

Baptist and Reflector

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ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED — Members of Berryville Church, Old Hickory, celebrated its 50th anniversary and homecoming on March 15. Pastor Virgil Peters was honored for 50 years as a pastor — and Harold Ford, who was the founding pastor, was recognized for 50 years in the pastorate. Peters has served 14 churches, five in the Nashville Association. From left: the Harold Fords, the Virgil Peters, and Clarence Ayres, chairman of deacons. — Photo by Wm. Fletcher Allen

Parks to retire in October, trustees affirm FMB personnel

BEDFORD, Texas — R. Keith Parks emerged from a spiritual retreat with trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board announcing he will retire as FMB president in October.

Seventy-eight trustees and 12 FMB executive staff met for the retreat March 19-20 after Parks asked trustees, in his address at their February meeting in Richmond, Va., to resolve the issue of his tenure.

Parks, a 38-year veteran of foreign missions who will turn 65 in October, asked trustees last August to allow him to serve until 1995 through the time of the board's sesquicentennial. The time, he said, would enable him to lay groundwork for his ten-point vision for global evangelization now under study by a trustee subcommittee.

Although he received public affirmations by trustees, Parks said in February that actions and undercurrents were occurring behind the scenes which undercut his role and leadership.

At the conclusion of the retreat, Parks said he felt God was leading him to retire. Parks will announce his decision officially at the trustees' meeting April 6-8 in Clemson, S.C. At that time, trustees will decide how long he will continue to carry his full responsibilities as president and the process for seeking a successor.

A joint statement released by Parks and trustees at a press conference said trustees affirmed Parks and repeatedly requested he continue his leadership. It said Parks alone made the decision that he retire.

"The trustees expressed that they felt, and still feel, a strong desire to the contrary," the statement said. "They emphatically urged that Dr. Parks continue his leadership role, but submitted to his sense of God's leadership."

The statement, read to the press by FMB trustee chairman Bill Hancock of Louisville, Ky., acknowledged Parks' "superior leadership as president since 1980" and expressed trustee "concern for continuity in the ongoing mission enterprise."

It also said "trustees affirmed to the missionaries, (FMB) staff, and Southern Baptists their commitment to the historic principles which have characteristically guided Southern Baptist foreign mission work."

In a question-and-answer time with reporters, Parks said his decision to retire in 1992, rather than in 1995, was made after he arrived at the retreat, although he had considered making it at the board's February meeting.

Parks said his decision became clear finally during a spiritual emphasis led by Henry Blackaby, whom trustees invited to set the spiritual tone for their meeting with Parks and his staff. Blackaby, director of prayer and spiritual awakening at the Southern

— See Parks, page 5

'Bold Believers' theme for SBC in Indy

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — A potential three-way contest for president, a possible visit by the vice president of the United States, and a theme of "Bold Believers in a Broken World" headline the 135th session of the Southern Baptist Convention June 9-11 in Indianapolis.

Moving its annual meeting to one of the newer areas for Southern Baptist work, the SBC will meet in the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis, said to be one of the best arenas for a meeting this size. What that size will be is an open question but it should approach the 20,000 mark of messengers with more than 25,000 total attendance.

There are some concerns. Vice President Dan Quayle, a native of Indiana, is scheduled to bring personal greetings at the start of the annual meeting June 9. However, he is "not able to nail down a commitment of this sort until closer to the date," said Mark Coppenger, SBC vice president for convention relations. "We'll list him on the program in hopes that he will be able to join us."

In a new development, Gospel singer Sandi Patti has notified convention officials she has to withdraw from a concert June 10. She's chosen to cancel her appearances for the first seven months of 1992 in order to devote more time to her family, convention officials told Baptist Press.

The SBC presidential contest could generate much interest. Two pastors have announced — Jess Moody of Van Nuys, Calif., and Nelson Price of Marietta, Ga. — while a third, Ed Young of Houston, seems probable. Both Price and Young are well known

"conservatives" while Moody has not openly taken a side in the 13-year SBC battle between "conservatives" and "moderates." "Conservatives" have won every presidential election since 1979.

Presiding at the Indianapolis convention will be Morris Chapman of Wichita Falls, Texas, who will become president of the SBC Executive Committee following the annual meeting. Chapman, pastor of First Church, Wichita Falls, will conclude two terms as SBC president and nearly 14 years as pastor of the Texas congregation.

Building on the theme, "Bold

Three may run for presidency; Patti withdraws from concert.

Believers in a Broken World" based on Ephesians 4:12, the convention will see and hear a multitude of high-profile speakers, musicians, and choirs. A large-scale area evangelistic campaign, Crossover Indianapolis, will precede the start of the annual meeting as will the Pastors' Conference, the SBC Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting, and dozens of satellite meetings.

Lewis A. Drummond, retiring president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, will bring the annual sermon with Atlanta pastor Charles Stanley, well known in Indiana with his "In Touch" television program, bringing the final message Thursday morning.

One musical highlight will be Bill

Gaither and the Gaithers Vocal Band on Tuesday afternoon. Also scheduled are choirs from Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, and Tennessee. A mass youth choir opens the Wednesday night session which is highlighted by the popular report from the Foreign Mission Board.

In between the opening gavel Tuesday morning and the final prayer Thursday morning, messengers will hear a myriad of reports from SBC agencies, institutions, committees, and fraternal organizations. Motions, resolutions, debate, and voting will occupy messengers in the six sessions.

Expected to draw particular interest are motions concerning the disposal of \$300,000 in a capital expenditures fund set aside in 1968 which has been claimed by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs as well as the SBC Christian Life Commission. The Executive Committee of the convention will recommend it be given control over the fund to disburse as it determines the need.

Also, bylaw change proposals are expected from the Executive Committee aimed at barring churches which approve homosexual practices. The Executive Committee passed a resolution in February aimed at two North Carolina churches and bylaw changes are expected in Indianapolis in an attempt to keep messengers from those churches participating in the annual meeting.

Convention officials are gearing up for expected protests at Indianapolis from gay and lesbian support groups.

Another expected debate is over the issue of membership in Masonic lodges. The issue of Freemasonry was brought up last year in Atlanta and referred to the Home Mission Board for study. HMB directors recently decided not to deal with the question and will refer it back to the Indianapolis annual meeting for messengers to decide what to do.

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Call legislators!

The Tennessee State Assembly is scheduled to vote on racing-gambling this week in both legislative houses.

The Senate votes today (March 25) on Senate Bill 2498; the House votes Thursday on House Bill 2501.

Both bills would allow betting on on-site horse races and on video at approved tracks — while cutting the state's tax income.

Tennessee Baptists who oppose gambling need to take action immediately by calling their local senator and representative. See the editorial on page 2.

Editorials

Quick move may negate opposition to gambling

It's time to laugh again at the old "get rich at the race track" scheme being foisted on Tennessee citizens.

The trick comes from the west, but it has a new twist. Under county option legislation, Shelby County okayed pari-mutuel betting on horse racing five years ago. But no track has been built — and the citizenry generally has put the issue aside.

However, those who are just itching to inflict race track betting on Tennessee have not been asleep at the starting gate. Evidently they have been busy making plans to counteract the dog race tracks across the Mississippi in Arkansas.

Here's the twist. Legislation introduced before Tennessee lawmakers last week would approve of betting at the proposed Memphis track — and also on races held elsewhere and seen by video. That's even "better for the bettor," more opportunities to lose money.

And the state is being told that in order to get racing and betting established in Shelby County, the state must be willing to take even less a tax bite. Does that sound good? The legislation would decrease the state tax on money bet through pari-mutuel windows from six percent to one percent. Isn't that doing the state a great favor? The owners get the other five percent.

The old scheme (with the new twist) doesn't remind us that while a few people might get more money — thousands will get poorer.

Is betting on horses that vital to the financial and spiritual welfare of the state? We will get the usual cry of "let the people decide whether they want to bet, they should have the opportunity." The Brooklyn Bridge is for sale, too, real cheap.

The Nashville morning daily worded it this way: "An effort to rescue Tennessee's foundering horse racing plan with tax breaks and betting on televised races won approval in key Senate and

House committees yesterday (March 17)."

Since we do not know all the crooks and turns in getting legislation before committees and on the floor of the two houses, we cannot call it "sneaky." But it is true that racing-betting foes were caught off guard.

Bill Bates, Tennessee Baptist Convention's legislative observer certainly was not aware of the plans.

The chairman of the Tennessee racing commission said construction of a race track would come much easier with this legislation. Previous efforts to build racing facilities in the Memphis area collapsed because of money problems.

At the writing of this editorial, it seemed very likely that the pending bill would reach the Senate floor before Baptist and Reflector press time and mailing (March 24). In past jousting with race track efforts in Williamson, Davidson, Rutherford counties — as well as Trousdale and Shelby (where referendum passed), the paper has had sufficient

time to spell out the plans and potential problems. We like to believe the paper provided valuable information for the anti-gambling citizens.

According to the new proposal for Shelby, one day of televised racing would be permitted for each two days on which racing occurs at Tennessee tracks.

The developing group plans to operate the track 280 days annually — including thoroughbreds, quarter horses, and harness racing.

Should this message to Tennessee Baptists arrive too late to voice a protest to local legislators, there is still opportunity to register a complaint if those local representatives vote for racing-betting.

Nashville television stations already promote Kentucky lottery operations by reporting winning numbers and featuring the few Tennessee winners. Not much is said about the compulsive gamblers and others who squander much-needed family money. That is the next step — a state lottery. — WFA

Retirement packages need explaining

What is a worthy retirement package for executives who leave Southern Baptist service?

In most cases boards of trust make the decision. Often the main considerations include length of tenure, loyalty, and commitment to the assignment, the measure of success, and qualities such as honesty and integrity.

At times, sympathy influences those who decide and/or those who ultimately pay the costs. Personal likes and dislikes can be factors, though there is no place for such. Occasionally there is the strong appearance of a "buyout."

Several Southern Baptist leaders have retired or resigned in recent months. Others have been fired. Baptists have been asking questions with increasing

frequency about salaries upon employment as well as retirement packages.

Baptists are trying to ascertain whether the person deserves the salary or the retirement package. Others say they don't like for Cooperative Program funds to be used as "golden parachutes." (CP money is not the source for all retirement packages.) Some have compared the packages to escalating salaries of professional baseball players, but we're not quite in that league.

Our letters on the topic are from concerned Baptists. Each new retirement package brings on another wave of discontent. Baptists deserve to know how such packages are developed — and the rationale. — WFA

Missions, scholarships planned at Fellowship meeting

ATLANTA (BP) — Leaders of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship proposed a \$2.5 million missions budget and a \$30,000 scholarship fund for 1993 during the group's coordinating council meeting March 12-14 in Atlanta.

Recently elected coordinator Cecil Sherman told members of the group's coordinating council the fellowship needs 100 churches willing to designate \$1000 a month towards Fellowship missions projects in Europe.

Recruiting those churches to raise \$1.2 million annually will be his first priority when he officially takes office in April, he said.

European projects, including support for the Baptist Theological Seminary

at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, comprise about half of the "moderate" group's mission budget.

Moderator John Hewett added that missions will be a two-way street with European Baptist Unions, meaning Europe may also send missionaries to America.

"That's the new world order for Christian missions," said Hewett, pastor of First Church, Asheville, N.C.

Concerning scholarships, the coordinating council backed a plan to give \$30,000 for the 1992-93 school year.

Both the missions and scholarship budgets will go before the general assembly at the Fellowship's annual meeting in Fort Worth, April 30-May 2.

The missions and scholarship budgets are part of a projected budget of \$6.7 million during the 1992-93 fiscal year.

Less than a quarter of that, however, is budgeted to Fellowship programs. About \$5.1 million, or 76 percent, is earmarked for state conventions and SBC programs.

"I think five years from now that 76 percent will have decreased dramatically," said Hewett. "There's a great time lag between the time that we approve a funding plan and money begins to flow."

The Fellowship's coordinating council, in the Atlanta meeting, also voted to offer assistance to churches seeking options to the annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions and

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

Jimmy Allen, a member of the Fellowship's global missions ministry group, said the special offerings are a response to churches who aren't going to give to SBC offerings anyway, not an intentional effort to establish a competitive offering.

"We don't want to be in competition with Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong," said Allen, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. "But we have a lot of our churches asking us for alternative ways to fund missions."

Fellowship Moderator John Hewett said he's not concerned with competing with SBC offerings, adding "the Foreign Mission Board has financial reserves that boggle the mind."

Search group hears suggestions

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — The next president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary hopefully will be a good administrator with a "heart for students and a vision for the future."

Seminary trustee chairman Roger Ellsworth of Benton, Ill., said that description reflects many of the comments received by the seminary's presidential search committee in a full day of meetings March 11 at the Wake Forest, N.C. campus.

"We've met with the advisory task force, the administrative council, the students, and the faculty," Ellsworth said. "Each group has given us a great deal of insight."

"All seem to be in agreement we need to move ahead as rapidly as we can and still find the right individual for this position," Ellsworth added.

Debunking rumors to the contrary, seminary trustees stressed throughout

the day no particular candidate had already been selected. Cecil Rhodes, trustee from Wilson, N.C., said trustees are approaching the presidential search with a "completely open mind." Trustee Dan Johnston of Jonesville, S.C., said to approach the selection process any other way would "rule out the Holy Spirit." He said all he wanted was "the man God had out there" for Southeastern because "we can't afford to make a mistake."

One administrator said the school needs someone with experience because there is not time for "on-the-job training."

The faculty input session was closed to the public.

During the student input session, there appeared to be overwhelming support for hiring a "conservative" president with a strong commitment to Biblical inerrancy.

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Draper admits mistake was made in renting facilities

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE (BP) — Responding to concerns about the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's television production studio and uplink facilities being used for a program featuring country music singer Hank Williams Jr., President James T. Draper Jr. said, "We made a mistake."

During the Feb. 12 live uplink, Williams urged viewers to attend his Budweiser Rockin' Country Tour. That reference was the first Sunday School Board officials knew of the involvement of the beer company with the program.

Draper said the board contracted in early February 1992 with On the Scene Productions of Los Angeles for use of the board's television studio and uplink facilities. On the Scene had used the studio on one previous occasion.

Since the termination of the board's satellite telecommunication network in 1990, Draper said the board has regularly contracted with production companies to use its facilities to "uplink" live programs. The board is one of only a few sites in Nashville equipped for live feeds and generates income to offset operating expenses through the service.

At the conclusion of the program, a Sunday School Board video producer went to an official of On the Scene Productions and explained the board would not have agreed to produce the live feed had they known the nature of the tour and its Budweiser sponsorship. Guidelines regarding content of programs originating from board facilities had been shared with On the Scene Productions prior to its first use of board video facilities.

A weekend entertainment and arts feature released March 13 by Associated Press noted the contrast of Hank Williams Jr. sitting in a television studio at the Baptist Sunday School Board. Draper said he first learned of the article when a trustee, George Kinchen of Parkersburg, W. Va., called after the article appeared in a local paper.

"We made a mistake in assuming that guidelines given to the company previously would be followed on this occasion. Those guidelines stipulate that programming and sponsorship originating from our facilities must be entirely consistent with the values and lifestyle espoused by the Baptist Sunday School Board," Draper said.

Draper said immediately after the incident video personnel concluded

they needed to reiterate policies regarding values and lifestyles with companies with whom they had previously done business. Such practice is followed in all first-time contact with client companies.

"In the future we will use both verbal and written means to clarify the kinds of programming and sponsors which may use our facilities," Draper said. "We regret any false implications this has given regarding the witness of Southern Baptists."

He said employees in the video/audiovisuals department are in the process of assembling a packet of materials to use as a witnessing opportunity with all visitors using the facilities. The packet will include the plan of salvation, a New Testament, and other items.

Executive Committee member resigns after elder rule dispute

By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP) — A Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee member representing the District of Columbia Baptist Convention will not seek a second four-year term following a dispute with D.C. officials over elder rule in his church.

"I have officially resigned, effective at the Indianapolis SBC meeting in June," said Walter S. Tomme Jr., pastor of Tyson Community Church in Washington. "I would rather not be the center of a controversy. I would rather that matters between us be settled on the basis of issues rather than personalities. For the sake of the common good, I would rather let the process

work."

Tomme said he felt his nomination for a second term on the Executive Committee would be challenged at the Indianapolis meeting because Tyson Community Church is not affiliated with the D.C. convention. In the November D.C. convention annual meeting, talks between Tyson and convention officials were formally broken off ostensibly due to the elder rule. Tyson is a new congregation, started by Tomme, which had applied for affiliation with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention which requires congregational form of church government.

Jere Allen, new executive director of

the D.C. convention, said the convention voted in November "to cease any relationship of any definition for the time being with Tyson." For two years prior there had been an unofficial or informal type of relationship through the convention's church applications committee, Allen said.

"The Tyson church's constitution describes a structure of organization that does not allow for decision-making on the part of the membership. The church is governed by elders who are self-perpetuating. They serve for an indefinite period of time. If a replacement is needed, nominations are from the church but must be approved by the elders," Allen said.

Tomme confirmed the Tyson church is led by a board of elders.

"It basically handles the administrative part of the church, the budget, policies, etc. Their (elders') job is to make sure our ministries conform to the Scriptures and our purpose statement," Tomme said. The initial

elders in the new church were appointed by Tomme. But now nominations from the church are taken, screened and then the board of elders elects them.

"We have four elders," Tomme said. The church averages 100-150 in worship.

SBC bylaws require membership in a church affiliated with a cooperating state convention to be an Executive Committee member. The D.C. convention has only one member of the Executive Committee.

But Tomme charges there are other issues, other than elder rule, in the decision of the D.C. convention to deny affiliation for Tyson.

"The official reason is church government," Tomme said. "But the frustrating part (for Tyson) is that a number of people say they know there are churches in the D.C. convention that are literally pastor-led... ethnic churches. I don't begrudge that at all."

Bush disavows homosexual support

WASHINGTON (BP) — President George Bush is not committed to a new agenda supporting homosexual rights, a White House aide has told two Southern Baptist leaders.

The March 10 letter from a Bush administration official came as a response to a Feb. 19 letter from Morris Chapman, Southern Baptist Convention president, and Richard D. Land, Christian Life Commission executive director, asking the president to "disavow any support or sympathy for the homosexual civil rights agenda." Chapman and Land made the request

of President Bush after Robert Mosbacher, chairman of the Bush/Quayle campaign, met with homosexual activists Feb. 13.

"The president has not made any policy changes that reflect a departure from his commitment to family values," Leigh Ann Metzger said in the letter, "and I assure you that this meeting was not related to any new policy agenda."

"This meeting was of a personal nature and did not include administration officials," said Metzger, who is deputy assistant to the president for public liaison.

President Bush again declared his faithfulness to traditional family values in a March 3 speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, Metzger said. In his address, the president expressed support for protection of the unborn, educational choice, the fight against obscenity, and child pornography, and prayer in public schools.

The Christian Life Commission and National Association of Evangelicals both asked the White House to use the NAE speech as an opportunity to disclaim support for homosexual rights. The president did not mention the issue in his 21-minute address.

President Bush would like to discuss family issues with evangelical leaders, Metzger said in her letter.

In October 1990 Chapman, Land, and 16 other evangelical leaders met with the president after the White House twice hosted homosexual activists at bill-signing ceremonies. They were told the invitations did not reflect support for the homosexual rights agenda.

Three SSB products on best-selling list

NASHVILLE (BP) — The Holman Bible Dictionary was the seventh best-selling Christian reference book in the United States in 1991 and two other Southern Baptist Sunday School Board products made the top 100, a national magazine reported.

The dictionary and the first two volumes of Broadman's New American Commentary were included in Bookstore Journal's "Reference Premier 100" — a list of the top 100 best-selling backlist reference books for 1991. The list, included in the March issue of the magazine, is compiled annually based on actual sales figures submitted by publishers.

The two volumes of the New American Commentary included in the best-selling list were "Philippians, Colossians, Philemon," which ranked 25th, and "Mark," which placed 32nd.

Volunteer opportunities abound in Chile

Tennessee Baptists, are you interested in using your talents and skills for the Lord in a foreign land? If so, the Chile/Tennessee Partnership is for you. Listed below are volunteer opportunities now available in Chile.

Construction — dates flexible between March and December — One team of three to five people needed to repair a parsonage damaged by fire in Castro. Evangelistic service will be held in the evenings.

WMU Evangelism and Church Development — Aug. 1-15 or Sept. 26-Oct. 10 — One team of ten-12 women needed for evangelism and church development work in Temuco.

Church Construction — date negotiable until Dec. 31 — One team of two-six people needed for church construction and evangelism in Puerto Varas.

Spiritual Development — May 31-June 8 or Aug. 16-24 — One team of six to 20 people needed to work in spiritual development at the Baptist Academy in Temuco. Trip also will involve some preaching in local churches.

Community Development — Nov. 16-30 — One team of ten women to

work in Temuco to discuss hygiene, nutrition, and drug addiction.

Mass Communications — June 1-10 — One team, unlimited number, to train people to work in mass media and communications in Santiago.

Education — June 1, for eight to ten weeks, in 1992, 1993, or 1994 — One team of two to six people to teach at the school operated by the El Sembrador Church in Temuco. Spanish is required and a visa will be needed.

Construction — May or June 1992 — Several teams of six to eight people to follow each other to build a church for a new congregation in Arica.

Health Care — Oct. 9-19 — Ten teams of three to five people needed to provide medical and dental care in Temuco.

Construction — Dates flexible — One team of six to eight people to work in construction on a senior adults home in Santiago.

Construction — Jan. 17-29, 1993, Feb. 1-12, or Feb. 15-27 — One team of ten to 12 people to finish a partially constructed wood/brick church building in Temuco.

Our Readers Write

Gambling alert

All Baptist taxpayers in Tennessee should be aware of pending legislation (SB 2498/HB 2501) that will make building a race track in Memphis or Trousdale County much easier. This bill slashes the taxes on gambling to less than what it might cost to pay for state supervision of horse racing.

The bill will rebate to the developers one half of gambling taxes to pay for constructing a track. Instead of generating tax revenue to help with education and law enforcement, as promised in the referendum approving thoroughbred racing, the taxpayers will be subsidizing gambling.

This bill could be voted for in the Senate any day. Please contact your legislators and the Governor quickly if you oppose this giveaway for gambling.

Jon Densford
3256 Ancroft Cove
Memphis 38128

Salaries questioned

I was shocked when I read the two letters concerning the salary and benefits of Morris Chapman in the March 11, Baptist and Reflector. I would like to know in dollars what Mr. Chapman's benefits amount to. I would also like to see what some other executives earn. I think we need to know where our tithes and offerings go. How can the SBC expect more money from churches, when they pay a salary of \$120,000 a year plus other benefits to one man?

Then I read another letter (Mar. 11) asking for books in the Upper Ohio Valley Baptist Association.

Some have so much and some so little, that also serve our Lord.

It would be very interesting to know more about these salaries and benefits.

Juanita Riley
201 S. Highland
Paris 38242

Interested in salaries

As I read the article, "Committee names Chapman to succeed Bennett," I was appalled at the disbursement of "God's money." I thought about the vast majority of churches that make up our convention, small congregations who struggle financially to support their pastors, yet who faithfully and trustingly send their tithes to the Cooperative Program. I could hardly believe the convention is providing Harold Bennett a new Lincoln Town Car and a \$22,000 retainer for three months following his retirement, plus paying expenses to commitments through 1995, and other retirement benefits.

I was shocked to read we will pay Barry McCarty \$1000 per day for services as SBC parliamentarian, plus his

Meetings explore Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses make 200 million visits every year to tell others Jehovah's kingdom arrived in 1918 through King Jesus' defeat of enemy Satan.

Islam is the largest world religion, its members totaling 800 million to one billion, and the fastest growing religion.

These two belief systems will be studied April 23-24 at Interfaith Witness Associate training events in Chattanooga and Knoxville, reported Terry Sharp, Missions Department, Tennessee Baptist Convention. The training is sponsored by the convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The sect of Jehovah's Witnesses is the subject of the Chattanooga conference to be led by Eddie Prince,

preparation and convention expenses. I do not know these gentlemen; I feel sure they are fine Christian men, so this is not personal.

But I am troubled that our Executive Committee would provide such excessive financial support from funds sent in for "God's work by God's people." I feel our churches should support all convention programs, but now I can understand why churches are designating where their monies are to be used.

I favor providing our leaders an adequate and comfortable living, but when I compare these salaries and benefits to those of pastors, missionaries, college professors, and convention workers, I question the wise use of God's money.

It has been said if we compare salaries of our convention leaders with those of business corporations, we are far below the standard. There should be no comparison between our mission and the business world, or between what motivates our convention leaders and corporate executives.

I pray that our Executive Committee will ask God's direction in disbursing tithes from his people who have placed their trust in their committee.

Linda Graves
87 Wells Road
Dyersburg 38024

• Executive Committee members may have information not ordinarily known to others. Surely they have taken into account wise use of money given by the churches. Some retirement benefits are "standard" procedure, such as a new automobile. — Editor

Bibles for legislators

The Tennessee Alliance for Life, a coalition of the state's pro-life groups, is distributing leather New King James Open Bibles to all the legislators in Tennessee. With 21,000 abortions performed per year in Tennessee, we are including a brochure on what the Bible says about abortion in an effort to effect the hearts of the legislators. Constituents are needed to present personalized Bibles to: Reps. Townsend Anderson, John Arriola, Joe Bell, Steve Bivens, Richard Clark, David Coffey, William Collier, Floyd Crain, Lane Curlee, Jerry Cross, Ray Davis, Eugene Davis, Ronald Davis, Shirley Duer, Dennis Ferguson, Joe Fowlkes, Tim Garrett, Doug Gunnels, Jere Hargrove, Bob Harrill, Tommy Head, Roy Herron, I. V. Hillis, Harold Holt, Doug Jackson, Peggy Knight, Harold Love, Robert McKee, Calvin Moore, J. B. Napier, Gary Odum, Bill Purcell, Shelby Rhinehart, Don Ridgeway, Bill Rigsby, Randy Rinks, David Shirley, Page Walley, Leslie Wingham, Mays Mix, and Senators

Mississippi pastor and former Jehovah's Witness. It will meet at Concord Church. Islam will be studied in Knoxville. Maurice Smith, associate director, Interfaith Witness Department, HMB, will lead this training at Cumberland Church.

Participants may be certified as Interfaith Witness Associates after the training is completed. The schedule is 2-9 p.m. on Friday, which includes dinner, and 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, which includes lunch. The conference cost is \$10, payable to the HMB. Registration deadline is April 5.

To register and obtain further information, those interested should contact Terry Sharp, Tennessee Baptist Convention, Missions Department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn. 37024, (615) 373-2255.

Riley Darnell, Lou Patten, and John Wilder.

Bibles may be obtained by calling (615) 371-0768. In northeast Tennessee, we have included our excellent Southern Baptist literature on abortion.

The Baptist and Reflector has documented the positive effects of providing Bibles to the former Soviet Union. Dare we do any less for our own governing authorities?

Ann Bennett
15 Pendleton Place
Kingsport 37664

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.

Stand firm

What do D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, Charles G. Finney, John Wesley, and Daniel Webster all have in common? They were all great Christian men, by whose witness thousands and thousands of people came to the Lord Jesus Christ. They were also men who denounced and opposed the Masonic Lodge. I suppose this would make them "extremists," "militants," and people "who cause divisiveness" according to the statements made by Johnny Jackson, chairman of the HMB's directors.

The Masonic Lodge does not consider itself a religion, but rather an organization which will guide men in their daily walk. Regardless of this disclaimer, it is obvious upon close inspection of its teachings, that Freemasonry does fall within the scope of responsibility of the HMB. It is a "religion" just as surely as is the New Age Movement, the Jehovah Witnesses, and the Mormons, and its deception just as deadly. I would urge Mr. Jackson to lay aside his fears of what men think and cling to the instructions given to us by God in Ephesians 5:6-13. Some people called Jesus an extremist, militant, and divisive, but He refused to compromise the truth, even for sake of harmony with the Jews. God grant that we would all stand firm on His truth and not be swayed by the doctrines and traditions of men.

Steve and Sharon Cate
P.O. Box 90
Strawberry Plains 37871

Decision needed

I would like to comment on the BP article in the Baptist and Reflector March 18, "HMB won't study the teachings of masons."

I understand why the HMB does not wish to confront the issue. There are a number of denominational leaders of our convention who are masons.

I also understand that a study of masonry would cause division. That is for sure! In the article, Chairman Jackson says, "Most Southern Baptists don't care about Freemasonry." The real issue is does God care? Chairman Jackson also says, "It's those who are extremist or militant on either side of the issue who have caused whatever divisiveness that has occurred." This is also a true statement. Most people don't care because they don't know and don't want to know.

My question is, when did we as Southern Baptists start deciding to address matters of doctrine on the basis of popular opinion? Furthermore there are reasons to divide. The Bible asks, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (II Corinthians 6:14) This is in the context of worshipping with those that were members of pagan religions!

If Freemasonry is a false religion disguised as a fraternal order, the leaders of our denomination ought to expose it as such.

Steve Fehrman, pastor
First Church
Box 155
Collinwood 38450

Thanks supporters

I would like to thank my friends in Tennessee who supported my decision to attend seminary this year. I especially would like to thank my parents, the congregation of First Church, Dandridge, and the music faculty at Carson-Newman College.

Before moving to Louisville, I naively believed I could come here and not be affected by distractions caused by the controversies. I realize now that I was wrong. The names I associated with Southern Baptist Theological Seminary are real people. My professors are not only my mentors, but they are my friends, and my brothers and sisters in Christ. I actually cried at the death of Dale Moody. When a professor such as Molly Marshall is unjustly accused of teaching false doctrine, I hurt. I will miss Page Kelley and Lloyd Allen; fortunately, I was able to study under each of these men. I feel very unfortunate to not have had the opportunity to learn from Bill Leonard or Glenn Hinson.

I am thankful for a very capable staff that will remain. I ask you to begin today praying for these Godly men and women; they are more than just names. They are real people.

Tim Shackley
SBTS Box 1578
2825 Lexington Rd.
Louisville 40280

Mixed message

I read with interest the March 4, Baptist and Reflector editorial, "Southern Baptists must keep sending undimmed Gospel."

Can we send the Gospel, undimmed, through the Sunday School Board's tarnished broadcasting lens?

Though a noble gesture, giving out New Testaments only keeps us in the gray area, sending out a mixed message.

Southern Baptists pay for and maintain our facilities and equipment to be used only for God's glory.

Being alert as to whom and how our equipment and facilities are being used should have top priority, getting us back into proper focus, before a lost and laughing world that needs our witness.

"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8 KJV).

Thelma Sudberry
900 Belmont Avenue
Shelbyville 37160

• The Sunday School Board does not receive Cooperative Program dollars, though it is a Southern Baptist Convention agency. — Editor

Smithers serves in Robbins

First Church, Robbins, called Mike Smithers as pastor.

Previously he led Mount Pleasant Church, Robbins, the church which ordained him. Smithers also was pastor of Glen Mary Church, Glen Mary. Smithers is a native of Robbins.

Parks to retire in October, trustees affirm . . .

—Continued from page 1
Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta, commended the retreat participants for their openness to the leading of God's spirit.

Asked to reconcile his decision to retire with his earlier feeling God was leading him to stay until 1995, Parks said: "In my own mind I've tried to reconcile that. Since that time there has not come the sense of certainty and affirmation that what I felt could be done then actually can be carried out."

Parks said he could sense "no apparent way" for trustees to make a commitment to him through 1995. "If I'd stayed, I think it would have . . . strung out the indefiniteness of tenure to the point that it would have created this uneasiness that has plagued all of us."

Both Parks and trustees said the president was not pressured to leave the post he has held since 1980. In fact, several trustees said board members had resolved their differences with Parks during the two-day "spiritual retreat" and were surprised and disappointed in his decision.

"I thought we had a breakthrough," said trustee Joel Gregory, pastor of First Church, Dallas. Gregory said ten central issues were discussed and resolved to everyone's satisfaction, leaving no "insurmountable obstacle" to Parks' staying. "The discussion was a contradiction of his decision," Gregory told reporters.

Parks agreed there was general agreement on the ten issues, which were the distillation of the first day's dialogue. But he said he was not convinced trustees would grant him the authority needed to continue in the job.

Parks said he and trustees differ on the role the FMB president should play. Although trustees assured him they want him as president, he said, "the perception of what that means was different on their part and on mine." For instance, he said, trustees expect him to exercise more control over the actions of missionaries and staff members than he is willing to do.

In a later interview, he explained that, although trustees had affirmed

him during the retreat, he "never did get the feeling it (his tenure as president) would not come up again." He said a motion was made during the retreat to affirm him until then but it remained "open ended."

Tennessee pastor Jack Parrott, one of five Tennessee trustees to the Foreign Mission Board, told the Baptist and Reflector March 23 the prayer retreat meeting was "peaceful and affirming."

He said the vast majority of trustees thought it best for Parks to remain as the FMB leader. "Over and over we asked Dr. Parks to stay," he said. "We felt he should stay through 1995."

Parrott, pastor of Sunnyside Church, Kingsport, said he personally asked Parks what could be done to convince him to continue as FMB president. Parks said he was seeking "positive leadership."

"There was no wrangling at the meeting," Parrott said. "We were pleading with Dr. Parks to stay at his post. I hope he will change his mind before the April meeting."

All of the Tennessee representatives were present at the Texas meeting: Parrott, Morris Mills, Memphis; Bobbie Jackson, Millington; David Stephens, Powell; and Bill Blanchard, Soddy-Daisy.

"In the interest of resolving the continuing uncertainty among missionaries, and among Southern Baptists, it's really just going to be better to go ahead and make the transition as soon as possible. I think my staying would have continued that uncertainty. We don't need continuing uncertainty."

Trustees, asked later to respond to that reaction by Parks, reiterated the joint statement from Parks and trustees indicated their support for Parks' leadership.

Parks admitted some of the philosophical differences he has with trustees which he expressed in his February address still remain, such as

agency. "We've got everybody on alert. Everybody has a bag packed and they're ready to move out at a moment's notice. So it's a bit more tense but we're not out yet, and we're still doing our work."

Stroope visited the seven workers in the northern Iraqi city of Zakho in late February. Under Global Partners' sponsorship, they continue to operate mobile medical clinics and drill water wells in Kurdish towns. In a new aid effort, they are distributing seeds to Kurdish families for planting gardens as spring approaches.

Southern Baptists have been aiding the Kurds in northern Iraq since the end of the Persian Gulf war last year, when a Kurdish uprising against Saddam brought savage reprisals that drove thousands of Kurds from their homes into the mountains. Southern Baptists worked in Kurdish refugee camps in Iraq and Iran and set up shop in Zakho to provide ongoing assistance.

But that presence is becoming harder to sustain, Stroope admitted.

the feeling there has been a shift in the board's basic approach to missions. But he said he felt during the retreat many of the trustees were beginning to understand his feelings and trying to take steps to move in the right direction.

Relationships between Parks and the trustees had become tense since the board's decision in October to remove \$365,000 budgeted for 1992 for the international Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, which many trustees consider to be "liberal."

Parks said in his February address he disagreed with the approach of using money to enforce theological conformity on those who receive Baptist money overseas.

Hancock said at the press conference he feels trustees and staff had pushed that issue behind them and were moving together in unity.

However, Parks said he doesn't feel his style of leadership matches what some trustees would expect and he doesn't exert control over the theological positions of staff and missionaries that some desire.

Gregory said in an interview later he feels trustees have confidence in staff and missionaries and no effort will be made to get them to sign theological statements.

Hancock said trustees came to the retreat to demonstrate unity and togetherness and had affirmed Parks' leadership. But, he said, they had to honor his feeling God was leading him in another direction.

Asked if he would continue missions through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Parks said he will continue to follow his calling to missions wherever God leads, but he's not sure where that will be. The CBF is an organization of Southern Baptist churches formed in protest to the "conservative" majority in the Southern

Baptist controversy.

On the question of philosophical differences, Hancock noted boards of trustees will have differences with anyone in the role of president and they must work together under God's leadership.

It is unclear what effect Parks' unexpected retirement will have on the FMB's 3900 missionaries or the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole, which is already deeply divided. In recent years, "conservatives" have gained control of the convention and its agencies, including the FMB, which is based in Richmond, Va.

Parks is at least the fourth chief executive in five years to leave one of the SBC's 21 agencies.

Although Parks told trustees last year he needed to stay at the FMB until 1995 in order to implement the agency's ambitious plan for global outreach, he said March 20 that trustees found "no apparent way to make a clear commitment through '95."

Hancock called on the missionaries to "rely on the Lord" to affirm their service with the FMB. He said the FMB remains committed to the same mission principles under which those missionaries were appointed. "I believe that these 3900 people responded to God's call and put their trust in the board . . . on the basis of those principles," he said.

Parks said he is concerned about the missionaries but predictions that many would now leave the field are exaggerated. "There may be some fallout," he said, "but I don't think this decision will have the repercussions that some have surmised." He predicted his retirement would not change the trustees' relationship with the missionaries, at least for now. — *Compiled from reports by Baptist Press (Robert O'Brien) and Associated Baptist Press (Greg Warner).*

Baptists continue work in Iraq

LONDON (BP) — Rumors abound: American or British forces may attack Iraq to force compliance with the U.N. agreement that ended the Persian Gulf war. Saddam Hussein's forces might attack the Kurds. Internal unrest could topple Saddam.

In the eye of the storm, a small contingent of Southern Baptist relief workers continues to aid the Kurdish people of northern Iraq.

"Southern Baptists are still there," said Mike Stroope, a Southern Baptist who works with Global Partners, a London-based relief and development

SBC messenger cards available

Messenger registration cards for the Southern Baptist Convention June 9-11 in Indianapolis, Ind. will be mailed soon to associational offices in Tennessee.

Cards marked "Revised '87" or "Revised '88" may be used; all other cards should be discarded.

One Word More

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

It was one of those rare occasions when events just seem to fall in place.

On God's calendar, I think he has reserved times and days for such happenings. Knowing how much his children enjoy surprises and serendipities, he marks down "reserved" and we are blessed.

A church is preparing for two special events — both within a few weeks of each other and sometimes coinciding, overlapping.

For a small Baptist church to be courageous enough to try that is a surprise in itself. But both events are underway.

On a recent Sunday evening, the pastor preached on the role of the Christian as a comforter. He talked about how Jesus is the perfect role model who walked among us comforting people.

On Monday, an appointment made by a church member with a customer was cancelled — and the man had a couple of free hours. He thought about

the sermon. He remembered a friend whose wife had died about a year ago.

A telephone call and a drive to a nearby city brought the two together. They talked about the sorrow. They laughed as friends do. They cried — two men right there in the restaurant. Both had had traumatic times in recent months.

Comforting each other brought glory to Christ our Lord!

That night, several church members met with and fed the church's special group of homeless men — as they do on each Monday night. At the same time, a couple was being honored with a small "drop-in" at the church, prior to their marriage on the following Sunday. There were delicious cakes, punch, other "goodies," and beautiful flowers.

As they rejoiced, the homeless guests came by — with some curiosity. I suppose the ordinary thing to do would be to take cake to the men, or briefly explain what was happening.

But the serendipity happened. It seemed right for all people present to be a part of the party. It was as if invitations had been offered to everyone.

Didn't Jesus speak a parable about wedding feast invitations?



ALLEN

Power struggles

The problem no one talks about, even in the church

By Aubrey Hay, director
Church-Ministers Relations

A technique of coping used by many from time to time when confronted with an unpleasant subject, is to ignore it. Whether it is due to fear of what may occur, or a feeling of inadequacy in understanding and offering solutions to the problem, this technique is a handy response that is universally employed. Nowhere is this truer than when the subject of power in the local church surfaces.

And yet, the question of who is in charge is at the heart of virtually every church conflict. How we respond and react to this subject will determine whether our church will function as a viable agency for the cause of Christ, or become involved in a perpetual tug-of-war over authority.

Because the claim to personal power goes against the demands of Jesus who

called us to be servants, it is difficult to discuss deeply. First it must be clothed in spiritual language before we are willing to admit that it exists. Whether pastor or lay leader, a person will seldom speak in terms of his/her personal power in the church without attaching some spiritual shibboleth to make it acceptable.

Without personal power, nothing will be done in any organization including the church. Power is not bad. How one uses the power and for what purpose is another matter. This article will attempt to address the use of power in the church setting.

Personal power

We all possess personal power. That we exist, breathe air, take up space, means that we must be reckoned with in some fashion. Beyond this meaning of power are characteristics of personal power which have been

developed and used in some manner to get one's way, to control a situation, or to arrive at some personal goal. Rollo May identifies four types of power:

Self-Affirmation is the means by which one expresses personal value and worth and has every right to be where he is.

Self-Assertion is the declaration of boundaries and the affirmation of one's rights and convictions, and the resistance to anyone who would violate these convictions.

Aggression is the violation of another's space without respect for their rights. Each of us have the potential to express this kind of power.

Violence is the overt and intense expression of one's rights. This is usually the reaction to a threat from another on the boundaries an individual has for his/her life.

For people of strong convictions, and that includes most of us, the ability to determine the difference between personal power and the power God brings to life is often difficult to determine.

Using personal power in a way that fulfills God's will for his work is even more difficult. We receive our feeling of self worth from what we do. If we are engaged in doing what we perceive to be his work, the line between what is his will and what is our will becomes fuzzy. It is a short step to cross the line into personal self aggrandizement disguised with a cloak of spirituality.

In my opinion, most church conflicts come about because of this confusion between personal and spiritual power. In most cases church people who find themselves embroiled in conflict with their fellow members are not mean and vindictive, but are rather deeply committed to the church.

Many are confused about the will of God and their own personal desires. How we understand and use our personal power will determine whether the conflict comes to a positive conclusion or escalates into a major church fight.

Things to consider

Every believer has a responsibility in how he or she reacts and responds to issues in the church. The proper use of personal power may make a real difference in whether the fellowship survives or not. The following observation may serve as a guide to consider the proper use of one's personal power.

How are my actions perceived by fellow church members? A power grab is hard to disguise. The accusation may be made by disgruntled members who are themselves engaged in a power play. Ask yourself if what you are doing violates the rights of others in the fellowship. How would you feel if someone else acted like you?

Determine if your action serves to clarify the issues or add to the confusion. It can scarcely be productive to the church if what you are doing increases the level of tension and confuses the issue.

Ask how your actions are seen by outsiders. The witness of the church as well as your own personal witness is at stake. It is difficult to affirm an attitude or action if they diminish the witness to outsiders.

Can your actions be clearly seen as modeled by Jesus? Do you have the spirit of Jesus? What Biblical example can be used to clarify the rightness of your actions? Copy your response from him.

Be fervent in your prayers. The ministry of the church is at stake. Can you honestly lay your attitude and actions before the Lord and believe He will bless them? Remember, no one is always and absolutely right. How you express personal power may make you always and absolutely wrong. Are you a solution or a part of the problem?

The church is made up of people whose only claim to perfection is through the grace of God. The Lord needs us all. Some have the gift of leadership and his work needs these, but there is never a situation for the abusive use of personal power. There is always a need for the redemptive expression of his power in you.

Church uses retreat to discuss conflict

The pastor and deacons of First Church, Estill Springs, decided to deal with the issue of conflict before conflict became an issue.

During the church's annual deacons' retreat, the deacons and Pastor John Segree chose to discuss conflict.

Aubrey Hay of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Church-Ministers Relations Department, led the weekend meeting at Montgomery Bell State Park.

Hay praised the church for taking the initiative in dealing with the subject. "The key to conflict management is prevention," Hay said, adding "it (conflict) needs to be talked about before it becomes a church war."

He noted the "management of conflict is part of the ministry of the church with pastors and deacons leading the way."

Segree, who has been pastor of the Estill Springs church for eight years, said the church has had some

minor problems in the past, but basically is noted for its good fellowship.

"We wanted to put the issue of church conflict on the table and talk about it," Segree said.

He added that by discussing the topic he and the deacons "could recognize pitfalls along the way and avoid them."

Segree said the church uses its deacons' retreat as a tool for training in a variety of areas. Past retreats have focused on prayer, discipleship, and the church family ministry plan.

In fact, Segree feels the knowledge gained by the deacons on conflict management can be incorporated into their family ministry program. They can use this training and perhaps head off potential conflicts before they arise, Segree said, noting church conflicts "don't always have to center around the pastor." — *Lonnie Wilkey*

Tennessee Baptists to serve as BJC scholars-in-residence

WASHINGTON — Longtime Tennessee Baptists Andrew "Jack" and Frances Prince will spend the fall as scholars-in-residence at the Baptist Joint Committee.

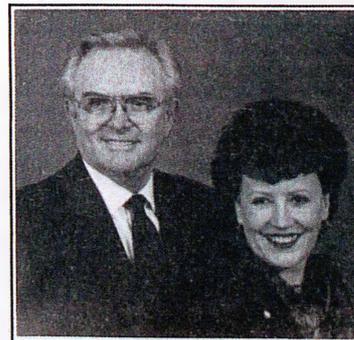
Jack Prince, who plans to retire this summer as pastor of West Hills Church, Knoxville, will work with the BJC denominational relations and development department. Frances Prince, assistant commissioner of the Tennessee State Department of Education, will help the BJC with educational

and other legislative issues.

At the time of his retirement, Jack Prince will have served 40 years in the pastoral ministry with 32 of those years at West Hills Church. A native of Stonega, Va., he holds a B.A. degree from Carson-Newman College, and master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has served in several leadership roles in Tennessee Baptist life, including vice president of the Tennessee

Baptist Convention. Jack Prince also has delivered the Tennessee convention sermon and has been a board member of East Tennessee Baptist Hospital, Carson-Newman College, and the Florence Crittendon Home for Unwed Mothers.



PRINCES

He also has been a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Boards, and a charter member of Ruschlikon International Advisory Committee.

A native of Athens, Frances Prince administers a \$90 million budget with the Tennessee State Education Department. As assistant commissioner, she directs an evaluation program for teachers and administrators. A 34-year-veteran of elementary school teaching, she earned a B.A. degree in music from Carson-Newman College and has done graduate work at the University of Louisville and the University of Tennessee.

She has provided leadership in her local church and denomination, including service as secretary for the first board of directors of the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program Inc. Involved in numerous community activities, she also has been a board member of the Florence Crittendon Home for Unwed Mothers.

"A wealth of energy, experience, and expertise comes to the BJC with the Princes," said James M. Dunn, BJC executive director.

The Princes, who have four children, will begin their association with the BJC in September. — *Pam Parry*

Bellevue Church ranks high in SBC statistics

NASHVILLE — Bellevue Church in Cordova ranked in the top 20 churches in nine of ten key reporting areas for 1991, according to figures compiled from the 1991 Uniform Church Letter.

Bellevue is the third largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention with 21,784 members, behind First Church, Dallas, and Second Church, Houston, Texas, respectively.

The suburban Memphis church also led the SBC in people enrolled in music ministry with 2964.

One other Tennessee church, Germantown Church, Germantown, ranked

among the top 20 churches in one of the key reporting areas. The church was ninth among SBC churches in ongoing music ministry enrollment.

Other reporting areas were baptisms, Sunday School enrollment and attendance, Discipleship Training enrollment, mission expenditures, total receipts, and Brotherhood, and WMU enrollments.

Second Church, Houston, and First Church, Dallas, were the only two Southern Baptist congregations to rank in the top 20 in each of the ten reporting areas.

Brotherhood Department staff personalizes missions

By Connie Davis

The staff of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Brotherhood Department is the smallest of all TBC departments with responsibility for children, youth, and adults, but it doesn't seem to be a hardship.

Director Cameron Byler credits his staff. "Bob lives and breathes RAs," he said of Bob Davison, associate. Dianna Hughes' commitment is such that in addition to working as administrative secretary, she has assumed a department project in her spare time — sponsorship of several Kurdish families, he pointed out. Secretary Carol Wheeler completes the dedicated, efficient team, Byler added.

The team's work is extensive — Baptist Men, Baptist Young Men, High School Baptist Young Men, and Royal Ambassadors, which are conducted in churches, and state-wide programs involving both men and women, including Disaster Relief, World Missions Conferences, and nine State Fellowships of Baptists in Missions.

The program load might seem over-

The Brotherhood Department coordinates the work of volunteers across the state through the following organizations:

- Baptist Pilots Fellowship
- Baptist Agricultural Workers/Veterinarians Fellowship
- Baptist Builders Fellowship
- Baptist Criminal Justice Fellowship
- Baptist Lay Evangelism Fellowship
- Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship
- Baptist Lay Renewal Fellowship
- Baptist RA/HSBYM Leaders Fellowship
- Baptist Sports Evangelism Fellowship

whelming, but Byler is a big man, both physically and spiritually.

"Our Tennessee men and women's response is so great in times of need. It's overwhelming," said Byler.

"Every person ought to have some type of ministry that helps involve him in his marketplace.

"But missions comes in many contexts," said Byler. He used his experience as an example. At the age of

Retreats scheduled for mentally handicapped

The Sunday School Department of the Tennessee Baptist Convention will sponsor two retreats for the mentally handicapped in May.

The retreats are set for May 1-3 at Camp Carson in Newport and May 22-24 for Camp Linden in Linden.

The retreats are for mentally handicapped persons of all ages, parents, Sunday School teachers, church staff, and associational leaders. One chaperone is required for every four or fewer persons with mental retardation.

A new approach of the retreats this year is to involve pastors and church and associational staff with a special luncheon/conference designed especially for them, said Liz Lee of the Sunday School Department.

Cost of the retreats is \$40 per person. For additional information, contact Liz Lee at (615) 371-4094.



BROTHERHOOD TEAM — Staff members, from left, Carol Wheeler, Dianna Hughes, and Cameron Byler, make up part of the Tennessee convention Brotherhood Department team. — Photos by Connie Davis

16 when he decided to become a missionary, he envisioned himself donning a "pith helmet and going to the deep, dark jungles of Africa and spending my days with the heathen. That was the concept of missions in those days," he described.

Instead, Byler became an athletic director and coach in high schools and then in a Baptist children's home in Texas. After a stint on a church staff, he became a professional Brotherhood worker. The work has led him from Texas to Alaska to Tennessee over the past 23 years.

Byler pioneered disaster relief work among Southern Baptists by leading Texas Baptist Men to assist disaster victims in 1968. He has directed Southern Baptist Disaster Relief in 43 or 44 major disasters.

Although a self-described "country boy," Byler is a student of western art and history. His other hobbies mesh with his work — outdoor activities including rock and barbed wire collecting, raising quarterhorses, and hunting.

After almost four years at the TBC, Byler is proud to report a steady increase of men and boys involved in Brotherhood work.

Involvement in Brotherhood work is important, explained Davison, because 80-90 percent of Southern Baptist missionaries report RAs and GAs (Girls in Action) played a pivotal role in their career decision.

Of boys who attend Tennessee RA camps, an average of 28 percent make spiritual decisions, reported Davison. And of the teenaged staff over the past five years, 36 percent are involved in or preparing for full-time ministry, he added.

"It's not that we do anything more at camp than they (boys and counselors) do in their chapter meetings. It's just more concentrated.

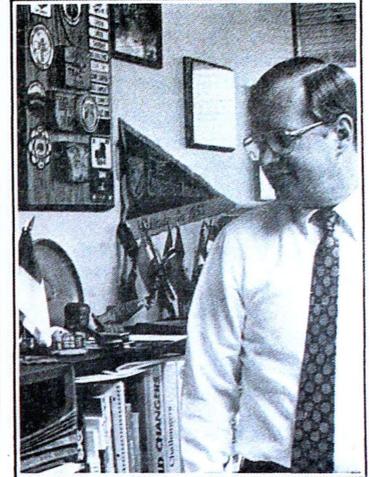
"It's more than building fires and sleeping in tents. The whole thing is based on missions education. That's our task, Brotherhood's task."

Davison's task includes programs for

Meeting rescheduled

A meeting of the Middle Tennessee Ministers' Association, scheduled for March 26 at Belmont University, has been canceled, according to President Gary Shockley of Clarksville.

The meeting will be held April 30 at Belmont University, he said.



MEMORABILIA — Bob Davison looks at some of the memorabilia in his office representing his work with RAs and Baptist Men.

grade 1 through age 34. Planning for just one event — RA Congress which draws about 1800 boys — spans more than a year, he noted.

He has help coping with the stress, he said. "When you know that you are in the position because God put you there, it takes a lot of the stress out of it," said Davison.

God's direction to his present work began at age 35. A businessman who had delved into trucking, printing, art, sign painting, sales, and management, Davison became involved in RAs by attending an event with his son.

Soon he had a passion for RAs that led him to apply for a state position. He was denied the position because he wasn't seminary trained.

Although he was "mad at God," said Davison, that rejection motivated him to go to seminary. He knew his chances were slim to be selected for a state position because he didn't have a college degree, but he wasn't discouraged.

Secretary sponsors refugee family

Dianna Hughes had been praying for God to tell her what to do with her free time. Her responsibilities for her family had eased since her mother had assumed most of those while living with them.

Then her boss, Cameron Byler asked if she would like to help him deliver some household items to some Kurdish refugees living in Nashville. Although it seemed an unusual activity for a secretary, she agreed.

She met several families, or more correctly parts of families, who escaped the fighting in Iraq. One young lady was wearing a sweater Hughes had contributed for the families.

Hughes was moved emotionally when she saw her old sweater was really helping. She decided she had found the answer to her prayer. Without consulting her family, she contacted the Nashville Baptist Association and located three families to sponsor. They have been in the United States about one month.

During one of her first visits she was served tea from a small table missing a leg. "They have so little and yet they're so willing to serve

He could have continued to do maintenance work at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary and church staff work, but God called him to Tennessee, explained Davison.

Hindsight also allows him to identify another part of God's plan. His secular experience was a part of that plan.

The trucking experience prepared him for Disaster Relief work. Sign painting and art come in handy, as does his printing background, he added.

Both Davison and Byler agree the rewards include memories. Byler recalled the homesick camper who crawled into bed in the middle of the night with him. They both agreed botched activities become hilarious after the fact.

The greatest reward, though, is changed lives, they explained.

"I think that God is at work everywhere out there," said Byler.

us," she said.

"The Lord has just put it together so naturally," Hughes explained. One family has two sons near the ages of her own. And another includes a young girl near the same age as her niece.

During the weeks since Hughes assumed the sponsorship, she has helped the families get food stamps and go shopping.

"We can learn from them because they eat so healthily," noted Hughes.

She predicts her family will benefit as she has. Her mother, Vivar Livengood, already has become involved.

Hughes has learned that one family lost a son during a "revolution" in 1989 and another had a family member die in prison.

"It has helped me to get my life into perspective and know we (Americans) don't really have needs. . . . I realize I can buy less (for myself) because I see their needs. I feel really good about it," she said.

Hughes has worked for the Brotherhood Department for ten years. — Connie Davis

Boys Ranch

Cottage completion cause for celebration

Millington – The new seven-bedroom home required truckloads of donated building supplies and countless hours of volunteer labor. And finally, joyfully, it is finished.

"The Lord put this together," says Dr. Gene Gafford of the newly completed cottage for the Boys Ranch. Gafford is West Tennessee Regional Director for the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. "We have been truly blessed by all who have given so much to make this possible."

On Saturday, April 11, the cottage will be dedicated as the first of four homes planned for the Boys Ranch, the newest TBCH ministry. An 11 a.m. dedication service will be followed by a luncheon of barbecue beef, and tours of the cottage and grounds.

The ranch-style cottage was designed specifically for the Boys Ranch program. Its 4,710 square feet of living space includes four bedrooms – each with a private bath – for the eight teenage boys who will be living there. There's a large living room, kitchen, dining area, and game room. In addition, the cottage features a private living area for the houseparents. This includes a master bedroom, a full bath, a smaller bedroom for the houseparents' children, and a small living room. A separate bedroom and bath is provided for use by the relief houseparents or visitors.

Construction of the cottage would not have been possible without the generous donations of materials and labor from area businesses and churches. In fact, the home will be dedicated as the "Volunteer Cottage" in honor of the more than 200 people who gave of their time, skill and resources to build it.

Among the individual volunteers was George Fulghum, a retired contractor and member of First Baptist Church in Memphis, who donated his services as construc-



Two boys enjoy an afternoon ride on the 224-acre Boys Ranch of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. The first cottage of this special ministry will be dedicated on Saturday, April 11.

tion superintendent. Volunteer groups included the Haywood Baptist Association, which put on the roof. Members of First Baptist Church, Covington, did inside and outside painting. Baptist Men's groups from Bartlett Baptist Church and Holland Heights Baptist Church helped with the framing of the cottage. Churches in Martin sent bricklaying crews.

"Building this cottage has been a real community

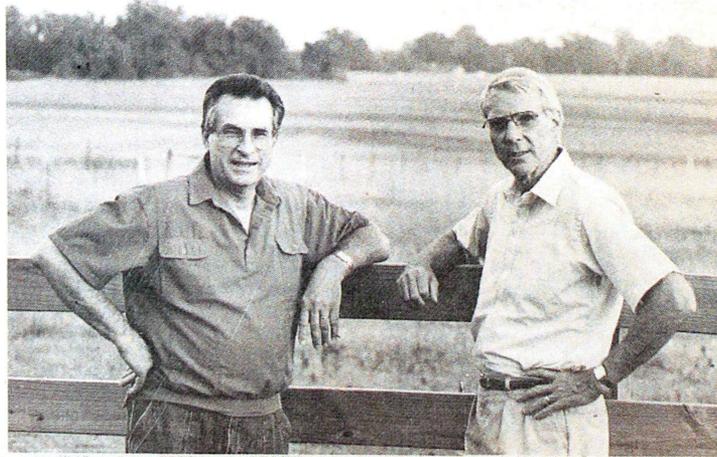
effort," said Bert Sutton, Director of the Boys Ranch. "It has been wonderful seeing everyone come together for this project."

Four boys had been living in an existing farm house with their houseparents, John and Teresa Scott. The move to the new cottage will allow four more boys to join the ministry. Once all four cottages are completed, a total of 32 teenagers will live on the 224-acre farm.

The ministry is geared to

adolescent boys from troubled backgrounds. A program of counseling, Bible study and outdoor activities helps rebuild the shattered self-esteem of the teenagers.

"We're not just building houses here; we're building boys," explained Gafford. "Some of these young men have met failure after failure in life. We have created a Christ-centered program that can turn a young life around."



Dr. Gerald Stow, TBCH Executive Director, and Dr. Gene Gafford, TBCH Regional Director, have overseen development of the Boys Ranch as the newest ministry of the Children's Homes.



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TenneScene

... from Cottontown, south to Coalmont,
and on to Sale Creek ...

Ordinations ...

Wilsonville Church, Newport, recently ordained Virgil Gray to the deacon ministry.

Mike Palmer was recently ordained to the ministry at Red Bank Church, Chattanooga.

Joe McCosh and Phillip Lashley were recently ordained to the deacon ministry of Fairview Tabernacle Church, Sweetwater.

Jeff Brown, pastor of Etter Church, Byrdstown, was recently ordained to the Gospel ministry.

Leadership ...

Members of Luray Church, Luray, recently welcomed Don Jones as pastor.

Greg Dempsey has been called as minister of music and youth to North Knoxville Church, Knoxville.

John Perkins is the new pastor at Snow Memorial Church, Johnson City.

Ted Hooper joined the staff of Georgian Hills Church, Memphis, as minister of education/youth.

Charles Hyder is now serving as pastor of Hickory Valley Church - Dayspring, Chattanooga.

Stan Stone resigned as minister of youth/single adults at First Church, Gallatin, to accept a similar position at Oceanview Church, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Mt. Pisgah Church, Bradford, recently called Bruce McCartney as pastor.

Churches ...

A series of Christian parenting videos produced by James Dobson will be presented at Lincoya Hills Church, Nashville. The series, Turn Your Heart

Senior adults 'celebrate life' in Memphis

About 1500 senior adults, including 750 from Tennessee, attended the recent "A Celebration of Life" conference held at Broadmoor Church in Memphis.

The conference, which focused on the senior adult years, was co-sponsored by the family ministry department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Shelby County Association, and the Baptist state conventions of Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

Chip Arn, an associate with L.I.F.E. International in Monrovia, Calif., a

Black Oak Church calls James Wilcox

Black Oak Church, Clinton, has called James Wilcox Jr. as pastor, effective April 5. He is former pastor of First Church, Caryville.

Wilcox is a Knox County native and is married to Dodie H. Wilcox. They have four children: Lisa, Amy, Katy, and Chase.

He received his bachelor of science degree from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City. Wilcox has been pastor of churches in Tennessee and Georgia.

Toward Home, a follow-up to Dobson's Focus on the Family films, will be shown for six consecutive weeks beginning March 29 at 5:40 p.m.

Composer, producer, and performer Nathan DiGesare will present a service of praise, worship, and celebration March 29 at 6 p.m. at Brook Hollow Church, Nashville. For additional information, call the church office at (615) 352-1295.

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of First Church, Elizabethton, choirs from Calvary Church, Immanuel Church, Oak Street Church, and Philippi Church, all in Elizabethton, performed during the evening service at First Church March 22. First Church was involved in the organization of these churches, except for Philippi Church. Philippi was chartered by black members of First Church who left to begin their own church.

The congregation of First Church, Middleton, worshiped in their new sanctuary for the first time March 1. The new building was dedicated March 22.

To celebrate its centennial anniversary, First Church, Wartburg, will hold several events on April 5. The newly published history, A Century of Service, will be presented during the morning service. Radio station WECO-FM will broadcast centennial events including the service. A covered dish luncheon will follow the service. All former pastors and spouses are invited to attend, reported Pastor Tom Mooty.

The youth ministry of Haywood Hills Church, Nashville, invites area youth groups to a DiscipleNow Youth Rally March 29 at 1:30 p.m. The program for youth in grades seven through 12 will begin with a concert by Crossing, the Baptist Student Union ministry team

research organization for churches desiring to reach out to senior adults, challenged the conference participants to prepare for the "senior surge."

He noted that by the year 2020, adults 65 years and older will comprise 17.3 percent of the American population.

Growing churches will have to provide structure and leadership for a holistic ministry with senior adults, he said.

Arns said churches also will have to effectively use seniors as leaders because the 30-50-year-old bracket will have fewer people. The later group traditionally has supplied church leadership, he said.

The senior adults also were challenged by Brian Harbour, pastor of First Church, Richardson, Texas; Ken Hemphill, pastor, First Church, Norfolk, Va.; and Steve Taylor, a former associate with Age Wave, Inc., of Emeryville, Calif.

A highlight of the conference was the appearance of former television star and recording artist Dale Evans Rogers who challenged and inspired the group on opening night. — Don Mauldin

from Belmont University. Jim Poole of Mobile, Ala., will be guest speaker. For information or to make group reservations, call (615) 832-6909.

Missions ...

Missionaries to Paraguay John and Sandy Silver may be written to at Casilla 177, Encarnacion, Paraguay. They are both natives of Tennessee. He was born in Morristown and considers Jefferson City his hometown. She is the former Sandra Martin of Dandridge.

Missionaries to Liberia Earl and Jane Williams are on the field and may be addressed at Mission Baptiste Meridiona, B.P. 1602, Man, Ivory Coast. She was born in Knoxville and lived in Oak Ridge.

Revivals ...

The following churches in Hardeman County Association have scheduled revivals for late March: Brints Chapel, Middleton, March 22-27, George Weaver; Parrans Chapel, Bolivar, March 29-April 3, Rodney Alexander of First Church, Halls; and First Church, Pocahontas, March 29-April 3, Tim West.

First Church, Gruetli-Laager, will hold revival services March 29-April 1. Gray M. Allison, professor at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, will be evangelist.

Fred Wolfe will lead revival April 5-8 at Calvary Church, Knoxville.

Frank Crumpler will be evangelist and Jerry Brown will lead music for revival April 5-8 at Brook Hollow Church, Nashville.

First Church, Cookeville, will hold revival led by D. L. Lowrie, Tennessee Baptist Convention executive director, April 5-8.

Members of First Church, Collinwood, will be led in revival April 5-10 and April 12 by Billy Friel, pastor of First Church, Mt. Juliet.

Leonard Markham, pastor of Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville, will lead revival beginning April 5 at First Church, Tullahoma.

Roy Fish will be evangelist for revival April 5-8 at Manley Church, Morristown.

Mt. Moriah Church, Whiteville, will hold revival April 5-8. Services will be led by Ken Culver, evangelist, and Graham King, music director.

Cumberland Plateau Association reported the following churches and evangelists will hold revivals in the coming weeks. First Church, Pleasant Hill, March 29-April 3, Charlie Ivey, Bethlehem Church, Crossville; Haley's Grove Church, Crab Orchard, April 12-16, Charlie Ivey; Oaklawn Church, Crossville, April 9-11, Edsel West, South Harriman Church, Harriman; and Bethlehem Church, Crossville, May 10-15, Wayne Markham of Crossville.

Roger Abington will lead a family life revival March 29-April 1 at First Church, Camden. Jonathan Nelms will lead music.

Former Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Bethea of Claremore, Okla., will lead revival April 12-14 at First Church, Lafayette. Pat Roper of Greenville, S.C., will be guest music evangelist.

Ricky Nelson, pastor of Grace Church, Collinwood, will be guest evangelist for revival April 5-8 at Knob Creek Church, Columbia.

The congregation of North Johnson City Church, Johnson City, will be led in revival April 5-8 by Reed Wright, pastor of Maple Street Church, Cleveland. Jim Lumpkins, Kingsport, will lead music.

The following churches in Gibson County Association will hold revival during late March and April. Evangelists are also reported: First Church, Dyer, April 26-May 1, W. B. Oakley, Randy Latch; Keely Mill Church, Dyer, March 29-April 3, Jerry Milam; Maranatha Church, Humboldt, March 29-April 3, Wayne Foropoulos; New Bethlehem Church, Dyer, April 5-10, Fred Clift; First Church, Trenton, April 5-8, Jerry Drace, Ken Holland; and West Side Church, April 19-22, Wayne Rowan, James Crossnoe.

Barry Littlefield will be evangelist for revival April 3-5 at First Church, Adamsville. Alan Guyer will be music evangelist.



TENNESSEAN ELECTED — Ron Phillips, second from right, recently was elected chairman of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board trustees. Phillips is pastor of Central Church, Hixson, and president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Other officers are, from left, Linda Principe, assistant secretary; Bob Curtis, second vice chairman; Alice W. Sanders, secretary; Phillips; and Brad Allen, first vice chairman.

Uzbeks experience American culture at C-N

JEFFERSON CITY — When most students at Carson-Newman College want to hear the news from home, they simply write a letter or pick up the telephone.

For Bahodir Turayev and Nazirjon Turgunov, however, the simplest, and sometimes only, way to hear about their homeland is to watch the evening news.

Turayev and Turgunov are natives of Uzbekistan, a newly-formed republic of the former USSR. They and eight other Uzbek students were sent by the Uzbekistan government to the United States last fall to study at Baptist schools.

After a semester at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas, Turayev and Turgunov transferred to Carson-Newman. They are continuing their study of the English language and American business as well as experiencing a different segment of

Tennesseans to lead crusade in Chile

Twenty-five Tennessee Baptists will leave April 2 for a nine-day evangelism effort in Chile.

The Tennesseans will lead a crusade in Talcu and nearby towns.

Volunteers include Sarah Cagle, Donald and Jo Ann Davis, Bob Landham, George Fletcher, Allen Lawrence, David Hassell, Jack and Bettye Jones, Lucy Locke, Jan Spruill, Susan Meredith-Janssen, Mary Walsh, Diane Mitchell, and Sidney Wallace. Two Rivers Church, Nashville;

Angyla Fitzgerald, Tusculum Hills Church, Nashville; Carol Bethshears, Faith Church, Hollow Rock; Naomi Edwards, Don Mauldin, Roy Renfro, and Ray Bartee, Woodmont Church, Nashville; John Seals and Marion Arbuckle Jr., Westwood Church, Murfreesboro; Barton Thigpen, Brainerd Church, Chattanooga; and Stacy Percy, Crossroads Church, Parsons.

Also participating in the crusade will be Pamela Zierer of La Mesa, Calif.

American culture and making new friends — the first step in a process which the Uzbek government hopes will teach them more about a capitalist society and promote good trade relations with the U.S.

When Turayev and Turgunov left their homeland, Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika had already moved the USSR closer to capitalism. The total dissolution of the Soviet Union has brought radical changes, not only in government, but in all aspects of Soviet life.

Turayev and Turgunov cannot call home because, as a result of the restructuring, the telephone lines that were once routed through Moscow are now inoperable. They can't send letters home because they are unsure how to address the envelopes. "We have heard that the country is now called the Commonwealth of Eurasian Independent States, but we do not know if that is legal yet," explained Turgunov.

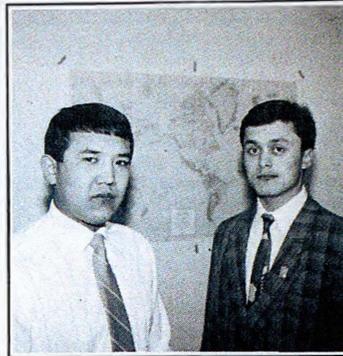
"We worry about our family and friends. Uzbekistan is considered the political and cultural center of Central Asia; therefore, there are many demonstrations there. We watch the television news and see our friends participating in riots. We saw one friend killed by police."

In contrast to other areas of the commonwealth, food is as plentiful as turmoil in the largely agricultural state of Uzbekistan. Prices have increased but are still lower than those

Church secretaries to meet in April

"Called and Accountable" will be the theme of the annual Church Secretaries Conference April 13-15 at the Baptist Center in Brentwood.

Secretaries can choose among a variety of conferences focusing on newsletters and bulletins, dealing with benevolence, selecting, organizing, and training a counting committee, copyright laws, coordinating and supervising



C-N STUDENTS — Nazirjon Turgunov, left, and Bahodir Turayev, from Uzbekistan, are enjoying their studies at Carson-Newman College.

in the metropolitan areas. "One kilogram of meat is now 30 rubles instead of five, but in Russia it is 180 rubles," said Turayev.

Independent Uzbekistan controls its own natural resources. Business opportunities are increasing, and prices are expected to drop. The Uzbek government is learning from the American capitalist system and hopes one day to establish trade relations between the two countries.

"Here at Carson-Newman there are many computers, but at Tashkent University, where we are enrolled as students, there are only about five computers," commented Turayev. "We

do not have the capability to produce a computer more complex than a calculator."

He added that although study in Uzbekistan universities is "much more intense than in American schools, we don't have the materials to apply our knowledge."

A normal day for Uzbek students consists of three or four 90-minute lecture classes in the morning. Students are allowed to ask questions. In the afternoon the tables are turned, and the students are divided into small groups to be grilled by their professors. Students attend classes six days a week.

Turayev and Turgunov are applying the same diligence to their study in America. Turayev is taking a full load of business courses, including accounting, marketing, and computer classes. Turgunov is enrolled in German and computer classes. In his spare time, he is compiling a dictionary of American business terms which he translates into both Russian and Uzbek.

The Uzbeks hope that exchange programs between the U.S. and their country will be mutually beneficial.

Union sponsors Bible conference

Union University will host its annual Spring Bible Conference March 30 — April 1. "The Church Responding to the Lordship of Christ" will be the theme for the week.

Chuck Kelley, associate professor of evangelism at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, will analyze the church's response to Christ's lordship through a study of Ephesians. Frederick Sampson, pastor of Tabernacle Missionary Church, Detroit, Mich., will lead the worship. Special music will be provided by Lois Jane Huddlestone from Gallatin.

Conference sessions will be held at 10 a.m., 3 p.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m. Monday and Wednesday in the G. M. Savage Memorial Chapel. Tuesday's sessions are scheduled for 9:25 a.m., 3 p.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m.

For more information contact the university's office of religious affairs at (901) 668-1818, ext. 243.

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REINFORCING

TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

We may need to have missionary Will J. Roberts teach us a song. Roberts and his wife Marie are serving in Tanzania. In their prayer newsletter which I recently received he shared about their work.

One of his tasks caught my attention.

He conducted a stewardship seminar in each Baptist association in their nation last year. Like many

Third World countries the people are very poor. Probably the best fed people in the country are the farmers who

Lee leads Blaine Church

Mike Lee is serving Indian Ridge Church, Blaine, as pastor.

Lee formerly was pastor of East Sunnyview Church, Knoxville. A bivocational pastor, he works for Southern Railway in Knoxville.

The native of Corryton was ordained in 1985 by New Hope Church, Corryton.

He and wife, Carla, have two children, Amanda and Adam.



LOWRIE

live in the sections of the country where it rains. They have very little income, but they have plenty to eat because of their gardens. However, they think of themselves as being very poor. Roberts says, "My favorite teaching sessions are to help them discover how much it costs to feed their families from their own gardens. Then I sing in Swahili a song which I wrote about how poor we are. But then I say if God has given us that much food to eat then we are very rich. I help them to learn a new song about how rich we really are."

We need to learn this song. Our whole nation seems to be singing the blues these days, but we should be singing the Hallelujah chorus. Sure there are some bad things happening, but we are still a free people. Those of us who know the Lord Jesus have our names written in heaven!

When I was growing up in Chinquapin Grove Church, "I Am a Child of the King" was one of my favorite hymns. We sang it from the Broadman Hymnal often. We were poor, but had real reason for joy. We are still the children of God, let's rejoice!

ing volunteers, staff relationships, and more.

The conference will begin at 1 p.m. on April 13 and conclude with lunch on April 15. Special features include a concert by The Alleys and a bookstore exhibit.

Cost of the conference is \$35.05 and includes four meals and annual dues for the Tennessee Baptist Secretaries' Association.

Also available is a basic certification seminar for church secretaries, offered by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

For registration information or information about motels, contact the TBC Discipleship Training Department at (615) 371-2053.

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God's steadfast love

By Jerry Winfield, pastor; First Church, Bolivar

It is amazing what the Lord has to do sometimes to get our attention. For Jonah, it took three days in the belly of a great fish and some serious praying before he was ready to obey God's command to him. Almost as soon as Jonah's feet touched dry ground, God began to deal with him again about preaching to the city of Ninevah.

This lesson deals with the steadfast love of God. In these verses we see God's love for the people of Ninevah in His sending Jonah to preach a message of repentance. This lesson should also lead us to a spirit of thankfulness for God's steadfast love for us. It is true that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9).

God's second call to Jonah (ch. 3:1-2)

Though Jonah's actions proved he did not deserve it, God gave him a second chance to fulfill His will for his life. God's message to Jonah was the same message He had given the first

time (see ch. 1:2). Even though it appears Jonah was not too happy about his assignment, God still loved the people of Ninevah and wanted to give them an opportunity to repent. Before we are too hard on Jonah, we need to remember God had used Assyria (Ninevah was the capital city) to judge Israel. Jonah's reluctance to go was an indication of his prejudice against these enemies. If we were in Jonah's position, we might have felt the same way.

Jonah's proclamation to Ninevah (ch. 3:3-4)

Since Ninevah was such a large city, it appears Jonah began to preach as he entered the city and continued preaching as he literally walked the streets of this great metropolis. Ninevah's sin was so great that Jonah's preaching was void of any word of hope. The ominous message indicated that Ninevah faced judgment in 40 days. Since Jonah hated the Ninevites so strongly, this is probably the only part

of his mission from which he took any pleasure.

Ninevah's response to Jonah's message (ch. 3:5-10)

One of the amazing aspects of Jonah's story is that the pagan Ninevites believed his message and repented. How many times in Scripture do we find God calling on Israel and Judah to repent and they refuse? Sometimes people who have little or no knowledge of the workings of God respond more readily to God's Word. According to these verses, the king heard Jonah's message and repented. He then made a decree that all the people should fast, repent, and ask for God's forgiveness. When God saw their actions, He averted His judgment. Of course, this is just another example of God's willingness to forgive those who genuinely repent.

Jonah's anger toward God (ch. 4:1-5)

How did Jonah respond to the Ninevites' repentance? He should have rejoiced that his mission had been successful. However his own sinful attitude caused him to be angry with God. Jonah acted more like a child than a prophet of God. Again it seems

like Jonah would prefer to die rather than see the city of Ninevah spared. How sad it is when God's preacher or people sulk and become sour in spirit just because things don't go their way. However, God was not finished with Jonah yet.

BIBLE BOOK
March 29 Lesson
Basic Passage: Jonah 3:1-4:11

God's lesson to Jonah (ch. 4:6-11)

As the pouting prophet sat under his booth stewing in the juices of his anger, God taught him a valuable lesson. To help ease the heat, God caused a gourd to grow over Jonah. Naturally this pleased Jonah. Then caused a worm to attack the gourd, which withered and died. Next God sent a hot wind that caused Jonah to become ill. Jonah was angry and sick and God spoke to him again. He pointed out the inconsistency of Jonah's pity on the gourd and his lack of pity on the Ninevites.

Could God possibly be saying the same thing to us today?

The Messiah and suffering

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

Mark 7 tells us about the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and the healing of the deaf-mute. Jesus' fame and popularity escalated to new heights. He was viewed in many different ways by the people. Some saw Jesus as a provider of physical cures. Others saw Him as a provider of food. There were those who were looking for a new golden age, similar to the days of Saul, David, and Solomon, with Jesus as their leader. Then, as always, a few believed Jesus' words and followed Him.

The enemies of Jesus always tried to stir up a controversy. There were those who doubted Jesus' miraculous birth, criticized His message, and disclaimed the real meaning of God's Word just because Jesus quoted it. In the midst of controversy and bickering by the religious leaders, the disciples were called and trained for their Master's service.

It is no different today. Amid the turmoil, strife, and pressures in our lives,

God is still calling and training people for His service.

Jesus took His disciples around the Sea of Galilee to the villages near Caesarea Philippi at the base of Mount Hermon. Jesus used this secluded area to further train His disciples and give them the opportunity to declare and confess their faith in Him.

The biggest and hardest question asked was not, "Who do men say that I am?" (v. 27). The only question that really counts is found in verse 29 — "Who do you say that I am?" Peter gave a qualified answer by acknowledging Jesus as the Christ. Yet when we read Acts 1:6, we also see that the disciples saw Jesus as their patriotic leader who would re-establish the honor, power, fear, and prestige of Israel.

When we look at verse 30, we might ask, — "Did Jesus have a double standard?" Here He told His disciples to tell no man, yet at His ascension He commissioned His followers to go

everywhere and preach, teach, make disciples, and baptize. There is neither a mistake, nor a double standard. The identity of Jesus would be interpreted wrongly. Head knowledge of Jesus is not sufficient. Only the revealing knowledge from the Holy Spirit can truly identify Jesus.

I believe that's the reason our churches today, regardless of denomination or sect, have so much driftwood and dead wood on their church rolls. They profess the knowledge and experience, but they do not possess the Holy Spirit-revealed knowledge. What is your knowledge of Jesus? How are you responding to Him?

CONVENTION UNIFORM
March 29 Lesson
Basic Passage: Mark 8:27-9:13

Jesus did not try to hide the cost of discipleship. He wanted the disciples to know clearly there would be a price. If

we follow Jesus, we must become like Him. Many people have no idea of what being His disciple demands. Remember Peter's words in Matthew 19:27, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee . . ." When we are truly His disciples, our major aim in life is giving, not getting. A disciple must say no to self (v. 34). Self-denial is not kicking bad habits or restricting life styles. It is a total surrender and commitment of our lives, will, and purpose to the perfect will, power, and authority of God. For us to know Christ, God's Son, Jesus must rule and reign in our total being.

There are grave consequences for those who suppress this knowing and following Jesus. Verse 38 tells us of the consequences. The time is coming when Jesus will come and claim or disown His followers.

Verses 36 and 37 ask a valid question for today. Many people are willing to "sell their soul" for fame, pleasure, comfort, power, or some new idea or theology that has no eternal satisfaction.

Little human creatures wear themselves out chasing rainbows.

Accepting God's invitation

By Sharon Herrington, layperson; Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage

If you've ever hosted a special occasion in your home, you know the joy and excitement of inviting others to be a part of your special event. Usually hosts and hostesses are careful to invite guests who are compatible. In the parable of Matthew 22:1-14, Jesus used a social occasion as the teaching tool to relate the common element binding the guests in God's kingdom — acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Delivering the invitation via servants was the custom of the day. Because one was honored to be an invited guest, one's refusal to attend the king's special event was utterly unthinkable! Custom dictated that the host first invite the guests weeks ahead and then send servants to summon the guests when the social event was ready to begin. One could assume the guests in Matthew 22:3 had previously agreed to come, but refused to come when sum-

moned by the king's servants.

Again the guests rejected the king's second invitation (v. 4). What is a special dinner or occasion if no guests attend? Honoring the guests by great preparation is the point of the event. Outright defiance is seen in verses five and six as the guests go to their choice of a more important activity. The remaining persons killed the servants who delivered the second invitational appeal.

The marriage feast would go on, so the king then invited "the unlikelies" — the publicans, sinners, and Gentiles who readily heeded the social expectation and graciousness of the king.

"A parable within a parable" is how theologian Herschel Hobbs designates verses 11-14, which carry the idea of a changed nature of a person receiving Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24). Custom dictated that wedding guests wear a wedding garment to the wedding and feast.

In the parable the king provides the garment for the "societal down and outs," who could not afford garments.

Just as the original guests refused the king's invitation, one guest in verse 12 "defied authority in a more arrogant way, by trying to attend on his own terms," according to Hobbs.

LIFE AND WORK
March 29 Lesson
Basic Passage: Matthew 22:1-14

The man in verses 11-12, Hobbs suggests, was not actually a guest, but an imposter!

How does this parable apply to us?

1. The Gospel is for all people — the down and outs, those "different from us," the socially unacceptable; as well as the up and outs, "those like us," the socially acceptable — everyone.

2. The call to all is to salvation, not

service, in this parable. All are unconditionally called to God's kingdom.

3. Emphasis is on who is in the kingdom and who is not. The king represents God the Father; the son represents Jesus. Marriage is used to express one's relationship to the son.

4. The first guests represent Israel who ran after other gods. The servants who called the people correspond to Old Testament prophets and New Testament evangelists.

5. Our wedding garment is our faith through repentance, which cloaks us in righteousness.

6. Everyone is invited to the marriage feast or life in Christ, but only a few accept the invitation for salvation through faith.

We either accept or reject the call of God to salvation. We cannot fool God, since He is the provider of our festal garment — regeneration through our relationship to His son, Jesus.

(BP) BRIEFLY

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

Griffith announces retirement as executive director in Georgia

ATLANTA — James N. Griffith, executive director-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention since 1981, has announced his intention to retire from that office effective March 15, 1993. Griffith's unexpected announcement was made before the GBC executive committee, assembled for its regular spring meeting.

Griffith, 66, said he was resisting those urging him to remain until mandatory retirement at the end of 1994 because "I do not feel led of God to do this." Griffith expressed appreciation to Georgia Baptists for "allowing me the privilege of serving in what has been the most challenging time in the history of our convention. The greatness of Georgia Baptists is clearly indicated by the fact that almost without exception, progress has been made in every area of our work."

Griffith is a native of Georgia, and worked as a journalist prior to entering the ministry. A graduate of Mercer University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., he received honorary doctorates from Mercer, Brewton-Parker College, Tift College, and the Atlanta Law School.

Plans underway for 'Mission 95'

NASHVILLE — Citing the success of "Mission 90", Southern Baptist student ministry leaders are making plans for another national after-Christmas student missions conference in 1994.

An advisory committee of representatives from Southern Baptist agencies, seminaries, state conventions, campus ministries, local churches, and Woman's Missionary Union met in Nashville March 16-17 to make preliminary plans for "Mission 95." Such student missions conferences have been held about every five years since 1970.

The advisory committee selected Louisville, Ky., as its first choice for "Mission 95" and Dec. 27-30, 1994, as tentative dates for the conference. Thinking ahead, committee members also chose St. Louis as their first choice for "Mission 2000." Fort Worth, Texas, was selected as the alternate location for both events.

Almost 4000 students attended "Mission 90," but Charles Johnson, director of student ministry at the Sunday School Board, encouraged committee members to "think big" toward attracting 8000 to 10,000 students to "Mission 95."

NOBTS trustees approve new baccalaureate degree

NEW ORLEANS — Trustees of New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary approved a proposal for a new baccalaureate degree program and elected a new chairman during their annual spring meeting on the New Orleans

Seminary campus, March 10-11.

The proposal for a baccalaureate degree program, with bachelor of arts and bachelor of general studies degrees, will be the first of its kind offered by any Southern Baptist seminary and will be available during the coming fall term, beginning Aug. 25, contingent on approval of the curriculum by the seminary's academic affairs committee and faculty this spring.

The seminary currently offers accredited associate's, master's, and doctoral degree programs. The seminary has been offering baccalaureate-level work since 1980 for students age 25 and older. This new baccalaureate degree program will fill the void between the associate's- and master's-level degrees.

Trustees elected W. Keith Huffman, pastor of First Church, Ironton, Mo., as chairman, to succeed Charles L. Wood of Wichita, Kan., who served the two-year limit. Re-elected were J. Roy McComb of Columbia, Miss., as vice chairman, and C. Glynn Rhinehart of River Ridge, La, as secretary-treasurer.

In other actions, trustees adopted a budget of \$7.45 million, reflecting a 3.2 percent increase for the 1992-93 fiscal year, granted George W. Harrison, who retired after 31 years of teaching at NOBTS, the title professor emeritus in the field of Old Testament and Hebrew, and approved two faculty promotions, effective Aug. 1: R. Dennis Cole to associate professor of archaeology and Bob E. Simmons to professor of missions.

RTVC documentary wins Silver Angel award

FORT WORTH, Texas — The Radio and Television Commission has received a Silver Angel award for its NBC-TV documentary "Set Free," according to Bob Thornton, vice president of television for the Southern Baptist agency.

"Set Free," which NBC aired nationally April 7, 1991, was hosted by Tom Landry, former head coach of the Dallas Cowboys. It featured the efforts of prison chaplains and volunteers to reach inmates with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Thornton said. The documentary, filmed at several Texas prisons and California's San Quentin prison, was produced and directed by RTVC staff producer Rosser McDonald.

The Silver Angel was the 23rd presented to the RTVC for outstanding work in television documentaries and nationally syndicated public service radio programs. The Angel awards are presented annually for outstanding productions of moral or social impact, said Mary Door, founder and producer of the awards.

Smith succeeds Cothen as NOBTS academic dean

NEW ORLEANS — Joe H. Cothen has announced his retirement as vice president for academic affairs and professor of pastoral work at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary effective July 31.

Named as Cothen's successor is Billy K. Smith, who has been chairman of the division of Biblical studies and professor of Old Testament and Hebrew. Smith has more than 20 years of pastoral experience.

Accident Baptist Church is no 'accident,' says pastor

By Craig Bird

BUKOBA, Tanzania (BP) — The car exploded out of the swirling dust and rammed his vehicle head-on — a horrifying shock to Rob Moor.

But a satisfying shock followed when he learned two weeks later the accident had led directly to the establishment of a new church.

Moor, a Southern Baptist missionary from Chesapeake, Va., was driving about 60 miles from his home in Bukoba Jan. 28 when he encountered "crash evangelism." He and Tanzanian pastor Sostenes Karoli were following a large truck along a recently graded dirt highway and reviewing the day's Baptist association leadership meeting.

Unknown to them, a car traveling the opposite direction pulled off the road to let the truck pass, then pulled back onto the road. "It just appeared out of the dust," Moor said. "I barely had time to hit my breaks before we hit head-on."

The car struck Moor's four-wheel drive and bounced back about 40 feet. One man was thrown through the windshield of the car, while Moor's seat was ripped from the floor. He and Karoli were spared serious injury by the grasp of their seat belts.

"When we got out and saw that all five people in the other car were hurt and one man looked like he was going to die, I just sat beside the car and cried," Moor admitted. "Pastor Karoli was okay and I just felt some bruises but we were really afraid for (the seriously injured man)."

But as it became apparent the man would make it to a hospital for treat-

ment (he later had his spleen removed), the two Baptist preachers began rejoicing. "We prayed for everyone in the accident and started praising the Lord for delivering all of us and passing out tracts to the crowd that had gathered," Moor said.

Eventually Moor caught a ride into Bukoba, leaving Karoli with the vehicle. Two days passed before a truck returned to haul the vehicle and Karoli into Bukoba. But Karoli used

the time well.

Two Baptist laymen who recently had moved to the area heard a missionary had been in an accident and came to investigate. They found Karoli counseling three spectators who had stopped to view the damage and wound up listening to Karoli preach. When the tow truck arrived 48 hours later, 14 people had become Christians through the witness of Karoli, the laymen, and another pastor who happened by and

stopped to help preach.

Two weeks after the crash a new preaching point was organized at a village about a mile from the crash site. It is named Kanisa la Ajali — Swahili for "Accident Baptist Church."

"Not because it was an accident that a church was started here," Karoli explained. "But because God used a bad accident to do something good so a church is in that village now."

MWBTS student composes as she commutes

By Brenda Sanders

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Every Friday, Gail Scott drives 256 miles to St. Louis where she serves as organist at Kirkwood Church. Every Monday, she drives back to Kansas City for another week of classes at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

One might think such a long weekly drive would be tiresome and even boring. But Scott puts the time to good use. She composes music as she drives.

Scott has composed seven hymn arrangements for piano-organ duets which recently were accepted for publication by the Genevox Music Group, a publishing division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. The collection, titled "Adoration and Praise," will be released in May.

"I wrote several of the pieces in the collection during my weekly drives to St. Louis," Scott said. "I would kind of sketch it out in my mind as I drove. It really has been a productive time."

Scott said she actually began com-

posing about seven years ago, but noted, "I just wrote for church and never thought about getting anything published."

Then, a little over a year ago, her pastor, Paul Duke, encouraged her to submit one of her compositions to a publisher. She sent one piece to Genevox and it was accepted. Then the publisher asked her to send enough compositions to publish a collection of piano-organ duets.

Duke said he felt Scott's compositions were worthy of being published because "her music is stunning. It has assisted me again and again in my personal worship experience."

Scott said she enjoys composing hymn arrangements and said the music "just comes to me. I really believe it is a gift from God."

She said having her compositions published is "really very rewarding because I feel in this way I am contributing to the atmosphere of worship in other churches."

When translating her music from a

mental image to the printed page, Scott composes by using a computer program which is connected to an electronic keyboard. "What you play on the keyboard shows up on the computer screen as musical notes," she said. "It really speeds up the whole process of writing music."

A first-year student in the master of church music degree program at Midwestern, Scott occasionally serves as organist during chapel services at the seminary and sings with the seminary's choral group, Midwestern Singers.

Skelton serves Zion Hill

Ken Skelton is serving Zion Hill Church, Friendship, as pastor.

Formerly he was seminary intern at Kirby Woods Church, Memphis, while attending Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary there. The church ordained him after his graduation. Skelton also is a graduate of Memphis State University.

The native of Memphis is married to Lorri Skelton.