

this week's news

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MAN RECEIVES MEALS last week from Vickie Bledsoe, member of Calvary Church, Oak Ridge. — Photo by Chris Gerbman



TENNESSEAN DON COLLIER, center, helps Jason Simpson, right, and Charles Shaw, left, of Eupora, Miss., prepare biscuits for hurricane victims. — Photo by Jim Veneman

Tennessee Baptists continue relief efforts

The Brotherhood Department, Tennessee Baptist Convention, needs more good volunteers.

Tennessee Baptist relief units will be in Florida for another month in all probability — and volunteers are needed.

Cameron Byler, TBC Brotherhood director, said from South Florida Monday that the need continues to be urgent. Volunteers should call the Brotherhood office in Brentwood at (615) 371-2025 for more information.

As of Monday at noon, Baptist units have fed 1,143,918 meals in South Florida, nearly 250,000 in Louisiana, and more than 20,000 in Hawaii. Tennessee units manned

by about 200 Tennesseans have been on site since Aug. 29.

Floridians owe "a great big thank you for all of the work teams and support and prayers that have come from Tennessee Baptists," said Doyle Wetherington, director of missions, Miami Baptist Association.

Wetherington was contacted by his friend, Bill Marr, pastor, Lincocya Hills Church, Nashville, after the hurricane. Marr explained his friend, whom he met while attending New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, can relate to hurricane victims. Wetherington's home in Homestead lost its roof. Most of its contents were ruined by rain.

All of the Baptist churches in the association, about 100, were damaged, Wetherington added. Because most of them are small, he is especially concerned about the pastors. Their financial support was blown away as the winds blew away the members' belongings and jobs. Marr pointed out.

Like so many Tennessee Baptist have already done, the congregation of Lincocya Hills will deliver a truck load of supplies during October, said Marr. Members are also planning to support rebuilding efforts, he added.

Wetherington emphasized the greatest need of hurricane victims is prayer for those in need and for Christians to respond to

openings for Christian witness.

The other need is money, he said.

Byler noted those wishing to contribute building supplies should provide the following: one and one-quarter inch roofing nails with collars, eight and 16 penny nails, and three-quarter inch plywood.

Volunteers will enjoy showers and bathrooms made available by Glendale Church. Food also is available.

Those wishing to contribute to disaster relief needs in Florida by providing time, money, or building supplies, should contact the TBC Brotherhood Department at (615) 371-2025. □

HMB allocates \$500,000 in relief funds

By Sarah Zimmerman
For Baptist Press

ATLANTA — The executive committee of the Home Mission Board directors authorized up to \$500,000 for relief ministries for victims of this fall's natural disasters.

The \$500,000 is in addition to \$115,000 the board released for relief ministries in August and September.

In their September meeting, executive committee members also received a financial report showing year-to-date income exceeding the budget. Bob Banks, executive vice president, said receipts from the Cooperative Program were the only source of income that did not exceed the budget. The Home Mission Board's Cooperative Program receipts were down \$600,000 from the amount budgeted. Banks said.

The board also approved 20 new missionaries while the chaplains commission endorsed 26 chaplains.

The \$115,000 already spent this year in disaster relief came from a \$50,000 disaster relief fund,

\$25,000 from hunger relief funds, and \$40,000 from reserve funds. The additional \$500,000 will come from reserve funds, executive committee members were told.

The \$500,000 will be distributed through state Baptist conventions in Florida, Louisiana, and Hawaii. The fund also will assist victims of the typhoon which hit Guam, where churches are part of the Hawaii Convention.

Paul Adkins, retired vice president for ministry who continues to work at the Home Mission Board on a contract basis, is going to Hawaii to help assess the needs there and in Guam. Larry L. Lewis, HMB president, and Larry Martin, vice president for ministry, will travel to Florida to survey the damage and discover ways the Home Mission Board can help.

"We're doing our best to respond," Lewis said. "As tragic as these disasters are, they do become tremendous opportunities for ministry and witness."

Martin, who recently spent a week in Florida, said the devastation cannot be described, yet he saw "the name of Jesus Christ

proclaimed."

Martin said he was told 80 percent of the town of Homestead will be bulldozed because it was destroyed beyond repair. He was also told 40 percent of the people will leave the area because the hurricane destroyed their income sources.

Denominations plan new churches

Baptist Press

CHICAGO — Forty-one Christian denominations plan to start 46,182 churches by the year 2000, a study by the Home Mission Board found.

While the churches have set an ambitious goal, Home Mission Board researcher Orrin Morris said church planters and other workers will have to be diligent to reach that goal.

"We're going to have to exceed 65 mph on the freeway and get busy if we're going to do what our mouths say," said Morris, who presented the study Sept. 12 to a group of denominational leaders meeting to discuss evangelism objectives for the year 2000.

Each year \$50,000 is designated for disaster relief. Adkins said the money comes mostly from Annie Armstrong Easter Offering gifts.

But the fund is depleted every year, said Adkins, who added, "I can't remember a year when we haven't spent more than \$50,000" in disaster relief. □

The Southern Baptist Convention leads the 41 denominations with a goal of 13,500 new churches, the study states. Next is the Church of the Nazarene, which hopes to start 6000 new churches, then the General Council of the Assemblies of God, which aims to start 5000.

Although the 41 denominations that responded to the survey represent only 28 percent of all U.S. Christian denominations, they make up 61 percent of all churches and 75 percent of the total members of those churches, the report states.

In addition to those 41 denominations, 16 others have some goal for growth or evangelization. □

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Brotherhood approves funds for Hawaii relief

By Steve Barber
Baptist Press

MEMPHIS — The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission took the first step Sept. 14 toward disaster relief involvement in Hawaii with the approval of funds for a mobile kitchen to serve victims of Hurricane Iniki.

Brotherhood Commission President James D. Williams approved the expenditure to purchase the unit, along with a water purifier, food, and equipment. A dollar amount was not disclosed. Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers Bill Arnold and Milton Schmidt from Dallas were expected to arrive in Hawaii Sept. 16

with the equipment to train local volunteers in mass feeding techniques. American Airlines transported the relief equipment without charge and granted free passage to the volunteers.

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood Commission's Memphis staff continued to evaluate additional needs in the stricken area.

The "garden island" of Kauai took the brunt of Iniki's 130 mph winds when it came ashore Sept. 11. The intensity of the winds and the extent of damage are reported to be comparable to Hurricane Andrew, which hit Florida and Louisiana three weeks ago.

The Hawaii Convention re-

ported damage to three churches on Kauai but there were no deaths or injuries among church members.

At the Lihue Church, pastored by Rick Watkins, the preschool building was destroyed. Large holes were opened in the roof of the sanctuary while the parsonage roof had minor damage.

The parsonage at Eleele Mission was flattened and a portion of the church roof was destroyed. Pastor Mel Campos lost virtually all his household goods.

The roof of Waimea Church, pastored by James Merritt, was partially blown off. The parsonage garage collapsed and

smashed the church van and the pastor's automobile.

"Hawaii Baptists are responding with food and volunteers," said O. W. Eford, executive director-treasurer of the Hawaii Convention in an initial report of Iniki's onslaught.

In Florida, the Kentucky Convention disaster relief unit at Florida City's First Church welcomed Vice President Dan Quayle and his wife, Marilyn, for a 20-minute visit Sept. 12.

Aside from the Kentucky unit at Florida City, others still operating in the area as of Tuesday included the Florida unit at First Church in Cutler Ridge; Tennessee at Glendale Church in Miami; Ohio at First Church in Perrine; and North Carolina at Richmond Heights Middle School. South Carolina and Missouri continued operations at Homestead Middle School.

The units are serving an average of 40,000 meals per day. More than 1.1 million hot meals have been provided by disaster relief crews in Florida alone since Aug. 24. Some 250,000 more were provided by units in south Louisiana. Approximately 650 volunteers have served thus far in the two disaster areas.

Further information is available on the Hurricane Andrew Message and Information Line at (901) 278-7839.

Donations may be sent to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn., 38104, and should be designated for disaster relief. Contributions may also be sent to the Hawaii Baptist Convention, 2042 Vancouver Dr., Honolulu, Hi., 96822, and marked "Kauai Relief."

Non-profit mailers may avoid rate hike

Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Most non-profit mailers probably will not receive a postal-rate increase in fiscal year 1993, but they are extremely vulnerable, according to a spokesman for the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers.

The U.S. Senate approved Sept. 10 a stop-gap measure that would avert for one year a rate hike for non-profit mailers like state Baptist newspapers but would place the non-profit mail subsidy, known as revenue foregone, in a very tenuous position, said Brian Hummell, assistant director of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers.

Revenue foregone reimburses

the U.S. Postal Service for non-profit mailers' share of overhead expenses. Non-profit rates reflect only the cost of handling that class of mail.

The Senate approved 82-12 a spending bill (H.R. 5488) for the Postal Service that would provide only \$200 million of the \$482 million needed for revenue foregone to maintain current rates. The House of Representatives previously approved the same funding level.

The \$282 million shortfall would have triggered as much as a 50 percent rate hike for state Baptist newspapers, except that both chambers of Congress approved a proposal to shield non-profit mailers from a rate increase for 1993. The proposal stipulates that the Postal Service cannot increase rates for non-profit mailers in fiscal year 1993, which begins Oct. 1.

However, the rates would not be frozen for third-class publications that mail flats, non-letter-sized pieces that must be hand-sorted. Third-class flat rates are scheduled to increase approximately 1.9 cents per piece on Oct. 4.

The rate hike is the second phase of a two-year increase de-

signed to cover a \$180 million shortfall from the previous year. Last year the rates on third-class flats increased by 2.2 cents per piece.

Most state Baptist newspapers are second-class, non-profit publications and will not be affected.

Hummell said the appropriations bill leaves non-profit mailers vulnerable for fiscal year 1994. He said the appropriations committee next year would look at the \$200 million as a starting point, and with economic constraints, Congress most likely would keep revenue foregone at that level or cut it.

The U.S. Postal Service has requested \$612.5 million for revenue foregone in fiscal year 1994. The \$412.5 million difference between current funding levels and next year's request probably will mean a huge rate increase unless a legislative solution is found, Hummell said. □

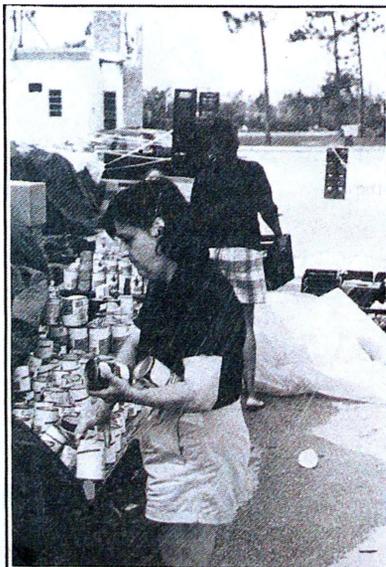
Thomas Redford dies

Thomas R. Redford Sr., 72, a former Baptist pastor, of Tullahoma, died June 16 in Tullahoma.

The native of Monroe County served churches as pastor in southern Kentucky and middle Tennessee for 50 years.

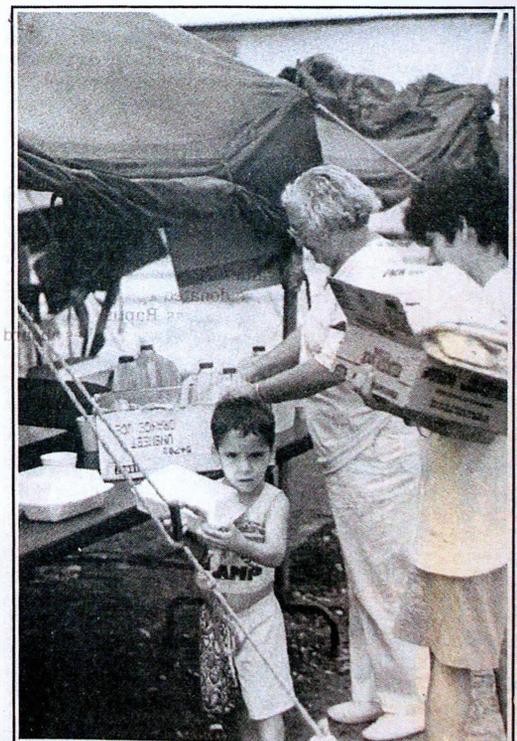
Redford was a graduate of Clear Creek Bible College in Pineville, Ky.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, one grandchild, and one great-grandchild. □



► **HUNGRY RESIDENTS** of south Florida pick up meals under the Tennessee feeding unit's tent near Glendale Church in south Miami.

◄ **MEMBERS OF GLENDALE CHURCH**, Roz Quigley, front, and Sherita Grant, box items outside the church to needy families. — Photos by Chris Gerbman



Parks urges Baptists to get 'vision for going'

By Marv Knox and Mark Wingfield
For Baptist Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — If Baptists really believe missions is the central theme of the Bible, they ought to do more about it. R. Keith Parks said in one of his last appearances as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Parks, who will retire as FMB president Oct. 31, addressed Kentucky Baptists several times during MissionsFest, a foreign missions extravaganza Sept. 11-12.

More than 2600 people attended the meeting, making it the second-largest MissionsFest ever. The FMB sponsors four of the festivals per year.

"If someone who had never read Scripture came to your church and listened for a month to all that was said and taught, and they examined your budget ... do you think they would come out saying the most important thing for these people is sharing Jesus with all the world?" Parks asked. "Or would they find that hard to believe?"

He called for Baptists to get a "vision for going" in response to God's teaching through the Bible and through Jesus Christ.

"The central teaching of Scripture is the concept that God is the God of all people and his message is for all people," Parks said. "If this is the primary theme of the Bible, then we ought to do

something about it."

But both the Jewish people and many who claim to be Christians have missed this basic concept, he said. "We have the feeling that somehow God loves some people more than others. This is not true."

Americans have a responsibility to share not only their material wealth but their spiritual wealth with a needy world, Parks said. "Christians in America ... need to carefully examine our relationship to our Lord and our responsibility to share our spiritual blessings. If we turn inward and fail to share that message, God will move on and find someone who is usable."

But the needs of the world — even though they are great — should not be the primary motivation for going, Parks said.

"The need is a valid consideration, but that is not where the call to missions originates," he said, noting the city of Lexington contained enough needs to keep every Baptist at MissionsFest busy.

"The vision for going begins with God's call," Parks stressed. "My prayer is we can be open and look in God's face and say, 'Lord, for what purpose did you create me?'"

Finding that answer is the key to Christian success, he added: "God speaks. God reveals what he wants us to do. And if we fail to respond to the vision God has set

for us, we are abject failures."

However, most Americans take a "purely human" view of the world and do not feel compelled to spread the Gospel overseas, Parks reported.

"Unless we as God's people look into the face of God and see God's vision for us, we are going to refuse to go," he predicted. "But when one looks in God's face and begins to see the world as God sees it, he rises up and goes."

"God's nature is always one of going and human nature is always one of drawing to itself. That's why more have not responded to the call to go."

Consequently, the Christian's

task is to see the world as God sees it, Parks said.

When people see and follow that vision, they will be changed as much as the people who receive their ministry, he explained.

He quoted the late B. H. Carroll, a Baptist theologian and educator, who said missions is the force that keeps Baptists together, against the centrifugal force of church sovereignty that pulls them apart.

"Missions may be our last hope for ourselves," Parks declared.

"What does God say to you?" he asked. "Look at it from God's eyes. Why did God save you? What good works did he have in mind for you? Without that vision, you'll

perish, you'll wither away, you'll die."

Parks said he knows God is saying "go" to many Christians.

"I believe with all my heart God still calls people with an open-ended, no-limitations calling," he insisted.

God still wants to come to people in human form, but Christians must be willing to go, he said, explaining "God will incarnate himself" in the lives of missionaries who go to tell his story.

Consider this, he suggested: "If Jesus Christ were here today incarnated in a human body, where do you think he would go to preach the Gospel?" □

Parks offered position with CBF

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — R. Keith Parks has been offered the post of global missions coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Parks, who retires Oct. 31 as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, told Baptist Press he has made no decision on the offer from the CBF, a two-year-old organization of SBC "moderates" dissatisfied with the current conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"They have been in contact with me," Parks confirmed, "and so have other organizations, but I haven't felt free to enter into discussion with anyone until my job as FMB president is complete.

I have not discussed details with any of the offers I've received."

Baptist Press attempted to contact John Jackson, a California pastor who serves as FMB trustee chairman, but Jackson was en route overseas and unavailable for comment.

The 84-member CBF coordinating council voted unanimously to endorse the job offer during its Sept. 10-12 meeting in Atlanta, according to a Sept. 15 report by Associated Baptist Press.

The offer initially was extended to Parks in February by the council's global missions ministry group, ABP reported. In a special March 19-20 FMB trustee meeting in Dallas, Parks announced he felt

led of God to retire from the FMB, and he also cited "philosophical differences" over missions strategy with trustees.

Parks, a 38-year veteran of missions who turns 65 in October, has been FMB president since 1980. The board currently has some 3900 missionaries in 126 countries and a current-year budget of \$183.6 million.

The CBF, meanwhile, has hired eight former FMB missionaries as its first "missioners" and, according to ABP, intends to hire six more by Jan. 1. The CBF has received \$4.5 million during the first eight months of 1992, equal to its 1991 income, CBF Cecil Sherman reported. □

Jones declines opportunity to lead Georgia Baptists

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.
For Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptist Home Mission Board administrator Gary S. Jones has declined a call to serve as executive director-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

A 69-34 vote approving Jones came after the GBC Executive Committee considered his nomination in a grueling one and one-half hour discussion. In remarks after the vote, Jones told the committee the vote did not represent

a mandate sufficient for him to accept the position.

Jones, HMB services section vice president, told the committee, "My prayers are with you. My commitment to you has not changed. My commitment is to missions, evangelism, and ministry; the difference is I'm going to be doing it at the Home Mission Board."

He also told the committee the process "has been a joy — and part of it has been interesting."

During the questioning before

the vote, several members of the committee pressed Jones on his positions on women in ministry, abortion, inclusiveness, and other issues.

Asked first about his view of the Bible, Jones said he affirmed the Baptist Faith and Message statement's description of Scripture as "truth without any mixture of error," though he chose not to use "words which tend to be polemical."

The issue of women in ministry was a topic of discussion with Jones during the Sept. 15 business session and, the night before, in a listening session held for executive committee members. Women served as deacons at Wornall Road Church in Kansas City during Jones' pastorate there and he had participated in the ordination of two women to the chaplaincy — a requirement, he stated, of their service as chaplains.

When pressed on the issue Sept. 14, Jones responded that, as executive director-treasurer, he would participate in the ordination of a woman if invited to do so by a Georgia church. When asked during the Sept. 15 business session if he had changed his mind, Jones responded he "absolutely, categorically" had not.

Jones made inclusion a central theme in his responses to questions. He stated that positions on the ordination of women, abortion, and participation in the Co-

operative Baptist Fellowship of SBC moderates "should not be tests of fellowship" among Georgia Baptist churches. He pledged to work toward the inclusion of diverse elements of Baptist life at all levels of denomina-

tional involvement.

Members of the search committee registered shock and disappointment after the vote.

The committee will "start over," said chairman Napp Granade of Warner Robbins. □

Baptists send aid to Nicaragua

Baptist Press

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — A team of Texas Baptist Men, Nicaraguan Baptists, and Southern Baptist missionaries joined forces Sept. 6-10 to aid survivors of a tidal wave that flooded Nicaragua's Pacific coast Sept. 1.

A seaquake measuring 7 on the Richter scale caused the tidal wave that reportedly killed at least 100 people and left about 100 missing, 155 injured, and 3700 homeless.

Texas Baptist Men, working through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, sent a planeload of relief supplies Sept. 6 to Managua, the Nicaraguan capital. The shipment included about 20 tons of supplies — food, clothing, building materials, and household goods. The supplies,

valued at more than \$100,000, were donated by Texas Baptists.

Five Texas Baptist volunteers traveled with the supplies aboard a C97 plane owned by Grace Aire Medical Foundation. The Christian organization provides air transportation and medical help for relief and mission projects. Team member Terry Elder, a Corpus Christi trauma physician, directs the foundation.

Texas Baptists, Grace Aire, and the Foreign Mission Board shared the cost of the flight, each contributing \$10,000, said Jim Palmer, a missionary to Nicaragua on furlough in Fort Worth, Texas. The Foreign Mission Board provided an additional \$5000 in disaster relief funds for use in ground transportation of supplies and other needs. □

How to become a Christian

The Bible introduces God to us. God is personal, and he wants to have a personal relationship with each of us (John 1:12).

God loves us; yet he also is our Judge. According to Ecclesiastes 12:14, God judges us for what we do, even what we do secretly. His standard for judgment is perfection. Yet none of us can meet that standard. All of us are sinners in God's eyes. The penalty for sin is death and hell (Revelation 20:11-15).

God acted to save us. Through Jesus, his Son, God offers each of us forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus lived a perfect life. Because he was sinless, Jesus was able to become our substitute. By his death, Jesus satisfied the penalty for sin so that we can be forgiven (I Peter 3:18).

Forgiveness makes a personal relationship with God possible. For that relationship

to happen we must repent of our sin and believe in Jesus as our Savior and Lord. To repent means to turn away from sin and accept the right relationship made possible through Jesus' death on a cross. To believe means to have confidence that Jesus provided all that we need to be right with God, and to trust him to guide and direct our lives.

God does not have to remain a stranger to you. Your desire to know him is the Holy Spirit's invitation to begin a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Ask Jesus to forgive you for your sin. Repent, believe, and let Jesus make you a Christian. When you do, tell your pastor or Sunday School teacher or a Christian friend. Find out how you can be baptized and become a member of the church. □

■ From the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

■ about letters to the editor

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■ Baptist beliefs
by Herschel Hobbs
Baptist theologian

Tremendous words — fourth in a series

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

Because I believe these four words I believe that he is the God of history. While not responsible for the evil of men and nations, he works within the context of history to guide it toward his benevolent purpose and goal.

In his sermon on Mars' Hill (Acts 17:22-31) Paul gives his philosophy of history. As Creator God is Lord of heaven and earth (v. 24). He had created out of one (Adam, "blood" not in v. 26) all ethnic groups of men. No nation emerges from the womb of time as a surprise to him. No nation falls into the grave of history but that he takes note of it. He has appointed the boundaries of each (v. 26). His purpose is that they seek him (v. 27).

In Christ he has provided redemption for lost people and a natural order out of harmony with his will (Romans 8:19-23). At the end of the age he will render righteous judgment of all (Acts 17:31). The saved will be with him eternally in heaven. The lost will be cast into hell forever (Revelation 20:15). Jesus likened hell to Gehenna, the garbage dump of Jerusalem. So hell is God's cosmic garbage dump for all unfit for heaven.

Even now in his mediatorial reign Christ is subduing the moral and spiritual universe unto himself, to be presented to God the Father "that God (Father, Son, and Spirit) may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:25-28). □

Herschel Hobbs is at home recuperating from an upper respiratory infection. He spent more than a week in an Oklahoma City hospital and doctors have ordered him to rest. Please remember him in your prayers.

— Editor

Names needed

The European Baptist Convention in cooperation with the Foreign Mission Board and the European National Unions has started five new churches in 1992. Two churches were started in September. One in Barcelona, Spain, and the other in Bremen, Germany.

There are thousands of English-speaking people living in these two cities as well as in the locations of the 56 other EBC churches in 15 countries throughout Europe.

Volunteers Jack and Charlotte Robinson of Augusta, Ga., are in Barcelona. Ernest and Pauline Walker are at Bremen. Both need the help of Southern Baptists in the USA to locate English-speaking people in their area.

The Robinsons can be contacted at Trau, de les cortis, 340, 7., 2., 08024 Barcelona, Spain; phone 011 343410 1661. The Walkers can be reached at Auf der Heide 56, 1860 Osterholz-Chambek, Bremen, Germany; phone 01149 4791-12887.

If you have friends, relatives, church members, or others living in or moving to these areas, you can contact the two missionaries above direct. For more information about the location of other English speaking churches in Europe, contact the European Baptist Convention by letter or fax. The address and fax number are Sonnenberger Strasse 60; 6200 Wiesbaden, Germany; fax number 011 49611 590 883.

John W. Merritt,
general secretary
European Baptist Convention

Meeting response

Since I know Cecil Sherman pretty well, I would like to respond graciously to the letter of Jimmy Stroud about the meeting in Knoxville on April 13, concerning the Fellowship. First, this was not a "cloak and dagger" meeting. It was hosted by some of the finest Tennessee Baptists of the area. Cecil did not slip into town. He came by invitation. That the meeting was not announced at the local pastors' conference is no big deal. Was the August 20 meeting at Bellevue, laying plans to control politically our state conventions, announced at the pastors' conference?

Furthermore, the redirection of monies through the Fellowship by some Tennessee Baptists needs explanation. This redirection refers only to SBC funds. No dollars are taken away from the work of our state convention. It is happening because many Baptists in Tennessee are disturbed about the direction of the SBC. Fellowship Baptists do not approve of the coerced retirement of Keith Parks; the broken promise to European Baptists concerning the funding of Ruschlikon; the dismemberment of the faculty and student body of Southeastern Seminary; the forced retirement of Lloyd Elder, Al Shackelford, and over 200 employees of the Sun-

day School Board; and the deliberate excluding in participation of those who do not agree to the control agenda. These are some of the reasons this is happening.

We don't need this in our state convention. Let's don't let it happen. We need each other for the cause of Christ.

Bill Sherman
2407 Sterling Road
Nashville 37215

Questions group

In a meeting held in Knoxville, April 13, 1992, Cecil Sherman, Coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, referred to the Southern Baptist Convention as "the old organization" and encouraged churches to move and shift more of their money to Fellowship missions. He said, "We can't do missions and send all the money back to the old organization." He said, "... you're going to have to get serious in your churches and move some of the money to where we don't just handle it and pass it back."

As to whether the CBF is a new denomination, Sherman said, "If you keep on shifting more and more money away from the SBC to what is now called the Fellowship, that would be a new denomination." Sherman indicated that if the CBF can get a significant number of missionaries, if they can have their own literature separate from the SBC, and if they can continue to convene annually separate from the SBC, and if they can continue to get enough money shifted away from the SBC to the CBF, that would be a new denomination.

If Sherman can influence enough SBC churches, money will be taken away from the Foreign Mission Board, and the Home Mission Board, and their missionaries.

Pete Roberts
4310 Papermill Dr.
Knoxville 37909

BYW schedules Gatlinburg retreat

A Baptist Young Women (BYW) "Get Away" is planned for Oct. 2-3 at the Holiday Inn in Gatlinburg.

The program begins at 4 p.m. on Oct. 2 for early arrivers with the first general session at 8 p.m. The theme of the meeting is "Beyond Boundaries."

Conferences will be offered on a variety of topics including "What Do You Say To A Hungry World?" "Finding My Place," "Gee, My Parents Are Getting Old," and "My Heart's Cry."

Program personnel are Cindy Drake, editor, *Contempo* magazine; Jennifer Dean, author of *Heart's Cry*; Mark Morris, Cooperative Services International; Robert Parham, Baptist Center for Ethics; Cindy Wilmoth, Baptist Health Care Center; Peggy Ray, Georgia WMU.

Registration fee for the weekend meeting is \$7. For additional information, contact Tennessee WMU at (615) 371-2038. □

Pocketbooks or truth

It saddens me greatly to read letters from other Christians who feel that the Democratic party better represents their family values. I suppose in the past the two major parties differed in many ways, but never before has there been such a difference in morals and family issues. One side opposes abortion on demand and homosexuality as an accepted lifestyle. The other side visably supports it. One side is against voluntary prayer in school and parental rights. The other side supports them. We are divided. The Bible is referred to as the sword of the Spirit. A sword divides. Who is on the Lord's side? We have to determine for ourselves which is more important to us; our pocketbooks, or God's truth.

Since recent study of 2 Kings in Sunday School I believe the history of the Old Testament can and should be applied to our lives today. God punished Israel and Judah severely for following their kings in worship of false gods. King Mannasseh shed innocent blood in this worship and God was provoked to fierce anger. What will God do to us as a nation?

I have heard some say that

abortion should not be an issue in politics. I strongly disagree. We should put a stop to it through our legal system. We must continue to stand against sin. Like Elijah who stood against 450 Baal prophets, our Christian leaders should make a stand. We must prayerfully select God's choice for our nation.

Labrenda Coleman
200 University St.
Martin 38237

Life chain rally set for Knoxville

A life chain rally will be held Oct. 4 at 2 p.m. in Knoxville.

Thousands of Knoxville-area Christians are expected to line up on Kingston Pike carrying signs which read: "Abortion Kills Children" and "Jesus Heals and Forgives." The event is held to remember the 1.5 million preborn children who are aborted each year, said Paul Dunn III, Knoxville office manager of Tennessee Right to Life.

Dunn said more than 80 Knoxville Baptist churches will participate in the life chain.

For additional information, contact the Knoxville office at (615) 584-0310. □



A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION was held recently at Etter Church in Byrdstown. The church was founded in 1892 by 12 charter members. The church was moved to its present site in 1944. Several additions have been constructed since then. As the church celebrated its past, it also looked toward the future. Along with the centennial celebration, the congregation dedicated its new educational space which added six classrooms. Church members gave more than \$80,000 for the new structure. Former pastors who participated in the service (top photo), from left, were Steve Sherlin, current Pastor Jeff Brown, Dan Lawler, Ray Hunter, and Danny Reed. Below, Riverside Association Director of Missions Ken McMillen, front center, presents a plaque to Brown and deacons and members of the church's centennial committee — Bob Cross, Gary Upchurch, Carol King, Sheila King, Tommy Aaron, J. B. King, Ruby Upchurch, and Ray Huddleston. — Photos by Lonnie Wilkey



Making sure we're on board the right train

Baptists are a busy people. We usually are active in our communities and churches, and if there is an arena for involvement in other matters of interest, we jump right in there. This is not to say Baptists are shallow or indiscriminate in their choices. Most of our support goes to things about which we care strongly.

Right now Southern Baptists, including some Tennessee Baptists, are very active in supporting varying movements and plans. We have this right because we live in America, under our God — and a primary Baptist tenet in priesthood of the believer.

Some examples:

- More than two hundred Tennessee Baptists have gone to Florida and Louisiana as volunteers helping hurricane victims. There will be more helping hungry people, restoring homes, helping some rebuild their spiritual lives, and being true servants.

- Leaders of the "moderate" Cooperative Baptist Fellowship met in Atlanta to approve two new staff positions, endorse an effort to hire Keith Parks to head their missions program after his Foreign Mission Board retirement, and to make other plans. While money is not exact-

ly rolling in, it was reported that income this year already exceeds \$4.5 million, the total for all of 1991. How will this impact the Tennessee Baptist Convention?

■ In mid-August some "conservative" Baptist leaders from several states met in Memphis to plan strategies for gaining or extending control over Baptist state conventions. One participant reported there was "an exchange of lessons learned." Will the Tennessee Baptist Convention be affected?

■ And, if we didn't have enough concerns, there is discord within the TBC because of feelings of how the position of the executive director of the Executive Board was filled. Rumors say there is (or will be) an effort to discuss this from the floor at the state convention in November.

There are conscientious people on both sides. The vote of approval was close. Some did not like the makeup of the search group. Some did not agree with the process used by the committee. Some did not like the choice. The committee staunchly defends the process. There were strong suggestions to the committee about the kind of nominee wanted by different mindsets.

It is difficult to dispell perceptions. Sometimes misguided perceptions can continue uncorrected so long that they seem to replace

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

real facts. But if the perception is wrong, it cannot follow that the perception becomes truth. What the perceiver must determine, without bias, is the real truth. That may depend on trust in each other and faith in God to lead to that right belief.

Apparently there is a lack of trust. We suggest — we urge — that in the weeks prior to convention time, November 17-19 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee Baptists seek reconciliation and a solution to this trust problem and the current unrest.

If we do not come together before the convention, there may be little hope for a convention that transacts business and does its work in a calm and productive atmosphere. Missions, evangelism, and ministries will suffer.

We further urge leaders from different viewpoints across the state to step up to the challenge of peacemaking. Let all Tennessee Baptists pray in a statewide concerted effort. Don't scoff at this — and we must not try to solve it from our own emotions and perceptions. We must pray and work for God's solution — and not our own.

The best and only solutions come from the best and only problem-solver, even our Lord. Indeed we are busy people; let us make sure this busyness has God's approval and is guided by his Holy Spirit.

one word more
by Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

Right kind of walk

Near to the Galilee Sea, there are hills and cliffs on all sides.

We had left Tiberias and headed toward Nazareth. The mid-afternoon sun moved like a spotlight in a well-timed drama, frolicking across the hillsides. We could see well images formed by shadow and shade, sunlight and rocks.

Someone spotted a flock of sheep on the nearest hillside, not more than a stone's throw from where we traveled on the road.

Somehow, for some reason, people like to see sheep on a hillside in Israel. It is Biblical, and yet real. The driver slowed and we watched the drama unfold.

The shepherd was undaunted by the tourists, or pilgrims as we called ourselves. We were not high on his priority list. He had probably seen an assorted dozen that day.

So he continued to walk along, moving at the flock's pace across the rock-strewn field. Scrubby trees attempted to hem in the wayward sheep out there on the fringes.

And then we saw the shepherd's dog. He was not as handsome perhaps as the four-legged herders of Scotland. He didn't seem to be a descendant of a blue ribbon pedigree, but he was getting the job done.

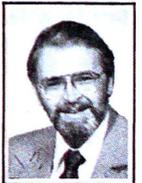
With a glance from the shepherd or a slight wave of the short staff in his hand, the faithful dog wheeled and hastily, but carefully turned the sheep back into the right direction.

There was something else about that dog. I noticed when his master was watching, he behaved differently. For a while, he went about the work steadfastly, with vigor. Then, all of a sudden, he seemed to feign a bruised paw which impeded his work.

He would slow his pace and limp, looking pleadingly at his master.

When the shepherd turned away, the sheep dog's running was full speed. He cavorted with abandon, sometimes jumping over or on top of great stones — always glancing every few seconds for the master.

I thought about that little drama as we drove away. The dog must have observed Christians. When the Savior is looking, we are ardent with our loyalty. But when we focus elsewhere — there is much spiritual cavorting. There is a remedy for that attitude: keeping our eyes on the Master



ALLEN

RTVC trustees affirm VISN-ACTS agreement

By Doug Dillard
For Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, TEXAS — Radio and Television Commission trustees expressed concerns about budgets and burgeoning opportunities but spent little time

fretting about complaints regarding the shared-channel agreement between ACTS (the American Christian Television System) and VGI (Vision Group, Inc.) during their meeting Sept. 14-15 here.

In specific actions, the trustees:

- Adopted a \$9.2 million spending goal, \$700,000 under their current budget and far below the amount needed to meet exploding opportunities shared by RTVC President Jack Johnson.
- Affirmed a services agree-

ment approved earlier by the commission's executive committee by which ACTS is scheduled Oct. 1 to begin sharing a satellite transponder with VISN, an ecumenical network composed of 54 faith groups.

■ Received reports that the commission has operated within its budget, paid all its bills, increased its reserves, and is running ahead of schedule in reducing its debt.

Johnson used a summary report from the commission's counseling services department to describe how the sometimes controversial VISN-ACTS decision is consistent with the agency's core mission.

"With almost 8000 calls this year, 335 prayed to receive Christ, 376 rededicated their lives, and 425 prayed for assurance of salvation," he reported. "Yet a telephone company study showed that our present system is handling only 13 per cent of the attempted calls."

"The VISN-ACTS move will increase our potential viewing audience from 8.2 million to more than 21 million homes immediately on Oct. 1," he said. "When the potential audience is doubled, we are praying — and expecting — professions of faith to grow into the thousands. And that's what the Radio and Television Commission is all about," he said.

just for today
by Fred Wood
Memphis pastor emeritus

Start with a smile

My wife was stopped by a policeman for a small traffic violation. He said, "Aren't you Dr. Fred Wood's wife?" She replied affirmatively and he said, "Your husband married my wife and me twelve years ago." She said, with a twinkle in her eye, "Is that going to help me or hurt me?"



WOOD

Take this truth with you

Every choice one makes affects his life — for better or worse. Obey the laws of health, morality, and the spirit. They will work for you if you will let them but against you if you "play the game" that way.

Memorize this Scripture

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7).

Pray this prayer

Lord, help me today to make a contribution to someone else's life. May he be better because I have helped him with his problem or perhaps even spoken a kind word of encouragement. Help me to do this not sometime in the future but today. □

Holly dialogues with HMB staff

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — The man who prompted the Southern Baptist Convention's latest struggle with Freemasonry met Sept. 17 with the Home Mission Board group assigned to determine whether Masonic teachings are compatible with Christian doctrine.

Larry Holly, a Beaumont, Texas, physician, met for more than three hours with six members of the HMB interfaith witness department, HMB President Larry Lewis and Vice President for Evangelism Darrell Robinson, and trustee Brad Allen of Duncan, Okla., who chairs the trustees' evangelism committee. Joining Holly in his presentation was Charles Burchett, pastor of First Church, Kirbyville, Texas.

"It was a very good and congenial meeting," Lewis said. "Dr. Holly did an excellent job of sharing his perspective and pertinent information."

The HMB interfaith witness department was directed to compare Freemasonry with Christian doctrine during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Indianapolis. The final report is expected to be brought to Home Mission Board trustees before

next year's convention June 15-17 in Houston.

During the Sept. 17 meeting, Holly reviewed a 628-page notebook he prepared for the group. The notebook included Holly's writings about Freemasonry and passages from books by Masons about their beliefs. □

Daily prayer requests for Chile/Tennessee Partnership — September



24 — Praise the Lord for the effectiveness of the Acteen Activators who served in Santiago in July. Pray that their experiences will continue to inspire them for missions.

25 — Missionaries Bill and Linda Clark as they have recently changed church memberships in Concepcion.

26 — Praise the Lord for providing additional funds to complete the church building of the Nueva Esperanga Church in Arica.

27 — The salvation of Manuel Sanchez of Temuco.

28 — Ask the Lord to continue preparing the hearts of Tennessee Baptists to volunteer for the many opportunities of service in Chile.

29 — Missionary Diann Bailey as she strives to teach in the seminary in Santiago and counsel women students in their work practice in the local churches.

30 — Birthday blessings today for missionaries Manny Manferd and Bonnie Smith.

Tennesseans view poverty, spiritual needs in Ukraine

For Baptist and Reflector

Five Tennesseans from Riceville joined 81 other Baptists in an 11-day evangelism effort in the Ukraine, which they claim changed their lives.

The effort also changed the lives of 8168 Ukrainians, who professed a newfound faith in God.

This is the second Tennessee group which has reported to the *Baptist and Reflector* service in the Commonwealth of Independent States republic.

Eddie Click, pastor of First Church, Riceville, led four other members of his church to participate. He reported amazing response from the Ukrainians. He saw at least 400 make professions of faith, he cited.

"The people are so warm and receptive and open to the Gospel.

We were not turned away from one place," he said.

The Americans got to meet Ukrainians in various places

besides the 22 churches they assisted. Tennessean Don Moore visited a hospital, a dairy, and several homes.

"I had always looked at Russia (Soviet Union) as a first class world power. I didn't realize the people lived in third world conditions," noted Moore.

Those conditions include an average monthly income of about \$20, homes without indoor plumbing. Most Ukrainians can't afford automobiles, he learned.

Ukrainians also face dangers from poorly treated water and pesticides, he added. They seemed to have enough food, which is produced locally, but it is treated with DDT, he said.



AMERICAN AND UKRAINIAN Baptists join together to conduct a short service on a street in the republic.

The main part of the Americans' work was with local Baptist churches. Moore worked with three other Americans on a

team assigned to Saki Baptist Church in Euaportoria, where they participated in lengthy evening services — about two hours

long, he said.

During the day the teams spread out to witness to people very interested in the Gospel. They also distributed Bibles.

Click's small team gave away over 300 Bibles "and did not even begin to meet the demand," Click cited.

Johnny Hope, minister of evangelism at the Riceville church, observed one possible reason for the interest in religion is the lack of opportunities available through the communist system.

"It seemed as though they had nothing to live for," he described. "What was so exciting to me was the fact that the people were so kind and eager to receive Christ into their hearts."

Other members of the Tennessee team from First Church, Riceville, were Bradley Evans and Hobart Gentry. □

Chattanoogans give to, receive from, Ukrainians

For Baptist and Reflector

Horace Kerr has done short-term evangelism work in 18 countries over the past ten years, but he has never seen people so "hungry" for anything related to religion before his visit to the Ukraine.

Kerr and Hazel Dunn, both members of First Church, Chattanooga, just returned from an effort in the Ukraine by 49 Baptists. An estimated 12,500 Ukrainians made professions of faith as a result.

The Partnership Evangelism project of the Foreign Mission Board was conducted in the city of Donetsk for eight days. They

were led by Jim Ponder, a Florida evangelist.

The hunger of the people, Kerr speculated, originates from a curiosity about something they have been denied during the communist regime. The result was crowds ready to receive any kind of religious literature and willing to listen to spiritual messages, he noted.

The people also responded, Kerr reported. He worked with two other Americans and a Ukrainian pastor leading impromptu gatherings in parks. The Ukrainian pastor had arranged for musical groups to perform. Soon about 500 people would gather, he shared. Most of those would stay

for the short message and about 50-75 would make spiritual commitments, Kerr added.

"It's hard to believe. Of course God's working in that country," he explained.

In addition to the team work, the U.S. Baptists led an open air service on the city's Lenin Square and a three-day crusade at the Ice Palace. They distributed 40,000 copies of the Scripture.

Kerr enjoyed a visit to Calvary Baptist Church in Donetsk, a congregation of about 100. The members had built the beautiful building, he said. The construction spanned three years because of the poor economy, he added.

Though needy, Kerr reported

everyone he saw was well-clothed and healthy. He speculated the rich production from gardening and farming in that area alleviated some food shortages. Medical services were lacking, he observed.

The hope of the country is the young people, who were intelligent, exuberant because of their new freedoms, and had foresight, said Kerr. Many could even speak English, he discovered.

Besides memories, he came home bearing many addresses of people who represent the "long-lasting friendships" made, Kerr concluded. — Connie Davis □

Baptists meeting in garage share vision with Joelton

JOELTON — It took more than ten years and efforts by workers in churches, an association, a convention, and a university, but a vision finally became a reality in a residential garage in East Cheatham County.

This summer the East Cheatham Chapel began to congregate, drawing an average of 20 each Sunday morning. The setting — a member's garage — isn't that

unusual when you consider the vision of the Baptists in this northwestern suburb of metropolitan Nashville.

It all began when leaders of Nashville Association projected the need for a Baptist church in the area and bought property in 1980. Soon a sign was installed reading, "Future Home of a Southern Baptist Church."

It was not until 1989 that

another gained the vision. First Church, Pleasant View, located eight miles from the plot, surveyed the area. But the vision wasn't clear.

Clifford Horne of Nashville Association wasn't about to give up on the vision. Last year he worked with Belmont University to arrange for a student from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and three students

from Belmont to help him. Their work, financed by a religion department grant, including conducting interviews with residents in the area and preparing a computerized data base for the association, explained Horne.

That was just the information First Church, Joelton, and First Church, Pleasant View, needed, he added. They recently voted to become co-sponsors. Now the vision was being caught.

With help from Horne and Don McCoy, who is a church starter strategist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the congregations started interpreting their visions.

But where could a new congregation meet. David Royalty, pastor of the Joelton, had an idea. Members Billy and Reba Byrd had just completed a large garage on their property which included space for a workshop and storage for a boat.

Though the Byrds had just joined the church, they agreed to house the church each Sunday evening.

But it had been a year since the community had heard of a new Baptist congregation. Members of the two churches visited people in their homes, made phone calls,

and mailed out information.

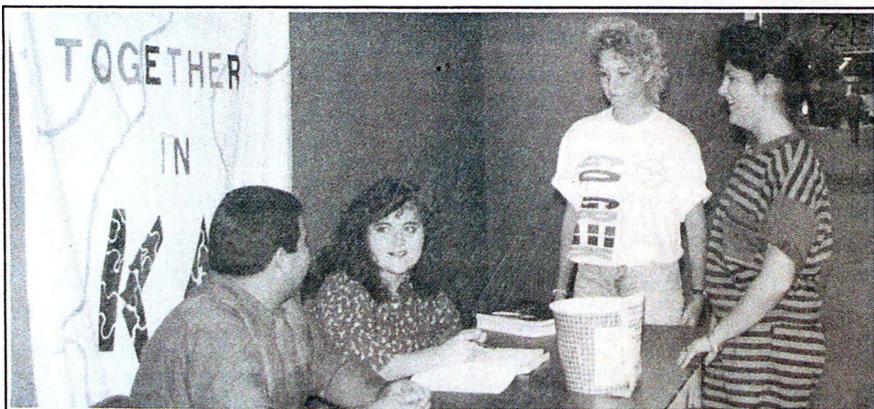
Harold and Linda Mosier of the Pleasant View Church was the first family to follow the leadership of the Byrds and leave their church friends to help start the new mission. Soon other families had joined them.

About six weeks after the first service, workers held a children's week. A tent was set up on the property for a three-day Backyard Bible Club followed by a family festival. The festival featured music, clowns, and free hot dogs.

The vision finally was caught by the community after an August tent revival on the property. Though rain forced the meeting into the garage two nights, the crowds grew each of the four nights to 46. One profession of faith was reported as a result of the revival.

The chapel and their pastor, Don McCoy, former pastor of First Church, Dickson, are already making plans to begin Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services and erect a building on the property.

The vision is spreading. — David Royalty, pastor, First Church, Joelton, contributed to this article. □



TO HELP HURRICANE ANDREW victims, Union University students gave \$1,104.92 during a two-day fundraiser spearheaded by the Baptist Student Union and Student Government Association. Helping were, from left, Ron Sloan, Cathy McElroy, Kelley Tummins, and Cindy Beard.

Holston churches help establish church in Romania

For Baptist and Reflector

A four-member team from Holston Association recently returned from Romania after delivering \$15,000 to help establish a village church in the Braila Association.

Holston Association members voted to help the Romanian Baptists earlier this year, reported Director of Missions Tal Thompson.

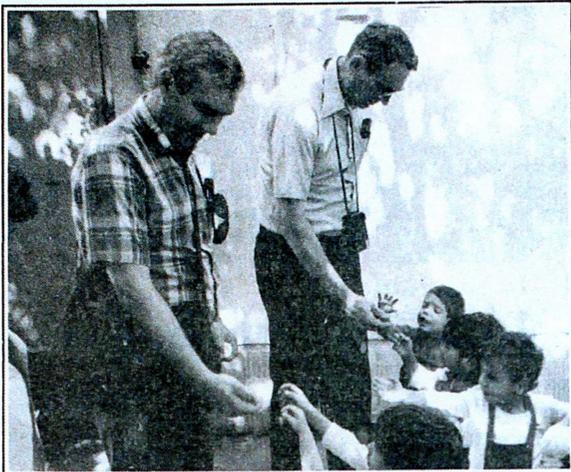
Thompson was accompanied to Romania by Tom Savage, moderator of the association and pastor of Pinecrest Church, Johnson City, and laymen Gary Tysinger and Curtis Engle of Calvary Church, Erwin.

The team presented the money, donated by churches in the association, to Joseph Stefanuti, president of Braila Association and associate executive secretary of the Romanian Baptist Union.

Thompson said the association began construction of the new church upon receipt of the funds. The new building will cost about \$20,000, Thompson said. He said the association hopes to provide the remainder of the funds.

"It is amazing what they can do with so little money," Thompson said, explaining the exchange rate of U.S. dollars into Romanian currency is good.

The new building for Gropeni



TOM SAVAGE, left, pastor of Pinecrest Church, Johnson City, and Gary Tysinger, a layman at Calvary Church, Erwin, make friends with children in a Romanian orphanage. The two men were part of a four-member team from Holston Association who traveled to Romania earlier this summer.

Church will seat about 150 people, Thompson said. It is located 30 miles south of Braila. Braila is the mother church.

While in Romania, team members preached in several churches. Two of the team — Savage and Engle — participated in a camp for a select number of Romanian youth, Thompson reported.

The camp was funded by contributions from Holston Association youth who collected \$4000 over a two-year period. They also sent left-over T-shirts from past youth conferences for the Romanian youth.

The youth went to a camp setting in Tusnod. In the evenings an outdoor worship service was held

and people from the community joined the youth. Several decisions were made for Christ, both from the youth and the community at large, Thompson said.

Thompson enjoyed the opportunity of preaching in another setting.

Church services in Romania are not that much different from in the United States, he observed. Thompson also said the Romanians have a good concept of associations and what it means to work together. "The churches in Romania help each other," the Holston DOM noted.

Thompson had the unique opportunity of participating in a Romanian funeral service. "It was like going back to the 1920s and '30s in the U.S.," Thompson said, referring to the fact the funeral was conducted at the person's home.

The Romanians are very gracious people, Thompson said, adding they are grateful for the interest and concern of American Christians.

The Romanians want Americans to pray that they will vote in a government that will allow them to continue their freedom to share the Gospel, Thompson said.

He observed the challenge for Romanian Baptists is to overcome their reputation which was false-

ly spread by the Communist regime for many years. During the Communist aggression, Baptists were portrayed as a cult, Thompson said.

He predicts the Romanians will overcome those false beliefs because they have a good concept of missions and ministry.

"Had it not been for the Communists, there would have been little difference between them and us, as far as lifestyle and standard of living," Thompson observed.

Holston Association will consider future projects with the Braila Association "as the Lord leads," he said.



HOLSTON ASSOCIATION DOM Tal Thompson speaks at a home church in Gropeni through a translator.

C-N students say 'thank you' through volunteer work

From Carson-Newman College

JEFFERSON CITY — Carson-Newman College students receiving financial help from a New Jersey-based foundation say thank you by doing volunteer work in Tennessee rather than in New Jersey.

They work at local animal shelters, nursing homes, and schools — a small price to pay for an undergraduate college program. The small town of Jefferson City is also thankful. Currently 47

students are supported by the Bonner Foundation of Princeton, N.J.

Bonner Scholars must participate in ten hours of volunteer work during the school year, part of which must be spent tutoring at local elementary and middle schools, and 240 hours during summer months.

Kristy Elmore of Jefferson City, who was selected as a Bonner Scholar, feared the volunteer service would seem like a job, but

changed her mind.

She served at Life Care Center of Jefferson City. "I had spent a lot of time with my grandparents and enjoy being with the elderly," she explained.

"Sometimes I go to the store for them, write letters for them, or take them outside since most can't get out on their own," said Elmore.

The volunteer work influenced Elmore to choose a career in social work, she added.

Bonner Scholar Christy Braxton of Jefferson City explained she probably wouldn't be in college without the program.

Her service has consisted of work at the college's Samaritan House, which provides assistance to the area's needy, and at an adult learning facility, Oakland Center.

She especially enjoyed work at the center, which draws many adults in the area, Braxton reported. "Although they are

sometimes self-conscious, the staff here offers not only lessons in reading but also love and support."

An art major, she has gained ideas for paintings from her students.

"You get so many rewards," commented Braxton. "It's not just the scholarship. It's rewarding every day to see the importance of the work that I'm doing as part of my community service project."

Cronan 'practices what he preaches'

From Carson-Newman College

JEFFERSON CITY — Tom Cronan practices what he preaches. The chair of the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Department of Carson-Newman College won the national pentathlon championship of the National Masters Track and Field Championship.

Cronan, who competed in the 50-54 age bracket, proved he still had what it takes. After just six weeks of training, Cronan jumped



CRONAN

17 feet and five inches in the long jump, threw the javelin 127 feet, completed the 200 meter swimming competition in 27.14, threw the discus 121 feet, and ran 1500 meters in 5.43.

"I told people that my objective was just to be able to walk away," he commented.

Competition in the tournament, which is for athletes over 30, is not new for Cronan. Four years ago, he was the national champion in a pentathlon and second in the decathlon.

Cronan said he enjoyed the camaraderie of the competition, including a friendship with an 82-year-old woman who is coached by her husband. The husband is a former marathoner who is a stroke victim. Cronan noted the oldest competitor was 90.

Cronan's wife, Joan, is director of women's athletics at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. □

Congregation helps sister church

Even while in the midst of a World Missions Conference which focused on needs worldwide, members of Hopewell Church, Savannah, did not forget missions begins at home.

At the conclusion of a Wednesday evening service during the final night of a World Missions Conference held in Shiloh Association, Hopewell Pastor Randy Isbell told of a sister church in the association in need.

Trinity Church in Michie had burned several weeks before. The congregation is trying to continue by meeting in a building and is in need of folding chairs, Isbell told the Hopewell members.

In an impromptu action, Isbell asked his congregation if

they would be willing to take a love offering to buy folding chairs for Trinity Church. Members voted overwhelmingly to participate.

They hoped to collect about \$300 which they estimated would buy 30 chairs. When the offering was counted, members had given \$569.

"It's a great blessing to see that kind of spontaneous response as the spirit of God led us to address a need," Isbell said.

The church has a history of generous giving. Two years ago the congregation moved into a new \$700,000 worship facility debt free.

"Over the last few years God has taught this congregation how to be a giving church," Isbell said. □

Church growth leaders urge unity in diversity

By Chip Alford
For Baptist Press

FORT WORTH — When it comes to church growth, Ken Hemphill and Rick Warren may preach different methodologies but their message is the same — reach the unchurched and bring them to Christ.

Hemphill, director of the Southern Baptist Center for Church Growth, and Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., both addressed participants at the Nationwide Church Growth Conference in Fort Worth Sept. 1. They agreed there is no one key or "secret" to growing churches.

"To reach our generation, we are going to have to have multiple methods for growth," said Hemphill, who assumed his newly created post Aug. 1 jointly sponsored by the Home Mission Board and the Sunday School Board. "We need to focus on church growth principles, not the methods."

Warren agreed: "We can have unity in our convention without having uniformity (in church growth methodology). We don't think our way is the only way; we're only one way."

Hemphill supports a more traditional approach to church growth. Before beginning his current job, he served 11 years as pastor of First Church, Norfolk, Va., leading the church to growth through an "evangelism-focused"

Sunday School and "celebrative" worship services.

Warren, on the other hand, led Saddleback Valley to become the fastest-growing Southern Baptist church in America by using home Bible study groups or "cells" and "seeker services" designed to appeal to the unchurched.

"I firmly believe an age-graded Sunday School is the finest integrative church growth tool on the market," Hemphill said, adding the Bible study program is "alive and growing" in the Southern Baptist Convention despite claims to the contrary by some church growth experts.

Before Hemphill's address, Michael Arrington, vice president for corporate services at the Sunday School Board, told conference participants Southern Baptist Sunday Schools experienced a net enrollment gain of 174,000 in 1991, the second highest gain since 1976, bringing the total Sunday School enrollment to 8.18 million.

Hemphill said other denominations are recognizing the value of Sunday School, citing a recent survey showing 14 of 17 of the fastest-growing churches in America rated Sunday School as a "key agent" in growing a church.

Though more than 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches are plateaued or declining, Hemphill insists Sunday School itself isn't to blame. What is needed in many cases is new vision and creativity in carrying out the Bible study program, he said.

"Why go reinventing the wheel? We just need to refocus it toward evangelism and use our creativity and flexibility to build off that foundation," he said.

For example, at First Church in Norfolk, Hemphill said Sunday School classes were started to meet the special needs of divorced people, married couples without children, Vietnam veterans, and other groups, some of which did not meet on Sunday.

"But we didn't sacrifice the foundation and many of these people in these groups were eventually mainstreamed back into the original (Sunday School) structure."

Warren, a fourth-generation Southern Baptist pastor, said he started Saddleback as a "church for the unchurched."

"I discovered real quick that what I had grown up with would not reach that particular target," he said.

The church's innovative ministry approaches include holding two types of worship services: a seeker service on Sunday with topical sermons and contemporary music designed to reach the unchurched and midweek worship services for believers that

feature "verse-by-verse" preaching.

Other innovations include home cell groups for Bible study and investing in staff members rather than buildings. (Warren said Saddleback is the largest church in America without a building, adding the church has met in 54 different locations in its 12-year history. The congregation currently meets in a local high school building.)

Both men shared with the

2400-plus conference participants several principles of church growth derived from their own experience and research.

Hemphill said church growth is a process, not an event or a string of events; the size of the Sunday School must be increased to permanently increase the size of a church; and visionary leadership begins Biblically and foundationally with the pastor.

Warren said growing churches require growing pastors. "All

leaders are learners," he said. "I tell my staff, 'The moment you stop learning you stop leading.'"

For a church to grow, Warren also said the people must give up control of the leadership and the pastor must give up control of the ministry.

The Nationwide Church Growth Conference was sponsored by the Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board, and the Baptist General Convention of Texas. □

21 groups fight beer ads on video

By Tom Strobe
Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — If the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and others have their way, Budweiser and Miller Lite soon will no longer be starring in movies and television shows. Neither will alcohol companies be able to target young persons or link drinking with risky activities such as auto racing and water skiing in their advertising.

The Christian Life Commission recently joined 21 other organizations in petitioning the Federal Trade Commission to use its authority under the unfairness doctrine to halt such practices because they violate laws and regulations intended to prevent alcohol-related problems. Among such policies are the 21-year-old minimum drinking limit and warning labels on alcohol containers.

For far too long these companies have demonstrated a woeful lack of concern for the dangerously misleading advertising of the alcohol industry, CLC Executive Director Richard Land said in a statement released at a Sept. 3 press conference in Washington. In light of the societal problems associated with alcohol consumption, one cannot help but believe they are directly related to the misleading advertisements of the alcohol industry, he said.

One of the practices the groups asked the FTC to outlaw is product placement, the featuring of brands of beer and liquor in movie and television show sequences as a result of payment by alcohol companies to the shows' producers.

Recent movies cited by the groups as containing product placement include: Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, Wayne's World,

Back to School, Beverly Hills Cops, Cocoon, Ghost Busters, Gremlins, Mr. Mom, and Top Gun. Most of these are rated PG or PG-13, movies which persons under 21 are able to attend without an adult.

Other organizations petitioning the FTC were the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, Center for Science in the Public Interest, National PTA, and United Methodist Church Board of Church and Society.

"We call on Southern Baptists to help us fight this battle in any way they can."

The groups petitioning the FTC also support bills in the Senate, S.664, and House of Representatives, H.R.443, requiring health and safety warnings in alcohol advertising on television and radio and in newspapers and magazines. □

Senior adults plan 1993 meeting

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Senior adults from across the nation began registering Sept. 1 for the second senior adult convention scheduled in Atlanta April 26-28, 1993. All sessions will be held in the new Georgia Dome, located adjacent to the Georgia World Congress Center in downtown Atlanta.



Special guests include internationally-known television personality Art Linkletter, Myrtle Hall, a long-time soloist at Billy Graham crusades, and vocalist Steve Green.

Speakers include Charles Stanley, pastor of First Church, Atlanta; Frank Pollard, pastor of First Church, Jackson, Miss.; Mildred McWhorter, home missionary from Houston; and Brian Harbour, pastor of First Church, Richardson, Texas.

Registration packets have been sent to churches, but individuals and churches may request additional packets from the family ministry department, 127 9th Avenue North, Nashville, Tenn., 37234. Deadline for hotel reservations through the housing bureau is March 26, 1993. □

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■ the churches

■ Members of Range Hills Church, Memphis, will celebrate homecoming and their 32nd anniversary Sept. 27. The first pastor of the church, W. W. Shanklin, will preach during morning worship, followed by luncheon and music.

■ The Hillcrest Reunion Choir of Hillcrest Church, Nashville, will perform "Alleluia" at the 46th annual homecoming Sept. 27. There will also be a note burning service to celebrate the debt-free parsonage.

■ Homecoming will be Oct. 4 at Eastview Church, Shelbyville. A fellowship luncheon will be served.

■ Annual homecoming will be celebrated Oct. 4 at First Church, Big Sandy. Pastor Bill Holbrook will be speaker during morning worship. A covered-dish dinner will be served, followed by a performance by the Union University, Jackson, group, "Witness."

■ The congregation of First Church, Ripley, will celebrate homecoming and their 140th anniversary Oct. 4. Jack May, former pastor, will be pulpit guest for the day.

■ Jerry Vines will lead revival Sept. 27-30 and fall retreat Oct. 2-3 at Calvary Church, Knoxville.

■ Homecoming Sunday will be Sept. 27 at Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain. Former pastor Bruce Coyle will be guest speaker.

■ Jim Ponder will be evangelist for revival Sept. 27-30 at First Church, Bluff City. Joe Atkinson will lead music.

■ A Sunday School revival is

scheduled for Sept. 25-27 at Ridgeview Church, Chattanooga. Wayman and Pat Jones of the United Tennessee League, along with several church members, will lead the training sessions

■ Members of First Church, Sevierville, will have a homecoming revival Sept. 27-30. Former pastors will deliver the messages at the services. A covered-dish luncheon will be served Sept. 27.

■ Homecoming will be Sept. 27 at Fairview Church, Watauga.

■ John O. Yarbrough, pastor of Tabernacle Church, Cartersville, Ga., will be guest speaker on homecoming day Sept. 27 at East Lake Church, Chattanooga. He is a former pastor of East Lake Church. Lunch will follow morning worship and singing will be in the afternoon.

■ Members of South Gate Church, Antioch, will celebrate the church's 20th anniversary and homecoming Sept. 27. Former staff members Lewis and Betty Walker will offer special music. A covered-dish luncheon will be held at noon.

■ Homecoming day will be Sept. 27 at East Athens Church, Athens.

■ John Holland will lead revival Sept. 27-30 at Island Home Church, Knoxville.

■ Revival began Sept. 21 at Calvary Hill Church, Dyersburg. T. C. Thurman is leading the services which will conclude Sept. 27 with a homecoming celebration.

■ Members of First Church, Dyersburg, are celebrating the church's 125th anniversary this week. Speakers for the week are Robert Agee, Don McCulley, Steve Gaines, George Guthrie, Jere



A MISSION TEAM from Swannsylvania Church, Dandridge, in East Tennessee Association, recently did "frontier" missions literally. The team traveled to Frontier Church, Frontier, Mich., to conduct Vacation Bible School, and do construction work, including the installation of a new church sign. Team members also assisted in revival services. The trip was held in conjunction with the Tennessee/Michigan Partnership. Swannsylvania volunteers were, from left, kneeling, Molly and Emily Hensley, Whitney Latham; standing, Zeke Woody, Lynne Hensley, Pastor Mike Hensley, Andy Chrisman, and Don Lane.

Phillips, Peter Rhea Jones, and Robert Orr. A fellowship dinner will be Sept. 27.

■ Mark and Becky Howard will lead revival Sept. 25-27 at Fowlkes Church, Fowlkes.

■ Ted Thedford will deliver the morning message at homecoming Sept. 27 at Enon Church, Halls.

■ Members of Pleasant Grove Church, Coalfield, will celebrate the church's 126th anniversary Sept. 27.

■ Murray Mathis, pastor of Third Church, Murfreesboro, will be evangelist for revival Sept. 30-Oct. 4 at Memorial Church, Hixson. Jimmy Cooley, Chattanooga, will be music director.

■ the leaders

■ Bill Sorrell is the new minister of youth and activities at

Audubon Park Church, Memphis.

■ Steve Rowland recently joined the staff of New Union Church, Dayton, as minister of education and music. He served in a similar position in Symsonia, Ky. He will begin his ministry in late September.

■ Ron Leonard is the new youth-recreation director at Highland Heights Church, Memphis.

■ Dennis Ward is serving as interim pastor of Elk River Church, Butler.

■ Eric Heaton recently began service as pastor of Hunter Memorial Church, Elizabethton.

■ Members of Cherokee Hills Church, Morristown, called Ricky Dinkins as pastor.

■ First Church, Monterey, Youth Minister Steve Tiebout resigned to enter Golden Gate

Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

■ Pruette Plemens has resigned as minister of music and youth at Ninth Street Church, Erwin, to join the staff of Tabernacle Church, Union, S.C.

■ Joe Morgan, minister of music at Stevens Street Church, Cookeville, was ordained to the ministry Sept. 6.

■ Arnold Porter has been called as interim pastor of Highland Park Church, Lawrenceburg. He is retired. He was pastor there from 1963-69.

■ the people

■ Don Kirk, Danny Goodman, and Ricky Jackson will be ordained to the deacon ministry of First Church, Linden.

■ Lorraine Stanfill of Memphis recently was recognized by her Sunday School Class at Beverly Hills Church as "an outstanding teacher." Stanfill has not missed a Sunday in 42 years. She has received a pin for each year.



STANFILL

■ Eric Spangler and Michael Hines were ordained to the deacon ministry of Island Home Church, Memphis, Sept. 20.

■ Jerry Bradley Jr., was recently ordained to the ministry at Poplar Avenue Church, Memphis.

■ French Broad Church, Dandridge, recently ordained Roy Williams.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

What is walking through your gate?

By Chuck Williams, pastor First Church, Troy

The Chinese Wall was the greatest piece of construction work ever attempted. It was started in 214 BC under Emperor Shi-Hwang-Ti to keep the Mongols out. Taking generations to build, it stretched 1200 miles across the entire frontier of China. It was the most carefully planned and gigantically constructed protective measure ever conceived. So, did this keep the Mongols out? No. They simply bribed a gate keeper

Most of these brief articles come from columns usually written by pastors and other church staff members. They have a variety of views. The Baptist and Reflector does not necessarily concur with the views expressed. The articles are gleaned from church and associational newsletters. — Editor

and walked through the gate!

It has seemed as if our nation is totally secure from any enemy. All who have tried to invade have been driven back. But about ten - 12 years ago, our nation began to crumble from within.

In churches and in counseling centers, a dramatic increase in deviant social and sexual behavior was noticed. What could have happened? Why the change? Someone has bribed the gatekeeper and let the enemy inside. The bribe was the TV set. The gift was entertainment. The result is the self-destruction of a nation.

Today Christians let the enemy march through their gates and into their homes, exposing their children to scenes of violence and sex which would have horrified our forefathers.

Christian leaders are asking; how could church members be so uninterested in spiritual things? Why don't our teenagers care about their Christian witness? Why is it so difficult to get our children interested in Bible stories?

The major networks, in an effort to gain a bigger audience, set loose the social and religious restraints. Now, all acts of depravity can be viewed on cable TV or on video. And Christians are watching it!

Repeated exposure to these scenes sears the mind. God talks about this in I Timothy 2:4, "their consciences have been seared as with a hot iron." In this state a person is hardened to the voice of God and does not even realize it!

Turn off the TV and get into God's Word. The Bible has power to heal your mind. Let God's Word wash you until you are clean and pure again. Our nation and families are at stake.

The gate has been opened to the enemy. Close the gate in your home and become spiritually alive again! □

What are we doing?

Pete Mullins, pastor East Athens Church, Athens

What are we doing here? What is the purpose for our existence on

earth? If you listen to evolutionists, you would believe we just "happened" in the "evolutionary process." I don't believe that for one minute, do you? I think the words of an old song tell why we are here - I was born to serve the Lord! The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever!! That is the purpose for our existence. We didn't just "happen" by accident. God gave us life and our purpose is to glorify him. If we are not doing that we are wasting our lives and missing the purpose for living. With that being true, and it is because the Bible tells us so, how can we glorify God? Let me share with you.

1. We glorify God through salvation: When a sinner bows the knee and heart before God and acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, God is glorified!

2. We must make glorifying God the aim of our life: Just because you are saved, that does not mean that you automatically glorify the Lord. We must make that the aim, the goal of our life. It is either our

intent to glorify God or to live the self life.

3. Confession of sin glorifies God: When we confess our sins, we are not passing on to God information that he did not have before! God knows even our thoughts! When we confess and repent of sin, we are simply agreeing with God and that honors him.

4. Faith glorifies God: Worry is a sin because it calls God a liar! If we worry we call God's character into question. When we live by faith we are giving testimony that Almighty God can be trusted!

5. Fruitfulness glorifies God: When our lives demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit spoken of in Galatians 5 we are living the "Christ life" and people can see our good works and our Father in heaven is glorified.

6. Praise glorifies God: Singing is only way of praising God. We praise God when we read his Word and stand in awe of his person and of his mighty acts as recorded there! □

Students' prayers for Bibles are answered

By Tim Fields
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — How do you locate 150 Bibles in an hour and a half to donate to victims of Hurricane Andrew?

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, and students and faculty of American Baptist College in Nashville will tell you it takes timely prayer and fast action.

Students and faculty of ABC, a four-year Bible college sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., had just returned from surveying needs of hurricane victims in low income areas of South Miami with Coretta King and other African-American leaders.

"We found that when Hurricane Andrew ripped through Florida and Louisiana, it not only damaged or destroyed homes and

churches, but the wind and rain also destroyed most or all of their possessions including their Bibles," explained Bernard LaFayette Jr., vice-president for academic affairs at ABC.

"We had an 18-wheel tractor trailer loaded with drinking water, diapers, foodstuffs, and clothing leaving the campus for Miami in 90 minutes, and we wanted to send all the Bibles we could find.

"I called Arthur Walker to share the appeal for Bibles with him, but he was out of the office in a meeting," LaFayette explained. I left word with his secretary that the truck was leaving at 2 p.m.

Unknown to LaFayette, Walker returned to the office and immediately began responding to the appeal. He found a few Bibles in the Education Commission storeroom and then contacted Bucky Rosenbaum and Harold C.

Bennett of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

Bennett and Rosenbaum found three cartons of surplus Bibles like the ones used in the auditorium of the SBC Building for chapel and Executive Committee board meetings. The Bibles which had been donated several years before by the Baptist Sunday School Board bore the gold-stamped words "Southern Baptist Convention Building."

Walker quickly loaded the Bibles into his car and headed for the campus unaware that at that very moment students and faculty of ABC were in chapel service making an appeal for Bibles and praying for God to provide the Bibles before the truck left campus.

"Our sermon title was 'Preaching the Word in a Changing World,'" LaFayette said. "As the chapel service was drawing to a close Dr. Walker walked in to deliver the Bibles. Our prayers were answered immediately.

"We are now praying that American Baptist College and the Southern Baptist Convention can form an alliance to provide additional Bibles and other long-term assistance especially for low-income families," LaFayette said.

In their survey, faculty and students at the school found large pockets of low-income Hispanics, Haitians, whites, and blacks in places such as South Miami, Florida City, and Goulds, Fla., whose special needs are not being met.

"We are trying to prepare these people for the post traumatic syn-

drome or spiritual storm which will remain long after Hurricane Andrew," LaFayette said. "This storm of spiritual deprivation is just beginning to hit. These people must now deal with storms of anger, hostility, and frustration which come from losing everything they have.

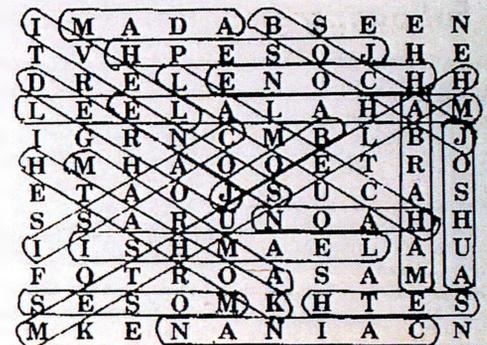
"These people have nothing to do all day. They have no home, no television, no telephone, no radio. They need spiritual strength to survive this storm. They need hope," he said.

In addition to collecting and sending more Bibles, ABC is preparing to organize Southern Baptist and National Baptist volunteers who can work at rebuilding the physical and spiritual base

of the low-income communities. "We will work through churches such as Glendale Church, a black Southern Baptist congregation in Goulds. These churches will coordinate the relief efforts in their communities," LaFayette explained. "We want to provide people-to-people contact to let these victims know that we love them and God loves them."

Southern Baptists and others who want to donate supplies or volunteer their time to the ABC hurricane relief effort are encouraged to phone Bernard LaFayette or Nelson Wilson at American Baptist College at (615) 228-7877. □

Solutions to puzzle from last week's Baptist and Reflector



"Seen the righteous forsaken" (Psalm 37:25).

Annuity Board announces \$1 million donation

By Kirby F. Warnock
For Baptist Press

DALLAS — A North Carolina couple has contributed the largest personal gift in the SBC Annuity Board's history.

Paul Powell, board president, said Hughy and Wyndolyn Royster Hollifield of Winston-Salem, N.C., donated a planned, irrevocable gift of \$1 million, earmarked for the Mission Church Assistance Fund.

The fund provides five-year, decreasing supplements of retirement contributions for pastors of new or small churches. The board uses the fund to support Bold Mission Thrust, an SBC effort that includes planting of thousands of new churches throughout the nation by the turn of the century.

"I am thrilled to receive word of this gift," Powell said. "In recognition of the Hollifields' contribution, the name of the Mission Church Assistance Fund will be changed to the Wyndolyn Royster Hollifield Mission Church Assistance Fund."

The North Carolina Baptist Foundation, which holds trust assets for the Hollifields, was instrumental in the presentation of the gift. Edwin S. Coates, executive director of the North Carolina foundation, said, "The Hollifields are truly excited about their involvement in both assisting retired pastors and families

who now have great need, as well as helping in a permanent way young churches and pastors to eliminate, or reduce, these circumstances in future generations."

The Annuity Board currently is conducting "A Time To Remember" campaign. The three-year fund-raising program is an effort to raise \$5 million in endowment for the Retired Ministers' Support Fund, \$2.25 million for the Adopt An Annuitant ministry, and \$1 million for the Mission Church Assistance Fund. The campaign encourages Baptists to care for their own by raising endowment to supplement retirees' income. □



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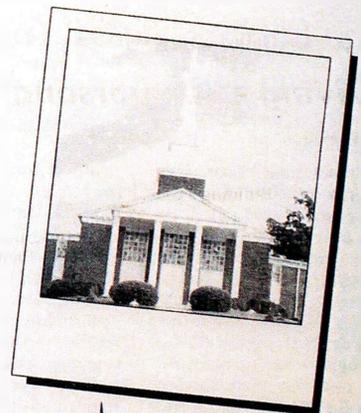
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■ Sunday School lesson commentary

□ God's restoration through faith in Him — Bible Book Series for September 27

By Leonard Markham, pastor, Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville

Faith in God brings real purpose to our lives. A person without God is like a ship without a sail — drifting with the water. That many people today have a mundane and superficial existence is a matter of record. H. G. Wells, the famous historian and philosopher, said at the age of 61, "I have no peace. All life is at the end of the tether." Ralph Barton, a top cartoonist in this country, left this note pinned to his pillow before taking his own life: "I have had few difficulties, many friends, great successes. I have gone from wife to wife, and from house to house, visited great countries of the world, but I am fed up with inventing devices to fill up 24 hours of the day." One can be successful and still be miserable.

When God presented His case against Israel He said, "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me." (Micah 6:3).

God reminded Israel of His redemptive activity in bringing them out of Egypt and in return the people had repeatedly turned away from Him. God is asking, "Have I wearied my people?"

It seems today it is us who have become tired of God. How else can we explain this endless quest for material possessions, the increase in divorce and family disruptions, and the tendency of Christian people to place their trust and loyalty in political systems and political leaders instead of God? Why this endless quest on the part

of many to try to find meaning in life.

We know that purpose in life can only come through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). Jesus wants us to live a full and abundant life. Yet, many people do not live such a life. Why?

The reason for unfulfilled lives is because there is an emptiness in souls. The great physicist and philosopher, Pascal, put it this way: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by a created thing, but only by God the creator, made known through Jesus Christ."

We will never be satisfied with our lives until we allow Jesus

Christ to control us and show us His purpose for creating us. No person, no thing, no drug, no amount of money can give purpose to our lives. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6).

Basic Passage: Micah 6:1-7:20

As a small child I prayed a children's prayer.

"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake I pray the Lord my soul to take."

I would change one word in that prayer to express the tragedy of many today. "If I should die before I live." Many have not

learned how to really live.

An epitaph for too many people would be: "He died at 33 and was buried at 66." Some people have been dead for years before they are buried. It is easy to get in a rut and stay there for the rest of our lives.

Someone said, "We had better be careful in selecting our ruts for a rut is only a grave with the ends knocked out. A place where we might spend the greater portion of our lives and then at the end someone will throw dirt in on top of us."

What we want is life. Jesus Christ has promised us the abundant life. Will we receive Him as our Lord and Savior today? Will we recommit our life to Him to find our purpose in His purpose? □

□ Following spiritual leadership — Convention Uniform Series for September 27

By Gary Coltharp, pastor, First Church, Jackson

We are living in a dangerous time wherein leaders are being doubted in all areas of life. The mood of our society is one of suspicion and skepticism where institutions and their leaders are concerned. Such attitudes are directed indiscriminately toward virtually all who are in positions of leadership, from political leaders to heads of corporations, from leaders of charitable organizations to religious leaders. The underlying assumption seems to be, "You can't trust anyone."

There are reasons for this suspicion and skepticism. Sadly, too many trusted leaders have violated the trust of their followers. Moral failure, financial impropriety, and other scandalous behavior have been brought before us and made personal through paid communication technology as never before. There have always been failed leaders,

but in former times it took much longer for the word to spread and far fewer ever knew of the failures. But in today's world, failed leaders are prime time news stories.

Basic Passage: Judges 4-5

I write this introduction to our study for two reasons. First, never before has there been a more crucial time for spiritual leaders to guard the trust of their Lord and those who look to them for leadership. Integrity is not optional! Second, God calls out leaders from among his people today as he did in Biblical times. Therefore, the Christian community must not adapt the worldly attitude of suspicion and skepticism with regard to spiritual leadership. God's appointed leaders should be identified, undegraded by the prayers of God's people, and followed as they

fulfill their divine callings.

Having said that, let us examine the account of two of God's chosen leaders in Israel during the period of the judges. In reading Judges one cannot overlook the cycles of blessing, complacency, sin, punishment, and restoration repeated again and again. The final verse of Judges is a refrain sounded within the cycles of Israel's life:

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes." (ch. 21:25). Proverbs twice repeats a principle of human depravity which is central to Israel's experience and ours: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." (ch. 14:12 and ch. 16:25). Deborah (ch. 4:4-5)

Following the death of Ehud, the left-handed judge, the people followed their old pattern of sin and God allowed them to be subjugated to Jabin, king of Canaan,

for 20 years. During this time a Godly woman named Deborah ministered to the people of Ephraim as prophetess and judge. God's call was upon her and He chose to use her as His leader at this critical time. She was not the only God-called prophetess in Israel's history (remember Miriam, Exodus 15; Huldah, II Kings 22; Anna, Luke 2). But she was the only woman to be named as judge in Israel. God chose her and used her in a mighty way to accomplish His purpose.

Barak (ch. 4:6-7)

Deborah turned to one more gifted and prepared than she to enlist and lead the army of Israel against Jabin and his general, Sisera. She delivered the word of Yahweh to Barak and he responded by committing to do what God required.

A leadership team (ch. 4:8-10)

Barak placed one condition upon Deborah as he made his

commitment. She must go with him, probably because he recognized her special gift as one through whom God would guide him. Deborah agreed to go and correctly reminded Barak that the goal was not glory for them but for God (v. 9).

God gives victory (ch. 4:14-16)

Embedded within this stirring account of Israel's victory over Sisera's army with its 900 chariots of iron is the most important factor in any person's or church's life. Deborah announced the day of battle by assuring Barak, "this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand." (v. 14).

Sometimes we presume that God will second our motions. Let us remember that God makes the motions. But note this: God's spokesperson was a person. Deborah. Are you responsive to the spiritual leaders God has brought into your life?

□ Giving your personal testimony — Life and Work Series for September 27

By James Hutson, pastor, First Church, Rockwood

This is our final lesson under the theme of "Building Your Witnessing Skills."

Do you have a testimony to share? Let me assure you if you know Jesus Christ as Savior in full pardon of your sins, you have a testimony to share. Are you prepared to share your testimony? "Always ready to make a defense to every one who asks you..." (I Peter 3:15 NASV).

I hope you will use this lesson to lead you to write out your testimony, if you haven't already. If you are a teacher, let me encourage you to provide an opportunity for your class members to do the same. This is the most important part of these lessons on witnessing.

Wrong but doesn't know it (vv. 1-11)

There are three accounts of

Paul's conversion experience in Acts — 9:3-22; 22:1-21; 26:1-32. Paul does not use the same words every time, but the basic thrust is the same. Paul described his life before he became a Christian.

■ He was the epitome of Jewish manhood and teachings (vv. 4-5). His life as a Jewish young man was without blemish. A more detailed testimony of Paul's pre-Christian life is found in Philippians 3:4-6.

■ Paul was so devoted to the Jewish way that he was hostile to the Christian way (vv. 9-11, ch. 8:1-2, 9:1-2). Sincerity and conviction can be wrong. Our convictions must always be tested against the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

What do you do when you learn you are wrong? (vv. 12-19)

Paul learned that he was wrong in a most dramatic fashion. "A

bright light from heaven — a voice speaking in a language Paul understood."

Maybe that is how the Lord came to you when you were saved. Many did not have such a dramatic experience. Your experience may have been a soft voice like that to Samuel (I Samuel 3), and you responded "speak Lord, thy servant heareth."

Basic Passage: Acts 26:4-5, 9, 12-16, 19-20

Don't be disappointed if your experience with Christ was not as dramatic as someone else's. Be thankful that you know Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. Be assured that your experience of salvation is as genuine as Saul of Tarsus.

When God's Holy Spirit convicts us of our lostness and offers to us

God's forgiveness — rejoice and praise the Lord. Some people are too proud to admit they are sinners and need to be saved. Fortunately for Paul and the Christian church, he was man enough to change his mind and believe in the Lord Jesus.

Paul's response to God's call (vv. 19-20)

■ Paul says, "I was not disobedient to my salvation experience." (v. 19). Paul's "heavenly vision" transformed his life. It changed his name from Saul of Tarsus to Paul, the Apostle. It changed him from being a "destroyer" of the Christian way to a matchless preacher of the Gospel of grace and faith.

Paul believed that if he could be saved. Everyone else could also be saved. And he spent his life being a witness.

What about you? Are you spend-

ing your life telling others about Jesus? Those who are lost need someone to tell them about the Savior. "How shall they call upon Him whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14b NASV).

■ Paul as a messenger of God's salvation (v. 20). Every Bible student knows about Paul's missionary journeys. Everywhere he went he preached the Gospel and started churches. Have you every been on a missionary journey?

Almost all of us go somewhere every day — to work, to the store. Automobiles and airplanes carry people to their appointed tasks and vacations. Let me urge you to use these "traveling" occasions to be a witness for your Lord. You may travel no further than next door. But when you go and wherever you go be a witness.

Write your testimony and use it for your Lord. □

Churches can respond during election year

By Michael K. Whitehead
Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Are you suffering from "tax-exemption paranoia?"

The syndrome makes cultural cripples of many well-meaning pastors and church leaders who have developed an irrational fear about losing a church's tax-exempt status because of excessive "political activity."

This fear can paralyze churches and prevent them from helping members to apply their Bible-based convictions when exercising their citizenship.

Part of the reason for the paranoia is an ambiguous statute. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code has two rules which regulate political activity by churches and exempt corporations.

The first rule permits some lobbying or "influencing legislation" by a church body, so long as it is "no substantial part of the activities" of the entity. The code does not define "influencing legislation" or "substantial part."

The second rule prohibits a church or tax-exempt corporation from "participat(ing) in or interven(ing) in (including the publishing and distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office." The code does not define "participate" or "intervene."

When balancing the risks, consider the fact that the Internal Revenue Service has never judicially revoked the tax-exempt status of a church because a pastor went too far in praising or rebuking a political candidate or in stirring up public pressure about some legislation. This is not to say churches should ignore the law just because the IRS has not enforced it. □

Discounts offered to youth for world conference

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Airfare and accommodation costs for Baptist youth and youth leaders planning to attend the 12th Baptist Youth World Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, Aug. 11-15, 1993, have been reduced by \$116 to \$314.

Up to 4000 young people from around the world are expected to meet in Harare under the theme, "Risking All for Christ — Our Only Hope."

"We have been concerned about the costs," said Paul Montacute, director of the Baptist World Alliance's youth department, "and we have worked hard ... to lower the costs of this trip because we want to do all we can to help Baptist youth to attend."

The greatest savings of more

than \$300 on the new prices just released by Wilcox World Travel and Tours, the official U.S. travel agency for the conference, are for those planning to fly from New York and stay in a first-class hotel during a combined conference/South Africa visit and those planning to combine attendance at the conference with a "Best of Zimbabwe" tour and stay at a first-class hotel.

The savings on other tours range from \$277 to \$116, with the least change in prices originally quoted for persons choosing accommodation at colleges rather than hotels. □

71-year-old leads hundreds to Christ through CWT witness

By James Dotson
Baptist Press

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. — Richie Dzio got a knock on his door on April 21, 1985, that changed his life.

A Christian Witness Training (CWT) team from Gainesville's New Hope Church came by to explain the Gospel to Dzio — a nominal Catholic at the time — in a way he had never heard before. He liked the concept so much, in fact, he not only accepted his own personal relationship with Christ but also now leads about 100 people to Christ each year as a staff member at New Hope. He is an outreach assistant, with sole responsibilities for visiting people in their homes and sharing the Gospel using methods learned through CWT.

"It's the most beautiful thing you'll ever see," Dzio said of the experience of helping someone come to know Christ. "And you can become as addicted to that as you'll ever get addicted to drugs or alcohol."

Dzio, 71, shared his testimony recently with participants in a four-day CWT National Seminar at New Hope to train ministers or laymen who will then lead their churches in establishing the full 13-week course.

Christian Witness Training is an intensive program that equips Christians to share the Gospel using a memorized outline of Scripture and illustrations. The presentation begins with questions exploring how the person feels about his or her relationship with God and culminates in an explanation of what God has done for mankind through Jesus Christ. □

Released time center offers students Christian alternative

By James Dotson
Baptist Press

ELLIJAY, Ga. — The course, being taken by about 150 Gilmer High School students this year for credit, is called "Handling The Hot Ones." One recent class in-

cluded prayer requests, prayer, a brief lecture from II Kings, and a discussion of peer pressure from a Biblical perspective.

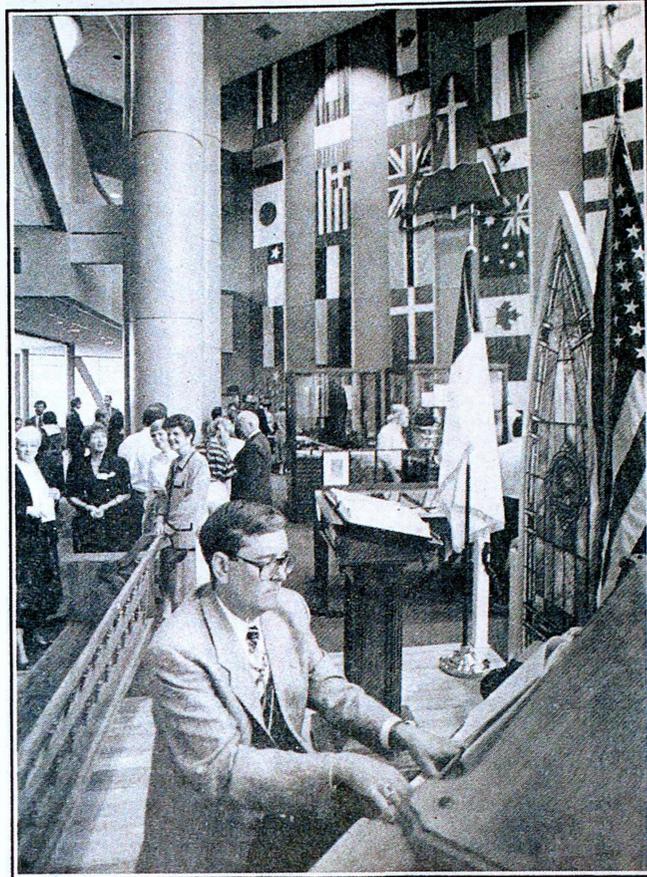
When the class was over, the students left the Gilmer Christian Learning Center — a privately funded center here offering Biblically based instruction as a high school elective — and walked down the hill to the public high school for the remainder of their day.

Such a scenario would be impossible, some might say, in an age when religious observance has been all but banished from the public school classroom. But the Gilmer Learning Center — and more than 100 similar centers nationally — are perfectly legal under a court-sanctioned concept called released time religious education. As long as students attend classes voluntarily, with parental approval, and at off-campus locations, then schools must release students for those classes.

Released time programs should be used more often, contend Christian religious liberty advocates.

"Released time programs are the best-kept secret about the constitutional religious rights of parents in public schools. And it is a secret the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) wants kept," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs also has endorsed the concept. □



PLAYING A PUMP organ at the dedication of the board's new visitor education center, The World Bridge, is Tommy Keown. The center, which features flags representing the countries receiving SSB materials, was dedicated Sept. 10. — Photo by Jim Vene-man.

Building village, relationships in Turkey

By Ken Camp
Baptist Press

DALLAS — Six Southern Baptists traveled to Turkey to help rebuild an earthquake-ravaged village and in the process built bridges across centuries of ethnic hatred, laying the foundation for further Christian witness.

Three volunteers from California and three from Texas worked two weeks in August as part of an international team to help rebuild a predominantly Kurdish village of 24 homes that was destroyed by an earthquake in March.

The six Baptists joined other volunteers from New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and Singapore working under the auspices of Global Partners, a London-based humanitarian organization.

In addition to construction, the volunteers also took water samples and measurements of existing water wells near the village. Within a month, a water purifier purchased by Global Partners will be installed in the village.

"The needs of Turkey and her people are great. I thank God he has given me a chance to reflect his love to them," said Gary Smith, a member of Midway Road Church in Dallas. "Kindness is a language the blind can see and the deaf can hear."

Other Southern Baptist volunteers were project coordinator Edd Brown and two fellow

members of Sierra Church in Pioneer, Calif., Charlie Throssel and James Warren, and two other members of the Dallas church, Mike Rouse and Mafa Barzani. □

Baptist youth in Germany decry violence

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — German Baptist youth leaders registered their shock and dismay against the firebombing of houses of foreigners in the Baltic seaport of Rostock by neo-Nazi youths.

"We are shocked at the events in Rostock, and we hope that young Christians in youth groups and churches in Germany will have the strength and courage of their convictions to stand on the side of the weak and helpless in this situation," said a statement sent to the Baptist World Alliance from the youth department of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany.

According to the statement, the violence was carried out "mainly by organized groups of young Nazi supporters from Eastern and Western Germany."

Neo-Nazis have been described as people "who generally revere Hitler and deny the existence of Nazi death camps."

Their actions in Rostock have been supported by Rostock residents, but polls show 86 percent of all Germans are against the violence. □