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Supreme Court ruling strikes big blow at dial-a-porn

WASHINGTON (BP) — Southern Baptists actively opposing pornography hailed the Supreme Court's recent refusal to hear an appeal by the dial-a-porn industry as the telling blow in a conclusive victory over such telephone indecency.

On Jan. 27 the court announced it would not review appeals court decisions upholding a 1989 law restricting dial-a-porn indecency. The law and resultant regulations by the Federal Communications Commission require customers to file a written request in advance for the service and mandates dial-a-porn companies provide a de-scrambling device paid for in advance by the consumer.

These restrictions block easy access to dial-a-porn numbers by children, who, in the past, constituted 70 to 80 percent of those calling such lines, lawyer Rob Showers of Washington, said.

The court's refusal to hear the appeal "signals the death knell for the \$2.4 billion industry known as dial-a-porn," said Showers, a Southern Baptist who has been a crusader against pornography from positions both inside

— See Supreme Court, page 5

Southeastern Seminary president

Drummond announces retirement June 30

By Herb Hollinger

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Lewis A. Drummond announced his retirement, effective June 30, following a four-hour, closed meeting of the seminary trustees' executive committee at the Wake Forest, N.C., campus Jan. 30.

Drummond, 65, made his announcement after the closed session but trustees refused to disclose terms of his retirement package until the full 30-member trustee board, in a regular meeting, votes on it Mar. 10-11. The announcement came amid concern about a worsening financial condition and the placing of the school on probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools last December.

But both Drummond and trustee chairman Roger Ellsworth, a Benton, Ill., pastor, denied there was discord among trustees leading to the retire-

ment. One trustee, however, said privately some trustees urged Drummond to retire two years ago and again last year.

Drummond refused to divulge any retirement plans but Beeson School of Divinity at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., has indicated interest in Drummond teaching at the school.

In his prepared statement, given to the press following the special called executive committee meeting, Drummond acknowledged the seminary "has experienced difficult days and quite climatic change during these past four years (during his presidency)."

Drummond hinted at these difficulties in his decision to retire.

"In light of the task before SEBTS in rebuilding faculty, administration, student body, etc., it has become increasingly a clear conviction that I must leave that rebuilding to another. I have made my contribution, under God, in a turbulent, transition time. Now I lay down the mantle in retirement for another to pick up and move forward," Drummond said in his statement.

Drummond later said he felt the seminary is "meeting all the criteria" required in the notations by SACS

which resulted in the probation.

"And our financial problems are essentially solved," he added. Declining enrollment and denominational financial support have been pressure points since Drummond took office April 1, 1988.

Ellsworth said Drummond voluntarily retired and had talked to him about it three or four times the past year.

The search for a new president began immediately with the 12-member executive committee, which will serve as the presidential search committee, returning to a closed session later that night.

"We have begun a process to work through," Ellsworth said. He would offer no speculation but, privately, several trustees said Paige Patterson likely would be the leading candidate. Patterson is president of Criswell College in Dallas and was high on the lists for agency executive vacancies at the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and Baptist Sunday School Board.

The seminary executive committee also spent time discussing steps the seminary is taking to meet notations by SACS which resulted in the probation. Administration officials said a financial urgency plan is now in effect and a self-study, with some 18 recommendations, is now being examined by faculty.

The seminary's second accrediting agency, Association of Theological Schools, will visit the campus Feb. 23-25. The seminary has been asked by ATS to show cause why the seminary should not be placed on probation.

Drummond came to Southeastern from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., where he was Billy Graham professor of evangelism and director of the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism. He was pastor of churches in Alabama, Texas, and Kentucky.



DRUMMOND

Chile Baptists interested in SSB literature

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE (BP) — Baptists in Chile may become one of the first beneficiaries of an arrangement to allow the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board to market materials outside the United States.

Although Mexico was to receive the initial focus in April, a personal mission trip in January allowed Chuck Padilla, Hispanic church development field service coordinator in the SSB's special ministries department, an opportunity to promote Sunday School Board materials in Chile.

Last fall, the board and the Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso, Texas, finalized an agreement for the publishing house to market its materials in the United States rather than through the Sunday School Board while allowing the board to market its materials outside the United States.

Padilla traveled to Chile as a participant in a Tennessee Baptist Convention partnership missions trip. His role was to teach Vacation Bible School sessions for children of Southern Baptist missionaries attending an annual planning meeting.

He also spoke with about 40 missionaries from throughout Chile about Sunday School Board products and ser-

vices now available to Baptists in Chile and other countries.

Although plans have not been finalized, the missionaries have asked Padilla and other Sunday School Board workers to return later this year for regional workshops to provide Sunday School and Discipleship Training information for Chilean national Baptists.

"Education is a high priority in Chile," Padilla said. "However, Sunday School and Discipleship Training programs are weak. Missionaries have done a good job starting churches and missions but they need Sunday School training to strengthen the organization to reach people."

Although Chilean churches have Sunday School, most use it for children only, he said. Discipleship Training would help Chilean churches strengthen people who come into the church but have no background in doctrine.

Missionaries attending the planning session expressed particular interest in Sunday School literature, Outreach Bible study materials, and Baptist doctrine studies. Padilla said. Virtually no SSB materials currently are being used in Chile but Padilla predicts that will change soon.

Padilla plans to visit Mexico in April for another personal mission trip and while there follow up his initial efforts

at introducing SSB materials.

Mexican Baptists already have expressed interest in ordering 10,000 copies of "La Fe Bautista," the Hispanic edition of "Baptist Adults," the Discipleship Training dated curriculum for adults.

"I think we will develop orders from Mexico for Discipleship Training materials and doctrine study books," Padilla said.

Other avenues are being explored to distribute other Sunday School Board products in Hispanic areas outside the United States, Padilla said.

TBC churches smash record

Best ever month for CP giving

Tennessee Baptist churches did it! Their giving to the Tennessee Baptist Convention Cooperative Program budget smashed TBC giving for any month on record.

Total gifts for January through the CP amounted \$3,145,384.24, or \$390,938.09 above the total for January 1991. The amount topped last October's total of about \$2.9 million.

The January record marked the first time Tennessee Baptists have given more than \$3 million in one month. And the 1992 TBC budget income jumped from nearly 30 percent under budget requirements to only 8.76 percent below.

"January was an especially good month in Cooperative Program offerings," said D. L. Lowrie, TBC ex-

ecutive director/treasurer. "No doubt a portion of the income was from churches that sent some December offerings in January — but we see a general feeling of responsiveness to CP needs. We appreciate the faithfulness of the churches to TBC ministries."

Last November TBC convention messengers voted to increase the CP budget to \$28.2 million. Several months like January will be helpful.

Gifts for the first three months of the budget year amount to \$6,452,994.65 — only \$264,465.61 less than last year at this time. However, the budget itself calls for \$7,072,740 for the period.

According to Lowrie, TBC departments, WMU, and the Baptist and Reflector can move from 85 percent usage of the budget to 88 percent.

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Editorials**Positive approach to Christian values defuses evil**

Even in most "civilized" nations, sin thrives and the ravages of Satan's work are evident. Read the headlines, observe television. Not only are crimes routinely reported — we seem to be entertained by such.

Turn to the Scriptures. Read in Peter's First Epistle: "But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" — I Peter 1:15-16.

Shouldn't that be taken to mean that we are not to seek to be entertained by movies and books and other literature that portray evil as acceptable?

Peter also tells us (5:8), "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." His belly is never filled.

Americans are constantly bombarded with facts about the demise of Christian values and the hesitancy of Christians to do anything about it. Three pieces of information came to the desk this week. We recalled that President Bush in his State of the Union address made a reference to a certain "nastiness" becoming more prevalent.

Earlier the President had spoken to a meeting of the National Religious Broadcasters and described five values which sustain America. The report on his speech mentioned: the sanctity of life, self-reliance being central to work, decency, the family, opposition to drugs and crime, and belief in prayer.

It would appear that to believe in these values reveals a strong bent to Christianity. Bush did say that the values he enunciated are traditional values "that make life and liberty worth defending."

A second piece of information comes from James Dobson of Focus on the Family. In his February magazine, a reader asks why people who believe in traditional values are less involved in public issues than secular humanists.

Dobson answered that Christians he knows would die for their faith but yet they "consistently get whipped in the public arena."

He also said, "The other side earns a living by winning these battles, while we are merely motivated by ideology." He pointed out that anti-family organizations receive many millions of dollars in subsidies each year. "Likewise," he said, "the abortionists, the pornographers, and the empire-building bureaucrats all feed at the same public trough." They do that because their livelihood depends on personal involvement in government. Usually, Christians have to make great sacrifices to fight in that arena even briefly.

His summation of the problem stated that votes are what counts. But the truth is that only half of all Christians are registered to vote. We had better start believing that Satan, the roaring lion, is very busy.

Third, it is worthwhile to look at a speech given last October by FCC Commissioner Ervin S. Duggan to a Religious Alliance Against Pornography group. He listed four lessons that America needs right now.

He talked about virtue, saying that in today's culture, the word has "a faint odor of quaintness and primness," obsolete, almost ridiculous. But virtue comes from a root that gives us virtuosity — superior skill, capable, talented, gifted.

So the first lesson is: "Our nation can only recover its strength when it recovers that fuller, more robust and complete meaning of the word virtue. And that includes virtue in our media."

The second lesson: Freedom cannot work without decent self-restraint. Freedom without self-discipline leads to chaos. Paul said, "I am free to do all things, but it is not proper that I do all things."

The third lesson: "Censorship and forcible efforts to suppress enlarge the audience for the very material that offends." This is ultimately true of the fight against pornography and filth of every kind that invades our homes through visual and print media. Public opinion can be changed, said Duggan, people can be rallied, a culture can be changed for the better.

Fourth lesson: "What drives and motivates a person is not what he is against, but what he is for." Well, now, that is interesting.

Promote something decent and good, gentle and humane. Excessive violence and explicit sexual messages in the media portray the human being, God's image, as an object to be used — a thing. Life and human dignity are degraded regularly and intentionally. The violence and explicit sex are seen as normal.

So the battle is not just a fight against things we believe to be evil, but a battle for those values we cherish, "the lives of children and adults, love and genuine romance, kindness and innocence . . ."

Speaking up for Christian values is not prudery or un-American, it is an exercise of the First Amendment right to speak, to publish, to be heard. Living the Christian lifestyle comes first. — WFA

Race relations: 'Come now, let us reason together'

The browning of America is well under way. Demographic studies show that forty percent of elementary and secondary school children in New York State are members of an ethnic minority. Fifty-one percent of the school children in California trace their heritage to African, Asian, or Hispanic roots. In one California city, more people with the last name of Nguyen are listed in the telephone book than people with the name Jones. Today, one in four Americans is nonwhite.

Early in the 21st century, America will be far less white. A child born in 1992 will grow up in a nation landscaped with all the varieties of ethnic and racial groups within God's human garden.

What will be our national response to these surging demographic trends? A review of facts will help celebrate Race Relations Day on February 9.

One possible answer is that the present resurgence of racism will intensify. Racial and ethnic supremacy groups will multiply. Neighborhood walls will go up. Parents will flee with their school-

age children into cultural ghettos. Churches will remain bastions of one racial group or another.

A second possible answer is that ethnic and racial groups will, for the most part, peacefully coexist with occasional outbursts of hostility.

A third possibility is that the nation will take to heart the creed on its currency. The Latin phrase, *E Pluribus Unum*, "one formed from many," is an uplifting vision.

Christians can play a vital role in achieving the third response. We confess that God is our Creator (Genesis 1), that Christ has broken down the wall of hostility that divides us (Ephesians 2:13-16), that the Gospel is for all nations (Matthew 28:19-20), that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34-35) and that the early church was composed of a host of ethnic and racial groups (Acts 2). Our faith provides the framework for interracial, interethnic, and inter-cultural interaction.

Isaiah 1:18 brings into sharp focus what we need to do to achieve such an ambitious goal. Isaiah

offers us a two-part strategy. First, we must "come . . . together." We need to begin meeting together in forums, at churches, and on playgrounds. Association must replace isolation.

Second, we must "reason together." The word reason means to correct one another. Indeed, we Christians, from different heritages and experiences, must sit down with one another and thoroughly discuss our differences. Mutual instruction can uncover misunderstandings, shatter prejudice, expose unwarranted fears, and lead to broad avenues of agreement. Dialogue is always better than either monologue or separation within the body of Christ.

On Race Relations Sunday, view Isaiah 1:18 as a strategy to achieve a community formed from many. Let us not just worship together. Let us come together in Christ and talk about our fears and hopes. Let us learn from, and about, each other. Let us model the love of Christ in our love for each other. — *Christian Life Commission*

Two Annuity Board funds set records in 1991

DALLAS (BP) — Two of the Annuity Board's four retirement plan funds performed well above expectations in 1991, returning more than 20 percent for the year and setting records.

The Variable Fund earned 28.27 percent, propelling the unit value to a

record high, from \$8.50 on Dec. 31, 1990, to \$10.90 on Dec. 31, 1991.

The Balanced Fund earned 22.42 percent, its highest return ever.

The board's Fixed Fund earned 8.8 percent and the Short-Term Fund earned 5.71 percent.

Market performance for 1991 was a surprise even to investment experts, according to John Jones, the Annuity Board's senior vice president for investments.

"Most experts expected somewhat lackluster returns" for stock and bond investments in 1991, Jones said, but surges at the beginning and end of the year produced "superlative" returns.

Jones and his staff direct and monitor a stable of outside investment managers.

All Variable Fund assets are invested in U.S. stocks (equities). The Balanced Fund's assets are invested in a mixture of stocks and high-quality

bonds. On Dec. 31 almost 56 percent of Balanced Fund assets were in equities.

The Federal Reserve Board's action to reduce short-term interest rates helps explain the moderate earnings in 1991 of the Short-Term Fund, Jones said. The return "mirrored the downward trend of short-term interest rates," he said. The fund's assets are invested in government, agency, and corporate securities with average maturities of 12 months or less.

And "despite the declining interest rates," Jones said, "we were pleased to credit earnings equal to our projected rate for the Fixed Fund." The board credited 8.8 percent earnings to accumulations in the Fixed Fund in 1991. Investments are in short- and intermediate-term fixed-income assets, including securities of the federal government, federal agencies, corporations, insurance companies, and banks.

Over the next six years the Annuity

accumulations in the Fixed Fund in 1991. Investments are in short and intermediate-term fixed-income assets, with short-term maturity investments in marketable government, government agency, and in other ways.

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Reception scheduled for retiring pastor

A reception is scheduled Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. at Ellendale Church, Memphis, honoring James D. Witherington Sr. Witherington is retiring Feb. 11 after 40 years as a pastor.

He was ordained in 1951 and preached his first sermon in Corpus Christi, Texas. Witherington has served several other Memphis area churches, including Berclair, Georgian Hills, Rugby Hills, and Lamar Heights.

Ellendale Church will name him pastor emeritus upon his retirement.

Tennessee volunteers help save Venezuelan

GUARENAS, Venezuela (BP) — They were praying when they heard the crash. Southern Baptist missionary Forrest Bohlen looked up just in time to see a parked car roll into another parked car on an incline. About 50 yards away, he and a group of Southern Baptist medical volunteers were just about to open the first day of a Baptist medical clinic. The clinic was set for Jan. 27-29 in Guarenas,

Venezuela, in a house where Venezuelan Baptists are trying to start a Baptist mission.

"We were ready, we were praying . . ." recalled Bohlen, a general evangelist from Danville, Iowa. But they weren't prepared for what happened next.

They heard people screaming and yelling beside the cars. In the middle

of their prayer, medical volunteers and missionaries rushed to the scene. When Bohlen arrived, several Venezuelans were trying to push back one of the cars. That's when he saw the child lying behind a rear wheel.

She was dressed in a preschool uniform. Bohlen later learned the 4-year-old girl and her mother were walking to the Baptist medical clinic.

Immediately, Elmer Motte, Southern

Baptist volunteer physician from Hayden, Ala., tried to revive the child, but it was too late. Motte determined she died instantly after being crushed by the car.

Onlookers had just freed the child's mother, Alida Rodriguez, from beneath the car. Motte quickly moved to Rodriguez, who was already being attended by Southern Baptist nurse Sandra Waller of Knoxville. Motte began applying pressure to the woman's severe head injuries.

Bohlen said Motte, working with the other Baptist medical volunteers, probably saved the woman's life. "She probably would have bled to death before anybody could have done anything" if the volunteers hadn't been there, he said.

Rodriguez was taken to a hospital in the capital city of Caracas, about 30 minutes away. She is recovering from a broken pelvis and head injuries, Bohlen said.

Other Southern Baptist medical volunteers at the scene were Motte's wife, Jean; Malinda Knott and Bob Carter, both of Nashville; Betty Rigby of Winston, Ga.; David McGowan and Lavern Warhurst, both of Hanceville, Ala.; Frank Harris of Richmond, Va.; and Kathy Hutchens of Chelsea, Ala.

After the clinic opened, volunteers treated about 250 patients, mostly children. Bohlen said. Following spiritual counseling offered at the clinic, 40 patients accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

The medical team was among 135 Southern Baptist medical volunteers leading clinics in the Caracas area through Feb. 3. The volunteers are conducting clinics at sites where Venezuelan Baptists hope to start churches.

Summit meeting indicates support for CP

By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP) — A summit meeting of Southern Baptist leadership concerning the denomination's unified giving plan found "enthusiastic support for and commitment to" the Cooperative Program, says the chairman of the meeting.

Two dozen past and present denominational leaders at state convention and SBC levels were invited to the Jan. 20-21 meeting in Nashville by David E. Hankins, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee. Hankins appointed the special study group in response to action and concerns of the Executive Committee in September.

The agenda was reported to include a review of the history of the Cooperative Program, an analysis of the nature of it as it is now being interpreted, and development of proposals for the future enhancement of the CP.

"I was very grateful to those who came," Hankins, pastor of Trinity Church in Lake Charles, La., told Baptist Press following the meeting. "We were helped greatly by the state convention executive directors and by our former SBC leadership. Their historical insights were particularly helpful to me."

The outcome of the meeting, Hankins said, was "enthusiastic" support by those attending for the support of and commitment to the cooperative concept of missions with state conventions

Minnesota-Wisconsin leaders plan retirement

ROCHESTER, Minn. (BP) — Otha Wunningham has announced his retirement as executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Convention, effective April 1, 1993.

His wife, Louise, also has announced her resignation as editor of The Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist, effective July 1, 1992.

The Wunninghams made their announcements during the Jan. 24-25 meeting of the convention's 28-member executive board in Rochester. The convention encompasses 13,000-plus members in 90 churches and 32 chapels in the two states.

Wunningham, 60, has led Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptists since July 1975.

In nearly 40 years in ministry, Wunningham was director of missions for the Keystone Baptist Association in central Pennsylvania for five years and a pastor in Indiana and Arizona.

Louise Wunningham, 59, has been volunteer editor of the convention's newspaper since 1976. She was Woman's Missionary Union director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana from 1959-66 and WMU director for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey from 1973-75. She grew up in Knoxville.

and the SBC working as partners to promote missionary work on both levels.

"There was unanimous agreement to move ahead (in promotion and support of the Cooperative Program)," Hankins said.

Future small group meetings — possibly regional gatherings — between Executive Committee leadership and state officials also were suggested. The Executive Committee plans the national Cooperative Program allocation budget while state conventions determine the percentage to be channeled to the national CP from gifts received by churches in their states.

"We would hold smaller group meetings in order to further enhance the growth in Cooperative Program giving," Hankins said.

The consensus of the group is that while churches and individuals should be free to direct their funds as they wish, Hankins said, the best way to do "our work is through a unified giving plan from the churches to the state conventions, then to the national convention to be distributed to the various agencies."

Attending the meeting were state convention executive directors William

Regional representatives to coordinate TBC youth work

The Sunday School Department of the Tennessee Baptist Convention has implemented a new project designed to assist youth Sunday School leaders and youth ministers throughout the state.

From now through Oct. 31, youth regional representatives, coordinated by Brenda Harris of Cleveland, will spearhead youth work in the TBC.

An experienced council of youth leaders met in Brentwood on Jan. 27 to launch this method of directing youth work while a program associate is being sought.

During their initial meeting, information was shared concerning updates in youth Sunday School programming and curriculum. Time was spent planning the youth portions of the seven regional Sunday School Leadership meetings for the fall. The group is putting together a promotional brochure to be distributed in late spring about youth Sunday School youth ministry events for 1992.

Youth ministry is now a part of the Sunday School Department. For this reason, the regional representatives are a mixture of professional youth ministers as well as lay Youth Sunday School leaders and ministers of education.

All eight regions of our state are represented. Harris, of North Cleveland Church, spent time both in the Sunday School office in Brentwood and working from her home in Cleve-

land. People needing assistance in the area of youth Sunday School or youth ministry may contact Linda Cates in the TBC Sunday School Department, at (615) 371-2054. She will gladly put you in touch with your regional representative.

Regional representatives are Keith Flippin, Calvary Church, Kingsport, north central; Jan Herring, First Church, Clarksville, central; Mike

Goodner, First Church, Soddy-Daisy, southeast;

Phillip Herring, First Church, Clarksville, central; Marilyn McCleendon, Highland Church, Tullahoma, south central; Walter Norvell, Whitehaven Church, Memphis, southwest; Jeff Jones, First Church, Martin, northwest; Leslie Tisdale, Raleigh Church, Memphis southwest; and Bill Stone, First Church, Cookeville, north central.



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES — Meeting recently at the Baptist Center in Brentwood to discuss youth Sunday School work were, from left, seated, Keith Flippin, Jan Herring, Brenda Harris, Mike Goodner, Tony Rodgers, Phillip Herring; standing, Linda Cates, Marilyn McCleendon, Walter Norvell, Jeff Jones, Leslie Tisdale, and Bill Stone.

Tennesseans on program

Convocation on Bible addresses variety of topics

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE — Whether Tennessee Baptists want to know how we got the Bible, help for preaching, ideas for teaching or how their personality relates to that of Bible characters, the National Convocation on the Bible will have conferences to help.

The convocation, planned for April 21-23 at the Nashville Convention Center, will include more than 130 conferences, workshops, and demonstrations conducted by 115 leaders from throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

In addition to Sunday School Board conference leaders, approximately 75 other Southern Baptists will be leading sessions. Leaders include seminary and university professors, other agency leaders, pastors, ministers of education, and experienced Sunday School teachers.

Plenary celebration sessions will include Bible teaching by Bill Hendricks, professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. sermons by pastor Ken Hemphill, First Church, Norfolk, Va., and Joel Gregory, First Church, Dallas, a musical premiere and drama presentations, and a commissioning service for home and foreign missionaries.

Conference leaders from Tennessee other than Sunday School Board personnel include Robert Byrd, professor of religion at Belmont University, Nashville; Louise Caldwell, minister of childhood education at Woodmont Church, Nashville; Mike Glenn, pastor of Brentwood Church; Ircel Harrison, director of student ministries at the Tennessee Baptist Convention; Pattie Kline, youth division Sunday School director at Brentwood Church; and Richard Melick, professor of New

Testament and Greek at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis.

Other conference leaders from Tennessee include Joe Morrell, minister of music at Woodmont Church, Nashville; Mike Smith, pastor of New Hope Church, Hermitage; Shirley Stephens, writer and editor from Brentwood; Martha Couch, Sunday School associate for the Tennessee Baptist Convention in Brentwood; D. L. Lowrie, executive director-treasurer, TBC Convention; Elaine Dickson, human resources consultant, Brentwood; Rollin DeLap, church evangelism department, Home Mission Board; and Richard Land, executive director-treasurer for the SBC Christian Life Commission.

Conference sessions will be held 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. and 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. Five conferences will continue for five hours of conference time and will offer study course credit, according to Judy Wooldrige, coordinator of the conference sessions.

The number of conferences makes it important for participants to decide at the beginning of the convocation which sessions they plan to attend, Wooldrige recommended.

The program book will include a schedule of conferences along with a description of the content of each session and photo of each conference leader, Wooldrige said.

The conferences focus on Biblical background, Biblical studies, proclamation of the Bible, teaching the Bible, and application of the Bible.

Biblical background sessions range from a four-hour panorama of the Bible seminar to a two-hour session on how the discovery of the Dead Sea

Scrolls is impacting Biblical studies.

Other Bible sessions include studies of various Bible characters, studies in New Testament books and topics and Biblical distinctives for Baptists.

A five-hour seminar on the Doctrine of the Bible will provide study course credit for the 1992 Baptist Doctrine Study and will be led by David Dockery, author of the 1992 textbook and general editor of *The New American Commentary*.

Conferences on proclaiming the Bible offer pastors helps for sermon preparation. Topics include using humor in preaching, preaching the Bible to a non-Biblical world, and evangelistic Bible preaching. Sessions also will give pastors tips on using a computer in

sermon preparation.

Teaching the Bible sessions provide help primarily for Sunday School workers. Various conferences focus on concerns of teachers of different age groups and other topics of general interest to teachers.

Application of the Bible sessions deal with various life concern issues such as aging, drug abuse, sanctity of human life, and how to talk to children about theological issues.

For registration information about the National Convocation on the Bible, call (615) 251-3997. Registration materials were sent to churches in August 1991. Additional materials are available from state convention Sunday School departments.

Study committee continues work on funds claimed by BJC, CLC

NASHVILLE (BP) — A special study committee looking into the dispute over the \$390,000 capital needs fund held by the Southern Baptist Foundation, claimed by both the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the SBC Christian Life Commission, met for four hours Jan. 24 and determined it needs more study.

The funds have been held for nearly four decades by the foundation but when the SBC recently severed relationships with the BJCPA a dispute erupted between the CLC and the BJCPA over ownership of the funds. The BJCPA requested the funds last fall with the intent to purchase a building in Washington; however, the matter had by then been referred to the SBC Executive Committee whose chairman, David Hankins, appointed a special study committee.

The study committee — the Executive Committee officers, its legal assistance committee and three at-large members — met Jan. 24 in Nashville for four hours, three of which were in executive session. Following the session, the Executive Committee's legal counsel, James P. Guenther, who said he was authorized by the committee to be its spokesman, said the committee will continue its study.

"The committee's study is more focused now," Guenther said. "But it will continue to research the matter." Guenther said the committee will meet, probably twice, during the Feb. 17-19 Executive Committee meeting in Nashville.

He gave Baptist Press a "time line" of facts the committee was given in its study of the matter. However, Guenther would not give any hint as to what direction the committee was taking.

"The committee has been diligent (and has) shown a desire to be informed and this is clear evidence (the committee wants) to do the right thing," Guenther said. The committee, Guenther added, is not sure at present what that is and wants more time to think about it, although there has been a "focusing" of the committee in the direction it sees as more likely. Guenther would not elaborate further, except to say, "Some options are better than others."

Richard D. Land, executive director of the CLC, and Oliver S. Thomas, BJCPA legal counsel, both presented written position statements of their respective agencies at the meeting.

The \$300,000 capital needs item was established in the mid-1960s ostensibly for a building in Washington housing several related groups including the BJCPA, and has been held by the foundation since. Almost \$100,000 has been added to the corpus during those years.

H. B. Roane dies

H. B. Roane, retired Tennessee Baptist pastor, died Nov. 3 in Covington.

He came to Tennessee as pastor of Hebron Church, Hardeman County Association, in 1959. He was pastor of Kirk Church, Williston Church, Fayette Association.

He also served Clover Creek Church, Madison-Chester Association. His last pastorate was in 1975.

He is survived by his wife who lives in Covington.

Our Readers Write

On Christian men

Kudos on your recent editorial about Baptist men. The Bible teaches that God places enormous responsibility on male leadership in the family and the church.

Much Christian emphasis is placed on children's and women's ministries as it should be. However, all too often men's ministries are ignored or only given lip service. How inverse that is considering the responsibility of the man's role in the family and the church. Men need to be trained, encouraged, and nurtured to be all the men that God wants them to be.

One woman told me that if Christian men were the men of God that they

should be, more families would be stronger and stay together. She couldn't have been more correct in her assessment.

Hamp A. Morrison
3541 Crestridge Drive
Nashville 37204

On with the mission

Power — Where is the autonomous local church and the individual church member in our great Southern Baptist Convention today? We are not to be (and Jesus did not establish) an hierarchical church. Satan evolved one and it impeded Christ's work for centuries and it wrote its own history and crushed us (all New Testament groups) and others that they called "heretics."

Martin Luther had the courage to walk up the Jerusalem steps (in Rome) saying, "the just shall live by faith," Romans 1:17. And Satan continues to be active in the world trying to break down our Southern Baptist Convention which probably is the greatest denomination, evangelistic group, of all time.

The effectiveness of Bold Mission Thrust aggravated Satan to embolden identity, power, and ego seekers, to try and bring down our great evangelical institutions.

The Southern Baptist Convention's effective work worldwide has been accomplished down through the years by the full range of Christians — from the nebulous "liberal" elements through solid middle ground Christians and on to

the nebulous "conservative" elements and the wild extremes of either and both are very dangerous.

May Christ through humble Christians be permitted back into sole control — from the pew on through top "servants."

All this while Satan is having a heyday with immorality in the United States of America. Let's stop our petty in-fighting and stand bold to save America, let the power go out to be a Paul not inward to be a Nero.

The Bible — pure and simple — is our Book. The Holy Spirit is our sustainer. Prayer is our power. On with Bold Mission Thrust and all that it means all around the world.

Ward S. Webb
Rt. 1, Box 13845
Madisonville 37354

No church services

If we cancel church services on Super Sunday in 1992, what will be the stated reason for closing the meeting house in 1993 and 1994 and beyond?

Will it still be football and soccer, hockey and political conventions — and low attendance at services of corporate worship anyway?

Precedent is now firmly in place for us Baptists to forsake "the gathering of ourselves together . . ." May He have mercy upon us all!

O. M. Smaw
1612 Sixteenth Ave., South
Nashville 37212

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.

Romanian council members disagree on Ruschlikon

By Mike Creswell and Stanley Crabb
BUCHAREST, Romania (BP) — The president of Romanian Baptists will neither confirm nor deny whether his union's General Council actually agreed last November that Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees should cut funds to the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

But some members of the 51-member General Council now confirm news reports circulating in Europe and the United States that they neither approved nor discussed the defunding and that no vote was taken. Another member, who sits on the General Council's seven-member Executive Council, interpreted it differently, saying no vote was taken because there was no difference of opinion on Ruschlikon.

Romanian Baptist President Vasile Talos declined specifically to confirm or deny in a Jan. 24 Baptist Press telephone interview that the 51-member General Council approved the contents of a controversial letter he and Nic Gheorghita sent to the Foreign

Mission Board. Talos, an attorney, said he would have to check with Gheorghita, the union's general secretary, and others to reconstruct what happened.

But Gheorghita, interviewed earlier by Associated Baptist Press while on a trip in the United States, said that no vote was taken by the council but that the letter was justified. "Everyone was agreed and no one said 'no,'" ABP quoted him as saying. "When there is no argument, there is no reason to vote."

Several other Romanian Baptists involved say that, although the Ruschlikon seminary was discussed in the Nov. 26 meeting in Bucharest, the specific matter of whether the Foreign Mission Board acted appropriately in defunding Ruschlikon was neither voted on, endorsed, nor discussed.

The Talos-Gheorghita letter said that "in the matter of the FMB decision of defunding the Seminary of Ruschlikon, the General Council of the Baptist Union of Romania, gathered in the meeting of November 26, 1991, agreed to this decision of the FMB."

A group of Baptist pastors, some of whom are General Council members, confronted Talos Jan. 23 and 24 in Bucharest about the letter and forced him to admit it did not reflect discussion the General Council held about Ruschlikon on Nov. 26, according to the president of the Baptist Theological Institute in Bucharest, Vasile Talpos. (Talos should not be confused with Talos. They have the same first name and their last names vary only one letter in spelling.)

The 42 pastors, in Bucharest to attend classes at the Baptist Theological Institute, canceled two mornings of classes to discuss the letter after Talos returned to Romania from a visit to the United States. Several pastors said they had learned of the letter sent by Talos and Gheorghita only after reading reports of it in the Baptist Standard, the state Baptist newspaper of Texas.

"Talos (the union president) tried to justify their position that it (the content of the letter) was discussed in general terms, but finally everyone convinced him that the decision was

not taken in the council," Talpos, the Baptist Theological Institute president, told European Baptist Press Service. "So the pastors insisted that he (Talos) write a letter explaining the situation and correcting it. He agreed to do that, but we don't know what he will do because we will not see the letter."

The Talos-Gheorghita letter represented the only support from any European Baptist union for the funding cut for Ruschlikon, which Foreign Mission Board trustees voted on Oct. 9 and reaffirmed in a second meeting Dec. 11. Baptist unions across Europe denounced the board's removal of funds to Ruschlikon; many union leaders termed it a betrayal of trust.

The Talos-Gheorghita letter, written to Eastern Europe mission administrator Paul Thibodeaux, was in circulation in the United States and being cited as support for the defunding before he saw it, Thibodeaux said.

In the General Council meeting Nov. 26, those present generally agreed it would be better to develop their own schools in Romania rather than depend on Ruschlikon, pastors said.

Ion Rincu, a General Council member, said he told Talos near the end of the Jan. 23 meeting: "Some of you on the executive committee (of the General Council) made a decision to send to the West a statement saying that the full council of the Romanian Baptist Union voted unanimously to support the defunding of Ruschlikon. This is not true and amends must be made." Rincu, the union's former general secretary, is pastor of the 700-member Second Church in Timisoara.

Ovidiu Bulzan, a member of the smaller Executive Council, said the Ruschlikon situation was discussed "very thoroughly" in the Executive Council in November and December. "We also made it public in the meeting of the council of the union (General Council), together with the 45 or so pastors who were there at the beginning of December." He said the letter expressed the sentiment of the council.

Bulzan agreed that no vote was taken in relation to Ruschlikon.

Urgent call issued for China personnel

HONG KONG (BP) — Southern Baptists' priority to meet opportunities in newly opened Soviet and Eastern European states may have taken the spotlight off work in China, steering volunteers away from growing opportunities there.

Hong Kong-based officials with Cooperative Services International are issuing an urgent plea for more workers in China. The Southern Baptist humanitarian aid organization asks Southern Baptists not to lose sight of CSI's China efforts in their rush to help Eastern Europeans behind the now-crumbled Iron Curtain.

"Southern Baptists have adequate resources to support both these tremendously needy regions of the world," said Jack Shelby, who directs CSI's China teaching program. "But response to our personnel requests for China has been very weak. Some of that can be attributed to the Tiananmen Square incident three years ago. But our shortfall in teachers also coincides with the opening of Eastern Europe" to Western aid.

Response to CSI's China work

threatens to hit a three-year low. Chinese universities have asked CSI to provide 123 teachers for the 1992-93 school year. But so far, just three people have agreed to teach in China this fall.

Those requests for teachers are "the most we've ever had from China in a single year," Shelby added. "Our program is becoming well known and respect for our teachers' work is growing among university administrators across China. There's a real demand for our people."

"But we've refrained from beating the bushes to get slots for teachers because we don't have personnel to fill requests we have in hand. We could easily get 400 requests for teachers but we haven't encouraged our China contacts to ask for more. We obviously can't keep the program going if we don't have people to fill teaching positions."

Southern Baptists sent just 46 teachers to China last year — the lowest total in three years. And 25 of those — more than half — will complete assignments after this school

year and won't return in the fall.

The agency has requested 50 volunteers to work in China for a six-week term this summer, including travel and orientation. But Southern Baptists have filled only about half those requests. CSI hopes to place six teams in China this summer to lead training courses for English teachers from Chinese middle schools and universities.

"We're looking for experienced primary, junior, and senior high school or university English teachers," Shelby said, "or others with degrees in English, ESL (English as a second language), or English literature. As policy, Chinese universities don't like to accept foreign teachers over 68 years old so we can take people up to that age in our program. That's a Chinese rule, not our rule."

People interested in CSI's summer teaching program should immediately contact Bill Peacock or Anita Mahoney in Richmond, Va., at (804) 353-0151.

Supreme Court ruling strikes . . .

—Continued from page 1

and outside the federal government. "They've run the route and they've lost it all the way up to the Supreme Court." The case denied a hearing by the court was Dial Information Services v. Barr.

"I'm ecstatic," said Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "This is a mortal blow to filth peddlers who would corrupt the minds of our children. To use sports analogies, this is a combination World Series sweep-Super Bowl blowout."

"By requiring these smut merchants to obtain parental consent before piping their sewage through the phone lines, this valid law permits parents to protect the privacy and decency of the home," said Michael Whitehead, CLC general counsel. "The toxic waste called telephone sex need no longer pollute the minds of our children and may finally wind up in the dump

where it belongs."

The Christian Life Commission was party to a brief filed by the National Coalition Against Pornography with the FCC asking for strict regulations in keeping with the 1989 law.

The '89 provision, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms, R.-N.C., was passed after the Supreme Court ruled against a previous ban on dial-a-porn indecency. In June 1989 the court said in Sable Communications of California v. FCC a prohibition of obscene dial-a-porn was constitutional but a ban on indecency was not. Such a law would have to be narrowly drawn to avoid violating freedom of speech, the court said.

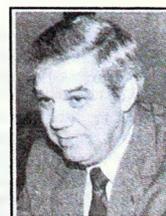
Showers, who is in private practice but also serves as president of N-CAP's National Law Center for the Protection of Children and Families, helped draft the '89 bill. A member of First Church, Alexandria, Va., he is a CLC trustee. Land is a member of N-CAP's executive committee.

TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

How are we doing on fulfilling the Great Commission? At least we will have to admit that we are not finished yet.

According to a recent report about one-third of the 5.2 billion people on the earth are nominally Christian. One-half of this Christian third would be Roman Catholic.



LOWRIE

There are an estimated 917 million Muslims; 722 million Hindus, 338 million followers of Confucius; 329 million Buddhists; 19 million Jews; and 17 million Sikhs.

What does this mean? It means the unsaved world is not irreligious. Actually their religious training is one of the barriers that keeps them from Christ. It means that most of them live

in countries to which missionaries must carry the Gospel. It means that our task is not finished yet!

However, it also means that our task of evangelizing the world is possible. We cannot win everyone to Christ, but we can make sure that they hear the Gospel. Let's discount the one-third that claims to be nominally Christian, and calculate that only one-tenth of the world actually knows the Lord Jesus as Savior. That would mean that if each true Christian would accept their responsibility, my part would be to be responsible for nine other souls, and you would be responsible for nine.

The truth is that we can evangelize this old world any time we decide that we want to do it. But we must have everyone doing his or her part. We will never get it done with only a few working at it.

Are you ready to do your part? Tell the Lord of the harvest that you are ready.

Teen suicide: 'A real problem' that churches must address

By Mark Wingfield

LOUISVILLE — More American teenagers will die this year at their own hands than from cancer, heart disease, influenza, and pneumonia combined.

While many child-killing diseases have been cured in the past 30 years, the suicide rate among American teens has been steadily increasing, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

Since 1960, the rate of children ages ten-19 dying of cancer has been cut in half, the number dying of heart disease has been reduced more than half, and deaths from influenza and pneumonia have been reduced 80 percent.

During the same period, however, teen suicide rates have more than tripled. Suicide is now the third most frequent killer of America's teenagers, behind accidents and homicide.

Nationwide, suicide rates are about 1.4 per 100,000 among youth ages ten-14, 11.3 per 100,000 for 15-to-19-year-olds, and 15 per 100,000 for 20-to-24-year-olds.

The casualty rate is highest among white males. Girls make more suicide attempts, but boys tend to succeed more often by using more lethal means.

Teen suicide is "a real problem," said Audrey Puryear, director of community services with Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in Louisville.

"If we believe the report that one out of every seven youths has attempted suicide, ... then we really need to sit up and pay attention," she said.

"I guarantee you, any youth group you go into, if you could get them to speak openly and honestly, you would find a significant number who are feeling depressed and you would find kids who are thinking about suicide. They may not have a plan, but they are at least thinking about that as a solution to their problems."

"There is little reason to believe the problem of suicide is diminishing," added Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant with the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville and

minister of youth at Tulip Grove Church, Old Hickory. "The factors in the home and in society that contribute to suicide all seem to be as strong as ever."

Both Ross and Puryear believe parents and church leaders should be prepared to deal with suicidal teenagers.

Ross said he has been reminded about the need for such counseling in churches by the overwhelming response to a Sunday School Board product called the "24-hour Counselor." Two components of this audiotape counseling series are titled "I No Longer Want to Live" and "My Friend May Commit Suicide."

good family relationships, a positive school environment, a good environment for community activities, and involvement in a church or synagogue.

Children with all four assets in place would be least at risk, but even one positive asset can make a big difference, she said. The positive influence of a church can make the difference for a child with poor family relationships, a bad school, and a bad community, she said.

Both parents and church youth leaders have roles to play in preventing teen suicide, Ross said.

"Church leaders definitely need to provide parent education experiences that help parents identify and respond

• Hopelessness. Ross said this is different from the depression all teens routinely experience. "Suicidal teenagers honestly believe that not only is life awful but it absolutely will not get any better."

• Unhealthy family relationships. "About 80 percent of suicidal teenagers are living without one or both biological parents," Ross said. "Even in intact homes, unhealthy relationships within the home can contribute to a sense of hopelessness."

• Guilt and moral failure. "The rate of suicide attempts among girls who have violated their own sexual values is high," Ross said. "Teenagers who have experimented with a homosexual style of life have a very high rate of suicide attempts."

• Sense of rootlessness. Teens often feel alone in society, especially if separated from extended family who in previous generations provided strong support during adolescence, Ross added. "Parents who give almost total attention to vocation often leave youths alone in a community without strong friendships or relatives to fill in the gap."

• Isolation from friends.
• Involvement with drugs and alcohol.
• Neglecting personal appearance.
• Unexplained changes in behavior, such as sleeplessness, under-eating, over-eating, abandoning long-term friendships, giving away prized possessions.

Someone simply listening to a teenager's concerns can be a positive step, Puryear explained. "There's a myth that if you talk with somebody who's having suicidal feelings it will cause them to actually do it. That's not true."

Ross added one warning: "Church leaders who believe a teenager may be suicidal should invite the teenager to talk with parents or trained professionals. If a teenager refuses, it may be best for the church leader to talk with a professional or the teenager's parents even if this means breaking a confidentiality with the teenager. In many states, church leaders are legally required to inform appropriate adults concerning a suicidal teenager."

Ross also affirmed church youth workers by saying the ongoing ministry of the church is a preventative measure against teen suicide.

"James Dobson uses the analogy of a cliff. He says churches often become preoccupied with running ambulances back and forth picking up teenagers at the bottom of the cliff. But there is a greater need for someone to go up to the top of the cliff and build a fence.

"The fence at the top of that cliff," Ross said, "is the ongoing youth ministry of the church." — ABP

Johnson City native is pastor in Kingsport

James H. Royston, a native of Johnson City, returned to his home state from North Carolina to serve as pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Kingsport.

Royston was formerly pastor of First Church, Huntersville, N.C. His duties in Kingsport began Jan. 1

He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

Royston and his wife, Jeannie, have two children, Jeff and Jennifer.

Suicide statistics: the grim reality

A 1991 Gallup Poll survey of a representative national sample of Americans age 13-19 found that:

27 percent believe that most of their peers have thought about suicide.

35 percent believe their friends have considered suicide.

52 percent admitted to discussing the topic with their friends.

35 percent said they had actually thought about committing suicide.

6 percent claimed to have attempted suicide.

About 500,000 teens have anonymously picked up the counseling tapes in their churches.

"I have received many letters and stories from teenagers on the verge of suicide who chose not to take their lives because of the counseling they received through an audiotape," Ross explained. "We have never put anything in print that teenagers would pick up by themselves on the subject of suicide. But by the thousands they are picking up the audiotapes on suicide."

Puryear said suicide is only one of many at-risk behaviors teens face. However, the risk of suicide increases as the number of other at-risk behaviors a teen has increases.

Research has identified four assets that significantly reduce such at-risk behaviors, she said. Those assets are

and plenty of advance planning.

"The Shelby County Correctional Center complex is the largest county jail in the United States, with about 3000 men and women inmates," said Creasman, who served as event chairman. "After meeting with the prison administrators, all of them extremely cooperative, we decided we'd have two complete worship services at five different locations within the complex. So we had to locate five evangelists, five song leaders, five musicians or groups, and a host of counselors."

They spanned the full theological and racial spectrum of Southern Baptist life in greater Memphis. Evangelists ranged from R. Paul Caudill, pastor emeritus of First Church, to James Vail, a student at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

"We had two white evangelists and three black, three white song leaders and two blacks, and our counselors were almost evenly distributed between the races," Creasman said.

Bill Hendry, director of the military ministry at Memphis' Bellevue Church, trained the prospective counselors at three locations around the city. Each volunteer had to undergo a security check for prior criminal activity and

to suicidal tendencies," he suggested. "Church leaders need to nurture relationships between teenagers and youth workers that make it more likely that teenagers will talk about significant personal issues with key adults.

"Church leaders need to deal with guilt and moral failure. Church leaders need to introduce lost teenagers to Christ as the ultimate reason for living."

Parents, on the other hand, "should begin at birth to strengthen within a child a Biblically sound and healthy sense of self-worth," Ross said. "During adolescence, parents should work very hard at keeping lines of communication open."

Puryear and Ross said parents and church workers alike should be aware of common contributors to teen suicide and common warning signs:

decide the times and locations they would be serving, again for security reasons.

In another concession to security, the inmates filled out commitment cards after returning to their cellblocks rather than at the conclusion of services. Follow-up is made with individual inmates later.

To drum up interest among inmates, organizers used mealtime announcements, posters throughout the prison compound, visitation in cellblocks, and "special interest clinics" on topics including how to read the Bible, marriage and family relationships, and sports with a Christian emphasis.

"The opportunity for failure was tremendous but it was a miracle how smoothly the revival worked out. And the results speak for themselves," Creasman said.

He urged others to consider prison ministry as an avenue for missions involvement, adding that concern for one's personal safety is misplaced.

"You can deal in a prison environment without fear because there's always security present. In fact, you're more protected in a prison these days than you are in the average shopping center parking lot," he said.

Memphis ministry program reaches prisoners

By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS (BP) — Larry Creasman knows that organization and commitment are the keys to reaching persons through ministry to prison inmates, and he has the numbers to prove it.

As a result of the most recent revival at Memphis' Shelby County Correctional Center, 261 inmates accepted Christ as Savior and hundreds more came forward in rededication.

Creasman, a retired U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employee from Hernando, Miss., is a member of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's National Fellowship of Baptists in Missions through the Shelby Criminal Justice Fellowship.

Working under the leadership of Shelby Association, Creasman and his associates in the fellowship help perform an ongoing ministry to more than 9000 inmates in city, county, state, and federal jails throughout the Memphis area, offering twice-weekly worship services, counseling, and special holiday programs.

Creasman, a member of Memphis' Bellevue Church, said the success of the "Victory in Jesus" revival was the product of this year-round ministry, with the addition of prayer, confession,

John Robinson

New missionary looks forward to return to Romania

The fall of communism in Romania has opened the door for Southern Baptist missions in that country for the first time since the end of World War II. Tennessean John Robinson was recently appointed by the Foreign Mission Board as a career missionary to work with the people of one of the first

Green River holds commissioning service

Green River Church, Waynesboro, will hold a special commissioning service for John Robinson on Feb. 9 at 4 p.m.

Special guests at the service will include Bill Troutt and Fred Kendall from Belmont University and Romanian students Lica and Tibi Vadan.

"We are all very excited to see how God has been working in John's life to lead him to this time and place," said Green River Pastor Mike Kemper.

Tennessee churches participate in Watchmen National Prayer Alert

By Lonnie Wilkey

Tennessee Baptist churches are finding they have a common bond with churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention because of a fervent interest in prayer.

Seventy TBC churches from all over the state are among about 1200 churches from across the nation presently registered to participate in the Watchmen National Prayer Alert.

The goal of the prayer alert is to bring spiritual awakening to the nation and the world. All churches have agreed to pray at least one hour a week during 1992.

The prayer alert is an organized effort coordinated by the Discipleship Training department of the Baptist Sunday School Board. It emerged from a call by SBC President Morris Chapman for Southern Baptist churches to become more involved in the nation's spiritual well-being.

Church members pray during the hour assigned them, said Mary Betts, prayer alert coordinator. Following their hour of prayer, the church "transfers the watch" or calls the church designated to pray through the next hour.

Betts expects to have a Watchmen National Prayer Alert membership roll of 2500 churches by the end of February.

She said the idea of transferring the prayer watch from one congregation to another helps unite churches in the prayer effort. "It also brings the different churches closer together as they share prayer concerns with one another," she said.

Tennessee Baptists share Betts' concept of the new national prayer alert ministry.

Lou Reynolds, minister of missions and special ministries at Judson Church, Nashville, is enthusiastic about Judson's involvement in the effort.

Judson participates in the ministry on Saturdays from 11 to 12 p.m. Judson receives the "watch" from Faith Church in Centerville, Mich., and passes it on to Medicine Bow Church in Medicine Bow, Wyo.

While Judson is a large metropolitan church, the two "prayer partners" are

Eastern European countries to overthrow communism.

Upheaval in the Romanian government over the past two years leaves a cloud of uncertainty over the plight of the country's people. "I'm hoping the political situation will remain stable and give me the opportunity to do what I need to do in my ministry," says Robinson.

"My first job is to share God with lost people," says Robinson. He also sees his role as a missionary to help Christians strengthen existing ministries. Specifically, he will be working in his field of expertise, music. His musical talent, interest in Eastern Europe, and love of the Romance languages led to his study of voice as a Fulbright Scholar in Transylvania, Romania. During 1987-88, Robinson studied at the Conservatory of Music in Cluj-Napoca, in the then-communist

both small churches, Reynolds said, noting, however, a bond has been formed.

"We want to know them and them to know us," Reynolds said. He already has become acquainted with the pastors of the two churches.

During Judson's hour, members who participate pray about a variety of items ranging from local church concerns to Southern Baptist Convention issues to world causes. The primary focus, however, is spiritual awakening, Reynolds affirmed.

"Our foundation is praying for spiritual awakening," he said, adding that spiritual awakening must start with the churches and then spread throughout America and the world.

At Buffalo Trail Church in Morristown, members will embark in the national prayer alert beginning Feb. 6 at 8 p.m. The church's partners will be First Church, Sherwood, Ark., and First Church, Atlanta, Texas.

Pastor Benny Keck is eager to begin the ministry.

It's one thing to promote prayer in the local church. It's another thing to get churches involved together to pray for spiritual revival, he said.

Keck observed the prayer alert "will give us a sense of unity and continuity."

In West Tennessee, Pastor Don Wilson of Kensington Church, Memphis, will lead a group on Thursdays from 5 to 6 a.m. The church is paired with a sister church in Memphis, Brookside, and Fairview Church in Lindale, Ga.

Wilson noted his goal in the Watchmen National Prayer Alert is to "make it an overall prayer renewal ministry for our church."

Wilson also is hopeful that the nationwide prayer effort will help to unite the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I'm looking for revival," he said.

Churches interested in becoming participants in the prayer ministry should write to Watchmen National Prayer Alert, MSN 151, 127 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, Tenn. 37234, or call Mary Betts at (615) 251-5037. — Terri Lackey of the Baptist Sunday School Board's office of communications contributed to this story.

country.

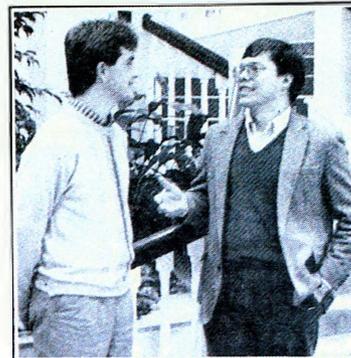
During his stay in Romania, he became acquainted with the college-age son of the local Baptist church pastor. In a unique exchange of friendship and faith, Lica Vadan came to study at Robinson's alma mater. Vadan is a sophomore studying religion and music at Belmont University. Robinson is a 1987 graduate of Belmont.

Robinson was also instrumental in Belmont Chorale's music tour behind the Iron Curtain in 1989, a time when religious freedom was still a dream in the Eastern bloc.

Prior to his appointment by the FMB, Robinson was working on his master's degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is considering completing degree requirements during his first furlough.

Robinson's journey to Romania may have begun several years ago when he decided to teach himself the language. He has a working knowledge of ten languages. A turning point was Missions '85 in Nashville where he met a Romanian worker from Georgia. The following summer, he served as a summer missionary at a Romanian Baptist church in Los Angeles. In addition, he has worked with a Czechoslovak congregation and a Romanian congregation in Vienna, Austria.

In his home state of Tennessee he has served as associate pastor/minister of youth at Valley View Church, Nashville, and as associate pastor and interim pastor at Green River Church in Waynesboro. He also served as interim minister of music at



SPEAKING ONE ANOTHER'S LANGUAGE

— Lica Vadan, left, will be finishing up his studies at John Robinson's alma mater, Belmont University, while Robinson begins his service as a foreign missionary in Vadan's homeland of Romania.

Ivy Memorial Church in Nashville. His parents are Samuel and Frances Riley of Waynesboro.

While events leading to Robinson's appointment to Romania may seem like a well-thought-out plan, he says, "it seems like a whirlwind to me. I didn't know it would happen this fast." Robinson leaves for FMB orientation in Rockville, Va., April 25 and will be on the field soon after. He says it may be easier to see that God has been "guiding in this way all along."

Christians in Romania have risked religious persecution for half a century, nonetheless there are currently 80,000 Baptists and 1000 Baptist congregations. — Mona Collett

In Murfreesboro

Yu leads growth at Korean Mission

Moses Yu was overjoyed when his father, a former Buddhist monk in South Korea, became a Baptist church deacon. Yu had shared the faith he had caught from a missionary serving in Korea. But he decided against another demand of his faith.

Fifteen years later God was still calling him to be a preacher, said Yu, pastor of Korean Mission, Belle Aire Church, Murfreesboro. At that time Yu and his wife and two children lived in California where he worked for the U.S. Post Office.

"With my physical sight, I thought, how can I survive? ... But God's still calling me," explained Yu.

An impetus to enter the ministry were the lives of his two best friends. They were involved in ministry and living comfortable lives. "My God is their God, too," he acknowledged.

Yu's resistance to God's direction wasn't whole-hearted. He had begun to prepare for the ministry. After his service in the U.S. Army, he had completed studies at Patten Bible College in Oakland, Calif., and had attended Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley. He also was minister of education of the Korean Church in Hayward.

When he finally decided to enter the ministry, Yu found his fears weren't unfounded. His income dropped 89 percent after he began

servicing his first church. Laconically, he drew a Biblical analogy to famine in the promised land of the Israelites.

"My Lord, he protects and cares and loves me and still he loves. And I'm in his will," he added.

After just four months at the Belle Aire mission, Yu reported the mission has drawn 50 percent of the Korean population of Murfreesboro to the congregation — about 20 members. Eight people have been baptized since he started serving.

His challenge, he noted, is unifying a congregation which includes Korean/American families. But through Jesus Christ "all peoples are one in Christ — educated or not, old or young," Yu said.

Because the services are held in the Korean language, Yu noted family members who don't speak Korean may attend Belle Aire Church services. The church is "the best in supporting a Korean church," he commented.

Another unifying strategy is home cell Bible studies held monthly in homes of members. People who won't attend church participate in the studies, he said.

Yu proudly reported the percentage of gifts given to the Cooperative Program — ten percent — and to Concord Association — four percent.

"We're small, but our goal is reaching the world for Jesus Christ," Yu said. — Connie Davis

Teachings of Carey valid today, maintains scholar

By Timothy George

Nearly 200 years ago, on June 13, 1793, a poor journeyman shoemaker named William Carey; his wife, Dorothy; and their four children, including a nursing infant, sailed from England on a Danish ship headed for India. At the time few people noticed their departure. With only a grammar-school education behind him, Carey had no credentials for missionary service except an inextinguishable conviction that God Almighty had called him to devote his life to "the conversion of the heathens."

Now, two centuries later, Carey is universally recognized as the father of modern missions. His name is synonymous with the heroic age of the Protestant missionary movement which began with his forty-year ministry in India and includes the saga of other notable figures such as Henry Martyn, Alexander Duff, Adoniram and Ann Judson, Lottie Moon, and David Livingstone.

Yet what Carey wrote about the fulfillment of the Great Commission 200 years ago is still valid, and even more compelling, today. "Some attempts are being made, but they are inconsiderable in comparison with what might be done if the whole body of Christians entered heartily into the spirit of the divine command on this subject."

Indeed, the Christian world stands today at a critical juncture in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Mission strategists have called for the evangelization of the world by the year A.D. 2000. Yet there are still 1.3 billion persons on earth who have never heard the name of Jesus for the first time. Hunger, violence, epidemics on a massive scale, racial and ethnic conflicts, debilitating poverty, illiteracy, political repression, and social dislocation; all these, together with fragmentation and loss of vision within the Christian world itself, present enor-

Seminary receives funds

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP) — Donations to the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, are coming in at a pace that probably will enable the school to make up the \$365,000 cut from its 1992 budget by trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The international seminary received about \$115,000 in general donations during November and December, plus another \$40,000 channeled through the Foreign Mission Board in designated gifts from Southern Baptists, reported Southern Baptist missionary Jo Ann Hopper, who works in school administration. Her husband, John David Hopper, is president of the seminary.

Another \$100,000 from Virginia Baptists was to be channeled in a lump sum through the Foreign Mission Board for the seminary Jan. 31, according to Nat Kellum, treasurer for the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

But Mrs. Hopper said continuing to meet the annual budget of the financially troubled school will be challenging. The Foreign Mission Board funding cut amounted to a third of the school's budget, she said.

"Before, we were getting a third of our budget through donations. Now we'll have to get two-thirds of it through donations and that will be hard," she said.

mous challenges to the task of missions in tomorrow's world. What can we learn from Carey as we seek to be faithful witnesses in a world like this?

The sovereignty of God. Carey knew that Christian missions was rooted in the gracious, eternal purpose of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As a young pastor in England he confronted and overcame the resistance of those hyper-Calvinistic theologians who used the sovereignty of God as a pretext for their do-nothing attitude toward missions. It was not in spite of, but rather because of, his belief in the greatness of God and His divine purpose that Carey was willing "to venture all" to proclaim the Gospel in the far corners of the world.

"Indeed, the Christian world stands today at a critical juncture in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Mission strategists have called for the evangelization of the world by the year A.D. 2000. Yet there are still 1.3 billion persons on earth who have never heard the name of Jesus for the first time."

Today, more than a new program of missionary training or another strategy for world evangelization, the church of Jesus Christ needs a fresh vision of a full-sized God — eternal, transcendent, holy, filled with compassion, sovereignly working by His Holy Spirit to call unto Himself a people out of every nation, kindred, tribe, and language group on earth. Only such a vision, born of repentance, prayer, and self-denial, can inspire a Carey-like faith in a new generation of Christian heralds.

The finality of Jesus Christ. Carey also knew that personal faith in Jesus Christ was the only way of salvation for all peoples everywhere. More recently, however, the uniquely divine nature of Jesus Christ and the cruciality of Christian conversion have both been called into question.

As this view has come to dominate more and more in the old-line Protestant denominations, the sending of missionaries from these quarters has dwindled to a trickle. It is estimated that nine out of ten of today's career missionaries are evangelicals affiliated with conservative denominational boards or independent missions agencies. Had Carey accepted the premise of much contemporary missiological thinking, he would never have gone to India in the first place; or, had he done so, he would have embraced there the indigenous Hindu belief that all religions are equally valid paths to the one unknowable God.

His life and witness encourage us to resist the seductive power of syncretism and to remain faithful to the only Gospel which can deliver lost men and women from the power of sin and death.

The authority of Holy Scripture. There were three bases in Carey's plan to evangelize India: Preach the Gospel, translate the Bible, and establish schools. Proclamation, translation, education. At the heart of each was his confidence in the authority and total truthfulness of the Bible. Carey poured his life into mastering the difficult languages of India and the East until he had either translated or personally supervised the translation of the Bible into some 40 distinct tongues.

Strange as it may seem, the task of

translating the Scriptures into all the languages of the world remains incomplete 200 years after Carey's pioneering labors. Missions researchers estimate that there are some 10,000 language families who have yet to receive the Bible in their own tongue. Much work remains to be done in fulfilling Carey's vision of conveying God's written Word in all of the vernacular languages on earth.

The power of prayer. For ten years prior to Carey's mission to India, the churches of Northamptonshire Baptist Association in England had been meeting regularly to beseech God for revival and the spread of the Gospel. This concert of prayer awakened the church to action. Throughout his

Gospel. He was able to make these adaptations because he had gone to India not merely to convert the people there from one "religion" to another, much less to import an alien culture or civilization, but rather to proclaim the life-changing, culture-transforming message of salvation through repentance in faith in Jesus Christ. Carey's ability to contextualize the Gospel without compromising the essentials of Christian faith provides a balanced model for us today.

Holistic missions. Carey never shrank from understanding his mission to include both a social and an evangelistic responsibility. If he gave priority to the latter, it was because he sensed so keenly the eternal destiny of every person he met and shuddered to think of the dire consequences of spurning Christ's invitation to eternal life. Still, he refused to divorce conversion from discipleship. He knew that Jesus had given food to hungry people on the same occasion that he presented himself to them as the Bread of Life. Carey vigorously opposed slavery and other inhumane practices such as abortion, infanticide, and sati, the ritual burning of widows. He detested the wanton destruction wrought by war and prayed for peace among the nations of the world. Without neglecting the transcendent dimension, so often missing in contemporary liberation theologies, Carey fully embraced the Biblical concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society.

Carey's mission to India was a catalyst for a great missionary awakening throughout the church. During the past two centuries, many others have responded to Jesus' command to "go into all the world, making disciples."

Today, as we stand on the brink of a new millennium with the mandate for world evangelization still looming before us, the best lesson we can learn from Carey is the principle by which he lived and died, "The one thing required of a servant of Christ is that he be faithful to his Master" (I Corinthians 4:2): Faithful in giving, faithful in praying, faithful in going.

Timothy George is dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala. He is the author of Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey, published by New Hope Press.



NASHVILLE WELCOME — Nashville Association pastors Bob Norman, left, Clearview Church, Franklin, and Ken Clayton, right, Tulip Grove Church, Old Hickory, visit with Dan Bahat, archaeologist from Israel. Bahat spoke to a group at the Baptist Sunday School Board concerning excavations around the Western Wall of the ancient Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

TenneScene

... From Kyles Ford to Karns,
on to Kimmons ...

Leadership ...

Jack Maness has been called as pastor of Banner Church, Gatlinburg. He is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Chuck Williams, pastor of First Church, Troy, has resigned to accept a pastorate in Missouri.

Tony Long has resigned as minister of education at First Church, Columbia, to become minister of education and administration at First Church, Smyrna.

Members of Immanuel Church, Nashville, elected Chris Dillard as interim minister of youth.

Holly Grove Church, Bells, called David Peace as associate youth director. John Kimberly Jr., was promoted to serve as minister of music/associate to the pastor.

Terry Chitwood recently began his ministry as minister of music and youth at First Church, Lewisburg. The Virginia native earned a bachelor's degree in Christian studies at Averett College, Danville, Va., and a master's degree in communications at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He has served churches in Florida, Texas, North Carolina, and Virginia, and worked as a radio announcer and production supervisor while completing his graduate studies.

Ryan Potts is the new pastor of Gearin's Chapel, Greenfield. He was ordained Dec. 8, 1991, at Bethlehem Church, Greenfield.

Carroll C. Owen retired Dec. 15 as pastor of Hobson Pike Church, near Mt. Juliet.

Members of Concord Church, Chattanooga, recently called two interim ministers. Mike Steele will serve as interim pastor and James Carpenter will serve as youth director.

Wayne Bryant is serving as pastor of East Niota Church, Niota.

Memorial Church, Crossville, called Wade Kreis as interim minister of music.

McMinnville Church welcomes new pastor

Danny Griffith recently began serving as pastor of Northside Church, McMinnville.

Griffith came to Tennessee from Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was pastor of First Church, Springdale. His ministerial experiences also includes service as associate pastor, minister of youth, and recreation director at churches in Louisiana, Ohio, and Alabama.

The Middletown, Ohio, native graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, with a bachelor's degree. He completed a master of divinity degree in 1988 at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

He was ordained in 1988 at Hillcrest Church, Carlisle, Ohio.

Jim Phillips recently joined the staff of First Church, Clarksville, as pastor of recreation. He has been head women's basketball coach and athletic academic coordinator at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, and served as part-time music director at West Paris Church, Paris. He holds a doctorate degree in health, physical education, and recreation from Middle Tennessee State University.

North Jackson Church, Jackson, recently called Kenny Kinard as minister of music and youth. He began serving Jan. 5. A native of Jackson, Kinard is a graduate of Union University. He and his wife, B. J. have two sons, Shaun and Cody.



KINARD

Gary Smith has been called as interim pastor of Ridgeview Church, Knoxville.

Joe Wiles recently resigned the pastorate of Silver Point Church, Silver Point, to work at the Baptist Student Union at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville. He will serve the church as interim pastor until a new pastor is called.

David Allison has been called to the pastorate of New Hopewell Church, Athens.

Ordinations ...

Manley Church, Morristown, ordained Terry Davenport, Hugh Jay Moore, Donnie Scott, Don Thompson, and Gene Tidwell to the deacon ministry Jan. 26.

Ron Hodges and James D. Worley were ordained as deacons Jan. 12 at First Church, Hixson.

Poplar Corner Church, Brownsville, ordained Sammy Tillman, minister of music and youth, to the Gospel ministry Jan. 12.

Missions ...

During the Christmas season, the Woman's Missionary Union of Union Friendship Church, Paris, requested that those who gave to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions light a candle at the church altar. The candles signified the light being taken into the world by Southern Baptist missionaries. The church set an offering goal of \$450 and exceeded it by collecting \$611.

Churches of Loudon County Association have agreed to provide \$10,000 for

Fields serves Trenton

Brian Fields has been called as pastor of Hillcrest Church, Trenton, while attending Union University, Jackson.

Formerly he was youth director, Latham's Chapel Church, Madonia; and at Grace Memorial Church, Maryville. Fields was ordained in 1991 by Parkway Christian Fellowship, Alcoa.

The native of Maryville is married to Joy Young Fields.

a church building in Osorno, Chile. A special offering will be taken Feb. 9 at churches in the association. A construction team from the association will travel to Chile in March to begin construction of the church.

A volunteer mission team of ten from Haywood Association, will be in the Philippines for two weeks in February to work with churches on Luzon Island. Six team members will work on two construction projects in Pangasinan Province building living quarters for pastors and their families. The remaining four volunteers, including Director of Missions Charles Pratt, will serve churches evangelistically. Pratt and Jerry Foster, layman from Zion Church, Brownsville, will lead a crusade in Davao City the first week of March. Other team members, who will return home March 3, will be Ray Ellington, also of Zion Church; Bill Presley, Brownsville Church, Brownsville; J. G. Wise, pastor of Woodland Church, Brownsville; Lynn King, pastor of Maplewood Church, Paris; Mike Hopper, Holly Grove Church, Bells; Thomas Odle, Fowlkes Church, Fowlkes; Rex Edwards, Southside Church, Dyersburg; and Mary Cheatham, Campbellsville Church, Bradfordsville, Ky. This trip will conclude a three-year partnership between Haywood Association and the Philippines.

Revivals ...

Bob Polk, director of missions for Watauga Association, led a one-day revival Jan. 19 at Powell's Chapel Church, Murfreesboro. One person joined the church by letter and one by baptism.

People ...

T. W. Swayze, retired Memphis City Schools band director and deacon and choir member at Colonial Heights Church, Memphis, reported the Memphis Christian Winds is available for special concerts at area churches. The group is made up of 25-30 wind musi-

cians from several denominations in Memphis and Shelby County. Their program includes symphonic arrangements of hymns, spirituals, solo and choir accompaniments, and chorales. Call Swayze at (901) 683-0676 for more information.

Edna Farmer, wife of retired pastor W. A. Farmer of Weakley County Association, recently died at the couples home in Como after an extended illness. She was a former regional president for Tennessee WMU.

Education ...

A spiritual emphasis will be led by Nick Foster Feb. 5-7 at Belmont University, Nashville. Foster, a guest of the Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Program, will speak on "Their Story, Our Story," his view of how people find similarities in their own stories and those of Bible characters.

Wells Station Church calls Ernest Gravatt

Ernest Dale Gravatt returns to Memphis as pastor of Wells Station Church Jan. 1, after serving as pastor in Holcomb, Miss.



GRAVATT

Gravatt also served Hickory Hill Church, Trafalgar Church, and Crestview Church, all in Memphis, before going to North Carolina.

He graduated from Mid-South Bible College in 1971, and has studied in the pastors' program of the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts and seminary extension of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Gravatt was ordained in 1974 at Hickory Hill Church.

He and his wife Marcia have four children.

An Occasional Word By Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor

As a boy growing up in South Carolina I used to work on a farm during the summer. We had a standing joke about two of the men with whom I used to work: One would drive a tractor until it fell apart under him while the other would take the tractor apart to see why it was running.

There seemed to be no middle ground among those two veteran farmhands.

After I bought my first car — a 1967 Plymouth Fury III — I used to be concerned about every knock and rattle that I heard. I would pester my grandfather about it and he would keep giving me that age-old advice: "If it's not broke, don't fix it." In other words, as long as my car was running, don't worry about



WILKEY

it. Those words of wisdom still apply to every area of our lives.

Just because some element may seem to have a "rattle" in it, that does not mean the whole thing needs fixing. Instead, it may just need minor tune up or preventative medicine.

In any case, it's best to get someone who is an "expert" to view the problem.

As for me, I am still not much of a handyman. Usually when I try to do a "fixit" project myself I end up spending more money because I have to pay someone to "refix" what I "fixed."

That same principle also applies to our spiritual lives and even our denomination and churches. When we have a problem there, we can turn to the greatest "fixer" of all — our Lord Jesus Christ.

By turning our needs over to him in prayer, He can "fix" our problems if they need fixing.

Tennessee Baptist churches call new pastors

Calvary Chapel

Richard O'Bryan recently became full-time pastor of Calvary Chapel, Ridgely, after serving on an interim basis.

O'Bryan had served as pastor of RoEllen Church, Dyersburg, for two years. Other pastorates include Scipio Church and Clifford Mission in Indiana. He was ordained in 1985 at Scipio Church.

The Dyersburg native earned a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, and a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Hawthorne Church

The congregation of Hawthorne Church, Dyersburg, recently welcomed Bolivar native David Chappel as pastor.

Chappel has been pastor of several churches in Tennessee, including Oakfield Church, Jackson; Bethlehem Church, Whiteville; and Walnut Grove Church, Ripley. Other pastorates were in Missouri and Arkansas.

Chappel was ordained in 1961 at Walnut Grove Church, Bolivar. He earned an associate degree of divinity at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Maple's Branch Church

Andy Ball, who has served as a pastor in Sevier and Cobb counties for 41 years, is leading Maple's Branch Church, Sevierville, for the third time. A bivocational pastor, Ball also is a farmer and construction worker.

Formerly he has served Walnut Grove Church, Knob Creek Church,

Mountainview Church, Valley View Church, Rocky Grove Church, Bradley's Chapel Church, New Salem Church, Pearl Valley Church, Mount Olive Church, Laurel Branch Church, Richardson Cove Church, Holder's Grove Church, and Cave Hill Church. He has been pastor twice of Henderson Chapel Church, Bethany Church, and Howard's View Church.

Ball was ordained by Pearl Valley Church, Sevierville, of which he is a native. He and his wife, Imagene Profitt, have two children and two grandchildren.

Bethel Church

On Dec. 1 Dwight Hobbs, pastor, Little Doe Church, Butler, began serving Bethel Church, Sevierville, as pastor.

Hobbs also was pastor of Carter's Valley Church, Kingsport. He was ordained in 1982 by Woodland West Church, in Arlington, Texas, and is a graduate of Luther Rice Theological Seminary, now based in Atlanta, Ga.; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; and East Tennessee State University, Johnson City.

The Jonesborough native and his wife, Donna, have two children.

First Church, Ashland City

The congregation of First Church, Ashland City, recently welcomed new pastor Sam Creed.

Creed served Cragfont Church, Gallatin for more than seven years before assuming the Ashland City position. Before coming to Tennessee, Creed served churches in Mississippi, Texas, and Arkansas.

The Wolfe City, Texas, native graduated from Arkansas State University, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, where he earned a doctor of ministry degree in 1979.

Creed is married to Joan White Creed and they have one daughter, Allison.

Pleasant Hill Church No. 1

Kelly Campbell, minister of education/youth, Levy Church, North Little Rock, Ark., began serving as pastor, Pleasant Hill Church No. 1, Martin, Dec. 22.

Formerly he was pastor of Eldad

Church, Trenton; minister of youth, Bethel Church, Greenfield; and minister of youth and interim pastor, Natchez Trace Church, Camden. Campbell was ordained in 1983 by First Church, Greenfield, which is his hometown.

He is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Campbell and his wife, Karen Goodlow, have three daughters.

Cedar Hill Church

Nashville native John Davis recently became pastor of Cedar Hill Church, Baxter.

Davis was pastor of Upper Helton Church, Alexandria, before moving to Baxter. Other pastorates were First Church, Campaign, and Allons Church Livingston.

The Belmont University, Nashville, graduate was ordained in 1959 at Radnor Church, also in Nashville.

Davis and wife Faye have two daughters.



Fifth Annual Bivocational Pastor's Conference

February 21- 22, 1992

"Blooming for HIM in the MARKETPLACE"

This year's conference will focus on encouragement, challenge and fellowship among the "double-duty" bivocational pastors. Topics will include "Joys and Frustrations of the Double-Duty Minister's Wife," "Minister's in the MARKETPLACE," "The Various Levels of Prayer," "Travailing for the Lost," and "Sermon Preparation on the Run."

PROGRAM LEADERS

John Adams, Union University
 Rob & Judy Finley, Prayer Resources, Inc.
 Reid Hardin, Home Mission Board
 Dale Holloway, Home Mission Board
 Becky Jenkins, Bivocational Pastor's Wife
 Larry Kirk, Tennessee Baptist Convention
 Robert Pearce, Bivocational Pastor
 Michael Powers, Bivocational Pastor
 David Reeves, Bivocational Pastor
 Tommy Stutts, Bivocational Pastor

COST

A \$10 registration fee includes all sessions and a Friday evening banquet. The Casey Jones Motel and Days Inn will be offering discounted rates for conference participants.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Dr. John Adams, Vice President for Religious Affairs at Union University, 2447 Hwy. 45 By-Pass, Jackson, TN 38305 or telephone at (901) 668-1818.

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Cooperative Program
HOT LINE
 Toll-free Information Line

NASHVILLE, TN - Beginning January 2, 1992, Southern Baptists can dial a toll-free telephone number (800) 722-9407 for information about the Cooperative Program.

The free Cooperative Program Hot Line is being provided by the SBC Stewardship Commission. It will be operative from January 2, 1992, through March 31, 1992. Cooperative Program information staff will receive calls from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (EST), Monday through Friday.

Calls may request information about the Cooperative Program, about Cooperative Program materials, and express personal opinions related to the Cooperative Program.

All calls should be brief and related to the Cooperative Program. Questions that cannot be answered immediately will be referred to the appropriate person or agency.

Since this toll-free number (800) 722-9407 is reserved for calls about the Cooperative Program, out-of-town callers wishing to speak with a specific staff person should call the regular Stewardship Commission number 1-615-244-2303.

Judgment and restoration

By Jerry Winfield, pastor; First Church, Bolivar

Throughout the book of Amos, two eternal spiritual truths continuously shine forth. First, God is always ready

and willing to forgive us and restore His relationship to us on the basis of our genuine confession and repentance. Second, if we do not confess, God will judge our sin and unfaithfulness.

The Israelites continued down their sinful path despite the vivid and powerful preaching of Amos. God would destroy the nation, but He also would spare a faithful remnant.

Even in the face of Israel's stubborn rebellion, God was gracious. For those who were faithful, there was the promise of a bright and beautiful future — restoration.



WINFIELD

Warning against social injustice

(ch. 8:4-6)

One of the recurring themes in Amos' preaching was the Israelites' sin of social injustice. This persistent sin in the nation was one of the main reasons God was going to destroy them. Verses 4-6 describe this sin.

Israelite law basically taught social responsibility. Those who could were expected to help the poor and disadvantaged get back on their feet. (See Leviticus 19:10; Deuteronomy 15:7-8.) But the wealthy had become so concerned with making money, they no longer cared about anything or anyone else. They couldn't wait for holidays and the Sabbath to be over so they could go back to making money. They cheated their customers in business transactions. They valued money and possessions more than people. God could not stand by and continue to let this go on.

Certainty of coming judgment

(ch. 8:7-14)

Amazingly, the Israelites acted like God either didn't know what they were doing or He didn't care. They were mistaken. God's judgment would be like none they had ever experienced before. Even the earth and the sun would be affected in this judgment. God was not going to forget (v. 7).

This judgment brought another famine. This famine was not one of food, but one of a spiritual nature. God's Word would be gone and no matter how frantically they looked, He would be silent. The depth of the Israelites' spiritual famine was best seen in their worship of idols as expressed in verse 14.

Completeness of the coming judgment

(ch. 9:1-10)

At this point, God gave Amos a fifth and final vision. The vision was of a smitten altar. God was standing upon (beside) an altar and commanding that it be torn down and those who came to worship be destroyed. With no priest and no altar, how could the Israelites be forgiven? This vision was

ominous indeed. No matter how hard they tried (vv. 2-4), they could not escape judgment. The God of all creation, the Lord, was His name. However, God was still a gracious and forgiving God. As He sifted through the nation, the sinners would be destroyed and the faithful spared (vv. 7-10). A pure and holy remnant would remain.

BIBLE BOOK
February 9 Lesson
Basic Passage: Amos 8:4-9:15

Promise of Restoration (ch. 9:11-15)

These verses are a natural conclusion to the book of Amos. Throughout the book there has always been a message of hope for the faithful (ch. 5:4, 6, 14; ch. 9:8-10). This passage describes the new day when the kingdom will be restored and God's people will again experience peace and prosperity. The overall message of these verses is that God is still in control, sin will be judged, and faith will be rewarded. This message is not only for God's people in the day of Amos — it is a message for God's people today!

Jesus' high, priestly prayer

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

The model prayer we studied last Sunday is a prayer we can all pray. Jesus, Himself, instructed His

followers how to pray. However, the prayer we study today is unique because only God's Son could pray this prayer. John gave us a precious view of Jesus as He talked with His Father, pouring out His heart about the desires and concerns He had for Himself and His people. There are at least three areas of our text we need to study.



TYDINGS

The first area is Jesus and His Father (vv. 1-5). Jesus had just finished talking to the disciples about the time of His departure and His return to the Father in chapter 16:28. Jesus then lifted His eyes toward heaven and talked with His Father.

God was very much aware of the accomplishments of Jesus. Their "agreed-on plan" for man's re-

demption had been made before the foundation of the world. Paul in II Corinthians 5:19, stated, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." The price for our redemption had been settled and payment was due. His sacrificial death expresses the depth of God's love, mercy, and grace.

As we look at verses 4 and 5, we notice Jesus did not refer to His crucifixion and death. He spoke as though they were behind Him. Notice His words: "I have glorified thee" ... "I have finished the work." He had finished the work, accomplished His mission, and was ready to return to the Father.

CONVENTION UNIFORM
February 9 Lesson
Basic Passage: John 17

The second area of our text concerns Jesus and His disciples (vv. 6-9). Jesus prayed this intercessory prayer for His 11 followers. (Judas Iscariot had already left the group.) The purpose of intercessory prayer is to ask God's grace and mercy upon other in-

dividuals as they go through a crisis.

Several years ago we received word by telephone that my wife's mother was in critical condition in a Louisville, Ky., hospital. By the time we arrived the situation was very grim. The doctors had given up hope and called in the family. The family formed a prayer chain around her bed and intercessory prayer was voiced by a pastor friend of the family. God heard our petition and extended her life a couple of more years.

This is the kind of prayer Jesus prayed when He was interceding for His followers and His church. The hour had come for Jesus to be arrested, tried, crucified, and placed in an empty tomb. He knew the disciples would be frightened and saddened by the events of Calvary. Therefore, Jesus prayed this intercessory prayer for them.

Verses 6-8 tell us Jesus came to reveal the nature of God. He had made this revelation a special mission to the 12 disciples. Jesus did not come to start a new religion or destroy the law, but to give a true understanding and knowledge of God. "God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (II Corinthians

4:6). In verses 9-12, He focused His prayer on His disciples. They had been held together by His presence while growing in unity of spirit. In this intercessory prayer, Jesus committed them to His Father's care. He wanted their unity preserved. Unity in purpose, love, and service is very important for Christian growth and witness.

The third area we should study is Jesus and His church (vv. 20-21). Jesus not only prayed for His disciples to remain unified, He was also concerned about their oneness in Christ. He was not referring to a uniformity among the followers, but a unity in spirit as you find in the oneness between Jesus and His Father.

If the church is to be an instrument of God, there must be a oneness of spirit. Have you ever considered the oneness of Christ's relationship in your life? Consider a rowing team. Each oarsman has to be in perfect timing with the others. They also must pull with the same amount of powerful force to keep the boat on course and moving at a fast pace.

Likewise, the church loses its power and purpose when the members break off in splinter groups and demand their own way.

Obeying Jesus' words

By Sharon Herrington, layperson; Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage

The purpose of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was to teach Christians or saved persons how to live in the kingdom of God among our fellow men and fellow Christians. Just as the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament is an ethical prescription for man's relationship to God and man, the Sermon on the Mount is the New Testament ethical roadmap for Christians in relating to others. After all, the way we treat our fellow man surely says a lot about our relationship to our heavenly Father!

One may wear sheep's clothing, yet possess the heart and motive of a



HERRINGTON

What motivates obedience to Christ? Is it fear? Is it obligation? Is it to be seen by others? What ever happened to simply loving God for all He's done for us? We act as Jesus wants us to because we love Him, we want to please Him, and we want to reciprocate by giving our best to Him. Perhaps we do not want to risk His displeasure with us by acting contrary to His wishes. These actions constitute love, which is the optimum motivation for our obedience.

Several years ago while studying T. W. Hunt's PrayerLife, I found a new motivation for wanting to obey Christ — we perpetuate His reputation among our fellow man.

Jesus said, "Be ye doers of the Word, not hearers only." Theologian William Barclay once asked, "Is there any word in which hearing and doing are summed up? There is such a word and that word is obedience."

LIFE AND WORK
February 9 Lesson
Basic Passage: Matthew 7:13-29

In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus affirmed those who obey His teachings build a sure foundation for themselves. Herschel Hobbs, author of numerous books, said, "If we obey, we can endure whatever storms life may offer." Likewise, those who disregard Jesus' teachings do not have a firm foundation to weather the storms of life.

What are the results of being an obedient child of God? Besides being secure in Christ, the obedient Christian's prayers are effective (James 5:16). The fruits of the Spirit are naturally evident in his living (Galatians

5:22-23). He or she works the work of Christ (John 14:12). Others know he or she is a Christian by the love toward others (John 13:35).

The obedient child of God displays a unique love different to the world's definition of love (I Corinthians 13). The obedient child of God takes seriously the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:40 that as we do to others, we do unto Christ.

The negative side of disobedience is summed up in several Scriptures: I John 4:8, John 14:23-24, and I John 3:9.

Some of us continue wearing sheep's clothing, oblivious to the fact that actions, attitudes, and motives smack of wolf-like characteristics (Matthew 7:21). Jesus cautioned that He will say to us, "I never knew you." Note the surprise in Matthew 7:22!

Being a child of God means keeping our relationship to the Father current, even to the grave. Let it not be said of us, "I can't hear what you are saying for your actions."

Missions over baseball; Brasington made right choice

By Mary E. Speidel

RICHMOND (BP) — Bryan "Breezy" Brasington slammed his baseball cleats into the closet. "OK, Lord. You win," he said.

It's been more than 40 years since Brasington gave up professional baseball to follow God's call into Christian ministry. He has no regrets.

"I've been on the right team," said Brasington, who recently retired as Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area director for Spanish South America. That area, where about 600 missionaries work, includes Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

His sports background has served him well in missions. "In sports you have to make decisions quickly — and accurately — if you're going to win. Every day an area director has to make decisions that affect the lives of people," said Brasington, nicknamed "Breezy" for his speed as an athlete.

From Heath Springs, S.C., Brasington and his wife, the former Vicky Young of Gainesville, Fla., served 36 years in missions. Before their missionary days, he played baseball for the DeLand Red Hats in the Florida State League for two years.

At the time, Brasington already had made a commitment to full-time ministry. But playing pro ball meant he could afford to get married while finishing his last year at Stetson University in DeLand, where he later was named to the school's sports hall of fame. The couple married in 1948, the year he made league rookie of the year as a Red Hats' centerfielder.

After his graduation, the league



HOME RUN MISSIONARIES — Bryan "Breezy" and Vicky Brasington hold a Louisville Slugger baseball bat autographed by colleagues to mark his 35th anniversary in missions in 1990. Brasington recently retired as the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area director for Spanish South America.

offered to pay Brasington's way to seminary if he would play ball that summer. "But I knew if I played for the rest of that summer, I probably would have stayed in baseball," he said. And even during his first year at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., "baseball was still in my blood."

After the first year at Southern, Brasington accepted an offer to play summer baseball in South Carolina. Before he went, he told God if a church called him as pastor, he would

know he was to leave baseball. When a seminary friend unexpectedly recommended him for a pastorate, the couple visited the church just to see what it was like. The congregation called him as pastor on the spot. That was the night he flung his cleats into the closet.

A few years later Mrs. Brasington faced her own struggle with God. She had been interested in missions since childhood but "I wasn't saintly," she said. "I wasn't brave. I wasn't patient. I figured God didn't have any use for a person who had none of those characteristics."

Later, when the couple sensed a call to missions, she thought God would give her those qualities. Instead, "God made me want to be a missionary more than anything else in the world. He didn't change my personality," said Mrs. Brasington, who has been active in teaching, writing, and music ministries.

The Brasingtons were appointed missionaries to Peru in 1955. They worked in student ministry, theological education, and evangelism, living in Lima

and Trujillo. Later they lived in Cali, Colombia, after Brasington moved into administration. In 1975 they resigned as missionaries when he became area director for Western South America, a position then based at the board's headquarters in Richmond, Va. A 1987 board reorganization added all of Spanish South America to his portfolio. That change took them to Quito, Ecuador.

During retirement they will live in Richmond. Brasington is working part-time with the board's development office.

The Brasingtons leave behind significant contributions to Baptist work in South America, said Betty Law, vice president for the Americas. They were "part of the foundation" for Southern Baptist work in Peru, she said.

Law said Brasington also has been a strong supporter of "one work," a missions strategy which means missionaries and local Baptists integrate their efforts so all Baptist work in a country is done together.

And he has urged missionaries to start innovative ministries such as sports evangelism and outreach to the deaf. For example, he encouraged one missionary to start a baseball ministry in Venezuela, where baseball is the most popular sport.

Baptists from many countries paid tribute to the Brasingtons upon his retirement. Venezuelans established a scholarship in their honor at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Los Teques. They also named a building for the couple at their national Baptist camp. Brasington played a key role in helping Venezuelan Baptists obtain that property.

Peru's second vice president, Carlos Garcia, a Baptist minister, sent the Brasingtons a "medal of merit" for their retirement.

The couple has known Garcia since his youth; they were present when he made public a decision to attend seminary.

As Brasington reflects on his vocational choice, he admits some baseball is still in his blood. But he knows he took the right path. "After a tremendous battle between baseball and God, I'm glad I chose God."

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CLC's Land commends ABC-TV

NASHVILLE (BP) — ABC-TV should be commended for asking James Dobson's "Focus on the Family" to produce a new series on Christian values for children, said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"We desperately need wholesome, value-affirming programming such as Dr. Dobson's on network television," Land said. "I applaud ABC for broadcasting the programs and Dr. Dobson's organization for producing them. More such programming is urgently needed but this is an important beginning."

The first episode of Dobson's "McGee & Me" was scheduled to air Saturday, Jan. 25. The exact time will vary from city to city, so interested Southern Baptists should contact their local ABC affiliate for the information.

Focus on the Family has said if the first broadcast receives enough of an audience on ABC-TV, other episodes of the series will be aired later.

"McGee & Me" is a real-life drama featuring a boy named Nicholas and his cartoon-character friend McGee.

Nicholas is shown in day-to-day life situations where he has to make moral decisions.

Seminar set at SSB

NASHVILLE — "How to Revive a Plateaued Church" is the theme of a seminar to be held March 9-12, 1992, at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Church Program Training Center in Nashville.

The seminar is designed to help participants understand the characteristics of a plateaued church, how to rebuild morale, and how to inspire, plan for and sustain a new vision for ministry. Practical steps for giving the new vision life through strategic planning, change management, new member assimilation, and Sunday School Breakthrough growth, also will be presented.

For registration information, write to the Church Program Training Center, P.O. Box 24001, Nashville, Tenn. 37203, or call the CPTC office at (615) 251-2294.

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