

Baptist and Reflector

March 10, 1993

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STATEWIDE EDITION

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Tennessee legislators oppose lottery bill on Senate floor

NASHVILLE — Although Tennessee Senate bill SJR-025 made it out of the Senate Judiciary Committee, it did not find instant approval when the full Senate looked at it last week.

The bill, if passed by a two-thirds majority in the House and Senate, would place the gambling issue on the gubernatorial ballot next year. Specifically, legislators would be asked to approve a measure to strike a prohibition on lotteries, a ban which has been in the Tennessee constitution since 1834.

That wording has thus far prevented the state from having any legalized gambling.

Change in wording would allow for state lottery.

Opposition on the Senate floor last week caused the bill to be sent back to committee before a vote was taken. One local newspaper said the measure ran into "a hail of criticism" from senators. The bill could be brought to the Senate floor later this legislative session by request of the Judiciary Committee. According to informed sources, if the bill passes, future General Assemblies could consider whether Tennessee would join 32 other states in conducting state-sponsored lotteries. Several senators pointed out that approving the bill would open the state to casinos, roulette, slot machines, blackjack games, and convenience store lottery ticket sales.

It would have to be placed on the calendar by the Senate Calendar Committee. Milton Hamilton, Nashville, is chairman.

Tennessee Baptist Convention was represented at the Senate discussion Tuesday by James Porch, executive director/treasurer; Leonard Markham, president, and pastor of Blue Grass Church, Hendersonville; Bill Bates, TBC public affairs consultant; and Paul Durham, pastor of Radnor Church, Nashville.

Some Senate observers said

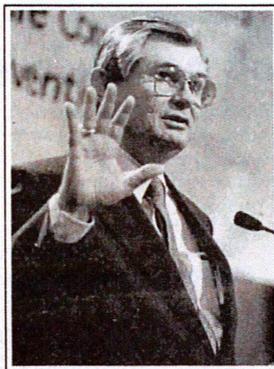
passage of the bill now is less than certain. Porch and Markham advised Tennessee Baptists to make their opinions on the issue known to their local Senators. The *Baptist and Reflector* will try to keep readers informed of the calendar date and other related matters.

The House committee was to have considered the matter early this week with the possibility of the bill getting to the full House floor. — Wm. Fletcher Allen

CLC seminar examines medical ethics issues

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptists were challenged to rise to the forefront of discussions of medical ethics issues in the months and years to come during the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's 26th annual seminar March 1-3 in Nashville.



NASHVILLE LAYMAN Thomas Harris addresses seminar.

The "Life at Risk: Crises in Medical Ethics" seminar drew 523 registrants to the three-day meeting at the Baptist Sunday School Board. It was the largest attendance at a CLC seminar in about six years, one staff member said.

The urgency of the issues and quality speakers were major drawing cards, said C. Ben Mitchell, director of biomedical ethics and life issues for the CLC. Major medical ethics issues have hit the "frontburner," Mitchell said.

They no longer are just aca-



MINISTER OF MISSIONS Ann Thompson, Belmont Heights Church, Nashville, visits with Ahmed Adne, a member of the Ethiopian congregation the church hopes will soon become its third mission for internationals started in 12 years. See story on page 7.

demically, Mitchell told the *Baptist and Reflector*. People deal with medical ethics issues daily, he said, citing patients in the hospital, dying family members, or treatment of genetically-linked diseases in children as examples.

In the opening address of the bioethics seminar, CLC Executive Director Richard Land reminded conference participants that Christians are "the last line of defense against a rapid descent into an evil abyss of barbarism" toward human life in the United States.

Followers of Jesus Christ must oppose the "lethal combination of technical expertise and spiritual ignorance" which would deny the sanctity of human life and result in abortion, fetal experimentation, euthanasia, and infanticide of mentally and physically im-

paired babies, Land said.

Several speakers addressed issues of abortion, AIDS, physician-assisted suicide, genetics, and other bioethical concerns during the meeting.

A Nashville university professor called for Christians to take a more active role in showing that religion and science are compatible.

Despite the beliefs of some scientists who feel religion and science do not mix, there is evidence for a Christian doctrine of science and technology, said Thomas Harris, a layman from First Church, Nashville, who chairs the department of biomedical engineering at Vanderbilt University.

He observed that bioethics "has become a significant arena for the interaction of moral theology and modern medicine."

— See CLC, page 2

Regional meetings have one change

BRENTWOOD — The date for one of the eight regional forums set up by the Special Study Committee has been changed, according to James Porch, TBC executive director.

The Eastern Region meeting has been re-scheduled to March 25, at Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour. All meetings are set for 7 p. m.

The concept for the study was approved at the TBC Annual Meeting last November in Gatlinburg. Members were named by Ron Phillips, then Tennessee Baptist Convention president. The blue ribbon group is studying the election

processes of the Executive Board and the committees on committees and boards. The committee will listen to Tennessee Baptists at the regional forums, and after study and deliberation, will bring its findings to the convention this November.

Fred Steelman, pastor of Red Bank Church, Chattanooga, is chairman.

The other regional meetings will be held in April and May, concluding June 1. Places and dates, announced in last week's *Baptist and Reflector*, will be published again later this month. □

CLC seminar examines medical ethics issues

— Continued from page 1

Specific concerns for bioethicists, Harris said, include issues related to the beginning and ending of life (abortion, the right to die, euthanasia, support of severely handicapped newborns), ethical dilemmas in the allocation of health care resources, the ethics of research using human and animal subjects, and the ethics of genetic manipulation.

Harris concluded that bioethics has a "significant debt to Christian moral theology." He noted that "to a large extent, evangelical and conservative Christianity has withdrawn from the science, technology, and Christianity discussion."

Because competent, informed bioethics is important to everyone, "evangelical and conservative Christians should be doing more to preserve and improve what we have," he said.

A former abortion provider told conference participants that the abortion industry is motivated by profit, not concern for women.

Carol Everett, who once co-owned two abortion clinics, said her abortion counselors were actually trained telemarketers selling a product.

"Abortion is not about rights or choices, or even about rape or incest. Abortion is about money," Everett said.

Everett said that during her six years in the abortion industry she was not only responsible for 35,000 abortions, but also the death of one woman and the maiming of 19 others due to hysterectomies or colostomies. She said it was routine for doctors and abortionists to

work together to cover up such mistakes and that these same types of complications are going on throughout the nation today, but the public never hears the truth.

Everett said she left the abortion industry because of a Baptist preacher who told her about the plan of salvation.

Everett said the church needs to lovingly reach out to those who have had an abortion because the world does not have the morals to make a difference.

Southern Baptist educator Timothy George also addressed abortion by noting the failure of Southern Baptists to take a strong stand against abortion in the early 1970s. He noted that messengers to the 1971 SBC meeting in St. Louis, Mo., passed the first resolution on abortion.

"While this resolution included a perfunctory tribute to the 'sanctity of human life,' it was in essence a strong call for the liberalizing and legalizing of abortion in this country.

"The resolution called for the legitimizing of abortion not only for the hard cases of rape, incest, fetal deformity, and threat to the life of the mother, but also 'carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, as well as physical health of the mother,'" said George, dean of the Beeson School of Divinity at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

"The failure of the Southern Baptist Convention to make a timely and prophetic response to the holocaust of abortion on demand reflects the loss of



TENNESSEANS MARTY LASKEY, left, of Red Bank Church, Chattanooga, and Pastor Bill Frazier of Antioch Church, Athens, confer with the CLC's Ben Mitchell during the annual seminar.

theological vision resulting in the malign neglect and distorted understanding of the most basic doctrinal affirmations we profess to believe," he said.

A Texas physician said Americans are being lulled to sleep by a sense of false security that they cannot acquire sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs).

Joe S. McIlhane Jr., of Austin, Texas, pointed out problems in Africa caused by sexually-transmitted diseases. Besides the AIDS epidemic about 25 percent of Africans are sterile because of STDs, he said.

"We think that in America we are not as susceptible as the Africans. But the problem in Africa is sexual promiscuity. Americans need to wake up," he said.

The transmission of STDs has become a crisis, he said. Before 1960 syphilis and gon-

orrhea were the primary STDs. Now, he said, there are 20-25 different STDs. More than 12 million people are infected each year with STDs, he added.

The only answer is to teach people to save intercourse until marriage, he concluded.

Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President James R. Draper Jr., gave three theme interpretations during the seminar.

He noted there is a "great gap between biblical beliefs and principles and public policy" in some areas.

"It is imperative that we as Christians address that gap and bridge it. The response which we make to this crisis may well be our greatest legacy we leave to the world of tomorrow," Draper said. — Linda Lawson, Tom Strode, and Jon Walker contributed to this story. □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen is the editor.
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Colorado officials acknowledge use of designated gifts

Baptist Press

DENVER — Colorado Baptist General Convention officials have acknowledged the continued use of Colorado Baptist churches' designated gifts to operate the convention

but denied the recent resignation of the executive director was the result of dissatisfaction with his handling of the funds.

"We have been operating (off the churches') designated gifts for nearly 10 years," said

Tom Pratt, chairman of the convention's executive board and associate pastor of suburban Denver's Northglenn Southern Church. "We've had to do this ever since the (Colorado Baptist) Foundation failed and left us \$1.5 million in debt."

Pratt said he has had at least one call, from an official of an SBC agency, asking if there had been an embezzlement at the state office of \$150,000. Baptist Press also had received a call about whether Charles Sharpe, former executive director of the

convention, had resigned because misappropriation of designated funds.

"Charles Sharp resigned for personal concerns," Pratt said. "He was not fired, not forced to leave," said Pratt, who is also the board's finance chairman.

Sharp resigned last month and moved to Garden City, Kan., to become director of missions for Western Kansas Association. He told Baptist Press Feb. 11 he was motivated by the desire to work more with people and less with paper. □

TBC giving continues even flow

February's Cooperative Program giving through Tennessee Baptist Convention churches continued on an even flow, according to figures from the TBC Accounting Department and James Porch, convention executive director-treasurer.

February's total amounted to \$2,175,864.38, an increase of \$235,771.50 over the same month in 1992.

The total for the budget year (since Nov. 1) is \$8,255,570.65, only \$137,516.88 under last year's CP income, or 1.64

percent under.

Budget needs for the year at this point amount to \$9,053,107.33. The budget deficit thus far amounts to \$797,536.68, or 8.81 percent.

Porch said he is encouraged by the totals. "Even though monthly receipts are short of budget needs," he said, "we realize February ended on a Sunday, so we did not receive all those CP gifts for this report. We still have steady and disciplined giving from Tennessee Baptist churches. We are grateful." □

SBC CP gifts down in February

Baptist Press

Committee president.

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for February were down 8.28 percent, compared to the same month a year ago, said Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive

February gifts totaled \$10,996,497, compared to \$11,988,817 in February 1992.

The year-to-date CP totals, however, remained ahead of the previous year, an increase of \$806,095, or 1.39 percent. □



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Annuity Board trustees mark 75th year; get Kmart update

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.
For Baptist Press

DALLAS — Trustees of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board marked the 75th anniversary of the agency and heard reports of growth and of their anti-pornography shareholder action against Kmart during their March 1-2 meeting here.

Paul Powell, in his president's report to trustees, said total Annuity Board assets rose more than \$1 million a day during 1992 and reached \$3.9 billion Dec. 31.

In his treasurer's report, Harold D. Richardson noted that the assets increased 10.5 percent for the year. The retirement assets reached \$3.77 billion and insurance assets grew to \$138 million. Net income was \$269.8 million.

Participation in the board's retirement plans is at record numbers, and contributions by members, churches, and other employers reached new highs. At year's end there were 68,600 active individual retirement income accounts, and

23,454 people receiving benefits. Retirement and relief benefits totaled \$117.2 million.

There was strong growth in the insurance fund. Claims control and stability of reserves were credited with making it possible to avoid a medical rate increase in the church plan and permitted increased maternity benefits that took effect Jan. 1. Total benefits paid were \$93.3 million for medical claims, \$5.6 million for life claims, and \$2.2 million for disability.

The property and casualty program, offered by Preferred Risk and promoted by the Annuity Board, showed its first profit since being launched in 1989.

Also, the board operated below budget for the year.

At the invitation of Powell, SBC President H. Edwin Young of Houston joined trustees for a dialogue session March 1. He spoke about his experiences as SBC president and his hopes for growth for the Southern Baptist Convention.

The trustees' relief commit-

tee approved 13 additions to the board's Adopt An Annuity program that provides an extra \$50 each month to annuitants with inadequate benefits. The board's endowment department provided \$599,235 in Adopt An Annuity benefits in 1992.

The trustees' investment committee reported that Kmart Corporation had notified the Pension Board of the United Methodist Church that its subsidiary, Waldenbooks, has withdrawn from sale a "Blue Moon" series of books that had been judged pornographic by some people. The Kmart letter was copied to the Annuity Board.

The Annuity Board, with support of a number of other pension boards and foundations, has filed a shareholder resolution with Kmart that seeks to end Waldenbooks' sale of what the Annuity Board deems pornographic materials.

The investment committee also reported a revision in the investment guidelines dealing with restricted companies. The new statement clarified the

No mid-year insurance hike planned

Baptist Press

DALLAS — Breaking with the national health-care trend, the Southern Baptist Annuity Board will have no mid-year rate increase in the Church and Seminarian Comprehensive Medical plans. There also was no rate increase in January.

This is the first time since 1987 there has been no rate increase in this plan for an entire year, said Joel Mathis,

an Annuity Board senior vice president.

U.S. medical costs continue to increase about 20 percent annually, but the Annuity Board has stabilized its health-care costs through several efforts.

Some successful changes in recent years include implementing and refining a ZIP code-based rating system linking medical costs on a local basis and a Baptist hospital enhanced benefits program. □

CLC trustees seek \$300,000 for D.C. site; affirm Land

By Louis Moore
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission trustees voted unanimously to send a letter to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee asking for the \$300,000 originally designated for an SBC building in Washington, D.C.

If the money is given to the CLC, trustees said they would probably use it for the down payment on an office building in Washington.

In presenting the recommendation, Liz Minnick of

Austin, Texas, said with the \$300,000 down payment, the CLC would spend approximately what it is paying now for rent on Washington office space to make the payments on the new building.

The trustee action during their March 4 semi-annual meeting in Nashville calls for trustee chairman Jim Richards of Baton Rouge, La., to write a letter to the Executive Committee requesting the money.

The \$300,000 originally was placed in an account with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs but was later

reclaimed by the Executive Committee in a dispute with the BJC over the funds. The dispute evolved from the SBC's decision to cut ties with the BJC. A settlement has since been reached with the BJC by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee will vote on distribution of the \$300,000 during its meeting in June in Houston in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In other action, trustees affirmed Executive Director Richard Land, who had been one of the final three candidates for the presidency of

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

The resolution, adopted by trustees, noted Land "is the man of God for this hour in the life of the Christian Life Commission."

In other actions, trustees

also voted unanimously to be a function of the staff investment committee and the trustee investment committee. The guidelines are:

"Investment in any company that is publicly recognized by the internal investment committee of the Annuity Board and the trustee investment committee as being in the liquor, tobacco, gambling, and pornographic industries or any company whose products, services, or activities are publicly recognized as being incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board are prohibited. This would include any company which fails to subscribe to the Statement of Principles, the seven-point code of affirmative action for companies with operations in South Africa." □

also voted unanimously to award the CLC's 1993 Religious Liberty Award to Memphis pastor Adrian Rogers and recommended the CLC staff prepare materials on the Christian heritage of the United States. □

BJC affirms fund settlement

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The executive committee of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has voted to accept a \$100,000 settlement in a dispute with the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

BJC officials on Feb. 24 furnished Baptist Press with a copy of a Feb. 16 letter from BJC legal counsel Oliver S. Thomas to SBC legal counsel James P. Guenther which confirms the BJC acceptance.

"We have polled the members of our Executive Committee, and they are willing to accept a cash payment in the amount of \$100,000 to settle the dispute," Thomas wrote Guenther. The letter, however, makes it clear the BJC continues to believe the \$300,000 in an account with the Southern Baptist Foundation, is owned by the BJC.

"This is not an easy decision for the BJC," Thomas said. "We feel entitled to the entire \$300,000 corpus and are reluctant to accept any compromise settlement. Yet, we are grate-

ful for the support we have received in the past from the SBC and, like you, wish to avoid a lawsuit, if possible.

"We also look forward to the day the SBC might again wish to participate in the work of the Baptist Joint Committee," Thomas told Guenther. □

SBTS trustees to vote on Mohler in March

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE — Southern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees will consider the election of R. Albert Mohler Jr. as the school's ninth president at a called meeting March 25-26 in Atlanta.

Search committee chairman Wayne Allen of Memphis said the meeting will give trustees "sufficient time to discuss any issue" with Mohler.

All proceedings of the Atlanta meeting will be in executive session, Allen said. Past meetings about president elections have been closed to the public and media, he added. □

How to become a Christian

Is God a stranger to you?

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 (1 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. — Baptist Sunday School Board □

■ about letters
to the editor

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



Be faithful

There is a frightening movement at work within our denomination that violates Scriptural teachings of unity, reconciliation, and love for one another. It is an exclusivism hard for me to understand. What are we afraid of? Are we fearful that someone might have a thought or idea that differs with our own?

I am amazed to read that Foreign Mission Board trustees felt the need to call together WMU leadership for a two-hour session concerning the decision to continue working with all Southern Baptists throughout the denomination. This sounds like children, saying "if you want to be my friend, you can't be theirs." How can Christ be honored in this? FMB trustees continue to embarrass many Southern Baptists, whom they are supposed to represent.

I am appalled that Long Run Association, in Louisville, has rescinded its invitation to Dr. Keith Parks to speak at its annual meeting. Executive Director, Russell Bennett, confirmed that the decision was made after Dr. Parks' announcement he would join the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Is this man, who has dedicated his life to missions through the SBC Foreign Mission Board, no longer an acceptable speaker because he has chosen to associate with

someone we disagree with? I am not "of Paul," or "of Apollos" (I Corinthians 3:4), but "a labourer together with God." I have no loyalty to any faction or group within our convention. I am a product of a conservative Southern Baptist up-bringing, educated at Howard Payne University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Those who do not know me, know that I do not seek recognition or call attention to myself. I am not "a



campaigner." I feel these recent trends compel me to warn that this "amputation" of those with whom we disagree must end.

Jim Muston, pastor
Cordova Church
Cordova 38018

Care, concern

I was very concerned to read the recent article in the *Baptist and Reflector* on Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy.

It doesn't take an accounting background to figure out that when you subtract \$150,000 from a budget you better come up with some creative new funding ideas fast or drastically cut the "long traditional heritage" of quality.

I would question our convention leaders' interest in maintaining Harrison-Chilhowee's quality. This did not seem to be a concern at the TBC this fall. Cutting funding and then limiting the school's ability to develop ways to make up the funding shows the care and concern.

Christie Gambrell
Greenville 37743

Training disciples

We recently had a Discipleship Training fair. We added our RAs, GAs, Mission Friends, Music ministry, jail ministry, and a special display of 1993 Vacation Bible School materials. Our library-media center provided an excellent display of available resources including books, periodicals, video tapes, study course material, and equipping centers. We talked about the future of Discipleship Training in our church.

Why have a Discipleship Training fair? As a church staff member I have tried to maintain an exciting, challenging, Discipleship Training ministry. We have an obligation to

Reminders for letter writers

Letters to the editor are among the best-read items used in the *Baptist and Reflector*. This is true because ideas and feelings expressed by others are a vital part of open discussion.

Letters give vent to thoughts, ideas, pros, and cons on a variety of issues that face Baptists and other Christians. Letters also give readers a way to challenge other views, and to explain those challenges to other readers, including leaders of conventions. But sometimes the rhetoric gets too strong as debates over convention matters and other concerns is heated.

Tennessee Baptists do not seem reticent about free expression. We have a lively letters page, and believe it is good for all of us — when used properly.

Here are some guidelines that will enhance the letters page — not by governing what readers write, but perhaps how they say it.

1. We print regularly a list of standard guidelines. Read them before you write. These basic guidelines are the standard rules for letter writers.
2. For some writers it is difficult to make the point in 250 words. This is a generous amount. It allows for more letters to be used at an earlier printing. Stick to that total — 250 words. If you can say it in less words, you have a better chance for publication without editing for length.
3. The *Baptist and Reflector* is not obligated to use letters, but the staff feels that this forum is helpful to readers who might not have other ways of expression short of paid advertising. The privilege is precious and should be protected by observance of the established guidelines.
4. Read your letter thoroughly before submitting it. Think it through. Is this the way to say it? Would Christ approve of my words? Would he use them in a letter?
5. Be careful with language. Don't use cruel, cutting, accusatory, sarcastic, un-Christian words. Find the decent way to say it. We will not use letters that attack other people with worldly terms. We all know the difference.
6. Remember that letters may be edited for length, abusive language, or insensitive remarks. No matter how "hot" the issue or how bitter the debate may seem among us or in other quarters — letters on these pages must be in a Christlike context.

Be sure to read the standard printed guidelines on letters. This list is intended to augment the standing rules and to remind us of Christian courtesy. — Editor □

disciple the people in our church to provide them with tools that will enable them to grow and become more mature Christians. This will benefit the entire church by providing a better trained church membership. For several months our Discipleship Training ministry has grown. This growth has been steady. We have begun new classes and studies, done some long range planning in the area of Discipleship Training, established a Discipleship Training council to assist in the planning, and involved people in the ministry itself.

During our Discipleship Training fair, people came and viewed the exhibits. We offered them the opportunity to sign up for study courses, training events, choirs, and even for Vacation Bible School responsibilities.

Discipleship Training provides us with avenues to teach doctrine, Baptist polity, study courses, new member training, parenting, marriage enrichment, or other programs. It

also gives us opportunities to consider critical issues facing our church families.

Why not have a Discipleship Training fair to help in the promotion of the ministries in your church?

I take very seriously the Scripture passage found in Deuteronomy 31:12.

Gary Lynn, minister of youth and education,
First Church,
Kingston 37763

Preachers school set

SEYMOUR — Harrison-Chilhowee Academy's Preachers School for area ministers and ministerial students will begin its final session for the 1992-93 school year on March 20. Classes begin at 8 a.m. in the academy's Ogle Building. The session ends the first year of a new four-year ministerial curriculum. Classes are eight weeks with four hours of study each Saturday.

For more information, contact Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy at (615) 573-8321. □

Daily prayer requests
for Chile/Tennessee
Partnership

March -



- 11 — Pray for Donna Mae Bobby as she serves in Valdivia as the only Baptist missionary. Pray that she may find a friend with whom to relate as she struggles with feelings of loneliness and isolation. Pray for her ministry with the bell chime choirs in the churches and Bible classes in the orphanage.
- 12 — Missionary and pastor David Grossman asks Tennessee Baptists to pray that the congregation of First Church, Arica be healed from internal strife. Pray for this church as it is experiencing leadership struggles.
- 13 — Pray for our Tennessee medical team today through the 24th. Pray they will be enabled to meet physical and spiritual needs. Pray for Chilean Dr. Pablo Musiett as he serves with the team.
- 14 — Pray for Dr. Robert Peden, medical team leader from Florence, Alabama, and his wife Mary. Pray this effort will provide opportunities for outreach among churches in Concepcion.
- 15 — Pray that the Lord blesses missionary Mark Andrews of La Serena as he serves as an evangelist, pastor, and works at the associational and national levels. Also, pray that he enjoys good health and journey mercies as he travels to many meetings in various places.
- 16 — Pray for missionary Marilyn Graves as she serves with our medical team today in Concepcion.
- 17 — Pray for missionary Mary Jo Cook as she leads a ladies Bible study in Santiago (every Wednesday). Pray as she seeks to challenge new believers to join a local church and lead their families to Christ.

Baptists: risking the rebuke of the Lord

There are issues sufficient to keep every Tennessee Baptist busy for many years.

On every front there are issues of morality and ethics, church and state, politics within and out of the Southern Baptist Convention, culture and social life, and even more. Who's counting?

Baptists also face issues of their own making. Decisions about missions giving, convention leadership, theological bent, relationships with the Masonic order, are issues that belong peculiarly to Baptists at this time.

Perhaps the easier plan is to put all of them in a package and drop them in the river of no concern.

But we know this is not the proper solution. Each issue, each problem or situation, begs for honest answers, correct resolution. How do we do it? Get real, there are matters of priority that demand total concentration of prayer, strength, concern.

With every advance in technology comes additional responsibility. Some of the inventors of the first atomic bombs, the fathers as they were sometimes tabbed, later became opponents of such weaponry when they understood the horror they had helped produce. The ultimate weapon of those times was abhorrent to the creators.

From their experiences and others, it is safe to assume that the end does not always justify the means. It is time to

remember that God is not a god of confusion even though his children do not bear that part of his image. We must do better.

Baptists of today are constantly calling each other into account. And there is a lack of timidity when dealing with other Christians as well.

Pointing fingers is ridiculous. Some years from now when Baptists look into the mirror of the past, reflections of Laurel and Hardy may appear.

What are Baptists up to now? Here are some examples of how we spend our time:

1. Debating Woman's Missionary Union and Keith Parks, two of Southern Baptists' most stalwart friends. Giving them hard times because they want to add more friends to their coterie. Telling them to remain exclusive in relationships.
2. Deciding whether to launch an attack on Freemasonry. Is it evil? Are its members a contradiction to Baptist faith?
3. Arguing about loyalties to the Christian Life Commission, the Baptist Joint Committee, the Baptist Center for Ethics. Must a person or church choose only one relationship?
4. Demanding that Baptist state papers choose between Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press (and yes, there are still other news services available). Can either or both be excluded because of the question of autonomy?
5. Instead of being a satisfied member of the team, determining what labels to

put on which people. Which way are they leaning? Are they sincere, have they passed MY test?

6. Like James and John, risking the rebuke of the Lord Jesus by pushing ahead to gain first place in line. Making Christ's decisions for him.

7. Telling others how they must give God's money. There can't be but one way, can there — total giving?

8. Going down a mental checklist when meeting another Baptist for the first time. Which side is he or she on?

Granted some of these are serious concerns to some Baptists, but surely there are greater motivations, deeper calls to service, and better reasons for commitment. What are the "main things" for Tennessee Baptists?

Telling the old, old story of Jesus and his love is the reason for being for every Christian. Serving the Risen Lord is motive enough for the daily walk.

Reaching and teaching the lost, discipling the new Christians, committing to a Christ-centered life, leave little time for dealing with the frivolous. Life is fragile, like a lovely petal on a day-old rose, it is soon passed.

It seems trite to call people to stand firm by the wall and continue the assault on the gates of hell. It seems useless to sound the alarm as the world burns down around us. We have heard it before. But the Risen Lord calls renewed people to stand firm for him, and having done all, to stand. Enough of the inconsequential. □

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

■ one word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen editor

Tools and healing

Before I ever heard of a Swiss Army knife, I discovered a United States Army "combination tool."

And before I was acquainted with that army tool, I had tinkered with many other tools while growing up on the farm.

There were all sorts of wrenches, screwdrivers, pliers, that made it easier to adjust blades on plows, fix broken equipment, and even to replace worn out parts.

But the Army's combination tool was a stroke of genius. At least, that's what I was led to believe by all instructors I had during ROTC days and in basic officers' training.

We could use that tool as a wrench, screwdriver, cleaning device — and sometimes as anything we wanted.



ALLEN

It was a gem, a veritable lifesaver. And later when I saw a Swiss Army knife at work. I knew it was a modernized version of the old combination tool.

I was, and still am, fascinated by the specialty blades, the screwdriver, the bottle opener, the hole punch, the toothpick.

The inventive minds of people can bridge gaps in time, make shortcuts, provide much-needed instruments for all kinds of work, tasks, leisure. Great problems are solved by hard work and much ingenuity.

Albert Sabin, the doctor who gave us the vaccination against polio on a lump of sugar, died last week. His research, along with that of Jonas Salk, stalked the killer polio and made the world a safer place. While recovering from a critical illness several years ago, he said he didn't believe in any kind of god. Everything he did, he said, he did himself.

How sad. Mankind, when tuned in to the Creator, is virtually unstoppable. We can heal the wounded, make the lame walk, give sight to the blind, give life to dead people.

No combination tool, no Swiss Army knife, no shrewd or brilliant mind can top that. With willing children, God gives the answers and the healing. □

WMU reassures missionaries through video

By Susan Doyle
For Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union March 4 sent a video message to missionaries appointed by the Foreign Mission Board reassuring them of continued support.

"We come to you today to say that we are still in the business of being your support system," said Dellanna O'Brien, national WMU executive director. "We want to give you assurance of our loyalty."

A copy of the videotape was sent to all mission stations from which Southern Baptist foreign missionaries work.

The WMU videotape follows by less than two weeks a videotape which was sent to foreign missionaries by FMB trustees. The FMB videotape was of a two-hour dialogue between the trustees and national WMU leaders concerning recent WMU executive board decisions. Much of the debate focused on WMU's decision which will allow the organization to consider providing mission materials to all Southern Baptist groups involved in missions at the request of those groups.

"We share with (FMB trustees) the desire that you know

all of the factors with which we're dealing right now, and we encourage you to watch that video," O'Brien said. "But we're also aware that by viewing that videotape, you may have more questions and concerns than you had before you watched it."

In her video message, O'Brien outlined how WMU's support of missionaries will not change because of the recent WMU board action.

"For almost 105 years, WMU has served as that organization that has provided prayer support for you," she said. "That has not changed."

"We also want to say that for those 105 years, we have supported the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering as well as the Cooperative Program to provide resources for your work. That has not changed."

WMU has told missionaries' stories through its magazines so others can know of their challenges, successes, and prayer requests, she said.

"That has not changed."

Some people are saying WMU is becoming a part-time organization, O'Brien said. "We want to say clearly — that is not true. We will be for

you all what we have been in the past."

O'Brien told the missionaries they can continue to trust and count on WMU just as missionaries have the past 105 years.

"As a matter of fact, as we've deliberated about necessary decisions in our organization, the question most frequently asked is 'What about the missionaries?' " she said. "As we've dealt with concerns, you must know that the bottom line has been for your good."

O'Brien continued in the video to explain some of the recent actions taken by the WMU executive board beginning with the recommendation WMU provide missions materials to other groups involved in missions at their request.

There has always been a great deal of diversity within the SBC, O'Brien said.

"WMU would like to be the umbrella that will pull all Southern Baptists back together again in the missions cause and effort," she said.

O'Brien pledged the WMU "will continue to be what we have always been for you — a support system for the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board..." □

■ just for today
By Fred Wood
pastor emeritus
Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile —

A man was describing his friend. There's nothing I wouldn't do for him, and there's nothing he wouldn't do for me. In fact, we spend our lives doing nothing for each other.

Take this truth with you —

The person who is wrapped up in himself is enclosed within a mighty small package. How big is your world? Are you like the girl of whom it was said, "She is bounded on the north by Edith, on the east by Edith, on the south by Edith, and on the west by Edith." Do you really enjoy helping someone else? How long has it been since you've gone out of your way to make another person's life better or load easier?

Memorize this Scripture —

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," (Romans 14:7).

Pray this prayer —

Dear God, let me be aware of others and their need today. May I resist the temptation to live for myself and look for opportunities today for helping others. Let this be my one goal and give me the determination to do it! Amen. □

Educators schedule May retreat

Religious educators in churches will hear Charles F. Gwaltney, minister of education and administration, First Church, San Antonio, at the annual Tennessee Baptist Religious Education Association Retreat May 6-8. It will be held at Fall Creek Falls, Pikeville.

Those attending will receive updated information, general training, and enjoy fellowship, according to Liz Lee of the Tennessee Baptist Convention who is consultant for the association.

The retreat will begin May 6 at 6:45 p.m. and end Saturday, May 8, after a morning devotion.

For more information, those interested should contact Lee at (615) 373-2255. □

Camps for mentally disabled held for 10 years

Special Friends Camps for the mentally disabled celebrate a 10th anniversary this year, reported Liz Lee, Tennessee Baptist Convention Sunday School Department, who directs the camps.

Tennessee is the only state to have week-long camps led by Baptists for mentally impaired campers, Lee said.

To recognize the anniversary, celebrations will be held at the end of the two camps, Aug. 2-6 at Camp Linden, Linden, and 9-13 at Camp Carson, Newport. The celebrations will begin at 9:30 a.m. and all Tennesseans are invited. □

Belmont Heights befriends Kurds, Ethiopians, Chinese, Cambodians, Armenians, Vietnamese, Russians, and a family from Afghanistan without other help

Because they are Moslem, Ann Thompson, minister of missions, Belmont Heights Church, Nashville, refrained from reporting their names, but told part of their story.

The family escaped from Afghanistan several years ago, driven out by the war with the Soviet Union. They fled to Pakistan, but not to safety. A bomb targeting refugees exploded near their home, injuring the mother/wife. They finally arrived in the United States.

Last year, the family suffered another blow. It's patriarch died. Because the commitment by the refugee agency helping them had ended, his death left the mother, two adult children, eight minor children, and one grandchild without any financial support.

Thompson learned about

them and visited. The mother and an adult daughter could not take advantage of government-subsidized English classes because they care for the preschool children, said Thompson.

Thompson arranged for a volunteer from Belmont Heights to visit the women once a week to teach them English.

Thompson kept in touch and learned as the Christmas season approached the family was thinking about Christmas despite the Moslem rejection of Jesus as God's son. It was their first without husband/father and one they faced without means to celebrate, noted Thompson. Their lives were a stark contrast to that in Afghanistan, where they were wealthy enough to have servants.



SUMMER MISSIONARY Alia Dzhiembaeva from Kazakhstan claps to music with a Kurdish girl during the church's day camp last year.



A SOMALIAN AND KURDS play table hockey at International Recreation, which is held weekly at the church.

On Christmas morning Thompson arrived with a carload of presents given by a family from Belmont Heights who wished to remain anonymous.

"When they were all relaxed, sitting with their opened gifts, I had the best opportunity I've had to tell them about Jesus. Of course, it was Christmas," said Thompson.

The family has a bright future, she predicted. As the children graduate from American schools and obtain better jobs, they will reject the U.S. welfare system they now rely upon, she forecast. She also has hope for their spiritual understanding. She knows Moslems who have become Christians in spite of death threats. — Connie Davis □

To help an international —

- provide training in simple repairs and car mechanics
- prepare income tax returns
- provide transportation for immunizations
- assist new parents
- provide Parents' Day Out program
- help in medical emergencies
- translate official papers and medical information
- repair clothing of working adults

— Future plans by the Missions Development Council of Belmont Heights Church

MissionsFest comes to Middle Tennessee April 2-3

The third MissionsFest will be held in Tennessee will be April 2-3 at Belmont University and Belmont Heights Church, Nashville.

This MissionsFest will include

testimonies by foreign missionaries, tips on how churches and individuals can be involved in missions, a film festival featuring the latest missions videos and films, and a commitment service. Also a global walkaround will be held, offering one-on-one contact with missionaries and a number of conferences.

MissionsFest will begin with registration at 5 p.m. on April 2 at Belmont University. The 7:30 p.m. evening session

West Tennessee pastors to meet

The West Tennessee Pastors Conference will meet on April 13 at Union University.

Gerald Stow, executive director, Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, will speak.

Fellowship will begin at 10 a.m. in the foyer adjacent to the chapel. Lunch is provided.

The Ministers Wives Fellowship meets at 10:30 a.m. □

at Belmont Heights Church will be a missions rally including flag processional, missionary testimonies, and music.

On Saturday a general session at the school will be followed by conferences such as "Exploring Career Missionary Service,"

"The Family in Missions," among others, and a missions "Video Theatre." The conferences will be led by a large group of foreign missionaries.

The Saturday evening service at the church is one of music and praise. Special music will be provided by the Belmont Chorale, Belmont Brass Quintet, and the Tusculum

Hills Church Choir.

According to James M. Porch, TBC executive director, the conferences are free and "for anyone interested in missions," including youth. Selected parts of the program may be attended, he noted.

Pre-school child-care will be provided at the church with prior reservation. Those interested should contact Belmont University, Office of Church Relations, 1900 Belmont Blvd., Nashville, Tenn., 37212-3757.

The TBC is sponsoring the event along with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. □



THE TBC SUNDAY School Department was second among state conventions in percentage increase in Sunday School enrollment. The department also was honored by the Baptist Sunday School Board for outstanding achievement in Vacation Bible School work. From left, TBC Executive Director James Porch, and SS leaders Greer Ruble, Roy Miller, and Martha Couch.

Church loves internationals

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Visiting Belmont Heights Church here may be like being transported to a Baptist church in 2020 A.D.

After Sunday School the Mandarin Chinese congregation gathers in the chapel for Sunday morning worship in

ians, Indians, Thais, Laotians, Nigerians, Iranians, Iraqis, Nicaraguans, Romanians, Russians, and finally, Caucasians.

The experience may seem futuristic in a country still torn by racial and ethnic prejudice. But it is reality for Belmont Heights Church, reported Ann Thompson, minister of missions at the church.

The metamorphosis from a

lege-level teacher.

In part, the church is responding to its neighborhood. Many internationals live nearby in an apartment complex which welcomes them. Some are refugees, like the about 250 Kurds who moved there last year to escape strife in Iraq, explained Thompson.

Some are students at Belmont University which nearly abuts the church property. Vanderbilt University is also nearby, she noted. However, internationals travel to the church from all over Nashville. And the church transports groups like the Cambodians to its ministries.

She credits financial help from the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Key Church project and the 150 volunteers from the church's active membership of about 400, 100 of which are internationals.

Only God stills fear, she cited. "There are not many Anglo middle-class women who would go into the projects. Not all of us do, but a lot of us do," said Thompson.

She refers to volunteers like Sylvia Lowry, a musician who leads the work with Afghanis. Because of their Moslem faith, none have visited the church, but they receive visits from Lowry anyway.

The poverty of internationals is the first need the church tries to meet, Thompson said. Of major concern now is helping clothe about 100 Kurdish and Cambodian children and teenagers through age 14 in the spring. She also needs several cribs for expected babies.

It's not that most don't try to succeed, she said. When an international gets a minimum wage job, he or she can barely pay rent and is disqualified for Medicaid. It costs about \$45 a month to use public transportation in Nashville, she explained. Health care or a car repair is a financial crisis for them.

Another big adjustment is the cultural one, added Thompson, whether "out of the rice paddies" or a city. "Even urban to urban is difficult. Our urban areas are so wildly different from theirs." For example, illiteracy among females is accepted in less developed countries, she noted.

A rejection of Christianity is natural. Culture and

religion are often closely related. Peer pressure, even threats, is also a factor, especially among Moslems, reported Thompson.

Thompson is equipped to understand some of the needs of internationals. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Spanish, studying in Peru for a year. That experience sensitized her to the other-cultural experience and the demands of being bilingual.

She advised Tennesseans that they can help internationals without learning their language, she noted. To discuss religion and philosophy, a bilingual must be very proficient, she said.

And she understands the impact of attending a church activity, if even just a few times.

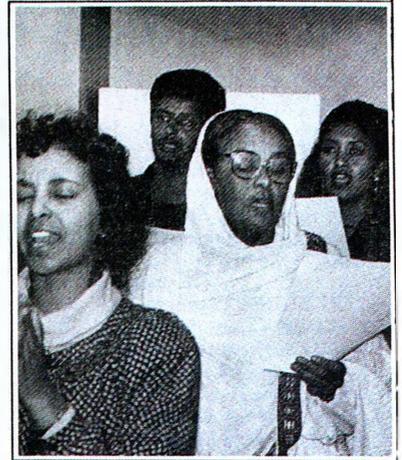
Thompson was raised in a home hostile to Christianity. She attended a church service only once during childhood. Her only other Christian experience was participating in a week of Vacation Bible School when she was five years old.

She never met those teachers again, but remembered their loving attitude. That experience prepared her to become a Christian, she added.

So when Moslem teenagers tried last summer to disrupt a day camp or when Kurdish children only attend Sunday School to receive used clothing, Thompson isn't deterred. The Christian messages they receive are used by God in their lives, she believes.

Her experience with her parents' alcoholism also prepared her for this ministry. Many internationals struggle with the problem, she noted. Recovery programs in the Nashville area, like Alcoholics Anonymous groups, are held only in one language, she said.

But success stories permeate Thompson's conversation. The involvement of about 30 Kurdish children in Sunday School can be traced back to their arrival in the U.S. A 10-week summer day camp was directed by Thompson and four Baptist summer missionaries. One of those missionaries, Joann Scaife, a Belmont University student, continues working with the chil-



ETHIOPIANS SING during the recent revival held by the congregation at Belmont Heights Church. — Photos by Connie Davis



THREE, ALMOST FOUR CHILDREN — Anglo, Asian, and Kurdish — jump a rope turned by Belmont University student Patrick Ball and a Kurdish boy.

their language. Cambodians scurry to the fellowship hall for their worship. Moslem Kurdish children holding gifts of clothing scoot out on their way home.

The church's other worship service is like a mirage for Baptists seeking world peace. Worshipers and choir members include Ethiopians, Armen-

"primarily middle- and upper-class Anglo church" to an oasis for internationals began differently for each church member, she suggested.

It may have been germinated by seeing an adult man visiting the church wearing "flip-flop" sandals in February. It may have been pride that a Korean Bible study begun by a member 20 years ago resulted in two Korean churches.

Today a worshiper may live near the state's governor or be on welfare, said Thompson. The chairman of deacons of Belmont Heights Church is a former Moslem from Iraq, she added.

"We're doing things sociologically some say can't be done," she reported in her studied approach, reflecting her experience as a former col-

Key Churches —

- receive financial support for a staff member for three years
- give missions the same priority as education and music programs
- establish a Missions Development Council
- begin five mission/ministry units each year

Start-A-Church Commitment Sunday —

"It's not just building a red brick building."
 "It's a myth that we have enough churches in Tennessee."
 "Over half of Tennesseans are unchurched."
 "I'm not opposed to folks driving to attend a church, but they also must redirect their energies to reach the church's community." — Terry Sharp and Larry Kirk, TBC Missions

Try —

- become a Key Church
- church-type mission or separate congregation
- indigenous satellite unit in apartments or mobile home park
- mission fellowship such as a Bible study or fellowship group meeting in a home
- permanent or ongoing mission
- preaching point at a recreation area or low income area
- transcultural outreach such as English class or home fellowship



A VIETNAMESE BOY tries to learn how to roller skate at International Recreation.

dren by leading a tutoring program and a Sunday School class for them.

Thompson also told about Ahmed Adne from Ethiopia, whose alcohol problem resulted in homelessness. A former homeless member of Belmont Heights opened his home to the man.

Recently Adne called Thompson to tell her he had been sober and attending the Ethiopian Bible study for a year. He also told her about his job and home. "This was a man whose life was totally turned around," said Thompson.

The formerly homeless church member made the difference in this situation, said Thompson. Robert Erwin, another member, is studying the Russian language to minister to Russians. Rayburn Jones leads the weekly International Recreation. He also visits in homes of internationals and helps them get eyeglasses and does repairs for them. And each week Lucy Hoskins leads nine trained volunteers to teach "English As a Second Language" classes.

"The Lord has provided," said Thompson. □

Missionaries help Argentines train for 'race of life'

By Mary Speidel
For Baptist Press

Sports evangelism is a growing emphasis in Christian ministry. Foreign Mission Board staff writer Mary Speidel traveled to Argentina recently to report on it. — Editor

NEUQUEN, Argentina — Steve Smith squints in the midday sunlight as he pedals his Trek road bike around the skating track.

Two champion roller skaters trail closely behind him. Their thigh muscles bulge as they pick up speed on their skates. After several laps the skaters switch places. Smith stays in front of them, breaking the force of the wind.

The athletes are two of Argentina's best: Jose Luis Lozano, five-time gold medalist in the 1987 Pan American Games, and Claudio Iurchur, second among speed roller skaters in Argentina. They're training for a national skating race this month. Smith sometimes joins them for workouts in Neuquen, Argentina.

Today Smith wears black biking shorts with a pink stripe down each leg. A silk-screened watermelon decorates the front of his green T-shirt. He hardly looks the part of a Southern Baptist missionary.

But he's not your traditional missionary. And, neither is his wife, Vidonia.

The Smiths, from Mississippi, came to Neuquen in 1991 to help First Baptist Church develop a sports ministry. He already had served more than three years in general evangelism in San Juan,

Argentina. Although the couple enjoyed the role, they dreamed of one day using interests in sports, fitness, and nutrition on the mission field.

"But we weren't even looking for that in San Juan; we were happy there," Smith recalled. Completely out of the blue, they got a phone call from Lozano on April 11, 1990, Mrs. Smith's birthday.

The professional skater, a Baptist, had heard of the Smiths from Leon White, a former Southern Baptist missionary in Argentina. Lozano dreamed of starting an evangelistic sports center in his hometown of Neuquen. When he told White about his desire, the missionary put him in touch with Smith.

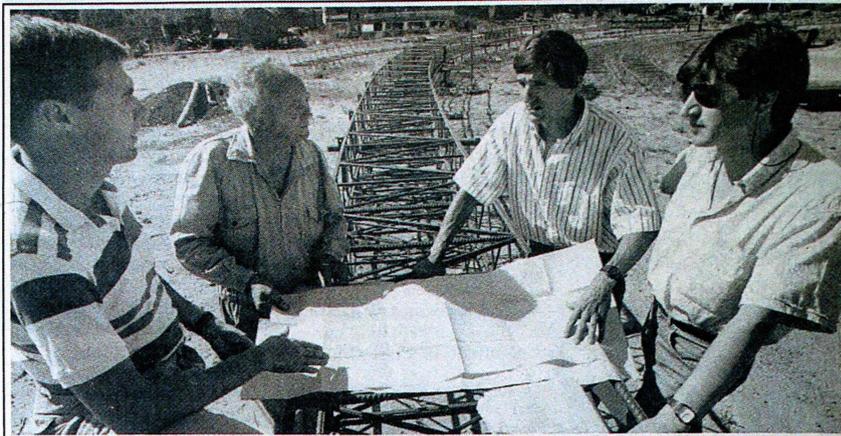
Lozano already was using his skating talent in evangelism. At age 20 he had accepted Christ as Savior at First Church of Neuquen. Five months later he won the world championships in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

From then on he has spoken openly about his faith through media interviews and contact with other athletes. In addition to his gold medals, Lozano holds 53 national and 12 South American titles in speed roller skating.

But in addition to skating, Lozano began to feel God was calling him to help create a broader sports ministry through his church. First Church supported the idea, and Lozano began looking for people to help him.

For the Smiths the phone call was a dream come true from God.

The missionaries are living



SOUTHERN BAPTIST sports missionary Steve Smith, far left, and Argentine Baptists Ruben Araya, far right, and Jose Luis Lozano, second from right, examine sections of a Baptist gymnasium under construction near Neuquen, Argentina. Also shown is Libero Canziani, owner of the metal-works plant where the structure is being built. — Photo by Warren Johnson

out that dream in a "sports-crazy" city, Smith said. About 60 percent of its 200,000 residents are under age 15. About 80 percent of young people Smith surveyed said they played sports.

To reach them and other sports fans in the community, the Smiths have built a team of Baptists who lead the Christian Sports Foundation. The foundation is a ministry of First Church, which operates several community ministries.

Smith has trained about 16 Baptist laypeople in leading evangelistic sports clinics. The volunteers conduct regular clinics for young people in a variety of sports, including Neuquen's most popular sports of volleyball and skating.

The Smiths and their colleagues also have started a

small gym in a rented building in downtown Neuquen. The gym is staffed by Baptist layman Marcelo Palidino, a national judo champion in Argentina, and Jose "Pepe" Soto, known for his work as a trainer of professional athletes.

The men build relationships with clients who come to the gym. That leads to conversations about life and problems. Then they tell people about the answers they have found in Christ.

At the church, Mrs. Smith has similar opportunities through an aerobics class she leads twice weekly for women. She always teaches an evangelistic Bible study during exercise breaks.

These ministries, closely tied to First Church, will later

be housed in the foundation's gymnasium, now under construction. It is partly financed through gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The Smiths and their colleagues hope to start a church through the gym and its ministries. "There are a lot of people who never go inside a church building but will come to a gymnasium. In that environment in a very nontraditional way they will be able to hear the Gospel," Lozano said.

Smith's philosophy of life and ministry can be found on a poster on his wall: "The race is not always to the swift, but to those who keep on running." □

Argentina soccer star sees fame as 'gift from God'

Baptist Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Jorge Cruz butts the soccer ball with his forehead, slamming the ball into the goal.

Cruz and his teammates then hustle to get in place for the next drill. They are members of the Hurricanes, a professional soccer club in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina.

Cruz is followed during a break by four boys, one of whom wants a photograph. Dripping with sweat, Cruz poses with the youngster.

After practice, he is surrounded by more young fans, but he takes the attention in stride.

Though from Colombia, Cruz understands what soccer means to the Argentines. "It's a passion," he said.

"It's stronger than the passion of the Dallas Cowboys," added Cruz's wife, Julie, a Southern Baptist pastor's daughter from Beaumont, Texas.

Cruz began playing soccer while growing up in Colombia. He played for a soccer club there and also for Houston Baptist University where he met his wife.

As a rising soccer star in Argentina, Cruz makes clear the place soccer holds in his life. "Soccer is something that God gave me to glorify him, to show people that Jesus exists," said Cruz, a Baptist.

He has had many opportunities to do that through national media coverage of his soccer achievements. During interviews he always mentions his faith. "For most people who

know Jorge Cruz, the first thing they know about me is that I'm a Christian," he said.



JORGE CRUZ, right, and a teammate practice a soccer drill.

Last year while playing with the Hurricanes he was featured in the national sports magazine *Grafico*, the Argentine equivalent of *Sports Illustrated*. A photo of Cruz holding a Bible appeared on the cover.

Such coverage is unusual for a non-Argentine athlete. "It was like a gift from God to me," said Cruz. "God knows that soccer is a passion in Argentina. It's like he chose me to tell others here about him through soccer. It's an opportunity to show my faith."

Southern Baptists have a part in Cruz's mission. He was not a Christian when he first enrolled at Houston Baptist University on scholarship.

After he met his future wife and they were later married, Cruz still was not a Christian.

But while visiting in his in-laws' home, he accepted Christ during a late-night conversation with Phil Herrington, now associate pastor of New Beginnings Fellowship in Houston. Herrington was leading evangelistic services at LaBelle Church in Beaumont, where Cruz's father-in-law was then pastor.

Cruz was so excited about his decision he woke up the whole family to tell them. "It was like a family celebration," Herrington recalled.

Cruz's teammates are curious about his faith and he responds. At least one player has accepted Christ. The Cruzes feel God will lead them to other such opportunities in the future. □

■ the associations

■ **Duck River Association** will sponsor a one night revival March 18 at First Church, Tullahoma. Roy Fish, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, will be evangelist.

■ **Nashville Association** will sponsor evangelism conferences March 23 at four area churches. Lloyd Bardowell will host a conference at First Church, Nashville, where Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Church, Nashville, will speak. Shelby Smith of Concord Association, Murfreesboro, will speak at Clearview Church, Franklin, hosted by Jim Gallery. Central Church, Oak Ridge Pastor Ron Herrod will speak at Rivergate First Church, hosted by Bob Cook, and Bill Hancock from Highview Church, Louisville, Ky., will speak at Lakewood Church, Nashville, hosted by Jud Hays.

■ the leaders

■ Members of First Church, Clarksville, called Roy Edgemon as interim pastor. He is director of the Discipleship and Family Development Division at the Baptist Sunday School Board. He began the interim

pastorate Feb. 21.

■ **Richard Castle** is music and youth director at Reservoir Road Church, Kingsport.

■ Members of Mount Pleasant Church, Bradford, welcomed **Floyd Paris**, Kosciusko, Miss., as pastor Feb. 21.

■ **Harsh Chapel Church**, Nashville, called **Kevin Boyd** as minister of music and youth.

■ **James Tillman**, Florence, Ala., is the new pastor of New Zion Church, Pulaski.

■ **J. C. Reagan**, Killen, Ala., has been called as minister of music to First Church, Loretto.

■ **Webbs Chapel**, Lebanon, called **Bill Fowler**, Smithville, as pastor.

■ **Jim Growden**, pastor of Hillcrest Church, Nashville, recently was elected Tennessee alumni president for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ Members of Walnut Log Church, Union City, recently welcomed **Ralph Moore** as their new pastor.

■ **John Fields** recently accepted the pastorate of Wynnburg Church, Wynnburg.

■ **Lakeview Church**, Harrison, called **Greg Kelly** as pas-

tor. He is a graduate of University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. Kelly was ordained by Clymersville Church, Rockwood, where his father Charles Kelly has been pastor for 25 years.

■ **Stanley Frederick** is the new pastor of Madison Heights Church, Madison.

■ the churches

■ **Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain**, sponsored their third annual missions fair Feb. 28. State, home, and foreign missionaries, and 16 local agencies and organizations participated.

■ **Members of Hillhurst Church, Nashville**, dedicated a new kitchen and fellowship hall Feb. 22.

■ **Jack May** will lead a Bible revival March 14-17 at **First Church, Lenoir City**. He will speak about the Sermon on the Mount.

■ **Charles Grisham** will be evangelist for revival March 14-19 at **Park Grove Church, Lawrenceburg**.

■ **Immanuel Church, Lawrenceburg**, will hold revival services March 24-28 led by **Deryl Alexander**.

■ **Billy Hines**, associate in the Tennessee Baptist Convention Evangelism Department will lead revival April 4-7 at **Leoma Church, Leoma**.

■ **Members of Broadway Church, Maryville**, burned the note of debt on their sanctuary, heating and air conditioning system, and organ Feb. 21.

■ **Oak Grove Church, Goodspring**, will hold revival services March 21-28. **Carl Bond**, Giles County Director of Missions, will be evangelist.

■ **Joel Carwile** will be evangelist for revival March 15-19 at **Welcome Valley Church, Pulaski**.

■ The youth of **First Church, Parsons**, will lead revival March 14-17. **John Coleman** will be speaker.

■ The following churches in Gibson County Association will hold revival services beginning March 14: **China Grove Church, Rutherford**, Ken Sparkman, speaker; **First Church, Kenton**, Floyd Lammersfield; **New Bethlehem Church, Dyer**, Jerry Wood; and **Walnut Grove Church, Kenton**, John Fields.

■ **Robert and Cynthia Woodham**, missionaries on furlough from the Philippines, will speak in the morning wor-

ship service March 14 at **East Cheatham Chapel, Joelton**. The Woodhams reside in a missionary home owned by **Woodmont Church, Nashville**.

■ the work

■ Several Tennesseans will participate in a medical mission trip to Concepcion, Chile, March 13-22. They are **Jo Sweet**, Central Church, Bearden, Knoxville; **Carolyn Ann Boyd**, Shellsford Church, McMinnville; **Richard Barkley**, Parkway Church, Goodlettsville; **Pastor Mickey Basham**, West Jackson Church, Jackson; **Donna Benson**, Monte Vista Church, Maryville; **Betty Mattox**, **Kenneth Mattox**, Springfield Church, Springfield; **Larry Rodgers**, **Bronce Rodgers**, **Bob Sessoms**, First Concord Church, Knoxville; **Shirley Silver**, Una Church, Nashville; **Steven Paul Wade**, First Church, Old Hickory; **Pleonjai Walden**, Clearview Church, Franklin; **Dewey Dunn**, **Bobbie Dunn**, Woodmont Church, Nashville; **Jean Quinn**, First Church, Watertown; **Paula Riggins**, Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville; **Juanita Hall**, Bayside Church, Ooltewah. Other team members are from Alabama, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Virginia.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

You must be kidding!

Gary Baker, pastor
First Church, Sweetwater

On a recent trip I passed a vehicle with a bumper sticker that caught my eye. It read: "Christians Don't Sin." My first reaction was to slow down and do a double take to be sure I had read it correctly. Sure enough it said exactly that.

My next thought was: "I'd like to nudge this guy's vehicle (a nice, expensive motor home) and see if he'd sin or not."

My next thought as I passed by and got a good look at the driver was, "What an arrogant, self-righteous person this must be. Who in their right mind would declare such a thing as this?"

I continued on my way, but I could not dismiss this message from my mind.

The truth that this bumper sticker denies is obvious: Christians do sin! We are not perfect — none of us — but we are forgiven (if we confess our sins).

But, also to say that we do not sin cuts us off from the flow of God's grace! That is a

tragedy!! God's grace flows where sin abounds. How terrible to be shut off from that!

Can you imagine what life must be like for the driver of this motor home — not to know marvelous, amazing, forgiving grace? I can't imagine that. I sin and enjoy God's grace. □

Don't get hurt in the fight

David Allen, pastor
First Church, Crossville

My family and I were fortunate enough to be able to take a few days off and go to our parents for the Christmas holidays. I was able to worship in my folks' church on Sunday morning and in my in-laws' church on Sunday evening. As I looked around at the faces of those present, I noticed that many of the same folks were there who were active in those churches when I was younger.

I am thankful for folks who will faithfully support their home church and can be counted on year in and year out. However, I noticed that there were some faces not present in those churches that at one

time would have been there to sing and pray and study the Bible. Some of those once faithful folks have gone on to be with Jesus. Others have moved to different communities and churches.

Yet I realize that there are many who have not moved or passed away. They have just dropped out of the fellowship of the local church where they once were active.

I asked about a few people and the story was much the same. They had changed and their priorities had changed. They no longer put a priority on serving the Lord.

The reasons are many as to why folks drop out in fulfillment of the verse in I John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us." In other words they have dropped out because they were never really saved in the first place.

And yet I realize that there are many folks who are saved but they have dropped out because they have been hurt because of a church fight and

they don't want to be hurt again so they just drop out. For many reasons there are folks who are no longer active who need to know that they are missed. There are folks who once taught Sunday School, sang in the choir, worked with the young people, and voiced their prayers in mid-week prayer services.

I pray these would return to the Lord and to a place of active service. □

How important is Sunday School?

Stan Johnson, minister of education/music
Calvary Church, Kingsport

"You have heard that it was said by them of old time," Sunday School is the reaching organization of the church. But I say unto you that reaching people for Bible study begins with a burning desire to gather the men and women, boys and girls, members and prospects to hear the Word of the Lord in Sunday School and Sunday worship services.

We want the children to develop the same desire as their fathers and mothers — to

reach the community with the Gospel. Our church was originally built to reach people who want to come to church. They know where we are; but I say unto you: "Go into the highways and hedges and encourage them to come in."

Our church is made up of individuals who are among those who are the salt of the earth. They have not lost their concern for "making a difference." Their light does not shine from the steeple of our church. The results of their shining if reflected in the faces of those who participate in Bible study under their leadership each Sunday morning.

Our Sunday School teachers and workers are special people. They have not fainted. Let us all "get in" on the reaping. Get involved in the Bible teaching program.

Why not volunteer to work in the preschool department. Training is available.

What has been said by them of old time is, "My Sunday School teachers and pastors encouraged me to study the Bible and get involved in sharing the Gospel in school, at work, at play, and in the church." □

Morristown businessman advises students to be responsible

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — "Pay attention to the small things in ministry," said John Wallace, a Tennessee businessman.

Wallace, president of Wallace Hardware Company in Morristown, was the guest speaker for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's recent James H. Tharp Lecture Series, presented annually by an outstanding Baptist layman.

A member of First Church, Morristown and the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Wallace encouraged NOBTS students to be responsible, especially by giving the necessary attention to some of the seemingly minor details in ministry.

"It's not always the big things that keep us from doing what we ought to do," Wallace said. "Many times it's the small things."

Relating an experience he had with his car air conditioning, he detailed the discomfort he endured on a long trip when the cooling system failed. He now carries the repair bill with him as a reminder of how

small things can make a major difference: the tiny blown fuse cost him only pocket change to repair.

Referring to the minister's Bible, he encouraged students to be consistent in their use of translations. While admitting no personal preference, he noted the frustration he experiences when a pastor preaches every service with a different translation.

Another small but important detail is to "keep your Bible neat," Wallace said. "Some of you will take better care of your golf sticks than your Bible."

Wallace also told students "to know the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) ... (and) read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 regularly" as they continue to be ministers.

Noting these passages as the two key guides for any minister, Wallace called on ministerial students to be responsible in their personal life as well.

First, referring to 1 Timothy 3:5, Wallace told students to value their marriage. Wallace's wife plays a major role in his life, he said. He believes a minister's wife and family should

be just as important as the minister's work.

Another detail needing attention in a minister's personal life is "Finances!" Wallace said. "This one really bothers me. Don't be in debt!" Wallace said he is often discouraged to learn of a minister who has not been responsible with what God has given him.

Concerning a minister's personality, Wallace frowns on servants of God who fail to express gratitude. "An unappreciative preacher is a contradiction in terms," he said. At Christmastime each year, Wallace sends turkeys to the

staff members of the church he attends; he is always pleased when a staff member responds with a note of thanks.

Wallace also pointed out the necessity of a pastor being responsible to the Bible and applying it to his life. "If you're really connected to Jesus," Wallace said, "you've got to believe in the Bible and believe it the way it says."

Most importantly, "a preacher has got to be a warm, caring person if he is going to be a good minister," Wallace said, "for 'if a man says he loves God but hates his brother, he's a liar,'" he quoted from the Scriptures.

"Now, if we don't love and care for our brother, something is wrong!" Wallace said. □



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National senior adult conference set for April 26-28 in Atlanta

Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE — A 7,000-seat choir, a large exhibit area, city bus tours, and a program featuring entertainer Art Linkletter are among big ticket items expected to draw about 20,000 senior adults to the April 26-28 Senior Adult Convention at the new Georgia Dome, adjacent to the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

In addition to Linkletter other speakers include pastors Charles Stanley of Atlanta, Frank Pollard of Jackson, Miss., and Brian Harbour of Richardson, Texas. Christian entertainer Cynthia Clawson

will sing at three sessions.

The conference theme is "Senior Adults Making a Difference through Christ."

The conference registration fee is \$40. Senior adults can register by calling 1 (800) 489-2012. A packet giving details of hotels and restaurants in the Atlanta area is available by calling the number. □

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■ Sunday School lesson commentary

□ True wisdom — Bible Book Series for March 14

By Bill Wolfe, pastor, First Church, Counce

The one verse of Scripture that comes to our minds when we think about wisdom is James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." We often think of wisdom as the ability to use knowledge. Although we may not fully understand or agree on what really comprises wisdom, I am sure we would all agree that true wisdom comes from God. Much wisdom can be found in the Psalms.

Psalm 1

This passage of Scripture ought to be committed to memory. It should be one of those we store in our arsenal to use against Satan. In this Psalm we get a picture of two kinds of men — the godly man and the ungodly man. The first Psalm is the only book in all the Bible which opens with the word

"blessed." The word implies the idea of being happy.

The only truly happy man in this world is the godly man. Verse 1 begins with three negative, yet positive, statements about the godly man's life: (1) "That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." A man who would be happy must avoid the supposed wisdom of the ungodly man. (2) "Nor standeth in the way of sinners." We are not to participate in sinful activities. (3) "Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." The seat would be the chair. In the New Testament it would be the seat of the religious leaders of the day. We do not need to seek what the world can teach.

We go from the negative to the positive in verses 2-3. His joy is found in the Word of God. When a man is godly, the Word of God has his full attention and affection. We meditate or

study it daily. Remember the words of Joshua 1:8? This verse contains a promise. The godly man's actions are reflected in the time he spends with the Lord. He becomes like a "tree planted." Time spent with God is our rooting or grounding, causing a godly man to bring forth good fruit and to prosper.

Verses 4-6 speak of the ungodly man! Instead of being planted, he is blown to and fro. He is driven by every wind of doctrine. Verse 5 tells us the ungodly man is doomed. Verse 6 tells us he is damned to perish. The way of the cross leads home, but he is lost and has turned away from the one who can lead him.

Psalm 73

The 73rd Psalm was written by Asaph, a choir leader "who knew the Lord and rejoiced in the knowledge of God's grace." Asaph dealt with a problem

and looked for its solution. Here is the problem: How can a righteous person not doubt when he sees the prosperity of the wicked? I am sure you can think of two people very quickly who saw this in their lives — Joseph and Job.

The Psalmist is going back over the problem over which he has already experienced victory. He confessed in verse 3 that

Basic Passage: Psalms 1; 73; 111

he was envious over the foolish when he saw them prosper. He could see wealth being enjoyed by proud and boastful men. Because he was envious he almost lost the firm footing upon which his faith was built.

The problem is solved in verses 17-28. He realize the solution begins by going to the Lord first (vv. 17-19). Is this

not true with most of our problems? He realized God would act in due time — his time! (vv. 20-22). He closed by reflecting on his own protection in the Lord.

Psalm 111

This Psalm begins with "Praise ye the Lord!" In Hebrew it means "hallelujah!" In this Psalm we find a description of God's character.

It reflects the majesty and glory of his person. The key verse in this Psalm is its closing, verse 10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In the fear of God there must be respect, awe, and reverence for him. This is where man truly begins his search for true wisdom.

Do not seek wisdom until you are willing to seek God. Ask God for wisdom and he will give it liberally. Then use that wisdom as God would give

□ Rebirth into eternal life — Convention Uniform Series for March 14

By Terry Bradshaw, pastor, Zion Hill Church, Sevierville

In today's lesson, we deal with a man who is searching for the truth. John identified this man as Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews (v. 1). John provided three identifiers to help us understand the man who approached Jesus that night. Two are found in verse 1, and the third is found in verse 10. In verse 1, Nicodemus is called a "Pharisee" and "ruler of the Jews." Simply put, he was a religious leader who was a member of the highest court of the Jews, the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was made up of 70 members who were responsible for not only religious decisions, but also civil rule under the Romans.

The third point came from Jesus himself. He called Nicodemus a "master (teacher) of Israel," (v. 10). From these

three indicators and other historical sources, we know Nicodemus was a respected religious leader and teacher of Old Testament truth. No doubt, if Nicodemus lived today, he would be recognized as a denominational leader.

Seeking the truth vv. 2-4

Nicodemus was not the typical follower of Christ. Many would have never entertained the thought of speaking with a commoner. Nicodemus not only spoke with Jesus, but seriously inquired about his teaching.

Nicodemus, in his quest for the truth, chose to meet Jesus at night. In verse 2, we find, "The same came to Jesus by night."

There are many theories concerning this night visitation, but for the sake of space, I

will only mention two. Some say it was out of fear of being caught by his religious friends. So instead of running the risk of exposure, he choose the cover of darkness. The second theory suggests Nicodemus was too busy during the day to search out and discuss spiritual matters with Jesus. Remember, the main point is not when he went, but rather what he found out when he got there.

Upon arriving, Nicodemus acknowledged the miracles Jesus performed indicating that God was working through him. So, in light of that, he wanted to talk with him as one Rabbi to another Rabbi. By addressing Jesus as Rabbi and teacher in verse 2, he indicated he truly did not understand who Jesus was.

Jesus' response to Nicodemus

was straightforward. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (v. 3). The word verily when translated means truly. Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand he was not just giving good advice, he was speaking God's absolute truth. In response to such a startling statement, Nicodemus replied, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (v. 4). Nicodemus absolutely missed the whole point of Jesus' statement. So Jesus sought to clarify matters in verses 5-8.

Explaining the truth vv. 5-10

We find here Jesus' commentary on what it means to be born again. The truth found

in these passages is that one must be born again (born from above) if he intends to be a part of God's kingdom. Nicodemus, still amazed, replied, "How can these things be?" (v. 9). Jesus reminded Nicodemus he should have recognized such teaching from his own study of God's Word (v. 10).

Basic Passage John 3:1-21

In closing, the truths recorded in this passage are timeless. The need of spiritual rebirth is a necessity if one intends to be a part of the kingdom of God. John 3:16 is still true. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ☐

□ When temptations come — Life and Work Series for March 14

By Toby Everett, pastor, Walker Memorial Church, Franklin

Imagine you are a large-mouth bass. You have enjoyed the comfort of a large lake with your fellow fish. Life couldn't be more pleasant. Then one day as you are going about your daily routine, there in front of you is a delicious-looking insect. You haven't seen one quite so tempting before. So here's the choice: you let the insect go by or you have a scrumptious meal. It seems so harmless and no other fish are around to vie for it. The moment you bite down, you know why you haven't seen that insect before. It is fake and it is filled with hooks.

That's the way temptation works. It is before us along life's journey. How do we deal with the temptation? From the

life of Joseph, we see his dealing with temptation and learn how to go through it ourselves.

Consider the source, v. 7

Having won the favor of his captives, Joseph began to enjoy some comfort in Egypt. But he was separated from all that was familiar to him. Temptation came at a potentially weak point in his life. He could have been lonely, needing companionship. Or perhaps he saw an opportunity to move up the ladder of success. All it meant was a small compromise of what he knew to be right. Our own inducements to sin come at those potentially weak points in our situations of life.

Weigh the outcome, vv. 8-10

Joseph basically asked himself three questions and re-

sponded. First, "Who will it hurt if I give in?" The one person who had given him a break, Potiphar, would be greatly hurt. Yielding to temptations affects more than ourselves. Second, "What is right?" Joseph knew this woman belonged to another man. It would be wrong to take that which belonged to another. Third, "To whom do I belong?" Joseph understood the sin before him would not only affect the two of them and Potiphar, but it was also wrong in God's eyes. For the believer, yielding to any inducement of sin reflects upon the Lord.

Flee the unexpected vv. 11-12

Once we have denied sin's enticement, as Joseph had so

many times, we may let our guard down. Just when we least expect temptation to happen, we find it gripping our cloak.

The apostle Paul warned Timothy to "flee youthful lust."

Basic Passage: Genesis 39

Sometimes the only way to avoid the traps of sin is to run from them. It is on you before you know it and you find the only avenue is to run. It is not cowardice to admit that I cannot resist temptation. But it is foolish to stay in its presence when sorely tried.

Expect the repercussions vv. 16-20

"Hell hath no fury as a wo-

man's scorn." There is nothing more vicious than sin defeated. When I was a boy in elementary school there was another lad being teased by the other children. I didn't like it so I stepped in to defend him. Probably, had I known that I soon would become the brunt of their teasing, I might have listened to the voice telling me to join in the scorn. But I am glad I did not.

Steadfastness, v. 21

We never realize who will be affected by our courage to face unjust treatment. The jailer was impressed with Joseph. But what matters is that Joseph found "favor" with God. Temptation will come. How we deal with it will determine God's reaction to us. ☐

Baptists eligible for earned income tax benefits

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The federal government will provide tax benefits this year of as much as \$2,200 to some working families with children, but as many as four to five million eligible families, including apparently many Baptists, may be in danger of forfeiting the money as they did in 1992.

Earned income credit is a federal tax benefit available to a parent or parents who had at least one child living at home for more than half a year and whose total income was less than \$22,370.

Nearly 14 million families claimed the earned income credit (EIC) in 1992 but another 25 percent or so failed to file for EIC or did not file the proper forms and lost their benefits.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission plans to send letters and information packets on the EIC to the executive directors of the 36 Baptist state conventions and three fellowships in the SBC. The letter will encourage them to publicize the EIC to Southern Baptists in their convention, said James A. Smith, director of government relations for the CLC. □

Lesch accepts interim editorship

Baptist Press

ROCHESTER, Minn. — Gomer R. Lesch, retired Baptist Sunday School Board em-

ployee, has been named interim editor of *The Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist*, monthly publication of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Convention.

Lesch, former SSB director of public relations, was appointed by William C. Tinsley, executive director-elect of the convention.

He will succeed Louise Winingham who retired recently after serving as editor for nearly 18 years. Lesch will continue to live in Nashville but will travel to Minnesota-Wisconsin regularly in directing publication of the paper.

Russians test RTVC radio shows

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Tatyana Andreeva, director of St. Petersburg Radio Service, has notified Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission authorities that tests of RTVC-produced radio programs are running in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Andreeva also confirmed by fax recently her interest in receiving RTVC radio programs on a regular basis, following up on conversations with RTVC President Jack Johnson who visited St. Petersburg in January.

Johnson, who presented program samples, said Russian officials requested a program featuring classical music, not currently offered by the RTVC.

But Johnson said the agen-

cy would begin working on such a program that will be hosted by Richard T. McCartney, the agency's executive vice president.

The RTVC produces six radio programs aired more than 5,000 times a week across the United States and in 87 foreign countries. All six were included in the presentation to St. Petersburg officials. □

Gardner-Webb begins divinity school

Gardner-Webb University

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. — The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has approved Gardner-Webb University's proposal to begin a School of Divinity and offer the master of divinity degree beginning in the fall of 1993.

The master of divinity degree will be the second degree, joining the master of arts in Christian ministry, to be offered through the divinity school which was established in the fall of 1992 by Gardner-Webb trustees.

The university also recently announced that Donald E. Cook, a faculty member at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., will become senior professor of New Testament interpretation at Gardner-Webb's divinity school. □

Executive directors elect Pugh president

Baptist Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — R. Quinn Pugh, New York Baptist Convention executive, was

elected president of the Southern Baptist Association of State Convention Executive Directors during its recent annual meeting here.

The state convention executives also elected Roy J. Smith, North Carolina, president-elect and R. Rex Lindsay, Kansas-Nebraska, secretary.

Nine new state convention executives were welcomed into the group, the largest number ever.

Among the new executives were James M. Porch, Tennessee; Robert White, Georgia; and B. Carlisle Driggers, South Carolina.

Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, was welcomed as an honorary member. □

Radio series features archeological finds

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — One of Israel's foremost authorities on historical Jerusalem, Yitzhak Yaacobi, will be featured on a series of radio interviews in May, according to Ed Malone, vice president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Malone and three producers from RTVC's radio division toured various biblical sites during a week-long tour of Israel in early February as guests of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism and El Al Airlines.

"We recorded commentaries and interviews with several biblical and archeological authorities for the commission's six radio programs," Malone said, including revelations about the discovery of the tomb of Joseph Caiaphus, the high

priest at the trial of Jesus. Yaacobi was among those interviewed. He will visit the Radio and TV Commission in March for further interviews and post-production while on a speaking tour in the U.S. □

Hastings featured at SSB workshop

Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE — The Baptist Sunday School Board will hold its annual workshop for aspiring writers July 19-22 in Nashville.

Robert J. Hastings, retired editor of the *Illinois Baptist* and author of *Tinyburg Tales* will lead the workshop. The workshop will be held at SSB headquarters in Nashville. The registration fee is \$67. Participants are responsible for their own lodging.

For more information, or to register, write: Church Program Training Center, P.O. Box 24001, Nashville, Tenn., 37203; or call (615) 251-2294. □

Holman dictionary makes best-sellers list for second year

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — The *Holman Bible Dictionary* was the fourth best-selling Christian reference book in the United States in 1992, moving up three places from the previous year's ranking, a national magazine reported.

The dictionary was included in *Bookstore Journal's* "Reference Premier 100," a list of best selling reference books for 1992. □



JOHNSON



EDGEMON

Annual doctrine study in April

Edgemon's personal experience fuels SSB focus on salvation

By Linda Lawson
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — At 15, the only time Roy Edgemon had been in church was to attend a funeral.

When he and several friends wandered by Temple Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, and were drawn toward the building by the sounds of music through open windows, Edgemon was not at first enthusiastic about going inside.

"That particular night, five of us were saved. To my knowledge that was the first time I heard the Gospel," recalled Edgemon, director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's Discipleship and Family Development Division. He also serves as interim pastor of

First Church, Clarksville.

Of the five teens who became Christians that night, three, including Edgemon, went on to become ministers.

"That little church adopted us and ministered to us," Edgemon said. "Training Union (now Discipleship Training) was my favorite time. I learned to pray. And Training Union sponsored a softball team. From then on, church was everything to me."

Out of his own experience and his conviction that too few Southern Baptists know how to bear witness of their faith, Edgemon believes the time is right in 1993 to emphasize the doctrine of salvation through the annual Baptist Doctrine Study. The emphasis will be observed April 19-23 in many

Southern Baptist churches. "I really think this is one of the most neglected doctrines, though we don't like to say so. Creeping universalism (belief that everyone is saved) is rampant. Emphasizing the doctrine of salvation will bring us back to the focal point of Jesus' ministry. If this is not the center of our ministry, we don't have the same center as Jesus," he said.

He commended the adult textbook for the doctrine of salvation, which was written by Darrell W. Robinson, vice president for evangelism at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"Darrell really lives this in his life. The churches where he was pastor were always fast-growing and evangelistic. This is his lifestyle," Edgemon said.

Emmanuel McCall, pastor of Christian Fellowship Church in Atlanta, agreed.

"While reading *The Doctrine of Salvation* I was convicted to make its chapters the focus for

a series of Sunday morning Bible studies during a season of doctrinal study. Baptist Doctrine Study is better taught than preached, Edgemon said.

In addition to the textbook for adults in English, a Spanish textbook for adults and texts for youth, older children, younger children, preschoolers, and teachers are available.

A free Baptist Doctrine Study poster/brochure may be ordered from the board's customer service center or through Baptist Book Stores.

Since its reinstatement in 1978 as an annual emphasis, Baptist Doctrine Study has focused on topics such as God, the church, biblical authority, priesthood of believers, lordship, and the Bible. □