

Baptist and Reflector

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STATEWIDE EDITION

NEWSJOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION

Tennessee Baptists show growth in most areas

By Lonnie Wilkey

Tennessee Baptists are keeping up with their Southern Baptist counterparts in most areas of church growth, according to statistics in the new Tennessee Baptist Convention Journal.

And, in some areas, Tennessee churches are doing better.

TBC churches reported 27,296 baptisms in 1991, compared to 26,065 in 1990, an increase of 4.7 percent. At the SBC level, baptisms increased 3.0 percent.

The number of churches and missions in Tennessee increased by 11 in 1991, or 0.4 percent, slightly behind the SBC increase of 0.7 percent.

Resident membership in TBC churches rose to 799,940, a 1.8 percent increase, while total enrollment reached 1,096,335, a 1.2 percent increase. Nationally, Southern Baptists reported a 1.7 percent increase in resident membership and a 1.3 percent increase in total enrollment. Overall, there were 15,238,283 Southern Baptists in 38,221 churches in 1991.

Tennessee churches fared well in the area of Sunday School. Churches enrolled 571,169 members, a 1.9 percent increase. On an average Sunday morning, 296,112 people attended Sunday

School, a 1.6 percent gain over the previous year. Nationally, churches reported a 2.2 percent gain in Sunday School enrollment.

Tennessee is one of five state conventions which have reported a net increase in Sunday School enrollment over the last five years, said Greer Ruble, director of the TBC's Sunday School Department. Others include Florida, Georgia, New England, and Nevada.

Tennessee churches reported an increase in Discipleship Training enrollment compared to a decrease on the national level.

Tennessee churches enrolled 985 more people in Discipleship Training in 1991 than in 1990, a 0.6 percent increase. Nationally, enrollment dropped from 2,206,252 in 1990 to 2,202,527 in 1991, or 0.2 percent.

Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union enrollments showed slight gains in TBC churches. WMU enrolled 436 more women than the year before (0.5 percent) while 230 men joined Brotherhood rolls (0.7 percent). On the SBC level WMU enrollment increased 0.2 percent while Brotherhood showed a gain of 1.3 percent.

Despite a troubled economy churches fared well financially. In 1991, church-

es reported \$345,899,690 in receipts, a gain of \$691,083 over the previous year.

Churches, however, gave \$939,274 less (3.7 percent) through the Cooperative Program in 1991 than in 1990 but designated funds increased by \$739,738 (6.3 percent). On the SBC level, CP giving dropped 0.4 percent, from \$140,710,282 to \$140,200,394.

Tennessee churches gave more to their local association in 1991 — \$5,445,872, an increase of \$84,061, or 1.6 percent.

TBC Executive Director D. L. Lowrie said he "feels good about the growth," though it did not meet ImpactTennessee goals in most cases.

ImpactTennessee is a five year plan (1991-95) to increase numerically in the areas of evangelism, church growth, ministry, and church starting. Annual goals during the five-year period include increasing baptisms by six percent; Sunday School enrollment by three percent; Discipleship Training, missions education programs, and church music by two percent, and Cooperative Program giving by .25 percent.

Lowrie is optimistic about ImpactTennessee despite not meeting last year's goals.

"I believe we're doing the right

things that will bring growth during the five-year period," he said.

Lowrie said that in order to reach most of the goals of ImpactTennessee more churches and units (new Sunday School classes, WMU and Brotherhood organizations, etc.) are needed.

He said the decrease in Cooperative Program giving is a concern, but noted he is finding "a lot of positive things" when he talks to pastors about the Cooperative Program. He cited the economy as a factor in last year's decline.

The TBC executive director challenged churches to find ways to add new units in all organizations, train more leaders, and "to involve the total life of the church in reaching out to new people."

Lowrie also called for churches to become more involved in intercessory prayer ministry.

"Prayer makes available to us the resources of God in accomplishing our mission," he said.

See pages 6-7 for additional stories and statistics — TBC statistics are from the Tennessee Baptist Convention Journal and are based on the 1990-91 church year. SBC statistics were released by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Parks tells FMB staff reasons for October retirement

By Robert O'Brien

RICHMOND (BP) — R. Keith Parks told staff of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board his decision to retire as president in October was based on spiritual leadership, not political pressure.

But he added the decision, made at a

retreat with 78 board trustees, did not change basic differences between him and trustees that make his continued service as president impractical.

Parks, who returned from the March 19-20 retreat in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, was greeted at a chapel meeting March 23 by several hundred mission board staff members bearing candles symbolizing appreciation for his leadership.

He told the staff his decision to retire in October — despite a worshipful retreat atmosphere with trustees asking him to remain as president — has confused some people.

"For a long time there has been the impression that if you can get together and pray together and have a good spiritual experience, that means you will all come out with the same conclusion," said Parks, a 38-year veteran of foreign missions and FMB president since 1980. "Although many of us had a very honest spiritual experience, that didn't change some of our basic ideas ... convictions ... and differences."

'Only honorable thing'

Some trustees "insist there are no basic differences (between us)," Parks said. But he noted at least five trustees told him at the end of the retreat he

had done the "only honorable thing" by stepping down if he couldn't agree with them philosophically.

Interspersing his remarks with humor that eased tension and sorrow in the chapel session, Parks said his decision came out of "a strong sense of the Lord's leadership rather than in the midst of confrontation and anger." He commended trustee Chairman Bill Hancock of Louisville, Ky., for his efforts to create a spiritual atmosphere at the retreat.

But he cited basic differences with trustees and said questions asked by trustees during the retreat indicated those differences would remain. He outlined three reasons discussed at the retreat that "reinforced my sense of the Lord's leadership" that October is the time to retire:

- no clear trustee support for his request to remain until 1995.
- differences with the trustees over the president's role.
- basic philosophical differences regarding missions.

Parks gave similar reasons in a letter he and his wife, Helen Jean, have sent to all Southern Baptist foreign missionaries.

Conservative resurgence key

Elaborating on the second and third reasons, Parks said part of the disagreement over the president's role was his refusal to endorse the "conservative resurgence" or "new order" in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Parks reaffirmed his belief in the Bible and his "conservative" theology. But he told trustees he can't endorse

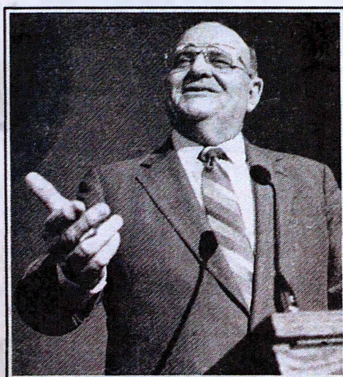
the "conservative" movement "in good conscience ... because my basic concept of the Bible is what I think Baptists have always stood for" — to cooperate in a non-creedal manner.

The denomination is moving toward a creedal approach of imposing theological control, he said, and FMB trustees expect him to exert more theological control over staff, missionaries, and overseas Baptists than he feels comfortable in exerting.

Parks said he disagrees with an approach in which theology takes first place in missions decisions over sound missiological principles. Sound missiology includes sound theology, he stressed, but theology is not the totality of missiology and other factors must be considered.

Missionaries must strip away

— Parks tells staff, page 5



PARKS TO RETIRE — Keith Parks lightened the atmosphere with a grin and a quip as he met with Foreign Mission Board staff members March 23 to explain his reasons for deciding to retire as president in October.

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We are happy to make this contribution to the ecology of our world. — Editor

Editorials

Direction of Foreign Mission Board cause of concern

The story on page one of this Baptist and Reflector reports on Keith Parks' report to Foreign Mission Board staff in Richmond after the called meeting of the FMB trustees March 19-20.

Now we have heard "the rest of the story," or, at least part of it.

At the trustees' meeting the FMB president told them he would retire when he reaches 65 this October — and not 1995 as he had earlier requested. As he spoke to several hundred staff members March 23, he apparently felt at ease in giving a more detailed explanation than had been given at a March 20 press conference in the Dallas area.

The trustees' meeting was in the setting of a prayer retreat. Parks said his decision to step down as president in October was based on spiritual leadership, not political pressure. And though he said the meeting was a spiritual experience, he admitted it was still possible for those involved to come out of the meeting with unchanged convictions about missions.

Parks told the FMB staffers he clearly feels God's leadership in his October retirement, noting basic differences between him and the trustees over the role of the president — and philosophical differences in missions.

We don't believe anyone would seriously question Parks' feelings toward missions. His 38 years in missions and 12 years as FMB president place him in a category few leaders attain. One strong factor in the timing of his retirement is disagreement over the president's role and his refusal to endorse the "new order" in the Southern Baptist Convention.

We will not rehash the Baptist Press story — but some reviewing is necessary.

• Parks wanted a definite answer about his

tenure — especially up to 1995. He said there was no clear-cut sense of trustee support for him to remain as president until then, no unreserved commitment.

• News sources say that European Baptists will wait to see who replaces Parks before deciding whether to work with the FMB on European mission projects.

• During the early part of the March 19-20 session, Parks began to feel led of God to retire. His conviction was strengthened as the group deliberated on points they wanted Parks to clarify. They eventually chose ten questions for him to answer. Parks evidently felt the process indicated lack of substantial support.

• During the retreat Parks was repeatedly affirmed and encouraged by some trustees to remain FMB president. He told them of his intent to retire and allow them to set the date. One report says a suggestion for a 1995 date brought disagreement, some trustees saying that he should answer the ten questions prior to being affirmed. He answered the questions, though the meeting continued until late hours.

• The following morning Parks reiterated his determination to retire and set the date for October 1992.

In reporting to the FMB staff the following week, Parks told them he felt "at peace" with the decision. One of the finest Christian statesmen and missiologists in Southern Baptist annals, Parks wants the work of the Foreign Mission Board to continue unhindered. He saw the question of his tenure as a potential hindrance in those missions efforts. He believes, he said, if there are such differing views between himself and the majority of the board — the board needs a person who will carry

out its intent.

There are times when a leader follows God's will and is "at peace," yet those around him are not at peace and suffer from confusion and even despair.

We need to face the concerns of the FMB staff and of every one of the 3500 missionaries hard at work in 122 foreign countries.

We need to recognize the consternation of Baptists around the world, who need assurance that Southern Baptists want to be fellow laborers.

We need assurance from FMB trustees that the long line of Southern Baptists in heroic service will continue to be unencumbered by any reckless actions.

The Southern Baptist Convention is at a turning point. Much has been said and written about open doors and worldwide opportunities. More needs to be said and written about historic Baptist principles.

Monumental decisions face Foreign Mission Board trustees. Each one must consider the directions to be taken, and decide for the good of missions. Will those who support President Parks, including Chairman Bill Hancock, be able to elect a successor like Baker J. Cauthen and Keith Parks? Will the next FMB leader be able to direct the bold program already planned by Parks?

Missionaries will be deciding, with God's leadership, whether there is a place for them. Whether or not there is adequate cause, many Southern Baptists are uneasy about what has happened, and about what will happen to the Foreign Mission Board. We face a new era, and the cause of worldwide missions is at stake. Pray for direction. — WFA

Smith sermon renews pre-convention evangelism plans

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — As 81-year-old J. Harold Smith rose to speak, several hundred Southern Baptists at a Crossover Indianapolis rally waited with anticipation. Smith was introduced with a reference to "God's Three Deadlines" he was about to preach. The oft-delivered sermon was compared to R. G. Lee's "Payday Someday" and Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

But rally-goers did not anticipate the way the Holy Spirit would move through Smith's sermon.

The evangelist underscored the seriousness of lost people committing the unpardonable sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in refusing conviction of sin and the need for salvation — and, he charged, Southern Baptists have lost the vision of reaching one lost soul, the value of that soul, and the

Administration partially lifts abortion 'gag'

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration has revoked partially a controversial regulation forbidding abortion counseling at federally funded family planning clinics.

The new interpretation of the 1988 ban would allow doctors to discuss abortion with women who come to Title X clinics. Other clinic workers, who see the bulk of the clients, still are forbidden to counsel women on abortions.

The Department of Health and Human Services distributed the new guidelines to its regional offices in a March 20 memorandum. The narrow exemption attempts to address the pervasive criticism that the counseling ban interferes with the doctor-patient relationship, leading opponents to label the ban a "gag rule."

victory of winning that soul to Christ.

"It's time repentance and humbling of the heart started in the house of God," Smith said.

About half the crowd of 400 recommitted their lives to Christ. A dozen churchgoers acknowledged they themselves needed to be saved.

Pastors and lay people alike expressed regret for not bringing more unsaved people to hear Smith preach. Alvin Reid, evangelism director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, stated, "We don't know what God can do. We don't have any vision." Individuals began pondering the seriousness of the June 6 Crossover Indianapolis evangelistic campaign before the June 9-11 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in the city.

Pastor O. J. Peterson of Indianapolis rose to ask for a second chance at rounding up folks to hear Smith's sermon. "Why can't we have (Smith) back" in conjunction with the Crossover effort, "now that we know what a great effect this can have?" Peterson asked.

Reid agreed to work with Crossover organizers and Indianapolis-area Metropolitan Baptist Association officials for an evangelistic rally the night of June 6 to culminate a week of simultaneous revivals in Indiana churches. Earlier efforts to plan a pre-convention rally had been laid aside out of concern that attendance would be low.

Charles Sullivan, the Indiana Baptist convention's executive director, said his dream now is to have "a thousand lost people saved" at the rally where Smith will again preach his "God's Three Deadlines" sermon.

James Abernathy, interim director of the Indianapolis-area Baptist assoc-

iation, closed the rally with a prayerful appeal for God to protect against pride or selfish attitudes interfering with what God had called the rally-goers to undertake.

Morris Chapman, SBC president, was at the rally and described it as "the spark which could ignite the highest and holiest hour which Southern Baptists have experienced for many years," resulting in revival for which so many have been praying.

Chapman urged Southern Baptist pastors across the country to bring a contingent of people to participate in the Crossover day of witness June 6 and the rally that night. "Indiana Baptists are saying here tonight they will have hundreds of lost people in that service. We are on the brink of a revival that can change this generation of Southern Baptists — and it is incumbent upon us to seize the hour."

Though many pastors hesitate to

leave their Sunday pulpits for pre-SBC meetings, Chapman stated, "I believe if the pastors of our Southern Baptist churches will give up their pulpit that Sunday so they may come to Indianapolis the Saturday before, their people will praise God the Sunday they return" over the impact of the Crossover campaign.

"We'll have a convention — but more desperately we need a revival," Chapman said.

Freddie Gage, Texas evangelist and Crossover co-chairman, acknowledged he was part of an April 1979 meeting to launch the "conservative" movement in the SBC in the office of W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Church, Dallas. He said he remains committed to the "conservative" effort. But Gage asked all Southern Baptists "to stop all the fighting — at least for the next 120 days — and go fishing for souls" with an eye toward Crossover Indianapolis.

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Wm. Fletcher Allen, Editor	Betty Williams, Bookkeeper
Lonnie Wilkey, Associate Editor	Susie Edwards, Administrative Secretary
Connie Davis, Assistant Editor	Mary Nimmo, Production Assistant
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SBC volunteers asked to register by April 15

ATLANTA (BP) — As the April 15 tax deadline approaches, Alvin Reid would like for Southern Baptists to keep another deadline in mind.

Mid-April is when registration is needed for people who plan to participate in Crossover Indianapolis, said Reid, director of evangelism for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

Crossover Indianapolis is the evangelistic thrust to precede the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis June 9-11. Last year's Crossover activities in Atlanta resulted in 203 professions of faith.

This year events will include door-to-door Gospel presentations and an evangelistic rally Saturday, June 6. Church starting efforts such as telephone surveys and Backyard Bible Clubs will precede and follow the convention.

On Tuesday, June 2, volunteers will be trained to share their faith in settings such as parks and busy pedestrian areas. The volunteers will use skills such as mime, singing, and street preaching to witness in high traffic areas June 3-5.

An added dimension to this year's Crossover activities will be four block parties at Indianapolis area churches June 6. The parties will include food, entertainment, and Gospel presentations.

"Our state has really picked up the

ball on this," Reid said. He noted that more than 50 of 70 churches in the Metropolitan Association of Central Indiana plan to participate in the activities.

Bill Cox, volunteer and local coordinator of Crossover Indianapolis, said several hundred people from Indiana already have committed to being part of Crossover Indianapolis. He said the greatest need now is for people who will attend the convention to come early to participate.

Freddie Gage, evangelist from Euless, Texas, said, "A lot of messengers come to the convention to shop and meet old friends. If we would

come to go soul-winning, it would spill over into our churches."

Gage and James Merritt, pastor of First Church, Snellville, Ga., are co-chairmen of Crossover Indianapolis.

During a rally in Indianapolis in March, Merritt said this pre-convention effort could easily surpass other efforts.

Merritt said three things contribute to his prediction: People in Indiana are open to the Gospel, Indiana Southern Baptists have a great desire to see God work, and "the devil has fought this Crossover more than any other."

Crossover participants are asked to

register by mid-April because assignments will be made later in the month. Participants will be notified of their assignments in May. People may register for Crossover Indianapolis after April 15 but coordinators would prefer making the assignments early.

Crossover volunteers may register by sending their name, address, telephone number, and church name to the Metropolitan Baptist Association of Central Indiana, 952 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. 46204. They also should indicate which part of Crossover Indianapolis interests them. For more information, call the associational office at (317) 636-7121.

Young declares as candidate for SBC presidency

HOUSTON (BP) — Ed Young, pastor of Second Church, Houston, has agreed to be nominated as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis June 9-11.

Joel Gregory, pastor of First Church, Dallas, earlier told news media he wanted to nominate Young in Indianapolis if Young would agree.

Young's nomination brings to three the number of announced candidates for the SBC presidency. Jess Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church, Van Nuys, Calif., announced last September that a group of non-aligned pastors and others had asked permis-

sion to nominate him. Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Church, Marietta, Ga., and, like Young, identified with the "conservative" movement, announced Feb. 21 he would be a candidate.

Current SBC president is Morris Chapman, pastor of First Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, who concludes two one-year terms at the Indianapolis annual meeting in June.

"Conservative" candidates have won all SBC presidential elections since 1979 against "moderate" Southern Baptists. Last year in Atlanta, "moderates" declined to nominate a candidate to oppose Chapman.

Interestingly, "conservatives" have nominated only one candidate each year since the start of the "conservative resurgence" in 1979.

Asked about being on the ballot with another "conservative," Young said he has the "deepest affection and respect for Nelson Price," who is the current SBC first vice president.

Young said he searched his priorities, which are first the Lord, then his

family, and then his calling to his church.

As to the first, Young said there has never been a greater opportunity for both evangelism and missions. "We need to set a goal to win a half-million people in 1995 and one million in the year 2000 for Jesus Christ," he said.

"I also would seek to institute a plan whereby specific churches adopt specific programs and by so doing double our foreign and home missionary efforts. People will more willingly sacrifice when they have specific goals and see them accomplished. It is imperative that we do a better job of marketing the Cooperative Program."

Second Church last year gave \$400,000 to the Cooperative Program, or 3.8 percent of its undesignated receipts, and devoted a total of \$1,424,122 to missions giving.

(Compiled from an interview with Young written by J. Walter Carpenter, editor of the Southern Baptist Watchman in Houston.)

Herrington, Mouser, Glisson are commentators for spring quarter Sunday School lessons

Sunday School lesson commentators have been named for April, May, and June.

Sharon Herrington, editorial assistant with the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, will continue commenting on Life and Work lessons, as she has done since January.

Jerry L. Glisson, retired pastor, will write about lessons in the Bible Book Series.

Glisson retired from a 35-year pastorate at Leawood Church, Memphis, last November. Before joining the staff of Leawood Church in 1956, he was pastor of First Church, Huntingdon for five years. He was ordained in 1942 at New Bethlehem Church, Dyer.

His education comprises a bachelor's degree and honorary doctorate from Union University, Jackson; and bachelor's and doctoral degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

As a denominational worker, Glisson served as Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board president, TBC president, Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Committees chairman, and Union University trustee. He was also a member of the board of directors of the Brotherhood Commission, the Christian Life Commission, and the Home Mission Board.

The ministerial veteran has had two books published by Broadman Press, *The Church in a Storm, Surviving or Thriving*, and *Knowing and Doing God's Will*.

Glisson and his wife of 47 years, Helen, have three adult children and



GLISSON



HERRINGTON



MOUSER

six grandchildren.

Ronald Mouser, minister of education at Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville, will comment on Convention Uniform lessons.

Mouser has served Central Church since 1985, when he left the minister of education position at First Church, Clinton. Before beginning a full-time education ministry in 1980, Mouser was involved in public education in the classroom and on county and federal government levels in Virginia and Tennessee. He also served as pastor of an Indiana church from 1969-1971.

The native Tennessean graduated in 1968 with a bachelor of arts degree from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City. He continued his education at East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, earning a master of arts degree in elementary education. He also studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

His denominational service includes memberships on several associational and TBC committees. In addition, he has worked as conference leader in a long-range planning seminar, and consultant to churches seeking to enlarge their Sunday Schools.

Mouser and his wife, the former Barbara Rogers of Jonesborough, have two children.

Tennessee BSU team recovers following accident in Mississippi

Ten members of a Baptist Student Union team from Maryville College are recovering from injuries sustained in an automobile accident March 22 in Laurel, Miss.

The BSU team was returning from a spring missions project in New Orleans, La., when the van they were in left the road during a rainstorm and struck a tree.

A "jaws of life" apparatus was used to free the nine students and BSU director Marsha Butler, who was driving the van, from the wreckage. The van was totaled.

Butler told the Baptist and Reflector March 27 the students suffered broken bones and some internal injuries, but "everything is mendable." Butler suffered broken bones in her arm and wrist.

Butler said it was unbelievable that no one was killed or encountered any permanent injuries.

As of March 27, all of the students had been released from the hospital. One student, Marjorie Dietz, was scheduled to be released March 30 or 31.

Butler said the accident occurred near the hospital in Laurel. A Baptist chaplain arrived at the scene and prayed with the students.

A passerby saw the name of the

college on the van and identified it as a Presbyterian school. She was evidently on her way to church and reported it to leaders at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Laurel.

Within 15 minutes, Johnny Patterson, the church's associate pastor and one of the elders who was a doctor arrived at the Emergency Room.

Patterson told the Baptist and Reflector they assessed the needs and began a plan of ministry. Church members stayed in the rooms with the injured students and brought various toiletry items and other necessities to the students.

Church members were unconditional in their Christian love to us, Butler said, adding, "they ministered to us more than we could ever have imagined possible."

In addition to Butler and Dietz, other students in the accident were Richard Bauer, Cassie Burns, Kaori Hara, Angela Masingo, Masako Ueno, Mike Sensuri, Tshiko Mukabakaba, and Suzanne Long.

Butler said it would be a missions project that would not be forgotten. "We were able to minister in New Orleans and we were ministered to in Laurel," she said.

Our Readers Write

To Tennessee Baptists

I call upon all Tennessee Baptists to answer the call of missions on at least two levels. One, renew your church's commitment to the Cooperative Program. Each church should strive to give a minimum of ten percent of its budgeted gifts to this God-given plan.

Second, we are moving toward the conclusion of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions. I call upon Tennessee Baptists to heed the appeal of Dr. Morris Chapman and Dr. Larry Lewis to double the Home Mission Offering.

Believe it or not we are on track toward the Bold Mission Thrust goals for the year 2000. Doors are opening and opportunities beckon. May Tennessee Baptists lead the way!

For Jesus' sake and their sake who wait,

Ron Phillips, president
Tennessee Baptist Convention

Commends editorial

I wish to commend the editor of our Baptist and Reflector for his appropriate article entitled, "Quick Move May Negate Opposition To Gambling."

The United Tennessee League is actively engaged in opposing gambling of all forms at all political levels. We are very grateful for the Baptist and Reflector and its editor for a consistent stand against the evil force of gambling.

Waymon Jones, president
United Tennessee League Inc.
P.O. Box 40327
Nashville 37204

Read a book

Concerning the article about the Home Mission Board and Masons on March 18, I encourage pastors and church members to read the book, *Deadly Deception*, found at your local Baptist Book Store. This book exposes Freemasonry. Maybe the Home Mission Board needs to read it, too.

One of our pastors here in Tennessee who read this book denounced his membership in the Masonic Lodge. I admire him for his stand for the Lord. If more of our pastors would study and search they would find out the real truth as to where Masonic lodges have come from; not from the Bible.

I agree with others who have written that if Freemasonry is a false religion, it should be exposed as such.

John Rushing, pastor
Northside Church
Theta Pike
Columbia 38401

About baptism

In the March 18 Baptist and Reflector, I noticed an article which disturbed and confused me. The article was in reference to the South Carolina Baptist Convention's refusal to recognize a newly-formed association because the churches' baptism policies were "inconsistent with most Southern Baptist churches." From what I understood from the article, this inconsistency was that they did not consider baptism a prerequisite for church membership. Why is baptism a prerequisite for membership?

Although I've been a Christian for 15 years, I've been a Southern Baptist for

only a year. When I converted from another Baptist group and asked to join a small congregation, it was made clear to me that I would be neither fully accepted nor completely trusted until I was baptized into the church. This hurt me because it seemed that my earlier baptism was being discredited as worthless when in fact it was a very special moment in my life.

It was my understanding that baptism was an acknowledgement that I was now a member of the wonderful family of God, not a member of a denomination or church. I searched the Word of God for assurance that what was being asked of me was Scriptural and not simply traditional. I found nothing. To avoid problems and because I so strongly believe in the Cooperative Program, I agreed to be baptized anyway. I was then accepted.

My purpose in writing is not to discredit the convention or any church or individual but to seek an explanation for Southern Baptists' position on baptism in relation to this specific matter. It is my wish that we as Christians put the human soul above human tradition as we work together to win people to the cause of Christ.

• The writer's name and address are withheld at the editor's discretion. — Editor

Point made

This is in response to the recent editorial comment following the letter, "Mixed Message," stating "the Sunday School Board does not receive Cooperative Program dollars, though it is a SBC agency."

The letter did not allude to CP funds being sent to the SS Board. The SS Board operates mainly from funds received from the sale of literature, supplies, and

services purchased by churches. These monies are from tithes and offerings of the memberships.

As we see it, the Sunday School Board is funded and operates mainly from the gifts of Southern Baptists. Most churches expend as much of their budgets on literature, etc., from the SS Board as they contribute to the Cooperative Program.

W. T. and Frances Victory
101 Bailey Collins Drive
Smyrna 37167

Pastor needed

Our pastor resigned and since that time we, the Pastor Search Committee, have been diligently praying and searching for the man God would have lead our church. Presently, Pastor Luther Morphis is interim pastor, but he will only be with us until about August.

Kanto Plains Church is a growing multi-national English-speaking church anchored in the belief that the Bible is the inerrant and holy Word of God. Our church is located 25 miles east of Tokyo. Seventy percent of our members are Americans from nearby Yokota Air Base with the remaining being Japanese from the local area. We average about 100 in Sunday School and about the same in worship service. As a Southern Baptist Church we participate in the Cooperative Program through tithes and special offerings. This would be a four-year associate missionary position through the Foreign Mission Board.

Contact me at the address below, or phone 011-81-425-51-1915.

John Williams
Pastor Search Committee
PSC#78, Box 3805
APO AP96326

One of TBC's oldest black churches has cause to celebrate

By Connie Davis

CLARKSVILLE — Tabernacle Missionary Church in Clarksville had a celebration recently, and not without good reason.

One of the first five black churches to join the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the congregation marked its tenth anniversary on March 7. Pastor Jimmy Terry, who baptized 86 people in the last two years, reports that membership includes at least 268 active members.

It is noteworthy that Tabernacle is one of 30 black churches with membership in the TBC, according to Larry Kirk of the convention's Missions Department. There are about 1200 black congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Tabernacle Missionary Church celebrated by inviting retired congressman Walter E. Fauntroy of Washington D.C. to address a banquet which drew about 250 to Austin Peay State University.

Fauntroy praised the congregation, whose celebration included a fundraiser for a school.

To help one child, he and his wife adopted an abandoned, drug-addicted baby in 1990 just prior to his retirement. Fauntroy, who served for ten years as a member of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, described "a joy unspeakable that comes when personalizing your mission."

"I can't tell you how to do it, but there's a job to be done," he said.

Others gathered for the banquet were Tennessee Rep. Bill Purcell, Clarksville's mayor, county executive, and school superintendent.

Members of the community honored

for assisting the church were Paul Schaff of First National Bank, Clarksville, who arranged a mortgage for the congregation; Isaac Roach, a professional painter, who painted church facilities without charge; and Mr. and Mrs. Rigobeto Rivera, owners of a security firm, who donated a building to the church.

Pastor Terry credited the church's success to its affiliation with Southern Baptists.

Most black Baptist churches are aligned with the National Baptist Convention, including churches Terry had served as pastor before attending American Baptist College in Nashville, which is partly subsidized by the SBC. There he learned about the world-wide missions program of the SBC funded by the Cooperative Program. So when he began the Clarksville congregation, he contacted the SBC.

To assure the decision was one of the congregation, Terry asked representatives of both conventions to present their programs. When the congregation voted to align with the SBC, Terry was pleased.

The SBC "came to our rescue and supported us," described Terry. The congregation receives a lot from the SBC, but it also gives — weekly to the Cooperative Program, he added.

Since then, the church has aligned with the National convention but it will never abandon the SBC, said Terry.

"I began to see my help was needed with my community and I was ostracizing myself and my people."

The church has participated in a local Southern Baptist mission cause — it helped start Greater Tabernacle Church in Lawrenceburg. Clarksville members visited potential members



CELEBRATING WITH MUSIC — The choir of Tabernacle Missionary Church led part of the March 7 anniversary festivities. — Photo by Connie Davis

and gave money to support the congregation which became a church in 1990.

Terry began Tabernacle Missionary Church by preaching and teaching on Sundays at a Clarksville recreational center. As more and more people joined the group each Sunday, they were forced to move to a Seventh Day Adventist church building. Soon the group bought 19 acres of land and began meeting in a house on the land. In 1986, Tabernacle Missionary added a worship center.

Even before completing the worship center, the congregation earned the top Sunday School growth award from Cumberland Association for adding 125 members in 1985.

Last year Terry took another step of faith to allocate more meeting space. He asked a family-owned security company in Clarksville for a building

which was for sale. It was given to the church and has been added to the complex.

His vision is to add a school to the church's complex which will emphasize vocational and spiritual training.

Terry notes schools or prisons can be built for children and youth today.

Evans serves in Greenbrier

Jack Evans is serving as pastor of Ebenezer Church, Greenbrier. Formerly he was pastor of Siloam Church, Meadville, Miss.

The native of Gallatin is a graduate of Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary. Evans was ordained in 1975 by Park Avenue Church, Nashville.

He and his wife, Dianne, have one son, Joshua.

Parks tells FMB trustees reasons for . . .

— Continued from page 1
Southern Baptist and American cultural customs "that many of us assume are Scriptural" and focus on telling the heart of the Gospel message — the birth, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he said. That does not water down belief or create an "anything goes" approach, he added. Instead, it gets overseas believers in tune with the New Testament to apply the Gospel to their own culture.

The Foreign Mission Board is in danger of modifying that approach to indigenous missions by imposing "a Southern Baptist standard of theology or other matters" on groups overseas, Parks warned. "They are not Southern Baptists . . . We have no right to require them to use the terminology or have the theological views that we have," he said.

"Many trustees strongly feel we ought to have agreement with the theological position of people we work with overseas. I hope that can be modified, but it's a very serious matter as I understand it."

Parks also noted concern about a trend toward considering individuals qualified for denominational and missionary service only if their theology and politics are "right."

Political activity

"There are many people whose theology would be very conservative, even more conservative than some who are in control, but they aren't acceptable because they haven't endorsed the political activity within the denomination," he said.

Parks said he felt trustees, who issued a statement after the retreat supporting Southern Baptists' historical principles of missions, had done so

honestly. But he added it will take time for them to work through their differences about what the principles are and what they mean.

Beyond philosophical and theological differences, Parks reiterated the retreat produced no clear-cut sense of trustee support for him to remain until 1995. Last August he asked to remain until then, the Foreign Mission Board's 150th year, to lay the groundwork for his ten-point vision for global evangelization.

Retirement, he said, was the only way to resolve the confusion and uncertainty surrounding his tenure and his authority as president.

The question of 1995 was discussed at the retreat, he said, "but it became apparent to me that, although the majority (of the trustees) would have said, 'Yes, we want you to stay,' there was no sense of an unreserved commitment to my leadership through 1995. I heard from some, as recently as last Saturday, stating in public meetings that I'd probably get affirmed in (the retreat) but I might be expected to retire in July or in June."



TRIBUTE — Numerous FMB staff members came forward to embrace board president Keith Parks after he explained his decision to retire in October.

"So I had a strong conviction that it would just be a continuing saga of 'Does he retire this month or next month or what about the first of the year?'"

Given the worldwide opportunities in missions and evangelism, he felt it was best to retire because "my staying would not provide the unfettered, enthusiastic moving ahead that's desperately needed right now."

Parks also said he told trustees his authority as president has been blurred by the tendency of many trustees to get involved in administrative matters with staff and missionaries, rather than sticking to the formation of policy. That prevents the board from operating properly and indicates a lack of confidence in leadership, he said.

If a missionary doesn't like an administrative decision he can just go to the trustees to get it reviewed, Parks said. That may let trustees feel they have more control and are not "rubber stamps" but what really happens is "nobody is in control," he said. Such confusion might end, he added, if the trustees "had somebody they trusted" in charge.

Parks added, however, that he feels many trustees heard concerns he expressed in the retreat and would try to improve relationships.

BJC seeks to retrieve funds on deposit

WASHINGTON — The Atlanta- and Washington-based law firm of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer, and Murphy has been retained by the Baptist Joint Committee to assist the agency in retrieving funds on deposit at the Southern Baptist Foundation.

Stuart E. Eizenstat, former chief domestic policy adviser in the Carter administration and a partner at Powell, Goldstein, Frazer, and Murphy, notified Southern Baptist Conven-

tion Executive Committee attorney James P. Guenther in a March 23 letter that the firm had been retained by the BJC.

Eizenstat's letter instructed Guenther that all correspondence concerning the funds be directed to Eizenstat's partner, Jeffrey D. Watkiss, at the firm's Washington office.

The foundation, acting on instructions of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, recently

sent the BJC a check for \$81,036, the amount the \$300,000 principal in the BJC account had appreciated.

The foundation has not honored the BJC request to release the \$300,000 fund corpus, placed at the foundation after being allocated for Baptist Joint Committee capital needs by the SBC in 1967 and 1968. The BJC requested all funds in its account to purchase a Capitol Hill office building it placed under contract Sept. 4.

The SBC Executive Committee, however, voted in February to ask the convention for permission to reallocate the funds.

BJC Executive Director James M. Dunn said the law firm was retained "to give the Baptist Joint Committee the level of expertise that we know is required in a matter so important and sensitive." — ABP

Donor writes Foreign Mission Board out of will

By Ed Briggs

RICHMOND, Va. — J. Harwood Cochrane, the Richmond trucking executive who has given millions of dollars to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has written the FMB out of his will because of the agency's direction under its "conservative" trustees.

As a result, the agency can no longer bank on one day receiving the tens of millions of dollars estimated that would have gone to the agency on his and his wife's death.

The 78-year-old Cochrane made his feelings known this week after Keith Parks, the missionary agency's president, said he is retiring because he and the trustees can't see eye to eye on how the largest Protestant missionary agency should be run.

Parks declined to comment March 28 on Cochrane's decision.

Trustee chairman William Hancock, when contacted at his Louisville, Ky., home, praised Cochrane for Cochrane's generosity to the FMB over the years. "He's been an example of stewardship

and giving," Hancock said. "I'm so grateful for that. But, just as we call God to call out missionaries, we must trust the Lord to provide the financial resources to provide the needs for this mission enterprise."

Cochrane, a member of Tabernacle Church, Richmond and chief executive officer of Highway Express, reportedly has given nearly \$8 million to the Richmond-based missionary agency and to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. The trucking executive, whose philanthropy reportedly included about \$2 million in world hunger relief, is a former trustee of the Foreign Mission Board.

But while he believes in supporting missionary work, Cochrane said, the change in direction of the agency under "conservative" rule and Parks' retirement mean that he isn't interested any more in its future.

"They're in my will only for food to be distributed on foreign soils . . . I might have even specified Africa," said Cochrane in an interview recently.

Previously, he said, "the bulk" of his estate was destined to go to the mission agency. He said he now plans to leave it in other hands but he declined to identify them.

Cochrane and his wife, Louise, have lavished money and land on the missionary agency and its hunger fund over the years.

Reprinted with permission from the Richmond Times-Dispatch — ABP

Legislators may vote to approve gambling

Two racing-gambling bills before the Tennessee legislature were not brought to vote last week, and the Senate calendar is filled for this week.

Last week's Baptist and Reflector told readers about Senate Bill 2498 and House Bill 2501 which would allow betting on on-site horse races and races on video. Shelby and Trousdale are the only counties in Tennessee where it is possible to build a race track now.

The move for gambling at horse races came from Shelby County. A group has proposed a track facility, and betting, including wagering on races held elsewhere and seen by video.

The bills also would allow trimming the state's tax income from six percent to one percent.

No action was taken, but the bills can be brought for voting at any time. In the senate, 17 votes are required for passage and the count at present apparently is short.

Opponents of the two racing-gambling bills should contact local legislators. — Editor

Daily prayer requests for Chile/Tennessee Partnership — April

Prayer requests have come for specific needs and for several undated requests in the Tennessee/Chile Partnership Mission.

April 1 — Twenty-six TBC volunteers preparing to leave for Talca.

April 2 — Missionary Virginia Irby who has served for more than 20 years in Santiago. Today is her birthday.

April 3 — TBC volunteers Sarah Cagle, Donald and Jo Ann Davis, Bob Landham, George Fletcher, Allen Lawrence, and David Hassell as they serve in Chile.

April 4 — Missionary Jackie Bursmeyer and missionaries and volunteers involved in an International Trade Fair in Talca.

April 5 — TBC volunteers Angyla Fitzgerald, Naomi Edwards, Don Mauldin, Roy Renfro, and Ray Bartee and Pamela Zierer from California as they lead worship and share testimonies.

April 6 — Missionaries Bill Dyches in Talca and Richard Bray in Curico who are translating for volunteers.

April 7 — TBC volunteers Jack and Bettye Jones, Lucy Locke, Jan Spruill, Susan Meredith-Janssen, Mary Walsh, Diane Mitchell, and Sidney Wallace as they visit homes and conduct services.

April 8 — TBC volunteers Carol Bethshears, John Seals, and Marion Arbuckle Jr. as they share the plan of God's salvation.



Shelby County, Judson associations top baptism statistics

Churches in Shelby County Association led the Tennessee Baptist Convention in baptisms in 1991 with 3064, according to statistics from the TBC Evangelism Department. John McBride is director of missions.

Two other associations exceeded 2000 baptisms — Nashville with 2630 and Knox County with 2039. Jim Friedman is director of missions in Nashville, succeeding Carl Duck who retired at the end of 1991. Walter Taylor leads Knox County Baptists.

Hamilton County Association, led by David Myers, was fourth with 1365 baptisms.

Rounding out the top 15 in number of baptisms are: Holston, Tal Thompson, 956; Chilhowee, John Churchman, 855; Madison-Chester, Herbert Higdon, 724; Bradley County, Raleigh Brady, 637; Cumberland, Wesley Pitts, 599;

Concord, James Powers, 570; Clinton, Michael Pearson, 559; McMinn-Meigs, Roy Fowler, 518; Big Emory, J. W. Bargiol, 468; Nolachucky, James Williams, 465; and Sweetwater, Bennie Creel, 463.

Judson Association led the state convention in baptismal ratio to resident church membership with 188 baptisms to 1669 resident membership, or a ratio of 8.87. Jerry Reynolds is director of missions. He succeeded Charles Livengood who was killed in an accident last fall.

Alpha Association was second with a ratio of 13.11 (141, 1849), followed by Indian Creek, 16.52 (153, 2529), and Bledsoe, 16.55 (353, 5844). Glenn Hester leads Alpha Association while David Miller and J. C. Lewis are directors of missions in Indian Creek and Bledsoe, respectively.

Rounding out the top 15 associations in ratio are: Big Hatchie, Ira Perkins, 18.33 (406, 7444); Cumberland, Wesley Pitts, 20.15 (599, 12,071); Giles County, Carl Bond 21.42 (208, 4457); Maury, Elmer Crosby, 21.61 (237, 5123);

Shiloh, John Pippin, 22.58 (360, 8131); Cumberland Plateau, Roy Davis, 23.20 (182, 4224); Cumberland Gap, William Hazlewood, 24.15 (364, 8792); Crockett, Herbert Higdon, 24.54 (101, 2479); Salem, Thurman Seber, 24.90 (190, 4732); Haywood, Charles Pratt, 25.06 (120, 3008); and Truett, J. D. Rains, 25.15 (80, 2012).

Tennessee native resigns MWBS post

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Citing "personal reasons," G. Temp Sparkman has submitted his resignation effective immediately as professor of religious education and church administration at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a native of Quebec, Tenn.

Sparkman, 60, was granted medical leave through July 31, with early retirement effective Aug. 1, according to a news release from the seminary.

A seminary spokesman said the seminary was honoring Sparkman's request not to disclose the nature of his illness and Sparkman did not return calls to Baptist Press.

Sparkman has been on Midwestern's faculty since 1972.

Sparkman is a graduate of Belmont University, Nashville, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Top 50 churches in baptisms during 1991

As reported in the story on 1991 statistics on page 1, Tennessee Baptist churches reported 27,296 baptisms last year, an increase of 4.7 percent. The number of baptisms is impor-

tant in Southern Baptist churches because it reflects the number of persons professing faith in God.

Rank	Number of Baptisms	Church	Rank	Number of Baptisms	Church
1	800	Bellevue, Cordova	23	82	Tennessee Avenue, Bristol
2	229	Two Rivers, Knoxville	24	81	Calvary, Knoxville
3	204	Germantown, Germantown	25	78	Hilldale, Clarksville
4	198	Central, Hixson	26	77	Chamberlain Memorial, Chattanooga
5	174	Leawood, Memphis	27	76	Kirby Woods, Memphis
6	170	First, Hendersonville	28	74	Washington Avenue, Cookeville
7	166	Central, Oak Ridge	29	73	Beaver Dam, Knoxville
8	142	Rayon City, Old Hickory	29	73	First, Concord
9	135	First, Clarksville	30	72	Woodland, Jackson
10	126	First, Millington	31	71	College Heights, Gallatin
11	110	Bartlett, Bartlett	32	70	First, Cleveland
12	109	Dotson Memorial, Maryville	32	70	Calvary, Oak Ridge
13	102	First, Mount Juliet	33	68	First, Milan
14	101	Westwood, Cleveland	34	64	White Bluff, White Bluff
15	100	Beaver, Brighton	35	62	Central, Bearden, Knoxville
16	95	Park Avenue, Nashville	35	62	First, Goodlettsville
17	94	City View, Knoxville	35	62	First, Donelson
17	94	First, Franklin	36	61	First, Powell
18	91	Chilhowee Hills, Knoxville	36	61	Grace, Knoxville
18	91	Sevier Heights, Knoxville	36	61	First, Columbia
18	91	First, Shelbyville	36	61	Tulip Grove, Old Hickory
19	90	Tusculum Hills, Nashville	37	60	Grace, Tullahoma
20	86	Bayside, Harrison	37	60	Broadmoor, Memphis
21	85	Central, Chattanooga	37	60	First, Collierville
21	85	Ridgeway, Memphis	37	60	Immanuel, Lebanon
22	84	Manley, Morristown	38	59	Third, Murfreesboro

SSB statistics

In baptisms

Smaller Old Hickory church among state leaders

Rayon City Church, Old Hickory, is playing in the "big league."

The church ranks among the top ten Tennessee churches according to the 1991 baptisms report, baptizing 142.

Most of the top ten churches include the largest churches in the state, enabling them to baptize larger numbers of new Christians.

All have more than 1000 members and they average 4100 resident members. On the average it took 18 members of the nine other churches to reach an un-baptized person.

Rayon City Church may only have 719 members, but only five of its members were required to reach a person for Christ. The congregation earned its spot through a stint in the "minor leagues," according to Pastor Terry Wilkerson.

Just five years ago the congregation was suffering the effects of the downsizing of a nearby company. The church sits in the shadow of the Dupont plant in metropolitan Nashville. Although the area is just four miles from a mall, it is not experiencing any new growth, Wilkerson added.

An admitted statistics fanatic, Wilkerson pointed to a turnaround. The average Sunday School attendance five years ago was 54. The congregation was considering hiring a bivocational pastor.

During 1991 the church had a high attendance of 386, and an average of 292 in Sunday morning worship over the first six months of the 1991-92 church year. Fifty-four people have been baptized during the six-month period, reported Wilkerson.

"The Lord's really blessed us. That's the best way to put it," he said of his four-year service at the church.

"I told them when I came, 'The day will come when we will baptize 100 a year.' They just looked at me kind of funny and smiled," Wilkerson quipped.

The top priority of the church is soul-winning, he explained, to parallel the

purpose of the first church. The church also emphasizes discipleship and fellowship, but only because these "strengthen the saints so we can be about the business of soul-winning," Wilkerson added.

To support its emphasis, the church sets numerical goals and directs programs like a tent revival and bus ministry which reaches about 100 children.

Wilkerson told of one contact through the bus ministry with children whose parents were not Christians. That contact resulted in about 20 family members and friends declaring a faith in God, he said.

"My idea is that we can have revival every week if we'll be about the business of soul-winning every week," he noted.

"If we're doing things that don't lead to soul-winning, then we need to stop doing them, because they just sap our energy."

He noted the Bible doesn't command non-Christians to attend church. "If we don't go, they're not going to come in," he noted.

Growth can be traumatic, he added. Because of the church's growth, it faces the need to buy property to expand. "So just pray for us," he concluded. — *Connie Davis*

Madden steps down as columnist

NASHVILLE (BP) — Imagine the emotions habitual readers of "Dear Abby" might experience if they picked up a newspaper and found the advice giver's syndicated column had been forever discontinued.

Home Life subscribers devoted to the monthly counseling column of Myron C. Madden will soon know the feeling.

Through no desire of its own, the family enrichment magazine produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board sheds one of its long-standing staples.

Madden has decided to quit after 27 years of offering Southern Baptists advice with a Christian perspective.

The 74-year-old pastoral counselor retired in 1983 as chaplain and director of the department of pastoral care at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

Beginning in May, Mike and Mary Stedham, Christian counselors from Abilene, Texas, will bestow their advice on Home Life's 680,000 monthly readers by responding to questions on family-related issues.

"For the last 27 years, I've been doing monthly issues for Home Life,"

Madden said from his home in New Orleans. "That's nearly a million people a month I've written to for 27 years. That's too much. It's time to give somebody else a chance."

Madden's final column appears in the April 1992 issue.

"Most of you have heard about all I know," he writes to readers in that issue. "My advice has not always been the best, but to the best of my knowledge and experience, I have given my best."

Madden, a member and former pastor of St. Charles Avenue Church in New Orleans, has worked for all four editors of Home Life. When he first began writing his column in 1965 under the magazine's first editor, Joe Burton, the format was questions and answers. For 25 years, until 1990, he responded to personal questions from readers. In April 1990, Madden began writing on a specific topic each month.

"Madden has tackled thousands of difficult and sometimes controversial subjects, sharing insights with readers from his wisdom as a Christian counselor," Home Life Editor Charlie Warren said.

Clarksville church meets challenges of rapid growth

By Lonnie Wilkey

Clarksville pastor Kim Allen doesn't believe in problems, only challenges.

Since he became pastor of Little West Fork Church about 15 months ago, he has encountered numerous challenges.

The reason, however, is positive — rapid growth.

When he came to Little West Fork, an older church which had membership in the 500-range in the early to mid-1970s, 45 people were considered a large worship service, Allen said.

In addition, only 31 people were attending Sunday School at the church which is strategically located near Fort Campbell Army Base.

Fifteen months later, the church now has an average Sunday School attendance of about 200 and has had a high of 262, Allen said. Worship services average about 325 weekly. The church has set goals of 300 and 400 for Sunday School and worship on Easter Sunday.

Wesley Pitts, director of missions for Cumberland Association, credits Allen's leadership for the turnaround. "The church was a sleeping giant that needed a booster shot. Kim came in and practiced Southern Baptist growth methods," Pitts said. Efforts paid off. (See Sunday School statistics on this page.)

Allen, however, does not take credit. "The Lord is doing a great work and I'm doing my best to stay out of his way."

Praying first

Allen, a native of Estill Springs,

came to Clarksville from First Church, Oakdale, with two commitments. One was "to pray before we do anything." The other was to adapt the theme of a popular restaurant chain, "Sometimes you've got to break the rules."

"Conventional and status quo ministries work sometimes and sometimes they don't," Allen observed.

One of the "broken rules" was to begin a churchwide canvassing program on Saturday mornings. From January through March of 1991, the church canvassed 587 houses within a ten-minute walk from the church.

Allen noted that 287 of those households had no church affiliation and 47 percent of that number had no saved members in the household.

Revival after canvassing

The church followed the canvassing efforts with a revival in April. The church also began a couple's Sunday School class. In 35 days the class grew to 45 people; now the church offers three couple's classes.

"In a 90-day period we became a young adult couple's church," Allen said, noting the number of children and youth in the church has reached 150, compared to about 20 when he came.

Two factors which have helped the church's growth, Allen said, are Desert Storm and a congregation who was willing to be trained.

Desert Storm created an awareness among people they needed more support than what they were getting, Allen said. The church's congregation is



CONVERSATION PIECE — Pastor Kim Allen stands in the sanctuary of Little West Fork Church, Clarksville. A mural of the Last Supper, painted by a former member, covers the rear wall of the building.

made up of about 78 percent active military. Retired and former military increases the number to 97 percent, said Allen, who himself was stationed at Fort Campbell about 19 years ago. He noted that 80 percent of those who came during Desert Storm have remained.

The second factor, he said, is the congregation which "is the most trainable church I've ever pastored." The people are eager and willing to learn, he said, adding they have attended numerous training conferences at the association and state convention levels.

Finding leaders

The congregation's eagerness to learn helped the church overcome one of its greatest challenges—to find

leaders and teachers to accommodate such rapid growth.

Another challenge for the church was a flooding problem in the basement and restoring the rooms for Sunday School use.

Other challenges are present for the Clarksville church such as funds and additional staff. The church has gone from a \$31,000 budget to an \$111,000 budget this year. The church has begun giving to the Cooperative Program on a percentage basis and is participating in all mission offerings.

Additional staff is needed. Besides serving as pastor, Allen also directs the adult choir.

"When you grow as fast as we have you have to play constant catch-up and have a reactive ministry," Allen said.

With growth comes increased costs, he said, citing the church's utilities as an example. He estimates, however, that 72 percent of the church's budget is used for actual ministry.

Despite the challenges, the church is moving forward with its goals. "God is continuing to bless us," Allen said, observing that there have been only 13 Sundays in the last 16 months without a public decision.

Setting goals

After adding 100 new people the first year, the church has a goal of 200 additions and 100 baptisms this year, Allen said. Possibilities for continued growth abound. Presently under construction across from the church is a subdivision which will add a projected 476 houses and 1460 apartments in the next two years.

Another goal is to begin a black mission in the church's old building across the road. Work has been done to restore the building and Allen is hopeful a mission will begin by the fall. The church has received some financial assistance from the TBC Missions Department and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta for this project.

Allen is grateful for the people who were at Little West Fork when he came because they were ready for change. "They wanted new people and fresh blood to come in and help," Allen said.

Giles accepts pastorate

Retired Grainger County Association Director of Missions Otto Giles recently became pastor of Oak Dale Church, Greeneville.

Giles, who served churches in east Tennessee for 28 years, retired as director of missions in 1984.

Top churches in 1991

net SS enrollment increase

Tennessee churches enrolled 571,169 members, a 1.9 percent increase. Among other state conventions, Tennessee is one of five reporting total net increases. Sunday School, which most often meets on Sunday morning, is the largest training program of Southern Baptist churches.

Rank	Net Increase	Church
1	812	Bellevue Church, Cordova
2	372	First, Hendersonville
3	336	First, Clarksville
4	271	Skyline Heights, Johnson City
5	266	Highland Heights, Memphis
6	265	Blairland, Loudon
7	244	Bartlett, Bartlett
8	241	Inskip, Knoxville
9	238	First, Chattanooga
9	238	Tusculum Hills, Nashville
10	237	Oakwood, Chattanooga
11	222	Grace, Knoxville
12	221	Eastwood, Ooltewah
13	220	Mt. Carmel, Signal Mountain
14	219	First, Franklin
14	219	Two Rivers, Nashville
15	215	Central, Fountain City
16	214	Central, Hixson
17	207	Parkway, Knoxville
18	205	Third, Murfreesboro
19	203	Woodland Park, Chattanooga
20	201	Ridgedale, Chattanooga
21	192	North Cleveland, Cleveland
22	190	First, Dickson
23	185	Trenton Street, Harriman
23	185	Cornerstone, McMinnville
24	182	Hilldale, Clarksville
25	179	First, Hunter, Elizabethton
26	178	Grace, Jackson
27	177	First, Milan
27	177	Bayside, Harrison
28	173	Sevier Heights, Knoxville
29	170	Little West Fork, Clarksville
30	166	Poplar Heights, Jackson

SSB statistics

Top churches in 1991

SS percentage increase

Sunday School enrollment increase by percentage over 1990 reports those churches who dramatically turn around their enrollment statistics.

Rank	Percentage Increase	Church
1	544	Antioch, Hornbeak
2	274	Little West Fork, Clarksville
3	264	Shady Springs, Oldfort
4	226	Unity, Jacks Creek
5	170	Eastside, Burns
6	166	Clax Gap, Harriman
7	162	Dogwood Heights, Tazewell
8	155	Crossroads, Parsons
9	147	Bethany, Jonesborough
10	141	Sherwood, Memphis
11	139	Citico Missionary, Vonore
12	131	Falling Springs, Alpine
13	115	Keeble's Chapel, Walland
14	113	Shiloh, Seymour
15	112	Hodges Chapel, Palmersville
16	110	Barnesville, Summertown
17	109	Bethel, Harriman
18	107	Midway, Johnson City
19	104	Maple Grove, Turtletown
20	103	Skyline Heights, Johnson City
21	102	Mountain View, Sevierville
22	96	Blue Springs, Sharps Chapel
22	96	Salem, Parsons
23	95	Calvary, Big Rock
24	94	Slick Rock Missionary, Robbins
24	94	Chestnut, Madisonville
25	93	Old Pleasant Gap, Powell
26	92	Antioch, Portland
26	92	Kinzel Springs, Townsend
27	91	Johnson Chapel, Sante Fe
28	90	Clay Hill, Riceville
29	89	Woodville, Ripley
29	89	Hilltop, Strawberry Plains
30	87	Grace, Jackson

SSB statistics

Music ministers still sing praises of new hymnal

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist ministers of music are singing the praises of The Baptist Hymnal after almost a year of experience with the volume released in March 1991, a sampling across the Southern Baptist Convention indicates.

"If I had the choice of buying any hymnal on the market, I'd rate The Baptist Hymnal as far superior to the others," said Harry Cowan, part-time minister of music at Lakeview Church, New Orleans, La. "I couldn't have said that before this one was released," he added.

May 7 is National Day of Prayer

National Day of Prayer will be observed by many people, churches, and communities in the United States on May 7.

Hundreds of towns and cities also will celebrate "Meet at City Hall" in

Women in Ministry plan April 30 meeting

LOUISVILLE — Southern Baptist Women in Ministry will hold its 1992 annual meeting on April 30 at 11 a.m., Broadway Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

The business session to elect new board members will be followed by a luncheon. New board officers will be announced as well as other news of interest.

Registration forms and information can be obtained by writing Southern Baptist Women in Ministry, 2800 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, Ky. 40206.

Cowan praised the resources for instrumentalists, mentioning specifically "the descants, medleys, transpositions, and modulations" provided in separate volumes, and the continuing release of "supplementary material provided in Worship: Resources for the Church Musician," a quarterly publication of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department.

"I probably won't use everything (in the hymnal)," Cowan said. "But some things I wouldn't use probably will appeal to someone else. This makes it versatile."

Sales of the hymnal as of March 13, their communities.

American Family Association, Tupelo, Miss., is asking people to meet at their local city hall from 12:20 to 12:40 that day to "pray for a moral rebirth for America," according to Donald Wildmon, AFA president.

"Meet at City Hall" meetings already have been planned for at least 1000 cities, with pastors, churches, and communities meeting for prayer for the nation.

Wildmon says the "Meet at City Hall" effort is open to everyone who wants to pray for the nation on that day.

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one day short of the book's first anniversary, had reached 1,804,809. Of those, 1,687,586 were new editions, with the remainder representing other hymnal editions, including those for instrumentalists and ministers of music.

Dennis McIntyre of First Church, Cookeville, said the hymnal has "a much better musical selection over anything we've done before."

"We purchased all the companion products and the congregation has been very excited by the use with the handbell and instrumental editions," he added. "The response from our people has been almost 100 percent positive. I really can't say anything negative about the book we have found this to be."

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David Justice, a general contractor and part-time minister of music for Mid-cities Church, Westminster, Calif., said his church had used "the old hymnal and a variety of chorus books" before The Baptist Hymnal was published.

"I've done away with all of them," he said. "The new hymnal just provides a wonderful mix for our congregation."

Justice, a composer whose chorus "One by One" is included in the hymnal, expressed concern that some might view his opinion as prejudiced. "It's a wonderful worship tool and I'm not just saying that because I have a chorus in it," he said.

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Leadership . . .

Members of Speedway Terrace Church, Memphis, recently welcomed James Smith, retired president of the Brotherhood Commission, as interim pastor.

Bill Delaney, a retired attorney from Chattanooga, has been called as pastor of Bartlebaugh Church, Chattanooga, effective March 29.

Gary Lynn has been called as minister of youth and education at First Church, Kingston. He will begin his duties in mid April.

After 35 years in the ministry, Paul Williams has retired. His last day as pastor of First Church, Somerville, was March 29. He will continue leading Sunday and Wednesday services until a new pastor is called.

Williams has served as pastor of churches in Jackson, Finley, and Somerville.

He also was a director in the Tennessee Baptist Convention Sunday School Department in 1982.

On April 1, Williams became part-time in-service guidance director at Union University, Jackson.



WILLIAMS

Ordinations . . .

Gum Springs Church, Walling, ordained David Bain, Hilton England, and Dewey Young as deacons.

Jimmy Kelley was ordained as deacon at Kelley's Chapel, Waynesboro.

Churches . . .

The choir of Haywood Hills Church, Nashville, directed by Nelson Turner, will present the Easter musical "The Day He Wore My Crown" April 19 at 7 p.m.

A new adult class, "Partners in Practical Parenting," will begin April 5 at Calvary Church, Knoxville. The class will meet during Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. The class is designed to give parents input on encouraging, teaching, training, and disciplining their children so the children will grow in their Christian faith. Class format will be group discussion and lecture. For more information, call Calvary Church at 523-9419.

Beech Grove Church calls Keith Sumner

Keith Sumner, Memphis, recently became pastor of Beech Grove Church, Dyer. This is his first pastorate.

Sumner's ministerial experience has been as youth director at Grace Church, Jackson, and Mt. Tirzah Church, Newbern. He was ordained in 1989 at Leclair Church, Memphis.

He is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree from Union University, Jackson.

Sumner and his wife, Christiana, have a son and are expecting another child in July.

The 53rd homecoming will be held April 5 at West End Church, Knoxville. In addition, church members recently recognized the volunteer work of three generations of one family who are members of West End Church. Jim and Judy Pyles; their daughter and her husband, Angela and Ronnie Patterson; and the Patterson's daughter, Heather Fisher, recently returned from a volunteer mission trip to Camp Cara Bobo near Valencia, Venezuela. This was the third trip for the Pyles and the second for the Patterson family. They returned to Venezuela to do maintenance work on a building they helped construct in years past.

The congregation of Park Avenue Church, Nashville, will hold a special service April 12 to dedicate their new educational building.

Members of Bethlehem Church, Greenfield, recently dedicated their new building.

People . . .

Courtney Walsh, a 16-year-old honor student and member of Prescott Memorial Church, Memphis, is one of about 40

American young people selected to travel to Russia this summer to participate in a month-long international artistic exchange. The Americans will join a group of Russian youth to work with professional artists and educators in writing, rehearsing, and performing in the Russian language for audiences in the Tartarstan Republic, the Mordovskaya Republic, and the Moscow region, all located in Russia, the largest of the Soviet republics. Walsh is the daughter of Tom and Jean Walsh of Memphis.



WALSH

Missions . . .

Three Tennesseans have been appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to work overseas through the International Service Corps. Zack and Karen Zbinden of Memphis were assigned to eastern Europe for two years. Zbinden will be a church planter/pastor, and his wife will be a teacher. Their home church is Highland Heights Church, Memphis. Tommy Wilkerson, a member of Salem Church, Knoxville, has been assigned to teach children of Southern Baptist Missionaries in Kenya for eight months.

Mark and Stacy Pennington have completed their first term of service in Mexico City and are on furlough at 514 E. Main Street, Georgetown, Ky. 40324.

Webb serves Clarksville

Mount Hermon Church, Clarksville, called Craig Webb from his position as minister of youth, Highland Church, Louisville, Ky., to be pastor.

Webb, a native of Nashville, was ordained Nov. 3, 1991, by the Louisville church. He is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.

He is married to Barbara Hudson Webb.

Revivals . . .

Edsel West, South Harriman Church, Harriman, will lead revival April 9-11 at Oaklawn Church, Crossville. Hank Hones will lead music.

Spring revival will be held April 10-13 at Poplar Corner Church, Brownsville. Chuck Kelley, professor of evangelism at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, will be evangelist.

Terry Bradshaw, pastor of Zion Hill Church, Sevierville will lead revival April 26-30 at Calvary Church, Brownsville. Chuck Smith of Cherry Road Church, Memphis, will lead music.

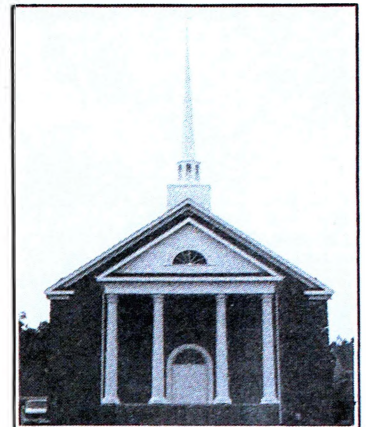
Earl McCosh, retired army chaplain colonel and pastor, will be evangelist for revival April 5-10 at First Church, Estill Springs.

Spring revival services will be April 5-8 at South Fulton Church, South Fulton. Keith Fordham will be evangelist and Brad Replogle will lead music.

Drew Gunnells Jr., pastor of Spring Hill Church, Mobile, Ala., will be guest evangelist at spring revival services April 5-8 at Central Church, Bearden, Knoxville.

The following churches in Salem Association will hold revival during April: Calvary Church, Smithville, April 26-30, Pastor David Koons; Elizabeth Chapel, Smithville, April 12-17, former Pastor Bob Jones; Sycamore Church, Woodbury, April 13-15, Kevin Goza; and Whorton Springs Church, Smithville, every Tuesday night in April.

Bob Horner, pastor of Southside Church, Huntsville, Ala., will be evangelist for revival April 5-8 at



SANCTUARY DEDICATED — The sanctuary of First Church, Middleton was dedicated March 22. Pastor George DeRousse preached the dedicatory message during the morning worship service. A dedication service and open house were held in the afternoon. Guest speakers for the service were former pastors Joe Littlefield and C. E. Whitman.

Hillcrest Church, Lebanon. Horner was national promoter for evangelism for 15,000 Chilean Baptists before moving to Huntsville.

Brook Hollow Church, Nashville, will hold revival April 5-8 at 7 p.m. Frank Crumpler, pastor of Brainerd Church, Chattanooga, will conduct services along with a special music ministry led by Jerry A. Brown of Antioch.

Rome Church, Lebanon, will hold revival services April 12-15 with Pastor Ron Dyer as evangelist. Al Mahan from Crossville will lead the music ministry during the revival.

Lebanon pastor Ron Dyer will lead revival April 24-26 at Hickman Church, Hickman.

TeamTalk

By D. L. Lowrie

I love to nose around in a pastor's library. I have had a lifelong love for books, and especially the kind of books that pastors have in their libraries. This is one of the few times I have to resist the temptation to steal.

While I was with First Church, Greeneville, recently I was looking through the library of James Best. He had some old books that T. L. Holcomb, a Southern Baptist leader of other years, had given him. One of them was an old book by J. M. Pendleton on his reasons for being a Baptist.

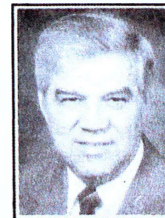
I looked at the old book. His reasons seemed valid to me. He mentioned that he was a Baptist because Baptists insist on a regenerate church membership. They declare that you must be saved before you are qualified to be a member of a local church. They understand this salvation as a personal experience of God's saving grace that begins a

process that will be finished when Jesus our Lord returns. I said, "Amen," as I read this.

Then he said he was a Baptist because Baptists practice baptism by immersion, and they baptize believers only. He made a strong case for baptism by immersion in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Again, I said, "Amen."

Then he gave our system of church government as a reason. He cited proof from the New Testament that the early church was a spiritual democracy under the Lordship of Christ. The early church did not have a hierarchy or ruling group within the body. The church decided. Again, I said, "Amen, me too!"

I know it is no longer in fashion to emphasize denominational differences, but I am still grateful for my Baptist heritage. I don't believe we are God's only people, but we have been careful to attempt to do our work by Biblical principles. We may not have understood or followed them perfectly, but we have taken them seriously. I like that! Let's continue this practice.



LOWRIE

N.C. Baptist convention urged to address homosexual issue

ASHBORO, N.C. (BP) — The leadership of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has drafted a recommendation which would refuse gifts from churches publicly approving homosexuality and disqualify them as "cooperating churches."

The recommendation, which goes to the convention's general board at its May 19 meeting in Ashboro, was drafted by E. Glen Holt, convention president; Dorothy Allred, first vice president; Edwin Vick, second vice president; Lamar J. Brooks, General Board president; Kathryn H. Hamrick, board vice president; and Roy J. Smith, convention executive director-treasurer.

The recommendation would change the business and financial policy of the state convention and the general board by adding the following paragraph:

"No funds of any kind, designated or undesignated, shall be accepted by this convention, its programs, institutions, or agencies, from any church which knowingly takes, or has taken, any official action which manifests public approval, promotion, or blessing of homosexuality. Any such church shall not therefore qualify as a 'cooperating church' as defined in Article IV, A, 3 of the Constitution of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina."

The recommendation was prompted by the decision of Pullen Memorial Church, Raleigh to approve the "union" of two homosexual males and

"Quotes and Facts" now in Green Light

For a number of years "Quotes and Facts" has been published quarterly by the public relations office of the Tennessee Baptist Convention for use by churches and associations in preparing bulletins and newsletters.

In order to reduce the cost of providing these materials, they will now be included as a pull-out section in the center of the TBC Green Light, a monthly promotional magazine sent to the same mailing list as "Quotes and Facts."

Public relations personnel suggests that pastors pull out the section immediately upon receiving it and pass it on to the person on the staff who is responsible for producing the church's newsletter.

the news Binkley Memorial Church, Chapel Hill is considering licensing a homosexual male to the ministry. The "union" of the two homosexual males took place March 15 at the Raleigh church.

"This in no way negates the importance of local church autonomy or the Biblical mandate for all Christians to minister to the needs of all people in keeping with the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ," said a statement released to news media following the meeting of the leaders.

The recommendation will be given as information to the general board's executive committee in its April 7 meeting. North Carolina officials noted the general board acts for the convention between annual sessions but does

not have the power to contradict convention actions. Otherwise any action taken by the board during the interim is binding on the convention and reported fully to the convention at its next session.

In 1991 the Pullen church contributed \$4854 through Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program state, national, and international missions fund plus \$2163 for special offerings through the Baptist Building office in Cary. The Binkley church gave \$2062 through the Cooperative Program and \$1600 to special offerings last year.

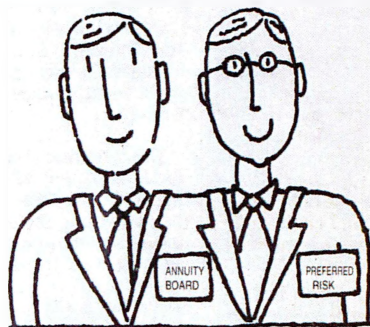
The Pullen church approved the union of the homosexuals by a 64-36 percent margin. While technically not a wedding, forbidden by law in North Carolina, the "union" is seen as similar to marriage.

The Binkley church has scheduled in April a congregational vote whether to license a ministerial student at Duke University Divinity School who is an admitted homosexual.

The Pullen congregation is affiliated with the Raleigh Association. The association was to have a special meeting March 28 to discuss the church's action. Binkley church is not affiliated with any association. Both churches are dually aligned with the American Baptist Churches and the Southern Baptist Convention, and Pullen is affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Alliance of Baptists.

(Compiled from information provided by R. G. Puckett, editor of the Biblical Recorder, state Baptist newspaper of North Carolina.)

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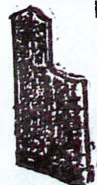
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Praise for God's comfort

By Jerry Glisson, pastor emeritus; Leewood Church, Memphis

An elderly woman whose son had died sought answers from the holy man to give her a way to bring her son back to life. Instead of sending her away without help, he told her to go out and find a mustard seed in a home where there had never been sorrow. He would use the seed to drive out her sorrow. Wherever she went, she seemed to find greater sorrow. And she stayed to comfort the people. As she continued to look, she found herself ministering to other people's needs and forgot to ask about the mustard seed. She never realized her sorrow had truly been driven out of her life.



GLISSON

The apostle Paul knew difficulty and suffering. The church was saturated "with many tears" (II Corinthians 2:4). He knew of the suffering of the church in Corinth, one of the most wicked cities of his day. Caring deeply for the Corinthians, he wrote four letters to them, two of which are found in the New Testament.

Second Corinthians is a personal letter regarding personal problems and needs. It was written to the church about 55-56 AD on Paul's third missionary journey.

In the introductory statements, Paul set forth the basis for his apostleship. Christ Jesus had made him an apostle by the will of God. His calling was to minister to and through the churches. My book, *Knowing and Doing God's Will* (Broadman Press), can help a Christian find God's will in any decision. To know God's will is a must if

we are to please Him.

Verse 2 records Paul's standby greeting, which is grace and peace. Grace is the basis of one's relationship to God and peace is the result of that relationship. Both have their source in God and are made available through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise rolled forth from Paul's heart as he wrote about God's comfort, which is available and usable to the follower of the Lord Jesus (vv. 3-11). It is praise for all that God is and all He has done for the believer.

God is the source of all comfort (vv. 3, 4a)

God is the master comforter. He is constantly calling us to come along side Him for His help so we may be comforted. God is also the master giver of comfort. When tribulation, affliction, or pressures are allowed by our Father to come into our lives, He

is there to comfort.

God's comfort makes comforters (vv. 4b-7)

There is a reason for the comfort of God. It is that His comfort might be passed on to others through us (v. 4b). Such comfort that flows out to others will flow back from others (vv. 5-7).

God's comfort brings confidence (vv. 8-11)

Paul gave an illustration from his life of God's comfort and deliverance. He had trouble. But note the result of God's presence, comfort, and deliver-

BIBLE BOOK

April 5 Lesson

Basic Passage: II Corinthians 1:1-11

ance. He could not and did not trust in himself, but he trusted in God (v. 9). Confidence came flowing back into his heart (v. 10). In addition, the prayers of the intercessors of the Corinthian church were used of God to bring about such comfort, deliverance, and confidence. Is this not a call to prayer?

Love says it all

By Ron Mouser, minister of education; Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville

The journey to Jerusalem was arduous. The emotional, physical, and spiritual stresses combined to heighten the air of expectancy as Jesus and His company of itinerant followers traveled to the Holy City. It was obvious none of the disciples comprehended what it meant to be the suffering Messiah.

They had argued about greatness and status in the coming glory and failed to understand this serious destiny awaiting Jesus at the end of the week of passion following Passover.

Religious officials were upset that Jesus perceived the shallowness of their pseudo piety and disturbed that He had wrecked their pocket-fleeing procedures by cleaning the money-changers from the Temple, they conspired to entrap the Promised One.



MOUSER

This group of leaders from divergent religious persuasions challenged Jesus with questions regarding authority, paying taxes to Caesar, and marriage in the resurrection. Each time Jesus' response was insightful, pointed.

A scribe, an interpreter, and teacher of the Law rose to ask a question. He was impressed with the responses from Jesus. Well-schooled in the Law and its 613 precepts, the scribe asked Jesus, "Which is the chief commandment?" Jesus quoted two passages familiar to the Hebrew mind. The Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) declared the unique oneness of God while calling for a relational affirmation of love for God that was to be expressed in a commitment emanating from the depth of one's being. Simply, one was to love the one and only God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The second commandment, another familiar saying (Leviticus 19:18), was also relational in nature calling one to "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus was unequivocally advocating

that love for God and neighbor were inseparable. He rejected the narrow Jewish concept of neighbor being a fellow Israelite and expanded it to include Gentiles, pagans, and people of the land. Love is inclusive. Love says it all!

The scribe rightly perceived that the relational dimension of love was far more important than "... burnt offerings and sacrifices." Love was to be the motivating factor in commitment to God and man, not the superficial adherence to a misguided, codified religious system. Jesus responded by telling the scribe, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." Love said it all!

CONVENTION UNIFORM

April 5 Lesson

Basic Passage: Mark 12:28-37

Now it was Jesus' turn to ask a question, "How is it that the teachers of the Law say that the Christ is the son of David?" In the narrative following,

Jesus indicated that "David" referred to the promised Messiah, not as a son of David, but as Lord. Jesus wanted it clearly understood that the Messiah was more than a descendant of David's lineage. The suffering Messiah, the expression of God's love, was the Son of God.

Soon, oh so soon, the reality of God's love and the full disclosure of messianic hope would be expressed in the death of the Anointed One. Love would say it all! All the misperceptions and misunderstandings would be overshadowed with a focused love.

Jesus, once and for all, would declare God's love for man in a willing sacrifice on Golgotha. The pages of Scripture and history would resound with the message of "God so loved..."

In the words of William R. Newell, "Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan! Oh, the grace that brought it down to man! Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary." Love says it all!

Confident of triumph

By Sharon Herrington, layperson; Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage

"Preparation means poise!" My experienced education professor frequently repeated this admonition in an effort to communicate to us young, inexperienced future teachers that our success in the classroom would depend upon prior preparation.

Jesus' preparation of Himself and His disciples produced confidence as He approached His impending crucifixion. Having spent three years with the disciples and using the last six months of those years to prepare them for His death, Jesus continued preparing them for the climax of Passover Week in Matthew 26.

He even predicted the day He would be crucified "... after two days" in Matthew 26:2. The two days in this



HERRINGTON

passage refer to Tuesday evening through Thursday evening.

A widely accepted thought is that Jesus spent these two days in seclusion at Bethany near Jerusalem. In contrast to His enemies' planning Jesus' death, He was spending the quiet time in Bethany spiritually preparing for the coming Passover and the inevitable events following. Writer Fred Wood of Memphis reminds us that "Only people who make proper preparation can face the future without fear or anxiety."

In Matthew 26:17, the disciples pressed Jesus about the details of the Passover meal, the symbolic reminder that God was at work to redeem His people in their darkest hours of slavery in Egypt. Again, Jesus attended to the arrangements in verses 17-19, giving specific instructions concerning the location, atmosphere, and elements of the Passover meal.

Jesus' institution of the Lord's

Supper in verses 26-29 using symbols for His body and blood referred to Jeremiah 31:31-34 where God spoke of a new covenant with His people - His reign within the human heart which is the essence of His kingdom on earth.

Sensing the anxiety of the 11 men, Jesus continued His careful preparation in verses 30-32 as He confidently led them in a hymn, predicted their future actions, and assured them of His whereabouts after the resurrection.

Because we are challenged by Jesus' example to face the "Gethsemanies" of our lives with confidence, I humbly offer a few tested preparations which tend to produce confidence of triumph in the eye of our storms.

LIFE AND WORK

April 5 Lesson

Basic Passage: Matthew 26:1-56

First, expect trials to come. Accept the "inevitables" of life. Talk over your fears of future crises with other Christians. Realize that the disciples did not fully understand the reasons for Jesus' death, and neither do we

have to have all the answers.

Don't wait until the storm comes to begin praying. Stay "prayed up" and don't expect God to bail you out when you've not given Him proper place in your life prior to the storm. If you feel you have given God priority, then trust Him to take care of you, count your blessings, remember answered prayer and other seemingly impossible things. Use your God-given imagination to picture yourself as a lamb "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" as the old hymn says.

Predetermine now your reaction to crisis. Ride out the storm, never losing sight of God and His future plans for your good. Remember to thank Him as the winds abate and calm returns to your life. Learn from the experience, and begin preparing for the next storm.

In those dark, uncertain hours of Passover, God was at work. Jesus worked at preparing Himself and His disciples for the hour (see Isaiah 53:7). Confidence of triumph for us doesn't just happen. It is the result of long hours of spiritual preparation.

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