actions are expected from the December meeting ordinarily since the board meets for organizational purposes. But acting on a recommendation from its Executive Committee, the board approved a \$200,000 payment on the loan principal. The remaining principal is \$1,724,800.

In other action, standing committees were organized and Executive Committee officers were approved.

Jerry Oakley, pastor of Springfield Church, took office as chairman of the Executive Committee. Gary Anderson, pastor of First Church, Dunlap, is vice chairman.

Standing committee chairmen of the

100-member board include: Budget and Program, Larry Gilmore; Central Administrative, June McEwen; Christian Services, Raymond Boston; Church Programs, Howard Olive; Convention Ministries, Don Givens; and Education, James Porch.

These committee chairmen hold membership on the Executive Committee along with Oakley and Anderson. Other Executive Committee members are Bill Bates, TBC president; Hershel Chevallier, at large; Paul Durham and Howard Kolb, president and vice president of the Executive Board; Calvin Harvell, at large; M. B. Howard, at large; John Laida, at large;

Leonard Markham, at large; Frank Samuels, at large; Bobby Turner, at large; and Emerson Wiles, at large.

Durham and Kolb, along with Anne Nolan as secretary, were elected Executive Board officers at its Nov. 14

meeting.

The Executive Board met at the Baptist Center in Brentwood Thursday morning for the organizational meeting. It was the first session under the leadership of Durham, pastor of Radnor Church, Nashville.

"After the solemn assembly of prayer and our state convention in November," Durham said, "I believe we have the warmth of fellowship that should set the tone for the year's

work.

"One of the key terms is 'sacred trust.' This is vital to us. I will not consciously violate the sacred trust that God has given me."

Durham asked board members to have a positive attitude at every level, to have a cooperative spirit, and a servant heart.

Standing committees met Thursday afternoon for organization. The Ex-

(See Board votes, page 5)

Paper's rates will increase March 1

Subscription rates for the Baptist and Reflector will be raised March 1, 1991.

Because of substantial second class postage rate increases which will take effect early in February, Baptist and Reflector subscribers will be asked to help.

The paper's Board of Directors last week authorized Editor Wm. Fletcher Allen to initiate the new rates. The 1991 budget remains at the same level as the 1990 budget. Coupled with the postage increase which could range from 20 to 30

percent, a rate increase was imperative, Allen said.

"Our subscribers will still receive a bargain — with quality," he added. He noted that prices of other denominational papers also will increase. He pointed out that the Baptist and Reflector publishes 51 issues annually — more than other Baptist papers.

New rates: Church Budget Plan, from \$5.56 to \$6.50; Church Club Plan, from \$6.25 to \$7.25, and Individual, from \$6.55 to \$7.50.

(See related editorial on page 2.)

MOVING? Cut out and mail this address label to the Baptist and Reflector, P. O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn. 37024 along with your new address.

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Editorials

Reflector rates will increase, but quality is a bargain

For years we have been extolling the low subscription cost of state papers with the claim that it costs the customer less per week than the price of a postage stamp.

As postage rates steadily increase, that claim becomes more accurate.

Many a story has begun with the admonition, "I've got good news and bad news. Which do you want first?" We do have good and bad news for our subscribers, but we will blend them together.

On March 1, your Baptist and Reflector will cost more. But it will still be a bargain of tremendous value and sterling quality. There you have it, bad and good.

The new rates: Church Budget Plan, from \$5.56 to \$6.50 per subscription; Church Club Plan, from \$6.25 to \$7.25; and Individual Plan, from \$6.55 to \$7.50.

For several weeks we have advised our family of subscribers that a rate increase seemed inevitable. Earlier this year, the U. S. Postal Service began a series of hearings to determine whether current postage rates are sufficient, and if not, what the increase should be.

The Baptist and Reflector, along with 37 other Southern Baptist state papers and many denominational papers, have had representation at the hearings and all along the process.

The hearings have been completed, part of the news is out. There will be an increase — but the authorities as yet have not informed its customers about the new rates.

Second Class postage, the classification for religious newsjournals, will increase next February by at least twenty percent. That kind of increase will have a debilitating impact on many budgets. If the increase is greater, we will have to rethink our position.

So the bad news of higher subscription rates cannot be avoided. The Baptist and Reflector budget remains the same as last year. And since there is no additional budget money, we have to call on our readers to help absorb the postage hike.

We make three promises to each subscriber:

- You will receive weekly the same newspaper, painstakingly prepared, newsworthy and trustworthy.

- We will not sacrifice quality for expediency.

- We will monitor closely other portions of the Baptist and Reflector in an effort to glean some dollars to help pay for the postage hike.

We also promise that we will not have a fund-raising drive. We plan to depend on frugality and the loyalty of our readers.

We encourage current subscribers to continue, yes, to even expand their subscription lists. Support from our readers and subscribers is needed now. We encourage churches to add more of their families to the list of subscribers wherever possible.

You can help us conserve costs by promptly notifying us of any address change. When the post office gives us the change, it is expensive. Keep your lists current so the paper can be delivered weekly without delay.

Take this news as an official announcement of an increase of rates to offset unbudgeted postage increases. Other reminders will be made. Notices will

be mailed in January along with other information from our office.

The notice will remind subscribers that subscription rates will increase on March 1, 1991, following a substantial hike in postage in early February.

We will have mailed the paper for three months (November, December, and January) under the 1990-91 budget. That helps. But now we call on subscribers and our own careful use of budget funds.

There are other ways to hack away at the disparity between what we have and what will be needed. We can omit several issues during the year, lowering printing and mailing costs. We can publish smaller papers. We can handle more news by telephone.

But we believe our readers want, need, and deserve a quality newsjournal, printed weekly, providing all the fresh news and information that is needed.

The Baptist and Reflector staff plans to be faithful to the assigned task. — WFA

What a birthday present — Maurice Graham freed

Laurie Graham received an extraordinary birthday present this week.

Thousands of Tennessee Baptists and many other Baptists have been praying without ceasing for the Graham family. Maurice Graham, Southern Baptist missionary from Shelbyville, has been one of many hostages held by the Iraqi government for several months.

Laurie Graham's birthday was Monday — but she and all the family knew a few hours before that Maurice had been released and was on his way home. God answers prayer — every hour of every day.

Time will tell how often Maurice consoled with Christian confidence those held with him in the

American embassy building in Kuwait City. God used a missionary who made himself a willing vessel.

At press time, we do not have word on Maurice's precise travel plans nor what the family will do when he arrives. That news is not necessary. We thank God for this extravagant answer to prayer — and praise Him for such blessings.

We do know that, at press time, Maurice Graham is again a free man, he is homeward bound, the family will be united, and God still has them in His hands.

Let us continue to pray for release of all captives there and elsewhere, and for a God-sent solution to Middle East strife. — WFA

Overtaxed church calendars lead to stress, leaders warn

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE (BP) — Stress runs rampant in today's fast-paced society, and overtaxed church calendars perpetuate it when scheduling demands the attention of some family member nearly every night.

"Basically, churches can be guilty of overprogramming for their families and then making them feel guilty for not being there every time the doors are open," said Gary Hauk, manager of the family enrichment section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department.

Sim Hassler, pastor of First Church Spring Branch, Houston, agreed.

"Something is going on at many churches every night of the week, and some expect that if you are a true follower of Jesus Christ that you will be there," he said.

Hassler said as a pastor he finds himself in the conflicting roles of supporting the frenzied schedules created by a well-intentioned staff, while quietly nodding at a family's need to stay home from functions to have time with each other.

"One of the biggest frustrations for me is that I don't expect my people to make every church event, but they think I do," Hassler said.

"I'm in a double bind of wanting to bless those events that the staff has planned but also realizing that even I can't attend all those events."

Hassler said the only way he knows to combat a member's frustration with

high activity levels at church is to fight each battle one at a time.

"The best way I know to take care of it is to hear the people when they complain. I just say individually to them, 'You don't have to make all that.' And, 'I mirror that with my staff,'" said Hassler who explained he does not attend every church event.

Hauk said families' inability to cope with overscheduling can become a factor in destroying family life.

"I think churches may tear a family apart by overloading and overburdening the family," Hauk said. "Churches can contribute to the divorce rate when they overschedule, overload, overwork, and overguilt. But, I don't think it has to be that way."

If staff members would take a good look at scheduling they could determine ways to better coordinate activities, Hauk said. For example, rather than scheduling activities for children at one time, teens at another and adults at still a different time, those responsible for the church calendar could coordinate scheduling to allow the entire family to arrive at church on the same day at one time, he said.

Likewise, Hauk said, "We need to look at utilizing Sundays and Wednesdays and not tying up so many other days of the week. I think that can be healthy, although it's not always realistic."

Charlie Baker, pastor of Southern Hills Church, Tulsa, Okla., said he

refuses to subject his 2000-member congregation to a constant barrage of church events. "We give Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night to worship, and unless it is a rare exception, we don't get back together at any other time of the week," Baker said.

"As a whole family, we try to do everything in the way of worship during these times so that they can have the rest of the week to do things with their smaller families," Baker said of his congregation.

Betty Hassler, family ministry coordinator for Houston's Union Baptist

Association, said church members must understand they can make choices. "We don't want them to attend church out of compulsion or guilt," she said. "People need to discern the difference between God and church. God is included in church, but he's not restricted to church. God is larger than this institution," she continued. "His purposes might call me into conflict with a church event."

And that purpose, Hauk said, might be spending time with family members.

"We have to give people permission to be there all the time," he said.

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15.2% increase in Tennessee

SBC baptisms projected to increase 7.7 percent

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP) — Baptisms in Southern Baptist churches for 1990 are projected to be up nearly eight percent over the previous year — the largest percentage increase in a decade.

Clay Price of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's research division presented that projection to state evangelism directors during their annual meeting here.

The total number of baptisms projected for the year is 378,000, a 7.7 percent increase over the 351,107 baptisms recorded in 1989.

The preliminary figures in Tennessee are even brighter. Presently, Tennessee Baptist Convention churches have reported 26,108 baptisms for 1989-90, an increase of 15.2 percent over the previous year.

"This is one of the best years the Tennessee Baptist Convention has had in a decade," said Jerry King, director

of the TBC's Evangelism Department, noting that only a year ago the convention had a decrease of 616 in baptisms.

King reported that 50 of the state's 68 associations had increases in baptisms.

Official statistics on baptisms will be reported by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board early in 1991. Price's estimate is based upon preliminary data provided by state evangelism directors.

The increase in baptisms appears to be a uniform phenomenon across the nation, Price reported.

Southern Baptists recorded their highest number of baptisms in 1972, when 445,725 people were baptized. The annual total has bounced up and down since then. The highest percentage increase during that time was 16.5 percent in 1980.

The highest percentage increase this century was in 1920, when baptisms in-

creased 41 percent.

Evangelism leaders cited several reasons for this year's increase.

One contributing factor was a six-week period of "Here's Hope" simultaneous revivals last spring, said Richard Harris, HMB director of mass evangelism.

"There's a significant correlation between baptisms being up and the Here's Hope emphasis," Harris said. "Every year of simultaneous revivals since 1950 there has been a marked increase in baptisms — except in 1969."

Southern Baptists previously had simultaneous revivals in 1950, 1951, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969, and 1986. After the 1986 simultaneous revivals, called "Good News America," baptisms increased 3.4 percent, stopping a five-year pattern of decline.

"The Here's Hope emphasis caused Southern Baptists to refocus their attention on the priority of direct

evangelism," Harris said.

King agreed with Harris' assessment of the Here's Hope revivals. He also noted, however, that the TBC's emphasis on personal evangelism training two years ago began to show in this year's statistics. In 1988 the Evangelism Department sponsored lay evangelism schools across the state.

HMB President Larry Lewis and evangelism section vice president Darrell Robinson agreed that the Here's Hope revivals played a major part in the baptism increase. However, both men said they believe the increase represents a movement larger than the six weeks of simultaneous revivals.

"This is more than something programmatic," Robinson said. "I think this is an indication of a movement of the Spirit in our churches."

"We're seeing our churches more strongly sensitized to reaching people and the spiritual needs of people."

Southern Baptists must address 'Muslim challenge,' Smith says

By Mark Wingfield

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP) — Islam is an American reality Southern Baptists must prepare to address, an interfaith witness leader said.

Maurice Smith, associate director of interfaith witness with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, spoke about "The Muslim Challenge in America" to state evangelism directors during their annual meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Islam is one of two major religious movements projected by the interfaith witness department to have the greatest impact on America in the 1990s. The other is New Age movements.

Islam is currently the fastest growing religious system in America. Worldwide, one in every seven people is a Muslim.

Smith said America has more Muslims than Episcopalians or Presbyterians. More Muslims live in America than Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses combined.

"The religion of Islam is now an American reality," Smith said. "All the Muslims are not in the Middle East.

"This has particular importance for Southern Baptists because Muslims now live in many of our communities and share their faith with the same people we know."

Smith estimates 4.75 million Muslims live in the United States. However, other estimates range from three to six million.

He identified five categories of Muslims in America: visitors, immigrants, Americans who have converted to Islam, black Americans, and independent or unorthodox Muslims. The largest number of mosques (Muslim places of worship) are located near university campuses, he said.

Islam, which literally translated means "submission," is the religion of people who claim to be totally submitted or dedicated to Allah, the Arabic term for God. Muslims are followers of Islam.

Islam began in the sixth century in what is now Saudi Arabia with the work of Mohammed, who said God spoke to him through the angel Gabriel and dictated a series of messages which represented the will of God for all people. After Mohammed's death, these messages were collected into the

Koran.

Humanly speaking, the chance of Muslims converting to Christianity is small, Smith explained, primarily due to their intense commitment to their faith.

Most Muslims in America — especially immigrants — never have thought of converting to Christianity, Smith said, because their faith is so integrally related to their socialization.

American converts to Islam, on the other hand, usually already have rejected Christianity to embrace Islam, he explained.

Muslims can be converted to Christianity, Smith said, but presenting the Christian message effectively to Muslims will require patience and sensitivity.

"The things Baptists do best are least effective in witnessing to Muslims," he warned. "I believe in what we're doing, but I'm convinced people in other religious groups aren't hearing us."

"They're talking on AM and we're talking on FM."

Baptist staples such as preaching, singing, meeting, and eating don't attract Muslims, Smith said.

"Muslims resent Christian preaching and often dislike Christian missionaries," he said, noting that Muslims have no professional missionaries because every member is ex-

pected to be a missionary.

Further, Muslims often are confused and offended by Christian worship styles, he explained. "They view our demeanor as irreverent and worldly and don't understand our mixing of the sexes in classes and in worship."

Baptists attempting to introduce Muslims into Christian worship would do well to begin with some basic information, he suggested. The culture shock will be less if Baptists take Muslim friends to the church facility when no one is there and explain what things are and how worship takes place.

How Baptists approach Muslims in witnessing encounters can make a difference in the reception, Smith said.

"We need to recover a sense that we are witnesses by virtue of our transformed nature," he said. "We should not witness because we fear if we don't God is going to back us into a corner and make us wish we had."

The current conflict in the Persian Gulf has intensified Americans' interest in Islam, Smith said. However, Baptists should not confuse the political conflict with the differences between Islam and Christianity, he urged.

"Remember that the conflict in the Middle East is not between Islam and Christianity."

National CP budget shows increase

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget receipts for November pushed total receipts for the first two months of the 1990-91 budget year to \$23,123,282, a gain of 2.07 percent over the same period of 1989-90.

October receipts had fallen 4.20 percent below the same month last year, but an 8.6 percent increase in November produced the growth balance.

In response to this report, SBC Executive Committee president and treasurer Harold C. Bennett said that he was "very pleased with the increase in Cooperative Program receipts in November as opposed to (the decrease) in October."

Bennett also said he was "gratified at the number of state conventions that

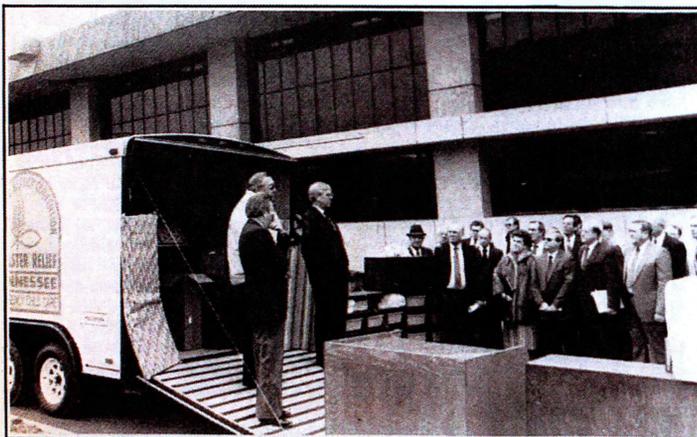
adopted recommendations in support of world missions through the Cooperative Program."

The total 1990-91 Cooperative Program basic operating budget of \$137,332,523 requires average monthly receipts of \$11,444,377.

Receipts above the basic operating budget will be distributed on a 50-50 basis to program advance and capital needs.

Program advance dollars will be distributed to budgeted entities according to each entities' percentage of the basic operating budget.

The 1990-91 Cooperative Program capital needs budget provides for a percentage formula for the distribution of funds available for capital needs.



DEDICATION FOR CHILD CARE — Executive Board members, Tennessee Baptist Convention employees, and others gathered after the board meeting to hear TBC leaders, from left, Paul Durham, board president; Cameron Byler, Brotherhood director; and D. L. Lowrie, executive director, dedicate the new Disaster Relief Child Care Unit.

— Photo by Connie Davis

Our Readers Write

His Word is answer

Zachariah 4:6 says "not by power or might but by my Spirit says the Lord!"

These words have been in my mind for days as I hear of the build-up of forces in the Persian Gulf area. An army is essential to a nation, but is that the real way that wars are won?

I am happy that Bibles can now be sent into Saudi Arabia. That our men were in a foreign country without the Word of God was unthinkable. Of course, having a Bible is not the real answer unless it is written in the hearts of the people. God's Word is so important in everything we do.

I have a sister who is one of the most encouraging persons I know. She always has a background of Scripture when an encouraging word is needed. Often we

GUIDELINES: Opinions of Tennessee Baptists on pertinent subjects are welcomed. Letters should be concise, no more than 250 words. Writer's name may be withheld for sufficient reason. Only one letter from the same writer will be considered for publication per quarter. Letters must not make personal attacks on the character or integrity of anyone. Form letters and "open" letters will not be published. Writers should send original copy. Writers are encouraged to write in a positive, Christian manner. Address and phone number must be included. Letters not conforming to these guidelines will be returned.

try to help someone with psychology or human ways when what they really need is to hear what God has to say about our needs.

To be able to use God's Word to help someone is a gift that must be cultivated by much study and prayer. When we try to do things by our own might or power we so often fail. But when we listen to the Spirit and follow His Words we can expect good things to happen.

Whether it is a nation or an individual, God's Word is the answer.

Dorothy Blake
923 Beverly Dr.
Alcoa 37701

Thanks volunteers

I am writing to sing the praises of 17 mission volunteers who came to our seminary here in Cali, Colombia, from the FBC of Rogersville, and other churches in that association, to work in our library building and do other minor repairs on our campus.

The group arrived on Oct. 26, and went to work the next morning. They worked diligently and constantly during the week, in addition to participating in the regular Sunday church services in our churches and in the Wednesday night prayer meetings. They also participated in two chapel services at the seminary, and some of them spoke in regular classes during the week.

The group was well organized and coordinated by pastors Ronell Owensby and Richard Cassidy from Rogersville. One of the most positive impressions was the opportunity for the group to get

to know the students more personally, and vice versa. It was a mutual blessing for students, faculty, and the mission volunteers. May their tribe increase!

James E. Giles, president
Int. Baptist Theological Seminary
Cali, Colombia

Expresses thanks

I thank God for Tennessee Baptists and appreciate the opportunity you gave me to serve as president of our convention. We are fortunate to have Christ-

honoring institutions in Tennessee Baptist life and I am grateful for the cooperative spirit that helps us reach many for Christ. I commend the churches for the leadership they give in sharing Jesus and their gifts through the Cooperative Program.

I will forever be indebted to the officers of our convention that served with me and to Dr. D. L. Lowrie and our Executive Board staff in Brentwood.

F. Murray Mathis
Third Church
Murfreesboro 37129

Sanctity of life lessons set for January

NASHVILLE (BP)— Sunday School lesson planners are interrupting ongoing study units to provide the first annual sanctity of human life lesson on Jan. 20, 1991, for all older children, youth, and adults using Southern Baptist Bible study materials, according to a curriculum manager responsible for the project.

It is rare that ongoing units of study in Sunday School materials are interrupted, but "the editorial staff, administration, and trustees of the Sunday School Board have worked together to develop a lesson dealing with this," noted Louis Hanks, manager of the youth Sunday School curriculum section and the manager responsible for the sanctity of human life lesson committee.

The 1991 lesson materials discuss alternatives to abortion and encourage churches to provide counseling for persons who are contemplating an abortion and ministry to persons who have had an abortion, Hanks explained.

While sanctity of human life involves numerous issues, the focus of the 1991 lesson is abortion. However, he said, materials for older children provide a focus on the worth of individuals and on loving and caring for others.

Sanctity of human life materials for adults have been written by Jimmy Draper, pastor of First Church, Euless, Texas, with Dan Taylor, minister of education at the church, writing teaching procedures.

Youth lessons were written by Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Church, Marietta, Ga., with Ozzie Ingram, minister of youth at Immanuel Church, Lexington, Ky., writing teaching procedures.

Older children's materials were written by Hal Boone, staff counselor at Sagemont Church, Houston, with teaching procedures written by Judy Latham, children's Sunday School division director at First Church, Nashville.

Graham family doing fine after ordeal, Laurie writes

Laurie Graham, missionary to Kuwait now in Nashville, sent this recent letter to friends before the release of her husband from the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City. Graham returned to the U.S. on Dec. 10. Continue to pray for the Grahams. — Editor

Thank you! For the tremendous support you have been during our crisis. We have appreciated so much your constant prayers, letters, and gifts. All four of us are doing well, so let me update you on our situation:

Peter, Aaron, and I left Kuwait on the Sept. 12 evacuation flight of women and children. Maurice had no choice but to remain in the U. S. Embassy in Kuwait where he says he is maintaining his weight on tuna fish, rice, and swimming pool water. Although we are very concerned for his safety and quick return home, the boys and I are coping well because we know from experience what life in the embassy is like. Maurice is not "holed up" there as one news report said. Although no one has been allowed in or out of the compound since Aug. 25 (except for evacuations), he can enjoy being outside, moving freely about the embassy grounds.

We were greatly enjoying our new life in Kuwait before the invasion. The church members in the English language congregation had welcomed us warmly as Maurice became their associate pastor, and we were all excited to be there. But the gunfire which awakened us at 5 a.m. on Aug. 2 took us completely by surprise. As four different sets of

troops came into our apartment above the church throughout the first day, we huddled on the floor in the safest bedroom with five Filipinos.

The Iraqi soldiers were searching for Kuwaitis and wanted food, water, and to watch videos. At one point a soldier handed me a guitar to play and I hummed Christian songs for thirty minutes while he listened. When Maurice realized the soldiers were taking over the church as headquarters, he said we had to get out of there, despite the fact that Iraqi troops were everywhere.

In between visits from the soldiers, we were able to call our friend, Bill Colwell, the U.S. consul, who told us to drive to his house immediately. So our family and the five Filipinos jumped in our car, sweeping away glass from two windows that had been shattered by bullets earlier in the day. As we drove through many troops the soldiers acted as if they did not even see us!

We arrived at the Colwell's house 20 minutes later to discover that the bullet that had been shot through the rim of the car tire earlier in the day simply spread out when it hit the rubber tire rather than piercing it. These are just two examples of endless times in the past three months that God has protected us from harm and provided for our needs.

So how are we handling all this? We are all coping well due to your constant prayers and expressions of love. The State Department calls me daily to report that Maurice is still safe in the embassy. Periodically

they pass short messages to him and back to me. Several days a week he hears 30-second radio messages from us over Voice of America. He says he is healthy and in good spirits. At the embassy he holds a small, informal prayer group each evening, conducts worship services each Sunday, and provides counseling there or over the telephone. He maintains telephone contact with church members who are feeding 100 hungry people each day and providing care for 200 children in the handicapped hospital. Fifty Filipinos remain behind in Kuwait specifically to carry on worship services and minister to others.

Peter and Aaron are doing remarkably well. They were greeted at the Nashville airport by school buddies from last year, and entered back into 7th and 5th grades with ease. They were keenly aware of the political situation in the Middle East, but are able to read the headlines every day, ask a few questions to ease their fears, then quickly jump right back into the world of the child with Nintendo and other activities. We are fortunate to be staying in a missionary residence and have excellent support systems.

I am busier than I want to be, but that's probably best. I grieve a little every day, but am generally able to go about daily life with energy and optimism. One thing I can't handle right now is speaking engagements. I don't know which is worse, speaking about Kuwait or Liberia! Our experience last year in waiting to know what direction we should take after leaving Liberia seems to have

prepared us for this current waiting game. But the six weeks we have been back in the States have flown compared to the long six weeks we spent in the embassy. So we believe Maurice when he says that each day seems longer than the day before.

We have appreciated the concern many of you have expressed over our financial situation. Like everyone else, we left Kuwait with only the clothes on our backs. But unlike most who evacuated, we are still on salary and our insurance will cover all our losses in Liberia and Kuwait, so we are in good shape financially. I do ask, however, that you would give generously to the Foreign Mission Christmas Offering which is the basis of missionary support.

Our prayer requests are obvious, but in addition to praying for all who are detained in Iraq and Kuwait, and most importantly, praying for peaceful resolutions throughout the Middle East, I ask your prayers for Liberia. That country and its people seem to have been forgotten in the midst of their devastating civil war. Just as some of our colleagues in the Middle East have evacuated, our fellow missionaries from Liberia have been temporarily reassigned to other West African countries. Pray for them as they grieve over the friends, ministry, and possessions they have suddenly left behind in Liberia.

Receiving letters means the most to me right now. Please write to let me know how you are doing.

Laurie Graham
P. O. Box 290751
Nashville 37229

Porter announces he will not run for SBC registration secretary

NASHVILLE (BP)— Southern Baptist Convention Registration Secretary Lee Porter has announced he will not be a candidate for the position as long as he is employed by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

In a prepared statement, Porter said: "As part of discussions regarding comments I made during the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, I was informed by the administration of the Baptist Sunday School Board that it would be unwise for me, as a board employee, to continue to hold an elected office in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I regret that my comments to students as a convention officer involved me in denominational politics. I am sorry for the pain and disruption caused by my remarks. I accept the position of the administration. Therefore, as long as I am employed by the board, I will not allow my name to be presented to the convention for reelection as registration secretary," the statement continued.

Porter, who has been registration secretary since 1977, said, "If the Lord should lead me to another position and God reveals to me and to Southern Baptist Convention messengers that the cause of Christ, denominational harmony, and confidence in the registration and balloting process could be extended with my serving, then I would be most happy to continue to serve as registration secretary."

Porter, a 14-year employee of the board, was removed from his position as a design editor in the board's Sun-

day School youth-adult department as a result of remarks made during the 1990 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans. He was reassigned to a non-editorial position as projects consultant in the same department.

During a June 13 session in the messenger registration area at the Louisiana Superdome, Porter met with a class from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. During the two-and-one-half hour session, he made personal comments on a wide range of SBC issues including messenger registration.

After reviewing the matter, board officials concluded, according to an administrative report, that Porter

"violated the established parameters of the Baptist Sunday School Board for acceptable employee conduct. His use of inflammatory language has impacted his performance as an employee and the board's relationship with its Southern Baptist constituency."

In response to Porter's announcement that he will not run again for registration secretary as long as he is still employed by the board, Gary Cook, vice president for church programs and services, said "a conscious desire to avoid any appearance of political activity and the time requirements for work assignments were primary reasons for the administration's discussions with Lee Porter

concerning the advisability of his continuing to hold denominational office. The administration and Lee Porter came to the agreement that he would make the announcement."

Porter said "whether I ever serve again as registration secretary, I will remember with happiness the last 14 years of hard work which I viewed as a ministry to the people called Southern Baptists."

Before joining the board in 1976, Porter was director of organization for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. Earlier, he was pastor of churches in Texas and Louisiana. He has served as first and second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and as SBC parliamentarian.

Old principles, new techniques needed, leaders say

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP)— Reaching people with the Gospel in the 1990s will require mixing time-honored principles with innovative methods before the time is too late, Morris Chapman and Larry Lewis said.

Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Lewis, president of the SBC Home Mission Board, spoke to state evangelism directors and state mission directors during their annual meetings in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"I believe the harvest is passing in America," Chapman told the group. "I believe God is writing across the sky in boxcar letters: Get right."

Delivering this message to America will require new techniques, Chapman

declared, because of rapid changes in society.

"The profile of America is changing," he said. "The Bible Belt is disappearing."

To meet the challenge, "the cry of our hearts needs to be to have a passion for souls," he said. "We need to be personal soul winners."

In an earlier address, Lewis cited principles Baptists must not forsake in developing new and innovative methods for reaching people in the '90s.

First, Baptists must proclaim the Gospel with celebrative worship that includes exciting music and dynamic preaching "from a red-hot pulpit where God's word is expounded," Lewis said.

He called for pastors to be prophets, confronting immorality, sin, and corruption in society. "Too many times, the pulpit is silent because the pastor does not want to offend anyone."

Second, Baptists must emphasize quality programming that includes in-depth Bible study, Discipleship Training, and missions education, he said.

Third, Lewis said, Baptist churches need to make evangelism and personal soul winning the responsibility of every member, not just the pastor and staff.

Fourth, Baptists need to focus on "Christ-centered, Bible-based redemptive ministries" which meet the needs of people in the community.

Fifth, Baptists need to emphasize growth by extension as well as growth by expansion, Lewis said.

Board votes to trim . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Executive Committee met Thursday night after meeting with Baptist and Reflector editor as the paper's board of directors.

Committee organizational reports were given to the board on Friday. The board honored 12 employees for five years service, five for ten years. Louise Fox, administrative secretary for Evangelism Department was recognized for 15 years.

Martha Grove, controller/accounting director, was honored for 40 years service, and Wallace Anderson, program services director, for 30 years.

The Executive Committee recommended to the board that the \$200,200 payment on building loan principal be made. The money will come from some individual gifts and two reserve

Charles Page resigns Nashville pastorate

Charles Page has resigned as pastor of First Church, Nashville, accepting a call to return to First Church, Charlotte, N. C.

Page, 51, has been pastor of the downtown congregation since March of 1985. He came to the 170-year-old Nashville church from the church he is returning to in Charlotte. "I was called by God to come to Nashville, and I am now honoring the same call to return to Charlotte," he said.

The pastor said he will remain at the Nashville church until Dec. 24, conducting a Christmas Eve service. Jimmy Dunn, minister of administration/education at the church, said a search committee will be named to seek a replacement for the pastor.

funds.

In other action, J. L. Ford, Tennessee Board Adult Homes executive director, reported to the board that TBAH plans to work with Willow Brook homes for older adults. Willow Brook's two facilities are in the Nashville area.

TBAH would provide for chaplain's service, some counseling, religious activities planning, and would coordinate social programs. TBAH would be compensated by a ratio per occupant — but never more than \$30,000 annually. Willow Brook is operated by Hardaway Management Group.

The Executive Committee Thursday night discussed the TBAH plan and gave its opinion at the Friday board meeting that if funding were needed for the Willow Brook program, Tennessee Baptist Cooperative Program funds would not be available.

Ford also reported completion of the new wing of the Lenoir City nursing home — which provides home for some adults and child care for workers.

Bill Bates, newly elected TBC president, addressed the board briefly Friday morning. He asked board members to help develop a spirit of cooperation and understanding. Bates said he would like for Tennessee Baptists to be more concerned about lost people, to respond to the needs of people, and to develop a prayer life greater than ever before.

On recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Executive Board voted to study attendance patterns of members of all boards of trust and committees in the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The board's next meeting is May 7.

One Word More By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

The late Texas writer John Henry Falk was sitting on the porch one day, just taking it easy, when a young friend stopped for a visit.

They talked for a while, the man and the boy, as neighbors do. Finally the conversation came around to the events of the past few days.

Falk told the boy he had seen him going to a birthday party in the community. He acknowledged that he had. Then the lad grew wistful. "You know, Johnny," he said, "that was some party. We sure did have a great time. It was so much fun. Why Johnny, I wish yesterday could be forever. Why can't it be, Johnny?"

Falk said he started into a philosophical explanation in trying to cope with the little boy's question. But I don't think he got very far. He didn't get very far because he began to realize that the question of the lad is a question we all dwell on. "Why can't yesterday be forever?"

You remember them, as do I. Crickets' calling, summer picnics, roses in the dusk, dew on the morning-glories, mother's cakes, friendships. Why can't yesterday be forever?

Let them be blessed, those memories. Let them recall from the past steps we walk, bridges we cross, building our lives in Christ's footsteps. And let us not be sad as was Jeremiah when he wrote, "The summer is ended and we are not saved."

The world of the spirit knows no summer. The same Lord that enables us to cherish yesterday's birthdays

gives assurances that today is upon us and that He is with us as we walk it.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me," Luke quotes the Master as saying. The emphasis is on today.

Jesus also said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow," and he taught these prayer words to us, "Give us today our daily bread."

The Bible views all aspects of life from the point of eternity. Yesterday pales into a shriveled shell if it has no bearing on what we learned and what rules we live by.

Our todays largely determine our prospects for eternity. So Christ offers His Way to us, the only help for life's problems and burdens — day by day.

When Jesus talked about denial of self and the daily taking up of the personal cross, He was talking about the realities of life. He had just miraculously changed a few fish and small loaves into an abundant feast for the hungry. Now it seems, He says to His followers, "Let's turn from the physical to the spiritual. I am on My way to the cross. If you want to continue fellowship with Me — walk in My footsteps."

Life is to be lived daily, in full. Memories of the past are lessons for today.



ALLEN

Diagnosis: Most SBC churches not growing

Editor's note: This is the first in a series on plateaued and declining churches.

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP) — If Southern Baptist churches were a family of children getting medical check-ups, the doctor would declare 52 percent of them stunted and another 18 percent critically ill.

The diagnosis: Most Southern Baptist churches are not growing.

And many of the growing churches are living off infusions from their sickly sister churches through membership transfers. It is a phenomenon one expert has dubbed "the circulation of the saints."

"Plateaued" and "declining" are the terms most often used to describe churches that aren't growing. However, defining which churches are plateaued or declining is neither easy nor popular.

In one association in the southwestern United States, pastors were asked if they thought their churches were either plateaued or declining. Few, if any, pastors said their churches fell in those categories. Yet statistical records revealed that 80 percent of the association's churches had not shown a net growth in the past ten years.

"Many churches that are feeling good about themselves are plateaued," notes Ebbie Smith, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "Some of them just haven't recognized that they're plateaued."

"They may get along real well and baptize people every year, but when you really figure it out, they are just sort of maintaining themselves."

The most common way to objectively measure church growth is through statistics. An annual net growth rate is determined by looking at membership additions and losses and changes in average attendance. Simply put, churches realize net growth when the number of people coming in the front door exceeds the number slipping out the back door.

Among Southern Baptists, the most thorough statistical study on plateaued and declining churches has been done by Kirk Hadaway of the Sunday School Board. For research, Hadaway defines growing churches as those showing more than a ten percent increase in membership over a five-year period. Declining churches are those showing more than a ten percent decrease in membership over a five-year period. Plateaued churches are those showing neither a ten percent increase or decrease.

Using that criteria, 52 percent of all SBC churches are currently plateaued and 18 percent are declining. When the criteria is narrowed to plus or minus five percent growth, 32 percent of churches are plateaued and 21 percent

Bishop returns to Knoxville

John Sevier Church, Knoxville, has called Grant Bishop back to the city to be pastor. He also served Lyons Creek Church in that role.

Bishop formerly was associate pastor/minister of education for Florence Church, Florence, Ky. Additionally he was pastor of Tusculum Church, Greeneville, and Buffalo Church, Rutledge. He was ordained in 1974 at First Church, Rogersville.

The native of Maryland and his wife, Gracie, have three children.

are declining.

Churches of all sizes and all theological shades may fall into these classifications. The phenomenon is experienced in all geographic locations. However, younger churches and suburban churches are less likely to be plateaued and declining than older churches and inner city churches.

Hadaway compared the growth rate of older and newer churches during a five-year period from 1981 to 1986. He found that older churches (those organized prior to 1927) grew only four percent on average, while newer churches (those organized between 1972 and 1981) grew an average of 47 percent.

Another researcher's study of churches in Memphis, revealed that the further a church was away from the inner city, the more likely it was to be growing. "Statistical growth is related to context more than anything," says Jere Allen, who directs the Home Mission Board's metropolitan missions department. Location and age are two "virtually uncontrollable factors" in church

growth, he says.

For that reason, Allen suggests churches should not be judged on statistical records alone. Within this context, a plateaued church is "any church which has been in the same place spiritually, attitudinally, or statistically for the past several years."

Even churches whose locations prohibit statistical growth should be able to grow in spirit and attitude, Allen says. "Some of these churches are in areas where it would be very difficult to grow, but there is an internal growth, a carrying out of the Great Commission."

"There's nothing wrong with being a statistically plateaued church if there is little or no opportunity for growth," adds HMB President Larry Lewis. "In God's sight, some of the most successful pastors are those who stay by the stuff even though they're in a hard situation where growth is all but impossible."

"However, I'm convinced most churches could grow and would grow if they had the right spirit, commitment,

and strategies," Lewis says. "The reason two-thirds of our churches are not growing isn't because there's no opportunity for growth, but because there's no real commitment to growth."

Like most of its churches, the SBC is a plateaued denomination.

While the SBC has recorded slight increases in membership in recent years, the rate of those increases is steadily declining. For example, in 1950 the SBC experienced a 4.7 percent increase in membership, compared to less than one percent growth every year since 1985.

But Southern Baptists aren't alone in this trend. Other Protestant groups — such as United Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Missouri Synod Lutherans — show actual membership decreases.

Despite a rough time for Protestantism, Southern Baptists have fared better than other groups because of a long-term investment in church starting and an emphasis on evangelism, says church growth author Lyle Schaller, who is a Methodist.

Pastor leads construction of 14 chapels in Brazil

The people of Brazil made such an impact on Glenn Grubb that he has returned nine times to an expensive and grueling activity — building pre-fab chapels.

The Maryville pastor had done volunteer work in Africa and Korea before visiting Brazil, but Grubb returned from his first mission work in Brazil in 1984 with a mission.

Fourteen completed chapels later, Grubb has led about 250 people on nine mission tours, but he's not done yet. His goal is to build 20 chapels for what he described as the "warm, appreciative" Brazilians.

For example, 140 accepted Christ during the Nov. 1-17 work tour Grubb led. The 28-member team completed two chapels, led 250 children in Vacation Bible School, and directed three-day revivals in the completed chapels, he reported.

It's not just Grubb's mission. Madison Avenue Church, Maryville, where he serves as pastor, adopted the project. And other area churches have supported it. Pastors accompanying Grubb on the recent trip included Pete Roberts, Knoxville; Gene Gann, Greenback; Greg Giltner, Maryville; and George Johnson, Morristown.

The Maryville church pays half of a member's expenses, which totals about \$1500. Each chapel costs \$6500, he added. He explained the budget of the church which averages about 600 in Sunday School, has increased miraculously during the project.

God provides the funding, said Grubb. It's often given months in advance by individuals and churches. Volunteer Gene Roberts, retired pastor from Seymour, and Ruth Yearout, Memorial Church, Maryville, wife of volunteer Howard Yearout, who is now deceased, financed the chapels built on the previous trip, he noted.

"It's been a sacrifice but it's been a good one," he said.

The pre-fab chapel, which was developed by a Southern Baptist missionary, is prepared in a plant in Brazil built by Southern Baptist Lottie Moon Christmas Offering funds, Grubb explained. More than 100 have been constructed across the vast country by

Southern Baptist volunteers.

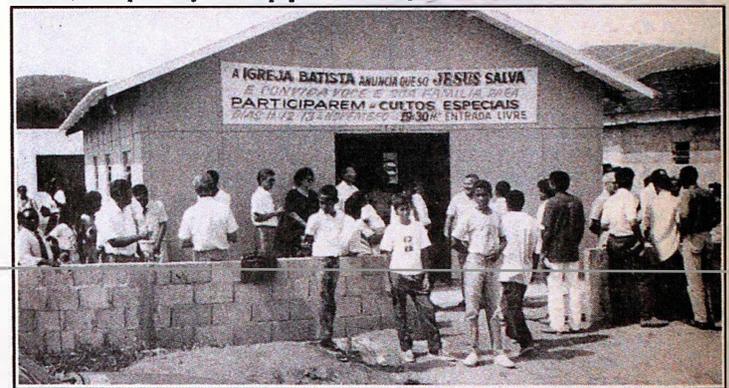
The initiator of all this activity is Missionary Guy Key, whom Grubb met on his first mission trip to Brazil. Guy was preparing to become director of missions for an area in southeast Brazil and asked Grubb to help him by building chapels.

Relationships were also built during the trips. While there in November the association's pastors asked Grubb to return to lead a city-wide crusade in Santos, a seaport city with a popula-

tion of 500,000. The crusade will be held May 26 to June 2 and Grubb is seeking 25 preachers and 25 laypeople to participate.

He will also lead a chapel construction team Oct. 6-13, 1991.

Grubb continues to return because of "the hunger of the people to know the Lord and to know the Bible," said Grubb. "The people are so appreciative. They just cannot thank you enough for coming and sharing the Gospel." — *Connie Davis*



FIRST SERVICE — Brazilians join Tennessee builders for dedication service of new chapel. — Photo by Glenn Grubb

Pulpit TEARS

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Funnyside up

A pastor finished a glowing message one Sunday morning. A stately grandmother with her young grandson shook the pastor's hand at the back door and announced, "Oh, pastor, I'm just filled with your message!"

The pastor, quite embarrassed with such a response, turned to the little boy and asked, "Well, young man, what did you think of the sermon?"

The little boy looked up at the pastor and said, "To be honest, pastor, I got a belly full of you, too!"

Tal D. Bonham and Jack Gullede, The Treasury of Clean Senior Adult Jokes. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Rogersville volunteers answer 'call' from Colombia

ROGERSVILLE — The Macedonian call found in Acts 16:9, though nearly 2000 years old, is just as vital today, says Richard D. Cassidy, pastor of Henard's Chapel Church in Rogersville.

As a result, 17 Baptist volunteers, the majority from Holston Valley Association churches, traveled to Colombia, Oct. 26-Nov. 3 to respond to a need at Baptist International Seminary in Cali. They were led by Cassidy and Ronell Owensby.

Owensby, pastor of First Church, Rogersville, learned of the need in Cali from missionaries Roy and Joyce Wyatt who teach at the seminary. Mrs. Wyatt is a native of Rogersville.

The Wyatts, who plan to retire to Rogersville in two years after more than 25 years in Colombia, contacted Owensby about four months ago to see if he could get together a group to come to the seminary to make needed repairs.

A missions group that had been set to go to Cali cancelled, Owensby reported, noting the Wyatts had never had a missions team visit them during their years in Colombia.

Owensby set into motion plans that would involve 17 volunteers from seven churches and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

For many years volunteer work in Colombia had been restricted, but has opened up just recently, Cassidy said.

The group which went to Cali included skilled carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, and a cabinet maker.

In addition to all the work done at the seminary, opportunities to preach, teach, witness, and give personal testimonies were abundant.



IN CALI — While on a missions trip in Cali, Colombia, volunteers took time to tour the city. From left, first row, are Annis Cope, Patsy Sorah, Margaret Floyd, Sarah Stewart, Rosemary Storm, Evelyn Willis Kerr, Kathy Wright, missionary Joyce Wyatt, Ronell Owensby; Second row, Denny Sorah, Walter Dunn, Kasler Hughes, Lynn Stewart, Richard Cassidy, Terry Owen, Tracy Wilson, Jack Storm, and George Testerman.

Owensby wrote the following message to his congregation in the church's newsletter upon his return:

"For 17 mission volunteers from Rogersville and other areas who journeyed to Cali, Colombia, the experience proved to be beyond the highest expectations. Who would have thought so much could be accomplished in such a short time? I must commend each team member for adapting to such a rigorous schedule which began at 6 a.m. and often lasted until 11 p.m. or later.

"In the nine days the main campus building at your Baptist International Seminary in Cali took on a new appearance. The library ceiling was

replaced, the electrical system updated, bookcases and shelving installed, and the main interior of the building was painted. Also, the plumbing in one of the dormitories was updated.

"Seminary President James Giles commended the team for their efforts and stated their hard work had saved the school and Southern Baptists thousands of dollars.

"In addition, your volunteers bore testimony of God's love in some ten churches, missions, and Bible study groups throughout the week.

"Roy and Joyce Wyatt and other missionaries went beyond the call of duty to plan and make the trip ex-

tremely meaningful and rewarding. Looking back, we must give God the praise for His good hand upon us."

Cassidy reported on the feelings of the missionaries in Cali. "They know that if it were not for Southern Baptist churches back home giving their dimes and dollars there would be no mission emphasis in Colombia or anywhere else."

Cassidy noted the volunteers were "convicted of their (the missionaries) zeal to continue their witness and work, both at the seminary to train men and women to spread the Gospel of Christ and to establish churches in that country.

The Rogersville pastor observed the seminary currently is training 75 students. Six Latin American countries are represented among the student body, he added.

Although the seminary is owned by the FMB, plans are in place to turn the facility over to the Colombian Baptist Convention by 1995, Cassidy reported. He observed that after 40 years "our SBC missionary-teachers have worked themselves out of a job," noting that almost half of the seminary staff will be retiring in the next two years.

Volunteers included Owensby, Annis Cope, Jack and Rosemary Storm, Tracy Wilson, and George Testerman, First Church, Rogersville; Cassidy, Kathy Wright, and Terry Owen, Henard's Chapel Church;

Denny and Patsy Sorah and Margaret Floyd, Choptack Church; Sarah and Lynn Stewart, Hickory Cove Church; all in Holston Valley Association. Other volunteers were Evelyn Willis Kerr, First Church, Morristown; Walter Dunn, Harrogate; and Kasler Hughes, Cowpens, S. C.

Chaplain misses Saudi Arabia, reports revival

By *Connie Davis*, assistant editor
Chaplain (Cpt.) Jim Duke misses Saudi Arabia.

Duke returned to Fort Campbell, home of the 101st Airborne Division, Oct. 28 after the death of his three-year-old daughter who was suffering from leukemia. His seven-year-old daughter, Bethany, and wife, Joni, needed him. But so do the soldiers, explained Duke.

"It's been a revival, that's what it's been. Because of that I miss being there. ... I got more accomplished there in eight weeks than in the eight years of my ministry as far as picking

fruit goes," said Duke, referring to leading people to belief in Christ.

"Sometimes in the Army chaplains have to justify their existence," said Duke, noting that leads to paperwork. "But in Saudi I was preaching, teaching, baptizing, and counseling, and I could have done it 24 hours a day."

He baptized 16 men in a Saudia Arabian reservoir and 15 more men from his battalion were baptized by another chaplain because of his absence.

Soldiers who "didn't need God and didn't need anybody" are "hungry for the Gospel" and "begging" for Bibles,

said Duke. And the changed lives are affecting lives stateside as soldiers share their experiences with family and friends.

This good result of the conflict and the anxieties of families are keeping him busy at Fort Campbell.

Families of soldiers may be less prepared for military conflict than the income of the deployed soldier, added Duke.

Duke is one of about 80 Southern Baptist chaplains now serving in Saudia Arabia.

soldiers, explained Duke. "The soldiers are trained. ... They have a lot of con-

fidence in their ability to do well. Many have dealt with what it might mean to die," he said.

The families are filling worship services, not allowing room for the base's soldiers if they returned, said Duke. The about 15,000 members of Fort Campbell's 101st Airborne Division were deployed to Saudia Arabia during August and September.

Families are also receiving help from local congregations and the community, said Duke. The church of which he is a member, First Church, Oak Grove, Ky., provides a weekly support group.

He encouraged Tennessee Baptists to write soldiers, noting that some in his battalion didn't receive mail. They may be written at 101st Airborne Division, APO, New York, N. Y. 09309.

Families of reservists and members of the National Guard across the state also need financial help, added Duke. Because more of these Tennessee soldiers have been deployed than from any other state, Tennesseans are "paying the price" as families often lose

Knoxville church calls Hill

Blount Avenue Church, Knoxville, has called Danny Hill as pastor. He was youth minister at Eastwood Church, Knoxville.

Hill, a Knoxville native, was ordained in 1989 by Eastwood Church. A bivocational pastor, he also works at an equipment manufacturing company.

He and his wife, Angela, have one son.

Maryville Brotherhood group builds Habitat house

The Brotherhood group of First Church, Maryville, decided it wanted to do something more than just meet once a month for breakfast. Less than one year later the missions group has completed a house for a needy family and organized a branch of the Habitat for Humanity organization in Blount County.

The majority of the men's group are not builders or craftsmen, and only number 25-30, but they secured about \$15,000 in funds, land, donated materials, and volunteer labor to build the house.

The group bought land from the city of Maryville for only \$100. The house was built in an area that had been planned for urban development some 20 years ago, explained Barton Wade, who was Brotherhood president when

the project was adopted.

"This is not welfare," said Wade. The family buys the house, but the cost is reduced because it is provided debt-free by the volunteers to the Habitat organization, which reinvests the house payments into other houses in Blount County, he explained.

First Church member Keith Rice, a building contractor, directed the builders and provided tools which made the work easier, said Wade. Another member of the church donated carpet and the Woman's Missionary Union provided lunch several times.

The community also responded, said Wade. The Alcoa Aluminum Company gave \$2500 to the project and materials were donated by other companies. But without individual gifts, the project could not have been completed, Wade

noted.

Brotherhood member D. K. Thomas is retired and was "looking for something to do," he said. "It was very rewarding, a labor of love. ... We had a lot of knots to saw through, but we did it and I'm proud of it." Thomas also is a board member of the Maryville chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

The Brotherhood members became bonded together, said Wade, an aircraft mechanic for the Tennessee Air National Guard based in Maryville. He also suggested another result of the project.

"If more work like this was done, maybe our federal government wouldn't be burdened with welfare programs," he said. — *Connie Davis*

First of two parts

The status quo: An analysis

By Herschel H. Hobbs

Someone defined status quo as Latin for the mess we are in. I want to apply it to the current situation in the Southern Baptist Convention. My only qualification to do this is age and experience. That I am the oldest living former president of the Southern Baptist Convention may give me the right to write this article. To borrow from "Mammy Yokum" of Dogpatch, if I had my "druthers" I would like to sit on the sideline, bask in past history, and cheer on a new generation running the race that is set before them. But I can no longer remain silent. I trust you will bear with me, my dear friends of our beloved convention.

When I was a young pastor I sat for hours at a time listening to such greats as Louie D. Newton and John Jeter Hurt Sr. as they recited history of which I had read but in which they participated. It linked me to the past and prepared me for the future. I cannot hold a candle for them, but hopefully I can help others as they helped me.

I am not on either "side" in the present controversy. Both sides have some right and some wrong. Through 83 years of living I have learned a few things. One is that extremes are never right. The truth lies somewhere between them. Another is that in every difference there are three sides: yours, mine, and the right one. The right one is God's side, and we must find it!

What I say is not criticism of the present generation, but of mine. Most are gone or are no longer in the mainstream of convention activities. But the roots of the present controversy are in the soil of our generation.

In the seminary my generation majored on Hebrew, Greek, theology, and homiletics. We studied psychology, counseling, and pastoral ministries. But they were minors over against the majors. In theology, for instance, we were taught Southern Baptist systematic theology. I fear that today's graduates know systematic theology in the broader sense. But I also fear they do not know Southern Baptist systematic theology. One veteran theology professor agreed with me that my fears are true. These men know more about Barth, Bruner, Bultmann, and Tillich than they do about Mullins and Connor. It is not their fault. They were victims of decisions made by people of my generation in the late 1940s.

My generation was thoroughly indoctrinated in what is generally accepted as Southern Baptist heritage and faith.

Homer Belcher begins work

Homer Belcher, who has served as a pastor of Tennessee churches for 31 years, has accepted that role at Valley Road Church, Athens.

He was formerly pastor of Greasy Creek Church, Reliance.

The native of Etowah was ordained in 1959 at Old Salem Church, McMinn County. Belcher and his wife, Joyce, have three children and three grandchildren.

I realize that with some in academia indoctrination is a dirty word. But it simply means teaching in a certain way. Southern Baptists have six fine seminaries. They were established and are financed for the purpose of training leaders for Southern Baptist churches and other institutions. People of other faiths are welcomed, but these schools do not exist for them. How can we train Southern Baptist leaders without teaching them our heritage and faith? I know that we should teach them to think for themselves. But we owe it to them to guide young minds into the right paths.

The result of all this is that we now have a generation, the greater part of which does not know our Baptist heritage and faith. This applies to both sides of our controversy.

Herschel Hobbs, retired pastor of First Church, Oklahoma City, Okla., former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and well-known Bible scholar, wrote this definitive article for Baptist state papers. The concluding part of the article will be printed in next week's issue. Hobbs writes a feature on Bible truths which appears regularly in the Baptist and Reflector. We gladly share this article with our readers. — Editor

My generation let the old Baptist Training Union die. We lost four months out of the year when our people studied our Southern Baptist heritage and faith. The result is that we have a sad lack concerning these matters in both the pulpit and the pew. Ask the average Southern Baptist what he/she believes, and the answer most likely will be, "I believe what Southern Baptists believe." If asked what they believe they will say, "I don't know. But I sure believe it!"

We hear cries of creedalism and academic freedom. For 27 years I have warned Southern Baptists that if we ignore the preamble of The Baptist Faith and Message we make it a creed. This preamble protects the individual conscience and guards against a creedal faith. But it also states clearly that Southern Baptists have been and are now identified with certain basic beliefs set forth in that document.

The preamble is as much a part of The Baptist Faith and Message as any of the 17 articles in it. Without the preamble the convention would not have adopted the Statement. Therefore, no Southern Baptist or group of such should try to enforce the 17 articles while ignoring the provisions of the preamble.

As for academic freedom, there is no such thing as absolute freedom where people live in community. Because my freedom is limited by your rights. I am

free to do calisthenics, to double up my fists, and thrust my arms back and forth. But I am not free to do that on a crowded street corner where in doing it I punch you in the nose. My individual freedom ends where your nose begins. Freedom and responsibility go hand in hand, else the result is anarchy.

In academia this freedom is limited by the purpose for which the school exists — whether it be a seminary or a state university. At the same time we should remember that a seminary is not a university. Its purpose of being is different from a university. A denominational seminary is limited by its peculiar purpose.

In my president's address in San Francisco in 1962 I sought to distinguish between a creedal faith and a living faith. I used the figure of two ways to graze a cow. A creedal faith is snubbing the cow to a post, allowing only limited grazing. A living faith is like building a fence about a piece of land. The cow is free to graze anywhere within that fence. In our figure the fence is the Bible and the purpose of the institutions.

In recent years a new word has been introduced into Southern Baptist theology — parameters. This refers to limits to our faith or the teaching/preaching of it. These parameters should not be so narrow as to stifle sound intellectual pursuits. But they should not be so broad as to have no limits beyond which one can go. It all comes down to freedom with responsibility. The Baptist Faith and Message could well be the guide here.

Now look at the Peace Committee. It was carefully chosen so as to be a balanced group involving both extremes with a middle section to balance between the "conservatives" and the "moderates." (I do not like labels, but we seem to be stuck with them. Toward the end of the second year of the Peace Committee's work a leading "conservative" agreed with me that these terms are not theological but political.) I have served on more SBC committees than I can remember. Never have I served on one which was more important or more conscientious in its work. Of course we had our differences, but we spoke the truth in love. Near the end of the second year a leading "conservative" said that if the spirit that developed in that committee could develop in the entire convention, our problem would be solved.

Every word spoken in all our

meetings, including stale jokes, was recorded on tape. The committee voted unanimously to seal the tapes for ten years. This was done so that committee members would speak more freely. Near the end of our work it was evident that they contained nothing that was world-shaking. Three attempts were made to rescind the vote to seal them. The chairman rightly ruled that it must be by unanimous vote. We always had two or three negative votes.

We were instructed by the convention to determine the source of the controversy, report our findings, and make recommendations. We soon decided that the source was theology which produced the politics. We then divided into subcommittees to visit the various agencies of the convention. Our purpose was to discuss theological problems as reflected in our mail. Reports to the Peace Committee revealed problems in only two seminaries, and they were being handled through proper channels by those institutions.

Then a subcommittee on politics was appointed. I was on that committee. On a scheduled basis we met with everyone who could have been involved in such. It is evident that denominational politics are involved — on both sides. It began with "conservatives" but later involved "moderates" as well. As for giving out ballots indiscriminately, we found no documented evidence.

Let one example suffice. It was reported to Lee Porter and Tim Hedquist that two Criswell Bible Institute students were giving out ballots at a certain entrance. Hedquist literally ran to that entrance, hoping that if it were true he would catch them in the act. Arriving, he found two nicely dressed young men. They had no ballots. They were not Criswell Bible Institute students. They were wearing stickers given out that day at the Southeastern Seminary luncheon.

With proper people we went into the matter of seminary faculty purges, only to find that they were baseless. One man, who according to rumors was one possibility for president of Golden Gate, said, "Present problems are the responsibility of the president and trustees. Through the process of attrition — resignation, retirement, death — I would replace them with people who believe as I do." That involves a generation, not an overnight purge! — Continued in Dec. 19 issue

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Leadership . . .

Hickory Valley Church, Hickory Valley, recently called Donnie Cottrell as pastor.

Jeffrey Brown has been called as pastor of Etter Church, Byrdstown. This is his first pastorate.

Oak Grove Church, Mt. Carmel, called Nashville native David L. Thompson as minister of youth/education. He formerly served at Silver Springs Church, Mt. Juliet, and is a graduate of Belmont College, Nashville, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.



THOMPSON

William H. Weaver recently accepted the pastorate of Gath Church, McMinnville. He formerly served at First Church, Iron City.

Flat Mountain Church, Dunlap, called Herman Lowe as pastor.

Bob Pruett recently joined the staff of First Church, Cleveland, as minister of education.

Funderburk called by Memphis church

Scenic Hills Church, Memphis, has called A. Carl Funderburk as pastor. He formerly served First Church, McHenry, Miss., and churches in California, North Carolina, and South Carolina in that role.

Funderburk is a graduate of California Baptist College, Riverside; New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary; and Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, N.C.

The native of Georgia was ordained in Simi Valley, Calif. He and his wife, Jane, have three children.

Ebenezer Church, Toone, called Mike Moore as pastor.

Richard Long recently accepted the pastorate of Antioch Church, Johnson City.

George DeLozier recently returned to his former pastorate at Basswood Church, Knoxville, as interim pastor.

Crossroads Church, Parsons, called Glenn Holifield as pastor.

Ronny Jones was recently called as pastor of Kingston Pike Church, Lenoir City.

Pleasant Heights Church, Columbia, called Emil Marug as minister of music, effective Nov. 18.

New Salem Church, Limestone, called Scott Greene as youth minister.

Members of First Church, Sweetwater, voted Nov. 18 to name Anderson McCulley pastor emeritus. McCulley formerly served the church as pastor for 24 years. He recently retired and returned to Sweetwater to reside.

Alfred Reyes, of Corpus Christi, Texas, recently joined the staff of Temple Church, Old Hickory, as minister of youth.

Ted E. Davis recently retired as director of missions of McMinn-Meigs Association. He recently joined the staff of the North Walterboro Mission in Walterboro, S.C.

First Church, Clarksville, called Tom Holland as pastor of education.

Joe Hamlet has been called as family life and counseling minister to Manley Church, Morristown.

Eastwood Church, Cookeville, called Tom Whittemore as music director.

A. A. Carlton, chaplain at Baptist

Health Care Center, recently retired after serving in that capacity for ten years.

Brian Howell has been called as minister of music at Bethel Church, Humboldt.

Ordinations . . .

Gary Anderson Jr. was ordained to the Gospel ministry Nov. 18 at First Church, Dunlap. He is interim pastor at First Cold Springs Church, Pikeville.

Randy Bishop and Charlie White were recently ordained as deacons at First Church, Middleton.

Temple Church, Old Hickory, recently ordained Tim Kahn, Jerry Stanley, Richard Street, Joe Thompson, and Wayne Denton Jr., as deacons.

David Harbin, Joe Lovell, Don Ridenour, and Steve Williams were recently ordained as deacons at Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville.

Steve Barnes was ordained as deacon Nov. 25 at First Church,

Bill Banks deployed

NASHVILLE (BP) — Bill Banks, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's special ministries department, has been ordered to active duty with the U.S. Army Reserve.

Banks, a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, reported to Fort Bragg, N.C., with his unit on Nov. 23 and anticipates spending six months at Fort Bragg. He is commander of the 678th Personnel Services Company in Nashville and will direct an element of the unit which has been assigned to assist in mobilization processing and personnel administration at Fort Bragg.

John Gardner, manager of staff coordination, will serve as acting director of the department until Banks returns.

Banks, a member of Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage, will benefit from a recently approved Sunday School Board policy on emergency military leave. The policy extends benefits offered for annual training military leave to cover situations of emergency military leave for up to six months.

Under the new policy, the board will make up the difference between active duty military pay and the individual's normal board pay. Also, insurance and other board benefits will be continued during the time of military service.

Lincoln Park Church, Knoxville, recently ordained Lloyd Jollay to the deacon ministry.

Churches . . .

The Christmas musical "Celebrate the Child" will be presented Dec. 16 at Haywood Hills Church, Nashville.

Three home missionaries from the Upper Peninsula Association in Michigan conducted a speaking tour of Tennessee churches recently. The missionaries were Steve Melvin, director of missions; Chuck Talbot, mission pastor in Marquette, Mich.; and Tom Wilson, mission pastor in Munising, Mich. They spoke at the annual meetings and in churches of Sullivan, Holston, and Watauga Associations; at Lincocya Hills, Woodmont, and Saturn Drive churches in Nashville; at Holiday Heights Church, Hendersonville; and Brentwood Church, Brentwood.

The choir of Middle Creek Church, Oliver Springs, will present a Christmas musical/drama, "Christmas at Home," Dec. 19 and 23 at 7 p.m.

Highland Church, Pulaski, will hold its sixth annual nativity pageant Dec. 18-24 with presentations at 6:30, 7:30, and 8:30 each evening. The pageant presents the story of Christ's birth and includes a full street scene of Jerusalem. The production involves more than 150 people. For more information, contact the church at (615) 363-5468. Dwight Mercer is pastor.

Joseph Rosas called to Memphis pastorate

Union Avenue Church, Memphis,

recently called L. Joseph Rosas III as pastor. He was installed Nov. 10.

Rosas has served the church as interim pastor for a year. He is also assistant professor of religion and philosophy at Union University, Jackson.

The Millington native has also served Calvary and Fairlawn churches in Memphis; Gates Church, Gates; Rossville Church, Rossville; and churches in Mississippi and Kentucky. He was ordained in 1972 at First Church, Millington.

Rosas holds degrees from Union University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.



ROSAS

TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

What do you see in the Middle East? The attention of the world is found there because of its rich deposits of oil and the ambition of one man to control it. But the Christian should see more. We should see the millions of souls that populate that part of the world. Any one of them is of more value to God than all of the oil in the world.

Most of these millions live in spiritual darkness. Their religion, government, and culture attempts to keep them in the darkness. They oppose any attempt to share the Gospel of Christ with them.

This should affect the way we pray for that situation. As we pray for the safety of our fellow Tennesseans and fellow Americans, let's pray for the salvation of these multitudes. We need



LOWRIE

persons as ready to take the Gospel to that part of the world as we have been to take our military might.

As the possibility of war seems to become more threatening, most of what I read and hear causes me to believe that we have our trust in our superior equipment and training. We must remember that God has the last word on the outcome of the battle. We need to humbly seek the face of the God of all nations. He must be the object of our trust.

The financial bill for this action is staggering. We will pay for it through our taxes. The price for evangelizing that part of the world will also be high. We can pay for it through our Cooperative Program giving and our gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

All of this action in the Middle East should put a new urgency in our prayers during this Christmas season. Jesus is still the only Prince of Peace available to this world.



LENGHTHY SERVICE — New Bethlehem Church, Dyer, recently honored three members for 75 years of faithful service. Pictured, from left, are Pastor Randy P. Latch, Milton French, Lois Shanklin, and J. B. Cunningham.

Help children deal with stress, specialists urge

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE (BP) — Pressures to achieve are robbing children of their childhood as they face stresses they are not equipped to deal with, two specialists at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board agreed.

Bill Young, manager of the preschool/children's section in the Discipleship Training department, and Cos Davis, manager of the preschool program section in the Sunday School division, said churches and parents should join together to protect children from inappropriate pressures of society and teach them how to deal with life's stresses.

Churches should refuse to be part of the problems confronting young children and, instead, should educate parents on how to help children manage stress, Young said.

"No parent should try to raise children in a stress-free world — that's just not possible," he said. "We need to give them inner strength to help them handle challenges of stress."

When a parent recognizes the stresses the world tends to place on a child, the parent must be available to help the child, Young explained.

"Children are more vulnerable to stress because they don't have previous experiences to rely on. They need help knowing how to understand situations they face," Young pointed out.

Stress is a positive factor that becomes negative when it is out of balance, he said. It becomes out of balance because the child does not have the developmental skills to cope.

Even preschoolers face pressure to develop skills at an earlier age, Davis said. Some educators and politicians advocate early skills development, and even the parents may push for a "super baby." The result is undue pressure that is not sound for the child, Davis said.

Parents and church workers need to be sensitive to the symptoms of stress by taking time to listen and understand the child's situation, Young pointed out.

"Most parents are very sincere and want what is best for the child," Davis said. Because society can lead in directions that create undue pressure on the child, churches can play an important role in helping parents find what is appropriate for the child.

Churches can equip parents through seminars and materials such as Parenting by Grace produced by the board's family ministry and Discipleship Training departments, Davis said.

Many parents feel ill-equipped to deal with a child's stress, Young acknowledged. "Seek help when you need it. Many times, talking with the child will help uncover the basis for the child's concern," he said.

Also, many children's stories help the child see his or her feelings are normal or see alternative solutions to the problem, said Young.

Young suggested parents seek the help of a church media library worker or staff member to find books for parents and children to deal with particular concerns.

When relating to the child, churches need to provide rich experiences that

are appropriate for the age level, Davis pointed out.

With preschoolers, churches need to use the time to lay foundations of faith. "Trust and positive impressions developed in preschool years help develop security and strong self-image that is needed," Davis said.

Earlier is not always better, Young pointed out. "We often expect too much of our children too soon. We tend to ignore the developmental process of a child."

But even in the best circumstances, children must learn to deal with stress.

Parents should be available to listen and talk with children at times of stress. "They may not be able to tell you what they think, but they can tell you how they feel. They can tell you about butterflies in their stomach or

headaches," Young explained.

"Parents often are so absorbed in their own world that they don't take time to understand the child's situation," Young said. "We must be sensitive to the child and look for signs of stress."

Signs may range from tantrums and aggression in one- to three-year-olds to increased fantasy and a need for more physical contact for older preschoolers Young said. Older children may exhibit other abnormal behaviors.

Signs of stress vary from child to child, but prolonged or intense abnormal behavior is usually a sign the child is trying to deal with some kind of stress in his own way, he said.

"When we teach children how to deal with stress, we give them an inner strength to handle challenges they will face," Young said.

AN OPEN LETTER TO SOUTHERN BAPTISTS



ANNUITY BOARD OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Dear Fellow Southern Baptists:

In light of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention, we want to be sure that all those we serve understand our mission and the spirit in which it is being undertaken. We also wish to reassure any who might be concerned about the status of the Board and the security of their funds.

The staff and trustees of the Annuity Board remain united in our task of serving the best interests of all who participate in our programs. A spirit of cooperation and dedication characterizes our work.

The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is the second largest church pension fund in the United States. The growing assets of the Board total over \$2.8 billion, consisting of contributions and earnings managed for the benefit of members and their beneficiaries. The Board has adopted sound investment policies and retains the services of more than two dozen of America's most outstanding professional outside investment managers. Retirement contributions are credited to members' individual accounts in compliance with Internal Revenue Code Section 403(b). Plan members receive regular reports of the performance of the plan funds they have selected.

The mission and spirit of the Annuity Board remain the same. The trustees and staff of the Board are working faithfully to "serve those who serve the Lord."

B. J. Martin
Chairman of the Board

The above letter was unanimously adopted by the Board of Trustees at the October 30, 1990 meeting in Dallas, Texas.



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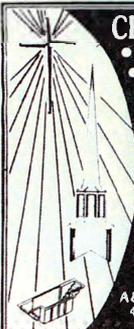
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Teaching about right priorities

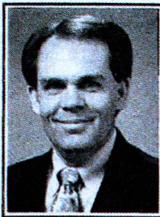
By Dennis P. Lunsford, pastor; Antioch Church, Humboldt

The old cliché states: "He who fails to plan, plans to fail." This is true whether we are describing our personal lives or the ministries of our churches. Why, as individuals, do we exist? Why does our church exist in our respective community? We had better have the answers to these questions if we are to effectively minister to others."

Jesus sought to instill the value of "priorities" in the lives of His disciples. His desire was that they too would see the world as He saw it.

The world is the same today. It may be described as lost, indifferent, lacking personal values. Jesus attempted to teach the disciples the significance of ministry.

The lesson passage Jesus' ministry and focus was "person-centered." The injured man in the story of the good Samaritan represents those who are all around us.



LUNSFORD

Have you ever noticed how people are hurting, lost, and dying even in a world that has been described as "affluent?" It is these who are somehow falling through the cracks of our church programs, lost in the shuffle of our mundane affairs called ministry.

The road this man traveled was dangerous. Yet, since it was traveled everyday by temple workers and others, you would have thought greater precautions would have been taken by the Jews or the Romans to safeguard the road from thieves and attackers. However, as we all know, it is easier to maintain a religious system than it is to improve a neighborhood.

A Samaritan's involvement? A Samaritan a hero? Samaritans were hated! Yet, the Samaritan demonstrated the ministry of Jesus. This man showed mercy to the undeserving! The Samaritan identified with the needs of the stranger and had compassion upon him. We are told this was true of Jesus. "The Word (Jesus) became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory

of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NIV).

BIBLE BOOK
December 16 Lesson
Basic Passage: Luke 10:25-11:54

Jesus identified with man and demonstrated grace and mercy to those who rejected Him. Being made aware of the concerns of Christ ought to evoke an attitude of worship from His followers. We are not worthy to receive His grace, yet He makes us worthy! Jesus clearly stated His purpose for coming to the world. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10 NIV). This is still His purpose today. Through His Holy Spirit, He seeks a "fallen, unregenerate man."

Consider Mary and Martha
Mary is found three times at the feet of Jesus. She listened to His Word (Luke 10:39), shared with Him her woe (John 11:32), and poured out her worship (John 12:3). Mary is seen as worshipping.

Consider her sister, Martha. Martha is seen as the worker. How we need a balance between work and worship. Martha, the worker, invited Christ into her home, but then neglected Him as she prepared the meal. It is important to note, "What we do with Christ is far more important than what we do for Christ." Few things are more damaging to the Christian life than to work for Christ without taking time to commune with Christ.

The answer to this dilemma The answer is, as Jesus pointed out to the disciples, discipline-priorities. Our priorities should be Jesus Christ first, then others, then ourselves. We must spend time at the feet of Jesus everyday so that we may effectively minister to the needs of others. Unless we meet Christ personally everyday, we will soon end up like Martha, busy, but not blessed.

The number one priority in the life of every Christian must be prayer, because Jesus, our example, was a man of prayer.

Are your priorities in line? We are ambassadors, neighbors, yes even worshippers, these three; the greatest of these is worshippers. When we have communed at the feet of Jesus in our everyday life, our priorities will be in line!

The banquet

By Carlos R. Peterson, pastor; First Church, Athens

When Cyrus the Great was a baby, his grandfather, out of jealousy and fear that Cyrus would one day take the Persian throne from him, called a servant and charged him to take the baby away and destroy him. Instead of killing the baby, the servant gave him to a childless shepherd living in a distant province.

Cyrus grew up thinking he was only a shepherd's son. One day he learned that he was a prince of royal blood and an heir to the throne of Persia. After that there was no mind-ing the sheep for him, for he immediately began to fit himself to rule the kingdom and eventually he became king of Persia. The turning point in his life came when he realized whose child



PETERSON

he was. When Jesus interacted with the Pharisees of His day, He confronted them with the question of their true relationship to God. He challenged them to examine their spiritual condition to determine if their claim to being God's children was based on God's forgiveness or their personal claim to special privilege because of birth as a Hebrew.

In our lesson this week, Jesus used a parable to help these Pharisees see that their religious heritage and ancestry were no guarantee that they were partakers of God's salvation or accepted as true children of God.

Challenge to compassion (14:12-14)
While experiencing the hospitality of a prominent Pharisee at a feast, Jesus observed the competition to sit in the place of honor, next to the host. Recalling Moses' exhortation to be considerate of the less fortunate of society, Jesus challenged these status

seekers to act in a manner that reflected their claim to a relationship with God. He charged these religious leaders to think less of themselves and their striving for prominence and more of ministering to those who were less fortunate: the poor, down-trodden, and outcasts of society.

CONVENTION UNIFORM
December 16 Lesson
Basic Passage: Luke 14:1-24

In a day when status is so important to most Americans, this lesson has special significance. It is a challenge to examine our own relationships to our friends and to the less fortunate who surround us daily.

Convenient response (14:15)
At least one experienced the quickening pang of conscience. In an attempt to shift the tenor of this conversation, he tried to divert the direction of this uncomfortable discussion from the present to the future. Focusing on the feast that God's children will one day enjoy in His presence, the religious leader expressed the anticipation of blessing on those who would share in

this heavenly banquet.
Call to come (14:16-24)
In response to the Pharisee's statement, Jesus told a parable which indicated the kind of people who would be present at this grand banquet. The invitations previously given to the various guests were followed up with a reminder of the banquet prepared for them. One by one they excused themselves with reasons that obviously indicated they had more important things to do. Their actions were insulting and offensive to the gracious host. His response was to invite those who were normally denied such opportunities. The very ones rejected by the Pharisees are the same individuals invited to sit at the great feasts already prepared. Those whose pride had caused them to reject the invitation would be replaced by the humble, repentant person who comes in gratitude.
Conclusion
God's invitation to become His child and enjoy fellowship with Him is given to everyone. Acceptance is based upon a response of faith from a spirit of humility.

Bread of life

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

This is one of the most difficult chapters in the Bible for us to understand. It begins with a beautiful picture of Jesus feeding the multitude, but goes on to speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. However, we must not let this hinder us from the search for God's Word.

Jesus offers what we need

In last week's lesson we noted Jesus always met human need. Though His disciples often showed little concern, Jesus never overlooked human need.

When the crowd following Him with seeming hunger for His words



NAIL

became hungry for food, Jesus provided food too. But don't fail to see the symbolism in this act.

Remember Jesus never performed a miracle, or "sign," just for the sake of the miracle itself. He also used the event as a sign of a deeper spiritual reality.

In this instance, Jesus gave them the food they needed for their bodies, yet they left a great quantity behind. Jesus provides ample spiritual food, only to see us snack on it and leave much of it behind.

Seeking the wrong things
Jesus pointed out that they were more interested in the spectacular demonstrations of His power than they were in what those signs had to teach them.

No matter how spectacular the show, it will soon be forgotten. Even those

whom Jesus raised from the dead went on to die again. However spiritual truth will endure.

When some came to Him and wanted to know the secret of doing the mighty works of God, Jesus pointed out that trusting Him was the mightiest work they could ever do.

LIFE AND WORK
December 16 Lesson
Basic Passage: John 6

The Bread that gives eternal life
At this point He interpreted the spiritual meaning of the feeding of the multitude.

Jesus referred them to the story of the Exodus and God's provision of their food. The existence of the nation was possible only because God provided the manna in the wilderness.

Jesus told them there is a spiritual food available to them which can sustain them through this wilderness journey on earth and through life

everlasting.
Surely they would have asked for the source of this bread as did the woman at the well that they might never hunger again. Jesus told them that that Bread was Him.

What options do we have?
When Jesus confronted the crowds with these truths they were faced with a choice. Some of them probably were disillusioned to learn Jesus was not just a miracle worker. Some people still become disheartened when Jesus does not perform a miracle each time they have a need.

They may slack off in their attendance or drop out of church altogether. Without being overly critical of such folks, I am convinced that many of them have been misled over the years into believing that being a Christian means the end of troubles.

But where else can we go? Simon Peter said the second wisest thing he ever said. We have nowhere else to go. Christ alone is the way to eternal life.

(BP) BRIEFLY

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

Oklahoma City pastor elected BGCO president

MOORE, Okla. — Messengers to the 85th annual Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, meeting at First Church, Moore, Nov. 12-14, elected Anthony Jordan, pastor of Northwest Church, Oklahoma City, president.

A 1991 Cooperative Program budget of \$16.5 million was approved. This is the same goal as voted the past three years. The gifts will be divided 55.75 percent to state causes and 44.25 percent to Southern Baptist mission and educational causes, the same as last year.

Resolutions were passed urging legislation to restrict induced abortion and calling for prior parental consent for girls under 18 years of age; commending the trustees and administration of Oklahoma Baptist University for their commitment to the relationship with the BGCO; reaffirming commitment to the Cooperative Program and discouraging any plan deviant to the existing method of mission support; and calling for prayer for the hostages in Iraq and Kuwait and for the armed forces in the Persian Gulf area.

Arizona Baptists deal with deficit

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Messengers to the 62nd annual meeting of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention heard a report on the convention's Baptist Loan Fund, adopted a \$4,942,159 budget and elected a new president when they met at North Phoenix Church, Nov. 13-14. A total of 579 messengers, almost 100 more than last year, attended the meeting.

The Baptist Loan Fund is facing a financial crisis, but plans have been made to deal with the problem. Dan C. Stringer, ASBC executive director-treasurer, told the messengers during the opening session of the annual meeting. As of the end of October, with holdings of \$4,403,181 that have been loaned to the loan fund by individuals, the Baptist Loan Fund has an operating deficit of \$3,624,496, Stringer said. Plans to deal with the deficit include selling Paradise Valley Baptist Conference Center in Prescott and the Baptist Building in Phoenix. In addition, the ASBC has made a major budgetary commitment beginning in 1991 to undergird the Baptist Loan Fund, Stringer said.

The 1991 budget, which is a 5.65 percent reduction from the one adopted by messengers last year, anticipates Cooperative Program gifts of \$2,250,000 from Arizona churches. That amount is based on actual giving during the year and is \$315,000 less than the amount adopted for 1990.

Dennis Adams, pastor of First Church, Show Low, was elected president.

In other business, messengers adopted eight resolutions as a slate without discussion, including a resolution in support of the Cooperative Program. The resolution declared that Arizona Southern Baptists' cooperation to share the Gospel "will best be accomplished through the continued efforts of each of our churches to give through the Cooperative Program."

BCNY enters relationship with North Carolina Baptists

MELVILLE, N. Y. — The 21st annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New York, Nov. 8-9, drew 224 messengers and 76 guests to the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Melville, Long Island, N. Y. The convention territory encompasses all of New York, Northern New Jersey, and southwest Fairfield County, Connecticut.

Larry Brown, a layman from Madison (N. J.) Church and outgoing chairman of the convention's executive board, was elected president. He is only the second layman to serve as president. Alwyn Dennis, pastor of Bethel Church, St. Albans, N. Y., was re-elected to a second term as first vice president. Mary Lois Sanders, a layperson from Bridgewater Church, was elected second vice president.

During the sessions the Baptist Convention of New York formally ended a 13-year sister state relationship with the Georgia Baptist Convention, and then affirmed a new partnership with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

In other business, a \$2,649,691 budget was adopted, an increase of 7.3 percent over the previous year. Of that amount, \$627,828, or 23.4 percent, is expected from the churches in undesignated gifts, with 25.5 percent going to Southern Baptist causes outside the Baptist Convention of New York. This is an increase of 0.25 percent.

Indiana messengers approve 1991 budget

GARY, Ind. — The 271 messengers from among the 312 Southern Baptist churches in Indiana chose devotion over debate during their three-day state convention meeting in Gary Nov. 13-15. John Greever, state convention president and pastor of Pleasant Heights Church, Indianapolis, was unanimously re-elected by acclamation along with first vice president, Clarence Brock, pastor of Coventry Church, Fort Wayne. James Dwiggin, pastor of Calvary Church, Evansville, was elected second vice president by acclamation.

A \$2,593,402 budget for 1991 was adopted without discussion or dissent. The total represents an eight percent increase over the previous year's budget, with the portion going to support Southern Baptist Convention causes increased to 32.25 percent.

Messengers adopted a resolution affirming the Cooperative Program unified budget while expressing "profound" disappointment in any attempts to decrease or withhold mission giving." Southern Baptist churches in Indiana were urged to "faithfully continue supporting the Cooperative Program at their present or increasing level." In another resolution, messengers expressed affirmation for the editors of the Indiana Baptist for faithful service "without fear of sharing the truth."

Wyoming Baptists elect Stroud president

POWELL, Wyo. — Messengers to the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention elected a Casper pastor as president and approved a budget of over \$950,000 with an increase in giving to the Cooperative Program unified budget during their meeting Nov. 14-15. Fred Stroud, pastor of Mountain View Church, Casper, was

elected president during the meeting at First Southern Church, Powell.

Messengers approved a budget of \$958,979, sending \$305,854, or 31.8 percent to the Cooperative Program. That is an increase of one percent over last year.

In other actions, messengers adopted a resolution opposing abortion and homosexuality. Another resolution in support of Billy Graham and his ministry was also adopted.

Roach elected president of Dakota Fellowship

BROOKINGS, S. D. — Carl E. Roach, pastor of Calvary Church, Blunt, S. D. was elected president of the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship at its annual meeting Oct. 24-26.

The proposed budget was adopted without opposition. This year's budget is \$649,538. Of that amount, 14 percent, the same as last year, will be forwarded on to the Cooperative Program unified budget for use in funding the SBC's missions and education causes.

NBC Baptists adopt budget, update constitution

PASCO, Wash. — Registration of messengers rose to a final count of 476 for the three-day Northwest Baptist Convention annual meeting Nov. 13-15.

A Northwest Cooperative Program budget of \$1,718,500 was adopted, an increase of 7.0 percent over the 1990 budget. Of this, 30.75 percent will be forwarded to the Cooperative Program unified budget, an increase of 0.25 percent over last year. Northwest churches have reported a resurgence in contributions, reflecting the economic upswing across much of the Pacific Northwest in 1989-90.

The state convention's constitution was updated more in form than substance, making the constitution a clear statement on convention policies, while the bylaws have become a description of convention procedures which are expected to be amended from time to time as the convention grows and faces new challenges.

James W. "Bill" Phillips, pastor of Kennewick (Wash.) Church, was elected convention president over four other candidates.

Brotherhood search committee announces procedures

MEMPHIS — The Brotherhood Commission's presidential search committee confirmed at its first meeting Nov. 10, the procedure for seeking the replacement of retiring president James H. Smith. Committee chairman Wendell Reed, a computer systems manager from Salem, Va., said the search committee will be open to recommendations from throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

People wishing to recommend a candidate for president of the Brotherhood Commission should submit the candidate's name in writing to Wendell Reed, Presidential Search Chairman, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104. The search committee then will notify the potential candidate of their recommendation to the committee. The name of the person making that recommendation will not be revealed to the candidate. The candidate will be invited to submit a resume.

Smith's tenure at the Brotherhood Commission will end June 30, 1991, if a successor has been chosen by then. If necessary, he will remain as president beyond then until another person is appointed.

The five member search committee includes: Tommy Knotts, director of missions, Aiken, S. C.; Robert Hill, pastor, Cleveland, Miss.; Joe Lenamon, banker, Fort Worth, Texas; Billy Summerlin, hospital administrator, Gadsden, Ala.; and Reed.

\$38.8 million bequest to Samford largest in Alabama history

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A \$38.8 million bequest to Samford University by philanthropist Ralph Waldo Beeson is the largest charitable gift in Alabama history and the largest bequest to a single educational institution in the nation since 1986. Beeson, a retired Liberty National Life Insurance Co. executive, died Oct. 15 at the age of 89. He was described as "Samford's greatest benefactor" because of his numerous gifts to the university over more than 20 years.

The bulk of his estate was divided between Samford and Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky., which also received \$38.8 million.

Kuwait refugee thankful for Baptist shelter, aid

DAVAO DEL SUR, Philippines — Safe and sound back home in the Philippines, a refugee from the destruction of Kuwait took time during the Thanksgiving season to thank Baptists who helped her survive the exodus.

"I want to thank you for the kind and special attention you extended to me while I was a refugee at the Baptist gymnasium," wrote Adjurgita Tanquion in a recent letter to Southern Baptists workers Gerry and Arjylis Milligan in Jordan. "Had it not been because of you, I would have suffered severe bronchitis."

Tanquion was one of several hundred Philippine workers who found food and shelter at the Amman Baptist School gymnasium in Jordan after fleeing Iraqi-occupied Kuwait in August and September. Thousands of Filipinos and other Asian workers living in Kuwait passed through Jordan on their way home. Both the Milligans, of Tulsa, Okla., are trained as nurses. They worked with the school doctor to care for refugees who became ill during their exhausting trek from Kuwait to Jordan.

When the doctor prescribed a series of six injections to treat her bronchitis, Tanquion recalled, "Mrs. Milligan patiently tried to find the (medicine) from the pharmacy. You, Mr. Milligan, injected the medicine and every time you finished you said, 'Oh, I'm so sorry to cause you pain, but I want you to get well soon.' Both of you were too concerned about the pain I felt. That's why you asked the doctor to prescribe capsules for me instead of the injections. The doctor agreed and I fully recovered." Getting home safely was like the beginning of "a second life for me," Tanquion said.

"I'm now here in the Philippines with my family. They are very happy to see me alive back home. As of now, I'm resting for I am so tired. My escape from Kuwait back home was a hellish experience. Yet I thank God for the courage He has given me. Above all, I thank Him for His unending love manifested to me through people who are as kindhearted as you and all the rest who made my escape back home possible."

Refugee aid at the Baptist school ended when the Jordanian government moved most of the refugees in Jordan to a large camp northeast of Amman. Most refugees now have returned to their own countries.