

Baptist and Reflector

VOL. 157/NO. 2/JANUARY 8, 1992

STATEWIDE EDITION

NEWSJOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION

Reviewing Tennessee, SBC

College funding, hospital ties 1991 top news items

By Wm. Fletcher Allen

What were the top newsmaking stories of 1991 in the Baptist world?

Tennessee Baptists have the unique opportunity of viewing that world through two windows — Tennessee Baptist life, and what happens in downtown Nashville where offices of several Southern Baptist entities are headquartered.

The news of 1991 involves college funding, a new relationship with Nashville's Baptist Hospital, a shortfall budget report, and Tennesseans involved in missions around the world.

Those are some of the headlines in Tennessee Baptist Convention actions.

On the Southern Baptist Convention level:

The new Baptist Hymnal proved to be a smashing success. Lloyd Elder retired as Sunday School Board president, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was stripped of all SBC funding (giving the Christian Life Commission its entire program on the SBC level), Paige Patterson was fired then reinstated as president of Criswell College, Southeastern Seminary was put on probation by an accrediting agency, and the Foreign Mission Board trustees voted solidly to cut off funding to the Baptist Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, in a tiff over a faculty member.

On the TBC front, the eleven-months struggle over election of trustees for Baptist Hospital, Nashville, was settled finally at the November convention in Memphis. A ten-point proposal was hammered out by hospital officers and trustees and Executive Board members for presentation to convention messengers Nov. 19.

The agreement allows the hospital to elect its trustees from a pool of those who have served previously, for at

least two years. In December 1990, hospital trustees had opted to elect trustees without restrictions.

Other points dealt with chaplaincy programs, service to Tennessee Baptists, hospital reports to the convention, and others less vital — but the second news-making item was a one-time missions gift of \$1.7 million from the hospital to the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Convention messengers approved the agreement by a large majority, and the \$1.7 million was used immediately to pay the remaining portion owed for the Baptist Building in Brentwood, now two years old.

Trustees from the pool will serve with Baptist Health Care Systems Inc., with Baptist Hospital becoming the parent body.

Overcoming a stalemate over equalization of funding for Belmont University, Carson-Newman College, and Union University, convention messengers approved over-whelmingly a compromise which raised the TBC budget to \$28 million.

The increased budget would equalize 1992 funding of \$1.75 million for the

three TBC schools. The Executive Board has proposed that 2.9 percent of the SBC portion of the TBC Cooperative Program be used for the equalization. Other motions failed, and the new budget was approved.

The budget shortfall, which may have been caused by the national economic recession and Southern Baptist controversy, as well as other events, affected Baptist departmental work. Departments worked at diminished budgets during most of the year.

Another top news story from the Memphis convention was the election of Ron Phillips over Howard Olive as convention president in a close election. Phillips is pastor of Central Church, Hixson, and Olive is pastor of Monte Vista, Maryville.

Long discussion on the two main agenda items may have caused low attendance for the election and other major convention business.

Jim Stroud, pastor of Third Church, Knoxville, resigned as convention parliamentarian on the eve of the sessions. He had been appointed by then convention president Bill Bates. He

— College funding, page 5

State CP receipts below budget

Typical of Tennessee Baptist Convention budget news over the past few months, reports thus far are mixed.

Cooperative Program gifts from the churches in December amounted to \$1,734,277.24 — almost \$59,000 above December of 1990.

However, two months into the budget year, the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program budget income is almost 30 percent below budget needs.

Total CP income for the budget year amounts to \$3,307,610.41 — or \$126,472.48 less than previous year at the same time.

Convention messengers voted last November to increase the budget to \$28,290,960. That action came as a solution to equalizing convention support of Belmont University, Carson-Newman College, and Union University — without reducing the Southern Baptist Convention's share of TBC Cooperative Program funds.

Under the 1991-92 budget, gifts would need to average slightly more than \$2.3 million each month.

D. L. Lowrie, TBC executive director/treasurer, said the November and December totals may not present a true picture for the Cooperative Program the rest of the budget year. December was better than November — and also better than the previous December.

As a precautionary measure, all TBC departments, as well as Woman's Missionary Union and Baptist and Reflector, will operate at 85 percent of budget.

Executive search narrows; report due in February

By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman is the leading candidate to succeed Harold C. Bennett as president/treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, according to sources close to the search committee.

However, Julian Motley, a Durham, N.C., pastor and chairman of the Executive Committee's search committee, said a final decision is not expected until later this month. Asked by Baptist Press if Chapman is the committee's choice, Motley said the committee has looked at a number of people but is not ready to make a decision public.

"It is my hope, by the end of the month, we will be able to officially identify the recommendation of the committee," Motley said. The ten-member search committee will make a recommendation to the Feb. 17-19 regular meeting of the Executive Committee.

Several Executive Committee members, however, who do not want to be identified, have said Chapman will be the committee's recommendation. Motley said he has been called by a number of reporters regarding the speculation but would neither confirm nor deny the report.

Bennett announced at an Executive Committee meeting in Atlanta in June

that he would retire Oct. 1, 1992. He would continue as a consultant until Oct. 1, 1993. Bennett, 67, has held the executive position since 1979, only the fourth person to hold that position.

The president/treasurer of the Executive Committee heads a small staff but, as chief executive, helps guide the committee which distributes funds to 19 various SBC agencies and entities

Jan. 20-21, Nashville

received from state conventions and churches. For the 1991-92 budget year the committee expects to distribute more than \$140 million in Cooperative Program funds. The committee also acts for the SBC "ad interim" in all matters "not otherwise provided for."

One aspect which the Executive Committee would need to resolve if Chap-

— Executive search, page 5

Draper speaks at conference

James Draper, Bob Agee, and Jack Graham will address the 1992 State Evangelism Conference Jan. 20-21. It will meet at Belmont Heights Church, Nashville.

Other speakers include Don Wilton, professor of evangelism, New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, and president, Abundant Life Ministries, Inc.; Jim Pollard, missionary church starter in Chile from Taylors, S.C.; and Ron Barker, associate director, associational evangelism department, Home Mission Board, SBC.

Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, is former Vice President for Religious Affairs at Union University, Jackson. Graham, pastor, Prestonwood Church, Dallas, Texas, is president of the 1992 SBC Pastors' Conference. Draper is president of the Sunday School Board, Nashville.

Other speakers include Ron Phillips,



DRAPER



AGEE

pastor, Central Church, Hixson, and president, Tennessee Baptist Convention; E. K. Bailey, senior pastor, Concord Missionary Church, Dallas; Jim Burleson, associate pastor of corporate ministries, Two Rivers Church, Nashville; and Don Womack, Memphis-based vocational evangelist.

The annual emphasis on laypeople will again be held on Tuesday evening.

The conference begins at 2 p.m. on Monday following the annual meeting of the Fellowship of Tennessee Baptist Evangelists. Sessions begin at 9:30 a.m., 2 p.m., and 6:45 p.m.

Participants may be reached by calling the conference office at (615) 385-3872 or 385-3873. — Program on pg. 3.

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Editorials**When all else fails, follow instructions; Jesus saves**

We are in a new year, and 1992 will have to be astounding to surpass 1991 for its cataclysmic impact on history. There has been world-changing news during the past twelve months.

What does the current year hold for Christians, and for Tennessee Baptists, in view of all the changes?

Culminating an eventful year, at least two occurrences must be noted for their impact on the world at large.

In perhaps the most historic event of the century, the Soviet Union collapsed. Built on the shaky foundation of atheistic communism, the Soviet Union totally disintegrated at Christmas, and its leader Mikhail Gorbachev resigned on Christmas Day, the day when Christians celebrate the birth of the very Savior which Marx and Lenin had ridiculed and denied. So had a long line of Soviet leaders and subordinates.

Communism had been touted as the solution to world problems of poverty, hunger, and Christianity. What Christianity and capitalism had not achieved totally for people, communism would accomplish.

It was an experiment carried out in a worldwide laboratory — at the sacrifice of millions of lives, built on the graves of freedom and liberty. It failed, and the world watched its death throes.

Ramifications of that collapse will continue for years to come. Suffice it to say, it seems to be much easier to get along with the survivors of the erstwhile Soviet Union. Even so, this is not a time

for gloating or finger-pointing, or pious "I told you so" summations.

All is not rosy, however. When the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics fell apart and communism failed, most of the republics hastily formed a "partnership" of sorts and voted for Russia to be the major stockholder with the prized seat at the United Nations, and with Boris Yeltsin moving into the Kremlin.

Yeltsin succeeded Gorbachev as the recognized leader. He has little experience as a world-class leader and will struggle with new freedoms and the change to a market economy. We have read and seen evidence of hunger — and fears among the people that food shortages will worsen.

The United States should give assistance in the form of technical advice on distribution of produce — and in supplying some of the food that will be needed until production meets demand.

Southern Baptists also must be busy in feeding the spiritual hunger that many Soviet people have been expressing. "God is needed, Bibles are needed — as well as food for the body," people are saying.

Meanwhile, there is concern about the military structure of the republics. Who controls the nuclear arsenals? The missiles are still pointed at the same targets in the United States and ours are pointed eastward.

Such problems are more crucial than those facing cartographers who are racing to update maps and boundary lines that may be outmoded overnight. Imagine the headaches involved in producing

a simple road map — not to mention the sophisticated and precise artwork of National Geographic mapmakers!

A second event of recent weeks involves the release of the last American hostages, including bodies of two who were murdered, by the terrorists in Lebanon. We rejoice at their release, but the Middle East turmoil continues. Peace talks which began with Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Palestinians in November are floundering. As in the taking of hostages, nothing has happened — there are no winners.

The whole world would be blessed if all people finally realize that taking of hostages is not beneficial to the cause of peace or justice. It may come out of desperation. It may come out of futility in attaining goals — but there really are no true winners.

In one sense, communism and atheism have held millions of people hostage for seventy years — and it has murdered millions more. By the grace and mercy of God, the world has been witness to its failure. Now, in the name of Jesus Christ, all Christians must go to all people everywhere with the truth of his Salvation.

Though warheads of mass destruction are still aimed toward nations, though there are evil spirits yet abroad in the world, the light of Christ shines brighter today than in any recent day. It is the light of opportunity, the light of love, the Light that blazes brightly toward the open doors. Be a light bearer. — WFA

New freedom in Ethiopia spurs church growth work

By Donald D. Martin

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP) — A year ago, a Christian conviction in Ethiopia meant serving time in prison, not church.

But since the collapse of the African nation's communist government last May, Christians and missionaries have enjoyed religious freedoms unimaginable under former President Mengistu Haile Mariam's dictatorship.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front took power in Addis Ababa and ended 30 years of civil war. Before that, Christians often had to worship in secret to avoid arrest for holding illegal religious services, said Southern Baptist missionary Sam Cannata.

About a year ago some members of the Baptist church in Debre Berhan were arrested for illegal worship, said Cannata, a veteran missionary doctor to Africa who is from Houston.

Bush praised for pro-life efforts

WASHINGTON (BP) — Evangelical Christian leaders, including the executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, thanked President George Bush during a recent pro-life ceremony for using his authority to protect federal pro-life policies.

Richard D. Land, executive director of the CLC, was among six evangelical representatives present in the oval office when the President signed a proclamation designating Jan. 19 as National Sanctity of Human Life Day.

"This is an excellent example of the President's prerogative to use his office as the 'bully-pulpit' to define issues, set priorities, and focus agendas, all of which are such a crucial part of presidential leadership," Land said.

"I want to express my appreciation on behalf of Southern Baptists for the President's declaring National Sanctity of Human Life Day," Land said. "Having a signing ceremony in the oval of-

Later, government officials offered to release the Christians if missionaries would pay about \$100 for each person.

"We thought, prayed, and sought the Lord's will," Cannata said. "We felt in the end that it was not his will to pay these so-called fines. First, it implied guilt. Second, it would probably precipitate mass arrests of other Christians and the demands for other ransom payments."

Instead of money, the missionaries sent the jailed Baptists food and worked for their release through the legal system.

However, after a few days the Christian prisoners asked the missionaries to drop efforts to free them. "They told us they had won so many fellow prisoners to the Lord that they needed time to disciple them," Cannata said.

Christians now can evangelize and worship openly, Cannata explained.

Land gives the kind of high-profile, focused leadership on this issue from the President that is so important in defining the critical nature of the right-to-life issue in our nation."

The group expressed appreciation to President Bush for blocking congressional attempts to overturn anti-abortion regulations, Land said. During 1991, the President again kept his commitment to veto efforts to weaken pro-life policies.

Also attending the Dec. 19 ceremony were staff members from the Christian Action Council, a pro-life group which sponsors Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in evangelical churches; the National Association of Evangelicals, and a Washington crisis pregnancy center.

Jan. 19 is recognized as 1992 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in the Southern Baptist Convention as well as by the Christian Action Council. Jan. 22 is the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion.

Missionaries may travel freely and visit churches outside the capital, Addis Ababa. Before, the missionaries often were hindered by tight government travel restrictions.

"Christians in Ethiopia are praising the Lord that they have newfound freedom to travel, to study the Word of God openly, and to worship without fear," he said.

The rapid changes in Ethiopia have expanded the focus of Southern Baptist ministries. For years, the missionaries justified their presence to the Ethiopian government through relief work. At one time they operated several feeding stations with medical clinics. But fighting between government and rebel troops forced them to pull back to the safety of Addis Ababa.

The change in government has allowed the 15 Southern Baptist mission workers to shift to more direct forms of evangelism and become more aggressive in church-planting work. Although the threat of starvation for many of Ethiopia's 53 million citizens still lingers, the missionaries believe

they need to take advantage of the new openness to start churches.

And although the civil war is over, the threat of violence is still part of life in Ethiopia. "Outbreaks of lawlessness are increasing. Armed robbery plagues parts of the country," Cannata said.

Gunmen frequently disrupt distribution of relief food supplies bound for refugee camps. Armed robbers have shot at food convoys; two convoys from the port city of Djibouti were hijacked. Because of this, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said thousands of tons of food are rotting on arrival piers.

Similarly grave reports about Ethiopia's desperate financial condition and growing ethnic tensions appear regularly in news reports from the country. But the resilience of the local church continues to sustain Cannata's optimism for the future.

"Yes, the Christians of Ethiopia have had times of severe persecution," Cannata said. "But they've found in those times great spiritual blessings."

Baptist and Reflector

Newsjournal of Tennessee Baptist Convention
Established in 1835

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Baptist and Reflector is published weekly except Christmas week by the Executive Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention, 5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood, Tenn. 37027. Subscription prices: \$7.50 individual; clubs of ten or more, \$7.25; church budget plan, \$6.50 when sent to 50 percent or more of church homes. Second class postage paid at Brentwood and at additional mailing office. (USPS 041-780).

Space forbids printing of resolutions, obituaries, and poetry. Advertising rates on request. Baptist and Reflector holds membership with Baptist Press (BP) news service of the Southern Baptist Convention. Telephone: (615) 371-2003.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Baptist and Reflector, P. O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn. 37024.

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Piland encourages innovation to develop Sunday School

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists must build upon the strong traditional base of Sunday School and be innovative with new approaches to achieve continued growth, Harry Piland told Sunday School leaders meeting in Nashville for annual December planning meetings.

"We must have a degree of flexibility to use means that work to reach people," said Piland, director of the Sunday School division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

While trying new approaches, Sunday Schools must maintain the traditional foundation. "Don't throw out the tradition, but add some new approaches. Don't give up on the proven just to try the unproven," he said.

Some churches leave the basic structure for a time to try something else with the intention of returning to the basic structure later, Piland cautioned. "What happens when the trend passes or they lose interest in the new idea is that they drop it but fall into disorganization without going back to the basics," he said.

Piland encouraged churches to take

Bible study outside the church walls to locations unsaved persons are more likely to attend such as offices, apartment complexes, homes, community centers, and other areas. He also encouraged ongoing Bible study at times other than Sunday morning.

He suggested use of direct mail, telephone contacts, newspaper advertising, and other marketing approaches to get the church's message to non-Christians.

The approaches and organization can be flexible if Sunday Schools maintain an understanding the purpose is to reach people, teach the Gospel, and make disciples, Piland said.

"We understand the mission; it's how to do the mission that we want help in," Piland said.

Special interest conferences during the three-day planning meeting reviewed trends that will impact churches in the 90s and church models that are working for reaching baby boomers.

Changing political structures, demographic trends, technology, family life, and culture are impacting the church, Art Criscoe, director of the manage-

ment support section in the board's Discipleship Training department told Sunday School leaders.

Criscoe pointed out 40 percent of the U.S. population is part of the baby boomer generation. However, he cautioned, baby boomers are not a homogeneous group.

In a conference on models that are working for reaching baby boomers, Ken Marler, Sunday School growth consultant at the board, said churches must change methodologies to meet needs.

"The church that succeeds today will be the church that knows why they are there and is finding a way to make a difference in the community," he said.

The meeting was the first gathering of state Sunday School leaders since churches began using improved Sunday School curriculum in October.

An informal survey of state leaders indicated high initial satisfaction with the improvements.

Of 97 responding, 83 percent said comments from Sunday School workers in their states indicated users were satisfied or very satisfied with the attractiveness of the improved curriculum.

Quality of Bible content was also rated high with 81 percent saying people in their states were satisfied or very satisfied.

The lowest rating was for price with 51 percent saying users in their states were satisfied or very satisfied with the price. A high number of participants, 39 percent, responded with the middle of the five options on the scale from very satisfied to very unsatisfied on the question of price.

The highest unfavorable rating was the 12 percent who said users in their state were unsatisfied and four percent who marked very unsatisfied on the question of size and format of teacher books.

"Anytime you make a change there is a noticeable negative. In six months,

the size won't be a concern," predicted Bruce Hose, Sunday School director for the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

State leaders were told Bible Book Series materials for adults and youth will have a four-color cover beginning in April 1992 rather than the trademark black-and-white cover.

Comments on attractiveness have far outnumbered comments on quality of content, said Bill May, director of church growth and development for the Arizona Baptist Convention.

May said price has not been an issue one way or the other in his state. In a discussion group, state Sunday School leaders indicated price was not a general concern but the increased costs of providing the supplemental WorData notebooks for youth had created some concern with cost.

Despite the cost factor, users are very pleased overall with the improvements in the youth materials, according to the state leaders.

A formal research survey of users will be conducted in the spring of 1992 after the materials have been in use for two quarters.

Hill accepts call at Richland Church

William T. "Billy" Hill recently became pastor of Richland Church, Nashville.

Prior to accepting the Richland pastorate, Hill was senior adult minister at Radnor Church, Nashville, for seven years. He was pastor of Hurricane Church, Lebanon, for eight years prior to joining Radnor's staff.

A native of Nashville, Hill is married to the former Monta Jo Neighbours. They have two sons and three grandchildren.



HILL

At Belmont

Lowrie receives 'highest honor'

D. L. Lowrie, executive director-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, was presented the Collegiatus Award at Belmont University.

He received Belmont's highest honor during formal ceremonies Dec. 16 in historic Belmont Mansion on the university campus.

Collegiatus, Belmont University's equivalent to an honorary doctorate degree, annually honors individuals whose support of higher education has been of special relevance and significant continuity in the life of Belmont. Recipients are selected by the university's board of trustees.

In presenting the award, Belmont President William E. Trout commended Lowrie for his leadership in key roles within the denomination and as a pastor. Noting the TBC head is a real leader in every sense of the word, Trout said Lowrie is "always positive,



LOWRIE

always learning, and always committed to doing the right thing."

In response to receiving the prestigious award, Lowrie lauded his parents who instilled a strong sense of faith and the value of education.

Lowrie has been overseeing daily operations of the TBC since May 1989. Prior to returning to his homestate, he was director of the State Missions Commission for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Born in Bluff City, Lowrie received a bachelor's degree from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. He attended Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City and is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Lowrie's first pastorate was Biltmore Church in Elizabethton. He was pastor of a number of Texas churches prior to working with the Texas convention.

Lowrie's denominational service is extensive. He has been a leader in associational and state convention work and has served throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

SBC giving falls short in December

NASHVILLE (BP) — The SBC Cooperative Program received 5.51 percent less in December 1991 compared to the same month last year, according to Harold C. Bennett, Executive Committee President/Treasurer.

The Executive Committee received \$10,575,202 in December which was \$617,005 less than the amount received in December 1990. For the SBC budget year, October through December, the total received was 2.46 percent less than the first quarter of the 1990-91 budget year: \$33,472,910 compared to \$34,315,488.

The 1991-92 monthly basic operating budget requirement for the SBC is \$11,725,856.

Designated gifts were also down, by 4.80 percent, for the month compared to a year ago: \$3,113,555 to \$3,270,528.

For the year-to-date, designated gifts were nearly the same compared to a year ago: \$6,885,997 to \$6,887,196 or a .02 percent decrease.

Designated contributions include the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Home Mission Board's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger, and other special gifts.

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

State Evangelism Conference

"Embrace God's Word . . . Share the Gospel"
Jan. 20-21 at Belmont Heights Church, Nashville

Monday, Jan. 20			
Afternoon Session			
2:00 p.m.	Welcome, announcements and hymn Invocation	10:15 a.m.	Special music — Huddleston
		10:20 a.m.	Special Music — Gary Rice
		10:25 a.m.	Message — Don Womack
		10:50 a.m.	Hymn
2:10 p.m.	Theme interpretation — Don Wilton	10:55 a.m.	Message — Ron Phillips
		11:20 a.m.	Special music — Huddleston
		11:30 a.m.	Message — Bailey Benediction
2:40 p.m.	Hymn	Afternoon Session	
2:45 p.m.	Message — Bob Agee	2:00 p.m.	Welcome, announcements and hymn Invocation
3:10 p.m.	Hymn	2:10 p.m.	Theme interpretation — Wilton
3:15 p.m.	Message — Ron Barker	2:40 p.m.	Hymn
3:40 p.m.	Special music — Lois Jane Huddleston	2:45 p.m.	Special music — Huddleston
3:50 p.m.	Message — D. L. Lowrie Benediction	2:50 p.m.	Message — Jimmy Draper
		3:15 p.m.	Feature on Chile — Jim Pollard
Evening Session		3:30 p.m.	Special music — Huddleston
6:45 p.m.	Pre-service music — DOM choir	3:40 p.m.	Message — Bailey Benediction
7:00 p.m.	Welcome, announcements and hymn Invocation	Evening Session — Laypersons' Night	
7:10 p.m.	Theme interpretation — Wilton	6:45 p.m.	Pre-service music — Tennessee Baptist Chorale
7:40 p.m.	Special music — Huddleston	7:00 p.m.	Welcome, announcements and hymn Invocation
7:50 p.m.	Hymn	7:10 p.m.	Testimony — Barry Barrett
7:55 p.m.	Message — Agee	7:25 p.m.	Special music — Chorale
8:20 p.m.	Special music — Huddleston	7:40 p.m.	Message — Jack Graham
8:30 p.m.	Message — E. K. Bailey Benediction	8:10 p.m.	Hymn
		8:15 p.m.	Special music — Huddleston
		8:25 p.m.	Message — Bailey Benediction
Tuesday, Jan. 21			
Morning Session			
9:30 a.m.	Welcome, announcements and hymn Invocation		
9:45 a.m.	Theme interpretation — Wilton		

Our Readers Write

Hodges to Togo

We would like to express our deep appreciation to you and to all Tennessee Baptists for the prayers and loving support we have felt, especially during these past three months.

Since our Sept. 28 evacuation from Zaire we have enjoyed the tremendous blessing of being part of the great Tennessee Baptist family. It is good to know that during adverse circumstances overseas, there is a place to come "home" to.

As a result of much prayerful seeking, we returned to Africa, to the country of Togo, Jan. 1, where Al will teach in the seminary. Our plans for Zaire continue to remain uncertain, as political turmoil continues. We again ask the prayers of all Tennessee Baptists for our family as we return to Africa, for the Zairian Christians, and a healing of the turmoil there and elsewhere in Africa, that souls come to know Jesus, and that the Lord's church be firmly established on that great continent.

We would love to receive letters (should be sent air mail).

Al and Karen Hodges
B.P. 1353
Lome, Togo
West Africa

Let labels rest

I continue to be amazed that in Southern Baptist circles, the word "liberal" is viewed by many as pejorative, implying that the person so labeled is some type of denominational reprobate. This is not the case in other settings. For example, the stewardship committee in my church has urged us to give liberally. I think they want me to be a fiscal liberal. Also, at restaurants we are most pleased if we receive liberal portions of food. In this situation we hope that the chef is a culinary liberal.

This leads to the paradox in present Southern Baptist life where liberals are not very popular. Puzzled by all of this I decided to consult Scripture, and began with my usually inerrant concordance (KJV). Failing to find a listing under the "Ls," I decided to reread the Gospel story for myself. Do you know what I discovered?

Using Webster's definition of "favorable to reform; not too strict," it seems that Jesus and Paul were liberals. If forgiving an adulteress is not liberal, then what is? It rates right up there with picking corn on the Sabbath. Paul, too, kept the liberal fires burning after his conversion from the orthodoxy of his day. Want to know what liberal really is? Read Romans 9-11.

No, I don't think being a liberal is a theological felony, but the Genesis story teaches that playing God may well be. Let's give it a rest.

Raymond M. Whitley
5022 Old Chestnut Ridge Rd.
Signal Mountain 37377

Staff relationships

It greatly concerns me that pastors and staff members are being dismissed at an alarming rate. Many have stayed on under conditions of threat and harassment. This is not the Christian way.

As a pastor of 50 years and the father of two fine staffers, I believe I am qualified to offer some helpful hints.

There is an ethical and Christian way to deal with this from the standpoint of all concerned. Churches have responsibility in taking the lead in strengthening the staff. The good name of the church hinges on proper handling.

As the church searches for pastor and staff much time must be spent in prayer seeking the will of the Lord. Church, be-

ware of the prospective pastor who requires staff to be terminated before he accepts the call. If the church has felt God's leading in calling staff, they owe it to them to stand by them. (It has sadly happened that a prospective pastor demanded removal of all present staff ... and still did not accept the pastorate.)

The staff, once in place, must not be threatened with dismissal by a 90-day evaluation process. If a pastor insists on such a plan, then he too should submit to the same scrutiny by a personnel committee.

We got away from the annual call years ago. Let's not stoop to the 90-day call of threat and harassment to satisfy a "big shot" in the pulpit. We need goals and evaluations but not threat of job loss.

We must have no hypocrisy when we appeal to our young people to surrender their lives to the cause of Christ.

John W. Kurtz, pastor
Mount View Church
12545 Old Hickory Blvd.
Antioch 37013

Applauds trustees

I am thankful for the courage our Foreign Mission Board trustees have shown by not sending the \$365,000 to the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

If the "E. Glenn Hinson sabbatical" was the straw that broke the camel's back, then I am glad our CP dollars are being used in a wiser way. Hinson's teachings are an example of the liberal theology which wormed its way into most of our seminaries.

Hinson's book, *Jesus Christ*, is a statement of his theology. On page 66 he notes concerning the Gospel writers that "some embellishments undoubtedly occurred." On page 76 he said that Jesus made an "error" in his predictions in

Tennesseans take food, supplies to Russian Baptists

NASHVILLE -- Five Tennesseans who left the Nashville International Airport Dec. 31 bound for St. Petersburg, Russia, may have looked as if they were planning to take up permanent residence there.

The travelers -- Rodney Wilson, associate director of student ministry for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Charles Johnson and Brad Gray of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department, Vanderbilt University student Jeremy Wilcox, and Johnson's wife, Shirley -- had 17 pieces of luggage. However, most were not filled with clothes or their personal belongings. Instead, the group had packed hundreds of pounds of food items and other supplies. They planned to distribute them to Russian Baptists.

The Tennesseans were part of a team of about 30 Southern Baptist students and student leaders traveling to Russia's second largest city to attend the dedication of Temple of the Gospel -- a Russian Baptist church. The group includes representatives from several Baptist student mission teams coordinated by Gray that were involved in renovating the church during the last two years. Wilson and Wilcox were on the Tennessee student mission team that worked on the church.

Before arriving in St. Petersburg, the Americans also will stop in Moscow for a visit with Russian Baptist leaders and Southern Baptist missionaries George and Veda Lozuk.

Mark 13 concerning the consummation of the age. On pages 83-84 Hinson said, "Jesus himself had no consciousness of divinity." Need I go on?

Thankfully we have leaders in our convention who are saying enough of our money is being spent casting doubt on the integrity of God's work in the minds of young ministers.

I do not doubt Dr. Hinson's personal warmth and concern for his students, only his concern for the veracity of Scripture

Chuck Williams, pastor
First Church
Box 286
Troy 38260

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.

Affirms FMB board

Much press recently has been given to the Foreign Mission Board trustees' decision to discontinue financial assistance to Ruschlikon Seminary. Many believe this decision will do harm to our work in Europe, especially when this region is opening to the Gospel. Has Ruschlikon been the bastion of strength for reaching Europe as some articles would insinuate? Pastor Bob Claytor served on the Foreign Mission Board from 1985-1989 and was chairman of the European Com-

mittee in 1989 which dealt directly with Ruschlikon Seminary. In the Alabama Baptist he reported that Ruschlikon has on 29 students working on theological degrees and another 17 working on non-degree programs; 12 are not from Europe. In its 40 years, Ruschlikon has averaged sending out 10 graduates per year.

"Ruschlikon has been considered so liberal in its theology that the majority of Europeans and the rest of the world have not sent their students to Ruschlikon," he said.

Claytor also said, "Two years ago Ruschlikon requested and the FMB were then the \$40 million campus. The FMB still pays missionary salaries of some of the faculty. Despite this, Ruschlikon has an operating budget of over \$750,000 to educate less than 50 students. That is \$15,000 per student in operating expenses alone. A Romanian seminary student can be educated in Romania for about \$250. This is the primary reason the Foreign Mission Board trustees made the shift from Ruschlikon to education in Eastern Europe."

I thank and affirm the FMB trustees for their wise decision regarding Ruschlikon.

Paul H. Russell
129 N. Willett
Memphis 38104

Church needs pastor

Calvary Baptist Church, a congregation of 90 people located in Lago Patria, Italy, near Naples, needs a pastor. The congregation is mainly people connected with the American military. Our church is affiliated with the European Baptist Convention (English language) and is based upon principles and doctrines of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Resumes and an audio tape may be sent. If God is leading you to pastor in a mission setting, please contact me.

Paul R. Smith
AFSOUTH
PSC 813, Box 149
FPO AE 09620-8000

According to officials at the Sunday School Board, the American group took powdered milk, cheese, peanut butter, crackers, canned meat, and other food items and supplies to distribute to Baptists in both cities. The group also took to the Lozoks a typewriter, a keyboard, and a suitcase full of food

paid for and collected by members of Central Church, Gainesville, Ga., and First Church, Tallapoosa, Ga.

The group also took a suitcase full of candy which had been requested by Lozuk to give out to children as belated Christmas gifts.

The group will return Jan. 12.

TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

The State Evangelism Conference is my favorite Baptist meeting of the year. I have been privileged to preach on the program for most of the state conferences across the nation, and have concluded that there is something special about our Tennessee conference.

It is a conference for everyone! As a pastor I always tried to take laypersons to the conference with me. Some of the greatest fellowship I have ever known has been during these conferences. My heart and their hearts were bent by the Lord in the same direction -- toward a lost world.

I have never attended a conference in which God did not speak to me. I haven't agreed with everything I have heard, but I have heard God speak in

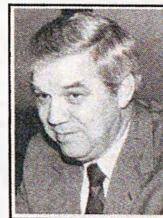
such a way a few times that I will never be the same.

He has shown me my sin in such a way that my heart was broken. He has shown me his Son in such a way that my heart was lifted up. He has shown me my responsibility in such a way that new commitments have been made.

Our annual conference will meet at Belmont Heights Church, Nashville, Jan. 20-21. You need to attend this conference. You need the fellowship you will experience. You need the information that will be shared. You need the inspiration that God will give.

If for some reason, you will not be able to attend, pray for this conference. Pray that God will visit Tennessee Baptists in mercy during this conference. Pray for Jerry King as he guides the sessions. Pray for each speaker. We have a need for such a special visitation from the Lord.

I will be looking for you at Belmont Heights!



LOWRIE

HMB helps churches start pregnancy centers

ATLANTA (BP) — Young women come to crisis pregnancy centers to find an answer to a question: Am I pregnant?

Before they leave, they have the answer and have received counseling. "Crisis pregnancy center" is a "generic" name used for such services provided in communities throughout the country, according to Sylvia Booth, coordinator for Alternatives to Abortion Ministries at the Home Mission Board.

All such centers are not alike. But the Home Mission Board has developed a plan for establishing crisis pregnancy centers that provide a Christian witness as well as the standard service.

"Crisis pregnancy centers usually are located in a neutral setting outside of the church building," Booth said in a telephone interview. "They offer free pregnancy tests and confidentiality."

Young women come primarily for the pregnancy test, she said.

The HMB program offers the woman a choice of counseling presentations

while she waits for the test results. Usually she will view a 26-minute video called "Your Crisis Pregnancy," produced by James Dobson's Focus on the Family, Booth said.

Whatever her choice of presentation, the woman will be told about the development of the "pre-born," procedures used in abortions, and about emotional problems associated with having an abortion.

Women view the video in a private room, and Booth said she has never had a client stop it.

After the test results are known, more counseling is offered.

If the test is positive, "some women just fall apart," Booth said. "Others just sit there."

"We try to communicate with her that whatever her need is we can help her through that."

About 60 percent of women tested are not pregnant, she said. But counselors still have the "opportunity to talk to them about lifestyle."

Booth said the counseling "provides a wonderful opportunity to present the

Gospel."

"We have done training for 30 crisis pregnancy centers in the past two years," she said. "Last year they reported over 600 salvation experiences."

HMB provides a \$50,000 budget for Alternatives to Abortion Ministries. The goals of the ministry are "to educate, motivate, and equip Southern Baptists to be actively involved in crisis pregnancy ministries," Booth said.

The response has been "overwhelming," she added.

There are four HMB trainers involved in the ministry, and Booth projects openings of ten pregnancy centers each year.

"Everything we do is free" to Southern Baptist churches or interdenominational ministries supported by them,

she said. That includes help in getting started and training of workers. However, "we ask churches that are able," to support the ministry.

She encourages churches interested in operating such a ministry to "take the time and lay a strong foundation. ... It's not unusual for it to take 18 months to two years to put it all together."

"A lot of people get emotional about this issue, and they want to do something," Booth said. But a crisis pregnancy center should be viewed as a long-term ministry.

The average annual cost is a minimum of \$25,000-\$30,000, Booth said. It can get as high as \$60,000-\$100,000.

The toll-free phone number for HMB Alternatives to Abortion Ministries is (800) 962-0851.

Series of world crises call society to examine its values

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE (BP) — An uncertain economy, high crime rate, threat of AIDS, massive drug use, and soaring costs of health care all translate into a national crisis that calls society to examine its values, a pastor said.

"I believe our culture is desperately searching for answers, and at the same time they are putting the family first," Bill Blackburn, pastor of Trinity Church, Kerrville, Texas, told state

family ministry leaders attending annual meetings at the Baptist Sunday School Board in December.

State family ministry leaders heard a report of upcoming resources to be released for the family, discussed the 1991-92 "Families Touching Families" theme, and explored the use of support groups as a tool for outreach evangelism and ministry during the meeting.

Meanwhile, Blackburn said: "I believe our society is responding to the national crisis by asking questions the church can answer."

He said the baby boom generation is fascinated with life after death, and he maintained the church can answer their questions of "What is the meaning of life?"; "What is important?"; and "What happens after you die?"

"We are hearing people asking questions related to the Christian faith that we can answer," Blackburn said.

He said social interpreters are predicting a return to traditional values.

"They see the 90s being a time when people value their family more than money," he said. "In bad economic times, people really discover what is important."

"According to recent surveys," Blackburn added, "family values are growing stronger. Our culture is ripe for spiritual awakening."

He suggested family ministry leaders look for innovative ways to respond to the trend and minister to the family.

One innovative way to minister to families is through support groups, according to Doug Anderson, director of the SSB's family ministry department.

According to a recent news magazine survey, more than 15 million people participate in one of 500,000 support groups nationwide, Anderson said.

The family ministry department will officially enter the arena of support group ministry with the October 1992 release of the LIFE course, "Making Peace with Your Past," a 12-week program that speaks to people who grew up in dysfunctional families, said Anderson.

Executive search narrows . . .

— Continued from page 1
man is the recommendation would be the effective date of his employment. The SBC constitution and several bylaws would indicate he could not serve in both offices, as president of the SBC and the Executive Committee.

Chapman's tenure as SBC president ends following the Indianapolis meeting in June so presumably the earliest employment date would be in mid-June. However, if he resigned as SBC president prior to that date, Nelson Price, Marietta, Ga. pastor and first vice president, would assume the presidency under the SBC constitution.

Chapman, 51, has been pastor of First Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, nearly 13 years. He was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans in June of 1990 and re-elected at Atlanta in June of 1991.

A native of Kosciusko, Miss, Chap-



CHAPMAN



BENNETT

man is a graduate of Mississippi College, Clinton, and has master of divinity and doctor of ministries degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Prior to Wichita Falls, Chapman was a pastor in Albuquerque, N.M., Waco, and Rogers, Texas.

His wife, Jodi, was a member of the SBC Peace Committee and a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board. They have two children, Chris and Stephanie.

College funding . . .

— Continued from page 1
stepped down in a protest of whether he was also parliamentarian of the Executive Board (which met Monday afternoon prior to the convention). Gary Anderson, pastor of First Church, Dunlap, had been appointed in December 1990 as the board's parliamentarian.

Other top Tennessee Baptist news:
• MissionsFest East was held in Jefferson City.

• Belmont College becomes Belmont University.

• A large health care team works in the Philippines, led by Dr. Dewey Dunn, resulting in many conversions and improved health.

• Carson-Newman College begins a \$50 million fund campaign for building and campus upgrading.

• Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes exceeds the Mother's Day offering goal.

• Several Tennessee Baptists join with large group sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board in a mission trip to Kazakhstan.

Other news stories from the SBC gaining attention on a large scale included the naming of Herb Hollinger as Baptist Press vice president, President George Bush speaks at the annual meeting in Atlanta, Sunday School Board selects Texas pastor James Draper as its new president, Texas Baptists affirm Baylor University in a new covenant relationship, and South Carolina Baptists vote by a narrow margin to sue its senior college Furman University over its decision to elect its own trustees.

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Tennessee BSUs report increase in student conversions

NASHVILLE (BP) — A record number of college students were reached through Southern Baptist student ministry programs in 1991, though the number of full-time directors of Baptist campus ministries declined.

In Tennessee, there were 7200 students reached through student ministry programs across state campuses, said Ircel Harrison, director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Student Ministries Department.

And while that number was about 12 percent less than the year before, the state Baptist Student Unions showed a significant increase in the number of student conversions.

Harrison noted conversions rose from 75 during 1989-90 to 180 during the 1990-91 school year. He credited the increase to an emphasis in evangelism training during the 1989-90 year.

According to the 1991 Student Ministry Report compiled by the Southern

Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department from information sent in by state directors of student ministry, 192,680 students were reached through Baptist student ministry programs in 1991, up more than 3000 students over the 1990 total of 189,410.

In contrast, the number of full-time directors of Baptist student ministries decreased from 525 in 1990 to 499 in 1991, and the total number of directors (including full-time, part-time, and volunteer workers) dropped from 979 in 1990 to 949 in 1991.

The number of campuses with student ministry programs also declined from 1036 in 1990 to 1009 in 1991.

"We do have fewer laborers in the field, but (these figures) do speak well for the work they are doing," said David Hazelwood, planning and projects coordinator for the Sunday School Board's student ministry department.

"I hope this means we are doing more with less and doing more only in fewer places."

The report, which was distributed to state convention directors of student ministry during their annual December planning meetings in Nashville, also showed a slight decrease in the number of student conversions through Baptist Student Unions. That number totaled 6597 in 1990 and fell to 6465 in 1991.

The number of students involved in witness training, however, was up from 12,508 in 1990 to 13,186 in 1991.

Student involvement in missions also was up, from 26,484 in 1990 to 27,751 in 1991.

"We had a good year in Southern Baptist student ministry," Charles Johnson, director of the Sunday School Board's student ministry department, told state directors. "This is a record we can legitimately be proud of."

The report also showed:

- 10,373 African American students were involved in Baptist student ministry programs in 1991, up from 9733 in 1990.

- A drop in the number of other ethnic students involved (such as Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans), from 6273 in 1990 to 5766 in 1991. The number of international students participating in BSU also was down, from 12,039 in 1990 to 10,720 in 1991.

- Students helped start 182 churches, Sunday Schools, or missions in 1991, down from 195 in 1990.

- Students helped strengthen 3342 established churches, Sunday Schools, or missions through teaching or helping with or leading outreach programs, revivals, surveys, music programs, Vacation Bible Schools, and other programs. This is up from the 1990 total of 3253.

- 39,726 students were involved in Bible study groups in 1991, up from 38,346 in 1990.

Preachers' School begins at HCBA

SEYMOUR — Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy Preachers' School, an extension of the educational format of the academy offering Saturday morning classes for ministers and prospective ministers, will begin its third session of the 1991-92 school year Jan. 12.

Classes will begin at 8 a.m. in the academy's Ogle Building.

Raymond Smith, veteran Christian educator and retired Baptist pastor, conducts the school's four-year study program. Each Preachers' School ses-

sion has a designed course of study, but beginning students can enroll at any point.

The session beginning Jan. 12 will continue through Feb. 29. Classes in the third session include Missions in the Bible, The Book of Revelations, Pastoral Ministries, Session Two.

Students have no tuition costs. Benefactors have provided funds to pay tuition for properly certified ministerial students. The only student expense is the cost of textbooks, available at the school for \$3 each.

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Israel's unfaithfulness brings judgment

By Jerry Winfield, pastor; First Church, Bolivar

In every society, to be persons of privilege is an enviable position. But, privilege brings with it a corresponding weight of responsibility. Such was true for the nation of Israel. The Israelites had failed to live up to their responsibilities as the people of God. Their unfaithfulness brought the judgment of God. Beginning in chapter 3, Amos expounded on the nature and consequence of Israel's sin.

The responsibility of election (ch. 3:1-2)

In chapters 3-6, the phrase "hear this word" appears three times. Amos was telling the people that what he said was directly from the Lord. The thrust of this "word" was that Israel had violated the covenant God made with it. The Lord had chosen (elected) them to a position of service by redeeming them out of the land of Egypt. Although speaking directly to Israel, Amos included his own people, Judah, in his mention of the "whole

family."

The fact that Amos said God knew Israel "only" among all earthly families did not mean that He did know about the others (see Exodus 19:5b). It did mean that Jehovah had given to Israel unmerited grace and privilege. But the Israelites had come to believe their election meant God would continue to bless them no matter how they lived or violated the covenant. Israel was sadly mistaken.

The certainty of the prophet's word (ch. 3:7-8)

To reinforce his message, Amos used a series of illustrations that demonstrated the principle of cause and effect. Evidently some in Amos' audience doubted the truthfulness of his prophecy. They needed to understand that nothing can happen, even in nature, unless God allows it. The Israelites had sinned (cause) and God was bringing judgment (effect). They were having to learn the hard way that

a righteous God cannot let sin go unpunished.

Amos reminded the people they had been told how to live and repeatedly warned of the consequences of sin (v. 7). God is a God of love, and He was not going to bring judgment without the Israelites understanding why. Even this was a demonstration of God's grace.

BIBLE BOOK
January 12 Lesson
Basic Passage: Amos 3:1-4:13

Amos compared God to a roaring lion (v. 8). A lion roars when it is about to attack its prey. God had roared the intention of His impending judgment. Wise people will not ignore God's message, yet the Israelites refused to listen.

God's judgment against wealth and ritual (ch. 4:1-5)

Amos began to direct his preaching

against specific groups and specific sins. He compared the proud, selfish, wealthy women of Israel to fat cows! Such preaching would obviously not endear the preacher to the congregation, but his comparison was right on target. While others were in need, these women continued to indulge their every desire. Verses 2-3 indicated they would be completely humiliated by God's judgment.

Verses 4-5 indicate that all the people, not just the wealthy, would be judged because of their false and hypocritical worship. They performed their rituals out of a sense of false spirituality and their worship never brought them closer to God.

Israel's failure to learn (ch. 4:10-12)

God had been a loving father to Israel. He had warned them through a series of terrible disasters. But, like disobedient, stubborn children, they refused to listen and obey. There was nothing else God could do. His judgment would certainly come. Israel, and every person, must "prepare to meet thy God."

A hymn to the redeemer

By David Tydings, director of missions; Grainger Association, Rutledge

While attending a church service recently, the pastor called upon one of the members to lead in public prayer. His prayer was quite lengthy as he prayed for the church, the pastor, the sick, and the lost. Then, as if adding a postscript (P.S.), he said, "Thank you for the blessings that are ours today ... Amen."

This afterthought hit me with the truth that we all have become blinded and hardened to the point that we fail to recognize God's blessings. He has given us so much for which we should be thankful. Is your prayer life one of thanksgiving and praise? Jack Taylor, in his book, *The Hallelujah Factor*, suggests that we have lost the art of praising God. If we have lost this art, I believe the 103rd Psalm will help us regain it.

David could have thanked God for his fame, his wealth, the temple building materials he had gathered by

gift or trade, and his military victories. Instead, he named the blessings that meet the basic needs of all mankind. In order to name these blessings, David, in verse 2, said, "forget not all His benefits." If we are to praise God as David suggested, our first task should be to begin thanking God for all of the things He gives in our behalf.

CONVENTION UNIFORM
January 12 Lesson
Basic Passage: Psalm 103

The psalmist said he will praise the Lord with his total being, not by head, nor by mouth, but from the very depths of his soul. As I think about this psalm, at least four blessings come to my mind that we are not to forget.

(1) Verse 3 tells us we are not to forget the debt we owe God for His redeeming grace. The cost of our

forgiveness and redemption was the death of the Son of God.

(2) We must not forget our God is the great physician, the healer of all man's diseases.

(3) When many things threaten our lives daily, we are not to forget we are in the hands of the supreme God.

(4) We are not to forget God supplies our daily needs.

James 1:17 says every good and perfect gift comes from above. It is God who sustains us. For His sufficiency, healing, preservation, and sustenance, we should be ever grateful.

David's song of praise moves to focus on thanksgiving for God's care of the nation, Israel. God heard the cry of the Israelites and delivered them from bondage. Because of disobedience and unbelief, the Israelites had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. God did not give up on them. He was long-suffering and loving. He forgave them and made them a great nation, just as He had promised. He continued to bless and protect Israel, even as a father would his own children. Are we thankful to God for all He has done for

us and our nation? As His children, He demands that we not take anything He gives as a matter of course, but in a spirit of thankfulness.

David realized God was worthy of praise from all of creation. The praises from David were not enough. The praises of Israel were not enough. The whole universe must join in and praise its own Creator. Psalm 97:1a tells us, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice," and Psalm 8:1a says "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"

David did not want to omit any created thing or being from the invitation of praising God. This invitation includes you and me. We should be able to out-sing the angels in heaven. God is not only our God, but also our friend and savior. We have experienced His mercy and grace. Angels do not have this kind of relationship.

The Lord has given each of us so much. May our hearts ever be grateful for His many blessings to us. We can be thankful in a topsy-turvy world if our own hearts are right side up.

Obedient to God's purpose

By Sharon Herrington, layperson; Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage

In the early years of my late husband's ministry, we were at a church which challenged our faith and commitment to pastoral ministry. Often we wanted to give up, but Richard would be reminded of his pastor-father's advice that trials of life are used by God to refine us and that our response in difficult times should reflect faith in God through our actions of "keeping on doing what you know God wants you to do."

Job reflected his obedience to God's purpose by remaining true to Him and Paul's unwavering obedience to God's purpose in the face of despair and discouragement speak to us.

Spiritual testing comes not only in valleys of depression, but also on the mountaintops of ease and prosperity. Temptation — that feeling of enticement to do something we morally question — comes to us in both the valleys and the mountaintops.

The focus of this Sunday's lesson is illustrating how Jesus' example of

handling temptation and His obedience to God's purpose for His life help you and me know how we should respond when tempted to abandon and reject God's purpose for us.

The setting of Matthew 4:1-17 is a wilderness of Judea shortly after Jesus was baptized. Jesus was near the end of His 40-day fast and Satan was on the scene ready to tempt.

Jesus, being diety with the human element, was faced with the question of the method by which He would establish His ministry. His humanity would be confronted with Satan's powerful potential. God in His wisdom would permit Jesus to be tested (only Satan tempts) and to make choices, just as He allows us choices.

What kind of role would the Messiah play in history and lives? What kind of Messiah would Jesus be? Jesus contemplated these questions, as well as God's will for Him to be a suffering servant. Satan was present to take advantage of Jesus' weakened condition

from fasting by enticing Him with a shortcut, according to Herschel Hobbs' commentary on Matthew 4.

Fasting is not an easy matter. It involves one's purpose of giving undivided attention to God through prayer for the purpose of seeking His guidance and direction for a matter of utmost concern. Trying to function and pray without distraction during the predetermined period of fasting, one views food in general and mealtime as a call to prayer. Authors on the subject agree that consumption of water, tea, or juices is appropriate.

LIFE AND WORK
January 12 Lesson
Basic Passage: Matthew 4:1-17

The strongest temptation to abandon the fast is at the beginning and the end of the fast. The mind plays a game of seeing the food rejected during the fast as a quick-fix to the sometimes agonizing hunger encountered. Satan precisely

timed his appearance to Jesus by coming to Jesus near the end of His fast. Keep in mind fasting is a voluntary action and not commanded by Jesus.

The first temptation was pointedly aimed at Jesus' appetite. Knowing His mission was to be a suffering servant Messiah and not a political ruler, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3. The second temptation challenged Jesus' aesthetic nature. Satan abused the poetry in Psalm 91:11 in his remarks. Jesus again quoted the law in Deuteronomy 6:16. The third temptation focused on ambition. Satan tempted with the short circuit method in what Jesus knew would be a long journey of suffering on the cross and His resurrection. His reaction from Deuteronomy 6:13 caused Satan to leave.

Hobbs points out that Jesus was tempted in His humanity, not His deity, and He resisted temptation in His humanity (Hebrews 4:15).

We have the same resources for resisting temptation that Jesus had — prayer, the Scriptures, the power of the Holy Spirit, and an unwavering commitment to obedience to God.

TenneScene

... from Henryville to Whitleyville, stopping at Parrottsville ...

Leadership ...

Hillard Goode is no longer serving as pastor of West Memorial Church, Saulsberry. The church recently called Scott Wilson of Wingo, Ky., as pastor.

Susan Crutchfield has been named assistant vice president of operations at Baptist Hospital. Since joining the Baptist Hospital staff in 1982, Crutchfield has held several nursing positions and most recently she oversaw the conversion to a new hospital/clinical information system.

In her new position, Crutchfield will be administratively responsible for several support and clinical services, special projects, and the coordination of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing.

Dallas Roscoe recently retired as minister of senior adults at Red Bank Church, Chattanooga.

First Church, Clarksville, called Jim Phillips as pastor of recreation. He currently serves as part-time music director at West Paris Church, Paris, and is on the faculty of Austin Peay State University, Clarksville.

Michigan Avenue Church, Cleveland, recently called Tim Edwards to serve as minister of music and Charles Shields as minister of youth.

Ron Stone recently resigned as minister of music and youth at First Church, Adamsville, to accept the same position at Matthews Memorial Church, Pine Bluff, Ark. He served as music director for Shiloh Association, and his wife, Elaine, was associational media library director.

First Church, Obion, called Bill Williams as interim pastor.

Greg O'Guin is now serving as part-time minister of music at Willingham Memorial Church, Ridgely.

Ordinations ...

Calvary Church, Union City, ordained Wendall Faught to the deacon ministry.

Tim Connell was ordained as a deacon Nov. 29 at Johnson Grove Church, Fulton.

Tommy McDonald, associate pastor and youth minister at Lucy Church, Millington, was recently ordained to the Gospel ministry. The church also ordained Michael Harris and Richard Kesler to the deacon ministry.

People ...

Tennessee alumni of New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary recently elected Marshall Hargrave, Jefferson City, as president; Jim Growden, Madison, as president-elect; and Jack May as secretary of the state alumni association.

Missions ...

West River Association, Rapid City, S.D., is expanding to include a resort mission department. Summer youth and adult mission volunteers are needed for short- and long-term summer ministry. Inquiries should be sent to Resort Ministries, 211 E. St. Joseph, Rapid City, S.D., 57701, or call (605) 343-5967.

The Royal Ambassadors at Pleasant

Martin church calls Barron as pastor

Warren Barron Jr., former youth minister of Balmoral Church, Memphis, is serving New Home Church, Martin, as pastor.

Barron, who has studied at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, was ordained Oct. 27 at Ridgeway Church, Memphis.

The native of Memphis is married to Janece Byrd Barron.

Grove Church, Maryville, collected more than \$250 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Twenty-six boys participated in a walk-a-thon and constructed a Christmas float for two local parades. Cliff Caldwell was the top money collector, and the float won first place and second place in the parades.

Churches ...

Members of Smyrna Church, Chapel Hill, held a groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 24 for a new education building and fellowship hall. Tim McGehee is pastor.

A note-burning service was held recently at Belle Aire Church, Murfreesboro, to celebrate payment of the sanctuary building debt. Pastor is Dean Sisk.

Construction of a new fellowship building was recently completed at Valley Road Church, Athens. In addition, sidewalks were extended and new carpet was installed.

Education ...

Christian singer Margaret Becker will present a concert Jan. 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Belmont University. Becker is a two-time Grammy nominee. For ticket information and prices, contact Belmont's SGA office at (615) 385-6428. Proceeds from the concert will benefit Habitat for Humanity.

Carson-Newman College will sponsor a Welcome Weekend Feb. 1 for prospective students and their parents. Students and parents can tour the campus, meet faculty, and talk with admissions and financial aid representatives. For more information, call (615) 471-3223. Another Welcome Weekend is scheduled for April 4.

Burton accepts call

First Church, Woodland Mills, has called Rick Burton, former interim pastor, as pastor.

Previously Burton was pastor of New Harmony Church, Hickman County, Ky. He has studied at Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College, Mayfield, Ky.



DOCTORAL GRADUATES — Four students with Tennessee ties received doctor of ministry degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during commencement exercises Dec. 20. Standing, from left, are Ernest James, whose parents live in Memphis; William H. Sims III, native of Humboldt; Landrum P. Leavell II, seminary president; Wesley Pitts, director of missions, Cumberland Association, Clarksville; and James Michael Ramage, pastor, Black Oak Heights Church, Knoxville.

Tennessee students graduate from Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Approximately 200 students received degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary during commencement exercises Dec. 13.

The seminary awarded degrees to graduates from its schools of theology, Christian education, church music, and church social work. Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, was commencement speaker.

In another ceremony later that day, Boyce Bible School, a division of Southern Seminary, awarded diplomas and certificates to 19 graduates. Seminary Provost Larry L. McSwain addressed the Boyce commencement.

Boyce, founded in 1974, provides ministerial training to persons who do not have college degrees.

Tennessee graduates, their degrees, and their home churches are listed as follows:

Master of arts in Christian education: Sharon D. Adkerson, Covenant Church Nashville, and Jeffrey W. Howard, Notchey Creek Church, Madisonville

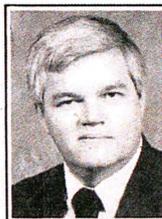
Master of divinity: Teresa Barham Bowers, First Church, Donelson; Ervin H. Gilliam Jr., Salem Springs Church, Murfreesboro; Richard Keith Whited, Cedar Valley Church, Sweetwater;



ADKERSON



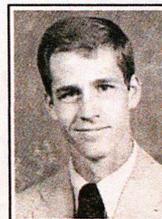
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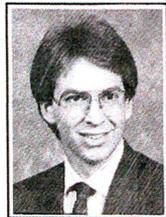
GILLIAM



HELM



HODGE



HOWARD



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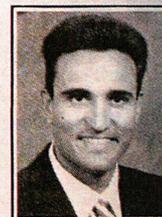
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David Gordon Kitts, Oakwood Church, Knoxville; Marshall Todd Helm, Immanuel Church, Nashville; Eric P. Hodge, First Church, Tullahoma; and Donald Edward Wright, Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage

Master of church music: Wendy Trew Kitts, Waterville Church, Cleveland

Doctor of ministry: John Fred "Jay" McCluskey, pastor, North Cleveland Church, Cleveland

Diploma in Theology: Larry D. Davidson, Second Church, Clinton

The following graduates listed Tennessee as their home state but did not provide additional information: Stephen W. Foreman, Jerry Lawrence

Bowling, Sandra Elizabeth Schaefer, Ronnie Wayne Gay, Duane Clark Harrell, David Wayne Jones, Benita Gay Pauly, Mary Jo Roberts Slaughter, Paul Lindsay Wilson, Mark Lee Potts, William J. Chandler, and Dalen Craig Jackson.

Photos and information on graduates were supplied by Southern Seminary.