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Leaders at summit conference affirm CP

By Herb Hollinger
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist denominational executives from state and national entities affirmed the Cooperative Program as the "finest method available for Baptists to work together to reach a needy world" in a high-level summit conference Dec. 2-3 in Nashville.

An outgrowth of six CP Issues Dialogues sponsored by the SBC Executive Committee and held throughout the nation during the past year, the summit conference drew 33 state convention executive directors, including James Porch of Tennessee, to dialogue with officials from the Executive Committee and the SBC Stewardship Commission.

After double digit growth in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Cooperative Program has lev-

eled off during the past decade. For the past two years, at the SBC level, year-end CP gifts have totaled slightly less than the previous year.

No votes were asked for, nor taken, during the meeting but a consensus appeared in a mutual affirmation of the nearly 70-year-old SBC channel for missions: the Cooperative Program.

"The forum ... provided a fine opportunity for the state executive directors to engage in frank, open discussion with the president of the Executive Committee, Morris H. Chapman, his staff; Rudy Fagan of the Stewardship Commission and his staff; and David Hankins, chairman of the Executive Committee," Cecil Sims, president of the state executives' group, told Baptist Press following the meeting. Sims is executive director of the Northwest (Oregon-Washington) Baptist Con-

vention.

The conference was held under background rules which allowed Baptist Press to be present but with no attribution nor quotes allowed in the coverage.

"Dr. Chapman encouraged openness and listened intently as many facets of Cooperative Program relationships were expressed. The executive directors unanimously affirmed the CP as the finest method available for Baptists to work together to reach a needy world," Sims said.

Chapman, Executive Committee president since Oct. 1, called the conference "an exceptionally good meeting."

Chapman said the state executives were helpful to him and "showed a genuine interest in the thoughts which I expressed."

Although no voting took place, Chapman said the meeting was not designed as a time

for specific actions, but rather as a time of informal discussions about matters which mean "much to all of us."

A number of state executives, speaking with Baptist Press informally after the meeting, expressed hope that all the entities involved have now shared their opinions, found a consensus, and are ready to work together to promote and affirm the CP.

During the three sessions topics ranged from the different ways states and the SBC identify mission gifts, sometimes recorded as Cooperative Program while at other times as designated gifts; nomination of people for SBC boards who are not representative of state Baptist constituency; the practice of "preferred items" in state budgets before the CP division to the SBC; wills and bequests shared between states and the SBC. □

Clinton, others knock entertainment industry

By Mark Kelly
For Baptist Press

LOS ANGELES — President-elect Bill Clinton surprised Hollywood evangelicals when he told TV Guide recently the entertainment industry is hurting America and should rethink "its enormous capacity

to influence opinion."

Some welcomed Clinton's comments as evidence the debate over values in the media has reached the mainstream of American society. However, Jess Moody, pastor of a prominent Southern Baptist church in the Los Angeles area, believes Holly-

wood executives have no interest in discussing the values they promote in their productions.

Clinton did not address the issues of values in the media during his campaign for the White House, which received high-profile support from prominent members of the entertainment industry.

Clinton told TV Guide he is "mortified" by some of what he sees on television. He called on Hollywood to take the lead in "deglamorizing mindless sex and violence."

The president-elect said there is "no question" the trivialization of sex and violence by — See Clinton, page 2

SBC gifts steady

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for November were 3.84 percent below the same month a year ago but designated gifts increased 3.98 percent over the previous year, said Morris H. Chapman, president, SBC Executive Committee.

CP gifts totaled \$11,734,974 compared to November 1991's amount of \$12,204,115. Designated gifts were \$2,384,109 compared to \$2,292,921 in 1991. The November 1992 total is above basic monthly operating requirement of \$11,683,366. □



WALLACE MEMORIAL CHURCH Pastor James McCluskey and Jane Powell, stand beside photos of famed Southern Baptist missionary Bill Wallace who was killed in South China in 1951. Wallace Memorial, which was named in honor of the Knoxville native, has opened The Bill Wallace Room which contains articles, pictures, letters, artifacts, memorabilia, audio and tape-recorded interviews, and other items related to Bill Wallace and his missionary service in South China. Tennessee Baptists are invited to visit the Bill Wallace Room individually or in groups on an appointment basis. For information, call the church office at (615) 688-4343.

CP giving improves after slow start

The 1992-93 Cooperative Program year didn't start well for Tennessee Baptists, but showed promise.

The old "bugaboo" of five Sundays in the month probably was the main cause of the shortfall of \$282,968 below November of last year.

Income through CP giving from TBC churches amounted to \$1,290,365.15, according to James Porch, executive director/treasurer.

Budget needs for the first

month of the current budget year amount to \$2,263,276.83, and receipts equal some 42 percent below that mark.

There is good news, however. Porch said through Dec. 7, second month CP income showed a gain of \$170,000 for the total budget over this time last year. "We appreciate the stewardship of Tennessee Baptists in CP giving," Porch said. "December gifts can make a big difference, and already show good news." □

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Southern Baptists feed refugees; locals the real heroes

By Mike Creswell
For Baptist Press

BELGRADE, Serbia — Southern Baptists in America are helping feed thousands of refugees who have fled the bitter civil war in former Yugoslavia.

But the real heroes are local Baptists who distribute food from outside donors through programs run on nickels, dimes, hard work, and faith.

A previously announced \$225,000 gift from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will provide food to more than 30,000 people over the next two to three months. Many of them are Bosnian families who have left their homeland with little more than their lives. Southern Baptist missionary Bill Steele is helping coordinate use of the funds.

Baptists work on all sides of the conflict, helping Croats, Serbians, and Bosnians alike:

■ In Puscine, northern Croatia, Baptist layman Bratko Horvat has turned the warehouse of his electronics firm into a clearinghouse for refugee ministry. The modern facility normally filled with fax machines and copiers now bulges with food, clothing, shoes, and other items. Horvat sends his own trucks around the city where 10,000 Bosnian refugees have settled. At times he even sends trucks into Bosnian territory to distribute aid.

Horvat personally has preached at the front lines. He distributes food and clothing to Muslim refugees with no strings attached, but uses every opportunity to spread his faith.

"Jesus is not American, not Croatian and not Serbian," he tells the refugees, whom he prefers to call "guests."

■ At Sisak, Croatia, near the Serbian war front, Baptist worker Zelko Mraz flips

through receipts for the food Getsemane Mission has bought with Foreign Mission Board funds: 2400 cans of stew, 500 kilograms of noodles, 500 liters of cooking oil, 500 pounds of rice, 1500 kilograms of sugar.

Each 21 days workers with the Baptist-led organization distribute food parcels to about 400 families the government has committed to their care. With few of their own resources, they depend on outside aid to help meet the pressing needs around them.

■ In Zagreb, Croatia's capital city, the Baptist group "My Neighbor" is using a \$25,000 gift from Southern Baptists to feed about 2000 people for two months. The ministry, based in Zagreb Baptist Church, operates a clothing warehouse and an extensive food distribution ministry across Croatia. "My Neighbor," probably the biggest of the Baptist-related refugee ministries, has established a newsletter to report on

its work.

■ Daruvar Baptist Church in the United Nations-protected town of the same name also depends on outside help, said pastor Misko Horvatek. With just 74 members, the church has taken on the mammoth responsibility of caring for 400 refugee families in the town of Krapina. To heighten the challenge, the church lost its entire savings account of prewar Yugoslavian currency at the bank. □

Virginia Baptists begin campaign

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — In the first action of its kind, the Virginia Baptist General Board unanimously approved a multi-million dollar fundraising campaign Dec. 1 to supply capital for ten current or newly-developing ministries.

The campaign, launched under the title "Living Our Legacy," is designed to raise from \$5 million to \$12 million in gifts and pledges by 1995.

It is believed to be the first time a state convention has embarked on a campaign to raise money for state ministries apart from its annual budget and state missions offering. It is common practice for agencies and institutions of state conventions to conduct such fundraising efforts, but not the state association itself.

By undertaking this campaign Virginia Baptists would be "living out the legacy given us by our forebears and projecting this legacy into the future," said VBGB Executive Director Reginald McDonough in his introduction of the campaign to a packed chapel at the Virginia Baptist building Dec. 1. □

Clinton, others knock entertainment industry

— Continued from page 1

by the media has had a negative impact on American society. He suggested "TV and movie makers could, without undermining their artistic integrity, have a major new impact on the way people view the world."

Clinton's comments reflect a growing consensus in mainstream America that Hollywood has gone overboard in its emphasis on sex and violence and has alienated itself from broad segments of the American populace.

In a new book, *Hollywood*

vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values, media critic Michael Medved echoes many concerns advanced in recent years by evangelical Christians such as James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association.

Medved, co-host of "Sneak Previews" on PBS, contends Hollywood has turned its "dream factory" into a "poison factory," producing films and TV shows many Americans see as a "threat to their basic values and a menace to the rais-

ing of their children."

Three evangelical Christians whose lives are invested in the entertainment industry welcomed Clinton's remarks about values in the media.

Ted Baehr, chairman of the Christian Film and Television Commission and publisher of Movie Guide, said Clinton's statements point out "a growing awareness on every side of the political spectrum" movies and TV have an enormous impact on society.

Tom Lester, who starred for six years as "Eb" on television's "Green Acres," said he was "glad to hear Gov. Clinton saying what he said." Lester is an unabashed Hollywood evangelical and a lifelong Southern Baptist. □

Martin accepts anti-gambling post

Baptist Press

DALLAS — Dan Martin, former news editor of Baptist Press, unanimously was elected executive director of Texans Who Care at the annual board meeting of the statewide anti-gambling coalition in Dallas.

Martin, 54, succeeds longtime anti-gambling activist Sue Cox who resigned as executive director of Texans Who Care to become director of the nonprofit Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling.

Martin will assume the executive post for the Austin-

based, non-partisan organization effective Jan. 1, 1993.

A native of Wichita Falls, Martin is a bivocational Southern Baptist pastor and veteran journalist who spent 17 years working for daily newspapers in Texas and Colorado before entering denominational journalism in 1973.

Martin worked for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and served nearly a decade as news editor of Baptist Press, official news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Martin also was interim news director for Associated Baptist Press for several months when the alternative news service was launched in September, 1990.

Most recently, he has served as a free-lance writer and pastor of Ledger Church, Ledger, N.C. □

Retired pastor dies

McMurray Robertson, retired pastor of First Church, Strawberry Plains, died Nov. 18 in Knoxville. He also was pastor of several other TBC churches.

He is survived by his wife, Lois, two daughters, and three grandchildren. □



NEW OFFICERS were chosen for Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union during their meeting in Gallatinburg. From left, next to wall, Ruth McNabb, Elizabethon, president; Patty Moore, Louisville; Betty Summers, Camden; Marguerite Babb, Nashville; Patty Seal, Smithville; Judy Cummings, Ripley; Carol Gilmer, Centerville; Inez Franks, Cleveland; and Glenda Roach, Rutledge, promotion directors; front row, Faye Cox, Knoxville, recording secretary; Martha Haynes, Ripley; Shelby Lord, Lenoir City; and Thelma Grace, Greenbrier, vice presidents.

Land asks Clinton not to appoint Vatican ambassador

By Louis Moore
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land has asked President-elect Bill Clinton to “redress a wrong” committed by former President Ronald Reagan when he appointed an ambassador to the Vatican.

“I am writing to ask you to strike a blow for these great principles by redressing a

wrong done by President Reagan in 1984 when he appointed an ambassador to the Vatican,” Land said in his letter mailed Dec. 2. “As a Southern Baptist, you are quite aware of the strong commitment of Baptists in general, and Southern Baptists in particular, to the principles of religious liberty and the separation of the institutions of church and state.”

His request is consistent with Southern Baptist policy

and statements both before and after Reagan made the appointment, Land told Clinton.

“Our conviction concerning the propriety of this policy has not wavered,” Land said in his letter. “The Holy See of the Roman Catholic Church is an ecclesiastical entity, not a civil state. While it is entirely appropriate for the government to have communication and interaction with a religious organization, appointing

an ambassador goes too far. It virtually tears down the wall of separation between the government and this particular denomination, while discriminating against other religious entities which do not receive the same diplomatic benefits.”

“We would oppose diplomatic status for any religious entity,” Land said.

Land also said the historic Baptist stand against appointing an ambassador to the Vatican “should not be miscon-

strued as anti-Catholic bigotry.” Land pointed out that earlier this year he had traveled to Rome with several other members of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography to meet with Pope John Paul II and other Vatican officials regarding an international anti-pornography effort.

Land’s letter calls on Clinton to act out of his own Southern Baptist heritage in making the decision about the Vatican appointment. □

The Baptists of India: building on the foundation

By Michael Chute
For Baptist Press

DEHLI, India — India — the proverbial sponge — has produced a cultural mosaic not witnessed anywhere else in the world.

The subcontinent’s vast point, jutting into oceans on three sides with mountains on the other, has acted like a giant cul-de-sac throughout history. This geographical trap has developed a myriad of invading peoples — each with its own language and culture — and created a nation always in flux.

India lured William Carey in 1792 like hordes of immigrants before him. He formed the first “Baptist Missionary Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen” to carry the Gospel to this land.

The young cobbler with a world map hung over his workbench launched the modern missionary movement. It has gathered momentum ever since.

Carey devoted 41 of his 73 years to evangelizing India without ever returning to his English homeland. His theme of faith — “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God” — resulted in the planting of 20 churches and mission stations, most of which continue today; the establishment of Serampore College, which continues to train Christian workers; and the translation of at least portions of the Bible into 42 languages.

Today, more Baptists live in India than anywhere in the world outside the United States. Only 21 million of India’s 880 million people call themselves Christians, but more than one million are Baptists. Gathered in more than 1000 churches in 28 conventions and associations, these Baptists are the direct result of years of missionary efforts. They continue to spread the Gospel.

Tracing expansion of Ca-

rey’s efforts through churches in north India, history reveals one of the exciting dramas of 20th century missions — the conversion of Nagaland headhunters that led to 80 percent of the tribal state’s people becoming Baptists. Large

India is the topic of the 1992 Foreign Mission Study that is being taught in many Tennessee Baptist churches this month.

Baptist concentrations are in surrounding states of Assam and Mizoram. American and Canadian Baptist work in south India resulted in 250,000 believers in Andhra Pradesh state alone. Now bands of Telugu Baptists from there carry their faith all over India.

Southern Baptists, although late entering India’s missions picture, also have a story to tell. Long-term efforts to enter the country paid off when Foreign Mission Board medical personnel were granted permission in 1973 to open Baptist Hospital in Bangalore. More than 20 career missionaries and scores of volunteers have served through the hospital over the years, offering healing and hope so many could experience Christ’s love for the first time. The 123-bed facility treats more than 33,000 patients every year.

But Christian concern doesn’t stop at hospital doors. In the hospital’s first seven years, 13 churches were planted in the Bangalore area. Since 1980 that has multiplied to almost 500 congregations throughout Karnataka state.

As the government closed India’s doors to most foreign missionaries, a new door opened for Southern Baptist work with Indian Baptists. National Indian Ministries

was formed in 1983 and focuses on equipping Indians to evangelize their own country. Southern Baptist volunteers and short-term personnel train Indian leaders through seminars and conferences. The ministry deploys teams for evangelism projects and channels support through Indian church planters.

The strategy has duplicated the phenomenal growth around Bangalore in places like Orissa, West Bengal, Chandigarh, and Bombay.

The formation of the Southern Asia and Pacific Itinerant Mission several years ago also has enabled Southern Baptist missionaries to work in different areas of India for short periods. It has expanded the work of National Indian Ministries to locations in 14 states.

But the remarkable church growth reported each year can be understood only through the work of Indian Baptists who are evangelizing their country:

G. Samuel is one such person. In 1969 he came to Hyderabad to begin a Baptist church with 35 people. Now more than 1500 people worship at Hyderabad Baptist Church and have begun 32 churches and missions.

Humble, 75-year-old Sadananda Patra, dressed in his traditional white Indian “djoti”, seemed to visitors to be a simple village peasant. Only as he began to preach did his 35-year back-

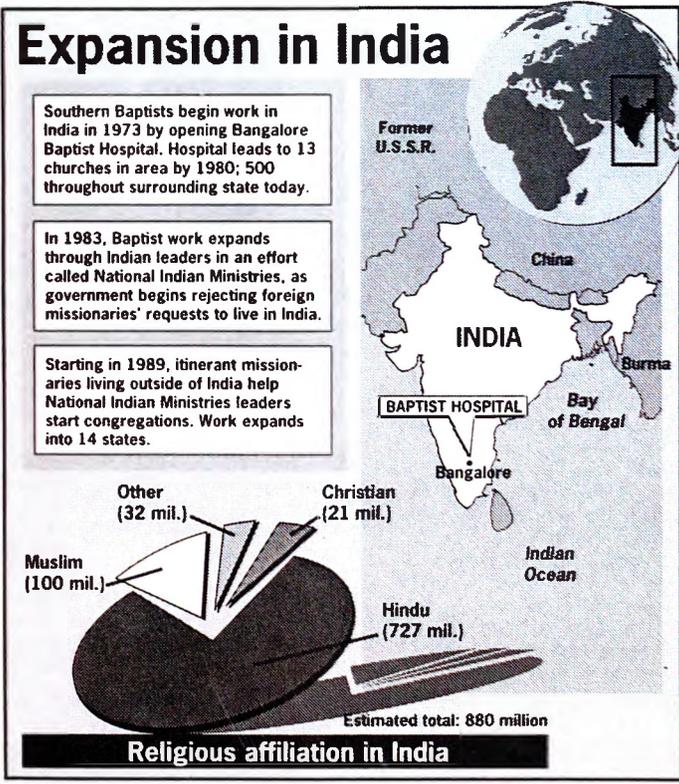
ground as Greek and Biblical studies professor at the Baptist seminary in Cuttack emerge. After the Church of North India took over the seminary, Patra led a remnant of Baptist churches in efforts to endure litigation that took their property and, later, attacks by Hindu radicals that destroyed crops and churches. Patra died last year.

India is difficult to comprehend. Its 880 million people rank it only behind China as the world’s most populated country. It equals the size of states in the United States east of the Mississippi River, but if America was saddled with India’s population density it would have more than two billion people. The impact that would have on the U.S. economy, job market, and food supply goes a long way toward explaining India’s poverty.

Yet India is self-sufficient in agriculture and ranks ninth in the world in industrial output. It boasts a well-educated, well-employed middle class equal to the U.S. population but still has half a billion people living in poverty. That’s the paradox of India.

India’s diversified religious society — Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Animists — represents an enormous challenge for Christian missions: to reach a nation of 600 different languages and 3000 distinct ethnic groups. Eighty percent of its people live in 650,000 villages, but India also is a nation of cities, providing a glimpse into the future of an urbanized world.

Twelve of those cities exceed one million inhabitants, each representing a mission field larger than many countries. □



■ about letters to the editor

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- Opinions and ideas expressed in letters are not necessarily shared by the Baptist and Reflector and its staff. □

■ Baptist beliefs

By Herschel H. Hobbs
Baptist theologian

The Lord's handmaid

"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord" — Luke 1:38

With these words Mary accepted God's will to bear his Son. They are so familiar that we fail to consider what they involved for Mary.

They brought shame upon her and her parents. They could cost her her husband and marriage. Under Jewish custom she was already considered to be Joseph's wife. This meant that she could be accused of adultery. Which meant that she could face death by stoning.

Mary turned to two people who could understand her story — cousin Elisabeth, who along with her husband Zacharias of Judea, soon would become parents for the first time though they were older (Luke 1:5-25, 36). Though their experience was not a virgin birth, it was a supernatural one.

So Mary visited them for three months, returning to Nazareth just prior to the birth of John the Baptist (1:56). During that time they had blessed fellowship in the Lord. □



HOBBS

Respect, press on

R. Keith Parks' decision to accept a position within the CBF reminds me that there has been, and always will be a dichotomy of Baptist belief. My dealings with Baptist university and conference center administrations have confirmed my belief that not all Baptists wish to be placed under one convention.

Both "moderates" and "conservatives" should view the formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as a good thing. Each side may choose an organization that more closely follows their beliefs. Let us only remember that we are to work together for the evangelization of the lost — not to fight among ourselves while the world perishes. Factionalism is a fruit of the flesh (Galatians 5:20).

Let not "conservatives" such as I condemn nor view R. Keith Parks as a "traitor," rather let us press on and respect each other as the brothers and sisters in Christ that we are.

Brad A. Pollard
Maryville 37801

Thanks volunteers

As the Christmas season approaches, I want to express thanks to Tennessee Baptists for their partnership with the Chile Baptist Convention during the past year, 1992. It has been the privilege of my husband and me to participate in four different partnership projects this year. Eddie, my husband, worked with two evangelistic projects, and I have worked with two medical projects.

Each time we have received great blessings in working with some tremendous Christian brothers and sisters from a variety of Baptist churches in Tennessee. Our lives have also been touched by volunteers that worked with our MKs at mission meetings and other volunteers we have met while they were here.

We are certainly aware there are many Tennessean Baptists who have supported these volunteers financially and in their prayers. They too are a great part of the blessing these volunteers have been to us and to many Chilean people.

I am reminded of what a Chilean Baptist layman said to me, with tears in his eyes at the "goodbye celebration" in Temuco as we met with the medical team that worked there in October. He said, "Si no volvemos a vernos aqui, nos veremos en los cielos" (if we don't see each other again

here, we WILL see each other again in heaven).

That is the security that many people know as they learned of Jesus and accepted him as their Lord and Savior because of efforts and prayers of Tennessee Baptists. Thank you, Tennessee Baptists, for lending us a hand as we share Christ's love here in Chile.

Marilyn Graves,
missionary,
Casilla 1417
Concepcion, Chile

Laity needed

The special committee appointed by Dr. Ron Phillips needs our prayers in a special way. At best, the committee members face an uphill struggle. The complete absence of laity (men and women) on this committee is already causing negative reactions. If it is at all possible through our Executive Board or through President Markham, I believe Tennessee Baptists would appreciate the inclusion of several lay people on this committee. Wouldn't a marvelous spirit be conveyed if some of the present appointed members would volunteer to step aside in order to have some lay people on the committee?

Dillard A. Mynatt
Gatlinburg 37738

Wider representation

In appointing eight pastors and one former pastor to the special committee to study the procedure for nominations to boards and committees, TBC president Ron Phillips missed a wonderful opportunity to model the kind of inclusiveness needed by our churches, associations, state conventions, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

True, the committee includes representatives from the three geographic areas of Tennessee, but it excludes church leaders such as other ministers (education, music, youth, children, preschool, etc.), women, laypersons, and ethnic leaders.

This committee is charged with the important task of dealing with a long-standing grievance that certainly needs attention. I trust that, as the committee meets, they will prayerfully and intentionally consider a recommendation that will help make our boards and committees more representative of the membership of the churches of our state, as well as representative of the geographic areas. We need to learn from various perspectives and we ought to celebrate our diversity!

Mary Jayne Allen
Chattanooga 37402

Seeks information

I am compiling material for a book about Southern Baptist missionary Lynda Bethea. Lynda was murdered in March of 1991 while serving in Kenya. If anyone has any correspondence from Lynda, a story, picture or a remembrance, please contact:

Janice Byrd
314 Randy Lee Lane
McKinney, Texas 75070
(214) 542-7389

Thank you.
Janice Byrd

Serve with devotion

Every time someone writes condemning our current SBC leadership with accusations of power politics, mind control, conservative agendas, committee controls, etc., I shake my head in anger and sadness.

It has been conservative fundamental, God-fearing, inerrant and infallible Bible-believing leaders that has brought this convention back to family values, morals and ethics, loyalty to Biblical principals, and Godly living. Thank God for men like Adrian Rogers, Charles Stanley, Jerry Vines, Paige Patterson, Jimmy Draper, and others who have said "No" to liberals in this convention.

The SBC has always upheld the principals of God's Word. Even if the Bible only contained four words, "In the beginning, God," it should compel us to serve him with total devotion, win the lost to Jesus, preach and teach against sin, live as righteous citizens with family values, morals and ethics, and uphold the constitution.

I wonder if those who write and complain about the SBC's current conservative agenda also think character is not an issue, and homosexuality and abortion are matters of choice. I pray they never get a toe-hold in our beloved convention.

I love them all in Christ and pray for them daily. But I will fight along side my "conservative" brothers to keep this convention on a Godly, moral, and conservative course. Give me that ol' time religion.

Darrell W. Lingerfelt
Lawrenceburg 38464

No Christian nation

We as Christians make the mistake of believing America is a Christian nation. This is not true. We are a nation with many individual Christians. There are also many people that are not Christians. No nation will ever be covered by the Holy Spirit as a whole again as Israel was. The coming of our Lord and Savior

Jesus Christ changed that.

Each individual is responsible for their own salvation. Then as a Christian we must reach out to every person that has not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord regardless of sins committed.

Mildred Bramlett
Old Fort 37362

Search committee

The pastor search committee of First Baptist Church, Soldotna, Alaska, requests assistance in locating possible candidates for full-time pastor position.

We would appreciate receiving names and addresses of persons who might be interested in being considered for pastor of our rural Alaskan community church, Southern Baptist in affiliation. At this time we are seeking both an interim and a permanent pastor. Our need is immediate as our dear pastor will be leaving us this month. Please reply directly to me at the address below as soon as possible.

Please pray for our committee as we seek God's choice for our church.

Paul Moses, chairman
Pastor Search Committee
First Baptist Church
Box 186
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

For lay representation

Concerning the committee appointed to study representation on the Executive Board and committees; it is my opinion that three or more of this committee should be laymen.

Surely there must be lay persons qualified to serve.

The number of ordained ministers is small compared to the number of layman in the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Please give us some representation!

James N. Lassiter
Woodbury 37190

Greatest gift

While watching all these commercials some thought about a gift came to me the greatest gift that ever was.

One doesn't have to search for it; you don't have to drive anywhere for it. It's available to everyone, and it never wears out, one never tires of it. It never shrinks, never goes out of style. One size fits all, and no credit card is needed because it's already paid for.

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Mrs. Cleo Loveday
Sevierville 37862

Making the Baptist world safe for diversity

John F. Kennedy, American president whose life was cut short by assassination, once said, "If we cannot end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity."

The "Camelot" president served in the turbulent 1960s. Our nation seems to have endured spasms for much of the last half century, or more.

Three hundred and forty-three years ago on this date, Roger Williams, a Baptist hero, wrote of his Baptist beliefs, but showed frustration with Baptist authority, according to the Baptist Heritage calendar.

Both men spoke about things that really matter. Williams was a vital part of the birthing process for Baptists in the American Colonies. He was concerned that Baptist heritage might not speak much about freedoms and beliefs if authority were abused in the process.

Kennedy's wisdom may have reached further than he intended. While he most likely spoke about national and international governments, and citizens in the secular order, we can appropriate the application to our state and national Baptist con-

ventions. Our worlds must be safe for diversity. We are responsible.

Last week we reported that Keith Parks, retired Foreign Mission president, has agreed to lead a world missions program for the fledgling Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. He has refused to accept the proffered financial package of \$100,000, saying he preferred to live more like ordinary missionaries. He ought to know those standards, after many years on the mission field and heading the FMB. We have had a week to reflect.

With that in mind, we know he isn't on the job for money. So what is his motive? It should be sufficient that he says he has been called to lifetime missions, and that this effort will point toward that part of the world where the Gospel has never been heard.

We surmised last week that fallout on his decision would be swift, answers few. In a matter of hours, pundits and interested Southern Baptists have hung on to every word about Parks. But let's not vote yet.

The points raised on this page last week are matters of genuine concern for this paper and for all Tennessee Baptists. We

need to recognize the diversity that is real, and the heritage that also is real. Neither "side" is right on all issues.

One of the key statements made to new members of the Executive Board and trustees for all TBC entities in reference to the role of the *Baptist and Reflector* simply says: "It is the purpose of the state paper to report and interpret all areas of Baptist life — state, national, and worldwide."

We will always try to do this, regardless of pressure from any source, and recognizing the diversity, heritage, and authority from which we came. Southern Baptists are diverse, we do have a glorious heritage, and God is our authority.

We expect expressions of concern other than those already received. For example there is word that former President Jimmy Carter met with Parks to discuss mutual interests. FMB trustees, officers, and former officers are reacting, as are many other Southern Baptists. In the midst of all this, we have to stay focused on presenting the Gospel to all people, by all means.

The Parks story is merely one of our major concerns. It and other matters merit prayer and thought. Our responses must be in tune with our Christian mission. □

one word more

By Wm. Fletcher Allen editor

Sheep and leaves

For the first years spent in our Franklin home, we didn't have many leaves to rake in the fall. Great, many folks would say, what a blessing.

I remember other homes in other days and the prospect of not having to rake leaves was "devoutly to be wished."

We do have leaves now, however, and at some future date they may overwhelm me. For the present, the equation of joy versus work is perfect.

I have a friend who keeps his lawn spotless. A poor little leaf, fluttering down on a soft zephyr, has no chance with him. He quickly plucks the errant masterpiece of color and places it with fellow



ALLEN

vagrants, into the leaf bag. It will make good mulch within weeks, no doubt.

When our trees began to relinquish their grip on the leaves earlier in the fall, I began to rake. Later, when there was a profusion of bright dancers on the grass, I realized more than casual raking was necessary.

It did not become an obsession, but I became slightly irritated one pleasant Saturday morning. I raked the leaves, gathered some, and left others for the mower to catch.

I noticed that the breeze and the leaves collaborated to play tricks with me. I would finish and look at the lawn, and behold, a scattering of leaves had teasingly followed my path. Over and again it happened.

Finally I realized that those gold and crimson harbingers of winter would keep falling. It was their nature to aggravate my efforts.

How like us all, I thought. God lovingly, carefully, tenderly gathers us up, one by one. Like the shepherd he is, I think he knows that, like the leaves, we are skittish of authority, and wayward also.

We joy in leaping away from him on any errant wind that blows. And, he steadfastly pursues the wandering one. I am glad he never falters in pursuit of this wayward one.

Leaves need gathering. □

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

just for today

By Fred Wood pastor emeritus Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile —

The wife complained, "I can't stand my husband's terrible disposition. He makes me so nervous I'm losing weight." "Why don't you leave him?" "Oh, I'm going to. I'm just waiting until he gets me down to 120 pounds."

Take this truth with you—

If you have peace within, no person or thing can harm you. Storms that lash the sea into a foaming fury do not disturb the water a few hundred feet below. If we live in the spiritual depths, we can know calmness and serenity rather than shipwreck of soul and disaster of spirit.



WOOD

Memorize this Scripture —

"... the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Pray this prayer —

Dear Lord, help me to trust myself completely to thy care. May I refuse to fret because of what others say or do to me. Let me dwell in thy love where nothing can disturb my personal confidence and inner security. For Jesus' sake. Amen. □

Letters to us from foreign missionaries

Christmas greetings from 'over there'

Letters from missionaries are always welcome in the Baptist and Reflector office, but they carry a special meaning at Christmas time.

From now through Christmas, we will print excerpts from some of these letters, sharing with readers thoughts from abroad. — Editor

David and Jennifer Hoggan, Blair and Jennifer, Madrid, Spain:

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come," expresses our feelings during this season better than we can. We have hope for the future because God sent his Son as a child into a world that would hate and crucify him.

He died for our sins and rose again so we can live in him.

Your prayers and financial support have given us opportunity to share this good news with the people of Spain.

Without this support we would not be here. Thank you for this precious gift.

We had to transfer from Huelva which we loved to Alcalá de Henares, near Madrid. At first we weren't too happy, but know we will have many opportunities here to share the Gospel.

This is the birthplace of Miguel de Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*, the great novel

which has sold more copies than any book except the Bible. More and more people are living here. We have come here to begin Bible studies and to work with students in the new university. Pray that we will be good witnesses. We love to hear from you!

Bob and Becky Couts, Josh and Rocco, Porto-Novo, Benin:

Kudo hweji Jesu ton! Merry Christmas! We rejoice in the Lord and what He has done this year. Miracles have happened as our people began experiencing real revival.

We praise the Lord for a visit from Bob's mom (after 17 years), with Dr. and Mrs. Ken Mattox, also from Springfield. He is a dentist,

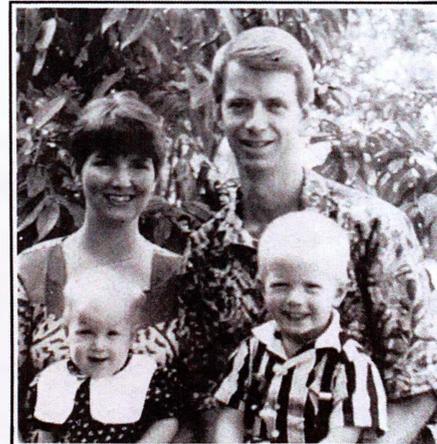
making his third trip!

A new church was born in October. We pray each of you celebrates Jesus' birth with new wonder of God's infinite love. Give to the Lottie Moon Offering, pray always.

Guy and Tammy Causey, Garret and Tabitha, Accra, Ghana:

We spend 40 hours weekly learning Twi language. We live near a college campus, and Garrett is a hit there. Tabitha, ten months, is growing too fast.

We appreciate your prayers for everything we need and do. Please pray for our Ghanaian personnel. Have a blessed Christmas, remembering Him. □



GREETINGS FROM AFAR

— Tammy and Guy Causey, with Tabitha and Garret, are Southern Baptist missionaries working in Abuakwa, near Accra, the capital of Ghana, West Africa.

Church Hill congregation dedicates mobile chapel

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

The Tennessee Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Department now has its third mobile chapel thanks to the efforts of the congregation of McPheeters Bend Church in Church Hill.

The facility was dedicated in a special service Nov. 22 at the church.

The mobile chapel is the first to be presented to the convention by a church, said Cameron Byler, TBC Brotherhood Department director. The other two chapels were donated by the Baptist Men of Bradley County Association, he said.

McPheeters Bend Pastor Larry Parrott said the church learned of the state convention's need for mobile chapels from Gene Williams of Oak Grove Church, Mt. Carmel, who at the time was state Brotherhood president.

Parrott presented the idea to his church which he describes as "very missions-minded."

Stan Ramsey, a member of the church had an old trailer which had been partially burned that he was using for storage. He offered to give the building to the church to convert to a mobile chapel.

The men of the church, led



RAIN DID NOT DETER the dedication of McPheeters Bend Church's mobile chapel. Participating in the service were state and association leaders as well as men from the church active in the remodeling efforts. From left, are, Charles Earl, director of missions, Holston Valley Association; Gene Williams, past state Brotherhood president; Pastor Larry Parrott; Wayne Stovall, Cameron Byler, TBC Brotherhood Department director; Onnie Nunley, Gary Connell, Charles McInturff, and Frank Arnold Jr.

by Wayne Stovall Sr. and Charles McInturff, took on the challenge.

It proved to be "construction out of destruction," Parrott said.

The men tore everything out of the trailer and replaced it including the wiring and plumbing. The only parts remaining are the frame and roof. They left a large open area

to be used as a sanctuary and one large room for Sunday School space, Parrott said.

The women of the church also got involved in the project. They made apple butter and sold it, earning about \$700 to purchase carpet for the mobile home. Sunday School classes pitched in as well. The men's class provided 35 new folding chairs for the chapel.

The remodeling efforts cost approximately \$4000, Stovall estimated.

During the dedication service held inside the mobile chapel, Parrott reminded those present that the facility would be used to bring people to Christ. "That puts us on holy ground," he said.

Stovall and McInturff praised the church for working

together to complete the project. "Everyone pulled together," the two men agreed.

Byler was on hand for the dedication. He told the McPheeters Bend congregation that statistics show that one-half of the state of Tennessee does not know Christ.

"The way we reach the most people is by starting new churches," he said.

Tennessee Baptists, through its ImpactTennessee goals, want to begin 40 new churches by the year 2000, Byler said.

Mobile chapels such as the one furnished by McPheeters Bend are essential to helping struggling churches, he said.

Byler said he had two sites in mind for the McPheeters Bend mobile chapel and hopes to have it on location by early Spring.

"We're grateful for this mobile unit. We may not ever know who was saved or what will happen to those lives because of your efforts," he said.

Parrott, in presenting the keys to the debt-free facility to Byler said, "We do this to the glory of God so that people in Tennessee will come to know Christ." □

Belmont professor takes third trip to Chile this year

By Mona Collect
For Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Heartstrings that stretch across North and South America have

pulled Betty Wiseman to Chile for the third time since August of this year. Since making her initial two-week journey in August with a Tennessee Woman's Missionary group,

the Belmont University professor has a new vision of world missions.

That WMU trip "was a life-changing experience for me," said the 27-year veteran coach and physical education, health, and wellness instructor.

"I began to see how the Lord can use what I've been doing in my life — career, church involvement, and faith — to meet the needs of people."

During a visit to a private Christian elementary school, Wiseman discovered there was nothing in the way of a physical education or sports program. "When I left Chile in August I felt there was more for me to do," said the woman who helped pioneer women's basketball in Tennessee.

The children of Chile have no idea that their coach is legendary in her home state. After setting numerous school records at Sumner County High School, the Portland native turned down the opportunity to play semiprofessional basketball to attend Belmont.

After graduating, she joined the faculty and served as head coach of the Belmont women's basketball team from 1968 to 1984. In 1989 she received the Chaney Distinguished Professor Award — Belmont's

highest tribute to individual faculty members.

Plans for her fall sabbatical took a big turn after her initial trip through the Tennessee/Chile Partnership. She returned to Nashville and gathered athletic equipment and planned to mail it to Chile.

After discovering the astronomical cost of mailing the equipment and receiving encouragement from friends at Brentwood Church, where she is a member, Wiseman decided to return to Chile.

Thanks to a large donation by a friend at a sporting goods store, Wiseman made her second trip to Chile in November, taking about \$1000 worth of equipment.

She stayed and worked with missionary Clara Brincefield. During that trip she distributed the equipment to four locations and also helped Brincefield in coordinating an October medical team visit.

Wiseman ran errands, took care of preplanning details, held a flashlight for a dentist, and loved children to calm their fears.

The parents of one of her little friends are caretakers at the church Wiseman attends. "Gonzolo is at church all the time. He and I are real bud-

dies," she said. She noted the four-year-old "talks to me in Spanish and I talk to him with my heart, my love, and my tears."

Having met her November commitments in Nashville,



BETTY WISEMAN gets a hug from her friend, Gonzolo.

Wiseman returned to Chile Nov. 30. By now she has reunited with Gonzolo and other new friends who love to jump rope and be active. She will spend Christmas there and return Jan. 4. It will not be her final missions trip, she said.

The 20 missionaries across Chile who translated for her also taught her about missions work and gave her a renewed sense of purpose. "My vision is beyond my career. I will choose to take time . . . to do more missions work." □

Daily prayer requests for Chile/Tennessee Partnership



December —

- 9 — Hayward & Sherra Armstrong and their son, Taylor, as they adjust to life in Chile.
- 10 — Today is the birthday of missionary Debbie Butts, home evangelist.
- 11 — Missionaries Gene & Jan Huckaby who have recently returned to the States on medical leave. Pray their needs will be met so they can return to Temuco.
- 12 — Missionary Dave Grossman who is an evangelist in the desert region of Arica. He recently had surgery. Continue to pray for his healing. Also, pray for retired missionary Jean Middleton.
- 13 — Virginia Irby and a women's Bible study she is leading in Malpu. Most of the participants are unsaved.
- 14 — Missionaries Alcides Nunez & Annete Racey are observing birthdays today. Pray joy and peace for each of them.
- 15 — Pray for the mission in Molina as they begin construction on a new church building.
- 16 — Missionary evangelist Roy Worley is having a birthday today. Pray he will have a special sense of God's presence in his life.
- 17 — Continue to intercede on behalf of Manuel Sanchez who has not yet accepted Christ as Savior. Pray for those who are seeking to witness to him.

Reports of church's death greatly exaggerated: pastor

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

KNOXVILLE — The congregation of Middlebrook Pike Church has a dream and John Kosier is glad he's come home to see it come true.

Kosier was retired when the church in which he'd grown up asked him to serve as interim pastor.

Kosier, 76, reports with only a slight smile, the rumors of the church's impending death were exaggerated.

Five years later, the congregation has added its fifth new Sunday School class, this one in a nearby nursing home because of lack of space in the church plant. The congregation has grown from 15 in Sunday School to an average of 86, he reported.

The transformation was all very natural, to hear Kosier describe it.

It began when an 18-year-old Kosier took his girlfriend to

a revival at the church. That evening they were both saved. During the next eight years, he became a leader in the church, he explained.

Kosier felt called by God to become a pastor just before WW II drew him into the armed forces. Three years later he returned to Middlebrook Pike Church for a couple of years. The congregation ordained him before he left to study at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City.

After completing Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, he served as an associate pastor and pastor for the next 32 years. In his home state he led Beaumont Church, Knoxville; Oglewood Church, Knoxville; First Church, North Hills, Knoxville; First Church, Vonore; and Prospect Church, Walland. In Texas he served in Waco and Houston.

In retirement, Kosier continued working, doing personnel

work for the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He and his wife had moved back to the Middlebrook neighborhood and visited the church, where his mother-in-law is a charter member, when it asked him for help.

"This is God's church. It's going to stand," he stated without pomposity.

To encourage the small gathering, he began his ministry at Middlebrook Pike by emphasizing the love and fellowship resulting from a relationship with God.

"Each year we developed a little more potential ...," Kosier said. With the addition of families, a nursery class was needed; then a class for children was started, followed by one for youth. During his fourth year a singles' class was started.

The momentum was caught by the only deacon of the church, George Keener, who is also SS director. He and Kosier



JOHN KOSIER and his wife, Jennie, lead Middlebrook Pike Church, Knoxville.

begin to lead the church to pray for an opportunity to begin another class at Middlebrook Pike though space wasn't available.

The solution came to a member of the church who was visiting Hillcrest Rest Home next to the church. He discovered the institution had no religious service. In August an extension SS department was begun in the home by youth of Middlebrook Pike.

The first Sunday, 16 gathered. A few weeks later the number had nearly doubled. Several members of the exten-

sion department have joined the congregation and a lady from the home sang during the church's recent revival, reported Kosier.

Middlebrook Pike has grown in other ways. It has spruced up — carpeting the sanctuary, padding the pews, re-roofing the buildings, and constructing a pavilion. It has added the following outreach programs — van ministry, prison, and cassette tape.

A man of few words, Kosier predicts, "We haven't reached our plateau yet." □

Worker 'wears three hats' comfortably

BROWNSVILLE — Mary Williams has a humble but spunky demeanor. She doesn't mince words when describing her 17 years as secretary/clerk/treasurer of Haywood Association.

The job was a Godsend, she explained. In 1970 when her husband, J.C., retired, she was "no longer a pastor's wife," she said. Just four years later when he died, she was "no longer a wife." And she didn't feel suited to her work as a substitute school teacher, she admitted.

"You know I didn't go into it for the money," added Williams. She made \$72 a month for what was a part-time job at that time.

Her candor extends to revealing her age. Williams, 79, said she retired Nov. 25 before anyone else decided she was too old.

She was honored by messengers to the Oct. 20 annual meeting of Haywood Association with an unexpected "This is Your Life" presentation, money tree, and book of letters. Director of Missions Charles Pratt told the Baptist and Reflector her

"high energy" has led him to depend on her heavily and enabled her to wear three hats.

Pratt referred to the fact Williams is one of a few associational office workers who hold the elected office of clerk and treasurer in addition to the employed position of secretary. She was well-prepared for her duties. She had previously served as clerk/treasurer for an association in Kansas and assisted her husband when he served Baptist associations, in addition to working as a public school teacher.

Her associational work spanned directors Gordon DePriest and Earl Wells prior to Pratt. During one interim period of several months she ran the office. She even did housekeeping chores at the office.

Her regular duties included

correspondence, making phone calls, and bookkeeping. Sheepishly she admitted the bookkeeping was her least favorite part of the work. She did it first each day so she didn't "make a mistake with somebody else's money," explained Williams.

Williams said she enjoyed the job "entirely." The returns came in the form of relationships and even gifts, she added. She received vegetables from gardens and Christmas gifts, she recalled.

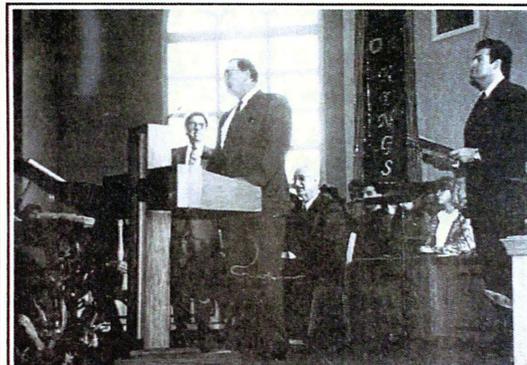
In her retirement, Williams will continue her ministry with the Spanish-speaking congregation of Brownsville Church. The ministry reaches migrant workers and a community of workers relocated from California by a plastics manufacturing company. She has taught English to about 20 students during the past eight years in addition to being outreach leader for the congregation's adult Sunday School class and being the kind of friend who helps them find jobs and lodging.

"There's more to it than meeting with them on Sunday," said Williams. — Connie Davis □

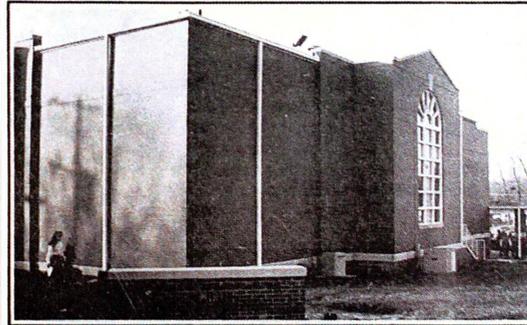


MARY WILLIAMS visits with Jaime Lopez, a fellow member of the Spanish-speaking ministry of Brownsville Church at annual meeting of Haywood Association.

Third Church, Murfreesboro, celebrates



ON NOV. 22 THE CONGREGATION DEDICATED a 1000-seat worship center and new educational and renovated facilities. The \$1.8 million growth program added 11,000 sq. ft. of new teaching areas and additional property. Members have given a total of \$600,000 toward the debt, while missions and regular offerings have increased, reported Murray Mathis, pastor.



Sunday School Board revenue up; Draper praises employees

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Total revenue for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's fiscal year ending Sept. 30 was up \$5.75 million from 1990-91, employees of the church programs and publishing agency were told in a recent employee assembly.

President James T. Draper Jr., speaking to a packed audi-

ence of Nashville-based personnel, said while revenues were \$1.5 million short of a goal of \$203,877,000, product sales, "an area where employees have direct influence over results, exceeded target by \$1.5 million."

With a total revenue of \$202,373,000, Draper said revenue remaining, after deductions for product and operational expenses and contribu-

tions for SBC and state convention support, exceeded a goal of \$6,678,000 by almost \$800,000.

"All of this was achieved in the middle of a distracting transition," Draper said. "It shows the quality and dedication of our employees."

The reporting period in-

cluded a time of massive reorganization for the 101-year-old Southern Baptist agency. Recent retirements of 159 long-tenured employees were part of the effort to streamline processes and reduce top-heavy management.

The two financial goals were approved last year by

board trustees as targets for an incentive bonus for employees for the fiscal year. While total revenue fell short of the goal by 0.7 percent, Draper said the most positive results for the year "were those most directly influenced by the performance of our employees." □

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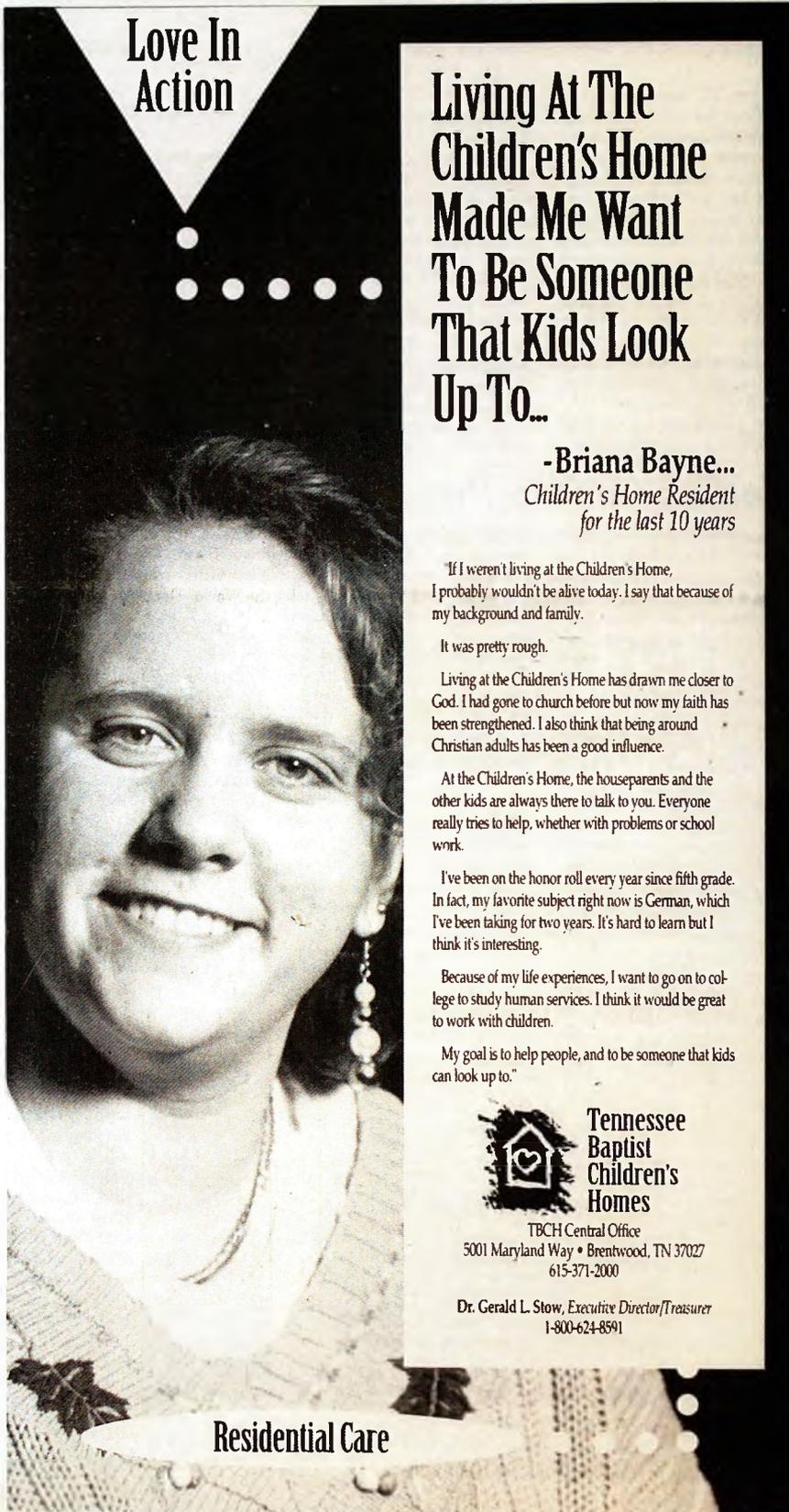
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Love In Action



Living At The Children's Home Made Me Want To Be Someone That Kids Look Up To...

-Briana Bayne...
Children's Home Resident for the last 10 years

"If I weren't living at the Children's Home, I probably wouldn't be alive today. I say that because of my background and family.

It was pretty rough.

Living at the Children's Home has drawn me closer to God. I had gone to church before but now my faith has been strengthened. I also think that being around Christian adults has been a good influence.

At the Children's Home, the houseparents and the other kids are always there to talk to you. Everyone really tries to help, whether with problems or school work.

I've been on the honor roll every year since fifth grade. In fact, my favorite subject right now is German, which I've been taking for two years. It's hard to learn but I think it's interesting.

Because of my life experiences, I want to go on to college to study human services. I think it would be great to work with children.

My goal is to help people, and to be someone that kids can look up to."



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■ **Vance Marberry** retired Nov. 15 from 40 years in the pastoral ministry. Twelve years of his pastoral career were spent at Tennessee churches. He is now pastor emeritus of Immanuel Church, Olive Branch, Miss.

■ **H. D. Luker** and **Toney Todd** were ordained as deacons at Bethlehem Church, Westpoint.

■ **Mount Hermon Church**, Clarksville, recently ordained **Daniel Williams** and **Phillip Traylor** as deacons.

■ **Immanuel Church**, Elizabethton, ordained **Bucky Peters** as a deacon Nov. 1.

■ the leaders

■ **Robert Sumrall** is the new church development director for Nashville Association. He comes to Nashville from the position of director of missions of the Greater Rochester Association in Rochester, N.Y.

■ **Dan Jones** has been called as associate pastor of worship and discipleship to Brook Hollow Church, Nashville. Jones was minister to single adults at First Church, Nashville, for eight years.

■ **Gene Fleming**, associate pastor, Cumberland Church, Knoxville, retired Nov. 15 after 43 years of ministry. He also has been pastor of West Knoxville Church, Knoxville, First Church, Franklin, Ky.; First Church, Portland, and First Church, Fayetteville.

■ **Thomas Clark Bryan** has resigned as vice president of administration and planning and associate professor of education at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City. He will move to Cleveland, Ga., to assume the presidency of Truett-McConnell College. He was employed by Carson-Newman College since 1964.

■ **John Berry**, the new minister of music at First Church, Obion, was ordained to the Gospel ministry Nov. 29.

■ **Shaw's Chapel Church**, Brownsville, recently called

Desi Ginn, Southaven, Miss., as interim pastor.

■ **Dennis Ward** is the new pastor of Elk River Church, Butler.

■ **Brian Wilson** resigned from the position of music and youth director at Siam Church, Elizabethton, effective Jan. 3. He will attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

■ **First Church**, Lobelville, called **Orvind Dangeau**, Franklin, retired Tennessee Baptist Convention employee, as interim pastor.

■ the churches

■ The 70-voice adult choir, 60-voice children's choir, and 35-piece orchestra of **Hilldale Church**, Clarksville, will present the Seventh Annual Living Christmas Tree Dec. 11-13 at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 5 and 7 p.m. on Sunday. The choirs are under the direction of **Bucky Phillips**. No admission will be charged, but tickets for the performance are needed. Groups of ten or more should call the church for reserved seating.

■ The international department, **Brook Hollow Church**, Nashville, will present "Joy to the World" Dec. 13, 6 p.m.

■ "The Sounds of Christmas" will be presented at 6 p.m. Dec. 13 at **Crievewood Church**,

Nashville. Performances will be given by three handbell choirs, the brass and woodwind ensembles, and the church's vocal ensembles. A special feature of the performance will be a suite of familiar carols arranged for the woodwind ensemble. No admission will be charged.

In addition, the public is invited to sing carols at the church Dec. 20, led by the choirs and instrumental ensembles. The music ministry of **Crievewood Church** is led by **David Bridges**.

■ **Members of Cedar Hill Church**, **Baxter**, dedicated their new building Nov. 1.

■ the work

■ Sixty-five people from six churches in **Sullivan Association**, led by volunteers from **Sullivan Church**, Kingsport, completed a mission project at **Clear Creek Baptist Bible College**, Pineville, Ky., where they reconstructed two student preacher cottages. College officials said this is the largest volunteer mission team to ever come from one association. Other Kingsport churches involved were **First Church**, **Indian Springs Church**, **Lynn Garden Church**, **West Colonial Hills Church**, and **Colonial Heights Church**.

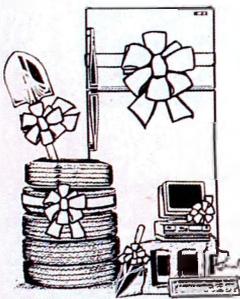


CLINTON E. ROBERSON, center, recently was named "Pastor Emeritus" in a ceremony at East Brainerd Church, Chattanooga. The Texas native has served as pastor in his home state and Arkansas and Missouri. He has lived in Chattanooga since 1980 and is an active member of the church. Helping to celebrate the occasion were East Brainerd Pastor **Ed Jump**, right, and **Tom Terry**, a former pastor of the church.



MCMINN-MEIGS ASSOCIATION messengers elected new officers during their recent annual meeting. From left are **Joel Dunlap**, clerk, pastor of Lakeside Chapel, Ten Mile; **Morris Hammonds**, associate moderator, pastor, East View Church, Etowah; **Bea Gardner**, associate treasurer, associational secretary; **Martin Bowlin**, associate clerk, pastor of Brookhill Church, Etowah; **Richard Tallent**, moderator, pastor of Union Grove Church, Niota; and **Myrl Vaughn**, treasurer, Lakeview Church, Athens.

This Christmas, give a gift of hope.



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Pray for our missionaries as they carry the gospel into foreign countries despite difficult physical conditions and other limitations. Pray,

too, that more Southern Baptists will respond to God's call to foreign missions.

Help declare hope to a lost world by giving to the **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions**.



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
National Goal: \$84 million

You Have a Will . . .

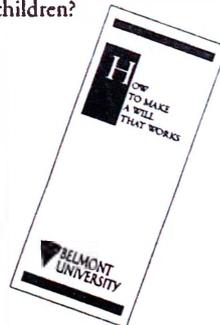
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Alabama Baptists elect Corder as new president by 58 votes

Baptist Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama Baptists elected a new president in the closest election in recent years during their Nov. 17-18 convention at the Montgomery Civic Center.

The 2532 registered messengers also passed resolutions on moral issues and tried to overcome problems with the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers.

Michigan Baptists hold 35th meeting

Baptist Press

LANSING, Mich.— The Baptist State Convention of Michigan celebrated its 35th anniversary Nov. 10-12 at Lansing's Bethany Church.

The convention, attended by 268 messengers, also featured a tribute to Robert Wilson, who has been a convention staff member all those years, including 22 as executive director.

Messengers adopted a 1993 budget of nearly \$2.9 million, encompassing a goal of \$1.26 million from Michigan's 254 Baptist churches and 55 missions. Of the \$1.26 million, 31

C. Dewey Corder, pastor of First Church, Trussville, was elected president of the 3100-church convention by a margin of 58 votes over Fred G. Lackey, pastor of First Church, Athens.

Corder has been first vice president of the convention for two years while Lackey had been second vice president.

Lackey, who had been publicly endorsed by a group of "conservative" pastors, an-

nounced his willingness to serve eight months ago. Corder said he decided to allow his nomination a few weeks before the convention.

The new president described himself as "theologically conservative and politically nonaligned." Both men expressed high regard for one another before and after the vote, each pledging to pray for the other.

The convention's 1993 Cooperative Program budget of \$28,885,000 includes 42.3 percent for SBC causes. Though the budget is \$385,000 more than last year, the SBC per-

Belmont offers Bible study help

Texas pastor Brian Harbour will teach the 1993 January Bible Study on the Sermon on the Mount Dec. 10 at Belmont University, Nashville, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Those attending the conference may park at Belmont Heights Church. A shuttle will be provided to take participants to the Belmont campus. Although there is no charge for the study, lunch will cost \$5. For information, call (615) 385-6405 or 385-6435. □

centage allocation remained the same.

Messengers also passed resolutions expressing strong opposition to the federal Freedom of Choice Act; affirming Christian values; urging members to pray for the incoming U.S. administration; deploring the massacre of five American nuns and four student novices in Liberia; and opposing casino gambling in Alabama.

Also approved was a "position statement" on homosexuality which calls for parents and churches to teach children basic Biblical morals, describes homosexuality as "a perversion of divine standards" and encourages people to express God's forgiveness and restoration to those who may have been involved in a "previous deviant lifestyle of immorality." The position statement was prepared and previously approved by the state board of missions.

Much discussion during the

convention centered around possible bylaw violations by the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers (ABRC), which incurred a \$5 million debt, without convention approval, for a nursing home in Dothan.

Messengers' actions on the ABRC included filling vacancies on the ABRC board after the resignation of 17 of its 20 trustees. (ABRC's president, M. P. "Pat" Harrison, also has resigned.), recommending that the new board consider no new buildings or ministries for at least one year, and appointing a special committee to conduct a feasibility study of ABRC's future. □

percent, up 0.5 percent over 1992, is to be designated for Southern Baptist Convention national and international missions and ministries funded by the Cooperative Program.

Re-elected as convention officers were: president, Levi Parish, pastor of Flint's Eastgate Church, and first vice president, August Peters, pastor of Hillsdale Church.

The convention also adopted a resolution of appreciation for Harold C. Bennett, who retired earlier this year as president-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee. □

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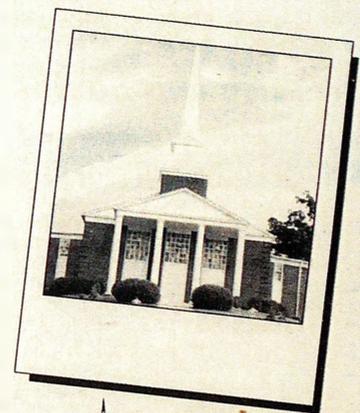
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■ Sunday School lesson commentary

□ Christian obligations in society—Bible Book Series for December 13

By Mike Kemper, pastor, Green River Church, Waynesboro

Christians are actually citizens of two worlds. We are in this world, and yet we are not of this world, but the world to come. We are citizens of two kingdoms. Our names are on record! While we remain in this world we have important responsibilities to the state. As Christians we should be the best of citizens. We should be examples of the life and testimony of Jesus who dwells in each believer. Although the church, as a whole, should not become entangled in politics, we do have responsibility as individual believers to be good citizens by participating in government. Too many of us



KEMPER

have said things like, "Politics are so dirty I'm going to leave it to others." Thus many Christians do not vote in elections, many fail to seek office in government, and others of us do not speak up. I believe this is a serious mistake. If Christians do not vote, do not seek office, do not speak up, who will make the decisions? That's right, non-Christians! If we think lost officials are going to look out for our Christian heritage and principles we are very mistaken.

In this lesson, Paul gives the reasons for obeying human government. The "higher powers" are the rulers of government, even though they may not be believers. God instructs us to submit to them. Even if we are not able to respect the man, we must respect the office. God can and does use officials even

though they may not be aware of his leading. It is God who ordained the home, the church, and the government. Thus we should submit to the authority that God has given and ordained. This is the command of the Lord.

Then, secondly, we should obey not only for fear ("for wrath"), but also "for conscience sake." Obedience for sake of fear is one motive, but there are deeper reasons to yield. To know the commands of God is one thing, but to feel a conviction to obedience and loyalty is a higher motive. The Spirit works in us to teach us responsibility by conviction. We should pay our taxes and customs while giving honor to those to whom honor is due (v. 7).

Does Paul mean in verse 8 that it is wrong to borrow

money? No. But he is speaking of honesty. As Christians we should be responsible. If we borrow we should repay the debt as agreed. We should not seek to defraud those we make agreements with. Equally, if we loan money we should not seek to take what is not rightfully ours by charging high interest or

Basic Passage:
Romans 13:1-14

unfair practices. All our dealing with others should be honest. Not only because it is the law, but it is a matter of conscience and a matter of love. There is a "law of the land," but Christians are citizens of heaven and our commitment should be like our prayer, "on earth as it is in heaven." Parents do not labor long

and hard to provide for the family because it is the law, but because of love for the family. Love is a higher motive of obedience. Higher than the law, higher than the motive of conscience. Where there is love as the motive there will not be evil things like those listed in verse 9. And Paul reminds us of words of Jesus in telling us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Now, the highest motive is for the Lord's sake. The return of the Lord is nearer now than ever before. Therefore we should be ever awake and be alert, behaving as those who have seen the light. Paul tells in verse 14 that we should "put on Christ," that is we should make Christ part of our daily life, making no allowances for the flesh. For the sake of others, and for the sake of Jesus our Lord! □

□ God's promise to Zacharias — Convention Uniform Series for December 13

By Wes Ellis, retired pastor, Forest Hill Church, Germantown

Luke the physician, a Gentile Christian who was a long-time companion of the Apostle Paul, wrote the Gospel that bears his name and the Book of Acts, as well. Only he and Matthew tell the events of the birth of Jesus, and his account is the longer. He shows how God, who acted in human affairs to deliver His people from Egyptian slavery, moved through events in a remote corner of the ancient world to redeem mankind from sin.

Luke's introduction (vv. 1-4)

Some Christians feel that all that is necessary to understand the Bible is to open it and read, with no consideration at all for historical situations, meanings of words, and so forth. They believe that the writers were simply mechanical instruments through whom God conveyed His

message, and, therefore no scholarship or study is needed.

Luke's introduction shows a different picture: While many documents detailing the life and teachings of Jesus had been produced (v. 1), and the apostles and other eyewitnesses had passed down their own accounts (v. 2), Luke thought it wise for him to carefully investigate everything and to write it out "in consecutive order" for his friend Theophilus (v. 3) in order that Theophilus might have a clearer understanding of the good news to which he had been introduced (v. 4; see also Acts 1:1).

Luke was not a mere recorder, but an investigative reporter and historian, a scholar of the first magnitude whom God used under divine inspiration to write this Gospel. No doubt he interviewed Mary and other participants of the Christmas story and shared his findings with us.

Unusual parents, unusual son (vv. 5-25)

Zacharias was a priest who on this occasion had the privilege of burning the incense on the altar outside the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem. The New International Version translates his name "Zechariah." He and Elizabeth were described as "righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord" (v. 6). The facts that they had no children and that they were now "advanced in years" bore heavily upon Zacharias' heart ("your petition," v. 13) as he ministered there. To be without children was distressing to any Jewish



ELLIS

couple, and it was especially so since many hoped that they would be parents of the promised Messiah. The people were gathered outside in prayer.

In this situation, something marvelous occurred! The angel Gabriel stood there with him and gave him the message of the coming of the Christ (v. 1-17). His son John ("God is gracious") would bring joy to the aged couple but also to many others, because after four hundred years of silence God was acting. So important was John's mission that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit before birth and throughout his life. His mission would be to prepare the way for Messiah's coming. Malachi had spoken of a forerunner of the Messiah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6; Luke 1:17).

Because Zacharias expressed disbelief (v. 18), the angel responded with a temporary

punishment (v. 20). The people outside were aware that something unusual had happened. However, Zacharias completed his assigned week of service in the temple before returning home with the glorious news (v. 23). What a happy couple!

Promise fulfilled (vv. 57-66)

The child was born; his father

Basic Passage:
Luke 1:1-25, 57-64

insisted on naming him according to the instructions of the angel.

Times when we draw near to God are filled with potential for spiritual surprises and perhaps changes in life's course. Zacharias and Elizabeth were faithful in spite of circumstances and personal disappointments. They were part of the glorious story. □

□ Promising a Savior — Life and Work Series for December 13

By James Hutson, pastor, First Church, Rockwood

As we enter the Christmas season, we must make every effort to strongly emphasize the spiritual teachings about the joy that is ours in Jesus Christ. These next three lessons will help as we study about the coming of the Savior.

There are many Old Testament passages that make up the Messianic predictions which find their fulfillment in the birth of Jesus Christ. Some of these passages are well known. We hear them in song and sermon every Christmas season. Some are lesser known. One of these lesser known prophecies about the coming Messiah is Isaiah 59:20.

Israel's alienation from God (vv. 1-2)

There are two grand divisions in the book of Isaiah. Chapters 1-39 describe the period prior to the exile. Chapters 40-66 describe the period after the exile.

Upon returning from Babylon, there was great hope and expectation that the Temple would be rebuilt (ch. 44:28), and the people would prosper (ch. 54:1-3). Neither of these had happened. The people had become discouraged and some blamed God for not keeping His promises. Isaiah says the reason for their lack of progress was their own sin. Their evil ways had separated the people from God. Their sins had made their prayers ineffective.



HUTSON

In verses 3-8 Isaiah gives a partial listing of the sins of the people. "Their hands were defiled with blood, justice is perverted and innocent blood is shed."

We need to remember that the

wages of sin is death. It was true in Isaiah's day. It is also true today. Humankind by its own sinfulness is alienated from God.

Israel's confession of sin (vv. 9-11)

Evidently the people heard the words of Isaiah in verses 1-8, and Isaiah led them in a prayer of confession. Their confession is one of moral and spiritual blindness. These sins (vv. 12-13) involve other people (oppression, lying, denying justice). The people recognize that their disobedience has produced misery.

If we think that sin brings only pleasure (Hebrews 11:25), we will continue in it. But the first step toward repentance is to acknowledge that we are sinners, and in our sin we are miserable.

God's intervention to help Israel (vv. 15b-21)

There are some great truths in

these verses about God.

■ God hears the prayers of His people. He sees that there is no one to help. So God Himself comes to help. What a marvelous word of assurance to all humankind. Despite our sinfulness and inability to help ourselves, God comes to bring deliverance. That is what God did in Jesus

Basic Passage:
Isaiah 59:1-2, 9-11, 15b-16, 20-21

Christ. The world needed a savior. "Thou shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins," Matthew 1:21. God gave his only Son to be that Savior (John 3:16).

■ God's intervention on behalf of humankind has two results.

1. There is destruction for the transgressor, v. 18. Though a

way of salvation is available, those who persist in their sins and refuse to repent will perish.

2. There is deliverance for those who turn from transgression, v. 20. "Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Romans 10:13.

■ God's act of destruction for the transgressor and deliverance for the penitent will be visible to all the world, v. 19.

■ God responds to the charge that He had not kept his promises, v. 1 by renewing the promise that his covenant will never fail, v. 21.

Much of the world still awaits a savior. But you and I who believe in Jesus know that He is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. Let us rejoice that the Savior has come. Let us be faithful to witness about him at all times and especially during this Christmas season. □

Southern Seminary to co-sponsor center with Russian Baptists

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE — Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Russian Baptists are launching a joint venture of ministerial training in Moscow.

"The Christian Training Center of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Russia" will open its doors in May. It will train pastors to serve Russia's burgeoning Baptist population, said Southern Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt.

About 40 pastors are expected to enroll in the first year of courses to be taught at the Russian Baptist union headquarters.

At least six professors from the Louisville, Ky., seminary will travel to Russia over the next two years to teach during six three-week terms. Faculty from Russia will teach courses in Russian, English, and Russian Baptist history. Persons who complete all six terms of study will receive a certificate from Southern Seminary. □

Volunteers still aid Florida storm victims

Baptist Press

FLORIDA CITY, Fla. — Disaster feeding units have gone home, but Southern Baptist volunteers still are rebuilding houses in southern Florida more than three months after

Hurricane Andrew blew much of this area off the map.

Between 40 and 70 volunteers arrive weekly, as the emphasis has shifted from food to reconstruction, said Gary Roberts, disaster relief coordinator for the Florida Baptist Convention. □

Illinois Baptists boost 1993 CP goal

Baptist Press

HERRIN, Ill. — Illinois Baptists adopted an increased Cooperative Program goal for 1993 at their annual meeting at First Church, Herrin.

Host pastor Charles Dampier was elected new president of the Illinois State Baptist Association after serving the past two years as vice president.

Messengers raised the CP goal to \$4,895,057, an increase of \$186,217 over the 1992 goal. Illinois Baptists are on target this year to exceed their CP goal for the first time since 1976. □

Hawaii Baptists begin 50th year

Baptist Press

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii — Hawaii Baptists launched their 50th anniversary year and received thanks from the mayor of Hurricane Iniki-ravaged Kauai during their annual meeting.

The convention was organized July 16, 1943, with 24 messengers representing five

churches on two islands. Now the convention encompasses 100 congregations.

JoAnn Yukimura, mayor of Kauai, addressed the convention to express appreciation for the work of 250-plus Hawaii Baptist volunteers and others from Southern Baptist state disaster relief units in mass feeding operations on Kauai following Hurricane Iniki. More than 250,000 meals were served by the volunteers from Sept. 15 through Nov. 5.

Messengers adopted a 1993 budget of nearly \$2.4 million, an increase of five percent over the 1992 budget. □

Ohio Baptists adopt \$5.8 million budget

Baptist Press

VANDALIA, Ohio — Ohio Baptists adopted a \$5.8 million budget during their annual meeting at First Church, Vandalia, a suburb of Dayton.

The budget includes \$3.6 million to be given through the Cooperative Program from the state's nearly 600 churches and chapels, a 2.53 percent decrease from 1992 to 1993. The budget reflects a decrease in percent of the budget designated for SBC causes, from 41.5 percent of the 1992 budget to 40 percent next year.

F. Joe Baker, director of missions for the Greater Dayton Association, was elected president of the Ohio Baptist Convention in a two-way race with Douglas Alexander, pastor of Sharon Woods Church, Columbus. □

Memphis hospital head receives award

Baptist Memorial HCS

MEMPHIS — Joseph H. Powell, president, Baptist Memorial Health Care System Inc. has received the L. M. Graves Award for outstanding achievement in community health.

The award was presented to Powell during the Frank M. Norfleet Forum for the advancement of Health held Nov. 16 in Memphis.

Powell began his career at Baptist Memorial Hospital in 1954 as an administrative resident.

He has received numerous awards and honors. The Graves award was established in 1966 to honor Lloyd Myers Graves, a distinguished Memphis physician who was director of the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department from 1942-1964. □

New Englanders maintain CP support

Baptist Press

WARWICK, R.I. — The Baptist Convention of New England adopted a \$2.2 million 1993 budget, roughly equal to the current year's budget, during its annual meeting.

Ken Hale, pastor of Trinity Church, N.H., was re-elected president of the convention. □

Northwest Baptists approve relocation

Baptist Press

EUGENE, Ore. — In a show of near-unanimity, messengers to the 44th Northwest Baptist Convention voted to move ahead with plans to relocate convention facilities from downtown Portland to a recently purchased site across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Wash.

The facilities also will house the Northwest Campus of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, located in Mill Valley, Calif., and the Northwest Baptist Foundation.

Approval of the \$2 million move was the high point of the convention which included the precedent-setting election of Roy Belcher, pastor of Grant Avenue Church, Corvallis, Ore., as the new president. He becomes the first president to serve in nonconsecutive years. He previously served in 1979 and 1980.

Convention messengers adopted a record \$3.6 million budget, up 4.2 percent over 1992. □

Iowa Baptists elect layman as president

Baptist Press

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa — Iowa Baptists elected their first layman president and increased giving to Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program by one percent during their annual meeting.

David Newcom, a member of Waterloo's Trinity Church, was elected by one vote over Ed Gregory, pastor of Immanuel Church, Cedar Rapids. Gregory then was elected unanimously as vice president. □

Californians debate urge Clinton, Gore to 'rethink' positions

Baptist Press

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — A resolution urging President-elect Bill Clinton and Vice President-elect Al Gore to "rethink their positions on abortion and homosexuality" was adopted by messengers to the California Southern Baptist Convention.

The strongly worded resolution of challenge also pledged that messengers "accept our obligation to pray" for them.

Some messengers expressed concern that the resolution, which came one week after the two men's election, was harsh and divisive.

In other votes, messengers strengthened the Cooperative Program as the method of choice for financing the convention's programs, missions, and ministries — debating then defeating a proposal to permit designated giving as a qualification for convention membership.

Messengers also approved a \$14 million budget for 1993.

Scott Williamson, pastor of Rose Drive Church, Yorba Linda, was elected to a second one-year term as president. □

Palmer accepts news position in Missouri

Baptist Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Tim Palmer has been named managing editor of the *Word and Way*, news journal of Missouri Baptists.

He was on staff of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar and has had secular newspaper experience.

He holds degrees from SBU and Baylor University, Waco, Texas. □

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