

Baptist and Reflector

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NEWSJOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION

Maurice Graham included

FMB plans survey team to investigate Kuwaiti needs

By Bob Stanley

RICHMOND (BP) — The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will send a survey team into Kuwait "in a matter of days" to determine how Southern Baptists can help people in the war-ravaged Persian Gulf country.

FMB President R. Keith Parks announced plans for the team March 7 after a meeting of the board's Global Strategy Group of top administrators and strategists.

Parks said he is convinced Southern Baptists want to be "instruments of reconciliation" and to help meet immediate human needs as the country begins a massive rebuilding program.

"I want us to think big and plan big so the creative energy of Southern Baptists can find heartfelt expressions in reaching out to the many needy people of this region," he said.

The survey team will include John Cheyne, who coordinates the board's human needs efforts; Maurice Graham, Southern Baptist worker in Kuwait who was held hostage in the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City for more than four months before his release

Dec. 9; and Jerry Zandstra, pastor of the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait City. Graham was associate pastor of the church after he and his family arrived in Kuwait early last summer.

The team will leave as soon as they can get permission to enter Kuwait, Cheyne said.

"We want to see what Southern Baptists can do that others might not be able to do," Cheyne said. He mentioned aid for Bangladeshi workers who were unable to leave Kuwait when others evacuated as one example.

The possibility of flying a planeload of rice and other food staples into the country will be considered to meet urgent needs for food in the Kuwaiti capital, he said.

Meanwhile, another FMB committee will begin considering a variety of recommendations coming from a recent meeting of Southern Baptist personnel assigned to the Middle East and North Africa. Before the conflict began, Southern Baptists had almost 150 people working in the region.

The Baptist workers recommended

innovative approaches for ministry in the postwar period, including possible expansion of personnel assignments in the area, said regional vice president Isam Ballenger.

The recommendations include encouraging Southern Baptists with specialized skills to seek employment with U.S. firms given contracts to help Kuwaitis rebuild their country. As they help with these efforts, the planners said, workers may be able to establish lasting contacts with people in the area.

The mission workers also proposed ways to increase the number of people interested in serving among Arabs.

They also urged more Southern Baptists to consider working on volunteer teams and enlisting in longer-term Foreign Mission Board programs such as International Service Corps and Tentmakers.

"There's a great need for Christians to understand better the Islamic religion and to be able to enter into dialogue with due respect and appreciation for the religion and culture of these Middle East peoples,"

Ballenger said.

But the work can't be done without special donations by church members above their normal church contributions, said Don Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president and a member of the committee.

He said Southern Baptists who want to participate may send donations to: Middle East Relief, Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230. All such funds will go to provide food, medicine, and other much-needed supplies in the region.

Besides Ballenger and Kammerdiener, the special committee named to develop a comprehensive postwar strategy includes Harlan Spurgeon, vice president for mission personnel; Lewis Myers, vice president for Cooperative Services International; Clark Scanlon, director of research and planning; Alan Compton, vice president for communications; and Jimmy Maroney, assistant director of the Global Desk, which is seeking ways to reach out to those who have never had opportunity to hear the Gospel message.

CLC adopts charter changes to include PAC

By Connie Davis, assistant editor

Directors of the Christian Life Commission meeting March 7-8 adopted charter and bylaw revisions which, if adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in its annual meeting in Atlanta, will merge the Public Affairs Committee to the CLC, acted to invite political candidates to its 1992 Christian citizenship seminar in Washington

Meredith to name its future trustees

CARAWAY, N.C. — The Executive Committee of the General Board, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, reviewed the actions of the trustees of Meredith College, adopted two recommendations from a special study committee, and agreed to work toward "a peaceful and positive" solution March 8.

Trustees of the women's college in Raleigh voted in February without prior approval of the state convention to amend Meredith's charter so that future trustees will be elected by the board rather than the convention. Also, any additional changes in the charter will be made without prior approval of the state convention.

A Meredith College/Baptist State Convention Relationship Committee was created and met March 4, prior to the Executive Committee meeting on March 5.

D.C., and discussed prayer in public schools.

In an unexpected event, Richard Land, executive director, left the meeting to join 11 other religious leaders meeting with President George Bush.

Upon Land's return, he reported the President called the meeting to thank those gathered for their support of the military effort in the Persian Gulf. Also invited were Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority, a political/religious organization, and several other religious institutions in Lynchburg, Va.; Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman; and Carl Henry, theologian.

Land said he and others used the opportunity to encourage the President to use the increased prestige of the United States to further religious freedom, particularly in the Middle East, but also in the Soviet Union.

Land speculated the success of the Persian Gulf War has given Bush "a new comfort level" for expression of his deep moral convictions.

The President also signed a proclamation designating April 5-7 as days of thanksgiving for victory and peace in the Persian Gulf.

The charter/bylaw change was in response to the Feb. 18-19 action of the SBC Executive Committee to merge PAC with the CLC. The directors adopted changes to temporarily

enlarge the number of directors to add the nine PAC members.

As approved by the EC, the former PAC members may serve a second four-year term if nominated by the Committee on Nominations and elected by the convention.

Land explained the EC recommendation "gives the PAC's function, money, and temporarily gives its members to us." The CLC will receive \$32,500 in 1991-92 from PAC, if approved.

It also will receive a 6.3 percent increase — the third highest increase

following the basic SBC budget and PAC — over last year's budget if the SBC budget is approved. In 1991-92 the CLC will receive an additional \$47,000 above the \$32,500 from PAC. Land noted the CLC has moved from a deficit budget in two years.

Directors applauded after reports on sales from materials. About 500,000 publications promoting Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in January were sold. And response to materials on Race Relations Sunday in February (See CLC adopts, page 3)

February is month for CP record

NASHVILLE (BP) — SBC Executive Committee President/Treasurer Harold C. Bennett announced Cooperative Program unified budget contributions received by the Executive Committee set a record for February.

Although receipts for the first five months of the budget year remained below receipts for the same period in 1989-90, they were above budget requirements for both February and the first five months of the budget year.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' way of supporting ministry and missions through state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining percentage to the SBC Executive Committee for national and international ministry.

February SBC receipts totaled \$13,682,656, which was 12.61 percent or \$1,532,360 above the previous record for February reached in 1990.

The 1990-91 SBC basic operating budget anticipates average monthly receipts of \$11,444,377. Average monthly receipts for this budget period were \$11,644,722.

Comparing 1990-91 year-to-date receipts with the previous year, February contributions reduced the deficit to 2.59 percent from the 6.46 percent reported in January.

Designated gifts have not fared as well during this same period. Contributions, most of which are designated for the Foreign Mission Board's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the Home Mission Board's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, and world hunger, are 8.69 percent, or \$5,639,682, below 1990 contributions.

May, June, and July are the primary months for the receipts of gifts for the Annie Armstrong Offering.

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Editorials**United States can have its finest hour — with peace**

The difficulty of fulfilling the leadership role of president of the United States is that today the role is played out on a global stage.

Often there seems to be little time or attention paid to affairs of the nation.

In a world filled with tragedy and great human needs, success does not come easily to leadership. Chaos and despair is couching at the door and sometimes we get perilously close to danger.

While the quick defeat of Iraq by American and other coalition forces may be good for the ego, we cannot live on that euphoria. Understandably Americans are proud of the victory with so few casualties. The military power of the nation proved without question its sophisticated strength and ability. President Bush reminded us that the victory also validates the courage of our Vietnam veterans.

Americans are thankful that our troops are coming home. Some of them, however, may be involved in keeping the peace in the Middle East.

We all should express pride in our effectiveness with modern weapons that marked the world's best equipped fighting force. But with that power comes enormous responsibility and restraint. Carried to an extreme, pride can translate into smugness.

The United States has been recognized by world leaders as the single most powerful nation in world history. Modern technology has proven that the methods of war have changed. Proper maintenance of that power and technology should help insure peace around the world.

We can accept the mantle of leadership only if we are willing to bear the price with humility. We must reassure hurting nations that we have no designs

for dictating or forcing our opinions on others.

Unusual alliances were formed during the Gulf War. We learned that war makes "strange bedfellows." With that awareness, nations should be able to move closer to solving age-old problems.

Our government has declared that the war is over. Now we need to look at the people of the world, particularly the Middle East, to offer helping hands.

For example, alliances now may allow more openness and better opportunities for the Gospel. Already the Foreign Mission Board is planning for food distribution and watching for doors to open in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Baptists must join with others to attack without fear the ills that enslave us at home. Our national government has to solve problems that are hurting Americans.

Political dishonesty, burgeoning crime, drug abuse, AIDS and other diseases, making education available for all people, overcrowded prisons, the blight of abortion on demand, economic recession — they all demand attention.

We applaud President Bush for calling Americans to pray. Now that God has answered prayers with a cease-fire, we should pray diligently for lasting peace and permanent cessation of hostilities.

Israel and Arab nations have discovered reasons for forging a lasting peace between their peoples. Arab nations banded together as part of the coalition that defeated Iraqi aggression. Israel showed heretofore undisplayed restraint in not responding against Iraqi missiles.

The Palestinians saw their "hero" defeated. They

now may show some willingness to soften their hard line against Israel.

Christian groups should help strengthen peace efforts and wage peace instead of war as the ultimate solution. The temptation to use power is always great to those who have it. Ever present is a temptation to sell weapons to other nations, some of whom have questionable motives.

There can be no lasting peace until Middle East parties sit down together. President Jimmy Carter's mediation between Egypt and Israel is an example of what can be accomplished when people seriously talk together.

We believe President Bush recognizes the fallacy of boasting instead of addressing problems. The bumper-sticker message of "God, Guns, and Guts" is ridiculous. Our president must lead the nation to its finest hour, in peace, as in war. He can do that, and we believe he wants to.

Flash points still exist in the Middle East. And there are hot spots, such as the Baltic nations struggling for freedom, South Africa, Iran, Lebanon, the Soviet Union, Liberia, Central America.

It is not an easy time to be a world leader, but the opportunities are tremendous. Before we take on the job of permanent world policing, we should prayerfully consider our own house.

We believe the president and congress — and all of us — must work for "a kinder, gentler" nation. We must work for a nation where God's will is first on the agenda — and we can do that without proselytizing. We can do it because Bold Mission Thrust has already been adopted as a goal for 15 million of us. Our own frontyard needs some tender love and care. — WFA

Baptist writer reports**Kuwaitis begin process of returning to normalcy**

By Frank Wm. White

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait (BP) — In the days following the coalition forces' rout of Saddam Hussein's armies from Kuwait, the Kuwaiti capital is ecstatic with celebration of freedom and, at the same time, marred with the scars of occupation and violence.

Three days after the cease-fire, Kuwaiti citizens were festively driving through the streets, honking car horns, and waving their nation's black, green, red and white flag which had been banished from view since the Aug. 2 invasion.

Flags flew from street corners and houses while oversized versions were draped from building rooftops.

Kuwaiti soldiers operated numerous checkpoints throughout the city, checking occupants of each vehicle for proper identification — a reminder that the horrors of the occupation were not long since past.

Once one of the Middle East's most beautiful cities, Kuwait's capital will not soon recover from the damages of the occupation and the battle to regain freedom.

Modern, glass structures and stately classic Greek-style buildings alike show signs of wanton destruction and the barrage of gunfire.

Iraqi tanks, armored vehicles, artillery pieces, and other mangled vehicles still littered the city's streets where bomb craters are stark reminders of the violence.

Frank Wm. White, a news writer in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's office of communications, is a public affairs officer in the Tennessee Army National Guard. He is assigned to the U.S. Army VII Corps in Saudi Arabia. He was with the 11th Aviation Brigade on Feb. 24.

American soldiers, evident throughout the city, received the Kuwaitis' highest praises. Soldiers driving through the streets were made to feel like beloved liberators. Passengers of every passing car waved at the Americans, many smiling and honking their horns while some waved American flags.

Despite the euphoria and celebration, the ravages of the occupation could be seen most in the city's children. In the outskirts of the city, children cheered and waved to American soldiers. If the soldiers stopped, the children swarmed the vehicle.

It first seemed the children might want only to shake hands and say hello. However, it soon became clear that their greatest interest was food.

Remaining contents of opened MREs — meals ready to eat, the U.S. soldiers' staple food supply — that had been the soldiers' on-the-road snack following a pre-dawn start without breakfast, were quickly grabbed from dashboard and console.

Other MRE packages offered to the crowd were quickly grabbed and carried away as were bottles of water. Soon, it seemed a hundred or more youths and children had swarmed the vehicle, and many were climbing in the back as well as in with the passengers.

The vehicle's four armed occupants would soon be no match for the horde. The only safe alternative to losing control of the situation seemed to be to drive away while it was still possible. The exit was made with regret that little had been done to help the children.

Because of the relative wealth of Kuwait, begging for food does not seem to have previously been a common practice for the city's children. Now is a time when Southern Bap-

tists and other Americans may have their greatest impact in helping Kuwaitis rebuild their country.

Immediate food and disaster relief is an obvious need. Other more long-term ministries could develop from that effort.

Meanwhile, in north central Saudi Arabia, the town of Hafar al Batin, a commercial center of sorts for the area, on the day following the cease-fire was returning to what might appear to be its normal pre-invasion routine.

Lights returned to the city streets and some storefronts which had been covered with metal bars for many months were beginning to reopen.

The town also had a festive atmosphere with nightly impromptu parades of local citizens in cars and pickup trucks waving Kuwaiti and Saudi flags through the streets honking

car horns.

Saudi Arabians will not soon forget the thousands of Americans and other Westerners who briefly inhabited their land. That contact, brought about by dire necessity of an impending emergency, could open the door for future contact.

As Southern Baptists return to Kuwait with a new mission, they may also find opportunities elsewhere in the region that previously could not have been imagined.

Now, the challenge for Southern Baptists may be to see the greater world need and unite as a cooperative force to respond to opportunities in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.

MISSIONS A FOREIGN MISSIONS EXPERIENCE
TENNESSEE, April 26-28, 1991, Carson-Newman College and First Baptist Church, Jefferson City

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At First, Murfreesboro

Defying statistics, Cotey celebrates 30th anniversary

By Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor
MURFREESBORO — Murfreesboro pastor Eugene Cotey continues to defy the stats.

The average tenure of a Southern Baptist pastor at one church is about five years, according to Aubrey Hay of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Church-Ministers Relations Department.

Cotey, on the other hand, has been pastor of First Church, Murfreesboro, since 1961.

On Feb. 24 church members and friends came together to honor Cotey on his 30th anniversary as pastor of the Concord Association congregation.

Born in Louisiana, Cotey was reared in Memphis and graduated from Union University, Jackson, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

After completion of seminary, Cotey became pastor of First Church, Oxford, Ala., where he remained five

years before returning "home" to Tennessee as pastor of First Church.

When he came to Murfreesboro, Cotey said he "had no idea" he would remain as pastor for the next 30 years.

The former TBC president (1975) has no secret formula for longevity at one church — just one simple reason.

"The Lord has been in it," he observed.

Cotey also credits serving a church with good members. "This is a church of integrity. Members don't look for scapegoats. They are always willing to work through things," he said.

In addition, Cotey observed, there has been a commitment from both parties since the beginning. "When calling me the church committed themselves to me, and I to them," he said.

The highlights of Cotey's tenure at First Church all are related to ministries that have reached out to meet the needs of the community.

He noted the church has sponsored

three missions, all of which are now churches in the association.

Over the years, First Church has sponsored various ministries including a "mother's club" for lower income women and a Laotian ministry. The church currently is involved in the "Room at the Inn" program designed to help the homeless in Murfreesboro, he said.

Cotey has witnessed many changes through the years.

"Used to be that religion was accepted at face value. That has changed in my 30 years here. The 1960s and 1970s put Christians and pastors under a lot more closer scrutiny, and we have to be on guard to make sure we are speaking with integrity," he said.

Another change has been from the traditional family structure to more single parent families, he observed.

"Everyone no longer feels like they have to necessarily be married to have a meaningful life," he said.

Cotey also has witnessed a decrease in denominational loyalty, but feels it is not linked to the controversy that has existed in recent years within the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Denominational affairs don't seem to be as important to people today," said Cotey, a former SBC Home Mission Board trustee.

But lack of denominational loyalty has not curbed an interest in missions, he pointed out.

He noted First Church has had numerous short-term missions volunteers and that the church currently is studying a plan to fund an endowment which would enable more church

Annuity Board claims 'remarkable success'

DALLAS (BP) — The Southern Baptist Annuity Board has experienced "remarkable success in the face of significant obstacles during the past 12 months," board President Paul Powell told trustees in their February meeting.

"Despite the economical, political, and denominational climate in which the Annuity Board staff has worked, we have made progress in every area of work," Powell said.

After four years of staggering losses in the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan, there are indications of stability, Powell said.

"In recent months, Prudential has recorded what they believe to be a trend in the right direction for this plan," Powell said. "We prayed for it. We worked for it. We're thankful to be able to continue offering a good benefit plan to our pastors and church staff families," he said.

Trustees on the insurance committee reported to the board that Prudential's latest analysis of incurred claims indicates that the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan might reach a break-

even point this year.

A prediction of a 22 percent national increase in cost of medical care in 1991 would still necessitate some rate increase on July 1, but the increase will be uniform and less than those of the past three years. All churches were advised last fall to budget for a possible ten percent increase at mid-year.

Powell spoke to trustees about the board's commitment to provide a medical plan and praised The Prudential for its willingness to risk losses to see the church plan return to healthy status.

"Our rates are high because we have taken a benevolent approach," Powell said. "We never cancel; we never underwrite. We know how to lower the

In Gulf War

Professions outnumber casualties

ATLANTA (BP) — In what may be a wartime first, the number of professions of faith exceeded the number of U.S. casualties in Operation Desert Storm.

Lew Burnett, director of military

premium — cancel the sick — but I'm not going to be responsible for cancelling someone's insurance because he is sick. As long as we have that commitment, our rates will be high."

Increased retirement contributions of \$10.5 million in 1990 are a sign of confidence in the Annuity Board, said Treasurer Harold Richardson.

Powell also addressed the subject of confidence and security in pension programs as he said, "We are strong and unified in our task of serving all Southern Baptists. I cannot tell you how pleasant it is to say to anyone who asks, 'There has never been even a hint of instability or division among trustees or between trustees and staff.'"

chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, estimates that at least 1200 professions of faith were recorded by Southern Baptist chaplains serving in the Persian Gulf. One news report estimated the number of allied casualties at less than 200.

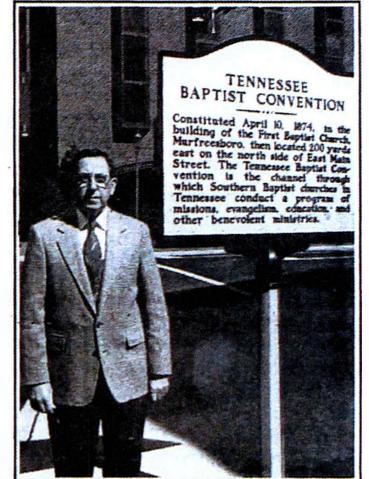
Burnett bases his estimates on letters he received from chaplains. One week in February, he received five letters which told of 100 professions of faith.

The number of Southern Baptist chaplains serving in the war reached 194.

Chaplains had to be creative in thinking of ways to baptize new Christians in the desert. Mike Langston, Southern Baptist Marine chaplain, used a metal coffin for the symbolic testimony of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

"It was all we had that would hold enough water for complete immersion," Langston said. At the time he wrote, Langston had been at sea for 141 days. Of the 2100 Marines on his ship, 38 made professions of faith and 24 were baptized. He noted 12 rededications in the Christian community of about 220 on board.

Christians other than chaplains were involved in the revival movement.



THAT'S HISTORY — Murfreesboro pastor Gene Cotey stands by marker outside First Church where TBC was constituted in 1874.

members to be involved in missions projects.

The interest in missions has spilled over into the youth area, Cotey continued.

"We used to send our youth on summer trips that were 'fun.' Now, they go on missions trips and lead backyard Bible clubs," he said.

And, finally, Cotey feels today's laypeople are more willing to be involved. "Thirty years ago, people felt church work was done only by the pastor and the staff," he said.

During the Feb. 24 service honoring Cotey's anniversary, he was "boasted

'The Lord has been in it!' — Cotey

at the morning services (led by long time friends Archie King, retired TBC Brotherhood director, and Tom Bryant, retired director of missions for Concord Association), toasted during an afternoon reception, and roasted by church members during the evening service," he laughed.

Cotey has not been alone during his ministry. He and his wife, Jean, have been married 38 years. They have four children — Sara Overby, David, Steve, and Jim Cotey — and five grandchildren.

Cotey added that all four of his children grew up in the Murfreesboro church and attended school from grades 1-12 in Rutherford County schools. "That's unusual for preachers' kids," he said.

Cotey's immediate plans are to remain at First Church "indefinitely" and to provide good leadership. "This is home," he said.

CLC adopts changes . . .

(from page 1)

was good. Sales are up 46 percent over last year, it was reported.

During his director's report, Land discussed prayer in public schools and the CLC's disagreement with the stance of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs that prayers during commencement exercises at junior high and high schools threaten church/state separations. The Justice Department had asked the Supreme Court to overturn lower court decisions holding that invocations and benedictions during junior high and high school commencement exercises at a Rhode Island school district because it violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Land said commencement attendance is not required, thus prayer should be allowed. However, prayers in classrooms should not be legislated because classroom attendance is man-

dated, in most cases. Providing equal access for religious groups on school campuses is the main emphasis of the CLC's lobbying and legal efforts, he continued.

Support of the constitutional amendment to allow prayer in schools would "drive a wedge in Southern Baptist life and compromise our integrity in Washington," said Land. "Non-Christians have a right not to have religion foisted upon them."

Directors Gary Crum, District of Columbia; Nancy Schaefer, president, Family Concerns, Inc., Georgia; and Alma Ruth Morgan, Oklahoma; questioned Land's stance on classroom prayer.

Schaefer supported school prayer, especially for "impressionable" younger students.

"If the state defines Christianity, it ends up corrupting true religion," Land said.

Trenton Street, Harriman

Not wanting empty buildings, church decides to reach out

By Wm. Fletcher Allen

He stands there burning a twenty-dollar bill.

Despite the pleas of about 80 people, he insists on incinerating the bill.

The man burning the money is Joe Hunt, minister of education for Trenton Street Church, Harriman.

The dismayed audience is composed of students from Harriman High School. They are eating lunch and at each place there is a fake twenty-dollar bill. But the burned bill is real, and they know it.

The students hear Hunt explain that a person can live his life without knowing Christ, "just burning it up like this twenty-dollar bill." They hear him admit that the bill has value, worth — but it can be burned to a crisp without being used for something worthwhile.

In five minutes the "program" is over.

It's all a part of a new ministry of Trenton Street Church. "Many of the students are unchurched, some even lost, and they are prospects for our church," says Pastor John Powers, "but we are trying to do something for them. We want to help them."

Each Thursday at 11:30 a.m., the students begin arriving at the church building. They have come from Harriman High, a few blocks away.

"There are about 600 students at the school," says Powers. "We wanted to do all we could to reach certain

pockets of people, groups that aren't objects of ministry ordinarily."

The high school students, fitting that description, became objects of ministry. There is no lunch service at the school, so school officials were open to the lunch idea when approached.

"As part of an outreach plan," Powers says, "we determined several pockets. We brainstormed about the school youth — some of whom are in our church. We thought about it — why not offer them a meal?"

So now, on Thursdays, the students walk, drive, or "hitch" a ride to the church for lunch. The church provides van service for those who want to ride but don't have cars.

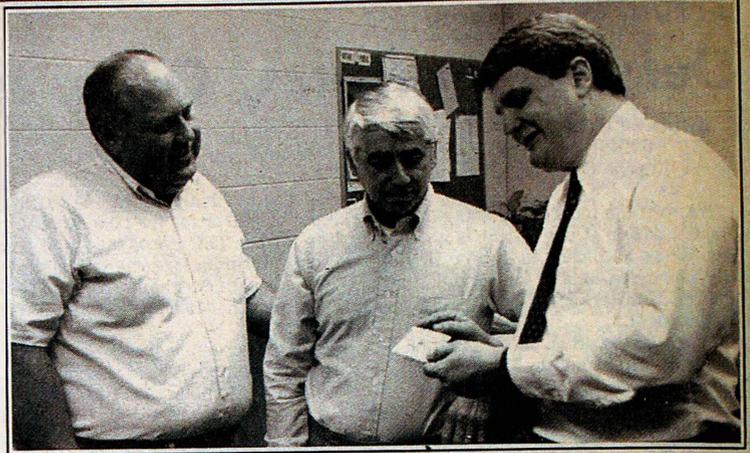
They get a meal, good fellowship, a brief thought about lessons in living, and they are free to go back to school.

"All they have to have," Powers says, "is a dollar and a completed form." That form also is brief — simply a line for the student's name, and also for the address.

The Thursday program has reached as many as 115, but usually runs about 100. Church volunteers prepare the meals (which are those liked by teens) with a little help from the staff.

Begun several weeks ago, the meal plan will continue until school adjourns for the summer. Even then, Powers, says, "We will have some kind of plan for ministry to the youth."

He says the church aims to "let



THAT'S TWENTY DOLLARS — Milton Gresham, left, and Ted Taylor, listen to Joe Hunt, right, explain a comparison of money to living. The three are staff members at Trenton Street Church, Harriman. — Photos by Wm. Fletcher Allen

them know that the Baptist church is a good place to be. They will tell their parents. Some of them bring other students the next Thursday."

Through the "little messages," the church staff lets the students know "how to have peace with God." The programs are planned weeks in advance, and most of the time involve students in skits or Christian rap songs.

"We have learned that everything is an experiment," Powers says. "Baptist traditions are not always sacred."

Students respond with statements such as, "This helps us know each other better," and "I feel that this encourages other people to know about being Christian."

Another says, "It's a different way to present good news." Yet another, "This helps some who need support."

One of the church volunteers hopes the youth continue to participate. "I think it gives them opportunity for fellowship," she says.

Trenton Street began several outreach plans for the less recognized "pockets," developed as a ten-weeks strategy. In January after months of planning, the staff put into place a Tuesday Bible study at church which is geared toward senior adults. Some of that group are Sunday School teachers, some are shut-ins, and others work on Sundays.

A Wednesday night prayer and Bible study with BSU members and others at Roane State Community College is growing. The day care program is flourishing, and helping families find their way.

More than 80 have been reached in the Bible studies.

The new ideas came through staff

and Sunday School leadership brainstorming last October. "We needed to learn how to reach certain people through Bible study, people we were missing," Powers says. "We got feedback from several groups, including our deacons."

Bible study involvement has increased by 50 percent. In the September-February period, Sunday School attendance increased by 19 percent over the same period a year ago. And in January and February, it jumped by 72 percent.

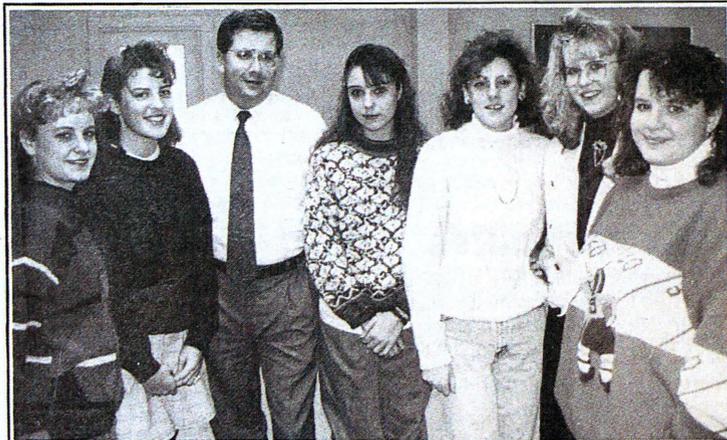
What's more, the church budget income has risen by 120 percent. Only once in the past has Trenton Street met its budget, according to the pastor.

The aim of all that is being done, he says, is, "We want to minister to pockets of reachable people who otherwise don't have Bible study. If we meet their needs, they will come." Trenton Street is investing 25 percent of its total budget in those people.

The church is seeing some immediate results in the ministries plan. For example, the day care where keen interest is blossoming, is "economically priced, well-organized, efficient, and teaches Sunday Bible lessons."

Involved in the Thursday program with the students are members of the church staff: Powers, Hunt, Ted Taylor, recreation director; and Milton Gresham, minister of music and youth. They are assisted by Beverly Johnson, cook; Faye Rose, Bob McGuffin, and other Sunday School volunteers.

"We began to realize we didn't want empty buildings," Powers said. "Buildings may be empty because we answer questions people are not asking."



LUNCH BREAK — Pastor John Powers talks with youth from Trenton Street Church about the Thursday lunch for students. From left, Kim Hartman, Hope Long, Powers, Amy Sewell, Heather Smith, Deidra McKenzie, and Nicole Armstrong. Below, the good meal is enjoyed.



SBC historical groups meet April 22-24

NASHVILLE — The annual meeting of the SBC Historical Commission and the Southern Baptist Historical Society is scheduled April 22-24 at the Southern Baptist Convention Building here.

There will be five presentations by religious education professors and Baptist Sunday School Board leaders, and a panel discussion focusing on local church issues.

The theme for the three-day meeting is "Religious Education in Southern Baptist Churches." It is designed for ministers of education and others interested in religious education.

Speakers include Irene Bennett, First Church, Evans, Ga.; Lucien Coleman, Southwestern Seminary; Mancel Ezell and James Fitch, Sunday School Board;

John Hendrix, Southern Seminary; Peter Kung, Sunday School Board; Bruce Powers, Southeastern Seminary; William Rogers, Southern Seminary; and Dwayne Zimmer, Woodmont Church, Nashville.

"Contemporary Issues and Answers in Religious Education" is the topic for a panel discussion.

A workshop is scheduled for those interested in learning how to document religious life through oral history. It is scheduled for Monday afternoon and Tuesday evening, led by Richard Dillingham, regional specialist of Mars Hill College.

For registration or program information contact the Historical Commission at 901 Commerce St., Nashville, or call (615) 244-0344.

Good self-image helps teenagers stay off drugs

By Barbara Denman

LAKE YALE, Fla. (BP) — Teens with a good self-image have a better chance of staying off drugs, especially if they can communicate, make decisions, and cope with stress, a social worker says.

"This is prevention and intervention warfare," said clinical social worker Shelly Vaughn. "One of the primary reasons why young people use drugs is because they feel worthless and powerless." Vaughn spoke during a seminar sponsored by the Florida Baptist Convention's missions ministries

In Middle East

Some workers get early return

NICOSIA, Cyprus (BP) — Southern Baptist workers who evacuated from Israel ahead of the Gulf war were expected to return there in early March.

But workers assigned to Jordan and Gaza were waiting for further clarification of conditions before returning. Anti-American feelings continue to run high in much of the Middle East, especially in Jordan and among Palestinians in Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza.

"So far our general feeling is that conditions aren't as bad as we had anticipated," said Dale Thorne, who directs Southern Baptist work in the Middle East and North Africa. But he cautioned that it was still too early to tell what effect the war will have on long-term conditions in the region.

Earlier Thorne and leaders of several Christian agencies had expressed concern that the bitter feelings that erupted during the war could harm Christian ministry among Muslims for years, both in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

Although the war divided Arabs as well as Muslims and fanned anti-Western feelings to a fever pitch, the "nightmare scenarios" some had pictured never materialized, Thorne said. "It could have been much worse," he said.

One scenario many feared was the entry of Israel into the war, which many observers said could have led some members of the Arab coalition against Iraq to change sides, causing a much wider conflict.

Many Palestinians, including Christians, backed Saddam Hussein during the war, taking pride that a champion had arisen to stand up to the West. The Iraqi leader tried to make the Palestinian question part of an agreement on withdrawing his forces from Kuwait, but no mention of Palestinians was included in the final war settlement.

New center opens at Southeastern

WAKE FOREST — April 15-16 marks the commencement of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's Center for Great Commission Studies with an Inaugural Conference on campus.

The conference will feature a seminar and convocation for the center. Seminar subjects are "Church Growth/Church Planting in the Nineties" led by Win Arn of Church Growth, Inc., and Charles Chaney, vice president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and several SBC experts in the field of church planting and church growth.

Theme for the center's inaugural

department last month.

"Drugs act as a crutch to deal with others and to cover up fears and insecurities," she told a recent seminar.

Vaughn, associate director of Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission, drew from her experience in treating drug-dependent teens to write "On Trac," a drug-prevention curriculum designed for churches.

"Our self-esteem affects our decision making, our ability to take calculated risks, our coping ability, and our spiritual lives," Vaughn said.

Studies and surveys indicate that

"Palestinians want to hold on to the thought that Saddam really won, but the reality is that it's not the case," said one observer in the region.

Southern Baptist workers assigned to Jordan and Gaza are remaining in either Israel or Egypt until conditions appear safe for their return.

Lesbian act may get NEA grant says CLC

WASHINGTON (BP) — Holly Hughes, who describes herself as an "openly lesbian performance artist," says she plans to use a recent grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to discuss female homosexual themes on stage.

The performance will feature two girls of about 12 years of age as its main characters, Hughes' grant application revealed.

The grant for a work by Hughes, whom the NEA had rejected in a different application last June, may fulfill the fears of legislators as well as evangelical and other groups that pushed for restrictions on content in October's reauthorization of the endowment. The legislation that was adopted after a lengthy battle directed NEA Chairman John Frohnmayer to take into account "general standards of decency" when making grants.

"This grant validates our claim that Congress should have imposed content restrictions on the NEA last year," said James A. Smith, director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "This is another example of how the NEA and its grantees can flaunt their perverted agenda at taxpayers' expense and expect to get away with it."

Hughes, a playwright/stage performer, said that the NEA should have known of her plans for the perfor-

young people turn to drugs during stressful situations when they are unable to tell people how they feel, Vaughn said.

By mastering communications skills where they can express their thoughts in an honest manner, young people are better equipped to deal with daily life stresses without turning to drugs as an escape, she explained.

Teens who can make decisions based on Christian principles have greater control of their lives, Vaughn said.

"They learn to reduce the amount of ambiguity in their choices and limit the degree to which outside influences affect their decisions."

When it comes to drug and alcohol abuse, Vaughn said, churches need to get involved in preventive education. "Our society is not teaching its youth how to make good decisions, and the churches are not in every case teaching them to apply their faith to decision making."

Drug abuse is "rampant in our churches," she said. "Just because kids are in a youth group, doesn't

mean they are not using drugs."

Congregations that refuse to admit that drug use is a problem among their youth are "in denial," Vaughn said. "We are enabling their drug addiction."

Tommy Pophin, minister of youth at Southside Church in Brandon, Fla., said he has encountered drug problems among the teens in his youth group. Drug use is not discussed among the teens, he said, so he only discovers the problem when teens drop out of church activities.

"Suddenly we wake up and find they're in drug or alcohol rehabs," he said. That's when parents request help from the youth minister, he added, but then "it's too late."

The "On Trac" curriculum includes a section that helps parents prevent drug abuse. From her experience, Vaughn noted, addicted teens usually come from dysfunctional homes. That makes it even more crucial for a church to provide Christian role models who can cope with stress, she added.

mance because they were included in her grant application, which was announced as approved on Jan. 4. Hughes made the statements in a telephone interview from New York City with Baptist Press.

The grant application, released by the NEA following a Freedom of Information Act request by Baptist Press, does not state explicitly that the performance will be concerned with lesbianism. The project description, which is included in the application, says that the performance will analyze female sexuality. It also reveals that

one of the sources for the work is a lesbian vampire short story, "Carmella," by a 19th century writer, Sheridan Le Fanu.

The \$15,000 grant for "No Trace of the Blonde," which is a collaborative effort by Hughes, as playwright, and Ellen Sebastian, as director, was given to the Downtown Art Co., of New York City, and later transferred to Performance Space 122 of New York after Hughes left Downtown Art. It was one of about 1200 grants that were announced Jan. 4 and total about \$47 million in federal funds.

One Word More

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

When we were in the Army — and for a couple of years thereafter, Betty and I moved more than a dozen times.

We didn't have furniture then, not much at all.

Since then, we have moved only four times. It never is easy.

But moving is an exercise in growing. As in many happenings in life, moving from one address to another changes us.

Families accumulate many things, and the larger the family, the greater the accumulation. There are items that you just can't throw away, others that you simply must keep. The necessities take up less space in the van than all the souvenirs of living.

As we prepared for each move, we would have a family council meeting. As parents, we would stress that economy dictated each of us should carefully make decisions about what was really needed — and what could be given away or tossed out.

The words usually fell on uncooperating little girls. I'm sure they really wanted to do as we asked, but you know they just really couldn't. They would caringly mark certain boxes as "precious" and "must go with us."

Inevitably we would discreetly instruct the movers as to what boxes

were to be placed on the truck. We would drive away from the lonely house, leaving behind stacks of "precious junk." Most of it really wasn't needed, some was just that — junk.

As we move along life's way, we accumulate things that prevent the fullness of the Christian life from developing within. We take with us some of the junk and garbage that should not go.

All the unwholesome habits, the worldly ways that beguile us, need to be left behind marked "Hazardous Waste, Not Fit for Human Use."

We fool ourselves often by rationalizing that, yes, we can take it with us, there is enough room. Not so. Garbage belongs on the rubbish heap along with other offal.

The Christian life should constantly move upward — though there may be plateaus. Each time we pack up and steadily move on, there should be an accounting. We should be sure no room is taken for rubbish — junk.

Living the true life for Christ means we of necessity must travel light — packing for growth, not for storage.



ALLEN

April doctrine study

Southern Baptists committed to evangelism, missions

By William H. Stephens

Second of a three-part series

Southern Baptists are committed to every form of proclamation: personal evangelism, lifestyle witnessing, evangelism, and missions.

However, both local church experience and Southern Baptist Convention statistics warn that some among us are moving rapidly away from the practice of Biblical evangelism.

In 1980, we had to baptize 2.6 persons to gain one resident church member; in 1989 we had to baptize 19.8 persons to gain one resident member.

In 1989, for the first time in our history, the number of resident active members was fewer than the number of inactive members (49.8 percent resident active; 29.9 percent non-resident inactive; 20.3 percent resident inactive).

Non-resident inactive members are those who move away from one church and fail to join another. Resident inactive are those who live within the area of their member church, but have not attended in over a year.

Some of those inactive were redeemed and can be reclaimed, although it is a reasonable assumption that some of them never were redeemed.

The facts indicate that we are in

practice (though not in theory) giving up our deep historic commitment that the church is made up only of the redeemed. This reality puts pressure on churches to move away from congregational government because, the reasoning goes, unredeemed people have no idea how to seek the mind of Christ.

Also, in many churches, new members are not nurtured systematically toward maturity. Worship attendance alone will not produce mature believers.

The pressures produced by the inclusion of unredeemed persons into Baptist churches along with the babes in Christ who do not grow toward maturity cause churches to take action. Unfortunately, one of those actions is the pragmatic solution of taking decision-making power away from church members.

The problem is real and cannot be ignored. Some action must be taken. But the solution ought not be rejection of the Biblical interpretation long held by Baptist churches, which is a fierce commitment to congregational church government. The reasons for our commitment are of crucial importance if Baptists are to remain Baptist.

Baptists must then correct the way they witness and disciple new Chris-

tians in Biblical ways.

We must avoid any tendency to slow down in our evangelistic efforts. We must lead lost persons to repent and to confess Christ as Lord as well as Savior as part of the salvation process. We must not sell the Gospel message cheaply.

The best magnifying glass by which to examine our witnessing methods is the lordship of Christ. How clearly do our evangelistic methods challenge lost persons to accept Christ?

In our zeal for souls, we have not emphasized repentance and Christ's lordship enough. The result of undisciplined evangelism is a superficial understanding of why Christ died and what he expects.

It is human-centered rather than Christ-centered evangelism. It is the type of evangelism which fills our churches with persons who have no idea what the church is to be and do.

With this sort of evangelism, those who are saved struggle with the terrible burdens of living in their own strength, misunderstanding their mission and that of the church, not knowing how to grow in Christ and seeking solutions in various types of second blessings.

It will be helpful to refocus on the Biblical meaning of redemption. We do not win persons to Christ only to keep them out of hell. While that result is greatly significant, the purpose of salvation is to restore lost persons to the possibility of becoming what God intended us to be when He created us.

God created humankind to glorify Him and have fellowship with Him. These purposes cannot be fulfilled if salvation is seen as an end in itself rather than the beginning of a new kind of life and relationship. That new life is focused on the lordship of Christ and is not possible without it.

That new life, moreover, is not one of bland sameness for every believer. Christ's lordship is tailor-made for each one who accepts Him as Lord. The word transformed in Romans 12:2 is from the Greek word, metamorphoo, from which we get metamorphosis.

People do not know by instinct that they should yield to Christ as Lord; they must be told at the point of decision. If we practice this disciplined manner of evangelizing, we will gradually correct the perilous trend toward which the statistics indicate we are moving.

The 1991 Baptist Doctrine Study textbook, "The Doctrine of Lordship," will help your church deal in depth with this crucial issue. Baptist Doctrine Study, sponsored by the Discipleship Training Department of the Sunday School Board, will be observed April 22-26 in many churches.

William H. Stephens is curriculum development coordinator in the Sunday School Board's Discipleship Training Department and co-author with Robert Hamblin of *The Doctrine of Lordship* published by Convention Press and available from Baptist Book Stores or by calling 1-800-458-BSSB.

Church secretaries conference scheduled

The annual Tennessee Baptist Convention Church Secretaries' Conference will be April 8-10 at the Baptist Center, Brentwood.

The program will include the Personal Enrichment Program, a certification seminar for denominational and church secretaries, led by Donna Gandy, consultant, Church Administration Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

Conferences to be offered include "Newsletters and Bulletins," "Associational Secretary," "Financial Secretary," "How to Write Work Procedures and Job Description," "Secretaries' Salaries and Benefits," "How to Deal with Transients and Families in Crisis," "Improving Grammatical Skills," "Improving Listening Skills, and "Job/Self Improvement."

Registration begins Monday at noon and ends Wednesday at noon. More information is available from the Tennessee Baptist Convention Discipleship Training Department, (615) 371-2053.

Sweetwater builds in Brazil

MADISONVILLE — Twenty-three Baptists from nine Sweetwater Association churches completed construction of two chapels earlier this year in the Campinas area of Brazil.

Sweetwater churches first became involved with missions in Brazil in 1984 when volunteers were enlisted by the Foreign Mission Board to spearhead a city-wide evangelistic effort in Campinas.

According to Director of Missions Bennie Creel, "we've been doing volunteer missions there ever since."

In the seven intervening years, volunteers from Sweetwater Association have funded and constructed nine chapels across Brazil. "It has been very good hands-on experience for our people," Creel adds.

This year the 23 Baptists from Sweetwater churches and one volunteer from Friendship Church in Loudon County Association built two chapels and held several revivals in the Nova Beneza area.

In a ten-day period, the group split into two teams. One team worked in

the Mothon community and built a chapel. The second team constructed a chapel in the Dic 1 community.

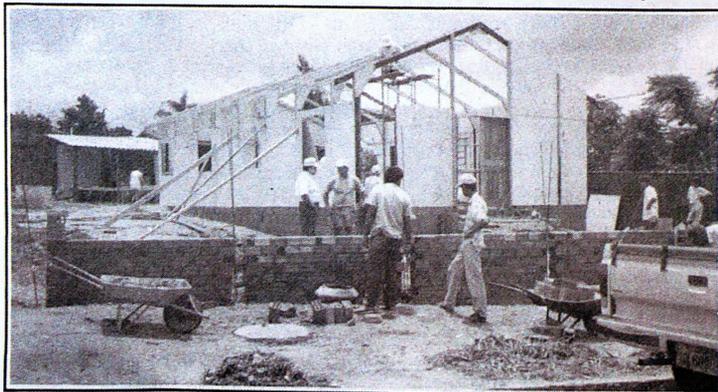
In both instances, construction work was followed by evangelistic efforts. Each group split into three evangelistic teams and held two services in three different churches.

There were 97 first-time decisions for Christ, and several cases of what Brazilians call reconciliation, plus many rededicated lives.

"The missions to Brazil have helped many of our people see firsthand where some Cooperative Program dollars are spent. This is translated into some growth in Cooperative Program giving in our association.

"We still have a long way to go," Creel added, "and we are working on it."

Sweetwater churches represented by volunteers this trip include Reed Springs, North Sweetwater, Vonore First, Cedar Valley, Island Creek, Fairview Tabernacle, Madisonville First, Cedar Fork, and Notchey Creek.



SWEETWATER VOLUNTEERS — Construction is underway on a chapel for Baptists in Dic 1, Nova Beneza area of Brazil, above.

TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

Let's celebrate! Last year was a year of growth for Tennessee Baptist churches. Baptisms were up! Sunday School was up! Discipleship Training was up!

Brotherhood was up! Church Music enrollment was up! Mission giving was up! The number of Church Media/Library Centers was up! We have more new missions! The Lord has blessed so we should bless Him. I see all of this as an evidence that God is at work among us.

Your Tennessee Baptist Executive Board staff made a contribution to this growth. They are to be saluted for a year of hard work. They made this contribution even though they were working with less than a full budget. They have risen to the challenge of do-

ing more with less.

What about this current year? We are encouraged. Wherever our staff travels across the state, they find the Lord at work among the churches.

There is one concern, however. We are concerned about Cooperative Program income. We have been experiencing a "sinking spell." Our studies tell us that this is because churches have had a "sinking spell" in giving. Whenever a Tennessee Baptist neglects to give his or her tithe through their local church, the impact is felt to the end of the earth. Our financial resources to do the work of God in Tennessee and around the world is an extension of what the individual Christian does in worship on Sunday morning.

Team, let's make increased giving a part of our celebration. Why not give a little extra this week simply because you love the Lord. Your church will be blessed and the impact will be felt in many places.



LOWRIE

Best hike in decade

Tennessee baptisms increase by 15 percent in 1990

Baptisms in Tennessee Baptist Convention churches increased by 15 percent in 1990, according to numbers reported by the TBC Evangelism Department. There were 26,065 baptisms reported by the 2970 churches.

Jerry King, evangelism director of the convention also reported that Tennessee had the fifth highest percentage increase among state conventions. In fact, the figures were so close that Tennessee almost ranked third.

King said he was thrilled "at the increase in baptisms." The total marked the best increase for Tennessee Baptists in more than a decade.

"There is no question that 'Here's Hope Revivals' contributed significantly to the increase," King said. "I have heard many positive reports from these revivals.

"We also saw churches and associations report good increases where personal witnessing training was conducted prior to this year."

In total numbers, Bellevue Church of Shelby County Association, baptized 749. Adrian Rogers, three-time Southern Baptist Convention president, is pastor of the 19,000-member church.

Shelby County Association leads the 68 Tennessee Baptist associations with 2979 baptisms from the 123 churches.

Fayette Association, where B. F. McIlwain is director of missions, leads in baptismal ratio per church member - 20.28, or 167 baptisms for the 3418 members of association congregations.

Two associations appear among the top 15 in total baptisms and ratio. Madison-Chester ranks seventh in total

with 791 and eighth in ratio with 23.09. Cumberland Association is tenth with 520 baptisms and seventh in ratio with 23.01.

Ratio of baptisms is the number of church members per each baptism.

Eighteen Tennessee Baptist churches baptized 100 or more. Two Rivers Church of Nashville reported 267 baptisms. Shelby County and Nashville were the two counties with more than 2000 baptisms.

Here's Hope revivals throughout Tennessee, as part of a nationwide Southern Baptist effort, did have impact on evangelism efforts during the year.

Darrell Robinson, vice president in evangelism for the Home Mission Board, says that Southern Baptists need to do much better in evangelization. "Only about 200,000 people each year are baptized from the pagan sector," he said, "and the pagan sector is estimated at more than 170 million people."

Robinson says that Southern Baptists need to ask God "to give us a burden

for the lost in our nation. Our rhetoric and writings will not accomplish the task."

He says that every church must raise its level of evangelism efficiency and commit to winning people to Christ daily.

Looking at the results of the revivals, Richard Harris says, "If we can reprioritize evangelism as an overflow of Here's Hope, that would be the greatest contribution beyond the people who were saved."

Harris is director of the mass evangelism department, HMB. Both men were speaking in the board's annual report, which also pointed out that

Greenhills Church, Collierville, "surpassed its goal of 25 professions of faith by recording 171 commitments" during Here's Hope revival emphasis.

Robinson called for churches to approach evangelism as a continuous process rather than a single event or method. He cited the need for ongoing equipping and discipling.

King said the local churches in Tennessee placed high priority on evangelism. "I deeply appreciate the local churches who worked hard and made a conscientious effort to give evangelism priority during the year," he said. "I believe our Tennessee churches will do the same this year."

McGregor to head new press service

NASHVILLE - Don McGregor, former editor of the Baptist Record with 40 years of experience in journalism, has been elected executive director of Associated Baptist Press.

ABP, an autonomous news service not structurally related to any Baptist entity, is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 15 Southern Baptists from across the nation.

McGregor, who retired last year from the editorship of the Mississippi state Baptist paper, was the unanimous choice of the Board. Immediately before his service in Mississippi, McGregor was editor of community newspapers in Texas. He joined the staff of the Texas Baptist Standard in 1952 and became associate editor in 1960. Later he was editor of the California Southern Baptist before

returning to his native Texas. "We feel so fortunate to have a man of McGregor's experience and commitment to head up ABP," Charles Overby, chairman of the Board, said immediately following McGregor's election.

"He brings to the task all of the insight and ability gained from his long service in Baptist journalism," Overby added.

ABP was chartered in July 1990 and launched in September. It has operated up to this point with a consulting firm and temporary reporters and writers.

Overby and McGregor will seek to employ an executive editor and editorial assistant on a full-time basis. Central operations for ABP will continue to be located in Nashville.

Youth evangelism — 1992
According to the Evangelism Department, Tennessee Baptist Convention, the 1992 Youth Evangelism Conference is scheduled for March 13-14 in the gymnasium, of Vanderbilt University Nashville.
Youth leaders for Tennessee Baptist churches are urged to put these dates on the 1992 calendar.

1989-90 Top 50 Churches in Baptisms

Church	Baptisms	Association	Pastor
1 Bellevue	749	Shelby County	Adrian Rogers
2 Two Rivers	267	Nashville	Jerry Sutton
3 First, Hendersonville	161	Nashville	Glenn Weekley
4 First, Clarksville	157	Cumberland	Dennis Newkirk
5 Woodland	153	Madison-Chester	Boh Ervin
6 Central, Hixson	152	Hamilton	Ron Phillips
7 Leawood	139	Shelby County	Jerry Glisson
8 First, Millington	132	Shelby County	Ray Newcomb
9 Woodmont	131	Nashville	Bill Sherman
10 Calvary, Oak Ridge	121	Clinton	Steve McDonald
11 Germantown	110	Shelby County	Ken Story
12 Hilldale	107	Cumberland	Verlon Moore
12 Beaver Dam	107	Knox County	Terry Taylor
14 Central, Chattanooga	106	Hamilton	Charles McAister
14 Sevier Heights	106	Knox County	Hollie Miller
16 Park Avenue	102	Nashville	Robert Mowrey
17 Chamberlain Memorial	101	Hamilton	Don Long
18 Westwood	100	Bradley	Bob Bell
18 Ridgeway	100	Shelby County	William A. Smith
20 Kirby Woods	94	Shelby County	Robert C. Pitman
21 First, Mt. Juliet	92	Wilson	Billie Friel
22 South Clinton	91	Clinton	Ronnie Owens
22 Grace	91	Knox County	Ronald Stewart
22 First, Collierville	91	Shelby County	Gary Watkins
25 Dotson Memorial	90	Chilhowee	Morris Anderson
25 First, Lenoir City	90	Loudon County	Charles Sullivan
27 Central, Bearden	89	Knox County	Larry Fields
27 Bartlett	89	Shelby County	Jackie Kay
29 Rayon City	88	Nashville	Terry Wilkerson
30 First, Hixson	79	Hamilton	Joel Wood
30 First, Dickson	79	Nashville	Donald B. McCoy
32 Bayside	75	Hamilton	Bob Stitts
33 Tulip Grove	74	Nashville	Kenneth Clayton
34 Broadmoor	71	Shelby County	Larry Gilmore
35 College Heights	70	Bledsoe	Ross Maroney
36 Stones River	67	Concord	Paul Durham
37 Radnor	66	Nashville	Don Owens
37 Immanuel	66	Wilson	Tim Floyd
39 First, Columbia	65	Nashville	Richard White
39 First, Franklin	65	Maury	Gene Mims
41 First, Cleveland	64	Nashville	Richard Emmert
41 Manley	64	Bradley	Doug Westmoreland
43 Tusculum Hills	61	Nashville	Bob Burch
44 Calvary	60	Knox County	Lawrence Burks
44 First, Goodlettsville	60	Nashville	Doyle Hayes
46 Scenic Drive	58	Concord	Bill Irvin
46 Lucy	58	Shelby County	Randy Wheeler
48 First, Bemis	54	Madison-Chester	Chilhowee
49 First, Seymour	53	Chilhowee	Ken Hubbard
49 First, Smyrna	53	Concord	Walter Davis
49 Parkway	53	Knox County	Don Whitt
52 First, Milan	52	Gibson County	Earl Davis
52 First, Memphis	52	Shelby County	

Top 15 Associations in Total Baptisms

Association	Baptisms	Director of Missions
1. Shelby County	2979	John McBride
2. Nashville	2539	Carl Duck
3. Knox County	1816	Walter Taylor
4. Hamilton County	1286	David Myers
5. Holston	971	Tal Thompson
6. Chilhowee	892	John Churchman
7. Madison-Chester	791	Herbert Higdon
8. Clinton	573	Michael Pearson
9. Concord	528	James Powers
10. Cumberland	520	Wesley Pitts
11. McMinn-Meigs	491	Ray Fowler
12. Bradley County	487	Raleigh Brady
13. Gibson County	440	Kenneth Sparkman
14. Sweetwater	432	Bennie Creel
15. Nolachucky	405	James Williams

Top 15 Associations — Baptismal Ratio

Association	Baptisms	Membership	Ratio	Director of Missions
1. Fayette	167	3418	20.46	B. F. McIlwain
2. Alpha	104	2149	20.66	Glenn Hester
3. Indian Creek	110	2335	21.22	David Miller
4. Shiloh	380	8104	21.32	John Pippin
5. Beech River	269	5763	21.42	Doyle Neal
6. Maury	225	4975	22.11	Elmer Crosby
7. Cumberland	520	11,967	23.01	Wesley Pitts
8. Madison-Chester	791	18,271	23.09	Herbert Higdon
9. Big Hatchie	301	7145	23.73	Ira Perkins
10. Hardeman County	230	5475	23.80	Deryl Watson
11. Haywood	122	2916	23.90	Charles Pratt
12. Truett	115	2770	24.08	J. D. Rains
13. Bledsoe	303	7357	24.28	J. C. Lewis Sr.
14. Weakley County	320	7815	24.42	Richard Skidmore
15. Central	167	4260	25.50	Ralph Hoover

Nashvillian revives church's Sunday School program

The first thing Barbara Love did when she was asked in 1989 to become Sunday School director for Nashville's Grandview Church was "get excited."

"I was shocked when they asked me, but I thought 'I can read. I can do what a book says,'" she remembered.

Love, a staff assistant in the Sunday School preschool/children's department at the Sunday School Board, knew where to go for help. She read every book on Sunday School growth she could find and realized she needed a plan.

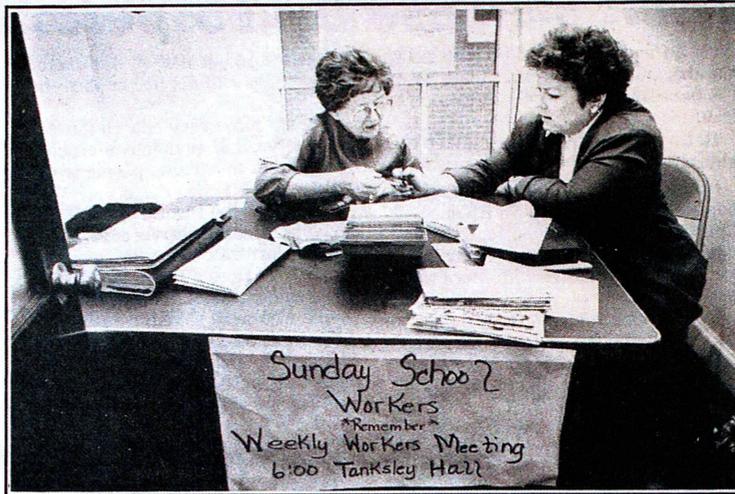
Research of church records showed a steady decline in Sunday School attendance. Immediate stabilization was needed.

This was not the first time she had worked with her husband, Jess, pastor of the church. She served as church secretary during their first two years at Grandview beginning in 1982.

As Barbara Love discussed ideas with Jess, she concluded that church volunteer workers needed training.

"I made sure every director had a book on growth for their division and encouraged their workers to read it," she explained.

Then she promoted associational and regional training conferences and found her workers beginning to share



NASHVILLIAN — Barbara Love, right, works with Sunday School secretary, Hazel Kirby, carefully counting attendance records at Grandview Church.

in her enthusiasm. Two new adult classes were formed and some teachers had opportunity to attend conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

"They came back excited and now are out visiting every week," Love said.

Over one-half of Grandview's 37 Sunday School workers have attended some kind of leadership training workshop.

"I received motivation," said Sue Lewis, Grandview's Adult 2 Sunday School outreach director. "It's great to hear somebody tell what's happening

in different churches. I learned that the impression people get when they first come to church is what gets them to stay or turns them away."

Following the plans outlined in Sunday School Leadership magazine, Love developed monthly Sunday School council meetings giving department directors the chance to communicate and learn from each other. Adult workers have also started weekly planning meetings.

"People need to talk through their ideas, share their successes, and understand that they have the same struggles," Love said.

The first annual Sunday School planning meeting produced immediate results. During a dream session, preschool workers reported needs for games, puzzles, and toys. Leaders poured over materials catalogues and had a churchwide "preschool shower."

Departments and classes also changed classrooms allowing for growth space.

Grandview's Sunday School enrollment increased 14 percent, from 200 to 230, during 1989-90 — Love's first year as director. She hopes to continue that increase with the same excitement she found when she accepted the job. — *Ginny Whitehouse*

Dunn addresses religious liberty at UT — Chattanooga

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)— Those who see the First Amendment's religion guarantees as the exclusive product of either religionists or rationalists have missed part of the picture, according to a Baptist spokesman on church-state issues.

"It took the combined and collective strength of the rationalists and the radical religionists to produce in the context of the American revolution the religious freedom guarantees of the Constitution and the First Amendment," Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn told an audience at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

"Many of today's church-state conflicts might be diminished with a more complete understanding on the beginnings of church-state separation," he said.

Addressing a colloquium on the Bill of Rights sponsored by the University Honors Program, Dunn highlighted the contributions of four key figures — Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Leland — to the emergence of the Bill of Rights, particularly the First Amendment

religion protections.

Williams "is disproportionately important because he first challenged the old world patterns of toleration, theocracy, church-states, and state-churches," Dunn said. "He died poor and rejected, nothing much to show for his labors . . . except the American experiment of religious liberty and the most vital churches in the world."

Jefferson "initiated intellectually the chain of legislation that led to the First Amendment and through agitation for it to the Bill of Rights," Dunn said.

Madison, author of the Bill of Rights, institutionalized religious liberty, Dunn said.

Leland and other religionists supplied the popular support and public demand for the Bill of Rights, he added.

"The Enlightenment leaders teamed up with frontier preachers of a liberating religion," Dunn said.

"Together they brought about the first nation on the face of the earth with real religious freedom, full religious

freedom for all, even those who are not religious."

Dunn criticized those who seek to interpret the meaning of the First Amendment without listening to the words and music of both the religionists and the rationalists.

He challenged the view held by some, including Chief Justice William Rehnquist of the U.S. Supreme Court, that First Amendment bans only the establishment of a national church and governmental preference for one religion over another.

"That view was, indeed, one of the views held by some of the founders," Dunn said. "It is specifically the approach that was rejected."

The Supreme Court, history, and common sense "consistently contend

that the establishment clause embraces much broader restraints on government than these simple prohibitions, he said.

"The record of the Senate debates over the approval of the First Amendment eloquently refutes all claims that a sort of preferential establishment was all the amendment was intended to prohibit."

Dunn said some American religionists "see the First Amendment as one-way street designed only to protect religion from the state. These revisers hold that the Bill of Rights restricts and limits only the government."

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Ordinations ...

Ninth Street Church, Erwin, ordained John McFadden as a deacon.

Howard Sparks was ordained by Pinecrest Church, Johnson City, as a deacon.

First Church, Lexington, ordained Russell Hayes to the deacon ministry.

Five deacons were ordained by Inglewood Church, Nashville, March 3. They were George Daniel, Mark Bourque, Chuck Bobbitt, Donald Hornbuckle, and Alvin Preston.

Kevin Casey, Bill Johnson, W.V. Roberson, and Ralph Vanderburg were ordained by First Church, Soddy-Daisy, as deacons.

Leadership ...

First Church, Soddy-Daisy, has called Tom Magee as minister of music and administration. He is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

Clear Branch Church, Lake City, has called George Delozier as interim pastor.

The new interim pastor of Fairview Church, Oakridge, is Larry Webster.

Edd Roberts is now serving First Church, Oliver Springs, as youth minister.

The new minister of music and youth at Robertsville Church, Oak Ridge, is Windell Woods.

On March 10 Herschel Spivey, minister of music and education, Memorial Church, Hixson, celebrated his tenth anniversary. During part of his service at the church he also was minister of youth.

Bob Elliot, vice president of business affairs, Union University, Jackson, is interim pastor of First Church, Savannah.

Churches ...

During 1991 First Church, Selmer, is celebrating its centennial. Monthly special programs are being held.

The first Acteen Recognition Service of Mount Hermon Church, Henrietta, was March 2. Those honored were Cindy Claybaugh and Cristy Demonbreum, both of whom achieved recognition as queens. Jonell Nicholson is Acteen leader.

Open Door Chapel, Dickson, is a new congregation. It is located at 115 N. Main Street and the pastor is John L. Miller.

Parkway Village Church, Memphis, will premiere the 1991 edition of the Baptist Hymnal, in a April 28 Hymnal Dedication Service led by Julian Suggs, Tennessee Baptist Convention Church Music Department Director. The hymnals, including 515 pew editions, 16 orchestra editions, and eight handbell editions, were bought with individual gifts, reported Minister of Music Allen Cade.

Revivals ...

Pleasant Hill No. 1 Church, Martin, is holding a spring revival March 10-14. Gene Mims, pastor, First Church, Cleveland, is the evangelist and John Fairless, Temple Church, White House, is leading the music.

Johnny Hunt will lead the March 18-21 spring revival of Central Church, Chattanooga. The Griffin family will serve as musicians for the event.

Spiritual awakening messages by Grant Adkisson of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, will be the focus of the March 24-27 revival at Trinity Church, Brighton.

Drama/puppetry/clowning festivals set

Three regional drama/puppetry/clowning festivals will be held across the state in April.

The East Tennessee Festival will be April 12-13 at Central Church, Bearden, Knoxville; West Tennessee Festival on April 19-20 at Germantown Church, Germantown; and Middle Tennessee Festival, April 26-27, Two Rivers Church, Nashville.

Leading all three of the festivals are Cindy Pelphrey, director, "Love Indeed Ministry," Jackson, Miss., and entertainers Tom Toombs and Brad Goad, both of Nashville.

The meetings begin Friday at 4 p.m. with registration and a book store ex-



\$6000 GIFT — Roy Davis, left, director of missions, Cumberland Plateau Association, presents Cliff Gibson, pastor, Cumberland View Church, Crossville, a grant of \$6000 from the Tennessee Baptist Convention for a building.

Adams Chapel Church, Dresden, will hold revival March 17-22. The evangelist is Donald Doster.

Director of Missions Richard Skidmore, Weakley County Association, is scheduled as the guest speaker for the April 17-21 revival at Gearin's Chapel Church, Greenfield.

Revival services beginning April 7 will be held at Union Grove Church, McKenzie. Greg Hill is the evangelist.

Salem Association reported the following revivals: Indian Creek Memorial Church, Smithville, March 17-24, led by James Gibbs; West Main Church, Alexandria, March 31 to April 5, led by Billy Hines of Tennessee Bap-

tist Convention Evangelism Department.

Churches planning revivals in Wilson County Association include: First Church, Mount Juliet, March 17-20, evangelist Junior Hill; Silver Springs Church, Mount Juliet, March 24-26, Terry Wilkerson; Ramah Church, Watertown, March 27-31, John Evans; Immanuel Church, Lebanon, March 31 to April 3, Rick White.

Revivals scheduled in Cumberland Association include Alva Church, Southside, beginning March 24, evangelist Bobby Kail, pastor, Crossland Avenue Church, Clarksville; and Victory Church, Clarksville, March 24-31, Luther Martin of Lexington, Ky.

Beech River Association revivals: First Church, Decaturville, March 24-29, evangelist Hugh Callens, Memphis; Huron Church, Huron, March 29-31, Maurice Hays; Mount Gilead Church, Cedar Grove, March 31 to April 5, Bob Copeland; and a youth revival at Twin Oaks Church, Cedar Grove, March 17-22, Skip Arnhart, Milan.

The spring revival at Highland Church, Lawrenceburg, will be March 17-20. Will Davis, pastor, Springdale Church, Fort Worth, Texas, and Greg Crane, minister of music, First Church, Columbia, will lead the meeting. Also "The Watchmen," a men's quartet, will sing on March 18.

Revivals planned in Gibson County Association: Avondale Church, Humboldt, March 24-29, evangelist Greg McFadden; China Grove Church, Rutherford, March 13-15, Greg McFadden; First Church, Humboldt, March 17-20, Bob Hamblin; Halem Church, Trenton March 17-22, W. B. Oakley.

Kenny Carr will lead revival March 17-20 at Cottage Grove Church, Cottage Grove. Larry Conger will lead music.

Student assists handicapped peer

Jim Shannon is an unusual student. The Hendersonvillian is working toward a degree at Volunteer State Community College, Gallatin — with a 4.0 grade point average as a freshman.

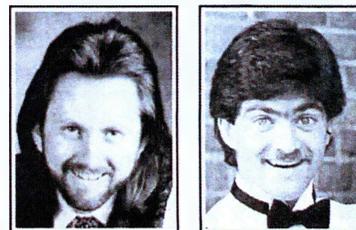
Shannon is crippled by cerebral palsy and makes his way around the campus with a motorized wheelchair. But Rosetta Howard is an unusual student too. She is never far from Shannon while he's at school. A member of First Church, Gallatin, she is a sophomore who spends about 25 hours a week with Shannon. She occasionally helps him at home.

Howard helps Shannon get from class to class. He rests between classes in the college nurse's office. Howard began work with Shannon when she answered a newspaper ad expressing his needs.

She takes notes for him and assists with his research and meals. Shannon uses a voice synthesizer to talk.

Howard says her friend is happy and "smiles a lot." "He really is a wonderful person," she said. She communicates with him through hand signals and the computer.

Rosetta Howard is president of the Baptist Student Union at Vol State, and plans to serve as a BSU summer missionary this year in Gatlinburg.



GOAD

TOOMBS

hibit. They end at 3:30 on Saturday. Numerous conferences will be offered. In the drama area conferences include "Costume Construction," "Basic Directing Skills," "Scenery Construction," and "The Nuts and Bolts of Pageantry."

Puppetry training covers four levels — beginning team, beginning director, advanced team, and advanced director. One conference will direct participants is using black-light and shadow puppetry, full-bodied puppets, rod puppets, and marionettes. Another will explore new product/equipment designs in staging, sound, and puppets.

Clowning conferences include "Street Evangelism," "Clowning in Worship," "Balloon Sculpture."

At the Knoxville festival conferences on recreation also will be provided. Registration is \$25 if received by March 15 or \$30. For further information, contact Eleanor Yarborough, director, Church Recreation Program, Tennessee Baptist Convention, at 371-2033.

Funnyside up

I was pastoring in a small town of about 1200 folks after graduating from seminary. I had a lot of stored-up knowledge to dispose of. On the Sunday before the Fourth of July, I preached a rip-roaring sermon with strong patriotic overtones.

Several people joined the church that morning. My six-year-old son went down the line of new members, shaking their hands vigorously and saying, "God bless you in the name of the United States of America!"

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



Recreation ministry needs clear purpose: ministry leader

ESTES PARK, Colo. (BP)— A church recreation program that spins out of control and becomes nothing more than fun and games can devastate a ministry beyond the point of repair, a recreation leader said.

Recreation ministers who are not confident of their purpose and mission as a support program of the church cannot adequately meet the needs church recreation was designed for, said John Garner, field services coordinator for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation department.

"In keeping recreation a ministry, you cannot lead others to be in tune unless you are," Garner told church recreation ministers attending Rec Lab at Estes Park YMCA Center in Estes Park, Colo.

"A ministry out of control will absolutely eat your lunch; the games will take control unless you know your purpose," Garner said. Once you lose the ministry aspect of your program, it is a real struggle to pull it back," he added.

Church recreation is not overtly religious in nature and "because of that it tends, without focus or direction, to take its own direction," Garner said. "It is so important that churches with rec ministries know what they want to do with them and where they

want to go with them."

To keep recreation in line with theology, churches must employ a key person who is responsible for knowing the ministry aspect of the program, Garner said.

"Some churches just throw up a gym and say, 'Ya'll come.' They fail to get anyone to do the programming or training or to design a creative recreation ministry," he said.

Keeping recreation a ministry, Garner said, involves a lot of research, some kind of proper program organization and the support of the pastor, the staff, and the church.

The pastor especially needs to understand what an effective support church recreation can be to many church program areas.

For example, Garner said, church recreation is used to support Sunday School by providing outlets of fellowship and sports for outreach.

It can support the music program by offering helps and aids in drama and pageant production, all under the auspices of church recreation.

The camping, day camping, hiking, and sports aspects of recreation are "extremely effective" for missions projects, he said.

Another means of keeping recreation a ministry, Garner said, is for the recreation minister to see himself or herself as a "true minister of the Gospel."

Garner also suggested that recreation ministers "dress appropriately for worship services or special events.

"When you go to the church, don't go in gym shorts, but dress in what is acceptable for other ministers," he said.

He also suggested make hospital visits or preach when the occasion arises.

"Round out your ministry with traditional ministry roles," he said. "As that happens, the church will begin to see you as ministers with validity."

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Church recreation ministers should receive as much outside training as possible and be prepared with a program, Garner said. They should know God, know themselves, love their people, and know and believe in their work as a ministry.

"A valid church recreation program is sweat and hard work," Garner said. "It takes blood, sweat, and tears for people to see you as a viable ministry."

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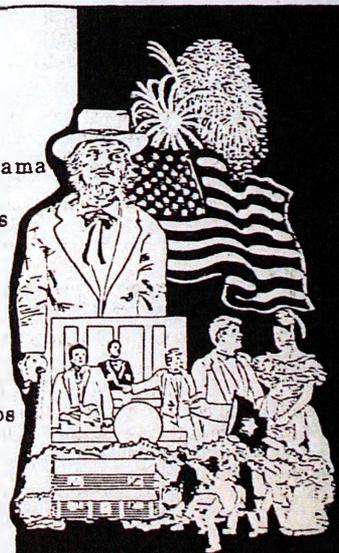
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Jesus unjustly condemned

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

We have considered the agony in Gethsemane, the arrest of Jesus, and when He was taken to the high priest's house in the middle of the night. The people hated Jesus so much they ignored the Jewish law stating no one could be tried at night. Their aim was to seek condemnation and destruction of Jesus.

Treatment of Jesus by the mob (22:63-65)

A mob scene developed when Jesus was taken by His accusers. They began to mock Him and beat Him. They blindfolded Him, struck Him, and demanded that He prophesy as to who struck Him. All the while they spoke blasphemously of Him.

Truly it was their hour and the tyrann-



NEWCOMB

ny of darkness. Unrestrained evil broke loose as it heaped insults upon the Son of God.

BIBLE BOOK
March 17 Lesson
 Basic Passage: Luke 22:63 - 23:25

Trial by the Jewish Council (22:66-71)
 They had declared Jesus worthy of death before dawn. To make it legal, the Sanhedrin assembled again as soon as it was day.

"If thou art the Christ, tell us," they said. He had already admitted His Messianic role. Refusing to use the word again, He said, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." Jesus added, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."

In His statement, Jesus said four things. In the title "Son of man," He admitted to being the Messiah. He also

claimed equality with God. He implied that even though they would kill Him He would live on in power and glory. Finally, He said that even though He awaited their judgment the time was coming when He would be the judge as they stood before Him.

The Sanhedrin caught all four. "Art thou then the Son of God?" This was a sum of all four points Jesus stated. Jesus simply replied, "Ye say that I am." He made them admit His identity before they formally found Him guilty. They condemned Him by the words "of His own mouth."

Trial by Pilate to release Jesus (23:13-16)

Poor Pilate! Jesus appeared before him in verses 1-5. Pilate sent Him to Herod and then Herod sent Him back to Pilate. In a further effort to get rid of Jesus, Pilate called together the Jewish rulers and the people. They had accused Jesus of sedition. Pilate examined Him and found no fault in Him. Pilate proposed to chastise Jesus

and release Him. A prisoner was to be released at the feast of Passover. Pilate had in mind to release Jesus after whipping Him.

Tempting of Pilate fails (23:18-25)
 Pilate's suggestion of releasing Jesus was answered by the cry of the people, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabas." Barabas was an insurrectionist and murderer.

Again Pilate spoke of willingness to release Jesus, but the crowd cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Still trying, Pilate reavowed Jesus' innocence. An urgent cry went up requiring that He be crucified.

Pilate did not dare resist this Jewish mob. They pushed him into submitting to their demand. So Pilate pronounced the final sentence that Jesus should be crucified.

"And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will."

Guidance about marriage

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

This portion of Scripture is Paul's answers to questions raised by leaders in the Corinthian church.

We must remember they were newly converted from paganism living in a city known for its immorality. They had little Biblical help in dealing with the issues facing them.

Singleness has its place (So much emphasis is put on the life

of the family in our churches we often overlook families that consist of one person. Only in recent years has the church begun to discover singleness as an option which is pleasing to God.

What Paul has to say about singleness, however, must be couched in the setting of the end-times in which the believers thought they were living. In light of the soon return of the Lord, Paul thought it better to remain single to devote himself completely to the



NAIL

service of God.

Marriage has its place

His reluctant acceptance of marriage as an option seems to put marriage on the level of a weakness of human flesh which may be allowed for those who can't contain themselves. It seems Paul didn't know much about marriage. But all of Paul's writing about marriage must be taken into account to avoid such an understanding.

Within marriage the Scriptures teach the man and the woman are committed solely to each other for the rest of their lives.

Sexual intimacy in marriage

Over the years I have served as a pastor, I have known many couples who used sexual intimacy as a reward for good behavior on the part of the mate. Such sexual "favors" were given or withheld based on the whim of one partner, or used as a tool to get one's way.

What a disgrace to treat a gift of God to the couple as a possession of one of the partners in the marriage! Sexual intimacy within marriage is not

a bargaining tool. Rather, it is a means of expressing trust and commitment which are a vital part of the marriage union.

Abstinence is a decision to be made by the couple as a unit, not by an individual. Such abstinence is especially blessed if it is for the purpose of setting aside special time for drawing nearer to God.

By permission and not commandment
 Most scholars agree that Paul was treating a subject not directly addressed by Jesus. He believes himself, however, to be speaking the mind of Christ.

I have wondered if the statement may mean something very different. Perhaps Paul was stating that this subject was not addressed in the letter, but he thought it needed to be said anyway.

Marriage with an unbeliever

Some of the dearest saints I know are married to persons who have never trusted Christ as their Savior. Many of these folks have a hard time seeking to live a Christian witness to their mate without being too pushy.

Several years ago I was a member

of a church made up of mostly military personnel. After having been there for a few weeks I recalled hearing at each prayer meeting the same woman make the same prayer request, simply, "Pray for Jim."

This went on for at least two years. I wasn't quite sure what she was praying for on Jim's behalf; but I joined the others in dutifully praying for Jim.

CONVENTION UNIFORM
March 17 Lesson
 Basic Passage: 1 Corinthians 7:1-40

Then on one ordinary Sunday morning, Jim came forward during the invitation hymn to profess faith in Christ. The woman who had been requesting prayer was his wife. On that morning there was a glow about her that spoke of the presence of God.

She had been married to this wicked man for almost 20 years. She had been abused on occasion for her commitment to Christ. But "she was pleased to dwell with him." By so doing her living faith eventually won the day. Her life truly sanctified his life and brought him to faith.

God's Son denied

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

We have not been challenged to confess "Jesus is Lord" at gunpoint, but are we committed to confess it if that day comes? More times than we care to admit we deny Christ without so much as a threat. Peter's denial is representative of us all.

Peter wanted to follow Christ anywhere (ch. 13:37). He did not understand what Jesus had been saying for six months about going away, dying, and being raised again.

Perhaps it began to dawn on Peter that Jesus was actually going to die. He asked the big question, "Why not Lord? I want to be with you anywhere you go." If only we would desire to



COMPTON

follow Jesus as much as Peter did.

Peter was willing to follow Christ no matter what. He was willing to die for Christ's sake (v. 37). There was no reason to doubt him. Peter had left the income of a good fishing business, the affection of his wife, and the shelter of his house to be with Jesus. He had already decided he was willing to lay down his life for Jesus. He was a man whose spirit was willing, but his flesh was weak (Matt. 26:41).

Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. He was unaware of his weakness until Jesus said, "The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (v. 38). Something about Peter's boast was definitely wrong. Jesus put him in his place.

Peter was willing to follow Christ where others would not dare follow (ch. 18:15). The other disciple who followed Jesus to the high priest's

palace with Peter was most likely John, who was somehow acquainted with the palace and people (v. 16). Where were the other ten apostles? Peter wanted to be with Jesus so much he drew his sword and cut off the ear of a soldier to help protect Jesus. No other disciple stood between Jesus and the guards. Matthew 26:56 said at this time "all the disciples forsook Him and fled." They did not even follow Jesus to the high priest's home like Peter did. If we are not faithful to the Lord in the little things of life, then we won't be faithful to the Lord when the big challenges face us.

LIFE AND WORK
March 17 Lesson
 Basic Passage: John 13:36-38; 18

Peter was doing well until he "stood with them" (v. 18). It is dangerous to want to be just one of the crowd. When we want to be like other people more than we want to be like Jesus we will certainly deny our Lord.

Three times Peter denied Jesus. First, to a servant girl at the gate who asked Peter, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" and he said, "I am not." The second time he denied it to the entire group who inquired, "Art thou also one of His disciples?" Again he said, "I am not." The third time he denied Christ to another servant, the kinsman of the one whose ear Peter cut off. Three times Peter did what he was committed to not doing. Like Peter, when we fail to take a stand for Christ, we compromise our testimony.

Peter came to himself when the cock crowed. He remembered what the Lord had said. He was heartbroken and wept bitterly. Peter wept over his sin, repented, and went on to serve the Lord in a mighty way. Judas admitted his sin, but did not repent and became of no use to the Kingdom of God.

We also deny our Lord by failing to pray, witness, tithe, or obey His will. May we be as brokenhearted before God as Peter was. If there is no real repentance, there is no forgiveness and no change.

Soldiers sought God before ground battle: chaplain

By Frank Wm. White

NORTHERN SAUDI ARABIA (BP)— Had he been given a choice, Dennis Whitaker would have elected to be right where the United States Army had placed him on Feb. 24, in the Saudi Arabian desert as the ground war with Iraq began.

As a lieutenant colonel and Southern Baptist chaplain with the 11th Aviation Brigade in the U.S. Army's VII Corps, Whitaker was doing what he had known since age 13 that God had called him to do.

Only hours after the ground war began, a shamal blew sand and dust across the nondescript, desolate desert around the canvas Army tent where Whitaker was holding his first of three brief chapel services of the morning.

About 15 soldiers from the aviation brigade sat on wooden benches placed on the sandy floor of the crowded tent in the center of a small compound surrounded by fortifications of concertina wire and sand berms.

Propped against the tent wall was a map with target locations marked in grease pencil. Within a few hours, some of the soldiers present for the chapel service would be guiding a weapon-laden attack helicopter toward the targets on the map.

Whitaker noted an increase in attention to matters of faith in the weeks of preparation before the ground war. And yet attendance at the services on that fateful Sunday morning was lower than usual.

"They (military personnel) had a lot of duty requirements. They're getting ready to go," Whitaker said after the services as he looked around the busy

brigade operations tent, temporarily turned into a makeshift chapel and then returned to its intended purpose as an operations room.

"I don't hold it against them that they were too busy to be at chapel. I'm sure God doesn't either," said the 48-year-old Atlanta, Texas, native.

Whitaker said the soldiers' increased attention to matters of faith was reflected in their mood and conversations.

"They realize they need something more than themselves to face battle. They want to know what God can do for them today," he said.

Whitaker said he appreciated the soldiers' questions and comments about God as an expression of their search for spiritual meaning.

"Any man who is searching for God will find Him. It's the one who isn't looking that concerns me," Whitaker said.

The slight, soft-spoken chaplain said his role is not that of a morale officer or a talisman for good favor.

"I'm their spiritual officer, not their morale officer. As they go out, I wish them God's presence for their comfort, and I pray that each will return," said Whitaker.

At the worship service, Whitaker followed the Scripture text from the

lectionary which many chaplains use as a source for texts. The words from 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 offered words of comfort for the soldiers with a message that God's grace provides that needed power in times of weakness.

Whitaker added a Scripture reading from Psalm 91, a psalm praising God's protection in battle.

Whitaker said his role as an Army chaplain has all of the excitement of ministry with people plus the added benefit of constant presence with his parishioners.

'I'm their spiritual officer, not their morale officer.'

"I'm with them all the time," he said. "I'll be there for them when the choppers land. If needed, I'll be at the hospital to provide comfort for any who are there."

Whitaker said he realized God was calling him to be a military chaplain when, at 13, he read about the chaplaincy profession in Royal Ambassador materials.

"There was no strike of lightning, but it was a clear calling," he said.

Evangelical tells of Romanian struggle

RICHMOND (BP)— Romanians still are struggling for freedom — and with freedom — according to the Evangelical Alliance president of Romania.

"There was a revolution, a lot of things were changed and the process of change is going on," Paul Negrut said. "But not everything is well and good in the country."

The new government has not yet committed itself to full religious freedom, said Negrut, leader of the evangelical coalition formed after the overthrow of communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989. Negrut also is co-pastor of the 4000-member Second Baptist Church of Oradea, the largest Baptist congregation in Europe.

Romanians face an array of social problems stemming from the freedoms gained to date. Freedom has permitted "all kinds of philosophies and cults" to flood the country, along with drugs, immorality, pornography, and guns, Negrut said.

"We need to have a new perspective on what's happening around us, to know who is who and what is what, to have a clear understanding of the different religious groups, philosophies, and social problems that arise with freedom," he said in an interview at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va. The pastor addressed two committees during the agency trustees' Feb. 11-13 meeting.

Abortion, for example, was outlawed under the Ceausescu regime, Negrut noted. Now an abortion can be obtained in Romania for the equivalent of one U.S. dollar. "We need to learn now what is the Biblical perspective on human life," he commented.

Christian leaders also need to be trained in helping young Romanians overcome the lure of pornographic movies and magazines, he said.

The Evangelical Alliance, encompassing Baptist, Pentecostal, Brethren, and Lutheran churches as well as the Greek Orthodox evangelical movement known as the Lord's Army, is at the forefront of the continuing battle for religious freedom in Romania.

A key sore spot is the government ban on radio and TV broadcasting by religious groups, Negrut said.

Under a proposed law on religious affairs, he added, denominations must register with the government — and the government would be able to withdraw its recognition of a religious body. "That means that a denomination can exist only if the state approves," he warned.

And the current draft of a proposed constitution provides for religious freedom — if religious activity does not harm the public order, state security, or the country's moral standards. The state could have great leeway in "checking the activities of the church and approving them," Negrut said.

"That is not religious freedom," he stated. "That is religious control by some state institutions."

"The revolution changed a lot of things, but the structures that were in the society for 45 years have very deep roots and it's very difficult to get rid of them. They still want the power. They still want to come back in one form or another."

Further debates over religious freedom before various government committees lie ahead, Negrut said. Evangelicals are represented on these committees, he said, but they face opposition from others linked to the Greek Orthodox Church.

"The Greek Orthodox Church is not in favor of religious freedom because it was doing very well under the communist regime," the Baptist leader

As the son of a Texas Baptist pastor, Sunday School, and Training Union had a big impact on his life. He was a Sunday School teacher by age 14 and a department director at 16.

"Training Union allowed me to go 'off line' with my peers and probe ways to look at different passages of Scripture," Whitaker recalled.

He graduated from Arlington State University in Arlington, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He then was a pastor of churches in Kansas and Illinois for eight years, meeting Southern Baptist requirements for appointment as a chaplain. His last pastorate was at Calvary Southern Baptist Church in Joliet, Ill.

As Whitaker listened to situation reports from the front lines, he said he would not want to be anywhere else.

"This is an exciting and exhilarating experience because things are happening. There is a great deal of anticipation here," he said.

Frank Wm. White, a news writer in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's office of communications, is a public affairs officer in the Tennessee Army National Guard. He is assigned to the U.S. Army VII Corps in Saudi Arabia. He was with the 11th Aviation Brigade on Feb. 24.

Day family in plane crash

ATLANTA (BP)— The widow of a prominent Baptist missions benefactor survived a plane crash off the coast of southern Chile Feb. 20 which claimed the lives of 19 other passengers.

Deen Day Smith, widow of Cecil B. Day who founded Days Inns of America and who gave millions to support home and foreign missions, was one of 53 passengers who survived a plane crash in the freezing waters at Puerto Williams, on the southern tip of Chile.

Killed in the crash was Dorothy Day, the wife of Lon Day, chairman of the board of Day Realty in Atlanta, who was involved with his brother in founding Days Inns.

Training set on New Age Movement

The New Age Movement is the subject of a two-day workshop on cults at First Church, Murfreesboro, March 21-22. Maurice Smith, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board interfaith consultant, will lead the workshop.

The workshop will present this movement in more detail as well as provide materials for future study and two meals. Participants, limited to 45, are requested to complete both day's sessions. The cost is \$10.

Reservations should be made by March 8 by contacting the Tennessee Baptist Convention Missions Department at P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn. 37024, (615) 373-2255.



NEGRUT

charged.

"It had a very happy relationship with the dictatorship."

Negrut said Orthodox leaders even wrote an open letter backing Ceausescu after his troops shot at and killed demonstrators calling for his overthrow in December 1989.

Orthodox antagonism toward evangelicals is akin to the centuries-old persecution aimed at "those who came to know Christ in a personal way and tried to live a committed, holy life," Negrut said. "The Orthodox Church wants to have the monopoly, the dominant position in society." It claims to be Romania's "mother church" and labels others as heretics, he said.

On any given Sunday, however, only ten to 15 percent of Romanians attend Orthodox services, roughly equal to the combined total of evangelical worshippers, Negrut reported.

Romanians are keeping a close eye on the Soviet crackdown against independence movements in the Baltic republics, Negrut said.

"We want to see how far those new waves of communism are going. But, historically speaking, I believe that communism has reached the deadline," he said. "There is no way for the communists to come back as a strong military block or a strong ideology." He predicted "a time of transition that can be long and painful in some countries and peaceful and quick in other countries."

"I hope in Romania it will be peaceful and quick."

China press prints Bibles

NANJING, China — Amity Press, the publishing house begun by Chinese Christians in the 1980s, reportedly reached the 2.5 million mark in Bibles printed in January. Amity also is now printing Bibles for export to the Soviet Union.