

# Baptist and Reflector

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STATEWIDE EDITION

NEWSJOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Top events listed

### Grahams, BJCPA debate lead 1990 Tennessee news

By Wm. Fletcher Allen

In Baptist life, some things change from year to year — others remain nearly the same. This is true also in reporting top news events for Tennessee Baptists in the year that just ended.

Commanding the number one spot in Tennessee Baptist news in 1990 is the story of Maurice and Laurie Graham, missionaries to Kuwait, and their sons Peter and Aaron. The Grahams were hostages from early August in the U.S. Embassy when Iraqi forces invaded the Middle East nation.

Laurie and the boys were released in September — but Maurice Graham was not allowed to come home to the Nashville area until Dec. 9 when the last wave of hostages was released. Their story was a top news item for five months.

Number two is the Tennessee Baptist Convention's handling of a proposal to send \$28,000 to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The Executive Board in its recommendation, reasoned that that BJCPA portion of the Cooperative Program funding for the Southern Baptist Convention, be sent directly to the BJCPA.

The BJCPA allocation from the SBC had been cut at the June convention from \$391,796 to \$50,000, upon recom-

mendation of the SBC Executive Committee.

Acting on comments and discussion by Tennessee Baptists on the proposal prior to the November state convention, the Executive Board's Budget and Program Committee recommended to the Board that the action be rescinded. It was rescinded, by the Board in its pre-convention meeting; and though the matter was debated on the convention floor, it was voted down.

An action that also ranks second: Messengers to the state convention approved unanimously a recommendation from the Executive Board to establish a Partnership Mission with Chile, to begin in 1992 when the Philippines partnership is completed.

The firing of the two top Baptist newsmen by the SBC Executive Committee ranks third. Both are from Nashville. Al Shackleford, vice president of public relations, and Dan Martin, Baptist Press news editor, were dismissed on July 17 by the Executive Committee. They were not officially charged, but the reason was a "perception of bias and unbalanced reporting." Shackleford still is without work and Martin is interim newsman for the new Associated Baptist Press. Both men are to receive full salary through February.

Other top ten news events:

4 — The hiring of four new Executive Board staff members, including Bill Wilson, Convention Ministries Division director; Jere Phillips, Missions Department director; Archer Thorpe, Cooperative Program/Stewardship director; and Aubrey Hay, Church-Ministers Relations. They replace retired staffers Carroll Owen, Leslie Baumgartner, Orvind Dangeau, and William Harbin.

5 — The trustees of Baptist Hospital, Nashville, voted Dec. 19 to elect hospital trustees. Though hospital officials say they intend to continue a close working relationship with the TBC, traditional ties with the Nashville health care system may not be as strong.

6 — Baptisms for Tennessee Baptist churches increased by 15.2 percent over the previous year. Churches have thus far reported 26,108 baptisms, "giving us a banner year," Evangelism Department director Jerry King reported in early December.

7 — In November elections, Bill Bates of Jackson was elected TBC president over Ray Newcombe of Millington. The Executive Board chose Paul Durham of Nashville as president, and the Executive Committee's

new chairman is Jerry Oakley of Springfield.

8 — The TBC budget remains the same as 1990, with no increased funding for programs or salaries.

9 — An "extravaganza" sponsored by the TBC and the Foreign Mission Board in Memphis in October saw almost 40 foreign missionaries gathering to share their stories with Tennessee Baptists. MissionsFest Tennessee proved successful.

(See Grahams, page 5)

### Baptist Hospital moves to elect board trustees

Baptist Health Care System board of trustees on Dec. 19 approved amendments in the charter of Nashville's Baptist Hospital which authorizes the hospital to elect its own trustees.

Currently the Tennessee Baptist Convention's committee on nominations annually presents a slate for convention messengers' approval.

The board action permits an increase in number for the hospital board and allows the board to elect its successors when vacancies occur.

Board chairman Guy Bates, Joelton, said the corporate reorganization approved at the regular meeting was part of the board's plan "to prepare the hospital for the challenges of the 1990s." The vote was unanimous, with one abstention.

Bates said the current 27 trustees will comprise the initial membership of the new Baptist Hospital board.

"These board members know the needs of this institution and it makes sense for this group to be the responsible governing body," he added.

TBC Executive Director/Treasurer D. L. Lowrie was unaware of any plans for such action. He first learned of the move when he was reached by telephone about 7 p.m. the day of the meeting.

Lowrie, who is on Christmas vacation visiting family in Texas, said he was advised by David Stringfield, Baptist Hospital president. "I had no prior information," he said.

(See Baptist Hospital, page 5)

### Evangelism Conference scheduled Jan. 21-23



R. HAMBLIN



F. HAYNES



L. LEAVELL



N. PILLOW

The 1991 State Evangelism Conference will include special interest groups in an expanded schedule to provide training in nine different areas.

The annual two-day conference has been expanded to three days — Jan. 21-23. It will be held at Belmont Heights Church and focus on the theme, "Share Heritage and Hope: Extend Christ's Mission." The annual Tuesday night session emphasizing the work of lay people is included in the program.

Leading four theme interpretations will be Robert Hamblin, director of an evangelistic organization based in Tupelo, Miss., and former vice president of the Evangelism Division,

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Other speakers include Freddie Haynes, a pastor from Dallas, Texas; Landrum Leavell, president, New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary; Nathan Pillow, director, Evangelism Department, Arizona Southern Baptist Convention; and Bobby Sunderland, Evangelism Section, HMB.

Tennesseans who will bring messages include Bill Bates, Tennessee Baptist Convention president from Jackson; D. L. Lowrie, TBC executive director; Carl Duck, executive director, Nashville Baptist Association; and Benny Jackson, vocational evangelist, Germantown.

The special interest groups will meet during the Wednesday morning session prior to the final message of the conference by Leavell. Participants may attend two groups, which offer training in using telephone and direct mail, special events, and lay-led revivals. Leaders are personnel from the Baptist Sunday School Board, HMB, TBC, and church members.

Musicians leading music are Duane and Mary Alice Jeffrey, vocational music evangelists, McEwen; Graydon Kitchens, Minden, La.; and Bud and Barbara Lee, music evangelists, Blue Springs, Mo. Sessions begin on Monday at 2 p.m. and end at noon on Wednesday.

A nursery will be provided during sessions for children up to five years of age.

### New subscriber rates effective March 1

New Year's greetings to all Baptist and Reflector subscribers and readers. A second definition for "subscriber" is — one who agrees with or consents with something written.

We know our subscribers and readers don't agree with everything printed, but you are appreciated.

A reminder is in order. New subscription rates for the Baptist and Reflector will be effective March 1.

The new rates reflect a Second Class Postage rate increase of approximately 30 percent.

The rates, beginning March 1: Church Budget Plan, from \$5.56 to \$6.50; Club Plan, from \$6.25 to \$7.25; Individual, from \$6.55 to \$7.50. All rates are for each subscription per year.

On the Church Budget Plan, the paper costs the reader only 12.7 cents per issue. That's a bargain! — Editor

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**Editorial: 'I wish I could say to Southern Baptists'****Thousands of others have not had the opportunity**

In this issue we have devoted space to major news events of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Next week we will have the 1990 wrapup for Southern Baptist Convention highlights.

Several "top ten" stories have been written already — and we have read them. The daily newspapers do the same for local and national events. But no two writers judge news value in the same way. We all have different criterion.

When looking back with Tennessee Baptists at 1990, it is important for us to see clearly. The swift and sudden news that strikes at the heart is not always the kind that shapes history.

News that relates to people — their causes, beliefs, lifestyle, successes, and failures, usually ranks at the top. It gets our attention.

So when we look at what Tennessee Baptists did, what Southern Baptists did in 1990, we must see clearly. We accomplished some good things, and some weren't so good. It is important that we see those good things as major news — and not be engulfed by calamity and discord.

For Tennessee Baptists and Southern Baptists to turn the page to 1991 gives pause for thought. Reviewing 1990 has merit. Looking over those days, we can pray for strength not to make those same mistakes again (whatever they were). We can mentally prepare to overcome the 1990 failures, push them aside, and move into days with new opportunities on clean pages.

To make any kind of impact on the world around us — it is imperative that we live in 1991 on a higher plane. "Love each other" is not some ancient shibboleth to be mouthed when we feel especially pious. When Jesus prayed "that they may all be one," no exceptions were given.

When He asked the Father "that the love with

which you have loved Me may be in them," He was not idly praying.

The lessons to be learned from 1990 are simple. We have learned that there are thousands more lost people in the world now than then.

We have learned that we cannot minister to them, witness to them, evangelize them, and disciple them, if we do not love one another.

We should have learned that it is ridiculous to say we love the world if we do not love each other. And, we cannot love God if we do not love the people of the world.

In a brief Christmas message to Baptist Center employees, Maurice Graham, missionary recently released from Kuwait, said he had mixed feelings about celebrating Christmas knowing that millions of people do not know the Christmas story — or Christ. His message rates "number one."

He said he had mixed feelings about being free when so many people are held captive to sin. And he said he wished he could explain to Southern Baptists that as long as we quarrel and do not love each other — we cannot finish the task God has given us. Here is the heart of his message:

"I also have mixed feelings about the small congregation I left in the Kuwait church, young people with the burden to carry out the Christian witness.

"I have mixed feelings about celebrating the Prince of Peace when we are gearing up for war, when 500,000 United States military people are gathering on the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border. And if there is war probably 250,000 people will be killed — many who have never heard the Gospel.

"I came out of a place where only one half of one percent of the population is Christian. Most of the people I met had never met a Christian. The area is the most closed area to the Gospel, because

Islam is fragile. They fear that if someone hears the Gospel, they will accept Christ.

"I have mixed feelings because Christianity teaches us to love our enemies, but we are gathering to destroy our enemies.

"Support for me and my family has been overwhelming, beyond my comprehension. But I hurt deeply because our denomination does not pull together, is not united to do our only task — to make sure that everyone, even people in Iraq, has the opportunity to hear the Gospel and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

"Until we do that I don't know how we can sit down at Christmas and celebrate the Prince of Peace, rejoicing that we are safe, saved, and going to Heaven, and that we know Christ. At the same time, knowing that thousands of others have not had the opportunity. They have not grown up in a denomination that loves people so much.

"But my heart will continue to be burdened as long as Southern Baptists cannot live by one of Jesus' last prayers, that we be as one. That church in Kuwait was one of the most diverse churches in the world, but Pastor Maurice told them that we are not going to have division.

"My prayer is for Southern Baptists, that the world may know because we love one another. We are going to be united in love, because that's what the Scripture teaches. God has set a task before us and we are going to be united.

"I wish I could say that to Southern Baptists."

No preacher, scholar, no orator could say it more clearly, more completely, more plainly. We also wish Maurice Graham could say that to Southern Baptists — and Tennessee Baptists. His plea would be a good pattern for living in 1991. — WFA

**Palmers beginning to 'get settled' as Nicaragua missionaries**

By Erich Bridges

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (BP) — They spent their first two months in Nicaragua sleeping on the floor at night.

They've watched an anti-American demonstration from their front gate in Managua, the capital city. They've waited for a bridge to be "disarmed" of anti-personnel mines before crossing it.

They also have felt the cold stares of people on the street who are weary of a decade of revolution, civil war, and interfering foreigners of all political stripes coming to the Central American country. And they've joined with those same people in the daily search for affordable food and essentials.

All in all, you could say Jim and Viola Palmer picked an interesting moment to move to Nicaragua.

The Southern Baptist missionary couple, from Marshall and Fort Worth, Texas, arrived in Nicaragua with their two children in early August — barely five months after a bitterly contested national election. The voters had ousted the ruling Sandinistas and installed a loose coalition government led by President Violeta Chamorro.

The election may have ended the Sandinistas' Marxist revolution and their long war with the U.S.-backed Contras, but it also plunged the nation

even deeper into social and economic chaos.

The Sandinistas were defeated decisively at the polls, but the population remains divided over who should run the country. Who actually is running the country is an open question, according to observers. Chamorro's shaky and contentious coalition ranges the ideological spectrum. The Sandinistas still control the army, the labor unions, and much of the civil bureaucracy.

Prices soar while Nicaragua's currency nose dives; two million Nicaraguan cordobas will buy one U.S. dollar. The economy — battered by years of state controls, war, and embargo — has grown even more sickly. Some Contra forces refuse to disarm. Contra and Sandinista sympathizers brawl in the streets.

What about the Palmers?

"We're beginning to get settled in ... I guess," Palmer reported with a rueful chuckle in late November.

Their furniture finally arrived, so the family doesn't have to sleep on the floor anymore. The kids — Jeremiah, 14, and Rebekah, ten — have their bicycles and are in school, so they're happy, Palmer said. The kitchen is functioning, which makes everybody happy.

"Our grocery bill is high, but the economy is in such a slump there's not a lot of other things to spend money on," said Palmer. "But I don't know how the poor folks are making it. I don't see how people — with daily wages what they are — can even buy beans and rice to feed their families."

Many Nicaraguans, in fact, aren't making it. One of Palmer's assignments is to assist Nicaraguan Baptists in social ministries to help

people survive.

"We've just gotten approval for \$50,000 in (Southern Baptist) world hunger funds to try to get some food programs and replanting projects going next year," he explained. "On top of everything else, most rural areas of northern Nicaragua had a drought this past year and harvested very little crops.

"We've tried to assist about 30 or 40 communities in doing small food-for-work projects sponsored by local Baptist churches to get some grains into these communities, and also provide a number of small farmers' loans — about \$200 a family — to help buy feed and fertilizer to plant new crops," he said.

The Palmers have experience in such ministries. They transferred to Nicaragua from neighboring Honduras

— one of the poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere — where he coordinated Baptist social ministries.

But they also hope to assist Nicaraguan Baptists in other areas. Southern Baptists have sent volunteers to the country in recent years, but the Palmers are the first career missionaries invited to live there since 1982. Nicaraguan Baptists advised missionaries at that time to leave the country because of the explosive political situation.

Local churches have received the missionaries warmly. Palmer preaches nearly every week and has taught a seminary extension course for rural pastors. He wants to help in evangelism, church growth, leadership training, and "any way Southern Baptists can assist in doing the Lord's work here."

**Baptist and Reflector**

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**Lancaster to serve church**

Bivocational pastor Larry Lancaster has accepted the call of Pleasant Site Church, Selmer.

Lancaster was pastor of Jacinto Church, Jacinto, Miss. He also served Friendship Church, Ramer. The Corinth, Miss., native works in a telecommunication firm there.

# Repression in Iran leads to execution of pastor

LONDON (BP) — A Christian pastor has been executed in Iran amid a new wave of repression against Christian believers and churches in the country.

Sources inside Iran reported that Hossein Soodmand, 55, an ordained Assemblies of God minister, was hanged Dec. 3 after being tortured during two months of imprisonment.

Soodmand's body was not released for burial. Fellow pastors who visited a prison in Mashad, a city in northeastern Iran, were told of the hanging and were shown a coroner's report stating Soodmand was dead. Authorities escorted them to an isolated grave and told them it contained Soodmand's body. The pastors said the grave was not in a cemetery but in a location they deemed "not a respectable place" for burials.

Soodmand was one of a handful of Iranian pastors who have left Islam and accepted the Christian faith. He had been asked by church leaders to move from Mashad to Gorgan, a city northeast of Tehran, to lead a congregation there. A church Soodmand led in Mashad was closed by the government in 1988.

The pastor had been conducting private meetings since the closing of the Mashad church, but sources said the government knew of the meetings.

When Soodmand arrived in Gorgan he was arrested by local authorities, blindfolded and taken away for interrogation, sources said. He then was ordered to leave Gorgan and return to Mashad.

Upon arrival back in Mashad, he was arrested again and imprisoned. During the following four weeks, Soodmand reportedly was subjected to public mockery for his faith and ordered to pray aloud repeatedly. He also was tortured, sources said, but no details were available on the extent of the torture.

He was released on bail for a time, then rearrested and imprisoned for another month. His hanging was reported to have taken place Dec. 3, but the news did not reach sources outside Iran until mid-December.

Soodmand reportedly was accused of spying, a charge friends dismissed as preposterous. "He was harmless, a meek man who will be remembered for his quiet spirit," said one man. After becoming a Christian believer, Soodmand began a ministry that spanned 24 years.

Iranian-born Christians in the West

## Soldiers to hear The Baptist Hour

FORT WORTH (BP) — The Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) will carry The Baptist Hour over its radio network for 13 weeks starting in the spring of 1991.

Through AFRTS, the program will be heard by more than a million military and civilian members of the Department of Defense stationed overseas and their families, as well as by department personnel aboard ships at sea, including those in the Persian Gulf.

The program will not be heard in Saudi Arabia, however. "Out of consideration for the request of our Saudi hosts, we do not have any religious programming there," said Chaplain Richard Davenport, of the U.S.A.F., the religious programming coordinator for AFRTS.

who monitor church ministry inside Iran said the execution is part of a new, harsh round of systematic repression against Christians — especially those who are former Muslims.

"Now they are willing to kill," said one Iranian Christian leader now living outside Iran.

Several believers have disappeared during the past year and are feared dead, sources said. Mehdi Dibaj, another church leader and ex-Muslim, has been held in prison for more than five years. Christian workers now are more concerned than ever about his fate.

Along with the closing of some churches and Christian bookstores, Christian conferences in Iran have been banned. Government approval now is required for Christian weddings or even church outings. Authorities have warned Iranian Christians not to contact the West.

Last July authorities closed down the Iranian Bible Society after repeatedly calling in the society's general

secretary for questioning. After the leader left the country, the government Office of Religious Minorities confiscated the society's files and locked staff members out of their building.

The government announced the society had been dissolved and that permission would not be given for it to operate again.

Amid the increasing repression, Iranian Christian leaders outside Iran said they find published comments by a key Iranian government leader especially ironic. The Dec. 12 issue of Kayhan Havai, an Iranian newspaper, quoted Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of the Iranian judiciary, as saying: "no one is in jail in Iran for his beliefs." The front-page article defended Iran's use of the death penalty and rejected as biased a report on human rights in Iran prepared by a United Nations envoy.

Christianity is one of the four religions officially recognized by the Islamic government of Iran, but Iranian Christian observers said that in

practice the recognition includes only ethnic Armenians and Assyrians, not believers from a Muslim background. The Christian population in Iran totals less than one percent of the nation's nearly 66 million people.

The new repression probably is an effort by the Iranian government to head off increasing response to the Gospel across Iran, they said. Efforts by Christians inside Iran and Christian radio programs broadcast into the country from outside are increasingly effective in presenting the Gospel.

Based on frequent reports from Christians who have left the country, one observer said, "I feel there are thousands in Iran who are interested in Christianity. Possibly this has alarmed the government."

Disillusionment with Islam has helped produce a "significant minority group" of Muslim converts, he said. Pressures brought by the government have produced more unity among Christians and strengthened their witness, he added.

## Agreements forestall litigation: attorney

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP) — A recent New Jersey court ruling suggests a very practical step churches and religious organizations may take to avoid expensive civil litigation, according to a church-state attorney.

Oliver Thomas, in an article in the current issue of Report from the Capital, says the New Jersey case clearly suggests that the use of well-drafted arbitration and conciliation agreements in employment contracts and in church or organization bylaws may be a successful way of keeping church disputes from becoming expensive legal battles.

In the New Jersey case, a synagogue filed suit seeking to terminate its rabbi after a lengthy dispute. The trial court concluded the dispute was essentially ecclesiastical and referred the dispute to a board of rabbis, whose judgment both parties agreed to accept.

After considering testimony and documentary evidence, the board of rabbis ordered the synagogue to pay the rabbi \$100,000 and he was asked to resign his position.

Dissatisfied, the synagogue refused and again sought relief in civil courts. But the trial court, finding that both parties had freely and voluntarily consented to the board's adjudication, threw out the case.

Thomas, legal counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee, said the case has obvious implications for churches.

"In light of the court's ruling, I see no reason why an arbitration agreement could not be included in the employment contract between a church and its ministers," he said, "or, more importantly, why a similar agreement could not be incorporated in the church bylaws and made applicable to all disputes between members and the congregation."

Present and future members would have to be notified of the agreement, Thomas said, but "a well-drafted arbitration or conciliation provision could protect a church from a variety of lawsuits, ranging from claims of clergy malpractice to simple negligence."

Thomas said such agreements could specify that disputes be referred to an outside arbitration service or could

provide that the dispute be resolved in-house by submitting them to a church governing board, whose decision could be appealed to the full congregation.

"Certainly there are limitations to any such arbitration agreement," Thomas said, noting that minors, for example, ordinarily cannot waive their claims before reaching the age of majority. He also said it is possible some courts might find such an arbitration agreement a violation of public policy.

"But this is unlikely, given the courts' preference for arbitration over litigation and their hesitation to accept jurisdiction over ecclesiastical disputes

## Writers to comment on SS lessons

Three writers have been chosen to comment about Sunday School lessons for the first quarter of 1991.

A. Ray Newcomb, pastor of First Church, Millington, will write about lessons in the Bible Book Series. Marvin Nail, pastor of Whitsitt Chapel Church, Nashville, will comment on Convention Uniform lessons, and John C. Compton, pastor of Oak Grove Church, Mt. Carmel, will write about Life and Work lessons.

Compton has been pastor of Oak Grove Church since 1987. Before going to Mt. Carmel, he served Glenwood Church, Kingsport, and two churches in Texas. In addition, he has served in various positions in Holston Valley and Sullivan associations, and is a member of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board.

He holds a bachelor's degree from University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

The son of missionaries who served in Brazil from 1950-1974, Compton and his wife, Teresa, have two daughters.

Newcomb has been pastor of the Millington church for 14 years. He served churches in Florida and Missis-

anyway," he said.

"While there are no guarantees, the New Jersey decision is encouraging to those who wish to stem the rising tide of litigation against churches," Thomas said. "For friends of religious liberty, that's good news."

In the article, Thomas provides suggested wording religious organizations may adopt for resolving disputes either through an outside mediation service or through in-house methods.

The article is available by writing the Baptist Joint Committee at 200 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C., 20002, or by calling 202-544-4226.



COMPTON



NAIL



NEWCOMB

sippi before coming to Tennessee.

Newcomb has been active in Baptist associations in Mississippi and Florida, as well as Shelby County Association in Tennessee. He has held numerous offices and committee positions in the TBC, as well as being a Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Committees member in 1988.

A native of Mississippi, Newcomb earned a bachelor's degree from Blue Mountain College in his homestate; a master's degree from New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary; and a doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary, Jacksonville, Fla.

He and his wife, Carolyn, have one son.

Nail, who wrote commentaries about Life and Work lessons last quarter, is a graduate of Mississippi State University, Starkville, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He is a native of Mississippi.

Nail completed the quarter begun by Richard Herrington, pastor of Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage, who died of a heart attack in October.

# Tennesseans venture through 'open door' in eastern Europe

**SIGNAL MOUNTAIN** — Two Tennesseans will be among the first Southern Baptists to venture through the recently opened doors in eastern Europe.

David "Bodie" and Lynda Bodenheimer were commissioned Dec. 11 as missionaries to Budapest, Hungary, during a special service at First Church, Charlottesville, Va.

On Dec. 16, the Bodenheimers were commissioned by Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain, where Bodenheimer has served since 1986 as minister of family activities and missions.

The Bodenheimers are among the first missionaries assigned to Hungary, Bodenheimer related. Another couple, Mary and Errol Simmons, former missionaries to Spain, recently were reassigned to the country, he added.

Bodenheimer reflected that when he and his wife began the process of missionary appointment two years ago, Hungary was not an option.

In fact, unlike some prospective missionaries who feel a call to a certain country or area, the Bodenheimers had no place in mind. "We just felt called," he said.

Fortunately, when they began the process they already had some of the requirements behind them. Both are graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Bodenheimer was a journeyman missionary to Peru for two years and both had experiences as Centrifuge staffers.

After "lots of testing — mentally, physically, and spiritually," the time finally came for the couple to decide where they would serve, he said.

He reflected that the FMB sent them many requests, but "nothing seemed to fit," said Bodenheimer, a native of Winston-Salem, N. C. Lynda hails from Tupelo, Miss.

He noted that this past summer the couple were returning from a youth



**COMMISSIONED** — David Bodenheimer, right, and his wife, Lynda, were commissioned Dec. 16 by Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain. The couple earlier was commissioned by the Foreign Mission Board. With them is Signal Mountain Pastor Jack Bishop.

outing and decided they had to make a decision on whether to continue the process or put it off for awhile. "We had begun to think the timing was not right, but, when we got home, the request from Hungary was in the mail," he recalled.

"What I will do in Hungary is what I learned to do here (Signal Mountain Church) and that is to help promote Sunday School," said Bodenheimer,

## SACS maintains 'warning' status at Southeastern

**WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)** — Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has maintained Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's "warning" status for another year.

In a decision announced Dec. 12, at the close of its annual meeting, SACS decided to continue the current status of "warning." SACS indicated that there had been significant improvement at Southeastern. However, the

noting he had responsibilities for education when he first joined the Signal Mountain staff.

As a religious education promoter, Bodenheimer will work with about 200 Baptist churches in Hungary. The churches were established before Communists took over the country shortly after World War II. The work has been continued by Hungarian Baptists.

"We're not going to plant churches.

"warning" status will be retained for an additional year while the school continues to address its concerns.

The seminary was notified of the agency's decision by James Rogers, executive director of Commissions on Colleges for SACS. Rogers indicated that a formal letter defining the decision of the Commission will be forthcoming. Rogers told seminary President Lewis A. Drummond that he would personally work with the school to help resolve the final areas of concern.

L. Russ Bush III, vice president for academic affairs/dean of the faculty, in response to the continued "warning" status, said, "I think the SACS decision is quite understandable. Though we have implemented several processes to address accreditation issues, in some cases we have not yet completed them."

The faculty selection procedure was cited as one example. "We adopted a new faculty selection process that we hope will meet the Commission's expectations, but it will not have produced a candidate until March of 1991.

## Clarys to serve in Philippines

**RICHMOND** — Chipton "Chip" and Vesta Clary were among 31 people named missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Dec. 11 at First Church, Charlottesville, Va.

The Clarys will live in the Philippines, where he will direct the activities of Baptist Refugee Ministries at the Philippine Refugee Center in Morong and together they will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

Recently they were FMB International Service Corps workers in the Philippines.



**THE CLARYS**

The churches are already there," he affirmed.

Bodenheimer noted that the "more we learn about the country the more assured we are about it being right."

During the commissioning service at Signal Mountain, Pastor Jack Bishop noted that "when God comes calling, it means change."

Bishop observed that churches sometimes lapse "into thinking we are weekend warriors for the Lord. But we are to respond to God's call wherever He leads us," Bishop said.

Bishop reflected that the Bodenheimers had always responded to God's call and are continuing to do so.

During the service, Bodenheimer thanked the members of Signal Mountain for the special relationship they have had during the past five years.

He reminded them, "You have known us as regular people. I hope that won't change.

"The call to missions is not optional for any of us. It is something required of us," Bodenheimer said.

He urged the members to "be open, be ready" for any call they might receive.

"Don't think of us as saints who have done something so sacrificial. We're just Lynda and Bodie," he concluded. — *Lonnie Wilkey*

Until we work the process all the way through at least once, it is hard for anyone to make a final evaluation of its effectiveness. Thus SACS has maintained the status quo until we have had time to let the new process run its course." Bush said he believes that information about the faculty/trustee retreat held in early October has helped SACS to see that the Seminary is making a strong effort to meet all of their criteria.

## Morristown church calls Ray Vinson as pastor

Ray Vinson recently joined the staff of Bethel Church, Morristown, as pastor.

Vinson has served as pastor of churches in Kentucky and Virginia.

He was ordained in 1964 at Campbellsville Church, Campbellsville, Ky. The Kentucky native earned a bachelor's degree from Campbellsville College, and a master of theology from Browns Theological Seminary, Fredericksburg, Va.

They are members of First Church, Memphis, Tenn.

Born and reared in Memphis, Clary is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Paul Clary of that city. He considers First Church his home church. Elliston Church and Colonial Church, both in Memphis, also were influential in his Christian growth.

He received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Memphis State University and also attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's extension in Jackson.

Mrs. Clary, a native of Avon Park, Fla., considers First Church, Memphis, her home church.

The Clarys will go to Rockville, Va., later this month for a seven-week orientation before leaving for the field.

## An Occasional Word By Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor

At year's end, articles abound on the year's top news stories and events. In this issue of the Baptist and Reflector, Editor Wm. Fletcher Allen has listed some of the noteworthy happenings in 1990, both in Tennessee and Southern Baptist life.

But this is not about the "major" happenings of 1990. Instead, this is about news stories I personally was involved with during the past year — stories that would make no one's top ten list except mine.

These are simply accounts of ordinary Tennessee Baptists doing extraordinary things for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

While many come to mind, let me list only a few.

- About 100 Tennessee Baptists cooperating on a hot June day in Liberty to begin constructing an associational office building. Salem Association now has a new facility which is debt-free.

- A group of volunteers to the Philippines from Haywood Association. Their zeal and enthusiasm for missions inspired me.

- Donaldson and Ina Frazier, retired missionaries to Nigeria now living in Jefferson City. They shared with me their love for Southern Baptists

and the Cooperative Program. Without the CP, they could not have done the work they did, the Fraziers attest.

- Floyd Hinson, who had the distinction of being the first deaf messenger to the Tennessee Baptist Convention. The fact he is deaf made this a "news" story, but more important is the fact Hinson refused to let a physical impairment keep him from doing what he felt the Lord wanted him to do.

The above illustrations are just a few of many examples. The common denominator is that God uses Tennessee Baptists to accomplish His purpose in sharing the good news of Christ.

I'm privileged to be a Baptist journalist in Tennessee. Tennessee Baptists have a wonderful story to tell and I'm grateful for the opportunity I have to share these stories with others throughout the state. My prayer is that 1991 will be one of the best years ever for Tennessee Baptists and Southern Baptists across the world.



**WILKEY**

# Mostellers retire to Tennessee after 34 years in Thailand

PHATTALUNG, Thailand — "Commencement" — an ending and a beginning. It has new meaning for Paul and Dorothy (Dottie) Mosteller in recent weeks as they retire after 34 years of foreign missionary service in Thailand, old Siam. She is a Tennessean.

Although they are church planters, the Mostellers have had a varied ministry on the mission field. They soon discovered that a missionary does many things in addition to preaching the Gospel by word-of-mouth. There are many responsibilities on the mission field and each missionary tries to help carry the load.

Upon arriving in 1956, the Mostellers, with their children, Anne and Cliff, joined the Thailand Baptist Mission which had about 20 missionaries at that time.

After two years of Thai language study in Bangkok, the Mostellers moved to rural Prachinburi (PRA-JIN-BOO-REE) Province in east Thailand to open new Baptist work.

Then the Mostellers were invited by the mission to move to south Thailand, down the peninsula near Malaysia, where they served four years in the city of Haddyai. It was during their

term that the Haddyai Baptist Church was constructed. It stands today with renovations and additions.

After furlough the Mostellers served in Bangkok where Paul directed the Radio, Television, and Publication Department. He also became the missionary advisor to several Thai and Chinese churches.

In 1969, the Mostellers moved to Bangkok where Paul served as the medical evangelist for one year. They were then reassigned to Bangkok to do evangelistic work. Dottie also taught music in the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary.

From 1974 to 1987, the Mostellers planted their lives in Songkhla. The main emphasis was assisting Pastor Suthep Pakthaworn and his wife Nop Nom, in teaching, training, and outreach. Dottie also worked with cell groups at the Prince of Songkhla University.

Following the Vietnam war, the Mostellers were deeply involved in refugee work, spending many hours weekly in the two Songkla camps.

The Mostellers moved to Phattalung in 1987 to pick up on the work former missionaries had left when they moved to start new Baptist work. The



**RETIRING MISSIONARIES** — Thailand Baptist Mission Administrator Tom Williams, right, congratulates Paul and Dottie Mosteller at the Baptist Christian Conference Center in Pattaya, Thailand, upon their completion of 34 years of missionary service in Thailand.

Mostellers' three major goals in Phattalung before retirement were evangelistic emphasis in the city (rather than concentrating on surrounding villages), completing the construction of the church building which had been begun by former missionaries four years earlier, and preparing the way for a new national pastor. This has taken much prayer, patience, and time.

Many Tennessee Baptists have prayed for these goals with the Mostellers.

Haven Baptist Church dedicated a new worship building last November.

A Thai home missionary is living in the building to help oversee the work until a pastor becomes available.

The Mostellers will reside at 4908 Franklin Rd., Nashville, from Jan. 7 to the end of June. They will then live at Hampton Missionary House, Woodmont Church, 2100 Woodmont Blvd., Nashville, through December. — Maxine Stewart

# Baptist Hospital moves to elect board trustees . . .

(Continued from page 1)

A letter from Stringfield explaining the board's action was delivered to Lowrie's office in Brentwood about 5 p.m., Dec. 19. Lowrie was out of town.

Lowrie said he had not yet received an official document. "We will want to review and study the situation," he said. He contacted three convention leaders by conference call Dec. 20 to schedule a meeting.

"I plan to sit down with Bill Bates, Paul Durham, and Raymond Boston and discuss the entire matter," he said. A meeting is scheduled for Jan. 10 of the Executive Board's Christian Service Committee, chaired by Boston, a Dyersburg pastor. Bill Bates is TBC president and Durham is Executive Board president.

"These officers and I will withhold judgment until we see the document. Then we hope to sit down with Presi-

dent Stringfield and Guy Bates and see where all parties stand."

He explained that no meeting could be held until after Jan. 1 because of Christmas holidays.

In the meantime, Lowrie said, TBC attorney Robert Taylor will study appropriate documents regarding TBC-Baptist Hospital relationships. Taylor is a former Baptist Hospital trustee. "I have conferred with him," Lowrie said, "and he will be ready to receive information and advise us."

According to Bates, "The hospital will continue to maintain a close working relationship with Baptist churches, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Belmont College, the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home, and other Baptist institutions."

Stringfield and Bates agreed that the hospital will continue to be "a not-for-profit hospital providing high quality

health care in a Christian environment." In a prepared statement, it also was noted that the change "will simply make it easier for the hospital to operate successfully in the changing American health care delivery systems."

The statement said the board action is effective as of Dec. 19.

Trustees currently serving are: Frank McGregor, First Church, Clarksville; Charles Page, First Church, Nashville; Scott Jenkins, First Church, Gallatin; Kenneth L. Ross, Woodmont Church, Nashville; J. Bill Morris, First Church, Dayton; Toney Hudson, First Church, Cookeville; C. Dennis Newkirk, First Church, Clarksville; Ralph Bryant, First Church, Celina; Bill Banks, Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage;

Michael Seshul, Woodmont Church; Gaye McGlothlen, Immanuel Church,

Nashville; Elbert C. Shackelford, First Church, Hendersonville; Joe Casey, Eastland Church, Nashville; Virgil Peters, Eastside Church, Burns; Bill Owen Jr., Mt. Carmel Church, Cross Plains; Roy Babb, First Church, Hendersonville; Osta Underwood, Belmont Heights Church, Nashville; H. Dean Dickey, First Church, Columbia;

D. Ed Moody Jr., First Church, Franklin; Guy Bates Sr., First Church, Joelton; Virgil H. Moore Jr., First Church, Columbia; Robert J. Norman, Clearview Church, Franklin; Jewell Jennings, First Church, Lebanon; Jack Adams, East Commerce Church, Lewisburg; H. David Smith, Brook Hollow Church, Nashville; Gary Carver, First Church, Chattanooga; and J. Harold Stephens, Edgemont Church, Shelbyville. — Wm. Fletcher Allen

# Grahams, BJCPA debate lead 1990 Tennessee . . .

(Continued from page 1)

10 — The Executive Board voted at its December meeting to pay \$200,200 on the mortgage principal on the Baptist Center in Brentwood.

Additional news items gaining Tennessee Baptist attention not necessarily in order:

- Tennessean Martin Bradley was defeated in June for the SBC recording secretarial post, a position he has held for more than a decade. Bradley was a signer of the minority report when the SBC Executive Committee voted in February to recommend cutting BJCPA funding.

- Ten Baptist students from Tennessee college campuses journeyed to Moscow, USSR, to help rebuild a Baptist church. Rodney Wilson, TBC Student Department associate, and Bob Hall, BSU director for University of Tennessee (Knoxville) students, accompanied the group.

- Gambling opponents in Trousdale

County, led by Kevin Ezell, pastor of Hartsville's First Church, and others, lost in a November referendum. A citizens' group has vowed to continue the fight against parimutuel betting.

- A debate erupted among Tennessee Baptists as Carson-Newman college gave an honorary doctorate to Dolly Parton, country singer, for her support of education and family life in East Tennessee.

- Tennessee Baptists from Germantown Church and Two Rivers Church, Nashville, helped in the Kenyan crusade which resulted in almost 57,000 professions of faith in Christ. Eighteen went from Germantown, and 16 from Two Rivers. Later, First Church, Jackson, sent more than \$30,000 to build a new church.

- Bellevue Church, Memphis, led Tennessee in baptisms (1989) with 461. Twelve churches baptized more than 100. Mission Oriente Bautista, Hamilton, led in ratio — 1.4 members

for each baptism.

- Liquor remains unavailable in Watertown, McMinnville, and Jamestown, but it was approved by voters in Lebanon in November.

- On Oct. 28, high attendance day in Sunday School, Tennessee Baptists reported 331,141 in Bible study. The goal was 300,000.

- Many Tennesseans and Baptist chaplains were deployed to Saudi

# Surgery delays move to Soviet Union

DALLAS (BP) — The arrival of George and Veda Rae Lozuk in Moscow as Southern Baptists' first resident workers assigned to the Soviet Union has been delayed.

Lozuk underwent surgery Nov. 29 for a recurrence of prostate cancer initially treated in 1988. Mrs. Lozuk reported that the surgery at the Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas went well and doctors hoped Lozuk could begin

Arabia and the Mediterranean for the defense of Kuwait and possible outbreak of war with Iraq.

- 33,000 attended the Youth Evangelism Conference in Nashville in March. More than 1200 attended the State Evangelism Conference in January, also in Nashville.

These are only some of the stories that made news for Tennessee Baptists in 1990. It has been a busy year for a busy people.

his assignment in Moscow in mid-January. The Lozüks were to have arrived there in November.

Lozuk will be the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's liaison with the primary Baptist body in the Soviet Union, the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. He also will assist the new seminary in administrative matters and the Baptist union in launching radio broadcasting efforts.

# TenneScene

... From Collierville, up to Sadlersville, then east to Surgoinsville ...

## Leadership . . .

Danny R. French recently joined the staff of First Church, McEwen, as music and youth director. He is a student at Union University, Jackson.

Joe Pat Winchester recently resigned the pastorate of Piedmont Church, Dandridge, to become a missionary associate with the Foreign Mission Board in Trinidad, West Indies. Before serving at Piedmont, Winchester and his wife served in Guyana, South America. The Winchesters will leave for Trinidad Jan. 8.

Donald Bullock recently joined the staff of Broadway Church, Martin, as interim pastor.

Greg O'Guin has been called as minister of music to Mt. Olive Church, Union City.

Don Maxey recently resigned the pastorate of Reelfoot Church, Troy, to become pastor of Emmanuel Church, Lansing, Mich.

Adonis Rodriguez is now serving as pastor of the Spanish mission of Red Bank Church, Chattanooga.

Bethel Church, Greenfield, has called Ryan Potts as activities director.

Mike Gass recently resigned as pastor of Southside Church, Shelbyville, after serving for four years. He will join the staff of Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham, Ala., as associate pastor, under the direction of Charles T. Carter, senior pastor.

Khem Sam became pastor of the Cambodian mission at Belmont Heights Church, Nashville, Jan. 1.

Mark Myers recently accepted the interim pastorate of Emmaus Church, Newbern.

Ken Jordan recently resigned as pastor of Chewalla Church, Chewalla, to accept the pastorate of Brookside Church, Tulsa, Okla.

Curve Church, Ripley, called Dwight Williams, a student at Union University, Jackson, as minister of youth.

Steve Bain, pastor of Lakeview Church, Selmer, has resigned and is now pastor of East Heights Church, Tupelo, Miss.

Immanuel Church, Portland, recently called Ralph Carter as pastor, after he served as interim pastor for six months. This is his first pastorate.

Christopher A. Krause, minister of music and youth, and Donald B. McElroy, minister of education at First Church, Lebanon, recently celebrated their tenth anniversaries with the church.

Mitch Hunter has resigned as minister of music and youth at Mt. Olive Church, South, Knoxville, to accept the position of minister of music at First Church, Rock Hill, S.C.

Calvin Metcalf, pastor of Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville, was honored Nov. 25 for his 15th anniversary at the church.

## Churches . . .

Members of Cedar Grove Church, Maryville, recently celebrated the retirement of the debt on their new learning and activities center by burning the note during a luncheon following morning worship.

## Missions . . .

The youth at Lincoya Hills Church, Nashville, recently mailed a carton of gifts to the men and women involved in Operation Desert Shield. Youth collected items such as lotions, sunscreen, candy, cassette tapes, toiletries, and stationery, and mailed it to Captain Darrell Williams, a Southern Baptist army chaplain from Florida.

Steven and Ruth Nolen, missionaries to Argentina, have arrived in Costa Rica for language study and can be written to at Apartado 100, 2350 San Francisco de Dos Rios, San Jose, Costa Rica. She was born in Chattanooga and considers Memphis her hometown.

Dwight and Joyce Bass, missionaries to Namibia, are on the field and can be addressed at P.O. Box 22385, Windhoek 9000, Namibia, Southern Africa. He is from Harriman and she is from Chattanooga.

Missionaries to Taiwan James and Rebecca Courson have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service. They can be written to at 305, 4F, Erh Sheng 2nd R., Kaohsiung 80608, Taiwan, ROC. The daughter of Southern Baptist missionaries to Taiwan, Courson is the former Rebecca Jones. She considers Woodbury one of her hometowns.



**NEW BLACKWELL HONOREES** — Gary Satterfield, center, pastor, New Blackwell Church, Rutledge, represents his church to honor Shields Greenlee, left, chairman of deacons for 26 years, and Guy Moore, church treasurer for 35 years.

ca Jones. She considers Woodbury one of her hometowns.

The following missionaries with ties to Tennessee are in the states on furlough. Barbara Brown, missionary associate to Zimbabwe and Morristown native, may be written to at 432 Wilder St., Morristown, Tenn., 37814.

C. F. and Polly Clark, missionaries to Japan, may be addressed at 202 Wicklow Road, Winston-Salem, N.C., 27106. He was born in Cleveland and lived in Covington, Chattanooga, and Nashville.

Missionaries to Japan Wayne and Dorothy Maddox can be written to at 3503 Lemmington Road, Pensacola, Fla., 32504. She is the former Dorothy Rogers who grew up in Nashville.

## Erwin church calls Walker Roberson

Walker Roberson is now leading Hulen Church, Erwin, as pastor. He came from the same position at Harmony Church, Elizabethton.

Roberson, a native of Elizabethton, also has served two churches in that city: Lynn Valley Church, as pastor, and Biltmore Church, Elizabethton, as interim pastor, where he was ordained.

He and his wife, Diane, have two daughters.

## New BSU directors begin work on campuses



BARNES

Four new Baptist Student Union directors began work on Tennessee college campuses during the fall semester.

Robin Barnes was appointed volunteer director at Pellissippi State Technical Community College in Knoxville. A native of Louisville, Ky., she holds degrees from Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond; Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green; and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. Her husband, Tom, is minister of music and senior adults at Ball Camp Church, Knoxville.

Marsha Butler is the interim BSU director at Maryville College in Maryville. She currently is working on a master's degree in educational psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She formerly



BUTLER



JENNINGS

worked for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as director of island resort ministries in Hilton Head, S.C.

Amy Jennings recently began work as volunteer BSU director at Walters State Community College's branch in Sevierville. A graduate of Belmont College, Nashville, and Southern Seminary, Nashville, has been on the church staff of English Creek Church, Newport.

Rick Wilson recently became interim BSU director at Tennessee Wesleyan College in Athens. He is employed in the McMinn County Youth Affairs Department as prevention coordinator and is active in leadership of the youth program at First Church, Athens.



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# Qualities of discipleship

By A. Ray Newcomb, pastor; First Church, Millington

**Entrance into discipleship** (Luke 13:24)

In verse 23, Jesus was asked "are there few that be saved?" He said in verse 24, "strive to enter in at the strait (narrow) gate." Strive renders the word "agonizomai" from which comes our word "agonize." It was used originally of athletes contending for a prize. An athlete "strains every nerve."

Jesus pictured the way of salvation as a narrow gate (Matthew 7:13-14). The word Luke uses means a "door." He knew nothing about many ways of salvation. He warned against such. For many "will seek" to enter and will not be able to do so.



NEWCOMB

Faith in God is the key that opens the door to a lifestyle of discipline and self-denial. The casual person will not perceive the door. The untrained and undisciplined person will not care to enter. Whosoever will can come and find life.

**The example of discipleship** (Luke 14:8-14)

Jesus taught us humility by the parable of those bidden to the wedding. In verse 7-8 we see the selfishness of the man who seeks the best seat. Don't seek the best seat when asked to a party. Someone more important than you may be present. Always think of others before yourself.

We are to be sincere (v. 10) and be ourselves when invited. Do not seek to be above or better than others. Be humble and meek. The spiritual is taught in verse 11. If you exalt yourself, you will be humbled. If you

humble yourself, you will be exalted.

The true disciple will be helpful (vv. 12-15). Jesus noticed the group of invited guests. He noticed it included only the Pharisees, friends, relatives, and richer neighbors (v. 12). They were invited so they could return the invitation. Jesus taught we are to invite the poor, crippled, blind, and lame (v. 13). These people cannot return the favor.

## BIBLE BOOK

January 6 Lesson

Basic Passage: Luke 13:22-14:35

**The examination of discipleship** (Luke 14:28-33)

Jesus gave examples of discipleship. He told about Pilate who went to build, but did not count the cost (vv. 28-30). The challenge to us is to count the cost before assuming the role of disciple. To do otherwise is to invite shame, failure, and defeat.

He also told about the Tetrarch who

went to battle with 10,000 and did not first sit down and see if he was able to meet him that came with 20,000 (vv. 31-33).

Jesus taught that would-be-disciples are to count the cost of building and battling with regard to the following.

1. A supreme relationship — "If any man come to me, and hate not . . . his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (v. 26)

2. A supreme responsibility (v. 27) — We can only interpret our cross by His. Our cross is voluntary, and borne for others in their need.

3. A supreme renunciation (v. 33) — If I am going to be His disciple, I must renounce my sin, selfishness, self-righteousness, and self-satisfaction.

The invitation is to the "whosoever." Those who respond will receive a free gift of grace. Our new relationship demands our all as disciples. We will as disciples enjoy abundant life in this world and the recompense of blessedness in the "resurrection of the just."

# The sower and the soils

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

Most students of the Bible enjoy studying and reflecting on Jesus' parables. Each story is timeless. They speak to each age because they are the truth about us.

The parables had a way of watching people in the story. The message sometimes didn't come through to the hearer until later. Whenever it broke through to the understanding, its truth could not be denied.

This parable may well have been the first Jesus told, and may explain why this is the only one which has an explanation along with it.

**Why Jesus taught in parables**

After Jesus used the parable of the soils, His disciples asked Him why He had done so. Apparently this was not the common way of teaching.

The rabbis often told stories, but their stories were told as illustrations of what had already been taught. Jesus

began His teaching with parables. In most cases they seem to have been used to make a point which would otherwise not be possible.

Some have understood the purpose of parables as being a way to keep a secret from certain ones. That hardly seems likely when we know that Jesus wanted all to understand and come to trust Him.

It is a fact, however, that many persons are unable to understand the Gospel message because they are unwilling to think spiritually. Failure to hear comes not from the message or messenger. It is the result of an unwillingness on the part of hearer.

**Some seed fell on the pathway**

In this story, some of the seed fell on a pathway. Farmers understood travelers would walk through a field. Those paths became packed earth which would not receive seed. Seeds which landed there would provide food for birds.

Such is the fate of much of the Gospel "seed" which we sow broadly on hearts not prepared to receive it. We need to prepare the hearts of the

lost through prayer and friendship before we "dump" Gospel seed on them.

This is not to take away the responsibility of the person whose heart is not ready to hear. However, it should also take away some of our comfort at thinking casting seed has completed our job.

## CONVENTION UNIFORM

January 6 Lesson

Basic Passage: Matthew 13:1-23

**Some seed fell on rocky places**

It became much easier to understand this part of the story when my family moved to middle Tennessee. Portions of my front yard have about one inch of soil covering limestone rock. Grass sprouts early in the spring, but with the hot sun we can discern the rocky area by the brown grass.

Many persons who receive the Gospel readily do not receive it deeply. When the difficult days of life come along, they are shocked, dismayed, and often shattered. For them, the Christian faith was considered to be an insulation against the harsh realities of life.

**Some seed fell among thorns**  
Anyone who has done any gardening in an area where Johnson grass is abundant knows what it can do to a garden if left untouched.

This is the picture of one who went through all the steps in becoming a Christian, but then went back to life as usual. For them, the Christian faith was a transaction completed rather than a relationship begun.

Easily distracted by the former ways of life, they lose sight of their identity and their source of life.

**Some seed fell on good soil**

When hearts are open to the good news of the message of Christ, the seed takes firm root and bursts forth with fruit in abundance.

**Be sure to listen**

More than once Jesus cautioned us to hear Him well. The responsibility is on us. We, like the soils, are responsible for what we do with the Gospel message we have heard.

If we turn a deaf ear to the claims of the Lord Jesus on our life we are no less responsible. Willful ignorance is subject to judgment. Are you listening?

# Freedom from sin's enslavement

By John C. Compton, pastor; Oak Grove, Mount Carmel

A minnow trapped in a fish bowl for a long time will become accustomed to swimming in circles. When set free in open water it will continue swimming around and around until it understands and believes there is freedom to enjoy the whole reservoir.

Jesus wants us to know we are a

slave to sin until by faith He sets us free. The Jews misunderstood Jesus' teaching on slavery to sin and freedom by faith. Today, many still do not comprehend or enjoy real freedom in Christ. Like a minnow, it's easier for us to see the possibility of freedom in Christ than to experience



COMPTON

Unbelieving Jews could not go to the heavenly Father's house with Jesus because they were slaves to sin. It takes only one sin to become a slave to sin. Sin sets into motion certain inevitable consequences. It separates them from God above. It condemns them to eternal death. Sin makes all of us earthly-minded. Therefore, we also have difficulty in understanding who Jesus is and the truths He taught. Sin dims spiritual sensitivity to truth, disrupts relationships, and normal desires become deviant. When we choose to sin, we have sold ourselves to an evil master who controls us and seeks to destroy us.

Only by faith in Christ can we be made free from sin. Jesus said real faith is found in those who live according to the will of the heavenly Father. Disobedience shows characteristics of another father. Studying the Word of God leads to saving faith, obedience,

and the discovery of truth. Truth is seeing things the way the Father sees them. The truth is we are slaves to the cycle of sin, a bondage which can be broken only by faith in Christ as Savior. Freedom in Christ does not mean freedom to do as we please. It is

## LIFE AND WORK

January 6 Lesson

Basic Passage: John 8

a freedom from the vices of sin. We must believe a Christian does not have to sin before we will seek to live holy lives before God.

Jesus spoke of spiritual freedom, but the Jews misunderstood it to be political freedom. Like minnows swimming in circles, the Jews did not know what real freedom meant. They denied ever being in bondage, not recognizing the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, and Syrian bondage, not to

mention their present Roman masters. The pride which keeps us from admitting physical facts also keeps us from admitting we need a Savior to set us free from the curse of sin.

Our Lord illustrated the difference between spiritual slavery and spiritual freedom using a household slave and a son. A slave lives in the house, but a son is family. A slave has a master, but a son has a father. A slave follows orders, but a son fellowships with his father. Because of sin we loose everything, but by faith we gain more than we can imagine.

In a court of law, an accused man who is declared not guilty is free. By faith in Christ we are declared not guilty and set free from the curse of sin. We are free indeed. Be free by faith or slaves by default. May we choose freedom that comes by surrendering to the will of God by faith in Christ.

**(BP) BRIEFLY**

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

**Soul winning encounter announced for 1995**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Southern Baptists will get a second chance to tell America, "Here's Hope." A national soul winning encounter slated for the 1995 will carry the same theme as the denomination's 1990 simultaneous revivals: "Here's Hope. Jesus cares for you."

International publicity for the year-long emphasis will carry a slightly different theme: "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now."

Rather than emphasizing only simultaneous revivals, the 1995 emphasis will expand to include personal evangelism leading up to simultaneous revivals. The national soul winning encounter will consist of two phases — 60 days of personal evangelism and six months of "harvest revivals."

The HMB will enlist 1.5 million people who will commit to witness to one person each day between Jan. 8 and March 9, 1995. Those 60 days of personal evangelism will be followed by a nationwide emphasis on revivals between March 12 and Sept. 30. Within that framework, suggested dates for revivals will be determined in each state. Some will be held simultaneously statewide; others will be held simultaneously by associations.

The soul winning encounter concept has been endorsed by state evangelism directors and will be planned by a steering committee from that group. Resourcing and coordination will be handled by the Home Mission Board. Adoption of the Here's Hope theme was announced to evangelism directors during their annual meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz.

**HMB church loan division to expand services**

ATLANTA — With a change in leadership has come a change in strategy of the church loan division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. After operating as the lender of last resort, the division is beginning to solicit loans to all qualifying churches. The church loan program began in 1882 with \$500. Assets at the end of this year are expected to exceed \$125 million.

The division has primarily served as the "loan fund of last resort in areas where Southern Baptists are relatively unknown," said Bob Kilgore, division director since 1965 when its portfolio totaled \$18 million. Kilgore, a Texas native, retired at the end of 1990. Bob Inlow moved from Dallas in June to observe the operation of the church loan division and became its director upon Kilgore's retirement. In Kilgore's 25 years with the division, almost 5000 loans have been made to churches. If each of these churches grew to 200 members, then one million people worship in churches built with loans from the church loan division while Kilgore was director.

While continuing to serve church starts in new work areas, Inlow said he wants the division to make loans to established churches as well. "My goal is to make us the best church lender there is, period." Some changes already have been made to increase the division's loaning capabilities. The maximum loan limit has been raised from \$750,000 to \$1 million. A weekly loan review meeting has been implemented as the beginning of an in-house loan committee. Fees and interest rates are being evaluated for possible restructuring.

Inlow believes borrowing money from the HMB church loan division will be attractive to larger churches because the division's interest income will be invested in loans to new churches. The church loan division does not receive any Cooperative Program or Annie Armstrong Easter Offering funds. Money from insurance companies, foundations, pension funds, and from the public through Home Mission Board bonds is used to finance the loans.

**UMHB announces new president**

BELTON, Texas — Jerry G. Bawcom has been selected as the 21st president of the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, according to the school's board of trustees. Bawcom will join UMHB Feb. 1 as president-elect and assume the position of president and chief executive officer Aug. 1.

Bawcom has been president of Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth since May 1984. He has been at the university since 1969 and previously was interim president, vice president for administration, vice president for student life, and dean of students.

"My lifelong goal has been to serve in one of our Baptist universities," said Bawcom. "I love this work and I feel called to this university just as a preacher would feel called and I have been as prayerful as you have been," he said to the UMHB trustees.

Bawcom has a bachelor of science in secondary education and a master of education from Texas Tech University, Lubbock. His Ph.D. is in higher education administration from the University of North Texas.

**Lack of youth evangelism called crisis in SBC**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Churches don't suffer a lack of ideas for youth ministry today, but a lack of evangelism, a youth ministry expert said. "We've got a crisis in the Southern Baptist Convention and it's in youth baptisms," said Dean Finley, a youth evangelism specialist with the SBC Home Mission Board. Finley led a workshop during the HMB's first national church growth conference in Scottsdale, Ariz.

He cited statistics showing that youth baptisms declined from 130,000 in 1972 to less than 90,000 in 1987. Youth baptisms increased slightly in 1988 and 1989 and are projected to increase slightly in 1990.

From 1972 to 1987 when youth baptisms declined by nearly 40 percent, the youth population declined only 12 percent, Finley observed. Also, the long-term decline in youth baptisms occurred when resources for youth ministry proliferated.

**Greater Boston Association provides housing for volunteers**

By Sarah Zimmerman

BOSTON (BP) — If Boston Baptists could get cash back for the work of their volunteers, the association's \$255,000 volunteer home would be debt-free.

The seven-bedroom "Craft House" provides low-cost housing to volunteers

for Greater Boston Baptist Association. In the area where monthly apartment rent begins at \$700, the house makes being a volunteer affordable.

"Probably six of the ten residents wouldn't be here if it weren't for the house," says Jim Pierce, volunteer house coordinator. "If you figure

\$25,000 worth of work is done by one volunteer each year, the house is a good investment. It's a real deal."

Larry Martin, associational director of missions, said the association depends on volunteers for everything from college and youth ministries to creative evangelistic performances at special events. Of the 22 people working for the association, only three receive a salary.

In 1985 associational leaders began making long-range plans and realized volunteers would be vital to their work. They also realized the cost of living in Boston would make being a volunteer prohibitive unless housing was provided.

When the association began looking for a house, Pierce said, "We had no money — zilch. All we had was a dream."

In 1989 the association purchased a three-story house in the Boston suburb of Waltham. Leaders raised \$70,000 for a down payment and financed the remaining \$185,000 through a private source since no bank would grant the loan.

The house was named for Ira and Betty Craft, lay leaders from Columbia, S.C., who have been volunteers among New England Baptists for more than 20 years. The Crafts were also instrumental in raising funds to purchase the house.

The 85-year-old house was in good enough condition that it was occupied as soon as the donated furniture was in place. The first volunteers moved in during 1989, and at one time, 16 people lived in the house.

The summer is particularly busy as short-term volunteers move in and out.

At times a volunteer moves out in the morning, clean sheets are put on the bed and another volunteer moves in that evening.

"It can be a little hectic keeping up with the keys," said Pierce.

Tennants each pay \$300 a month or \$10 a day in rent, but Pierce said, "We haven't evicted anybody yet." Rent income goes toward house payments and upkeep.

**'We had no money — zilch. All we had was a dream.'**

Residents contribute to the cost of the Wednesday night meal when they all try to eat together, but other meals are each person's responsibility. Chores and the phone bill are shared, but the Pierces pay the remaining utilities.

The role of Pierce and his wife, Eunice, is advisor and counselor. "In a sense, we're Mom and Dad," he said. Pierce, who is retired from construction work in the steel industry, makes most of the house repairs. Mrs. Pierce, who always worked as a homemaker, said she has yet to retire.

Plans are underway to begin a similar ministry in an 11-bedroom house donated to the association by a local church. The church began meeting in the house, which it has since outgrown. It voted to give the dwelling to the association as long as it is used as a mission house.

**TeamTalk**

By D. L. Lowrie

Could it be a trend, or have I just encountered the exceptions? I have been in four churches recently where the excitement about Discipleship Training has been high. Since they are located in different parts of the state and in different types of communities, I thought it might be a trend.

Union Church, Hampton, is basically a country church. Under the leadership of Burgess Vincent, they have a good number of people in Discipleship Training.

National Avenue Church, Memphis, is an inner city church, but under the guidance of their pastor, Robert Tyson Sr., they are training on Sunday evening.

Oak Grove Church, Mt. Carmel, is a small town church in a growing area, and they have a strong Sunday evening program. John Compton also has led them to be a strong mission church.

Bethel Church, Greenfield, is

another. I met with a large group of adults on a Sunday evening who were involved in studying the adult Discipleship Training material. Wayne Perkins is their pastor.

Each of these four churches are moving forward in the work of the Lord. Each is strongly committed to missions support through the Cooperative Program. Each is made up of people of all ages.

While with Bethel Church, Alice and I did something we had not done in years. We actually went to a Discipleship Training "social." It was a Christmas dinner at a favorite restaurant in Union City. There were several couples present who share in an adult Discipleship Training unit on Sunday night.

If this is not a trend, I pray that it will become one. Participation in Discipleship Training in my teen years, (we called it Training Union then) had a positive impact on my life. It helped prepare me for the call into ministry which came as an older teenager. I covet this kind of help for every Baptist in this state.



LOWRIE