

## Missionaries help Philippines relief

MANILA, Philippines (BP) — Southern Baptist missionaries have joined forces with Baptists on Luzon, the northernmost island in the Philippines, to supply food and medical help to victims of Mount Pinatubo.

Pinatubo began erupting June 9 for the first time in 600 years, blowing ash and sand into the area for miles around, with some clouds of ash reaching the Asian mainland. Heavy rains turned the volcanic debris into gooey sludge. Missionaries expect to seek Southern Baptist relief funds to help rebuild homes and churches damaged after the weight of the sludge collapsed roofs.

But the "priority right now is food and medicine," said missionary administrator Sam Waldron. In fact, some damaged churches have become relief distribution points.

Member churches of the Luzon Baptist Convention are distributing food, money, clothing, soap, and other relief goods. Missionaries, in cooperation with the convention, are distributing three tractor-trailer-loads of rice and other food to victims and refugees driven from their homes by the volcano. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has released \$50,000 in relief funds to help provide food and medicine.

A medical team of missionaries and Filipinos will work north of Manila in the Olongapo and San Marcelino areas, which bore the brunt of the volcanic eruptions. The team, headed by missionary Julia Yost, a nurse from Summerville, S.C., will aim its work at distributing milk and alleviating fever and diarrhea among children.

## CP receipts fall

Cooperative Program receipts from Tennessee Baptist Convention churches in June fell more than \$500,000 below the mark of June 1990.

Total receipts for the month totaled \$1,472,963.81, a drop of \$558,508 from last year.

CP income for the year thus far is \$15,632,129.89, a loss of \$1,399,403 when compared to last year's total at this time. This is 8.22 percent lower than 1990.

Budget needs at this point are \$17,865,240. CP budget income is 12.5 percent under that figure, or \$2,233,110 short.

June was a month of five Sundays, including the last day of the month. The June 30 receipts sent to the TBC were not included in the month's CP giving.

## Gibson Baptists' prayer helps crusade

By Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor  
TRENTON — Gibson County residents witnessed "brighter days" June 23-28, compliments of the area's 54 Southern Baptist churches.

Every church in Gibson County Association participated in the Brighter Days Crusade held at the Gibson County High School gymnasium, local leaders said.

The week-long crusade, led by evangelist Fred Wolfe and music evangelist Ed Keyes, both from Mobile, Ala., culminated more than 15 months of prayer and preparation, said association moderator Jerry Summers, pastor of Mt. Pleasant Church, Bradford.

An average of about 1700 people attended services nightly with a high attendance of about 2500 on the first night.

Summers said several of the association's pastors had recognized the need for a county-wide revival for some time. The association's last crusade was held in 1979.

Don Whitt, pastor of First Church, Milan, and the chairman of the crusade steering committee, agreed. "We felt the need for our churches to get together for a crusade effort," he said, noting that the association's churches are "spread out" over the large county.

Summers noted that when Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile, Ala., was approached about leading the crusade more than a year ago, he agreed on two conditions — that the churches commit themselves to pray for the crusade for a year and that the budget for the crusade be raised beforehand so no offering would be taken during the meetings.

Different committees were formed to begin work, including a prayer committee, led by Jerry Legg, pastor of First Church, Dyer.

Legg noted monthly meetings were



**CRUSADE LEADERS** — Gibson County Association churches held a "Brighter Days Crusade" June 23-28 in Trenton. Helping to plan and coordinate the efforts were, from left, Trevis Oley Jr., First Church, Trenton; Director of Missions Ken Sparkman; Jerry Summers, Mt. Pleasant Church, Bradford; Evangelist Fred Wolfe; Don Whitt, First Church, Milan; and Ed North, First Church, Humboldt.

held with prayer coordinators from each church. Several special prayer projects were planned including rallies and seven days of continuous prayer leading up to the crusade.

"God has done some great things before and during the crusade," Legg said.

He observed the efforts have "increased the awareness of the importance of prayer. We tried to do some things to challenge the people. We thank the Lord for His work among us," Legg said.

In addition to prayer, every church met the budget challenge, Summers said.

The steering committee recommended a budget based on \$2 per resident member and each church met or exceeded that figure, he said. The crusade had a \$25,000 budget, of which a great deal was spent on publicity and promotion.

"The fact all 54 churches have prayed and taken a part in the crusade has been a blessing from God," Summers observed.

Whitt agreed. The churches "coming together and working together has been real positive. Everything fell into place," Whitt said.

Wolfe noted that what is exciting "has been the cooperation of the pastors and the way they raised the budget. It's been a great experience," he said.

Topics of Wolfe's messages during the week included the importance of obeying God today, being honest with God about your spiritual condition, and the Lordship of Christ.

In Wolfe's June 26 sermon, he noted the message of God can be summed up in four words — "Jesus Christ is Lord."

He observed that in the New Testament the word "Savior" was used only 16 times to describe Jesus, but He was called "Lord" more than 200 times.

"The supreme message of the word of God is Jesus Christ is Lord," he emphasized.

The crusade netted four professions of faith and about 50 recorded

— See Gibson, page 5.

## Sullivan picked to lead Indiana Baptists

Charles W. Sullivan, pastor of First Church, Lenoir City, for nine years, has been named executive director/treasurer for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

Sullivan resigned to the church June 30. He will join the Indiana convention Aug. 11.

He has served as pastor of Tennessee churches 16 years, and was pastor at Southland Church, Memphis, prior to Lenoir City.

A native of Springfield, Mo., he is a product of Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., Baylor University, and Southwestern Seminary where he

earned the B.D. and Th.D. degrees.

Sullivan completed last month a second term as a member of the Southern



SULLIVAN

Baptist Convention's Executive Committee. He is the second Tennessean to serve as chairman of that group — a post he held for two years.

Sullivan and his wife Delilah have three grown children, Cynthia, David, and Stephen living in Texas and Oklahoma.

He also served more recently as chairman of the Executive Committee's administrative subcommittee. He has been on the executive boards of two state conventions — Missouri and Oklahoma. In Tennessee he has served on the TBC Credentials Committee and Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Sullivan was president of the TBC Pastors' Conference in 1983 and was elected first vice president of the convention in 1986.

He and his wife officially will say "goodbye" to the Lenoir City congregation on July 28.

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## Editorials

# Eternal vigilance is the price for religious liberty

In an obvious celebration of patriotism, the exuberance of messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention was prominently displayed.

Tumultuous applause and crescendoes of approval echoed music and messages.

Each slight mention of country or flag or Desert Storm ignited the crowd again. We flirted with the appearance of developing our own political rally.

Patriotism means "love for or devotion to one's country." We pray for the future of the nation, and praise our Lord for the heritage from which we came. There is striking appeal in Ralph Waldo Emerson's lead stanza of Concord Hymn:

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,

Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,

Here once the embattled farmers stood,

And fired the shot heard round the world.

The poem commemorates the beginning of the war of liberation fought by the American colonies to gain freedom from their mother, England. The patriots of that day dared to die that their children — and theirs — might be free.

When today in our churches and meeting halls we display the American flag and the Christian flag, that is not mixing government with religion. The presence of the American flag affirms our right to honor the Christian flag and to worship God when and where we please. But they are not the same.

When we mix the two, we are flirting with obscenity to civil religion.

The observance of Independence Day, July 4, is a good time to rediscover our heritage of separation of church and state, and to acknowledge there is no place in the United States for civil religion.

The Minute Men and others of the 1770s fought for freedom to worship; others have sacrificed lives and fortune to keep it. It has been bought with blood and repeatedly defended not just for America, but for all peoples. Now there is increasing danger as bits and pieces of priceless religious liberty are

chipped away. We don't seem to know the difference.

On May 16, 1920, George W. Truett stood on the east steps of the United States Capitol — at the request of the Baptist churches of Washington and addressed an estimated 15,000 people on the fine points of the Baptist role in religious liberty.

"How is it," he asked, "that Baptists, more than any other people in the world, have forever been the protagonists of religious liberty, and its compatriot, civil liberty?"

"They did not stumble upon this principle. Their uniform, unyielding and sacrificial advocacy of such principle was not and is not an accident. It is because of our essential and fundamental principles . . .

"Our fundamental essential principles have made our Baptist people, of all ages and countries, to be the unyielding protagonists of religious liberty, not only for themselves, but for everybody else as well."

Forgetting those principles, Truett said, "explains many of the religious ills that now affect the world . . . Christ's religion needs no prop of any kind from any worldly source, and to the degree that it is thus supported is a millstone hanged about its neck."

Answering a question about the legality of paying poll taxes to Caesar, Jesus looked at a coin that bore Caesar's likeness and responded, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Truett, the great Southern Baptist leader and pastor of First Church, Dallas, said that utterance of Jesus, "is one of the most revolutionary and history-making utterances . . . once for all, marked the divorcement of church and state. It marked a new era for the creeds and deeds of man. It was the sunrise gun of a new day . . ." He called it the doctrine of a free church in a free state.

We came close to substantiating civil religion at the convention, despite our heritage of religious liberty and separation of church and state.

It was not that it was President Bush who spoke — nor Oliver North's speaking to the pastors. The speaker is not the problem — it is the principle that matters.

A messenger proposed that we have the pledge of allegiance to the American flag at every convention. We approved carte blanche Desert Storm and ignored the immense suffering that continues in the aftermath. We approved support for vouchers for parental choice in education — using tax money for private and/or church schools. Speakers blended political designs with Baptist preferences without distinction.

In the early days of our nation, we shared the common human condition of seeking happiness during the years between birth and death. Though we had individual goals, we interacted for the welfare of all, under God, for a nation free from the tyranny of a crown-blessed religion, a state that was pervasive in its subtle power.

Faith in civil religion will fail ultimately. The Old Testament tells of repeated failures of God's people because they placed loyalty to the king above loyalty to the King.

It is proper to be involved in government and politics. It is said that our government is "of the people, by the people, and for the people." But it is not to mix with religion. Render unto Caesar, and render to God.

Lest we continue to be unaware of the danger, we need to realize there is a difference. We must never confuse blessing with being especially blessed.

We cannot have it both ways, choosing areas in which we accept civil religion. We are protected by forces symbolized by the American flag, but God's power is over even that. — WFA

## Missionary family answers call of Romanian Baptists

BRUSSELS, Belgium (BP) — Charles and Kathie Thomas will become the first Southern Baptist missionaries to live in Romania in more than half a century when they take up residence in Bucharest this September.

The Thomases, missionaries to France since 1976, have accepted an invitation from the Romanian Baptist Union to represent Southern Baptists and work in evangelism and education projects in the Bucharest area. Thomas, from Atlanta, is better known by his nickname, "T." She was born in Cynthiana, Ky., and grew up in that state and in South Carolina.

"It is a leap into the unknown with a lot of faith," Thomas said of the transfer.

Much of the unknown has to do with the continuing shaky economic and political conditions in Romania. The country held democratic elections after the overthrow and execution of communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989, but many citizens still question the government's policies. Those evolving policies do not yet include a full commitment to religious freedom, critics say. And a new law on religious affairs could have a chilling effect on Christian ministries, Baptist leaders have said.

But Thomas had high praise for the estimated 80,000 Baptists of Romania. "They are the warmest, most delightful Christian people you can ever want to be with," he said. The

1000 or so churches in the union have moved ahead with an aggressive campaign of outreach and church-starting since attaining freedom, he said.

Despite those numbers, four decades of communist rule have left the Baptist union with only 172 qualified pastors, Thomas said. "Almost every pastor has five to ten churches he's responsible for. The Baptists are going to be putting a high priority on leadership training."

Baptists have a seminary in Bucharest, but government restrictions have kept the number of students there very low until recently. A Bible school begun last August by the 2600-member Second Church, Oradea, likely will be the first of several lay training schools begun by churches and associations, Thomas said.

The missionary has talked with leaders of three associations eager to begin such schools, which would train lay people for church leadership through a two-year, part-time course of study. Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrators anticipate additional missionaries will be sent in coming years to help meet the pressing educational needs.

Discipleship Training, also limited during the Ceausescu years, is another need among the churches. The Thomases helped introduce the MasterLife discipleship program in France and other French-speaking countries during recent years. A week after their arrival in Romania, they will help coordinate the first workshop on the popular program adapted for use in scores of countries. MasterLife materials are being translated into

Romanian.

Southern Baptist workers were forced to withdraw from Romania before World War II, but the Foreign Mission Board has maintained steady contact with Romanian Baptists in recent decades and provided help with teaching projects, church-building programs, medical projects, and hunger relief.

Board representatives also helped Romanian Baptists in their relationships with government authorities in times of persecution. Many of these efforts could not be publicized earlier because of the sensitivities involved.

The Thomases have five children.

"We are extremely pleased that our brothers and sisters in Romania have invited this exceptional couple who represent some of our more experienced missionaries in Europe," said Keith Parker, director of Southern Baptist mission work in Europe. "The Thomases are well-established evangelists and church planters, having served in France in a solid way. 'T' has been able to travel to Romania on numerous occasions to assist in other programs and has already made a solid shift from the French language to the Romanian language."

Transfer of the Thomases to Romania is part of a major drive by the Foreign Mission Board to send workers into the opening countries of Eastern Europe as soon as possible. Already workers have been assigned to Hungary, the Soviet Union, Poland, and Bulgaria. Southern Baptists have long worked in Yugoslavia, currently torn by internal conflicts.

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# ATS report cites progress at Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP) — A covenant between faculty and trustees may represent the "best possible hope for the future" of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a report from a national accrediting agency concludes.

The report from the accrediting commission of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada commends the "Covenant Renewal" document approved this spring by trustees and faculty as a sign of improving conditions at the seminary.

The commission's report was issued June 21, a month after a two-day "focused visit" to the campus by representatives from ATS and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the seminary's other ac-

crediting agency.

In endorsing the "focused visit" report, the commission acknowledged "the progress that has been made by all parties," citing in particular the adoption of the covenant and the board's amendment of an earlier action allowing tape recorders in all classrooms.

However, it cited "the continued need for monitoring the situation" and called for a series of progress reports from the seminary. The report made no suggestion Southern has been in danger of being placed on probation or losing its accreditation.

Relations between trustees and seminary faculty and administration have been strained since a new conservative majority of trustees voted

several controversial actions last year. Those actions also prompted the ATS and SACS investigations.

Since a preliminary ATS staff report in January, however, trustees and faculty reached the covenant agreement, spelling out a compromise on employment of future faculty. Trustees in April also voted to leave determination of "appropriate methods of transcribing classroom lectures" with the administration. That action replaced a policy approved last September which would have allowed all seminary classes to be tape recorded. The policy had been termed in January's preliminary ATS report as "a direct intervention of the board" into seminary teaching practices.

The covenant, approved overwhelmingly by both faculty and trustees, effectively replaced trustee action a year earlier which added the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee report as a guideline for the employment, promotion, and tenure of all faculty. The action potentially would have required all faculty to subscribe to both the recommendations and the findings of the peace committee report, in addition to adhering to the Abstract of Principles, the theological statement that has governed the seminary since its founding in 1859.

Faculty, however, voted unanimously to urge trustees to rescind the action. The preliminary ATS staff report also questioned whether the board had stepped "well beyond the approved

academic personnel policies and the seminary charter and bylaws." After several months of intense negotiations, specially-appointed trustee and faculty committees drafted the "covenant" document as a compromise proposal.

"Perhaps its greatest significance is that it represents some compromise on all sides," the ATS report said of the covenant, adding it "symbolizes hope that all parties want to work together to avoid causing irreparable damage to the institution."

The accrediting commission requested semi-annual progress reports from the seminary between now and late 1992 when Southern is scheduled for its regular re-accreditation visit.

Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt, commended in the report as a "key factor" in progress made at the seminary, described the ATS assessment as a "strong affirmation" of trustees, faculty, and administration. "The future hinges on the covenant," he said. "If it is implemented responsibly, as I think it will be, we have plotted a path to a bright future."

Trustee Chairman W. Wayne Allen, pastor of Briarwood Church in Cordova, said he was "very pleased," noting "the apprehension felt by students and faculty about accreditation problems should be eased if not erased by this report."

Although interpretation and implementation of the covenant remain a challenge, faculty and trustees are "probably closer than the common perception," he added.

The ATS report encouraged the trustee board to "continue its own development," including more faculty-trustee dialogue. It also suggested trustees expand their understanding of their role to include support and advocacy for the seminary as well as oversight. — *Pat Cole and David Wilkinson*

## Sex discrimination charged against FMB

RICHMOND (BP) — A woman fired by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in April is suing the agency for \$1 million and charging she was a victim of sex discrimination.

Beverly Pierce, 51, of Mechanicsville, Va., filed suit in Richmond Circuit Court May 31 alleging two counts of breach of contract and one count of sexual discrimination under the Equal Pay Act.

Employed in 1977 by the mission board, Pierce was assistant director of missions ministries in the board's public affairs office when she was dismissed April 15. In that post she scheduled speaking engagements for missionaries on furlough in the United States and helped coordinate World Mission Conferences. These conferences are special mission programs in which churches in an area hear missionary speakers tell about their work.

Pierce charges she was wrongfully dismissed and was penalized for initiating a formal employee grievance while a member of the board staff. She also contends male employees of the board received higher pay than she did for similar work.

Board officials declined to comment on the charges because litigation is pending, but said a response to the suit by the board's attorney denying all charges was to be filed with the court June 27. No court date has been set.

## Missionary robbed in Philippines

MANILA, Philippines — A group of men overpowered Southern Baptist missionary Doris Blattner in front of her Manila apartment house, then forced her into her own car and eventually stole it from her.

Blattner was getting out of her car at about 11 a.m. June 25 when three or four men appeared, snatched her keys and forced her into the back seat, according to a report she filed with local police. The men pressed her face down to the floorboard with her feet up, covered her eyes and drove around for about 20 minutes. Then they pushed her out of the car, saying they wanted to use it for a while.

Police were still looking for the mission-owned car the next day. Blattner, 57, sustained minor bruises but was generally unharmed, said missionary administrator Sam Waldron. Mission officials believe robbery was the only motive.

Blattner, of St. Louis, has worked as a religious education promoter in the Philippines since 1988. Before that she was a missionary to Indonesia for 24 years. She was the first in a string of 50 Southern Baptist missionaries to leave Indonesia after the government established a policy limiting resident visas for missionaries to 10 years.

— BP

## Local SEBTS trustees hear 'progress reports'

WAKE FOREST, N.C. — Local members of the Southeastern Seminary board of trustees were to have met July 2 to hear progress reports from seminary officials regarding "financial and theological integrity" at the seminary. The Baptist and Reflector expects to publish an ac-

count of the meeting next week.

The July date was approved at the March trustees' meeting as was a January 1992 meeting of the same ten trustees. The local members of boards can meet to discuss items when the entire board is not needed.

Apparently the two meetings are to

hear progress reports from the institution regarding finances and theological integrity and (if necessary) make recommendations to the full board meetings in October and March.

Specifically the July 2 meeting was called to hear responses to an address last March by President Lewis Drummond dealing with the two critical issues.

Referring to the July 2 meeting, Academic Dean L. Russ Bush III said, "This is not an official meeting of the board. This group cannot take official action, and can only recommend to the full board."

Bush said trustee chairman Roger W. Ellsworth, Illinois pastor, is planning to attend the meeting. Local trustees fit a category for trustees living within 300 miles of the seminary.

Reports that were expected to be made at the meeting include a business office examination of the school's finances, especially regarding what would happen if and/or when the seminary funding formula is unfrozen. The SBC Executive Committee froze the seminary funding formula, the distribution of Cooperative Program funds to the six seminaries is primarily based on enrollment, and would have been financially crippled if the formula had not been frozen.

Costs incurred in the remodeling of the president's home and some expenses related to his office also have drawn criticism from people both within the trustee board and outside the seminary family. It was unclear whether those items also will be discussed at the July meeting.

Bush said his office would make a report dealing with the matter of theological integrity but gave no details.

## Cooper, Williams to write SS lessons

Two new writers will join David Brown, pastor of Mine City Church, Ducktown, and who began writing June 5, in commenting on Sunday School lessons for July, August, and September.

William A. Cooper Jr., will write about Life and Work lessons and Gary N. Williams will comment on Convention Uniform lessons. Brown will continue writing about lessons in the Bible Book Series.

Cooper has been minister of education at Woodmont Church, Nashville, since 1988 when he came to Tennessee from North Carolina where he served as minister of education at First Church, Shelby. Cooper has also served as minister of education, recreation, youth, and preschool and associate pastor at several other churches in North Carolina and South Carolina since 1964.

Born in August, Ga., Cooper was ordained to the ministry in 1966 at North Trenholm Church, Columbia, S.C.

Cooper graduated from University of South Carolina in Columbia, and earned a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

He and his wife, Carolyn, have three daughters.

Williams began serving in 1989 as

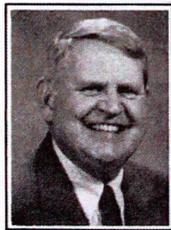
director of education and promotion at Madison-Chester and Crockett County associations.

Before joining the association staff, he was minister of education and administration at First Church, Union City. He also served as minister of music and youth at Liberty Grove Church, Jackson; Whitten Memorial Church, Memphis; and First Church, Bemis.

In addition, he was a senior adult consultant in the family ministry department at the Baptist Sunday School Board in 1982 and 1983.

The Madison County native graduated from Union University, Jackson, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, where he earned a master of religious education degree.

He and his wife, Dale, have one daughter.



COOPER



WILLIAMS

# Our Readers Write

## Worth hearing

Pat Landrum, pastor of Brighton Church for more than 30 years is my father in the ministry. When he speaks, I pay attention.

He said something well worth repeating in a recent newsletter from his church. He was writing about the recent Southern Baptist Convention.

"A few moves were made that seemed to have dangerous implications," he wrote. "However, Southern Baptists have always been equal to any weakness that might emerge. If the Lord is in changes that I oppose, I can be sure He will make them beneficial to the body and give me wisdom to understand His action . . ."

That spirit, I believe, has made Southern Baptists strong.

I commend Brother Pat Landrum for these statements and I have utmost respect for his church which gives more than 30 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program.

Churches like Brighton and men like Pat Landrum will see us as Southern Baptists through the decade and into the next century.

Mike Mayo, pastor  
Saturn Drive Church  
1212 Saturn Drive  
Nashville 37217

## Church is growing

Our church continues to make historic decisions. We're in the beginning stages of enlarging our sanctuary from 400 seats to 875 seats. Work should be completed by December. In regular business conference recently we voted to call two permanent, part-time staff people.

Susan Eller, of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home, was called as minister of music. Brenda Hales, of the Hamilton County Baptist Association ASSISTeam, was called as minister of children and preschoolers.

We sent out three volunteer, short-term mission teams. One to Mt. Sterling, Ky., one to St. Francis, S.D., and one to Valentine, Neb.

I thought the readers would like to know how God continues to bless.

Jim O'Dillon  
Minister of Education  
Ooltewah Church  
5514 Ooltewah - Ringgold Rd.  
Ooltewah 37363

## Better words

In the May 7 issue of the Western Recorder of Kentucky (article six in a series of eight on the history of the BSSB by Leon McBeth) church historian McBeth writes about the furor which occurred at the BSSB and the SBC over the book *The Message of Genesis* by Ralph Elliott. He categorizes Elliott as "basically conservative." His exact words are: "In the broad scope of American theology, Elliott comes off as basically 'conservative,' but he was clearly to the left of many Southern Baptists. History records that K. Owen White referred to Elliott's book as 'death in the pot . . . liberalism pure and simple' and was elected as president of the SBC in 1963.

I have read Elliott's book. Elliott classified as non-historical and error-prone the stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and some events in the life of Abraham. He referred to Melchisedek as a "priest of Baal" although Genesis 14:18 calls him "the priest of the most high God." Elliott maintained that though there might be error in the literary vehicle, that didn't necessarily mean that the faith message or purpose of God in the message was in error.

Although McBeth refers to the "conservative" resurgence as a "fundamentalist

takeover," since 1979 all elected SBC presidents have been Southern Baptist college and seminary educated. These presidents all believe in a perfect Bible, that in the original autographs God's revelation was perfect and without error doctrinally, historically, scientifically, and philosophically. Herschel Hobbs stated before the 1979 SBC that the Baptist Faith and Message Committee understood the words "truth without mixture of error" to refer to "the entire Bible." If McBeth can categorize Elliott as "basically conservative," perhaps he can find a better word than "fundamentalist" to describe the majority attending the Southern Baptist Convention.

Jim Stroud, pastor  
Third Creek Church  
4917 Western Avenue  
Knoxville 37912

• The writer refers to a series of articles not used in the Baptist and Reflector because of the length, and because of statements such as the one examined by the writer. — Editor

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

## Friend and teacher

Mildred Jeffers Liming died in Colerain Township, Ohio, June 5.

Many people in Tennessee remember her as a dedicated servant at the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home, Franklin campus.

Mildred grew up at the Franklin home, studied at Middle Tennessee State Teacher's College, and returned to the Children's Home to teach.

She was loved by the children and those she taught. She was 83.

Memorials may be made to Needed Kids of All, 1906 Highland Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.

Porter Freeman  
7131 Nolensville Rd.  
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## About prayers

I have read with interest the recent editorial on the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta. I am a bit concerned about interpretation of the opposition to James Dunn of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs pertaining to his opposition to mandatory prayer in public schools. I believe all his Southern Baptist friends and foes agree with this position. I have never known of a "conservative" or a "moderate" who advocated mandatory prayer in the public schools. What most "conservatives" and many "moderates" would like to see is voluntary prayer in the public schools. This is the term usually employed. I have never heard James Dunn advocate voluntary prayer in the public schools, and I have never read anything written by him in favor of voluntary prayer. He is mistaken if he accuses his opposition, among Southern Baptists, of wanting anything more than the privilege of voluntary prayer. It is unfair and untrue to accuse opponents of wanting mandatory prayer because that might carry with it government prescribed prayers.

J. Harold Stephens  
1104 Dow Drive  
Shelbyville 37160

• The paper does not speak for Mr. Dunn. Thank you for the information. Perhaps a better term would have been "school or government sponsored prayer." — Editor

## Old-time preaching

Dr. Criswell remembers when saints shouted praises to our Lord. I think many of our older preachers remember it too. I would invite him (and any others) to a church that still loves Jesus. It is called South Holston near Lenoir City.

If you can't get here you can find a few scattered about this land. One is called New Life Southern Baptist a few miles out from Aurora, Ind.

I feel sorry for so many of our youth who have never seen God at work among His believers. Few pastors will get a message from God to deliver to the church. Both he and his church leaders prefer "sermons." Preaching a message from above can get him fired. Baptist leaders don't want it. We could rename many of them "Laodocian Baptist Church." You have to get back to your first love in order to shout, cry, sing praises to Him. You have to love Jesus.

J. W. Glass  
1025 Hillcrest  
Lenoir City 37771

## Defends KJV again

In response to letters about my letter and Mrs. Sudberry's in support of the King James Version as the only Bible, I must answer.

The KJV says anything different to what God wrote in it is "dung."

Imperfect man cannot write a perfect book. To slice off a little here and add a little yonder, and change some words and phrases, God says don't do that.

I know a certain man who wrote four versions. What was wrong with his first one?

God did not have to rewrite His. It was perfect at first and only writing. He will never write another. He has a copy settled in Heaven and gave me one on earth. I expect to compare mine with His when I get there, and I know they will agree. I will stay with my KJV.

John S. Counts  
Route 2, Box 73A  
Belvidere 37306

# ATS report eases pressure off study panel

ATLANTA — The recent report of the Association of Theological Schools on Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary may "take the pressure off" a Southern Baptist panel studying accrediting practices of the denomination's seminaries, say panel members.

Although serious, the accreditation report does not place Southeastern on probation. Many had expected a probation ruling would trigger a dramatic response — perhaps even a call to sever ties with ATS — by the institutions workgroup of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

"It sounds like the kind of thing we had anticipated and will give Southeastern time to make progress to satisfy the accrediting agencies," said David Hankins of Lake Charles, La., chairman of the institutions workgroup, which was assigned by the Executive Committee last February to study the accrediting issue. Hankins is now chairman of the Executive Committee.

Added workgroup member Paul Pressler of Houston: "This takes the pressure off the committee (to make a quick decision)."

The workgroup's assignment was sparked by investigations at two seminaries by ATS and the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges, which also accredits SBC seminaries. The investigations, at Southeastern

and Southern Baptist Theological seminaries, were prompted by actions taken by the seminaries' trustees to move the schools in a more "conservative" direction. Some faculty members have charged new guidelines in governance and teaching are being implemented that violate the agreements in effect when they were employed.

Fearing the ATS and SACS investigations could lead to probation, which in turn could lead to loss of accreditation, some Southern Baptists have called for their denomination to set up its own accrediting agency and for all SBC seminaries to withdraw from affiliation with ATS and SACS.

Although such a proposal already has been studied and rejected by the SBC Education Commission, members of the Executive Committee authorized their own study last February. The workgroup met June 3 in Atlanta during the Southern Baptist Convention.

Hankins said prior to the ATS report that a "helpful" response from the accrediting agency would ease the work of the committee. "The catalyst for the timing has been Southeastern," he said at the time. "If that should smooth out, we'll have less impetus to be real aggressive to meet before September."

After hearing of the ATS report, Hankins confirmed it is "not likely" the group will meet.

Pressler, a state appeals judge who has been critical of the accrediting agencies in the past, said, "I am delighted (Southeastern) was not put on probation."

He added he favors investigating "all options" for future seminary accreditation, including a separate denominational agency. "If the accrediting agencies place us in the position of having to respond, we are ready to do so."

However, he noted: "We do not want to intervene in a process that is working appropriately . . . Our committee will not be pro-active but reactive."

During its June 3 meeting the workgroup recommended that its membership remain unchanged until the Sept. 16-18 Executive Committee meeting, although four of its members' terms on the Executive Committee ended in June.

The action, approved by the full Executive Committee later that day, essentially created a special study committee to examine accreditation matters until September.

The Executive Committee could renew the study committee's authority in September or it could return the assignment to its institutions workgroup, effectively ending the expanded study committee's existence. — ABP

# Polish Baptists cry 'foul' on church property seizures

WARSAW, Poland (BP) — Polish Baptist leaders are crying "foul" over delays in the return of Baptist church properties from the Polish government, even as 2000 properties are being returned to the powerful Roman Catholic Church.

The church buildings were seized by the communist government after World War II. Now, since Poland has adopted a democratic government, a move is on to restore such properties to church groups.

According to recent press reports in Warsaw, the government already has approved the return of 56 Catholic

properties and Catholic authorities have filed more than 1500 applications on other properties. They expect to file at least 500 more applications later, reports stated. At least 90 percent of Poland's people are said to be Catholic.

In some cases the government converted seized Catholic properties into public schools. If those properties are returned, the schools will have to be closed or relocated at major expense. But government leaders reportedly are ready to pay the bill.

Meanwhile, the government has not responded to requests made in early

1990 by leaders of the Baptist Union in Poland to return a handful of church properties seized after the war.

"Now it's 1991 and they don't tell us no, they don't tell us yes," said Igor Barna, Baptist general secretary. "They tell us nothing. Since the government has changed, they tell us we're low priority."

Barna criticized a new Polish law governing the return of church properties because it applies only to the Roman Catholic Church and not to other groups such as Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, and the Polish National Catholic Church, a church not

affiliated with Roman Catholics. A law that would return seized Orthodox church properties passed one house of the Polish parliament, but hasn't emerged from the second.

At issue for Baptists are a dozen properties scattered across Poland that were seized after World War II. Some Baptist church buildings were taken and adapted for government use. In Bartoszyce, a city in northern Poland, the government seized a Baptist church building and forced the congregation to accept a smaller building.

So far only one church building has been returned. That 100-year-old structure was returned in May 1990 but is in such a devastated condition it is unusable. "We took it anyway," said Baptist leader Konstanty Wiazowski.

To Baptist onlookers, the picture is simple to analyze: "The Catholic Church controls Parliament. It can block the appointment of people. The Senate now looks to the Catholic Church for decisions instead of to the Communist Party," charged Wiazowski.

Baptists also fear they could lose the church properties they now have. "We're always worried about losing properties," said Barna. "We're afraid of the Catholics taking it, or the government."

## Recommendations sought by Executive Committee

DURHAM, N.C. (BP) — Recommendations for the successor to President Harold C. Bennett of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee are being accepted now in written form and with full resumes, according to the chairman of the search committee, Julian M. Motley, a North Carolina pastor.

Bennett announced his retirement, effective in October of 1992, at the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta earlier this month. He will be 68 at the time of his scheduled retirement.

A ten-member search committee was appointed at that time with Motley, pastor of Gorman Church in Durham, named chairman.

"The committee requests the

prayers and input of our Baptist people across the convention and asks that all recommendations be in written form and accompanied by resumes containing full biographical and ministry information," Motley wrote in a letter to Baptist Press.

Recommendations should be sent to Motley at P.O. Box 15127, Durham, N.C. 27704.

Motley said recommendations will be received through Aug. 1, 1991.

Motley commended Bennett who has been the committee's chief executive since 1979 and will continue as a consultant until Oct. 1, 1993.

"(As president and treasurer) he has served Southern Baptists exceptionally well and in which he continues to com-

mand deep respect and appreciation," said Motley. "(The search committee) recognizes the need to facilitate an orderly transition in this critical leadership role in Southern Baptist life."

Members of the search committee (all Executive Committee members) are: Stan D. Coffey, Texas; Doyle J. Collins, Ore.; Ronnie W. Floyd, Ark.; Gwyna S. Parker, Texas; Guy S. Sanders III, Fla.; Simon H. L. Tsoi, Ariz.; Joe B. Warwick, Knoxville; Fred H. Wolfe, Ala.; David E. Hankins, La.; and Motley.

Hankins is chairman of the Executive Committee.

## Gibson Baptists back crusade . . .

(Continued from page 1)  
rededications, said Don Edwards of First Church, Milan, who chaired the counseling committee.

He noted, however, many other decisions were made as people counseled with their own pastors. "There were a lot of in-house decisions made and will continue to be made that we will not have a record of," Edwards said, noting that "without questions" seeds have been planted that will result in future harvest.

Association pastors also expect results from the crusade to linger for some time.

At First Church, Kenton, Pastor Wayne Perkins hopes to use the crusade as "a launching point for a new emphasis on evangelism. He noted the awareness created through promotion of the crusade will be helpful. "If we live and obey God like we should, it will increase opportunities for witness," Perkins said.

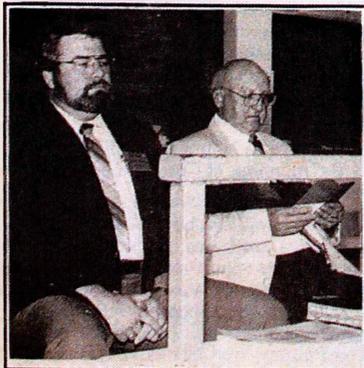
Trevis Otey Jr., pastor of First Church, Trenton, noted he saw results before the revival began because of the intensive prayer that took place.

Otey also observed that in addition to following up on decisions from Trenton residents, he hoped that "the messages during the week will revive our own people."

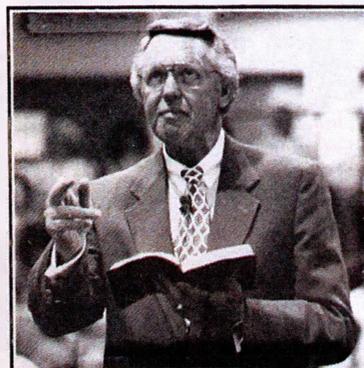
Wayne Rowan, pastor of Oakwood Church, Milan, predicted the crusade will help the entire area. "It depends on how much members take back and retain," he said.

Jerry Milam, pastor of Gibson Church, Gibson, said the crusade has brought an awareness "to the county and the churches that people can be saved."

Gibson County Association Director of Missions Ken Sparkman said he was pleased with the crusade. "It has been a rallying point for our churches," he said.



**GOOD SEATS** — Gibson County pastors, Wayne Rowan, left, Oakwood Church, Milan, and Jerry Milam, Gibson Church, Gibson, got balcony seats to view the crusade.



**EVANGELIST** — Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile, Ala., makes a point as he preaches during the Brighter Days Crusade held at Gibson County High School.

## One Word More By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

The American Revolution had begun and now came the time to put forth the reasons for it.

They gathered, these bold men, in Philadelphia, to put down in words for all mankind forever, the summary of the case against Great Britain. The children sat down to hold judgment and then to spank the parent.

The Declaration of Independence, officially ratified on July 4, 1776, is a document which has no peer, no brother in history. It was forged of unsurpassed steel on an eternal forge.

It was not without caution and prayer and debate that the die was cast. When it was done, it was only the beginning. Dire circumstances and days of extreme difficulty lay ahead. But the colonies were bound to be free.

Signing the Declaration of Independence meant severance from certain forms of security as protectorates of Britain. Somehow, the band of patriots were willing — yes, eager — to determine their own destiny.

They would not truckle to the Parliament. They would not give allegiance to a sovereign thousands of miles away who seemed not to hear their grievances.

The men that signed the Declaration were not sailing on the ship of freedom as stowaways. They would pay the fare and stand as free men on the deck. That price would exact a staggering toll on their lives, fortunes, and perseverance.

The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia also — in September 1774. When the men had settled in their chairs, Patrick Henry stood to ask for unity. He spoke words original and unusual.

"The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders is no more," he

said. "I am not a Virginian, but an American." It was perhaps the first time the name had been used that way.

When they signed the Declaration, the war already had begun. Hopes that hostilities could be avoided had been dashed. On the green at Lexington, April 19, 1775, the line of Minute Men met the Redcoats.

"Stand your ground — Don't fire unless fired upon — But if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!"

They signed and we are the beneficiaries. John Witherspoon of New Jersey said before he wrote his name, "That noble instrument upon your table, that insures immortality to its author, should be subscribed this very morning by every pen in this house. He that will not respond to its accents, and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions, is unworthy of the name of free man."

Those men responded. We know what happened. And when it was ended, and we got around to determining our government, George Washington was trusted with the helm.

In his first inaugural address, he spelled out the feelings not only of himself, but of the citizens of the nation, forever:

"The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps as deeply, as finally, staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people."



**ALLEN**

# Tennessee Baptist re-elected president of SBCB

By Maria Sykes

NASHVILLE (BP) — "Let's stop making excuses and start asking for solutions," Charles Couey, president of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind said during the conference's second annual meeting, June 21-23 in Nashville.

The conference unanimously adopted a proposal seeking acknowledgement and funding to equip blind Southern Baptists for ministry from the Home Mission Board, re-elected Couey as president for a second term and set goals for direction of the conference.

Couey is a member of Park Avenue Church, Nashville, and is a consultant with the blind for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Woody Parker, manager of the special education section of the special ministries department, affirmed the conference and defined the position of special ministries department and the board in its relation to the conference.

Couey referenced correspondence between the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and the Sunday School Board, which have run circles

In Philippines

searching for a solution in verifying the needs of blind Southern Baptists.

On behalf of the conference, Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice-president of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, asked for help from the Home Mission Board and its program of Christian social ministries and the program of language missions in a letter on Jan. 16.

In a response letter dated March 15 from the Home Mission Board to Mosley, Paul R. Adkins, vice president of HMB ministry, said, "Because of staff and budget limitations, our work in ministry with disabled persons has focused on raising awareness of the needs and encouraging local church-based ministries," he continued, "While we intend to continue these efforts, it is doubtful at this time that additional resources can be allocated for this specific ministry."

"With regard to the ... production of materials in braille, large print, and audio tapes, I would recommend that this request be forwarded to the Sunday School Board," Adkins said.

Although the conference struggles to establish itself in the Southern Baptist realm, under the leadership of Couey,

it refuses to give up. "It's time for the blind to stand up and say 'Stop tossing us back and forth ... Let's cooperate together,'" Couey said, "Help us use our gifts. Give us the support and materials we need."

Couey is expected to present the conference's proposal to the Home Mission Board executive committee during their meeting July 16-17, 1991. "If that doesn't work," explained Couey, "We'll take it to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee at the meeting in September."

"The whole purpose of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind is to help sighted persons who work with the blind and help blind persons come to the full realization that they are not all equipped the same," Couey said during his presidential address. "... But they are equipped and gifted for special service and must do that service in the power of God."

"As we help our sighted friends understand our equipping, we call upon them to help us have a clear voice in our denomination to say ... 'Provide for us the tools that enable us to do the ministry that God has ... called us to do,'" Couey continued.

"We want, more than anything else, to have at our fingertips materials that make us feel comfortable when we stand before a Sunday School class or when we take the challenge of any other task in our churches," he said.

Parker explained the Sunday School Board previously produced braille curriculum and Bible study materials, but in 1987 ceased the program. Parker alludes the decision to usage. "Only 16 percent of all blind persons read braille," explained Parker.

The Sunday School Board currently produces audio tapes of various board materials including adult curriculum and Open Windows devotional. "About 2700 tapes are ordered each quarter. Half of those are used by visually impaired," said Parker.

There are about 43,000 visually impaired Southern Baptist and "... Many are twice blinded — physically and spiritually. We need to reach them too," Couey said.

While the total attendance for the conference only reached eight during the weekend meeting, Couey said it went very well. "We were encouraged with a variety of personalities and input. We are enthusiastic," Couey said.

## Tennesseans 'take root' at Rural Life Center

By Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor  
BANSALON, Philippines — It's easy to understand why Tennesseans Jeff and Regina Palmer "took root" to their work as Southern Baptist missionaries at the Rural Life Center in Bansalon in the Philippines. In a sense, they were returning "home."

The Palmers — Jeff, from New Johnsonville, and Regina, from Camden — served as journeymen at the Rural Life Center from 1983-1985.

Palmer noted that it was during this time that he experienced a call to career missions.

"We fell in love with it. We both knew we would go back as career missionaries," said Palmer, an agriculturalist. He acknowledged, however, they did not know if they would go to the Philippines.

After returning to Tennessee in 1985, Palmer went to work in Waverly with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. He also served as minister of music and youth at First Church, Waverly.

As they went through the appointment process, "a lot of doors closed in different areas of the world," Palmer recalled.

He noted that near the end of 1988 they felt they would not go as missionaries, but a request from Asia came through.

"God had kept us in the appointment process. He shut doors that we shouldn't be in until the right place came along," Palmer said.

The "right" place just happened to be the Rural Life Center where they had served as journeymen. "It was a thrill to be able to work with Harold (Harold Watson, director of the RLC) and to be going to an area where we knew the people and a little bit of the language," Palmer said.

The Palmers noted that it had been hard to leave the Philippines in 1985. "When we found out about the appoint-

ment we felt like we were returning home," Palmer said.

Regina Palmer observed, "It was neat to come back. We hit the ground running and were able to get into the work fast."

Palmer serves as director of training for the Asian Rural Life Development Foundation. He trains international groups who come to the RLC to study agricultural techniques.

A sign in the welcome center of the RLC informs groups what the center is about:

"The Bansalon Rural Life Center is a Christian approach to rural development. It strives to enable people to realize their goal of a more satisfying and abundant life today. The center pursues the six-fold functions of research, extension, development, education, evangelism, and missions (REDEEM). In these ways the Rural Life Center works toward the redemption of the total man."

The basic approach of the RLC is to

help Filipinos and others in Third World countries to grow crops, both for food and to earn a livelihood, with what they have.

"We're trying to help people who just don't have a lot of cash to help themselves. They are caught up in a poverty cycle," Palmer observed, noting they work with farmers who generally have about six children and have no more than a third grade education. Their average income is about \$10-15 in American money, he added.

Instead of providing food, the RLC staff provides seeds and teaches Filipinos how to grow their own food.

One of the major problems encountered by Filipino farmers, Palmer noted, is much of the farmland is very hilly and soil erosion occurs.

To combat the problem the RLC developed and refined the SALT (sloping agricultural land technology) process which is designed to help upland farmers farm hillsides without com-

mercial fertilizer and to stop hill erosion, the number one problem in upland agriculture throughout the world, Palmer said.

The SALT system involves planting crops following the contour of the sloping land. The use of natural terracing and hedges of fast-growing trees planted across hillsides causes fertile soil to accumulate between the hedges and flatten strips of land for crops.

The success of the project has brought national awards and interest to the RLC. Palmer noted the SALT system has been adopted by the Filipino government as well as by several other Asian countries.

The center, located on 38 acres of land, also shows Filipinos and others agricultural methods, including how to reforest land and the advantages of using goats for milk instead of cows. American dairy cattle just are not suited for tropical climates, Palmer explained.

The bottom line of the RLC is that it meets both spiritual and physical needs.

"When Jesus was out ministering and encountered someone with physical needs, he met those needs. When He met someone with spiritual needs, He met those.

"You have to help people. If not, you lose the meaning of Christian compassion," Palmer said.

The Palmers, who have two children, Sarah and Daniel, are excited about their ministry opportunities.

"We're happy because we know we are where we are supposed to be," Regina said.

The Palmers are scheduled to return to Tennessee — their other home — for furlough next year. — Wilkey interviewed the Palmers in March while he was in the Philippines with a medical mission team.



**TOUR GUIDES** — New Johnsonville native Jeff Palmer and his wife, Regina, from Camden, explain the work of the Rural Life Center to members of a medical mission team who visited the facility in March. From left, Palmer; Dewey Dunn, Nashville; Sarah Woolwine, Knoxville; Regina Palmer; and Dana Smith, Nashville.

## Waynesboro couple visits Romanian Baptist churches

Tennessee Baptists Mike and Kathy Kemper recently traveled to Romania where they visited ten Romanian churches in seven different cities and villages.

Kemper, pastor of Green River Church, Waynesboro, and his wife were invited to Romania by Vasile Vaden, a pastor in Cluj-Napoca.

Vaden has two sons in Tennessee — Lica, a student at Belmont College in Nashville, and Tibbi, a high school student in Franklin, who is staying with the family of Jim McDonald, TBC business manager.

Last September, while in Tennessee, the senior Vaden visited Waynesboro and became acquainted with Kemper. While there, he preached at Kemper's church. "Our Green River family has really come to love Brother Vaden and his fine sons," Kemper said.

Kemper noted that last March the church, after encouragement from David Miller, director of missions for Indian River Association and member of Green River, and Associate Pastor John Robinson, felt led to send the Kempers to Romania "to be used any way the Lord would make available."

After contacting Vaden in Romania, he was eager about their proposed visit in late April and promised to plan the Kempers' schedule.

On the Kempers first Sunday in Romania, they traveled to the country village of Girbau. Kemper noted this was a "special day" for the church because they had an American



**BAPTISMAL CANDIDATES** — Mike Kemper, back row, recently met with Pastor Vasile Vaden, right, and 13 baptismal candidates from Dimbul-Rotund Baptist Church.

preacher and a wedding was to be incorporated into the service which lasted from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A band played and sang music. The church's pastor, Vasile Tamas, preached a message from Ephesians about husbands and wives.

Kemper preached a message "Faith is the Victory" about being "overcomers."

"Afterwards, I realized that if there were overcomers anywhere, it was certainly these people who kept the faith in the midst of terrible times of communist tyranny.

"We learned that during those days before the 1989 revolution, the church

had been destroyed and rebuilt. And, on this day, as other Sundays, the house was filled with about 200 people, and many were standing all around the wall.

"At this point I thought, 'Oh Lord, thank you for allowing me to be here to see your people who are so eager to worship you.'"

After participating in the wedding party, the Kempers traveled back to Cluj-Napoca and attended the Second Baptist Church. Tamas also was pastor of this church, along with three others. "In Romania, we learned there are approximately 1400 Baptist churches, but only 200 pastors," Kemper said.

The remainder of the Kempers' time was spent visiting other villages and cities. Kemper preached and sang to as many as 500 people at each church.

Kemper was impressed with the commitment of the church members in Romania. "All the Baptist churches seemed full of life and enthusiasm for the Gospel. They want to reach out but their resources are limited," Kemper observed.

Kemper noted there is not much "we can teach them about how to worship the Lord. On the contrary, we can learn from them."

Kemper observed, however, the Romanian Baptists do need help with organizational structure, training for



**SHOWING LOVE** — Kathy Kemper gives a hug to a young Romanian orphan.

preachers and teachers, literature, and financial support.

"The door is now open but no one knows how long this opportunity will last," Kemper said, noting the Baptist people there "fear that communism will take over again if the economy fails."

Kemper said he has learned "there is much to consider in sending money, people, or resources, to a country like Romania.

"But after I have seen for myself the opportunity that currently exists there, I feel it is urgent that we do all we can, while we can," he said.

And, the Green River congregation is responding to that challenge.

On June 30, the church took up a special offering to send to a church in Dej-Mir that has been in a new construction project for two years. "The members exhausted all their resources and building has stopped," Kemper said.

He noted the church needed about \$2000 in American money to complete their building. "Our church will do our best to help them finish," Kemper said.

"The Sunday before we celebrate our independence, we helped a Romanian church celebrate their new freedom to worship. This is our Independence Day gift to them," Kemper said.



**ORPHANS** — Mike and Kathy Kemper visited orphanage children in Baia Mare.

## Knoxville church helps Russian family adapt to America

KNOXVILLE — Anatoly Potapenko was a laborer in the Crimean town of Simferopol, near the Black Sea. He operated an excavating machine.

He also was a Southern Baptist lay pastor as his father had been before him.

He was employed until a day not too long ago when KGB agents walked into his church and told him he no longer had a job.

They also took away his food coupons for a month.

That was what he and his wife, Anna, both 38, had used to feed themselves and their two children, Daniel, almost 14, and Elizabeth, 12.

Potapenko and his family now live in Knoxville, thanks to Calvary Church. He works at a construction firm owned by one of the church's deacons.

"When the KGB decides you should not work and should be shunned by your neighbors, a Soviet citizen has an even harder time than usual," said Richard J. "Rick" Cheverton, owner of Hunter Construction Co. and the deacon who employs Potapenko.

"You should have seen them when we took them into a supermarket for the first time," Cheverton said. "The whole family would look at the food on the shelves with big eyes, look at each other with big smiles and then pinch themselves on the arms to make sure they weren't dreaming.

"In the Soviet Union, they are used to stores with empty shelves. They just couldn't believe it," he said.

"The church had sponsored a couple of Romanian families about two years ago," Cheverton said. "The Bridge Refugee Service contacted us about the Potapenko family. They were really being oppressed for their religious beliefs."

Cheverton, who is chairman of the church's missions committee, said Bridge Refugee Service is a local office that is part of the Church World Services and the Episcopal migration Ministries. It acts as a go-between for East Tennessee churches and refugees who need a sponsor. It is endorsed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"These are refugees, not (illegal) aliens," he explained. "They all are persons who have been the victims of persecution, usually religious persecution in the case of Soviets. The whole object is for a church to help them get on their own two feet and become self-sufficient.

"These are not people with green cards that will have to return to their native land," he said.

The problem is that the Bridge Refugee Service has more qualified refugees than it has churches to sponsor them, Cheverton said.

The churches who do sponsor a refugee family accept the responsibility for a startup period that usually lasts at least three months. They agree to:

- Provide housing for at least three months.
- Provide clothing and food as necessary.
- Help them find jobs.
- Make sure they get needed medical and dental attention.

"The Soviets made a big thing about

all citizens getting free medical and dental care," Cheverton said, "but it was pitiful. They all need care, especially dental."

The Potapenko family is being treated by David M. Rankin, doctor, and dentist Donald R. Harrell, both members of Calvary Church.

The two children speak "much better" English than their parents, Cheverton said. Daniel is in the eighth grade at Bearden Middle School and Elizabeth is in the sixth.

"They were taught English in their schools in the Soviet Union," Cheverton said, adding that it is not a thorough knowledge of the language.

The family has just completed its first three months in Knoxville, living in the church's missionary home.

The family has just moved into The Pines, on Francis Road, after learning some of the basics of living on a budget. — Adapted from a story written by Bob Barrett in the Knoxville News Sentinel. Used with permission.

# King James Bible still popular among Baptists

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE (BP) — Despite the proliferation of contemporary translations and paraphrases of the Bible, Southern Baptist adults still prefer the King James Version.

Sixty-two percent of respondents in the 1990 Southern Baptist Constituency Study said they prefer the King James Version of the Bible for personal use. The Living Bible trailed in a distant second place with 13 percent, followed by New International Version, nine percent; New American Standard Bible, six percent; and Revised Standard Version, five percent.

Five percent did not respond to the question in the national study conducted by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's corporate planning and research department in conjunction with HTI Custom Research of Chicago.

At the same time, sales figures of Bibles indicate Southern Baptists and others are buying contemporary versions at a record pace.

While the King James Version remained the number one seller for Holman Bibles produced by the board with 38.9 percent for 1989-90, the New International Version was a close second with 32.2 percent. Spanish Bibles sold 13.7 percent; New American Standard, 13 percent; and the Revised Standard and New Revised Standard versions, 2.1 percent.

A number of popular contemporary translations of the Bible such as the New King James Version are not available to Holman.

Sales of the New International Version outpaced the King James Version 33 percent to 23 percent for Bibles sold July-December 1990 to retail outlets by

Spring Arbor Distributors, which distributes 3700 Bibles, testaments, and Scripture portions nationwide.

Other versions garnering more than three percent of Spring Arbor sales for the period were: The Living Bible, 9.9 percent; New King James Version, 9.1 percent; New American Bible, 4.7 percent; Revised Standard and New Revised Standard, 3.5 percent; and New American Standard, 3.2 percent.

In reporting sales, Spring Arbor is careful to note their sales are affected by product availability and special promotions and their rankings represent trends only for one major wholesaler.

Spring Arbor sales of the King James Version have shown a steady decline in percentage of overall sales since 1983. The King James Version represented 31.7 percent of Spring Arbor sales for Jan.-June 1983 compared to 23 percent for July-December 1990.

At the same time, the New International Version has risen from 16.5 percent in 1983 to 33 percent of total Spring Arbor sales in 1990.

Even though Southern Baptist adults are among those buying contemporary translations, their continued preference for the King James Version does not surprise Johnnie Godwin, vice president for general publishing at the Sunday School Board.

"The King James Version has more than 350 years of history," said Godwin.

He cited a 1988 question on the Southern Baptist Uniform Church Letter, an annual statistical survey of churches, asking which Bible version churches preferred for use in worship.

The King James Version was selected by 27,555 churches; New American Standard, 2696; New International Version, 2146; and Revised Standard Version, 754.

While Godwin sings the praises of contemporary translations which help Bible students understand and apply the Scriptures, he bemoans the difficulties posed in public worship by congregations made up of people reading from varied versions of the Bible.

"If I were a pastor today, I'd state the translation I plan to preach from. I would have matching pew Bibles so we could all read together from the same version," said Godwin.

The introduction of the Revised Standard Version in 1952 stirred angry protests from many Christians, Godwin noted. However, two generations and numerous contemporary translations later, there is "openness and acceptance" to other Bible translations and paraphrases.

The popularity of the New International Version "already has increased more than I would have imagined in my lifetime," Godwin said.

Product lines built around the NIV should add to its use, he noted. The NIV is the base translation for The New American Commentary being published by Broadman Press and in October will become the contemporary translation used in Life and Work Sunday School curriculum produced by the board.

Rapidly escalating changes in the English language have led to revisions of several contemporary translations, including the Revised Standard Version and the Good News Bible. Godwin said. He recommends a serious Bible student have at least two Bibles — a King James Version and a contemporary translation.

"The KJV is the version most people still know and use. However, language and textual developments have changed so much through the years that readers may find the KJV to be laborious reading and may even come up with the opposite meaning of the Hebrew or Greek text behind the translation. The contemporary translations have taken care of that," said Godwin.

Godwin, who said he personally prefers the NIV among contemporary translations, also recommends students own and use a study Bible such as the Disciple's Study Bible published by Holman.

## TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

Does Jesus really make a "new creature" out of us? Some of the evidence being gathered by the pollsters raises a doubt about it. The evidence seems to be that we who claim to know the Lord are not much different from the world about us. It seems to indicate that we are guided more by the culture about us than we are by the Lord.



LOWRIE

One pollster discovered that we claim to believe in the Ten Commandments, but we do not know what they are and do not believe them to be binding. I suppose we would rename them the Ten Suggestions. He discovered that seven percent of us would be willing to kill if the price was right. Twenty-five percent of us are willing to abandon our family for a price.

Our own Sunday School Board has discovered through an extensive poll what most of us already knew. Thirty-five percent of our members rarely ever come to church, if they come at all. A full eight percent of our people admit to being less involved in the

church now than they were in 1986. Forty-five percent of our people have not been in Sunday School or Discipleship Training in the last six months, and nine percent attend once a month or less. Eleven percent of those surveyed contributed nothing to their church in the last year, and 13 percent more gave \$50 or less. Fifty-four percent of us gave from zero to \$500. Obviously there are not too many tithers among us.

What conclusions do you draw from the surveys? Obviously our talk is better than our walk. We need to remember the stinging words of our Lord to those whose religion is all "talk."

It is my conviction that Jesus Christ is still producing "new creatures." One surveyor estimated that about ten percent of the professing Christians in this country give evidence of this transforming relationship to Christ. They concluded that this group is fulfilled and happy, enjoying the fruits of this relationship.

So what do we need? It appears to me that all of us need to draw near to our Lord, to seek a deeper knowledge of Him, and to learn to love Him more. Ultimately, He is the one who makes the difference. He is still creating "new creatures."

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# TenneScene ...Starting at Skullbone, over to Cheap Hill, then on to Deer Lodge ...

## Churches ...

Members of Oak Grove Church, Milan, celebrated homecoming June 30. Roger Mullins delivered the morning sermon and The Mullins Family provided special music.

The congregation of Poplar Creek Church, Clinton, recently dedicated the new church parsonage.

The new educational wing at Mount Harmony Church, Niota, was dedicated June 9.

A spiritual homecoming will be held at Calvary Church, Knoxville, July 8-10. Speakers will be Fred Wolfe, pastor, Cottage Hills Church, Mobile, Ala.; Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellevue Church, Memphis; Bobby Boyles, pastor, First Church, Moore, Okla.; Jerry Vines, pastor, First Church, Jacksonville, Fla.; D. L. Lowrie, Tennessee Baptist Convention executive director; and Jay Strack, evangelist from Dallas. Music will be provided by the Calvary Church choir, Leslie Sexton, Gerald Wolfe, and Caryl Kitchens. Robert C. Burch is pastor.

William George will speak at homecoming July 14 at Calvary Church, Union City. The Elect will provide special music.

## Ordinations ...

Clayton Owen was ordained to the Gospel ministry June 2 at First

Church, McKenzie. He has been called as the church's associate pastor and minister of youth.

Bob Hatley was ordained to the ministry June 30 at Notchey Creek Church, Madisonville. He has been called as pastor to Druid Hills Church, Tellico Plains.

## Revival ...

First Church, Donelson, will hold revival July 11-17. Roy Fish will be evangelist.

## People ...

Ethelene Holt Rich died June 24 in Nashville. She was the wife of C. Winfield "Windy" Rich, a retired minister of education who served for many years at Temple Church, Memphis, and Belmont Heights Church, Nashville.

Evangelist W. B. Oakley of Dyer recently received the honorary doctor of divinity degree from Union University, Jackson, during graduate ceremonies.

## Hospitals ...

Baptist Home Plus, the non-profit home health care affiliate of Baptist Memorial Hospital, Memphis, has relocated to Nonconnah Office Park, 2603 Corporate Avenue. Baptist Home Plus provides rehabilitative, preventive, restorative, and recuperative home care through nurses, therapists,

nursing assistants, homemakers, and companions/live-ins. Services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the home or hospital.

Also, a new addition to the Baptist Heart Center, the cardiovascular intensive care unit, opened June 27. The Heart Center includes a coronary care unit, cardiac rehabilitation services, cardiac catheterization labs, non-invasive cardiac labs, and nuclear cardiology.

## Missions ...

A volunteer mission team from Meridian Church, Knoxville, will be in Michigan July 13-20 working with Beaconsfield Mission, Detroit, in Vacation Bible School, visitation, community canvassing, and restoration projects.

First Church, Manchester, volunteers will go to New Orleans, La., July 6 to conduct backyard Bible clubs.

A construction crew from First Church, Kingston, recently returned from Terra Alta, W.V., where they built a sanctuary building for Evergreen Church.

A bus filled with medical, school and construction supplies, powdered milk, and infants clothing recently stopped in Memphis en route to the Baptist university in Managua, Nicaragua. The bus was bought and supplied with funds raised by the Baptist Peace

Fellowship of North America, based in Memphis. Prescott Memorial Church, Memphis, donated \$1200 toward the purchase price of the bus and supplies. The Baptist World Alliance also donated \$10,000. The bus is a gift to the university and will be used to transport agricultural students to the countryside for hands-on training.

Several Clinton Association churches are involved in mission work during the summer months.

Youth and adults from Black Oak Church, Clinton, returned June 15 from High Springs, Fla., where they worked with former director of missions Charles Pinkerton in backyard Bible clubs, construction projects, and surveys. Edgemoor Church, Clinton, Acteens Activators will visit Cheboygan, Mich., Aug. 10-19 and work in backyard Bible clubs. First Church, Andersonville, youth and adults will go to Barnsville, Ohio, Aug. 2-10 to work in backyard Bible clubs and a revival. Youth from Robertsville Church, Oak Ridge, worked in day camps with drama, puppetry, and clowning in Branson, Mo., June 22-30. South Clinton Church, Clinton, Acteens Activators worked in backyard Bible clubs at an inner-city park and at the Baptist Center in Birmingham, Ala., June 9-15.

## Leadership ...

Longfield Church, Lake City, called Kerry Hatmaker, a member of the church and a pharmacy student at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., as music leader.

John Adams from Union University, Jackson, has been called as interim pastor to Hillcrest Church, Dyersburg.

Gerald Ackerman resigned as pastor of Zion Hill Church, Friendship, June 2 to move to Sidney, Mont.

Dutch Bottom Church, Newport, called Barry Warren as pastor.

Quin Bernhardt recently joined the staff of Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga, as associate pastor.

Noel Edwards, pastor of Ramer Church, Ramer, is retiring after 45 years in the ministry. He will be available for interim work, supply, and revivals. His phone number is (901) 587-0795

## Milledgeville Church calls Robert McCullar

Retired pastor Robert McCullar is leading Milledgeville Church.

McCullar, a former school teacher and Southern Baptist home missionary, comes to the position from Mason Wells Church, Jackson. He also has served as pastor of Palestine Church, Henderson; Porter's Creek Church, Middleton; First Church, Bernie, Mo.; Memorial Church, Poplar Bluff, Mo.; White Church, Holly Spings, Miss.; Oak Grove Church, Milan; Tishoming Chapel Church, Corinth, Miss.; and First Church, Dielstadt, Mo. His home missionary service was in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Ramer native was ordained in 1951 at Mount Gilead Church, Bethel Springs. He is a graduate of Blue Mountain (Miss.) College, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

McCullar and his wife, Gwen, have two children and four grandchildren.

## World Changers to serve again in Briceville

MEMPHIS — Hundreds of Southern Baptist youth from seven states will return to Briceville July 13-20 for a second World Changers missions project to be held in the Tennessee coal mining community.

In 1990, about 135 youth participated in a pilot project in Briceville. This year more than 250 youth will return to the area for one of six World Changers National Work Projects being held at different locations across the United States.

World Changers is an eight-day coeducational missions education project for high school youth sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood

Commission. Michael Pearson, director of missions for Clinton Association, said many Briceville residents are still feeling the impact of last year's pilot project.

"World Changers has helped the churches and people in this area to understand that Southern Baptists are here to help and to see that the love of Christ and Christian people is still intact even in a world like the one we have today," Pearson said.

Tennessee churches participating in World Changers are First Church, Collierville; Second Church, Memphis; and Central Church, Bearden, Knox-

ville. Other states represented are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Nebraska, and South Carolina.

Billy Godwin, youth minister at First Church, Collierville, said World Changers will give his youth the opportunity to put their faith into action.

"We do so many things designed to draw kids in that a lot of times we don't offer any service opportunities for the youth," Godwin said. "This gives them an opportunity to give something back."

"I want help them understand what the Bible says about it's more blessed to give than to receive."

During the eight days of the Briceville project, youth will repair roofs, put up siding, rebuild porches, paint, weatherproof, and clean homes in the Clinton Association area which includes Briceville.

"There are about 20 projects lined up," said Jeff Roach, project coordinator and minister of youth at Second Church, Memphis.

"I'm hoping that the kids will see that when working together with a common bond and a common goal to share Christ's love, a lot can get done," Roach said.

To qualify to participate in a national project, youth must complete ten sessions of missions education study and a local missions project. World Changers is for youth who have completed the ninth grade or who are 15 years old.

More than 1300 youth from 17 states are registered at the six World Changers projects this summer. Other locations are South Rio Grande Valley, Texas; St. Louis, Mo.; Birmingham, Ala.; Los Angeles, Calif.; and Eastern Shore, Va.



**ETHNICS MEET** — Tennessee Baptist ethnic leaders met recently at the Baptist Center in Brentwood to discuss and plan strategies for reaching ethnics across the state. From left, Samuel S. Chhum, pastor, Cambodian mission of Silverdale Church, Chattanooga; Khamsorn Vilaysack, pastor, Laotian mission of Southeast Church, Murfreesboro; Hannah Kung, president of Chinese Fellowship from Chinese mission of Woodmont Church, Nashville; Sei-Hun Kim, language catalytic missionary for Nashville and Concord associations; Eliab Saenz, pastor, Hispanic mission, First Church, Nashville; and Terry Sharp, program associate, TBC Missions Department. — Photo by Greer Ruble

# Baptists in Guatemala prepare for cholera outbreak

By Mary E. Speidel

GUATEMALA CITY (BP) — While the cholera epidemic stalks Latin America, Baptists in Guatemala are bracing for the worst.

Since the epidemic broke out in Peru in late January, it has spread into Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile. So far about 212,000 cholera cases have been reported in South America and about 2000 people have died. Some health officials predict as many as 40,000 people may die of cholera in the next three years.

And now world health officials warn Central America, Mexico, and some areas of the Caribbean also are threatened by cholera.

Baptists in Guatemala are heeding

## Brentwood hosts preschool training

A "Tennessee Baptist Preschool Extravaganza" will be held July 20 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Brentwood Church in Brentwood.

The program, sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention Sunday School Department, is for Sunday School teachers; church staffs; preschool committees, directors, administrators, and parents; weekday early education directors and teachers; and day care, mother's day out, and kindergarten workers.

Participants at the Extravaganza will have an opportunity to learn practical ideas, techniques, and resources in preschool Sunday School and church weekday early education programs.

Program leaders include personnel from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Registration fee is \$20 for materials and lunch. For registration forms or additional information, contact Martha Couch, TBC Sunday School Department, at (615) 371-2054.

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that warning.

A delegation of Guatemalan Baptist leaders recently met with Magda Bianchi de Serrano, president of Guatemala's social welfare program, and another official, the vice minister of health, to discuss cholera prevention. Mrs. Serrano is the wife of Jorge Serrano, Guatemala's first elected evangelical president.

The group wanted to learn the government's plans for cholera prevention and how they might be able to help, said Joe Bruce, director of Southern Baptist mission work in Middle America and Canada. The delegation included Bruce, Don Doyle, chairman of the Southern Baptist mission organization in Guatemala, and three Guatemalan Baptist leaders. The meeting, held in the governmental palace in Guatemala City, was arranged by an evangelical lawyer with ties to the government.

Central America is vulnerable to the

## Order new curriculum now, Franks says

A new Discipleship Training preschool curriculum will be in effect Oct. 1, reported Cindy Franks, preschool /children's director, Tennessee Baptist Convention Discipleship Training Department.

"Preschoolers-at-Church" curriculum will be produced on a quarterly basis and include a resource kit, teacher's book, and pupil's take-home leaflets.

The materials will replace Preschool Bible Teacher A, Preschool Bible Teacher B, Preschool Bible Teacher C, and Bible Story Time. These materials, which have included both Sunday School and Discipleship Training curricula, will provide only Sunday School teaching helps as of Oct. 1, ex-

spread of cholera because of a lack of sanitation in many areas — especially in rural areas and crowded slums, Bruce said. Since cholera reportedly is transmitted through human waste, it spreads quickly in areas with no sewage treatment or running water. Cholera bacteria contaminate drinking water and food.

If the epidemic hits Central America, "It will spread like wildfire," predicted Bruce, who is based in Guatemala.

To avoid that possibility, Mrs. Serrano and other officials asked Baptists to help in a prevention program of cholera education. Baptists also were asked to prepare to help with medicines and medical personnel if cholera strikes the region.

Guatemalan Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries are coordinating the production of an instructional video and brochure on how to avoid getting cholera.

plained Franks.

Although churches must order separate Discipleship Training preschool teaching materials, the new curriculum, which has less pieces, is easier to use, noted Franks. The curriculum also will include materials on parenting and family life that will be shared with parents, she added.

"Preschoolers-at-Church" Discipleship Training curriculum may be ordered now from the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville. Other questions may be directed to Franks at (615) 371-2053.

The video will be produced by Southern Baptist media missionaries. The brochure is being written by David Harms, missionary physician in Honduras.

Both items will be available to Baptists and missionaries elsewhere in Latin America, Bruce said. He expects the video and its soundtrack to be broadcast on television and radio throughout the region.

Meanwhile, Baptists in South America continue to help in the fight against cholera. The majority of cholera cases have occurred in Peru, with about 190,800 reported cases, and Ecuador, with close to 21,000.

In Peru, almost no new cases have been reported on the coast, but cholera has spread into the Amazon jungle, said missionary Hayward Armstrong. In Iquitos, a city on the Amazon River, some 200 people have died.

To help with needs in that region, Baptists are providing 25,000 liters of intravenous fluids, part of a 216-ton shipment of medical supplies sent by Texas Baptists in April. Cholera treatment involves rehydrating patients and fighting the bacteria with antibiotics.

Much of the shipment, sent in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has been distributed throughout Peru. But some of the supplies have been stored for later use, Armstrong said. Health officials predict a major resurgence of cholera in Peru next January.

Further distribution of supplies has been complicated by "increased fervor" in a medical workers' strike, Armstrong said.

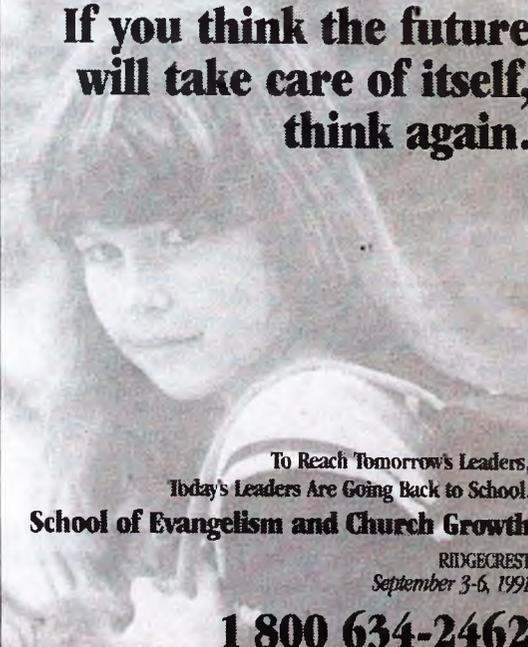
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# Solomon succeeds David as king

By C. David Brown, pastor; Mine City Church, Ducktown

I Kings records David's last activities and his death. The account of David's last days are mind-boggling to believers today. It is difficult enough for us to understand a Godly king having a harem. It is more difficult to understand the cultural reasoning that saw nothing wrong with securing a young lady to help restore the body heat of their king. Nevertheless, the events are shared as if they were appropriate at that time.



BROWN

Beautiful Abishag of Shunem "cherished the king and ministered to him." (v. 4). "The king knew her not," that is, he did not have sexual relations with her. David is pictured as a person who was too old to care for himself.

The next scene described in I Kings pictures the importance of being prop-

erly related to Godly and discerning people. Although David was too old to think rightly, those nearest to him knew he had an allegiance to God and His will. The prophet Nathan cared for God's people and the reputation of God's anointed King. David's oldest living son, Adonijah, had taken measures to set himself up as the next king of Israel. Nathan heard what Adonijah had done. God had chosen Solomon to succeed David. In 2 Samuel 12:24-25, Nathan was told by the Lord to go to David and tell him to name Solomon "Jedidiah," which means "beloved of the Lord." The name marked Solomon as successor to the throne. (See also 2 Chronicles 22:7-10.)

Adonijah's steps to make himself king placed the lives of Solomon and his mother, Bathsheba, in jeopardy. (v. 21). Nathan took matters into his own hands. He advised Bathsheba to go to David and share with him the developments regarding Adonijah. She wisely took the advice, telling the king exactly what was taking place. (vv.

17-21). As she spoke, Nathan arrived, insisting it was the king's duty to declare who was king. David saw the seriousness of the developments and took immediate action and publicly proclaimed that Solomon would be the next king. (vv. 38-40).

**BIBLE BOOK**  
**July 7 Lesson**  
 Basic Passage: I Kings 1:1-2:46

The noise and report of Solomon's coronation ceremony caused followers of Adonijah celebrating at En-rogel to desert Adonijah. Adonijah himself was so overcome with fear that he fled into the Tabernacle where he "caught hold on the horns of the altar," (v. 51). Such action was supposed to guarantee safety, (Exodus 21:14). Solomon took no action against his half-brother, but allowed him to go home in peace provided he did not act wickedly, (vv. 52-53).

Before David's death, he charged Solomon to obey the Lord and walk in

His ways, and to teach his children to do the same. As long as this charge was kept by David's descendants, the Davidic lineage of kings would continue, (v. 4). God's blessings for all of us are determined by obeying the Lord and walking in His ways.

Solomon saw Adonijah's request to marry Abishag, a member of David's harem and thus an inheritor (vv. 3-4), as a scheme to gain the throne. He ordered Adonijah to be executed. Then Solomon dismissed the priest Abiathar who had sided with Adonijah. Solomon then killed Joab who was already frightened by the series of events. Solomon dictated certain conditions and limitations for Shemei and when these provisions were broken, Shemei also was killed "and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon." (v. 46).

History is God's story of prophetic fulfillment. Obedience to God's declared will in David's life was rewarded. We are also accountable to God for His revealed will. God's Word is the revealed truth of God for us today. We must not only read it and study it, we must live by it.

# Rise up and build the wall

By Gary Williams, director of education and promotion; Madison-Chester and Crockett County Associations

Our studies over the next few weeks will teach us valuable lessons about prayer, sacrifice, and persistence. Nehemiah, the author of and chief figure in the book, gave up a responsible and wealthy position under Artaxerxes, king of Persia in 445 B.C., to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and revive the Jews as a nation.

Throughout the book, Nehemiah used the word "I" and gives evidence of the intensely personal nature of this narrative.



WILLIAMS

In Chapter 1, Nehemiah is visited by a group from Jerusalem. Hanani, identified as the brother of Nehemiah (ch. 1:2, ch. 7:2), is among the group bringing distressful news about the condition of the city of Jerusalem.

**CONVENTION UNIFORM**  
**July 7 Lesson**  
 Basic Passage: Nehemiah 1:1-2:20

Nehemiah, somewhat surprised at this report, responded with deep grief (v. 4). He began to weep, mourn, and fast, a practice he would repeat many times in the days ahead.

Nehemiah felt the need for a powerful God, a covenant-keeper, a merciful God, who could help him. Nehemiah

prayed earnestly for the forgiveness of sins; and those of his people, his family, and himself. This was the first step if restoration was to occur.

Without haste and with careful thought, Nehemiah approached the king to request permission to go to Jerusalem and give direction to the reconstruction (ch. 2: 1-5). The king was attentive and granted letters to Nehemiah that would insure his safe travel through neighboring provinces to Judah. Additional letters assured Nehemiah that much needed materials would be supplied for the reconstruction project.

Nehemiah's efforts did not go unopposed. When he arrived at his destination, Nehemiah received reports that Sanballat, a Samaritan leader, and Tobiah, thought to be a local leader,

were disturbed about his reconstruction efforts (ch. 2:10, 19). Therefore, Nehemiah was cautious and made a secret inspection of the walls at night (v. 15).

Nehemiah, a man of action, called on the people to help him rebuild the wall. It was a disgrace (ch. 2:17) for the Holy City to be without its walls. Nehemiah gave credit where credit was due. He realized through persistent prayer that God's hand was upon them. The people responded, "Let us rise up and build."

Nehemiah's message was one that has pierced the ages both before and since his time. While God does not condone our sin, He continues to love us. Through prayer and confession, we are able to gain godly strength to tackle any task given to us by Him.

# Trusting God to provide

By Billy Cooper, minister of education; Woodmont Church, Nashville

When I learned what it meant to be a disciple some years ago, it was staggering and exciting. The verses in John 15 became a guide for daily living.

To learn to trust God daily by filling your spiritual well with God's Word and building spiritual strength through prayer, helps one to mature enough to be ready to face any obstacle.

In the Bible study passage for this week, we deal with an individual who had to lean on God completely. His name was Elijah.

Elijah, God's prophet in Israel, knew what it meant to trust God. He had tremendous faith.

Elijah lived in a troubled time. Ahab was king of Israel, the northern kingdom. The kingdom, while filled with sin and corruption, was still powerful. Elijah would come to know

that his trust and dependence on God would carry him through troubled times.

We are told Ahab had done more evil in the sight of God than any before him. He compounded his difficulty by marrying Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal.

Into this evil and blasphemy Elijah came to tell Ahab of God's judgment upon him, his family, and the people of Israel.

The Bible does not tell us how God spoke to Elijah, but we know that the message got Ahab's attention.

Elijah told Ahab of an impending drought, when there would be neither dew nor rain in Israel. Elijah did not give a time on the duration of the drought, but Jesus eluded to it in Luke 4:25, referring to the time as three and one half years.

Israel was dependent on spring and winter rain for crops and water for livestock. Without rain, economic disaster would take its toll on the entire nation. The impending disaster

was a direct challenge to the Canaanite storm god, Baal, by Yahweh, true God of Israel and creator of all things.

The drought could also have endangered the prophet's life.

Ahab and Jezebel sought to kill Elijah, but God protected him. Elijah went to an isolated place east of the Jordan River. God used his creature, the raven, to provide food for Elijah. What a marvelous way to provide for Elijah's needs!

**LIFE AND WORK**  
**July 7 Lesson**  
 Basic Passage: I Kings 17

God provided a second hiding place for Elijah, a village in Phoenicia. Although this was pagan territory, Jezebel's home land, God provided a widow, a worshipper of Yahweh, to provide for Elijah. She had received God's command and was obedient to it.

Elijah told the woman, on arrival at Zerephath, to give him drink and bread for him and for the woman and her son. Elijah assured her that the oil and meal she had would last the woman and her son through the drought.

As Jesus would later perform a

miracle with the boy's barley cakes and fish to feed thousands, so did God use Elijah to be the bearer of this miracle.

As miracles were performed in Elijah's day and by our Lord Jesus, so do miracles occur today. God still acts today as He has all through history to accomplish His purpose.

As in the miracle of providing food for Elijah, the widow, and her son, so does God further demonstrate His mighty miraculous power. The woman's son became ill and he died. God used Elijah to bring the boy back to life. The woman had been obedient to God to provide for Elijah. Because of her faith and trust in God, God restored the boy to life. The mother gave all she had, and God honored her faithfulness by giving her son back to her.

So many times we saw Jesus restore health and life to human beings to whom He said, "Your faith has made you whole."

God wants us to be whole persons in Him. He wants us to trust Him, love Him, be obedient, and live daily for Him.

Believe me, we will visibly see the result, if we, as His disciples, live daily for Him.

**(BP) BRIEFLY**

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

**Wife of Guatemalan president requests prayers for peace**

GUATEMALA CITY — The wife of Guatemala's president has called on Southern Baptists to pray for peace talks in the 30-year civil war between leftist guerrillas and the government. Magda Bianchi de Serrano, wife of Guatemala's first elected evangelical president, Jorge Serrano, requested the prayers during a recent meeting with Baptist leaders at the governmental palace in Guatemala City. The Baptist delegation included Joe Bruce, director of Southern Baptist mission work in Middle America and Canada, Guatemala missionary chairman Don Doyle, and three Guatemalan Baptist leaders.

The Baptists met with Mrs. Serrano, president of Guatemala's social welfare program, and another official to discuss cholera prevention plans. World health officials predict South America's cholera epidemic will eventually spread into Central America. During the discussion Mrs. Serrano changed the subject to Guatemala's civil war. Peace talks have been part of her husband's political agenda since he was elected in January, but negotiations so far have been deadlocked, according to news reports. A second round of peace negotiations between the government and rebels of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union began June 17 in Mexico.

Mrs. Serrano described the unsuccessful peace talks in spiritual terms, saying "the devil had blinded the eyes" of people who were trying to block peace. Bruce said. She asked Southern Baptist churches to join in praying the dialogues would bring "the signing of a just and lasting peace accord" to end the long civil war in Guatemala. Bruce promised to pass on Mrs. Serrano's prayer request and offered to pray with her during the meeting. Standing in a circle in the palace, the group prayed for peace in the conflict, which has killed about 120,000 people in Guatemala. The meeting was a first between Baptist leaders in Guatemala and either of the Serranos, who are Pentecostal.

**Thomason attacked by pit bulls in Georgia**

COLUMBUS, Ga. — John Thomason, executive director of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention is recuperating after being attacked by two pit bull dogs.

Thomason was jogging on the morning of June 12 on a road near his parents' home near Columbus when he said he heard some barking behind him. He turned and saw the two dogs chasing him. "One dog went straight for my Achilles' tendon on my right foot, and the other one went for my left hand and forearm," Thomason said.

After knocking him to the ground, the dogs tried to pull him off the road to a wooded area, Thomason said. "A Georgia power employee in a truck saw me waving my bloody hand and stopped to help me. Fortunately, he had a radio so he radioed the county sheriff and an ambulance. If he hadn't stopped, I don't know what would have happened. I guess I got help about as fast as I could have."

The power company employee arranged for someone to call Thomason's wife, Eleanor, and his parents to tell them what had happened. They met him at the hospital.

Thomason was to have been dismissed June 20, and will stay at his parents' home for a period of time. He said he did not know when he might be able to return home to Wyoming.

**Birmingham chosen as site for 1994 Acteens Convention**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union officials have named Birmingham as the site for the National Acteens Convention to be held June 21-24, 1994.

The National Acteens Convention is held once every five years for Acteens members and their leaders. Acteens is the WMU-sponsored missions organization for girls in grades seven through 12.

Registration for NAC will open sometime during 1993 and continue up to the time of the convention. Only those who register in advance will be allowed to participate in NAC activities.

**Drugs worst problem, teens say; adults disagree**

RIDGECREST, N.C. — Teens placed drugs at the top of the list of the biggest problems they face today, but adults claim peer pressure is the number one nemesis of youth, surveys revealed.

A Gallup poll listed 54 percent of American youth as saying drugs are their biggest foe, while 12 percent listed alcohol as second. Pregnancy was third with 11 percent; peer pressure, ten percent; AIDS, five percent; and parents, growth, no job, and suicide each at two percent.

On the other hand, adults believe peer pressure is the top concern of young people, according to an informal survey taken during Summer Youth Celebrations at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Centers last year. Adults listed personal problems as the second biggest problem of youth; family, third; and spiritual, fourth.

Young people surveyed at Glorieta and Ridgecrest last year listed drugs as their biggest problem; peer pressure, second; alcohol, third; sex, fourth; and family, last.

"Parents seem to dwell more on peer pressure as a problem, according to the survey, than youth do," said Barry Sneed, youth specialist in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Discipleship Training department. "Youth see peer pressure as a problem, but they don't see it as a big problem like parents do."

**Tennessee Baptist goes 'home again' to native Morocco**

By Lee Holloway

NASHVILLE (BP) — Allen Bennett, a member of Judson Church, Nashville, found himself well-remembered recently, even by some people he had never met.

After an absence of 14 years, Bennett returned to his hometown of Melilla, a Spanish colony on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. He visited the small Baptist church where he became a Christian 30 years before.

"It has not grown much in number, but for sure it has grown spiritually," he observes. Many active members from the days of Bennett's youth still are there, but now their children are leaders in the church and preach.

"During all those years, these people remembered, and talked about, and

prayed for their young Christian brother who had gone off to America. So when I returned, even the youngest ones, and some I had never met, knew about me and welcomed me as an old friend."

Bennett actually moved from Melilla in 1969, living for a time in Lebanon, England, Egypt, and Germany, with visits home annually. Then in 1977 he and his Egyptian-born wife and Beirut-born daughter moved to the United States. Their second daughter was born shortly after their arrival in Nashville. Trips home became too far and too expensive.

For more than 12 years Bennett has been a printer and shipping superintendent for the Seminary Extension program in the Southern Baptist Con-

vention Building. On his own time he has been involved in ministries among Arabic and Spanish-speaking people in Nashville.

Bennett became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1983, at which time he adopted his American name of Allen Mark Bennett. Back in Morocco he still is known by his original name of Ahmed Benali.

He was just 18 when he began preaching in the Melilla church during times when they were without a pastor — which was most of the time. He estimates he preached a total of five years out of seven. He also became a deacon, a Sunday School teacher, and youth leader in the church. On the first Sunday of his recent 12-day return visit, he led in worship once again.

Getting to visit with all his friends and relatives posted quite a challenge. Bennett was forced to set up a daily appointment schedule to fit everyone in. Meeting in homes and cafes, these visits usually lasted from 30 minutes to an hour. "The whole time I was there, they never stopped." One niece traveled more than 22 hours each way from her home in Spain to see him.

"In my younger years I had been able to touch the lives of many of these people," Bennett says. "Strengthening those relationships was one of my reasons for wanting to go back at this time."

Another major reason was his aging parents. His Arab father is "very old. He says he is 113, and I believe him," Bennett said. His 78-year-old mother is a Berber, the mountain tribe indigenous to North Africa. Bennett says because of their advanced years they wanted to see him even more than he wanted to see them. During his visit with her, his mother said to him in her Berber language, "Now I can die because I have seen you again."

Now that he is back in the United States, Bennett finds himself thinking about going back to his hometown to stay. "I would like to do it for just one reason: I see many opportunities to witness to those who never heard about salvation in Christ."

Making such a move now would require "too much adjustment" for his two school-age daughters, he feels, but he plans to keep thinking about the idea and discussing it with his wife.

"If it doesn't happen before then," he says, "the day after I retire I will have my ticket to go back."

**CLC's Whitehead applauds Supreme Court ruling**

WASHINGTON (BP) — The United States Supreme Court's decision supporting a ban on nude dancing is a victory for "common sense" in the arena of freedom of expression, the general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission said.

The Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision June 21 a law forbidding public nudity can be enforced to prohibit totally nude dancing in bars and adult bookstores. The court said the law was not a violation of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of expression.

The Court's opinion, written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, said nude dancing is "expressive conduct within the outer perimeters of the First Amendment, though we view it as only marginally so." Government has a

right to limit such a form of expression because "it was not the dancing that was prohibited, but simply its being done in the nude," the Court said.

"Dancing may be expressive activity, but the manner of dancing — nude — may be regulated," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Christian Life Commission.

"The dancers are free to dance and to speak their minds about nudity," Whitehead said. "But the fact that they are dancing does not permit them to ignore the law against public nudity, just as dancing while smoking marijuana would not transform the smoking into legally protected 'free speech.'"

"It is refreshing to see such common sense prevail in free-speech litigation," Whitehead said.

Indiana's public indecency law, adopted in 1988, banned total nudity in public. It was challenged by two South Bend businesses, the Kitty Kat Lounge, a bar, and the Glen Theatre, which houses a "bookstore" featuring live entertainment. They sued, maintaining the state's requirement their dancers wear pasties and a G-string violated the First Amendment.

The district court ruled such nude dancing was not protected by the Constitution, an opinion reversed by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

"The dancers at the Kitty Kat Lounge claimed a constitutional right to dance naked on bar-room table tops covered only by the First Amendment," Whitehead said. "The Supreme Court has told them to get some clothes on."