

Laotians dedicate first building in state

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

MURFREESBORO — Language Missions Day had special significance for two Concord Association churches.

On Aug. 9, the day set aside on the Southern Baptist Convention calendar to honor ethnic work, New Life Laotian Baptist Mission in Murfreesboro dedicated its new building.

Under the sponsorship of Southeast Church, Murfreesboro, the congregation is the first Southern Baptist Laotian body in Tennessee to purchase its own facility and only the second in the United States.

Southeast Church first began working with Laotian children on Sunday afternoons about 13 years ago said Pastor Don Edwards.

At the same time, he said, First Church, Murfreesboro, had a small Bible study for Laotian

adults.

About three years ago the two groups were brought together under the umbrella of Southeast Church. The Laotians soon called Khamson Vilaysack as their pastor.

The mission has grown faster than we ever imagined, Edwards said, noting about 60-65 Laotians attend services weekly.

With the help of Concord Association and assistance from the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Home Mission Board, the mission acquired land and a building about two years ahead of schedule.

During the dedication service, Edwards noted there "have been many over the years who said this day would never come."

God answers prayer, Edwards reminded the Laotians. "This group of believers in this church is not yet finished with the dream.



ASSISTING IN THE building dedication of New Life Laotian Baptist Mission were, from left, front row, Don Edwards and Terry Robbins, Southeast Church; Pastor Khamson Vilaysack; back row, Sei-Hun Kim and James Powers, Concord Association; and Thomas Phothisack, New Life Mission.

I believe you will fill all these chairs," he said.

Edwards said the dedication service really should not be a surprise to believers. "God blesses dreamers who work for him," he said.

James H. Powers, director of missions for Concord Association, challenged the Laotians to rejoice in what the Lord has done and to always be willing to take their requests to God.

Powers acknowledged the association assisted the Laotian

congregation. "Our churches are very loving toward the Laotians and are glad this could happen," Powers said.

But, Powers added, "The Lord did it all. We give him the credit."

Pastor Khamson Vilaysack thanked the members of Southeast Church and Concord Association for their help.

Southeast Church will continue to work with the Laotians, said Terry Robbins, missions committee chairman at Southeast.

— See Laotians, page 2

this week's news

global:

- Africans suffer severe drought. — See page 2
- Dan and Libby Panter serve as first Southern Baptist missionaries in Belarus. — See page 8

national:

- Barbara Bush visits a Baptist children's home in Florida. — See page 3
- CLC supports alcohol labeling bills. — See page 3
- State conventions get \$17 million in billing credits from Annuity Board. — See page 4

state:

- Tennesseans needed for partnership missions in Chile. — See page 4
- State Baptist schools get ready for new year. — See page 7

MOVING? Cut out and mail address label and new address to Baptist and Reflector, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024.

Baptists gain in metro areas

By Sarah Zimmerman
For Baptist Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Southern Baptists are making progress in the nation's largest cities, according to a report by the Home Mission Board research division.

The report shows that from 1981 to 1991, associations in 44 metropolitan areas outpaced the rest of the Southern Baptist Convention in new churches, membership, baptisms, Sunday School enrollment and attendance, and Woman's Missionary Union enrollment.

The report was presented in Albuquerque during the annual update of Mega Focus Cities, a strategy shared by five Southern Baptist organizations. Mega focus cities are 44 metropolitan areas expected to have at least one million residents by the year 2000. They are represented by 69 Baptist associations.

The associations are home to 118 million people, or 47 percent of the U.S. population, said Clay Price, director of the HMB research department.

Yet these associations have fewer Southern Baptist churches per residents than the rest of the country. Nationwide, there are 6507 people for every Southern Baptist church. In these associations, there are 27,508 people for every Southern Baptist church, according to the report.

The percentage of unchurched residents in the mega focus associations is 44 percent, compared with a national average of 45 percent. But 11 of the mega focus associations report an un-

churched population of more than 60 percent.

The report represents the fastest growing areas of the country, such as eight associations in Southern California which gained three million people — the equivalent — See Baptists, page 2.

CP goal within reach, Bennett says

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program funds received by the SBC Executive Committee dipped 1.89 percent below the same month a year ago, according to Harold C. Bennett, the committee's president-treasurer.

"There is still time for us to meet the Cooperative Program goal for 1991-92, and I pray we will respond to the challenge," Bennett said. He voiced conviction that "Southern Baptists remain committed to spreading the Gospel in all the world and to the Cooperative Program as the channel of financial support."

After ten months of the SBC fiscal year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30), Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program giving for missions and ministry — \$116,631,991 — remains just 0.51 percent below the rate of a year ago. The monthly basic CP operating budget is \$11,725,856; the overall 1991-92 goal is \$140,712,282.

Designated gifts for July, meanwhile, jumped 55.37 percent, totaling \$4,990,614 compared to \$3,212,018 in July 1991. For ten months of the current fiscal year, designated receipts were 2.99 percent above a year ago.

In Cooperative Program giving,

the July 1992 total was \$11,372,445 compared to July 1991 gifts of \$11,591,867, or down 1.89 percent.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions, the

Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions, world hunger, and other special gifts.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. □

Wilson named TBC interim director

William G. (Bill) Wilson will become interim executive director/treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention on Sept. 5 unless a search process finds a successor to D. L. Lowrie prior to that date.

TBC personnel guidelines specify that a designated division director hold the interim position. Wilson, currently the only division director for the Executive Board staff, joined the TBC in July 1990 as Convention Ministries Division director. He was pastor of Brentwood Church for 20 years.

Lowrie resigned several weeks ago to become pastor of First Church, Lubbock, Texas, on Sept. 5, the day after the regular Executive Board meeting.

A nine-member search commit-

tee was appointed in June to seek a successor for the executive director/treasurer position.

In an Aug. 4 meeting, the Executive Board's executive committee confirmed Wilson's interim position as the top executive officer.

Executive Committee Chairman Jerry Oakley said the group wanted to endorse and affirm Wilson. "Today we assured Bill Wilson of our unanimous vote of confidence and that this committee will support him in every way," the Springfield pastor said. □



WILSON

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee
*900-00410-0727
* HISTORICAL COMMISSION
*901 COMMERCE ST SUITE 400
*NASHVILLE TN 37203

about your newsjournal

- Wm. Fletcher Allen is the editor.
- **Subscribe to the Baptist and Reflector for one year and receive 51 copies.** Family or individual subscription — \$7.50, clubs of ten or more subscriptions — \$7.25, church (more than 50 percent of families) — \$6.50. Send check/money order to address listed below.
- To contribute a news item, call or write Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor; or Connie Davis, assistant editor.
- To advertise — Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor.
- For billing and subscription list questions — Betty Williams, bookkeeper.
- For information about trial subscription plan for churches or association edition — Lonnie Wilkey, Connie Davis, or Susie Edwards, administrative secretary.
- For information about local church edition — Connie Umstead, news assistant/church pages coordinator.
- For production answers — Mary Nimmo, production assistant.

PUBLISHER: Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board. **Board of directors:** Jerry Oakley, chairman; Gary Anderson, vice chairman; Mickey Basham, Wendell Boertje, David George, Gary Gerhardt, Don Givens, M. B. Howard, John Langlois, Joe Littlefield, Leonard Markham, Earl McCosh, Paul Moody, Clint Oakley, Howard Olive, Ron Phillips, Frank Samuels, Bobby Turner, and Emerson Wiles Jr.

OFFICE: Baptist and Reflector, 5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood, Tenn., 37027. Mailing address: P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024. Phone: (615) 371-2003. FAX: (615) 371-2014.

MEMBERSHIPS: Southern Baptist Press Association

POSTMASTER:

- Send address changes to **Baptist and Reflector**, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024.
- Second class postage paid at Brentwood and at additional mailing office. (USPS 041-780). □

Printed on Recycled Paper

Prayer needed for Africans suffering drought

Baptist Press

RICHMOND, Va. — The Foreign Mission Board is asking Southern Baptists to pray for millions of Africans affected by war and drought.

"Several million people are suffering and many are dying for lack of food. The sight of people hungry and thirsty ... having no hope, that's what drives me to request prayer," explained Bill Bullington, the board's vice president for Africa.

This century's worst drought in southern Africa has wiped out between 50 and 90 percent of the region's cereal crops. By September some 30 million people in the region will need outside food assistance to survive, according to the U.S. Committee for Refugees, a private research organization in Washington, D.C.

Bullington also asked Southern Baptists to pray for people in Somalia, where civil war and drought have plunged the nation into a desperate state of anarchy. Relief workers in the region say the disintegration of the country surpasses the more publicized horrors seen in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"A bad day in Sarajevo would be a good day in Somalia," said a relief worker who recently returned from east Africa where Somalia is situated.

The Red Cross drew a similar conclusion. "The situation in Somalia is the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today," said the director-general of the British Red Cross in a recent press report.

Baptists make impact in metro . . .

— Continued from page 1
 alent of the residents of Oklahoma — in ten years, Clay said.

During the update meeting, leaders of the SBC groups which work with mega focus cities signed a resolution to "prioritize our resources to reach the people of these great metropolitan areas with the saving message of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Signing the resolution were Larry Lewis, HMB president; James Williams, Brotherhood Commission president; Dellanna O'Brien, Woman's Mission Union executive director; James Draper, Baptist, Sunday School Board president; and A. R. Fagan, Stewardship Commission president.

The mega focus strategy involves working with associational leaders to develop a grass roots ministry. Lewis and Draper both praised the strategy for giving associations ownership of the program.

The following statistics compare Southern Baptist Convention growth from 1981 to 1991 with growth in the mega focus cities and other associations:

Churches: SBC, 5.9 percent; mega focus cities, 14.6 percent; other associations, 4.9 percent.

Total members: SBC, 10.5 percent; mega focus cities, 15 per-

Some 5000 people a week die from starvation in Somalia and 1.5 million are at "extreme risk of starvation in the next few months," concluded the U.S. Committee for Refugees.

The crisis in Somalia offers an important opportunity for the world's Christian community to help one of the countries most isolated from Christianity, said a relief worker.

Scores of Christian organizations, including many Southern Baptist agencies, rushed into the former Soviet Union to stake a claim in rebuilding the Christian church. But recent cracks in Somalia's wall of Islamic isolation have gone largely unnoticed, he said.

Historically Christians have ignored Somalia because of its violent opposition to any religion except Islam, the worker said. Yet Christian researchers still were surprised at the extent of neglect of Somalia when they compared

ACTS, VISN to share cable channel

Baptist Press

DENVER — Southern Baptists' ACTS (American Christian Television System) and the Vision Interfaith Satellite Network signed agreements July 28 to share a single channel reaching some 21 million households.

The two networks will maintain their own identities and separate program times on the channel, to be launched Oct. 1 as "VISN-ACTS, The Faith and Values Channel."

ACTS' prime-time slots will be from 10 p.m. to midnight Eastern Standard Time. Also included in

cent; other associations, 9.6 percent.

Resident members: SBC, 8.5 percent; mega focus cities, 9 percent; other associations, 8.3 percent.

Baptisms: SBC, 2.2 percent decrease; mega focus cities, 2.2 percent increase; other associations, 3.3 percent decrease.

Cooperative Program: SBC, 58.6 percent; mega focus cities, 51.5 percent; other associations, 60 percent.

Total mission expenditures: SBC, 65.9 percent; mega focus cities, 63.1 percent; other associations, 66.5 percent.

The 44 metropolitan areas included in mega focus cities are Seattle; Portland, Ore.; the California cities of Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego; Phoenix, Ariz.; Salt Lake City; Denver; Kansas City, Mo.; Oklahoma City; New Orleans; the Texas cities of Dallas-Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston; Memphis and Nashville; Atlanta; Charlotte, N.C.; Greensboro, N.C.; the Florida cities of Orlando, Tampa-Saint Petersburg, West Palm Beach and Miami-Fort Lauderdale; St. Louis; Chicago; Minneapolis-St. Paul; Milwaukee, Wis.; Detroit; Indianapolis; the Ohio cities of Columbus,

the distribution of evangelistic resources in Somalia to those in post-Soviet Russia. At current levels, a Russian will receive a million evangelistic messages before a Somali receives one, the research concluded.

"How can you say that's fair?" a researcher asked. "We've ignored Somalia because it's such a tough nut to crack."

Beyond Somalia, Bullington asked for prayer for all of southern Africa. The next few months are critical, he said. In August or September what is left of internal food stocks will run out, forcing many countries in the region to rely on imported food, according to an American Red Cross report. The region will need food assistance for almost a year, Bullington added.

"The next normal rainy season will not come until October or November," he said. "So even with good rains, the people will not have food that they've pro-

its eight hours on the air are slots from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 5-6 p.m.; and 4-6 a.m. VISN programming will occupy the remaining 16 hours of the day.

The eight-member ACTS executive committee approved the agreement July 24 in a meeting at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport. Neither that action nor the RTVC's negotiations with VISN were reported through official Southern Baptist Convention news media. The RTVC had encouraged Baptist Press not to report the negotiations because of their sensitivity.

Cleveland and Cincinnati; Pittsburgh; Buffalo and Rochester, N.Y.; Boston; Providence-Hartford, Conn.; New York City; Philadelphia; Baltimore; Washington; and Norfolk, Va.

Five metro areas were originally part of the mega focus cities process but are no longer included because they are losing population and not expected to have one million residents by 2000. They include Birmingham, Ala.; Dayton, Ohio; Honolulu; Louisville, Ky.; and Vancouver, British Columbia. □

Laotians dedicate first . . .

— Continued from page 1

The church is supplying Sunday School teachers and is helping to train the Laotians in children's ministry, Robbins said.

"The Laotians are awed at the amount of work to be done, but they are willing," Robbins observed.

He said he expects it will be from two to five years before the mission has the financial means to constitute as a church.

Fred Rolater, deacon chairman at Southeast, presented Vilaysack with an engraved communion service to mark the occasion.

Following the afternoon service, members of Southeast wor-

duced for an additional five or six months. That means there's nearly a year before us without adequate food resources.

"We are talking about massive human need. Southern Baptist missionaries and African Baptists have already begun to act through normal channels and hunger relief projects. New efforts have been planned, and additional requests for hunger relief funds will soon arrive."

Missionaries in Zimbabwe are feeding about 20,000 people and plan to expand the \$700,000 feeding program to assist 40,000 by this fall. Zimbabwe is one of the countries hit hardest by the drought.

Other missionaries are preparing relief projects that should deliver up to \$2 million worth of food assistance to countries in southeastern Africa, Bullington said. □

The agreement will help ACTS avoid a major deficit during the coming year from increased satellite costs, RTVC officials confirmed.

ACTS' currently pays \$135,000 per month for use of a satellite but because the cable industry's use of that satellite is declining the network needed to move to a new satellite which would have required up to a \$1 million initial fee and at least \$200,000 a month, said Doug Dillard, RTVC vice president for external relations.

Under the agreement, ACTS will be able to transmit via a satellite currently used by VISN.

Programming currently produced by local ACTS boards of church representatives in some 150 communities will remain intact for at least two years under the agreement, RTVC officials said. By 1994, a new agreement will be negotiated for preemption rights by local groups over network programming, which ACTS currently allows. One RTVC official said he hopes the preemption policy will remain intact and that VISN may increase its options for locally produced programs. □



FRED ROLATER, deacon chairman at Southeast Church, presents an engraved communion tray to New Life Mission Pastor Khamson Villaysack.

shipped with the Laotians through an interpreter. □

Annuity Board to set state medical rates

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.
For Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptists' Church Comprehensive Medical Plan will be priced according to state experience, although an effective date has not been set.

Southern Baptist Annuity Board trustees, meeting in Atlanta, heard reports of a modest decline in claims but a slow, steady loss in participants.

The board's executive staff brought a recommendation to begin rating state by state to bring more fairness to the rate structure and protect against shifting losses from one state to another if a state convention endorses another plan as an alternative. The move was supported by independent consultants and the board's carrier, Prudential Insurance Company of America.

Joel H. Mathis, senior vice president for insurance administration, said it is too early to say which states may benefit or be hurt by the change.

"Our consultants and carrier are already hard at work analyzing claims state by state. We know

some states will have no increase in rates for 1993. Others may have a significant increase."

Mathis said he will issue information in the next several weeks to help churches know how to budget for the medical program in 1993.

"I am well aware," Mathis said, "that everyone is anxious for details. I wish we had them today. We don't. But we'll inform every church at the earliest possible moment."

"But the important point to make," he said, "is that each state convention, its leadership, pastors, and churches can do something to help themselves. They can promote the plan."

"Making this change (in rating by state)," Mathis said, "will not guarantee competitiveness in every state. In some, it may make it worse, while in others it may become significantly better. But if the states — their churches, ministers, and executive leadership — will become aggressive in promoting enrollment of young, healthy participants, they will be able to directly affect rates in their states."

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell spoke with alarm to trustees about the apparent lack of commitment to the denomination's medical plan. "Confronted with steeply rising costs and decreasing participation, many churches have sought less expensive coverage elsewhere. At the same time, messengers to state conventions have clamored for their states' executive leadership to find solutions close to home," he said.

"Several state conventions have appointed committees to study alternative insurance plans for their states. In the light of this (the possibility of some states endorsing competing plans), the only fair way to rate our people, and perhaps the only way our convention health coverage plan can survive, is to set rates state by state," Powell said.

The problem, he explained, is when alternate plans are endorsed by a state convention: "It inadvertently encourages the young and healthy to get coverage elsewhere, leaving behind the high-cost or high-risk participants in the church plan. These people

cannot get coverage elsewhere but we pay their claims from a reduced income flow.

"Insurance consultants tell us that ours is a unique plan and it cannot survive unless it has the support of its sponsoring groups — and that includes SBC leadership, state conventions, and local churches," Powell said. "If our leadership does not participate in, support and endorse the plan, and if our people do not come in, it cannot survive."

"Affordability is the number one concern of churches and their staffs," Powell said. "Because we had to raise rates dramatically over the period 1988-1991, we have been seen by many as an adversary instead of a benefactor. This year we've been more successful but still more are leaving than enrolling."

"We have striven for fairness," Powell declared. "The most unfair thing we could ever do is fail to charge enough to pay the claims. In this we will never fail. The rates will always be set to cover expected claims and provide a safety margin."

"But fairness," Powell went on,

"includes spread of costs in a reasonably equitable fashion including age, cost of medical care where one lives, and some recognition of claims experience."

Powell told trustees there are three things state conventions and churches can do to make the medical plan healthy and competitive.

"One," Powell said, "is to encourage every church to do its God-ordained duty and support the ministers they call to serve. Every church ought to pay the whole cost of medical and disability coverage for every employee. It's not salary. It's the cost of being a church."

"Second, every minister should commit himself or herself to be brother and sister in the plan and stop chasing lower rates with other plans and leaving their sick brothers. Also, many of these plans cannot or will not guarantee portability to another state."

"And third," Powell said, "neither the state convention nor the SBC Executive Committee should ever endorse another plan."

CLC supports bill for expanded alcohol labels

By Tom Strode
For Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — A bill requiring more information on alcoholic beverage labels recently was introduced in Congress. The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has endorsed the legislation.

House of Representatives bill 5613, introduced by Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., would amend the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to require the following information on alcoholic beverage labels:

- Alcohol content by volume in a non-promotional way.
- Number of drinks per container.
- Ingredients by their common name and calories per container and drink.
- This statement: "If you or

someone you know has a drinking problem, a call may be made to (a toll-free number established by the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services) for help."

The bill would require the information to be conspicuous in its type and its location on the label. It also mandates the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms issue a report to Congress on the effectiveness of alcoholic beverage warning labels.

H.R. 5613 defines a drink as .6 ounces of alcohol.

"We must keep in mind that children have died from overdosing on fortified wines that contain the equivalent of five shots of hard liquor in a container the size of a beer can," Schroeder said in introducing the bill. "Failing to

make the alcoholic contents of these products perfectly clear is courting disaster for our kids as well as for adults."

"We are pleased this legislation has been introduced," said James A. Smith, CLC director of government relations. "The Christian Life Commission believes it is always beneficial to fully inform consumers about alcohol. We believe this information will help

educate consumers, especially children, who may not be fully informed."

"We also hope the inclusion of a toll-free help line will offer hope to individuals who feel trapped in their alcohol dependence and who may not get help any other way."

Warning labels already are required on alcohol containers by The Alcoholic Beverage Labeling Act of 1988. The labels read:

"GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) According to the surgeon general, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause health problems."

The bill, introduced July 9, had 12 original co-sponsors.

First Lady visits Florida children's home

TALLAHASSEE (ABP) — First Lady Barbara Bush came to the Florida Baptist Children's Home in Tallahassee for about 45 minutes July 30 with a message of hope and possibilities.

"You can be anything you want, if you put your mind to it," she told the group of almost two dozen youngsters after reading them a children's book on that theme.

The story-time setting was a family room of one of the Tallahassee home's three residences. The bright lights, photographic flashes, and microphones that attended the First Lady didn't seem to distract the children.

Following the reading time, Bush asked the children what they wanted to be when they grew up. The boys and girls eagerly called out their dreams — a pediatrician, an animal trainer, a fireman, an electrical engineer, a teacher, a veterinarian, a football player, even president of the United States. The First Lady praised the choice and encouraged the children to go for it.

"It was a good, universal story that applies to any kids," Richard Phillips, president of Florida Baptist Family Ministries, said later, "but it was especially good for our kids who have had so many failures."

The Children's Homes, which are operated by the Florida Baptist Family Ministries, provides residential care and other social services to needy and neglected children.

"She's nice. I like her," said ten-year-old Erica. "I felt very special. She reminds me of my grandma. And that's what my grandma tells me: 'If you put your mind to it, you can do it.'"

The children presented the First Lady with a tee-shirt that each of them had signed. The shirt displayed a drawing of an American flag and children holding hands, and the words: "One Nation Under God" and "Florida Baptist Children's Home."

Bush assured the children the shirt would remain a treasured memento of her visit. She gave the children a football autographed by herself and one of her escorts for the visit, Florida State University football coach Bobby Bowden. Bowden was Tallahassee-area chairman for a recent campaign to raise money for the Children's Homes.

About 50 adults — Children's Home alumni, trustees, staffers, foster parents, special friends, news media, Secret Service agents, and White House aids —

were there also. During the visit Bush was given a tour of a neighboring residence and also received a briefing by Children's Homes officials.

Her response: "You all are doing such a wonderful thing here." □



WENDY NORVELLE, 39, has been named director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's international service department. The department coordinates several mission programs: the International Service Corps — including journeymen — for people serving between four months and two years; student summer and semester missions; and the "Baptists living abroad" and "tent-maker" programs.

Postal increase delayed for now

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Non-profit mailers — including most Baptist newspapers — may have dodged a postage-rate bullet for next year, but they face a perilous future, according to a spokesman for the Alliance of Non-profit Mailers.

Neal Denton, executive director of the organization, said action by the Senate Appropriations Committee may have rendered only temporary relief to an annual problem.

"The one-year reprieve leaves us in a terrible position for next year," Denton said.

The Senate committee approved July 31 a postal bill (H.R. 5488) that would appropriate only \$200 million of the \$482 million needed for the non-profit mail subsidy, known as revenue foregone, to maintain current rates.

Revenue foregone reimburses the Postal Service for the non-

profit mailers' share of overhead expenses. Non-profit rates reflect only the cost of handling that class of mail.

The \$282 million shortfall would have meant a 30 percent to 35 percent rate increase in fiscal 1993 but the committee also approved a one-year measure that would prevent the Postal Service from raising non-profit postal rates.

The Senate measure mirrors the bill approved July 1 by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill may come before the full Senate in early August.

While non-profit mailers may be relieved that rates will not increase in the coming year, they were searching for a permanent solution to the annual problem, Denton said. If Congress approves the measure as it is, those publications face a "bloody battle" for sustaining current rates beyond 1993, he added. □

■ about letters to the editor

- Make it concise, no more than 250 words. Letters may be edited for length.
- Name may be withheld for sufficient reason. Include address and phone number.
- Avoid personal attacks on the character or integrity of anyone.
- Send original copy. Form letters and "open" letters will not be published.
- Only one letter in a three-months period per writer will be published.
- If letter does not conform, it will be returned. □

■ Baptist beliefs
by Herschel Hobbs
Baptist theologian

Tremendous words
— second in a series

"In the beginning God ..."
— Genesis 1:1

Because I believe the first four words in the Bible I believe in miracles. Many miracles were performed by others, but most of all by Jesus. Thirty-five of his miracles are definitely related; mention is made in general reference of unnumbered ones. All miracles are evidence of God's power. In John's Gospel Jesus' miracles are called signs, signs of his deity.



HOBBS

Jesus never worked a miracle on demand. He never advertised one in advance. He worked them, not to gain popularity, but to minister to human need. Indeed, on occasion he told people not to tell of them after the fact.

Some people deny miracles on the basis that what man cannot do, God cannot do. They would limit God by their limitations. Some deny them as contrary to the laws of nature. But miracles are not hocus-poes.

A miracle is an act of God, contrary to natural laws as man understands them, but not contrary to natural laws as he understands them, and which he works in the accomplishment of his benevolent will and purpose.

We accept as a matter of fact things which would have been regarded as miracles a century ago — such as laws of aeronautics and electronics. We speak of man discovering these laws. Since they have been known to God eternally, I prefer to say that he reveals them in keeping with his will. Since God is God we should not be surprised that he works miracles. I would be surprised if he did not do so. □

Volunteers thanked

My husband and I are Southern Baptist missionaries in Concepcion, Chile. We have been with the Foreign Mission Board for 15 years. It is with great joy that we recently worked with two volunteer teams from Tennessee.

One was a medical team in April. The team was great and we and the Chilean people will never forget that week.

The second wonderful experience was in mid-July during our annual mission meeting. Our children, Michael (12), Taylor (nine), and Mindy (four), have never been so happy and excited about a group of teachers.

As they were saying goodbyes, Mindy said, "This is so sad. She was my best friend," as she referred to the teacher.

As we began our nine-hour trip toward home, the conversation over and over went to our teachers, the Bible stories, puppets, signing to music. Bill and I want to express our thanks for each person who made up the team which blessed our children so much. We were greatly blessed.

Bill and Linda Clark
Casilla 1417
Concepcion, Chile

helping us both stay in school full-time, training for those ministries God has called us to. We are proud to have served in the Tennessee Baptist Convention and are eternally grateful for what Tennessee Baptists are doing to assist us.

Keith and Michele Dickenson
4013 Merida
Fort Worth, Texas, 76110

No wailing wall

I read in the July 22 issue of the *Baptist and Reflector* the article, "Jews protest HMB's Wailing Wall." I agree with the Jews that were offended. The wall is strictly Jewish, not Christian. A bulletin board to place pictures as a reminder for prayer requests seems to be sufficient. As Christian churches we have an altar to offer our prayers to the Lord Jesus Christ whether that altar be in church, at home, or wherever. This western wailing wall, which I have visited several times is a religious symbol of the temple, the glory of nationalism, Zionism, a prayer for their messiah to come.

I do not think dedicating wailing walls or praying to wailing walls is a proper symbol for Christians. Our communication is through the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only potentate and intercessor, our high priest, Messiah, and Savior. We do not need to talk to a wall. I would like to see our pastors write the HMB

requesting the wailing wall proposal be changed.

Elbert W. Kitts, pastor
Grace Church
P.O. Box 5873
Knoxville 37928

Learning lessons

Recently there have been articles on the Clinton-Gore ticket (and its' pro-choice stand), and the Supreme Court "stinging" the pro-life movement. There have been letters to the editor printed supporting both the pro-life and pro-choice movements. The *Baptist and Reflector*, and probably the majority of its readers, support the pro-life movement. However, there are a great many Southern Baptists who are pro-choice. (I know of no one in America who is pro-abortion.)

I urge the *Baptist and Reflector* staff to provide a more balanced view of the topic, and I thank the paper for allowing voices as disparate as Chris Thomas and Brenda Kecks to be heard. We should realize after our struggle through the 1980s that Southern Baptists are not a homogeneous group. We have different opinions on abortion, creation, the national budget, professional athletes in the Olympics, there are even some people who would call themselves Southern Baptists who don't like grits!

Our denomination has to learn

to live with diversity. The abortion issue is not going to go away anytime soon. The question of inerrancy will linger for decades. Women in ministry? Fully racially integrated churches? There are all sorts of issues that some people don't want discussed. However, we need to discuss them in all seriousness and with respect to each other's viewpoints. We need to learn from each other, and we need to learn this lesson soon.

Andrew F. Bennett III
Box 317 SBTS
2825 Lexington Ave.
Louisville, Ky., 40280

Correction

In last week's paper (Aug. 5), there was a mistake in the final paragraph of a letter from reader Gary Jared.

In the concluding remarks of the letter, the writer said: "I don't believe we are judging but using discernment when we will not tolerate homosexual lifestyles and marriages in our churches."

Then the closing sentence of the letter should have read: "I do believe we are judging when we make a blanket statement about the rest of the churches in the convention permitting their ranks to be filled by sin-laden people."

We regret the error (the incorrect rendering of the last sentence read "I do not believe we are judging ..."). — Editor

Grateful for TBC

Being called to the ministry and leaving our home state and home church to train at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary brought many unknowns. One of those was how a husband and wife called to the ministry could both go to school full-time, be actively involved in the local church, study, have time together and work enough to pay for all expenses of school and maintaining a home.

Two important institutions have played a vital part in fulfilling God's call in our lives while here in seminary. Our home church, Hillcrest Church in Dyersburg, has the "vision for excellence" by assisting those in their membership as they further their education and training for ministry. Their financial assistance toward school expenses has been a blessing and allowed us to continue training to be better prepared for ministry. We are thankful for the love and support from our Hillcrest family and their stewardship toward ministry training.

The Tennessee Baptist Foundation is also a vital part of our lives in our training and ministry here. We had met Earl Wilson and he took the time to talk about school, expenses, and the possibilities of assistance. Since that time, our knowledge has grown to realize the great number of ministry endeavors our Tennessee Baptist Foundation is involved in that makes that financial support possible.

As the economy changes and fees continue to rise, we are grateful to our Tennessee Baptist friends at Hillcrest and the Tennessee Baptist Foundation for

Conventions get surplus from Annuity Board

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptist state conventions will receive \$17 million in billing credits for the Church Annuity Plan as a result of action by Annuity Board trustees Aug. 3-4 in Atlanta.

"Our excellent earnings with investments in the Protection Section and a favorable claims experience created a surplus," said Paul W. Powell, president of the Dallas-based agency. In deciding to make the credits, Powell added, "We saw this as a blessing to the states who paid in the original contributions."

The Protection Section is a state convention-funded part of the Church Annuity Plan that provides supplemental disability and life benefits to eligible participants.

The allocation of surplus funds in the Church Annuity Plan to state conventions was the third major financial boost from the Annuity Board this year. In January more than 16,000 annuitants received a permanent ten percent increase in monthly benefits. In July all 22,000 annuitants received a permanent five percent increase. Also, the 734 annuitants with a variable annuity received an increase of more than 25 percent Jan. 1.

Trustees heard a mixed report on the board's Church Comprehensive Medical Plan. Claims were down and reserves were reported rising to a level to permit introduction of two less-costly op-

tional plans Jan. 1. However, participation in the comprehensive plan is declining.

The board voted to change rates for the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan to a statestate experience basis, with the effective date to be announced.

In another major action, trustees approved a staff recommendation that the Annuity Board begin preparations leading to a restructure of its investment functions into a mutual fund format. Its investment funds would become registered securities under Securities and Exchange Commission regulations. The board's investment committee explained the move will allow the Annuity Board to better serve its annuitants, retirement plan participants and Southern Baptist agencies and institutions.

participants and Southern Baptist agencies and institutions.

In his quarterly report to trustees, Powell reported continuing growth in both enrollments and contributions to the Church Annuity Plan and Convention Annuity Plan.

Asset increase of \$111.1 million in six months was strengthened by an increase in Church Annuity Plan contributions of 3.6 percent and an increase in Convention Annuity Plan contributions of 18.7 percent. Total assets reached \$3.65 billion.

Benefit payments were up 8.7 percent for the six months to \$55.6 million. There were 22,750 annuitants receiving benefits on June 30. □

Volunteers needed for work in Chile

About 100 volunteers are needed for two mission projects in Chile, reports Jarvis Hearn of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Partnership Missions Department.

Six teams of five people each are needed for a medical-dental project in Temuco, beginning Oct. 10 and lasting for ten days.

The following people are needed: general practitioner, pediatrician, ophthalmologist or optometrist, dentist, and a pastor.

The second project which begins Oct. 31 for 11 days involves an evangelism crusade in Vina del Mar.

Twenty-five teams of one to

three persons are needed. Each team must be led by an experienced pastor who may be accompanied by one or two additional laypeople.

For more information on these projects, contact Hearn at (615) 371-2028. □

Retreat postponed

A PK/MK (Preachers' Kids/Missionary Kids) Retreat set for Sept. 4-5 at Camp Linden has been postponed. The retreat will be rescheduled at a now undetermined time by the TBC Missions Department. □

Higher education — blessing to Tennessee Baptists

Tennessee Baptists appreciate higher education.

It was not always that way. From antagonism against "formal learning" in the earlier years of Baptist development in the frontier state — to energetic support of many pastors and laity, the role of education has been strengthened.

The road has been long and the work difficult. J. Fred Kendall, in "A History of the Tennessee Baptist Convention," says one problem holding back Tennessee Baptists through formative years was lack of educated ministers.

There were not enough preachers to fill the need for missionaries and for pastors, he wrote. Appreciation of higher education grew and the weakness was strengthened steadily. One of the first tasks, he said, was to overcome a deep-seated prejudice by many against education.

R. B. C. Howell, editor of *The Baptist* in August 1835, printed a letter about the subject of education:

"Brother Howell, I wish you to give me either the precept or example 'for educating men for the ministry.' " The writer added that he could find nothing

about it in the Scriptures.

Howell later editorialized that an educated ministry was needed to cope with problems of the world. He also admitted that "education does not make a man a minister."

Interest in education continued to grow and Tennessee Baptists worked and prayed to a successful purpose.

Coming into the Tennessee Baptist Convention at different times and becoming equipped to provide unique services — Belmont University, Carson-Newman College, and Union University are stronger each year.

The three colleges, and Harrison-Chilhowee Academy, provide Tennessee Baptists with excellent higher education institutions. We are blessed.

August is a month designated for recognition of Baptist higher education institutions. Many Tennessee Baptist churches will observe "Off to College Sunday" as young people leave for college.

It would be well to bolster them with prayer and assure them of support for them and our Baptist institutions. The churches also can direct them to vital ministries on campus, including Baptist Student Union. There is where the student finds instant support and an outlet for worship and personal ministry. All Tennessee BSU groups are listed on page

7 of this issue.

Belmont, Union, and Carson-Newman are institutions that any state convention would be proud and honored to have. Administrative leaders are dedicated to high standards of academic excellence, and to Christian-oriented programs and classrooms. The Baptist Faith and Message is not forgotten. Faculty members provide teaching that captures the subject matter — and stems from a sound Christian base.

The institutions need at least three things from their Baptist family. They need continuous prayer support. They need financial support through individual donations, wills, and budgeting. And they need our young people.

As Tennessee Baptists we have an obligation to inform our youth about these educational institutions. We need to let them see loyalty at work. As they make choices for colleges, they should have all the information they need about our TBC schools.

"Off to College Sunday" does not mean "ship 'em out" and forget about them. Our colleges and our young people need our very best support, all that we can give of prayer and caring. Keep in touch with them, and send them the state paper each week. Thank God for our colleges. □

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor



ALLEN

Know your gifts

After I finished my military obligation of "defending" the country during the Korean War, I rejoined the civilian world with deep gratitude for my blessings — and an enduring appreciation of the United States of America.

Prayers of thanks for the defense provided by our armed forces and the values of American life somehow meant more to me. Public endorsement of the age-old struggle for liberty for all people won more support from me.

At that time, it was required of each honorably discharged veteran that he/she serve at least six additional years on "ready" reserve. These choices usually included the Army or Navy Reserve unit and the National Guard.

I studied the situation and decided that the reserve unit would be best — since our first-born daughter had been added to the family. I was a reporter for a daily paper — and reserve duty wouldn't require much night duty.

I investigated the unit — and after several trial sessions I found there just wasn't much to do there. It was a waste of time.

A friend persuaded me to join the National Guard. He was one of the local officers and had great confidence in me — though the unit was artillery and I had served in reconnaissance. "Never mind," he said, "you can catch on quickly."

I will admit some panic when we visited the state capital where I was to be interviewed by high ranking artillery officers. I was approved — but I knew I couldn't make the necessary adjustment without months of hard training.

I knew what I had to do. I wrote out my resignation — clearly and without any excuses.

I'm reminded of that experience when I am pressured by someone to undertake some task that is beyond the reach of my gifts. They just want someone to do it. Finding someone who will say "yes" is much easier than earnest prayer for God's will and searching for the person with gifts to fit the task.

Has it happened to you — or to someone close to you, a friend? Christians have the right to say "no" in such cases — without feeling guilt.

We owe God and each other our best. We are responsible to use our gifts — and to help others in discovering theirs. In the brief time I had to direct artillery fire while on duty, I learned that was not my gift.

The church and its members are better off when gifts are matched with the task. □

Brister offers tips for beginning ministers

By C. W. Brister
Southwestern Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas — "Keeping up with the Joneses" used to be enough to satisfy the average American. Today, plain people of the Cross are attempting to keep up with a fast-changing world. We are familiar with a few of the miracles and new techniques in medicine because of high profiles in the media. What about education for the pastoral or missionary ministry? What would you say to one or more "blue chip" high school graduates who've returned

from church youth camp with a commitment to Christian ministry as a vocation?

First, navigating the road from idealistic, early commitment to mature ministry with integrity is more demanding than ever. People seem fed up with churches that exist for themselves, not for the members. People want leaders who are intelligent, Kingdom-of-God persons with compassion. They are weary of "kingdom builders" who capitalize on folks' generosity as they climb to the top of the megachurch mountain.

Each ministry candidate should be challenged to understand his or her developmental history and motives as determining factors in readiness for ministry. Careful assessment of one's natural abilities and spiritual gifts should be undertaken. One's spiritual journey should be supervised under the mentorship of a spiritual director — a trusted, mature adult who models Christianity at its best.

Second, study changing times. Marketing specialists tell us we live in a segmented society of niche thinking: rich and poor, employed and unemployed, white and people of color, pro-life and pro-choice on the abortion issue, gay rights' and homosexual opponents' activist groups, boomers and "gray panthers" as Americans grow older, nostalgia and entrepreneurship in church music, worship, and ministry styles; plus conservative and progressive thinking about the church's mission on earth.

The young ministry candidate facing 2001 must discern the times, study leaders' styles for wise models, explore how churches can respond to peoples' busy lives with simplified schedules and programs, and learn how to

tap lay volunteers for shared ministry.

Again, there is much talk about abandoning theological education for pragmatic doing of ministry. Yes, there is evidence that church-based ministry training has value, but it must not be set against seminary-based education. It is one thing to know how to "run" a youth retreat, for example. It is quite a different thing to know how to claim one's authority as Christ's minister in a terrible crisis situation, or how to work directly with lay and staff members in tough times, or to use administrative skills in guiding the ministry of a great church.

Young ministry candidates need the wisdom of classic Biblical, historical, theological, and ministry studies — alongside practical internships in the real world. Why offer a young minister trainee a job slot in a church that caps prematurely his or her lifetime educational needs? Future options should include both a splendid theological education and church-based skill training for effective ministry.

Finally, can theological schools

restructure their programs to take the personal developmental histories, needs for wisdom, and desires for effectiveness skills of ministry candidates into account? Theological educators must ask what interferences with true learning they may be placing in students' paths. Ministry candidates, meanwhile, should be guided toward those theological schools that have stood the test of placing effective graduates in strategic places of global mission.

Readiness for ministry is not an emergency enterprise. It takes time to grow a soul for God's use. Pastors and counselors, tell your idealistic, splendid young people to take the "long look" and prepare themselves well for the lifelong journey of Christian ministry. Help them get a realistic picture of the church at its best, not simply of clergy temptations, of God's ultimate triumph in history. — Brister is distinguished professor of pastoral ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He has taught at Southwestern since 1957. □

Penn/Jersey convention seeks leader

Baptist Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The executive director search committee for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey has announced a Sept. 23 deadline for receiving resumes of prospective nominees.

The position became vacant when Wallace Williams resigned to join the faculty of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala. Williams had led the state convention five years.

According to search committee

chairman Chuck Teague, the committee is asking each resume be accompanied with a cover letter specifying reasons for the person's nomination.

Resumes with cover letters should be mailed to Search Committee, 4620 Fritchey St., Harrisburg, Penn., 17109.

The search committee also is conducting an in-state survey of Baptists for input. The Penn/Jersey convention, organized in 1970, has 204 churches and missions with some 25,000 members. □

just for today
by Fred Wood
pastor emeritus
Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile

The sophomore was complaining to his professor. "Sir, I don't think I deserve a zero on that test." The professor said, "Neither do I, but it's the lowest mark I'm allowed to give."

Take this truth with you

As life moves along, most of us usually get what we deserve. Things have a way of "paying off." Sometimes the mills seem to grind slowly, but they always grind exceedingly small.

Memorize this Scripture

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Pray this prayer

Lord, give me patience as I wait for your will to be worked out both in my life and in that of others. Help me to remember constantly that you are longsuffering and want the best for everyone. □

Chattanooga students 'go where the people are'

By Ruth Robinson

Long, thin balloons turn into all sorts of exciting animals in the hands of five college students who served as summer missionaries this year with Hamilton County Association.

For missions to be effective, missionaries have to go where the people are. That's what these young people did this summer, in addition to the usual back yard

Bible clubs and Vacation Bible Schools.

"The missions council of the Hamilton County Association thinks a presence here is important," said David Myers, director of missions for the association, during Riverbend, an annual ten-day music and entertainment extravaganza on the banks of the Tennessee River in downtown Chattanooga. "Lost people aren't in church on Sunday morning.

We're going to have to get out in the world."

The five young people — Jerry Roberts, Marley Myers, Mona Shorosh, Jon Farmer, and Amy Whittimore — worked under a tent and a new logo, Scenic City Ministries. In addition to painting faces, they also made animal balloons for their youthful clients and told them about Jesus, using a bracelet of different colors.

Their biggest trade was in face painting and in animal balloons. Long, thin balloons were pumped into lengthy sausages and then folded and pinched into whatever animal or other design the child asked for. The child's name and the message, "Jesus loves you," were then written on each balloon.

Usually the request was for cats, dogs, or other easily recognizable animals. One little boy, however, asked for a gorilla leaning up against a palm tree.

This is the first year the association has had a booth at Riverbend, although other Baptist groups have been represented in the past.

"I've been trying to get us into tourism ministry for several years," Myers said.

After members of the UT-Chattanooga Baptist Student

same thing at Riverbend.

Myers took Moore's idea to the missions council and Scenic City Ministries was born. In addition to Riverbend, the missionaries have taken the program to a different location each week night, including the plaza of the new Tennessee Aquarium, which is drawing thousands of tourists each day; Riverpark, a new recreation area on the river several miles from downtown; and nearby Harrison Bay State Park. Riverbend was too noisy, but at the other events the group also presented a puppet show.

This is a fantastic opportunity for missions, with people coming up asking for information, Moore said.

With the end of summer, the five summer missionaries will be going back to school, but Scenic City Ministries will continue with volunteers from the UTC and Chattanooga State BSUs. — Robinson is a retired journalist from *The Chattanooga Times*. She is a member of First Church, Chattanooga. □



AMY WHITTIMORE touches up makeup on the face of clown Jon Farmer. — Photo by Ruth Robinson



MONA SHOROSH makes a balloon animal for a youngster at the Riverbend festival. — Photo by Ruth Robinson

World Changers projects benefit Tennesseans across state

By Susan Watt and Lisa Griffin
Brotherhood Commission

BRICEVILLE — When Jessie and Shiela Duncan's home and everything they owned were destroyed by a fire, they had no choice but to move in with their parents. That was five years ago. During two weeks in July, a group of Southern Baptist youth known as World Changers rebuilt their house.

World Changers, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, is an eight-day coeducational missions project for high school youth that combines missions education and missions involvement. The projects involve youth in home construction and renovation work in low-income areas.

Sixty-six low-income homes in

Tennessee were improved by Southern Baptist youth from 17 states during June and July as a result of World Changers. The Brotherhood Commission, SBC, sponsored three separate World Changers National Work Projects in Tennessee this summer in addition to eight projects in other states. The first project, from June 13-20, involved more than 230 youth working at 17 work sites in Memphis. The two other Tennessee projects were in Briceville July 11-18 repairing 21 homes and Campbell County July 18-25 repairing 28 homes.

Work was coordinated with the help of the local Baptist associations — Shelby County Association, Memphis; Clinton Association, Briceville; and Campbell County Association, Campbell County.



JENNIFER OWNBY, 15, of First Church, Sevierville, puts the finishing plaster on the ceiling of a home in Lake City, as part of the World Changers National Work Project held July 18-25 in Campbell County.

Generally, the projects involve re-roofing, replacing shingles, doors and windows, scraping and painting exterior and interior walls, putting up sheet rock, and other light construction work. However, the objectives of repairing, painting, and flooring changed for two crews of youth when they arrived at their work site in Briceville for the first time. They were asked to rebuild the Duncan house from a concrete foundation. Two crews in the Campbell County project actually finished the house the following week.

The Duncans agreed that the teens did an excellent job. "It was remarkable to come in from work and see more walls up," said Shiela Duncan.

Expressing gratitude for the teens and for the Lord's help, Jessie Duncan said that the teenagers are "just going around making people's dreams come true."

The crews agreed that confidence in their job increased when they could actually see progress. By 9 a.m. on Wednesday of the first week they had raised the

second wall for the house.

Paying \$225 to cover project expenses, all of the teens prepared for their work through 11 sessions of training in their local churches. There they learned how to share their personal testimony and prepared for their future work in Tennessee by learning the basics of construction.

Upon their arrival, participants were divided into various work crews and given names such as "Toe Nails," "Square Jaws," and "Brick Bats." Work crews were led by an individual with construction experience. Evenings are devoted to large group worship, youth group meetings, recreation, talent shows, skits, and free time. Chuck Maxwell, a Christian musician and songwriter, led the worship and large group meetings in Memphis. Maxwell is a member of Englewood Church, Jackson. Bill Kerr, minister of music at Main Street Church, Lake City, led the worship and large group meetings in Briceville and Campbell County.

This is the third World Changers National Work Project to be held

in Briceville and the first in Memphis and Campbell County. World Changers was piloted in Briceville in 1990.

Cameron Byler, Brotherhood director for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, said World Changers "is truly a life-changing experience because they (the youth) are learning what servanthood is all about. They get a new perspective on life and learn to see what people's needs are."

Clinton resident Elona Daniels also had her home repaired by World Changers. "I hope someday I can help other people like they have done for me," said Daniels. The "Hand Saw" crew removed her front porch and replaced it with a new floor and roof. They also worked on the bathroom and kitchen drainage.

Though some of the results are not as visible as a fresh coat of paint or a new porch, most of the youth feel they are making a difference in the lives of those they are helping.

More than 450 youth and leaders from Tennessee participated in World Changers Work Projects this year. Tennessee churches participating were: First, Millington; First, Oak Ridge; West Jackson, Jackson; Stock Creek and Central-Bearden, both of Knoxville; Wildwood, Maryville; Graceland, Whitten Memorial, Audubon Park, Raleigh, First, Second, and Eudora, all of Memphis; Riverview, Clinton; First, Collierville; First, Sevierville; Calvary, Bristol; Germantown; Canada Road, Lakeland; First, Smyrna; First, Fairview; Highland Park, Columbia; Central, Hixson, First, Monterey; and Grace and Westwood, both of Nashville. □

Daily prayer requests for Chile/Tennessee Partnership — August



16 — The salvation of Manuel Sanchez. Pray that the El Sembrador Church, where his family are members, will have wisdom and sensitivity in reaching him for Christ.

17 — Intercede for missionary David Butts, evangelist in Vina del Mar, who is having a birthday today.

18 — The nominating committee for the national Woman's Missionary Union.

19 — Pray for the 30-40 youth who will attend the youth music workshop beginning tomorrow in Temuco.

20 — Missionary Wanda Dobbins, hospital chaplain in Santiago, on her birthday today.

21 — Travel safety for our construction team that departs today for Santiago.

22 — Missionary Connie Harvey as she celebrates her birthday today in Santiago.

23 — Team members Ricky and Doris Ayers of Medina who are working today in Santiago installing interior wallboard. Pray for adequate building materials, ease with the language barrier, and energy for their tasks.

State schools 'gear up' for fall semester

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

As the middle of August approaches two things are certain — summer is almost over and the beginning of school is near.

Many Tennessee Baptist students will be enrolling in colleges and universities this fall. Tennessee Baptist churches are encouraged to observe an "On to College Day" in August to recognize and support their students.

"Churches have a unique opportunity to blend future and present leadership by focusing on college student ministry," said Rodney Wilson, program associate in the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Student Ministries Department.

"Observing 'On to College Day' can enable churches to take advantage of this often hidden poten-

tial in their midst," Wilson added.

More than 6000 students from Tennessee and across the nation are expected to enroll in the TBC's three colleges and universities this month.

For Tennessee students not enrolling at Belmont University, Carson-Newman College, or Union University, there is still a Baptist presence available on most campuses across the state through Baptist Student Unions.

"The ministry of churches is extended onto college campuses through the vehicle of Baptist Student Unions," Wilson observed.

"BSUs are once again gearing up to rise to the challenges of on-campus ministry for another year," Wilson added.

Tennessee's three Baptist colleges also are gearing up for a new year.

At Carson-Newman College in

Jefferson City, students will find a transformation has taken place. When students left campus in the spring, there was only a cleared piece of ground surrounded by bulldozers.

On Aug. 27, the first day of classes, students will pass a recognizable skeletal frame of a building which will soon house the college's new student activities center.

"These are exciting times at Carson-Newman College," said President Cordell Maddox.

The school is projecting an enrollment of 2150 students for the fall. Preliminary ACT scores for incoming freshmen are at an all time high of 22.9.

Not all of C-N's students will be on campus during the day. The college offers classes in surrounding communities to serve the working adult students. The college is anticipating a five percent gain in the number of adult students this year, said Jack Shannon, director of adult education. More than 75 classes will be offered on weekends and evenings in Jellico, Newport, Morristown, Knoxville, and the C-N campus.

The college also is providing 14 new classes this fall, including "Understanding Christian Missions."

Carson-Newman also will introduce students to 13 new faculty members during the coming year.

Union University is anticipating an enrollment of about 2500 students, including 1950 on the



THE NEW student activities center will be a topic of conversation among Carson-Newman College students this fall. From left, Melody Bates, Shanie Skeen, and Beth Krieder.

Jackson campus and about 500 nursing students in Memphis. As of July 25, 412 freshmen had pre-registered for the fall, already exceeding last year's freshman class. Classes begin at Union on Aug. 27. Freshman registration and orientation will be held Aug. 24. Registration for other students is scheduled Aug. 26.

Union is providing two new programs — an accelerated evening program and a generic bachelor of science in nursing degree.

The accelerated evening program allows adult students to work toward a bachelor's degree in accounting, economics/finance, or management/marketing. Evening courses meet at an accelerated pace. There are two eight-week terms in each regular semester and students may take up to nine hours of classes. The program is based on the assumption that students will either be a community college graduate or will have had courses at the freshman and sophomore levels.

The generic nursing program allows students to study a wide array of supporting courses in the first two years while preparing for more in-depth nursing study in the junior and senior years.

New faces also will be prevalent at Union as 18 professors begin serving on the Jackson campus.

At Belmont University in Nashville the school's enrollment has increased every year for the past

20 years, reaching 2821 last year.

As of Aug. 6, 1669 students had pre-registered for the fall, an increase over the same time last year. Of those 529 are new students. Last fall's freshman class of 715 was a 33 percent increase over the year before.

Students attending last fall represented almost every state in the U.S. and at least 40 foreign countries.

"We continue to be pleased with the growing quality of our applicant pool," said Belmont President William E. Troutt. "It is encouraging to see more and more well-prepared students seeking the type of quality Christian education offered at Belmont."

Registration is August 25-26 and classes begin Aug. 27. The last day to register for classes is Sept. 3.

Belmont students also will see a change on their campus. Under construction is the Lila D. Bunch Library. The new center for music business is being completed and is scheduled for use in January 1993. The center will be housed in the Massey Business Center.

For the first time at Belmont, students may earn a master of accountancy degree which is being offered through the Jack C. Massey Graduate School of Business. — Contributing to this story were Mona Collett, Belmont University; Tracey King, Union University; and Diahn Oakley, Carson-Newman College. □



UNION UNIVERSITY professors Wallon Padelford, right center, and Brent Cunningham, left, advise a student during pre-registration in July.

Tennessee colleges/universities — BSU directors



How would you like your college-bound young adults to arrive on campus with a built-in Christian support group? Below is a listing of Tennessee colleges/universities that have an active Baptist Student Union on campus and the name of the BSU director. Let them help you minister to your young adults while they are on campus. For additional information, contact the TBC Student Ministries Department at (615) 371-2057.

- American Baptist College — Chris Jackson
- Austin Peay State University — Jim Alexander
- Belmont University — Dane Anthony
- Carson-Newman College — Nenette Measels
- Chattanooga State Tech CC — Stan Braley
- Cleveland State CC — Steve Roper
- Columbia State CC — Steve Hixson
- Cumberland University — Ken Tramel
- Dyersburg State CC — Glynda Hall
- East Tennessee State University — Scott Payne
- Fisk University — Chris Jackson
- Hiwassee College — Roger Hill
- Jackson State CC — Maurice Hays
- Knoxville College — Clay Mulford
- Lincoln Memorial University — M. C. McCarter
- Martin Methodist College — vacancy
- Maryville College — Marsha Butler
- Meharry Medical College — Chris Jackson
- Memphis State University — Ron Hawkins

- Middle Tennessee State University — Charles Nored
- Motlow State CC — Eric Hogstrom
- Pellissippi State Tech CC — Betsy Adkins
- Rhodes College — Charles Griffin
- Roane State CC, Harriman — Elaine Pugh
- Roane State CC, Oak Ridge — vacancy
- Shelby State CC — James Perry
- Tennessee State University — Chris Jackson
- Tennessee Tech University — Joe Wiles
- Tennessee Wesleyan College — Rick Wilson
- Union University — Tim Wheat
- UT, Chattanooga — Jim Moore
- UT, Knoxville — Bob Hall
- UT, Martin — Adam Hall
- UT, Memphis — John Billington
- University of the South, Sewanee — Randall Taylor
- Vanderbilt University — Bill Choate
- Volunteer State CC — Penny Lay
- Walters State CC — Martin Klinghard



BELMONT UNIVERSITY students relax as they listen to professor Ginger Justus.

Missionaries adjust to life in 'birthplace' of communism

By Mike Creswell
For Baptist Press

MINSK, Belarus — A huge statue of Lenin still towers over downtown Minsk, but communism casts fewer shadows over this part of the former Soviet empire. Lenin Square has become Independence Square. And in this city of 1.7 million people — one of communism's birthplaces — Southern Baptist missionaries now serve.

Dan and Libby Panter, of Pascagoula and Pearl, Miss., respectively, worked in the African nation of Togo 14 years before transferring last year to Minsk. They are Southern Baptists' first career missionaries in Belarus



MISSIONARY DAN PANTER sits under the old communist hammer and sickle at a subway station in Minsk, Belarus. Symbols of communism remain in the former Soviet republic, but the political power of the ideology that attempted to destroy the Christian faith has crumbled. Panter and his wife, Libby, are Southern Baptists' first missionaries in Belarus.

(also called Belorussia, Byelorussia, and White Russia), the formerly communist land between Poland and Russia. Belarus is part of the fledgling Commonwealth of Independent States, the loose confederation of some former Soviet republics.

The Panters join more than a dozen missionary couples who have moved into Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, many of them transfers from other fields. The two have spent much of the past year learning Russian, their third foreign language, and learning to live in a society with a faltering economy. Their specific ministry will be determined later in cooperation with the national Baptist union.

"We see our ministry as working hand in hand with Baptist leaders here in Belarus in evangelism and church planting," Panter said.

Mrs. Panter hopes to teach English as a way to make contacts with people. "I'm going to have

these Belarussians speaking English with a Mississippi accent," she declared with a laugh.

For now they continue to study Russian with the help of tutors. They expect it will take two years to become proficient in the difficult language. In addition to its Greek-based Cyrillic alphabet, the language has a complicated sentence structure. Change one word in a sentence and all the others must change.

Still, the Panters have had to grasp the basics quickly in order to exist in a city where few speak English or French. Shopping requires the use of Russian numbers. Riding the subway in Minsk requires the ability to read place names. "We were highly motivated; we wanted to eat," Panter admitted.

Baptist work in Belarus is about the same size as that in Togo. About 120 congregations count a total of about 10,000 members. For a nation of more than ten million people, that's not very large.

There are other similarities. In Togo, children sometimes would flee when they saw Panter. He was the first white person they had ever seen; they assumed he was a ghost. In Belarus he gets almost the same response when people hear he is American.

At a collective farm where Panter attended a Bible study, a pastor spoke to Panter in Russian. "Slow down! He doesn't understand everything you say!" another Baptist told the Russian speaker.

"Oh? Why not?" the pastor replied. "He's American."

"American? I never thought I'd see an American here!" the startled Baptist replied, peering at Panter intently. The color drained from his face as if he'd seen a ghost. Panter recalled with a chuckle.

When the missionary couple visited Svetlana Kapustin, a member of Minsk Baptist Church,

they got a similar reaction.

"I never would have dreamed I would have an American in my home and have dinner with me," she told them with a choke in her voice.

After their initial shock, Belarussian Baptists are very welcoming, the Panters quickly point out. But their initial reactions are understandable. Five years ago a visit by an American almost certainly would have led to questioning by the police, perhaps even a jail sentence. A casual conversation in the street could have led to losing one's job or other problems.

Even today, Baptists talking to the Panters remain highly selective in what they will discuss by telephone. And they prefer to avoid discussing anything sensitive on visits to the Panter home, still fearing the modest two-bedroom apartment may be bugged.

Yet the Panters have found most people open to discussing the Christian faith and looking for spiritual answers. As they studied Russian at a language institute in Minsk, the Panters evangelized other students and teachers, gave out Bibles, and showed a film on the life of Jesus.

They were the first Americans at the institute. "Why are you here?" people asked them, giving an excellent opening for sharing their missionary call and the Christian message of salvation.

"These people are hungry spiritually," Mrs. Panter said. "They have been so squelched. They were not allowed to say a word about God."

Panter feels God called them to the region long before they actually could work there. Appointed foreign missionaries in 1976, they spent a year in France studying French before heading to Togo. But during that year Panter took advantage of a budget-priced, two-week tour of the Soviet Union.

Missionaries encounter 'Twilight Zone' economics

Baptist Press

MINSK, Belarus — When Southern Baptist missionaries Dan and Libby Panter go to market, it's like visiting a financial "Twilight Zone."

Before walking to one of two nearby shopping complexes, Mrs. Panter first checks her ration coupons. This year common foodstuffs like sugar, flour, macaroni, butter, oil, cereal, rice, washing powder, and soap are strictly rationed.

Each person — including the two Mississippians, who arrived in the former Soviet republic last year — is allotted one bar of soap and one box of washing detergent every three months. Men get two undershirts per year.

Milk may or may not be available today; if it is, you take a container to bring it home in. Meat is in short supply and expensive if you can find it.

But "expensive" is a relative term these days. For Belarussians, prices have been skyrocketing.

The average worker earns about 2000 rubles a month. A pair of tennis shoes can cost 1600 rubles — virtually an entire month's wages. A pair of women's dress shoes costs between 1300 and 2100 rubles. Sausage, the most common meat product, has gone from eight rubles per kilogram (about 2.2 pounds) to 324. Cheese that cost five rubles a kilogram nine months ago now costs 77. Butter has gone from three rubles a kilogram to 40, sugar from six to 40.

Inflation reportedly runs 20 percent per month. Yet prices in Belarus are much lower than in neighboring Russia. The ration cards keep outsiders from cashing in on the lower prices of goods in Belarus.

But here's another "Twilight



IN A 'TWILIGHT ZONE' market Southern Baptist missionary Libby Panter makes a purchase in a Belarussian market. The Panters are often bewildered as they shop in stores where customers face skyrocketing prices for goods — if any goods are available. Inflation reportedly runs 20 percent per month. But the Panters have it better than most; a person with U.S. dollars can live well for now because of favorable exchange rates. The Panters call it "Twilight Zone" economics. — Photo by Dan Rutledge

It changed his life.

"The Lord really spoke to me while I was here about how great the need was," Panter recalled. "One night I made a commitment to him that if the door ever opened I would like to come."

At the time, missionary service in the Soviet region was impossible. But Panter kept thinking about spiritual needs behind the Iron Curtain. He talked with Russians who visited Togo and read avidly about events in the Soviet Union.

When he casually asked in 1990 about mission work in the Soviet Union, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrator told him requests for missionaries in the region were coming and that service was possible.

"It was like a bolt of lightning," Panter said. "The Lord said to me, 'You said if the doors opened, you'd go.'"

Mrs. Panter was less enthusiastic at first, but after praying through it, the two united in a sense of call and began to apply for a transfer.

So far the hardest part of serving in Belarus for the Panters has been sending their three children back to the United States. Traci, 20, is a college student and would be away from home anyway. But Katherine, 17, and Michael, 15, are staying with Mrs. Panter's parents in Florence, Miss., to attend high school there.

Despite such hardships, the Panters feel they are where God wants them.

Belarussian Baptists never thought they would have missionaries from the United States among them. The Panters never thought they would be able to work there. All agree their very presence is a miracle and they intend to make the most of it. □

Zone" aspect: The rapid increases in ruble prices have been accompanied by a sharp fall in the exchange rate of the Russian ruble to the American dollar. In February 1991 \$1 could obtain 5.4 Russian rubles. In June 1992 \$1 purchased 120 Russian rubles. For now, a person with dollars can live well — at least within the limitations of a tottering economy in which there is often little to buy at any price.

For a person with dollars, a six-ruble ice cream cone costs less than six cents. A steak dinner in the best restaurant in Minsk costs about \$2. A subway ride costs one cent. A ten-hour train ride from Minsk to Moscow, complete with private cabin with beds and hot tea, costs under \$5.

It is "Twilight Zone" economics. Shopping doesn't seem real.

At a grocery store near the Panter apartment, shoppers

stand in long lines to buy eggs, milk, or meat. Some purchases require standing in line three times — first to order an item, then to pay for it, and again to pick it up.

Even with money in hand, finding what you want to buy becomes a major adventure. Stop to look at a display and soon several other shoppers will crowd up close behind you. Perhaps you have found something worth buying, and they don't want to miss an opportunity.

In such an atmosphere shopping takes on a grim, life-and-death demeanor. The intent expressions of most shoppers reveal the tension of the search.

"Life is especially hard for retired people," said a hospital worker. "Many cannot buy meat. They can buy vegetables only in state shops where the quality is low. They cannot buy oranges or apples." — Mike Creswell □

■ the people

■ **James Bondurant** was ordained to the deacon ministry of Main Street Church, Martin, Aug. 2.

■ Members of Central Church, Johnson City, honored Minister of Music **David E. Hampton** for 20 years of service to the church in a surprise celebration Aug. 9. During Hampton's tenure at Central Church, several new choirs and an instrumental ensemble were organized. He also began the Living Christmas Tree program and a summer concert series in 1979. The concert series includes music by local and professional artists performing during Sunday evening worship services during July.



HAMPTON

■ the churches

■ Members of First Church, Middleton, will celebrate homecoming with a noon meal in the family life center and Heaven Bound in concert at 7:30 p.m.

■ **Second Church, Memphis**, entered its 31st year in July. A 30th anniversary celebration was held which included music and responsive readings used in the first service of the church, taped greetings from former staff members, and recognition of charter members. Brooks Faulkner is interim pastor.

■ **Don Whitt** will preach at revival services Aug. 23-28 at First Church, Adamsville. Fritz and Shirley Smith will be music evangelists.

■ The First Church, Crossville, congregation will be led in revival Aug. 12-16 by James Travis.

■ Members of First Church, Smithville, will celebrate homecoming with a churchwide dinner at noon Aug. 16. Bill Palmiter, former pastor of First Church, will speak during worship at 11 a.m.

In addition, revival will be Aug. 30-Sept. 2.

■ Friends and neighbors of Lockeland Church, Nashville, are invited to revival services led by Henry Linginfelter Aug. 23-26.

■ **Immanuel Church, Germantown**, celebrated groundbreaking July 19 for its first building. Funding for the new building was provided by a bond issue of \$2.3 million. After the worship and praise service, a caravan of cars moved the congregation to the 14-acre property about a half mile north of the shopping center where the group has been meeting.

■ Members of Oak Street Church, Elizabethton, broke ground recently for a new activities building.

■ **Bob Polk** will preach at the homecoming worship service Aug. 23 at Shady Valley Church, Shady Valley, followed by D. L. Lowrie delivering the message at the building dedication in the afternoon. The Assurance Quartet will provide special music.

■ Homecoming will be Aug. 23 at Johnson Church, Monterey. Morning service will be followed by a fellowship dinner and special music at 3 p.m. Glenn Conner is interim pastor.

■ Several churches in Salem Association have revivals scheduled in the upcoming weeks. They are Coopers Chapel Church, Woodbury, Aug. 9-14, Thurman Seber, evangelist; First Church, Woodbury, Aug. 9-14, Bill Wilson;

Mt. Herman, Smithville, Aug. 17-23, David Koons; First Church, Smithville, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, Benny Jackson; Shiloh Church, Woodbury, Sept. 13-18, Thurman Seber; and Whorton Springs Church, Smithville, Sept. 20-26, Glenn Denton.

■ Homecoming and the 100th anniversary of Old Bethel Church, Palmersville, will be celebrated Aug. 23.

■ **Gates Church, Gates**, is 75 years old this month. Members celebrated Aug. 9 with their former pastor Bill Smith delivering the morning message. Bill Kelly presented a concert following a noon meal. Roy Stinson is pastor.

■ Homecoming Aug. 23 will kick off revival at Mary's Chapel Church, Ripley. Services will be led by Fred Ward. Doug Buchanan is pastor.

■ **Bill Williams** will be evangelist for revival Aug. 16-21 at Miston Church, Bogota. Carmon Dennison is pastor.

■ **Curtis Vaughan**, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort. Worth, Texas, will speak on homecoming day at Roellen Church, Dyersburg. Vaughan preached his first sermon 50 years ago at Roellen. Phillip Mansfield is pastor.

■ The Flag Pond Church, Flag Pond, congregation will celebrate the church's 150th birthday Aug. 16. Reece Harris will offer the morning message.

■ **J. Harold Smith**, president of the Radio Bible Hour, will preach during revival at North Johnson City Church, Johnson City, Sept. 2-6.

■ Members of First Church, Blountville, recently dedicated a

new family life center and educational and office facilities. Guest speaker was former pastor Mike Gilmore.

■ The following churches in Wilson County Association are planning revivals: Greenvale Church, Watertown, Aug. 12-16, Doug Westmoreland and Wendell Hall; Ramah Church, Watertown, Aug. 12-16, James Williams; and First Church, Lebanon, Sept. 13-16, Jim Wilson.

■ Members of Lakeview Church, Selmer, recently dedicated new church property and held a groundbreaking service for a new building.

■ **Larry Gafford** will speak at homecoming Aug. 16 at Kimball Church, Kimball.

■ the leaders

■ **Gladeville Church, Gladeville**, has added several new staff members. **Bruce Grubbs** has been called as bivocational pastor and

Barry Rickard as fulltime associate pastor for congregational worship, care, and nurture. **Doug Merritt** will serve as bivocational associate pastor for youth ministries.

■ Members of Cross Creek Church, Indian Mound, recently welcomed new Pastor **John McBride**. He is a graduate of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis. He formerly served in Stewart County Association.

■ **Jerry Hyder** will begin service Aug. 17 as minister or education at First Church, Sevierville.

■ **Allen Lockerman** is the new pastor of First Church, Cleveland.

■ **Carl Simmons** is the new pastor of Second Church, Knoxville. He was formerly pastor of Cornerstone Church, McMinnville, as well as churches in Kentucky and Virginia. He holds a doctor of ministry degree from Mid-America Seminary.



THE YOUTH of First Church, Sparta, recently spent a week at Columbia Avenue Church in Pontiac, Mich. The youth worked and taught Vacation Bible School and distributed more than 300 Gospel tracts. Fourteen people accepted Christ as Savior during the week. Participants included, from left, front row, Carol Bohannon, Janie Denton, Pam Haun, Joel Golf, Rachel Turner; back row, Minister of Youth Derek Bohannon, Jonathan Johnson, Nathan Johnson, Jonathan Haun, Pastor Dean Haun, Ashley Boston, Holly Weaver, Angie Heady, Lori Hensley, and Emily Smith. Tennessee Baptists have a partnership missions agreement with the Michigan Baptist Convention.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

Gravity and earth

By Tom Suter, pastor
Indian Springs Church, Kingsport

It has been said that Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravity. Certainly he observed it when an apple fell from a tree, but the law was there and had been around since creation. The law of gravity was around when Adam and Eve took of the "fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Gravity pulls downward or earthward. There is a spiritual law of gravity as well. We have all experienced it as well as the natural law. Paul described it in Romans 7 when he said, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (v. 21).

The Scriptures refer to the evil system as the "world." So it is the pull of the world that we must contend with everyday. Our old nature is comfortable with the pull of the world, but our "new man" created in Christ is only satisfied

with the pull of heaven. We are living in a world system that seeks to pull us down everyday, and we have within us the gravitational pull of the Spirit. God is calling us upward in all we do. The new man is not "magnetized" to this world. The Spirit is always pulling us upward.

This is a great struggle. However, if we learn to live by heaven's pull we will be drawn farther away from the gravitation of this world.

Every Christian is to be a living example of a higher gravity. □

Life is a partnership

By John Pippin, DOM
Shiloh Association

Paul was thankful for the Philippian Christians' partnership in the Gospel (Philippians 1: 3-5). "Partnership" comes from the word "koinonia" which is often translated "fellowship." It means sharing or participating with someone in an experience. The Christian life is a partnership,

a sharing with someone in an experience. It is a shared life.

A Christian shares with all other believers the blessing of grace. He also shares with them the responsibilities of the new life in the proclamation of the Gospel. If the Gospel is to reach the world, an effective partnership among many people is necessary.

Some must give, stay, witness, and pray as the Philippians had done. Some must receive, go witness, and pray as Paul had done. Paul was deeply grateful that these had been his helpers and partners in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Like Paul we should be grateful for helpers and partners in the proclamation of the Gospel. One particular group is the 13 youth and adults who went from this association to Detroit on a mission trip.

The Lord used their dedication to encourage a struggling church and to open the doors of the Kingdom to some who were lost. Many of you prayed for them and some

even helped them financially. The partnership worked; souls were saved; give thanks!

That is one of the blessings of being a Southern Baptist and doing cooperative missions! No, Southern Baptists are not perfect, but they are a partnership of believers sharing the blessings of grace and the responsibilities of proclaiming the Gospel. No one individual nor church can proclaim the Gospel around the world, but a partnership in the Gospel can carry out the Great Commission.

Pray for our partners in the Gospel and give cooperatively to support their work for the Lord. But do not forget to give thanks for them! □

True education

By David Hanes, pastor
Alice Bell Church, Knoxville

True education is not the cramming of the mind with different ideas, but the developing of our capacities so that their real

character may be brought out to the best advantage; and the highest purposes of our lives accomplished.

In the caterpillar, all the rudiments of the butterfly may be seen, but a great change is needed to liberate the higher faculties and make the caterpillar the new creature it seeks to be. Jesus Christ said, "Learn of me." He educates by regenerating the character and opening the way for the full development of all the capacities of the new man. To learn of Christ, then, is to be conformed into His likeness, and thus be able to fulfill all the purposes of God in the new life.

In the teaching ministry of our church, we seek not only to instill knowledge but to encourage the application of that knowledge to the life of the individual. Let us be willing to put into practice that which we have learned from God's Word. Let us become participants — not just spectators. □

Welcome visitors from 'parking lot to pew'

By Frank Wm. White
For Baptist Press

RIDGECREST, N.C. — Churches, especially those with a southern tradition, should be the friendliest places around but many churches don't even realize how unfriendly they are to guests, according to a Southern Baptist growth consultant.

One of the biggest challenges facing the church may be how to assimilate people attracted by the church's evangelistic efforts, said Jerri Herring, growth consultant in the Sunday School Board's Sunday School division.

From the parking lot to the pew and every place in between, visitors are developing an impression of a church, Herring said in a session at a Sunday School Leadership Conference, July 25-31 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Lankford to manage Ridgecrest

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — G. W. Lankford, manager of the engineering, maintenance, and construction section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's property management department, will be recommended to become manager of Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, effective Sept. 1.



Board trustees will be asked to approve Lankford, 48, during their semi-annual meeting at Ridgecrest Aug. 17-19, according to T. Michael Arrington, executive vice president for operations.

Lankford, who previously worked at Ridgecrest five years, would succeed Ken McAnear, who retires Sept. 1 after 25 years as manager of the national conference center.

A native of Aiken, S.C., Lankford holds a bachelor's degree in

"Most churches don't have any idea how bad of an impression they are leaving with visitors," she said.

From the lack of parking spaces to the decision about which door to enter, lack of greeters once inside and hospitality in the worship center, visitors are getting the impression they are not wanted in most churches, Herring said.

While a church with limited parking may be unwilling to allocate a few of its premium parking spaces for visitors, those are the churches which most need designated visitor parking, she said.

If a visitor has to hunt for a parking space and find one a block away, he likely will take his family elsewhere, she said.

Visitor parking spaces should be some of the best spaces near

an entrance to a visitor welcome center, she recommended.

Curbside greeters should be outgoing people "who never met a stranger, not 'good ole boys' who will stand around and talk with each other," she said.

"When visitors pull up and see seven doors, how are they going to know which one is the quickest entrance to where they need to be?" she asked. Greeters can help with that problem as well as helping with diaper bags and with the children.

However, Herring cautioned that a greeter should never pick up a visitor's child without first asking if he may help get the children out of the car.

Although some churches have elaborate welcome centers, it does not have to be a formal area. "It may be as simple as three people standing at the door with clipboards," she said.

Relating an experience of trying to return a shirt to a store while holding a crying grandchild, Herring said she refused to fill out the required form. "I realized we are doing the same thing to people at church. They stand there with a baby and diaper bag and two other children hanging on

their legs and we ask them to fill out a visitor's form," she said.

Volunteers at the welcome center should fill out the forms. When the welcome center volunteer asks the questions and fills in the blanks, there is a greater likelihood the church will have the information needed, she said.

While coffee in the welcome center may seem like a nice touch, it may only take extra time and attract unwanted "hall standers" to the area, Herring said.

At the welcome center, visitors should be able to get answers to any questions and should receive a nice brochure about the church's activities including music, camps, Bible studies, family activities, and other activities, she said.

"The brochure need not be four-color but needs to be good quality," Herring suggested.

Greeters should take visitors to their Sunday School classes, taking youngest children first and

parents last, she said.

Once in the worship center, visitors should expect friendly greetings from those around them but likely will not want to be singled out as visitors. Some churches are requesting that everyone in the worship service register their attendance, she said.

Many of these churches use a tab on the order of worship for each person to provide their name, address, and phone number. Other information such as prayer requests and decisions can be marked on tabs collected at the end of the service, Herring said.

The system allows church members to provide prayer requests, changes of address, and other information while the visitors do not feel that they are being singled out, she noted.

Churches need to experiment with ways to make visitors feel comfortable, Herring said. □

industrial management from

Clemson (S.C.) University. He began work for the Sunday School Board in 1984 as foreman in the building maintenance unit at Ridgecrest and was promoted to his present position in 1989. Prior to his employment at Ridgecrest, he was the city building official for Seneca, S.C., and a self-employed contractor.

A member of First Church, Franklin, he holds professional memberships in the International Facility Managers Association and the National Association of Homebuilders.

He and his wife, Evelyn, are the parents of one son, Andy, and a daughter, Melissa. □

SMOKY BEAR LODGE
160 Bear Lodge Drive
Townsend, TN 37882
16151 448 6442
Hours: 10-5:30 PM

"In the Peaceful Side of the Smokies"

"We specialize in church retreats in the Smokies. Also family vacations and reunions. Call us for a FREE brochure!"

"JESUS IS LORD!"

CHURCH STEEPLES
• BAPTISTRIES
• WALL CROSSES
• BAPTISTRY WATER HEATERS
COLONIAL, CONTEMPORARY AND MODERN DESIGNS

ERECTOR AVAILABLE
WRITE OR CALL FOR LITERATURE OR PROPOSALS

TOLL FREE 1-800-941-3152
IN NC 1-800-523-9058

A & O STEEPLES & BAPTISTRIES
4871 HARVEY RD. • BOX 1053
JAMESTOWN, NC 27882

We Specialize In:

- ★ Workers' Banquets
 - ★ Deacons' Retreats
 - ★ Stewardship Banquets
 - ★ Senior Adults Banquets
 - ★ Ministers' Banquets
 - ★ Evangelistic Crusades
- Hundreds of Banquets and Revivals over several states
Call Early: (615) 758-2006 or write

John Kurtz,
302 Woodlawn Dr.,
Mt. Juliet, Tenn. 37122



Rev. John Kurtz and The "Professor"



BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD

Be a part of "Building our Future" at the Sunday School Board fulfilling the vision of "assisting local churches and believers to evangelize the world, and grow churches by being the best worldwide provider of relevant, high quality, high value Christian products and services."

Seeking highly trained and experienced personnel for key leadership positions in the following areas:

- COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
- BUSINESS AND FINANCE
- DISTRIBUTION
- BOOK STORE (National and Regional Management)
- BIBLE AND BOOK PUBLISHING
- ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Minimum requirements include a bachelor's degree and 10 years of successful high level experience in the specified field.

Competitive salary and comprehensive benefit package provided.

If qualified and interested please send resume with salary history and references including addresses and phone numbers to:

Senior Search Committee
Human Resources Department
Baptist Sunday School Board
127 Ninth Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37234
(Equal Opportunity Employer)

BOWLING UNITED INDUSTRIES
Lights Baptistries
1000 W. 10th St.
Box 2250 • Danville, VA 24541
FAX: 804-822-2210

Call for Free BROCHURE
BAPTISTRIES HEATERS, PUMPS FACTORY DIRECT
TOLL FREE NATIONWIDE 1-800-251-0679
FABRIMOL 355 BAPTISTRY CO
3511 HANSON PIKE • CHATTANOOGA, TN 37415

Steeple & Baptistries
From the world's largest manufacturer of fiberglass church products
Call or write for our free catalog

• Steeple • Crucifix • Window • 1-800-521-9058
• Baptistry • Lighted Wall • Baptistry Heaters • PO Box 1053
• Cross • Chattanooga, TN 37415

FIBERGLASS SPECIALTIES INCORPORATED

Pray for 300
to attend
Pastors' Retreat
Aug. 24-27
at Camp Carson

Hear —
Jay Strack, evangelist
Don Long, Chattanooga
D. L. Lowrie, TBC

Enjoy —
music
recreation
Call (615) 371-2058 for information.
Paid for by retreat consultant committee

PEWS
NEW & USED (800) 366-1716
Overholtzer

For the best in Church Directory Photography,
MIKE FESMIRE Photography
3 North Broad • Lexington, TN 38351
Call (901) 968-8977

FOR \$25 SEE THE GREAT PASSION PLAY & STAY AT KELLER'S COUNTRY DORM RESORT for Groups of 12-160, in Eureka Springs, Ark. Air Conditioned Lodging, Swimming, \$9 TICKETS, Cheeseburger Cookout, Dessert, and Breakfast. ALL INCLUDED! Call 501/253-8418 today!

A & O CHURCH FURNITURE
4871 HARVEY RD. • P.O. BOX 1053
JAMESTOWN, NORTH CAROLINA 27882

— PEW —
UPHOLSTERING
1-800-521-9058
N.C. 1-800-222-7895
REUPHOLSTERING

■ Sunday School lesson commentary

□ The decline and fall of Israel — Bible Book Series for August 16

By Leonard Markham, pastor; Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville

During the reign of Ahaz in Judah and Hoshea's reign in Israel, the people were "traveling down a downward road," as Clyde Francisco described the nation. The spiritual erosion had gone so far that the prophets of God denounced the sins of the people. There seems to have been two sins in particular receiving denouncement from Isaiah and Hosea.

Hosea and Isaiah were violently opposed to the policy of depending on foreign alliances for Israel's security (Hosea 7:8-10; Isaiah 30:1-5). Hosea used a series of metaphors to describe the ruin that had taken place in the nation. The bringing together of these unholy alliances he likened unto the mixing of oil and water. His words have referenced the fact that Israel was dependent

on other nations and not God for her survival.

Israel had been chosen by God to be an instrument of salvation to the nations. She was to be a peculiar nation. She had been separated and set aside to do God's mission. Did Israel do God's will? No! She formed unholy alliances with other nations and was unfaithful to God. God had instructed her: "I am your God and you are my people," and "you are to have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:2-3). Was this instruction heeded? No!

Let us not be too harsh with Israel. We, too, have been guilty of trying to compromise the things of this world with Christianity. We know what happens when we try to mix oil and water. It is a futile effort. Then why do we try to com-

promise the standards of God with the ways of the world? Jesus addressed this issue when He said, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (John 15:19).

Basic Passage: II Kings 14:23-17:41

What did Jesus mean by those words? Jesus realized the way of the world and His way were, are, and shall always be diametrically opposed. He knew His disciples would have different standards, different values, and different goals. Jesus prayed for His disciples, saying, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16).

I address this question to all of us. Why does the world not hate us? Could the answer be that we have so compromised our Christianity that the world cannot tell the difference between a "man in Christ," and a "man in the flesh?" Could it be that we Christians have "mixed" ourselves with the world until we are sterile and assimilated? I had a seminary professor who said, "When there is no difference between the world and the church, you can easily tell which one has changed." Do we feel a note of alarm in this statement? I do.

The other sin of Israel denounced by Isaiah and Hosea was their indecision. Israel and Judah were torn between these foreign alliances and trusting in God. The metaphor used by Hosea to

describe the sickness of Israel was, "Ephraim is like a cake not turned." (Hosea 7:8-10). Israel was like a pancake done on one side but raw on the other. She needed to be turned, but she didn't know what to do. Israel had become indecisive and unable to act.

Can we picture in our minds a helpless man wringing his hands as he views the morning breakfast, burning on one side, doughy on the other, and not knowing what to do? If we can, then we have a picture of Israel. She was indecisive. She had compromised her integrity; she had diluted her faith; and she was left with a "half baked religion." Here is a message of warning from God's Word to the church today. How will we respond to God's message? □

□ Respect God's Word — Convention Uniform Series for August 16

By Gory Coltharp, pastor; First Church, Jackson

This study is the first of three in a new unit titled *Guidelines for Serving*. These lessons are drawn from II Timothy and Titus and focus on proper respect for Scripture, faithfulness in service, and consistency in living for Christ each day.

Paul knew full well what such loyalty to Christ could cost. II Timothy was probably written from a small, dark, damp dungeon cell in Rome's Mamertine Prison. Here he awaited certain execution (ch. 4:6f). Paul's friends were scattered. Some had deserted him (ch. 1:15, ch. 4:10f). Only Luke was with him (ch. 4:11). From such dire circumstances Paul wrote to challenge Timothy to remain faithful to Christ and pursue his calling unashamedly (ch. 1:12-14).

Challenge to faithfulness (vv. 1-2)

Today the complete Bible can be purchased in 322 different languages and portions of Scrip-

ture have been translated into nearly two-thirds of the world's more than 3000 languages. When Paul wrote from his prison cell, the Word of God had not yet been written down and codified. Therefore his challenge to Timothy is all the more incredible. "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (v. 2). This essential process of faithful witnesses telling others the good news and teaching them the ways of God remains key to the spread of the Gospel to this day.

Basic Passage: II Timothy 2:1-19

Illustrations of faithfulness (vv. 3-7)

To illustrate the essential qualities of faithfulness required in effective Christian service, Paul offered three images from everyday life: a soldier (vv. 3-4),

an athlete (v. 5), and a farmer (v. 6). Like a faithful soldier we are to endure whatever inconvenience, hardship, or suffering is required for us to accomplish our mission. A Christian soldier will be required to remain focused upon the task and goal of his/her life, not be distracted by worldly entanglements.

As an olympic athlete must compete according to the rules of competition or be disqualified, the Christian servant must live according to God's standards.

The hard-working farmer earns the right to enjoy the fruits of his labors in due season. But he must work hard and long with no immediate reward beyond the knowledge he is doing the best he can. Our generation in its quest for instant gratification can learn from this simile of faithfulness.

Gospel in paradox (vv. 8-13)

Paul, reflecting on the essence

of his faith and hope in Christ, drew striking paradoxical similarities between his imprisonment for the Gospel and his Lord's sacrifice on the cross. Both Jesus and Paul appeared to be defeated by the world, yet both were the true victors. The Gospel messenger may be silenced, but "God's message is no prisoner." (v. 9, Montgomery). "If we endure suffering, we shall also reign with Him." (vv. 11-12, Montgomery). Even when we fail to be faithful, our Lord is faithful, true to His divine nature and integrity (v. 13).
Cut a straight path to truth (vv. 14-15)

In respect for the Word of God, Timothy was encouraged to stay away from controversy. Instead of "disputing about words," he was to focus upon living out the solid truths of God's revealed Word. James wrote, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James

1:22). Paul was convinced that controversy, semantic argument, and theological haggling, accomplish no ultimate good. In fact, such activities eventually turn malignant, ruining the hearers (v. 14). Paul challenged Timothy to make it his supreme ambition to please God by performing his Christian duties in his highest ability while "rightly handling the word of truth." (v. 15). Literally, Paul admonished Timothy to "cut a straight path to the truth."

A Christian servant is advised to avoid wandering the paths which wind aimlessly through the world's clutter. Instead, we are to handle the truth of God's Word as a sacred trust from the One who loved us enough to give Himself for our redemption. By consistent, careful study and application of the Bible's truths we, too, can maintain a straight path to God's truth for our lives. □

□ Showing kindness to others — Life and Work Series for August 16

By James Hutson, pastor; First Church, Rockwood

This is the third lesson in the unit, *Ways of Serving God*. The first lesson was about humility. The second was about forgiveness. This lesson is about kindness. William Barclay says, "Christian kindness is a lovely thing, and its loveliness comes from the fact that Christian kindness means treating others in the way which God has treated us." (Barclay, *Flesh and Spirit*, p. 102). What a beautiful world it would be if everyone treated each other in the same way God treats us.

David and Jonathan (ch. 9:1)

The friendship and affection between David and Jonathan is one of the beautiful stories of Scripture. Their friendship was all the more remarkable because Saul, Jonathan's father, tried every way possible to kill David. When Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle, David was genuinely sorrowful (ch. 1:17).

But David became king of Israel (ch. 5:4-5), and a time of peace came to the land. David's thoughts returned to his friend Jonathan (ch. 9:1). David learned from Ziba, a servant in Saul's house, that there was a son of Jonathan named Mephibosheth who was lame. David had Mephibosheth brought to the palace to live. The servant Ziba and his family were instructed to till the land for Mephibosheth, and all the profits from the land would belong to Jonathan's son.

A time of treachery (ch. 16:1-4)

Years passed and Absalom, David's son, led a rebellion to overthrow his father. David and the soldiers loyal to him were forced to flee Jerusalem. As David fled the city, he was met by Ziba who brought provisions. When David inquired about Mephibosheth, Ziba told him Mephibosheth had remained in Jerusalem hoping David would be

killed and Mephibosheth would become king (v. 3). David evidently believed Ziba and bestowed on him all the lands owned by Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth's reply (ch. 19:25-28)

After the death of Absalom and the rebellion was squelched, David returned to Jerusalem. One of the first to meet him was Mephibosheth. David asked him "wherefore wentest not thou with me?" (v. 25). Mephibosheth knew his personal and financial security depended on his answer. Mephibosheth gave a different story. He said he wanted to come

Basic Passage: II Samuel 9; 16:1-4; 17:27-29; 19:24-39

to David, but his servant Ziba tricked him (vv. 26-27a). Mephibosheth appealed to David's honor (vv. 27b-28).

David's decision (ch. 19:29-30)

Who was David to believe? Ziba

had always done as David requested and helped him during the rebellion. Mephibosheth said his servant deceived him. David probably believed a little of both stories. He showed the wisdom that would do credit to his son Solomon. David divided the property between Ziba and Mephibosheth.

An old friend (ch. 19:31-40)

Barzilliah had befriended David during the struggle with Absalom (v. 31). As David was returning to Jerusalem, he met Barzilliah who helped him cross the Jordan River. David invited Barzilliah to come to Jerusalem and be a part of the court. Barzilliah, because of age, graciously declined the invitation and suggested that his servant, Chimham, go with David. This was done and Barzilliah returned to Gilead.

This lesson offers two examples of David's kindness. One instance

concerned Mephibosheth. David showed kindness to him because of his friendship to Jonathan. David's kindness was steadfast despite his uncertainty about the role of Mephibosheth during Absalom's rebellion. This kindness was given to someone who could not return the favor.

The second instance was David's kindness to Barzilliah and his servant. This was kindness returned to someone who had helped in a time of need. It is the height of ingratitude not to show kindness in return for help received. But with Mephibosheth, David showed kindness to the son of an old friend.

Remember the words of Barclay, "Christian kindness means treating others in the way God has treated us." Let us all practice kindness to those who are kind to us and to those who need the kindness we can give. □

Lewis envisions 'Luke 14 churches'

Baptist Press

GLORIETA, N.M. — A convention of "Luke 14 churches" is the vision of Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis.

"I want our churches to be not merely Baptist churches, not just New Testament churches, not only Bible churches but Luke 14 churches," Lewis told 2000 people attending the annual home missions conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Luke 14 includes the parable of a man who prepared a feast but the invited guests refused to attend. The man then told his slave to invite people from all over town to the feast so that the house would be full. "God wants his house filled," Lewis said. "He is not pleased with empty buildings. He is not glorified with empty classrooms. Empty pews don't get saved. Empty chairs don't make decisions."

To fill churches, people should follow the parable's example of taking the invitation to the people, Lewis said. Evangelism is not a program or a strategy, he said, but a "spirit of people who say 'come to Jesus.'" □

Directors of missions receive recognition

Baptist Press

GLORIETA, N.M. — Four directors of associational missions were honored during home missions conferences this year.

Dub Hughes of Big Sky and Yellowstone associations in Montana was recognized for his work as town and country director of missions for the Western United States. Hughes has worked in Montana since 1975, helping the association grow from nine to 50 churches.

William E. East was honored for his metropolitan director of missions work for the western United States. He works in Currin County Association in Bakersfield, Calif. East and his family moved to California in 1933 and were involved in establishing California's first Southern Baptist church, first association, and the state convention.

Doc Lindsey was recognized for metropolitan director of missions work in the eastern United States. He has worked in Greater Detroit Association three years. Lindsey was recognized for his inclusion of ethnic pastors and lay people in associational leadership. He also was described as an encourager to church leaders and an innovator in ministries.

John Dent of Beaver Dam Association in Seneca, S.C., was honored for his town and country director of missions work for the eastern United States. Dent, who retired in April, was director there for 14 years. He has been influential in organizing construction and evangelism mission teams to several areas in the United States and abroad. He also helped open a crisis closet for a closing ministry in the association.

The awards are presented annually by the Home Mission Board associational missions division. □

Romo cited for Hispanic work

Baptist Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Ethnic groups now are a significant element of Southern Baptist life when, 40 years ago, Southern Baptists believed language work belonged to someone else, Oscar Romo said after being honored as Southern Baptist Hispanic Statesman of the Decade.

Romo, director of the language church extension division of the



THE FOUR GRANDMAS as they are known at the Nanjing Children's Welfare Center in China have found a rewarding way to spend retirement — caring for orphaned babies at the center. The center is home to 300 orphans, newborns to age 14, who were abandoned because of birth defects or their female gender. The four women, all who have grandchildren of their own, also give expert medical advice — two are doctors and two are registered nurses. The Amity Foundation, a Chinese organization begun by Christians and others, sponsors the "grandmothers project." Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization, has provided resources and funds for a number of Amity projects. — Photo by Lounette Templeton.

Home Mission Board, said he never dreamed "we could have had this kind of reception in the convention."

Romo's contributions to Southern Baptist ethnic work were noted by a parade of Southern Baptist agency leaders and their representatives who paid tribute to him during the Conference of Southern Baptist Hispanic Pastors' meeting in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 2.

Romo was named as Hispanic Statesman by the conference that was a celebration of the 500th anniversary of Hispanic influence in America. The Hispanic meeting preceded the National Language Church Development Conference sponsored by the special ministries department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board at the Hyatt Orlando Convention Center, Aug. 3-6. □

Youth ministers meet in Nashville

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Youth ministers attending the Youth Ministry National Conference 4 will be able to choose from more than 100 seminars and workshops on everything from impacting the school campus to training parents of youth in sex education.

The Aug. 19-23, 1993, conference is jointly sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union, and Brotherhood Commission. Meetings will be at three locations in downtown Nashville — the board's Nashville headquarters, Nashville Convention Center, and First Church, Nashville.

Morning Bible studies during the week will be led by Dan Yeary, pastor of University Church in Coral Gables, Fla., and each of the evening worship celebrations will feature a different ethnic influence.

A luncheon at Opryland also is planned followed by a "Christian Artist Showcase" at one of the theme park's theaters. Several nationally recognized contemporary Christian recording artists will perform and then participate in a dialogue session with youth ministers.

For a conference brochure and registration information, write Richard Ross, Church Administration Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, MSN 158, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, Tenn., 37234. □

Georgians learn for 1996 Olympics

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — One team in Barcelona, Spain, this summer competed for something more valuable than gold.

Four members of the Georgia Baptist Convention's Atlanta games ministry committee were in Spain during the summer games to aid foreign missionaries in witnessing and ministries while gaining insight in preparation for the XXVI Olympiad in Atlanta in 1996.

"We wanted to learn some things, meet some people, and make some contacts," said Bill Lee, committee member and director of special ministries for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Also in Spain were Ray Johnson, committee chairman and director of the Georgia Baptist Convention's education division; Elmer Goble, HMB associate director of short-term volunteers; and Don Sewell director of special projects for the denominational relations department of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Many ministries during the Barcelona games were geared to tourists and local residents, said Fred Dallas, a 12-year foreign missionary to Spain and coordinator for Southern Baptist work during the Olympics. □

Thai Baptists may double by 2000

Foreign Mission Board

BANGKOK, Thailand — A shift toward urban-centered ministries in Thailand has Southern Baptist missionaries there expecting the number of Baptists to double to 6000 by the year 2000.

English classes and even financial seminars at urban ministry centers have attracted numerous

middle-class Thai professionals, said missionary Tom Williams. "This is one of the most open groups to Christianity," Williams said.

"These young professionals are thinking more about their lives and their futures and Buddhism is not answering their questions." At least 95 percent of Thailand's 59 million people are Buddhist, with Christians accounting for less than one percent. □

Missionaries return to Sierra Leone

Foreign Mission Board

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone — Seven Southern Baptist missionary families who evacuated Sierra Leone in May because of a military coup returned in July.

Skirmishes continue in the small west African country between troops loyal to the new government and small bands of rebels. But the missionaries believe it is safe to resume their work.

Ground broken for Kenyan church

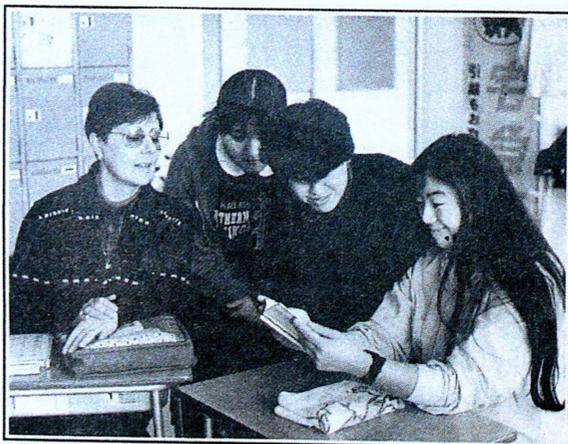
Foreign Mission Board

NAIROBI, Kenya — Ten years of prayer cleared the way for the recent groundbreaking for Parklands Church's new building in Nairobi, Kenya. And more than 100 city workers cleared the weeds.

After many fruitless efforts to get land for a larger facility, deacons and missionaries in 1982 asked God to provide the very plot where the structure will go up. They walked around the vacant lot, claiming the verse, "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you" (Joshua 1:3).

A year ago the title deed was finally granted for the seven-acre plot. But when deacon chairman John Gichane visited the site three days before the groundbreaking, he found weeds had grown so high it would be difficult to have the service, so he went to the city council for help.

By the next morning more than 100 workers were clearing the land by hand. □



SOUTHERN BAPTIST missionary Nan Jordan, left, works with some of her students at the Ohta School for the Deaf in Tokyo, where she teaches American Sign Language. To teach American Sign Language in Japan, the teacher must know Japanese as well as Japanese Sign Language. Jordan knows all three. "Part of the challenge with these kids is just convincing them that they can learn," says Jordan. "These kids are smart, but they need more encouragement because they're so far behind their hearing counterparts." She hopes eventually to start after-school Bible clubs for the students. — Photo by Janice Hicks.