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Participants at state forums stress laity involvement

CHATTANOOGA — The third meeting of the Special Study Committee met at Red Bank Church here April 6 and dialogued with 14 Tennessee Baptists who attended.

Previous forums have been held at Harrison-Chilhowee Academy, Seymour, and at First Church, Cookeville. Five more regional meetings are scheduled. The committee was mandated by Tennessee Baptist Convention messengers last November to study election processes for the Executive Board, the Committee on Boards, and the Committee on Committees.

Participants mainly discussed ideas about boosting laity representation on the three groups, and on other TBC committees, as well as adequate representation for the 68 associations within the convention. Both items were high priority at the first two sessions.

Committee members present included Ken Altom, pastor of First Church, Cookeville; Raymond Boston, pastor of First Church, Dyersburg; Edward (Tommy) Futrell, pastor of Southside Church, Johnson City; Jackie Kay, pastor of Bartlett Church, Bartlett; James McCluskey, pastor of Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville; Ralph McIntyre, retired Sunday School Board, Nashville; and (ex officio) James Porch, TBC executive

director; and Leonard Markham, Hendersonville pastor and TBC president.

Several asked questions about the process of selection after nominations have been received through forms from *Baptist and Reflector* readers and other sources. Mary Jane Allen, First Church, Chattanooga, asked if guidelines were adhered to concerning laity representation. She reported that more and more lay people "are saying that they want to serve." One committee member responded that there usually is a shortage of nominations, and that pastors on the nominating groups usually know more pastors.

There was consensus from the committee, however, that laity is being considered, and that efforts will be strengthened. The topic was mentioned several times during the two-



RED BANK CHURCH, Chattanooga, hosted the third forum of the Special Study Committee last week. Participants included, from left, Wallace Parham, First Church, Chattanooga; Jim Hensley, pastor, Middle Valley Church, Hixson; and Joe Walker, pastor, Second Church, Chattanooga. The committee next meets April 15 in Johnson City. — Photo by Wm. Fletcher Allen

hour meeting. A retired church staffer who has served in six state conventions said Ten-

nessee is more pastor dominated than the others.

— See Participants, page 2

Proposed bill calls for Constitutional Convention

With only a few weeks remaining on the legislative calendar, the Tennessee General Assembly still has several hundred items for consideration. Several dealing with moral and ethical issues continue to be of special interest to Tennessee Baptists. Some may come up for voting without lengthy advance notice.

HB-1048, a House companion to the Senate's SB-0747, has been before a subcommittee and was scheduled to get to the House Finance Ways and Means Committee yesterday (April 13). Both bills authorize pari-mutuel betting on simulcast races and set fees for conducting the races. Both also lower the amount of tax that would be paid to the state and county from betting proceeds to a maximum of two percent. Simulcast betting allows gambling on televised races at other tracks.

The Senate passed SB-0747 on April 1, 17-14. A similar vote by House members on their bill would give approval by both houses. The bills would greatly enhance the likelihood of horse racing and pari-mutuel betting in Tennessee. Potential race track builders and operators have complained that the current tax rate would prohibit sufficient profit, thus making the venture unprofitable.

Gambling interests "hype" the notion that race track dollars would rapidly fill the state's coffers. However, if the tax rate for those profits gives track developers more and the state less — the race track and betting argument is diminished. Many Tennesseans, including Baptists, were caught off guard last week when the Senate brought out its version of a call for a Constitutional Convention. SB-0031 was discussed April 7, but then rolled back to the Senate calendar

committee. No doubt it will come back to the floor in a few days.

SB-0031 and a House companion bill, HB-1336, call for a Constitutional Convention. Here is the gist of the Senate bill: It proposes submitting a call for a Constitutional Convention on taxation, state and county officials, county boundaries, and a lottery at the general election Aug. 4, 1994, "with delegates to be elected Nov. 1, 1994, to convene July 11, 1995, and to meet up to 60 days." The House version puts the election date at Nov. 8, 1994.

There seems to be a determined and concerted effort to legalize gambling in every way this session. However, the *Baptist and Reflector* stands against these attempts and urges Tennessee Baptists to stay informed. Contact local legislators and express your views.

Gambling invariably hurts those who can least afford to lose money — and those who can afford to gamble usually have enough income to overcome any losses. Money won by pari-mutuel betting is tainted, no matter how many states encourage legalized betting. Once the state gets involved, it is affected just as an individual, continuing to gamble for a great payoff. □ — Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Resumes sought by committee

Only one more day exists for Tennessee Baptists to send resumes for the position of director for the Central Administrative Division, Executive Board in Brentwood.

The Executive Committee of the board acted recently to begin the process for filling that post for the first time, and announced March 24 that April 15 would be the cutoff date.

The position was created in 1988 and has yet to be filled — mainly because of funding restraints.

Action on the vacancy follows the retirement of Martha Grove, Accounting Office director, and James McDonald, Business Office director. Both retired officially last December, but Grove has stayed

on until a new director could be selected.

David George, Nashville pastor, appointed a search committee chaired by Larry Williams, pastor of Ooltewah Church, Executive Committee member. According to Executive Board policies, the committee will present a nominee to the board for action. The next Executive Board meeting is May 11.

At this late date, however, any resumes should be hand delivered, addressed to TBC Executive Director James Porch, because of the April 15 deadline.

The new director will be responsible for offices of accounting, business, program services, and properties management. □

Baptist leaders seek grassroots affirmation of WMU

By Herb Hollinger
Baptist Press

HOUSTON — A campaign to seek grassroots affirmation of the national Woman's Missionary Union was unveiled by five Southern Baptist leaders in a news conference held April 8 in Houston.

The teleconference call with Baptist state paper editors and other Baptist news media was hosted by Daniel Vestal, pastor of Tallwood Church, Houston.

Vestal and the four others representing the group said the aim was simple: to rally Southern Baptists to express support for the WMU, which they said is under attack by the "conservative" leadership of the SBC, in written forms which will be presented to national WMU leadership at its annual meeting in June in Houston.

The suggested four-paragraph resolution affirms the more than 100 years of WMU involvement in Southern Baptist missions and calls the WMU's "integrity of commit-

ment ... unquestionable."

The form calls it "inconceivable" that anyone would question the WMU's intent or ability to expand its mission support. In January, the national WMU voted to expand its services to other evangelical groups but stopped short of promoting any mission offerings other than the SBC Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

WMU's action resulted in a resolution in February by the SBC Executive Committee calling for WMU to rescind its action and affirm its historic "auxiliary" position with the Southern Baptist Convention. The Home Mission Board voted in March to affirm the Executive Committee's resolution and several SBC leaders have publicly decried the new direction of the WMU.

Morris H. Chapman, president of the Executive Committee, while on a trip in Texas, contacted by Baptist Press, said the committee's

resolution was "nothing but affirmation of the WMU's historic relationship with the SBC."

Vestal said his group is composed of "concerned Baptist people" and is not tied to any organization, such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an association of moderate Southern Baptists critical of current SBC leadership. Nor, Vestal said, has the group been asked by the WMU to start the campaign on its behalf, although Vestal said he did advise Dellanna O'Brien, national WMU executive director, of the group's plan.

Participating in the teleconference call, in addition to Vestal, who is a leader in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, were: R. Quinn Pugh, executive secretary of the

Baptist Convention of New York; Ellen Teague, president of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and on the special WMU committee which brought the recommendations adopted by the national WMU in January; P. James Flaming, pastor of First Church, Richmond, Va.; and J. Richard Maples, a Bryan, Texas, pastor and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Vestal said a suggested form of affirmation or tribute is available through a toll-free number although he encouraged individuals, churches, associations, and state conventions to submit personalized affirmations as well.

The toll-free number is 1-800-580-7729. Written affirmations can be sent to Vestal, at Tallwood Church. □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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Participants at state forums ...

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Though the method of giving the convention president singular appointive powers was not discussed as a possibility, two persons in the audience spoke against it. Don Givens, St. Elmo Avenue Church, Chattanooga, said the committee method works best because of nominations through individuals and institutions. He also said it might be appropriate for directors of missions, or associations, to send nominations from their areas.

Futrell said he agreed with other Special Study members that balance should be stressed, but he did not want a system of quotas for any group. McCluskey said the number of women on the Executive Board

is increasing, but "we are moving too slowly on that." He also stated he believed pastors' wives should not be classified as laity.

David Myers, Hamilton County Association director of missions, said, "We need to do a better job in educating Tennessee Baptists that the Executive Board is not a body to represent associations. There is little need to change the selection system." He suggested that a list of associational representation be kept on hand during the selection process, "so areas of the state convention will be considered."

McCluskey said he had found that "lay people who are elected will attend the meetings faithfully and be totally involved if they are informed."

Porch said the committee was aware of needed changes in some areas, such as time of meetings for the Executive Board, and that the Committee on Boards, for example, could eventually be a year-long affair. "We want to take a good system and make it better — for all Tennessee Baptists," he concluded.

Other Special Study Committee forums are set for: April 15, Holston Association Office, Johnson City; May 24, First Church, Bolivar; May 25, First Church, Trenton; May 27, Belmont Heights Church, Nashville; and June 1, Lawrence County Association Office, Leoma. — Wm. Fletcher Allen

Union has hotel rooms for SBC

Union University's office of alumni affairs has hotel rooms in Houston for the 1993 annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting.

The rooms, which have a nightly rate of \$69 for singles and \$74.75 for doubles (tax included), are available anytime between June 11-18.

Reservations and deposits for the rooms must be made by May 10. For more information, call the office of alumni affairs at (901) 668-1818, ext. 209. □

Daily prayer requests for Chile/Tennessee Partnership April -



- 15 — Continue praying for the salvation of Manuel Sanchez.
- 16 — Missionaries Cecilia and Dave Grossmann request prayers that they will daily reflect Christ in their home, neighborhood, and their work in Arica.
- 17 — Ask the Lord to provide pastors for the many pastorless churches in Chile.
- 18 — Missionaries Jim and Lori Spikes ask prayer for the Los Lirios Mission and that the members will gain a vision of what God can do in their rapidly growing community.
- 19 — Pray about the need for a ministry to the large numbers of young men serving in the Chilean military in Punta Arenas.
- 20 — Pray for the seven vice presidents of the Chilean WMU at their spring meeting.
- 21 — Pray for the convening of the Executive Committee of WMU and for their president, Teresa; and Ana, executive

Drama, Puppetry, Clowning Festival set at First Church, Hendersonville

The 13th annual Drama, Puppetry, Clowning Festival will be held April 23-24 at First Church, Hendersonville. The event is sponsored by the church media library and church recreation office of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

A multitude of conferences will be offered on all facets of the dramatic arts and church recreation. There will even be a special symposium offered for pastors, ministers of music, worship leaders, and others interested in how to better use drama in worship.

Speakers for the pre-festival drama in worship symposium include Richard White, pastor, First Church, Franklin; Ev Robertson, drama specialist, Sunday School Board; Ragan Courtney, worship/drama consultant, SSB; Matt and Darlene Tullios, drama consul-

tants/actors, Nashville; and Scott Shepherd, drama director, First Church, Franklin.

The pre-festival symposium will be held on Friday from 1-4 p.m. Festival registration begins at 4 p.m. and the exhibit area will be open. The sessions begin on Saturday at 8 a.m. and will conclude at 4 p.m.

The registration fee (after April 15) is \$35. Preregistration is not required. Persons interested in attending may register at the door. T-shirts are guaranteed only for those who preregister. The registration fee includes dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday. For those who wish to attend the pre-festival symposium only, the cost is \$10.

For additional information, contact Eleanor Yarborough at (615) 371-2045. □

Former Tennessean in Russia as Yeltsin drama unfolds

By Marty O'Gwynn
For Baptist Press

SHAWNEE, Okla. — As Americans listened to media coverage of the unfolding Russian political drama in late March, Bob Agee listened to the chairman of Russia's Liberal Democratic Party of Congress.

Meeting with the leader of efforts to save Russian President Boris Yeltsin's job was one of the highlights of a serendipitous week for the Oklahoma Baptist University president.

Agee, former vice president for religious affairs at Union University, Jackson, led a group of representatives from

the Shawnee, Okla., Baptist college to Moscow for a week of meetings with Russian education officials, March 21-26, as they discussed varied ways for OBU to assist Russians in education and business development.

When the Oklahomans arrived in the Russian capital on the afternoon of March 21, Agee said they found themselves "in the thick of it."

"It was an unrepeatable moment," Agee said. "We were able to be there while the world was shaking in its boots over frightening possibilities of the outcome of Russia's democratic reform movement."

The OBU delegation was in Moscow to formalize the uni-

versity's role as a partner in creation of the Moscow Economic School, a model school (kindergarten through grade 11) that has received endorsement from Russia's education ministry and the Moscow Department of Education. Their meetings were scheduled well in advance, to coincide with OBU's spring break, but their timing and accommodations allowed them an inside look at a pivotal moment in history.

Agee and his colleagues, OBU trustee chairman Sam Hammons and his wife, John Cragin, OBU's Peitz associate professor of business, and recent OBU graduate Greg Long, were housed in the for-

mer Warsaw Pact headquarters, which is now a military compound.

"While we were there, the former defense minister for the Soviet Union was meeting with generals who were gathering from all over the Commonwealth of Independent States," Agee recounted. "We were staying at the headquarters where military decisions were being made."

In addition to sharing the halls with military strategists, the OBU group met for dinner March 25 with leaders of Russia's Liberal Democratic Party, who were instrumental in mounting congressional support for Yeltsin to avert a successful impeachment vote.

"They needed 689 out of 1,033 members of Congress to impeach," said Agee. "When we met with the Democratic Party leaders they said their opponents had about 650 votes. We were spending time with key leaders in Congress who were trying to head that off."

The OBU group also felt the tension of the events in their discussions concerning the Moscow Economic School.

The school, funded by the Moscow Stock Exchange, will offer a college preparatory curriculum focusing on free market economics, English as a second language, and Christian studies. □

Hurricane victims celebrate progress, seek peace of mind

Baptist Press

FLORIDA CITY, Fla. — Seven months after Hurricane Andrew ripped through the South Miami area destroying homes and livelihoods for more than 250,000 people, there's an uneasy mixture of hope and despair.

Many homes have been repaired, landscaped, and manicured — picture perfect except for heaping mounds of trash piled in front yards. But tens of thousands of homes still lay with their sides ripped out and addresses scrawled on the walls. Reopened businesses support a flurry of activity, while other shops remain boarded up and destined for the bulldozer or public auction.

Peace of mind has eluded almost everyone. The incidents of domestic violence are up-

Nightmares plague children who cry and whimper during a storm.

The realization that hurricane season begins in June, coupled with news reports that predict three hurricanes to hit North America this year, has struck panic in all ages.

Where Hurricane Andrew was the great equalizer, destroying \$500,000 residences and \$50,000 homes alike, time and insurance has created a disparity among the economic levels.

The affluent and comfortable have received insurance checks, rebuilt homes, and are getting on with their lives. The poor continue to see the heavens when they sleep at night, get wet when it rains, and live a life with little hope.

During the past seven months, volunteer teams, coor-

dated by the Florida Baptist Convention, have "closed the books on 457 homes and 11 churches."

Another 179 homes are in the process of being rebuilt and authorization has been given to help 230 additional families in the economically deprived communities of Richland Heights, Goulds, and South Miami Heights. Each week more than 100 Southern

Baptist construction volunteers report for work at the convention's relief center at First Church, Florida City.

FBC officials have said they will remain in south Florida as long as they have funds, volunteers, and the call from God. Since August, the state convention has received more than \$2.8 million for disaster relief, most of which is plowed into construction costs for

homes and churches. Convention officials expect to remain in Florida through the summer.

Seven months of work by Southern Baptists has made an indelible impression on Otis T. Wallace, Florida City's mayor, who said he "thanked God" for the ministry of Southern Baptists, noting they have "taken a great burden from us." □

Bill requiring warnings in alcohol ads reintroduced

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Legislation requiring warning messages to be included in alcohol advertising was reintroduced in Congress March 30 in the face of what appears to be increased opposition.

The Sensible Advertising and Family Education (SAFE) Act, introduced for the third consecutive Congress, would require health and safety warnings in all alcohol ads broadcast on radio or television or printed in newspapers,

magazines, or promotional displays in stores.

In the Senate, the bill is S. 674. No number had been assigned yet in the House of Representatives.

Sponsors of the bill hope they can "simply change the atmosphere that surrounds alcohol" and "create an idea that there is at least a down-

side to taking a drink," said Representative Joseph Kennedy of Massachusetts.

Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land said the SAFE Act "provides a much-needed and long-overdue counterbalance to dangerously misleading alcohol ads." □

SBC gifts to CP down in March

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for March were down 8.97 percent, compared to the same month a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

Southern Baptists gave \$11,148,016 in March, compared to \$12,246,492 in March

1992, or a difference of \$1,098,476.

The year-to-date totals dropped below last year: \$69,908,521, compared to \$70,200,901, a \$292,380 or .42 percent difference.

On a positive note, designated gifts for March were up: \$15,496,772, compared to \$14,704,765 for a difference of \$792,007 or 5.39 percent. Total designated gifts were still .61 percent below the previous year.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas offering, the Annie Armstrong Easter offering, world hunger, and other special gifts. □

Retired DOM dies

W. W. Shanklin, 76, retired director of missions in Dyer Association, died April 3 in a Gibson County hospital.

Shanklin was in the ministry for 48 years. He served as director of missions in Dyer Association from 1968-81. Before joining the association staff he was pastor of Forest Hills Church in Memphis. After retirement from Dyer Association he was pastor of Beech Grove Church, Trenton, for seven years.

The former Dyer DOM is survived by his wife, Kathryn, a son, Leonard Shanklin, four grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. □



PAUL AND PEGGY GROSSMAN, missionaries to Burkina Faso, tended a booth at the recent MissionsFest at Belmont University and Belmont Heights Church, Nashville. With them is Dene Bailey, right, member of Two Rivers Church, Nashville, and friend of the missionaries. Bailey's daughter and son-in-law, Jane Anne and Bart Gibbs, served with the Grossmans on the field. The Grossmans are returning for their last term before retiring in the Nashville area. — Photo by Wm. Fletcher Allen

Messenger cards available for SBC

Messenger cards for the 1993 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, June 15-17 in Houston, have been mailed to associational offices across the state.

Contact your local Baptist association for messenger cards.

Ret. Master Sergeant Lopez earns 'preacher' title

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

April 14, 1955 changed the life of young Marine Lindbergh (Lindy) P. Lopez from Niagara Falls N.Y.

Barely a man when he entered the service, he had grown up fast while serving in France during World War II. During the next 11 years he was "living in the world," Lopez said of his life during those years.

His travels took him to Virginia, where Lopez visited a small Baptist church. "For the first time ever I heard the Gospel as far as the need for salvation," he said. Lopez accepted God's plan for him that April day.

His life was changed, he said. His ambition shifted from the military to being a preacher "on skid row." Experience from his past life had prepared him for that, said Lopez.

Then he discovered a ministry in the military. He began serving in prison ministries and as a volunteer in military centers, witnessing to fellow soldiers. While serving as a volunteer in a center in Clarksville, he met another volunteer, Betty, who became his wife. Over the next 12 years, he remained in the Army to raise his family, serving in a third U.S. war in Vietnam.

But full-time ministry was never removed from his plans. When he retired from the Army in 1967, Lopez had his opportunity.

He and his wife had moved to Tennessee, her home, and Lopez was attending Austin Peay State University in Clarksville when he met Chip Redding, director of the Military Oasis Center in Millington, which Redding directed for Baptists.

Soon Lopez was working there assisting Redding. Retacent about personal matters, Lopez summarized the rest of the story by stating — that was 23 years ago. He retired as assistant director Jan. 31.

But he's quick to explain the source of his humility. "I've always felt God was involved in every step of the way," said the Ret. Master Sergeant.

His military experience helped him relate to the thousands of Navy and Marine personnel based near Memphis. But he "never tried to bring up my military experience," he said.

He certainly knew the lingo. Marines are called leather necks and jar heads, Navy per-

sonnel are swabbies, and Army soldiers are doggies. But Lopez noted today's soldier uses less such lingo, a measure of a broader acceptance among soldiers in the different branches.

He's seen many other changes, he added, but one aspect of the military hasn't altered over the past almost 50



LOPEZ

years. Soldiers need God, said Lopez.

Even the soldiers who visit the Oasis Center, which is known to be a Christian-sponsored center, know little about spiritual things, he observed.

Although not introspective enough to identify it, Lopez did become a preacher. He admits he has been called such by many soldiers and their families.

He counseled individuals and taught Bible studies at the center. He learned to deal with differences of opinion among participants by showing them love, he stated.

The young people who visit the center are usually interested in playing pool, watching TV, visiting with other servicemen, or getting a snack. Lopez said he learned to be assertive and start the conversation, which often would lead to a discussion of the person's needs.

Lopez recalled the few relationships which endured in such a transient society.

■ A single woman in the Marines was struggling to decide what to do about her pregnancy when she visited the Oasis Center and met Lopez. After talking with Lopez, she decided to keep the child, who is now five years old.

■ An intoxicated Marine visited the center. Lopez witnessed to him. Four years later, he returned to thank Lopez. He had become a Christian, married, and his wife was expecting a child.

Lopez stated his family helped him in the ministry. In one instance, he noticed a woman who had disappeared into the center's bathroom with her baby for a long time. Lopez discovered she had been living in her car for two weeks. Her husband, a soldier, was away and she had run out of money.

Lopez took her home with him, where she stayed with his family until arrangements could be made for housing.

Thanks to his own good marriage and training provid-

ed by the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Lopez said he developed counseling guidelines. It's not about giving advice, he said. And it helps to remember personal struggles and mistakes and to speak simply about spiritual matters.

He thanks Tennessee Baptists "for all they've done for me," he added. Lopez managed financial affairs of the center, which made him proud of being a Baptist, he said. Lopez noted gifts from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention, Shelby County Baptist Association, and local churches made the Oasis Center possible. Especially important were gifts of food from Woman's Missionary Union, said Lopez.

Lopez, who is recovering from heart bypass surgery and helping his wife recover from cancer treatment, plans to retire in Tipton County where he hopes to help a church. "That's a ministry too," he added. □

Cookeville's Lester Flatt lets others play guitar

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

COOKEVILLE — Unlike a distant relative with the same name, this Lester Flatt does not sing or play a guitar. In fact, he laughed, "I can't even play a radio without static."

Flatt, a Cookeville pastor, once made a deal with Grand Ole Opry star Lester Flatt (now deceased) when the two met in Livingston. "I told him, 'You do the singing and I'll do the preaching,'" He agreed wholeheartedly, Flatt said.

Pastor Flatt kept his end of the bargain. For 40 years he has been preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, first in Michigan, and for the last 34 years in Tennessee. He retired as pastor of Caney Fork Church on April 4.

Flatt has "made the full circle." Caney Fork not only is his last pastorate, but it is also the church where he was converted and baptized in 1939.

He was reared around Cookeville and Lola, his wife of 48 years, was reared just within minutes of Caney Fork Church. "This has been a special place to me," he said of the church, which also was his longest tenure (nine years) of his ten pastorates.

Flatt began his ministry as pastor of East Side Church in Detroit, Mich., in 1952. The Flatts had moved to Michigan

earlier because of his work. He surrendered to preach on New Year's Eve, 1950, during a watchcare service.

After almost seven years in Michigan the Flatts returned "home" to Tennessee in 1959 when he became pastor of Allons Church, Allons, a church of



COOKEVILLE PASTOR Lester Flatt has been ably assisted in his 40-year ministry by his wife, Lola. Unlike a distant relative with the same name, Flatt does not play the guitar or sing. He prefers to preach the Gospel.

which he still has fond memories.

Other Tennessee pastorates include Cedar Hill and Nash Grove churches in Baxter, Brush Creek Church, Brush Creek, Dillards Creek Church, Chestnut Mound, Memorial Church, Livingston, and Providence Church, McMinnville.

Though he served primarily small churches, Flatt never let them use being small as an excuse for not being missions minded.

"I committed myself not to become pastor of a church that was not missions-minded," he said, adding that he always told churches that called him they needed to support missions and give to it through the Cooperative Program.

"The Cooperative Program is

a way of sharing around the world whether you have a dime or a million dollars," he said.

Flatt also has taken an active part in missions. He has returned to Michigan three times as part of the Tennessee/Michigan partnership and he hopes to go back this summer.

As Flatt reminisced over his 40-year ministry, he recalled several "highlights" including the opportunity of once baptizing 28 people in one day after a revival and baptizing three of

his grandchildren. But, he acknowledged, "anytime you bring a person to salvation, that is a highlight. It could be your last one." He also is proud that several men were called to preach under his ministry.

About half of his ministry was as a bivocational pastor. At times, it was tough making ends meet, he said. "But looking back I see manifold blessings that I could not see then. God has been good to us."

Flatt has some sound advice for young men seeking to enter the ministry. "I tell them to find a wife who is in agreement with them if they are going to undergo years of service," he said, noting his wife has been a tremendous help to him during his 40-year ministry.

He also tells young pastors to simply "preach the Word. If it's not the Word, leave it alone," he said.

Upon retirement the Flatts plan to remain in the Cookeville area. He hopes to be able to do supply and interim preaching as needs arise. He can be reached at (615) 526-1855.

And, though they are leaving the pastorate at Caney Fork, they are leaving part of themselves behind. Their daughter, Virginia Hickey, is the church organist and their grandson, Bryan Hickey, leads the music at Caney Fork. □

Is interest in foreign missions waning locally?

Middle Tennessee Baptists had a rare opportunity to observe foreign missions close-up, and to participate in firsthand missions experiences April 2-3.

The third MissionsFest "foreign missions experience" was held at Belmont University and Belmont Heights Church, Nashville. For those few who attended, it was a grand occasion, filled with nuggets of foreign missions.

To those who missed it intentionally or otherwise, they missed many rich missions vignettes. They also missed the opportunity to meet and talk with twenty Foreign Mission Board staff members, several FMB trustees, plus at least thirty-eight foreign missionaries. For some Tennessee Baptists, the weekend afforded perhaps the only likelihood to be a part of that kind of gathering.

The missions event was sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention in cooperation with the Foreign Mission Board. Of course Belmont Heights Church and Belmont University were valued partners in executing and promoting the event.

While this "passport to people" brought foreign missions to Middle Tennessee with its powerful message, it was not well-attended.

Tennessee Baptists, long known as volunteers, also have a reputation for loving missions. Baptists in the Volunteer State have volunteered in astounding numbers for ventures in Partnership Missions with Burkina Faso, Venezuela, the Philippine

Islands, Michigan, and Chile. Thousands of men and women have preached, taught, built, repaired, conducted seminars, held camps and retreats, and attended cooperative meetings in these and other places.

They have returned to their local churches and associations with souls on fire and hearts aglow with missions fervor. In fact, the great majority have become active missionaries in their communities, and some have become foreign missionaries through surrender, appointment, and commissioning by the Foreign Mission Board.

So it is surprising to look at statistics for April 2-3. For perhaps several reasons an estimated three hundred attended Friday night's opening session. The dinner/dialogue for Tennessee pastors, directors of missions, and their wives — was the high mark as it was followed by a compelling message from Don Kammerdiener, interim FMB president. He also hosted the dinner.

The Friday afternoon "global walkaround" gave participants opportunity to see and talk with the missionaries, many of whom dressed in clothing of their service country.

That scene was repeated on Saturday morning and afternoon, also in Belmont's gymnasium. It couldn't have portrayed foreign missions any better, other than one's actually being alongside missionaries in the field.

Detailed conferences also were held four times on Saturday — with time for discussion and questions.

There was a scattering of participants for all those events. Kammerdiener's messages were from the heart, excellent, and portrayed a genuine love for missions. He would make an excellent fulltime leader for the Foreign Mission Board, with no strings attached. He expressed the Bible's teaching that missions is the theme that draws people together in cooperation.

So where were Tennessee Baptists? There might have been two hundred present Saturday.

It's hard to believe that Tennesseans have lost their zeal for foreign missions. It is even more difficult to understand why the parking lots were not filled with buses.

What better way is there for Royal Ambassadors, GAs, and Acteens to be impressed by the mission message? Here were "real, live" missionaries — dozens of them. They had the message that Baptists need to hear. They need our support.

This editorial is not meant to be a time for hand-wringing, task-taking, or assigning guilt. Questions must be raised, however, about the apparent lack of enthusiasm.

The missionaries and FMB staff members were not in Middle Tennessee to brag or to take an offering. The purpose of MissionsFest included a report to interested Baptists about their missionaries' work. Another focus was that of sharing with potential foreign missionaries the call of missions from biblical perspectives.

We missed the boat on this one; let's do better. God asks, "Who will go for me?" And what is our reply? Not interested? □

one
word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

Across time zones

Genesis tells about God's making the first day and days. We learn there about his wisdom, power, and authority in that magnificent directive, "Let there be light!"

Mankind was aware that the sun could not be seen all the time (there's a good word).

Later on, (there's another reference to separation of light and darkness) man learned to live in days and nights, and divided time into seconds, minutes, hours, weeks, months, years, generations.

When we began to explore, to travel from our own nesting places, someone realized that the sun didn't shine at the same time in all places.

We divided time and space into zones. Anyone who travels quickly learns the disparity of time zones, and the problems they can cause travelers. We also learn to accommodate ourselves to them.

One of the first meetings I attended when I came to work with Tennessee Baptists was almost in North Carolina.

Sure enough, I forgot about the time zones, and barely arrived on time. The meeting was beginning.

Our Christian lives are lived at times as though we are in different spiritual time zones.



ALLEN

It becomes easy to pass back and forth between the "good" zone and the "bad" zone. It is tempting to stay a while in the "not-so-good" zone, just to see how other folks (non-Christians) live.

As we enter a different spiritual time zone, we are not aware of the dangers. The jet lag gets us.

In the real world, people of the old Soviet Union would have to pass through 17 time zones to go from east to west. It's no wonder there was such diversity and ethnicity.

But spiritually, we must be cautious about slipping from where we should live, to a place where we grieve our Lord.

There's much danger in doing that. It's not like driving from Franklin to Rockwood. □

Cooperative Program Day is Sunday, April 18

HOW THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WORKS



The member contributes an offering during the Worship Service.

The church forwards this offering through the channel of the Cooperative Program to the state convention office.

The state convention office uses part of this offering for mission work in the state and forwards the rest to the Southern Baptist Convention office in Nashville, Tennessee.



The Southern Baptist Convention distributes a large part of this offering to the Home and Foreign Mission Boards.



The Home and Foreign Mission Boards use this offering to help support missionaries serving in the U.S. and in other countries of the world.

The Bible tells us what the purpose of a church should be. In summary, it is to proclaim and apply the Gospel of Christ in the world (Matthew 28:19-20). Each church must determine how it will fulfill its purpose by planning its ministries.

This is why your church's budget is so important. The ministries listed in it show your congregation's understanding of God's will for your church. It reveals priorities.

The secret of the success of the Cooperative Program over the years is found in the word "cooperative." Time has proven the Cooperative Program to be the finest and most extensive mission support program in the world.

The Cooperative Program is more than money. It is ministry. It is missions. It is a meaningful and corporate response to the Great Commission.

just for today

By Fred Wood
pastor emeritus
Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile —

"The trouble with you" a friend once told Orville Wright, "is you are too silent. You should talk more, assert yourself." The famous flyer answered, "The best talker and the worst flyer among birds is the parrot."

Take this truth with you —

Most of us talk too much! William Cowper spoke of the "flippancy fluency of tongue." Benjamin Franklin said, "The tongue offends and the ears get the cuffing." George Herbert observed, "Foolish tongues talk by the dozen."

Memorize this Scripture —

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life" (Proverbs 15:4).

Pray this Prayer —

Lord, help me to recognize the power of my tongue. With it, I can do much good or terrible evil. Above all, may I use this instrument to help people and never to hurt them. Lead me to become like the woman of whom the Old Testament wrote, "in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). □

ClearTV calls for boycott of Johnson wax company

By Louis Moore
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Christian Leaders for Responsible Television, nicknamed CClear-TV, has called for a one-year boycott of S. C. Johnson and Son, Inc., a Racine, Wis., corporation that markets a variety of waxes/polishes and household/personal products because

of the company's sponsorship of prime-time television programs that feature sex, violence, and profanity.

CClear-TV is composed of more than 1,000 Christian leaders from about 100 denominations. The organization in the past has initiated boycotts of other TV advertisers it has deemed to be sponsors of sex, violence, and profanity on

prime-time TV.

Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and a member of the CClear-TV's executive committee, is urging Southern Baptists to join in the boycott of Johnson.

"All attempts to get Johnson to respond to our real and legitimate concerns have been rebuffed," Land said. "A boy-

cott of the offending sponsor's products is a perfectly legitimate way to use consumer power to demand redress of serious grievances. Boycotts have a long and glorious history in righting societal wrongs," he said.

Land asked Southern Baptists to pray about whether to

honor the boycott.

A CClear-TV spokesman said the Johnson company has not responded to requests to meet with CClear-TV representatives.

Johnson products include Johnson Wax, Pledge wax, Drano drain opener, and Agree shampoo. □

Highlander dies in Chattanooga

Duane Highlander died March 31 in Chattanooga following an extended illness.

Highlander, 66, was on the staff of Hamilton County Association for 25 years, including 18 years as director of special ministries. He retired in 1988.

A native of West Virginia, Highlander was a cluster co-

ordinator for the Tennessee/Michigan partnership.

Prior to his death he served as pastor of Clifton Hills Church in Hamilton County Association for more than three years.

He is survived by his wife, Edith, four children, and nine grandchildren. □

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■ Sunday School lesson commentary

□ God's intervention in a crisis — Bible Book Series for April 18

By Mark Mangrum, pastor, First Church, Whiteville

To fend off an attack from Assyria, the nations of Syria and Israel made an alliance. Judah refused to join this alliance, so Syria and Israel attacked Judah, hoping to force her into compliance. In history, this attack is called the Syro-Ephraimite War.

Immanuel, God with us (ch. 7)

King Ahaz of Judah was fearful of what the Syrian/Israelite alliance could do to his small nation. To ease his fear, God sent Isaiah to tell Ahaz to ask for a sign. But alas, poor Ahaz wanted nothing to do with God! He wanted to figure out for himself what to do.

The Lord tells Ahaz that he's going to get a sign, whether he wants one or not! This sign would be in the form of a child, whose name would remind all

that "God is with us." God is going to be with and protect Judah, no matter what the king says or does, or doesn't do.

God is that way with us. Even in all our stubbornness to do "church" our way, God is still with us. We but need to open our eyes.

The prophecy of this child named Immanuel is both timely and timeless. Some believe this child was born in Ahaz's own time. Many speculate him to be good King Hezekiah, born not to a "virgin" as we understand the term, but to a "young maiden" as understood in Hebrew. The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy comes in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Prince of Peace (ch. 9)

There are many warnings and calls for judgment in the

book of Isaiah. But Isaiah also is a book that reminds us that in the midst of judgment, God offers hope. Sometimes God's judgment calls for punishment. Other times God's judgment calls for redemption. We see such a call for redemption in chapter nine.

Judah was down and out. Ahaz was a terrible king, and it seemed no hope remained for the Judeans. But along comes one of the greatest of all the Judean rulers, King Hezekiah. Not only was he great in his deeds, but he was great in his devotion to Jehovah God.

As with the Immanuel prophecy of chapter seven, the prophecy of chapter nine is timely and timeless. Many believe the person spoken of in 9:6-7 refers to King Hezekiah. No doubt, Hezekiah was great.

But no earthly man can fit the description of these two verses. This child that is born unto us, this Son that is given, can only come from the One who is in all, above all, and is all himself.

Basic Passage:
Isaiah 7:1-2, 10-17;
9:2, 6-7

The names given to describe this great leader, this ruler of mankind, contain both human and divine characteristics:

■ Wonderful (divine) Counselor (human). The wisdom of this one will be demonstrated in his ability to administrate and guide.

■ Mighty (human) God (divine). This supreme being will rule over all, and be greater

than any who came before or after him.

■ Eternal (divine) Father (human). This one will care for his children with the everlasting love of a father, and provide "tough love" as the need arises.

■ Prince (human) of Peace (divine). He will be the leader in promoting a new way of life that can only come from above — peace.

This ruler's kingdom will be universal and everlasting, for "there will be no end to his government." Isaiah doesn't say when this will occur, but he does know God was working it all out. We must not ever forget when we lose hope that God is not dead. □

□ To love is to serve — Convention Uniform Series for April 18

By Wesley Pitts, director of missions, Cumberland Association, Clarksville

Describing her airplane ride, a wife said, "The gentleman in the seat next to me asked me an unusual question. He asked me if I were a Christian." Her husband replied quickly, "Did you tell him that your religion is a personal matter and none of his business?" "Honey," she replied, "if you had heard him talk about Jesus and how he asked the question, you would have known that it was his business."

Church growth experts have suggested that the greatest problem in our churches today is that we do not make sharing Christ with others the main thing. We allow good things to divert us from the business of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Like the apostles we need to be reminded that loving

Jesus means serving others.

A reminder of the call to service (vv. 1-14)

Jesus had told the apostles that he would go ahead of them into Galilee. As they waited for the risen Lord to appear in Galilee, it was natural for them to return to their previous occupation of fishing. They were slow to accept the resurrection and unsure of their future role.

The event of Jesus appearing on the seashore reminded the disciples of three truths.

■ He had called them to a new task. They would be fishermen.

■ He reminded them that God would provide for all their needs. Had they been successful in catching fish on their own that night, they would have had greater difficulty leaving

the boat and nets.

■ He demonstrated again the role of servant leader by preparing breakfast for them.

A reiteration of the call to service (vv. 15-17)

Scholars have concluded that John 21 was written to show Peter's restoration. Peter's denial may have discredited his role in the eyes of the other apostles. Although he had repented with tears, Peter himself had wondered if he would play a part in the kingdom work of Jesus. The Lord's conversation with Peter assured them that his call was restored.

The three questions and answers employed different words for love and feeding the sheep. Jesus asked Peter if he had the highest love for him. Humbly, Peter answered he loved Jesus

with a brotherly kind of love. Christ responded twice by saying feed my sheep and once by saying shepherd my sheep. This discussion reiterated the fact that those who love Jesus demonstrate that love by obeying him and ministering to his sheep.

A reaction to the call to service (vv. 18-25)

Jesus predicted that Peter would die as a Christian martyr. Peter's old, hasty, forward self returned; and he asked what would happen to John. Jesus told him that was none of his business. Peter's business was to follow Christ.

Herschel Hobbs noted that this command, "Follow me," is the last precept of Jesus in the last of the Gospels. He added, "It is a fitting finale which en-

compasses the whole of the Christian life for all who propose to become disciples of Jesus."

Basic Passage
John 21:12-22

Tertullian and Origin stated that Peter was crucified as a Christian martyr. According to tradition, Peter asked to be crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as the Lord. Peter came to love Jesus with the highest love and encouraged others to do the same. □

□ The Spirit's power — Life and Work Series for April 18

By Milton Knox, pastor, First Church, Dayton

Before ascending into heaven, the risen Lord gave the disciples the task of spreading the good news to the whole world. Tremendous power would be needed to accomplish such a monumental task and Jesus had promised them that he would give the power to them.

The coming of the Spirit (vv. 1-3)

The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers on the Day of Pentecost, which was 50 days after Passover. This was the day that Jews celebrated God's giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai which gave Israel its identity as a nation.

It is significant that on this occasion God gave his Spirit to the church which identifies us as his people. The coming of the Spirit was marked by the audible and visible signs of

and fire which were familiar symbols of God's presence as recorded in the Old Testament.

The believers "were all together in one place." In Acts 1:14 we find that this means more than that these people happened to be at the same place at the same time. They were united in mind, purpose, fellowship, and prayer. We would do well to remember when we gather together each Lord's Day that our unity is vital to the moving of the Spirit in our churches today.

The empowering by the Spirit (vv. 4-6, 11b)

When the Spirit filled believers, everyone knew something had happened — even those who did not believe it was from God. Notice they were "all" filled with the Holy Spirit. God does not want to exclude any of

his children. The Lord wants all of us to yield ourselves to his Spirit so he can accomplish his work through us, individually and corporately.

Each one spoke as the Spirit enabled or empowered him. We are not to use the power of the Holy Spirit for our purposes, we are to be used by the Spirit according to his purposes. If the church would understand this, much of the abuse of the gifts of the Spirit would be done away with.

There are still many differences of opinion concerning exactly what happened on this Day of Pentecost. Some believe it was a miracle of speaking and others think the miracle was in the hearing.

I find that sometimes people who speak the same language do not communicate at all! It is

the Spirit who really communicates the Gospel to the hearts of men and women.

Basic Passage:
Acts 2:1-6, 11b, 15-17,
32-33

The explanation related to Joel's prophecy (vv. 15-17)

Others were there who mocked the disciples and accused them of being drunk. I have found that there are always those present who try to explain away things they do not understand. Then Peter preached. This man, who just a few days before denied the Lord because of fear, now stood with boldness to proclaim the name of Jesus.

Jesus had told the disciples

that they would be able to speak boldly and that the words they needed to say would be given to them (Matthew 10:19, Luke 21:15; John 16:13). If the only things we attempt are what we can do without complete reliance upon God, then he is not working in us as he desires.

The explanation related to Jesus' ministry (vv. 32-33)

Peter preached with the boldness of Christ as he interpreted Psalm 16:8-11, telling the people that the passage referred to Jesus, not David, and of the resurrection. About 3,000 people were saved. God was at work that day and he is still working today. □

■ the people

■ **Andy Milam** was ordained to the Gospel ministry by Avondale Church, Humboldt. He is a former staff member of the church and now a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ the leaders

■ Interim pastor of University Heights Mission, Cookeville, **Don Wynn**, was licensed by the sponsoring church of University Heights, Stevens Street Church, Cookeville.

■ **Lester Flatt**, retired pastor, Caney Fork Church, Cookeville, was honored with a reception April 4.

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

■ **Center Grove Church**, Tullahoma, has called its first minister of education. **Patrick Milam** began serving April 4. Milam is a graduate of Motlow State Community College, Tullahoma; University of Tennessee; and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He recently was ordained by First Church, Tullahoma.

■ **Slayden Church**, Slayden, has called **Bill Wilson**, associate pastor, Oak Grove (Ky.) Church, as pastor.

■ **Cannie Leonard** is serving as supply preacher for **Dowelltown Church**, Dowelltown.

■ **Virgil Allison**, pastor, Harmony Church, Adams, has resigned effective May 30.

■ the churches

■ Revivals in Gibson County Association churches include **First Church, Medina**, April 11-16, led by Fred Clift; **Emmanuel Church, Humboldt**, April 16-18, Page Cothren; **First Church, Dyer**, April 18-21, led by laymen; **West Side Church, Trenton**, April 18-23, Roy Auvenshine; **Salem Church, Trenton**, April 23-25, Union University team; **Hillcrest Church, Trenton**, April 25-30, Nicky McMinn; **Idlewild Church, Idlewild**, April 25-30, James Abbott; **Keely Mill Church, Dyer**, April 25-30, Wayne

Perkins; **Northern's Chapel, Rutherford**, April 29-May 2, Charles Halliburton; and **Oak Grove Church, Milan**, April 30-May 2, Union University team.

■ A May 2-5 revival will be held by **Center Grove Church, Tullahoma**. Tim McGehee, pastor, Smyrna Church, Chapel Hill, will lead.

■ **First Church, Athens**, is holding Disciplenow 1993, a retreat for students grades 7-college April 15-18. It will feature David Ring, evangelist.

■ **Little Hope Church, Clarksville**, will have a spiritual emphasis weekend April 16-18. It will be led by Howard Olive, pastor, Monte Vista Church, Maryville.

■ A spring revival will be held April 18-21 at **First**

Church, Clinton.

■ **Jerry Drace** and **Ken and Lois Holland** will lead the April 18-21 revival at **First Church, Tullahoma.**

■ The April 18-21 revival of **South Gate Church, Antioch**, will be led by Jimmy Goudelock.

■ The sesquicentennial celebration of **Poplar Grove Church, Trenton**, will be held April 21-25. It will include a Sunday afternoon dinner on the grounds followed by a praise service. Former pastors **Bill Oakley**, **Robert Campbell**, **Rodney Alexander**, and **James Glisson** will speak during the week.

■ **Central Church, Hixson**, is holding the East Tennessee Women's Conference May 21-22. **Luci Swindoll**, wife of speaker and author **Chuck Swindoll**, will speak.

■ **Rocky Valley Church, Lebanon**, will hold revival April 25-30. **Billy Edmonds** will speak.

■ **Archie King**, retired director, Tennessee Baptist Convention Brotherhood Department, will lead revival April 18-21 at **Woodland Church, Woodbury.**

■ Members of **Mount Herman Church, Smithville**, built a fellowship hall and educational space for their facilities.

■ **Mount Zion Church, Alexandria**, will begin construction on new facilities.

■ **Mason Goodman**, pastor, **Riverside Church, Harriman**,

will lead revival at **Oaklawn Church, Crossville**, April 25-May 2.

■ **Lincoln Park Church, Knoxville**, will hold an April 25-30 revival led by **Jack C. Parrott.**

■ **Bob Hamblin**, interim pastor, **West Jackson Church, Jackson**, will lead its April 18-21 revival.

■ **Phil Glisson**, Memphis-based evangelist, will lead revival at **Georgian Hills Church, Memphis**, April 18-21.

■ **Ron Herrod**, pastor, **Central Church, Oak Ridge**, will lead revival at **First Church, Lawrenceburg**, April 18-21. **David Gibson** will direct the music.

■ **Don Mitchell**, **Earl McCosh**, **Chuck McGill**, **Mike Feeley**, and **Norman Turley** are speakers at the April 18-21 revival at **Central Height Church, Dandridge.**

■ **Oakwood Church, Knoxville**, had a revival March 21-24 in which **Harold Hunter** spoke. About 40 people made decisions for Christ.

■ the associations

■ **McMinn-Meigs Association** will hold a prayer conference April 26 featuring **T. W. Hunt**, Sunday School Board, Nashville.

■ **Cumberland Association** will hold its semi-annual meeting April 26 at **Parkview Church**. **James Porch**, TBC executive director, will speak.



PARTICIPATING IN THE SPRING BIBLE CONFERENCE sponsored by Union University, Jackson, were, from left, **A. L. Slaughter**, pastor, Woodville Church, Ripley; **Ira Perkins**, director of missions, Big Hatchie Association; **Bill Damron**, Brownsville; **Bob Norman**, pastor, Clearview Church, Franklin; and **Russell Newport**, musician, Springfield, Mo.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

How to reach people in class

By Fred Johnson, pastor
Grace Church, Nashville

The response at the invitation in our worship services is almost entirely the result of our prayers and witnessing during the week. Preaching to a congregation which is composed of professing Christians and active church members does not leave the Holy Spirit but a very few lost or unchurched people upon which to move. Something must be done each week if we are to see people coming forward making decisions for Christ and uniting with his church:

(1) Absentee class or church members should not be the focus of our visitation, but should be contacted by phone. Don't underestimate the value

of the telephone conversation.

(2) Identifying lost or unchurched people must be a daily practice by each member. Be aware and concerned for those you meet during the week. List these individuals for evangelistic efforts. Ideally no one who goes visiting should have to ask for a prospect card.

(3) Inviting your friends, associates, and business acquaintances to Sunday School can be enhanced by inviting people to join you for a worship service first. Many are reluctant to attend a small group of strangers, but will agree to sit with you in the larger group. When the person attends with you, introduce him or her to several members of your class. This will make it easier for prospects to come to class.

While regular church visitation nights are important, many more can be reached

during the week as our people befriend and invite others to Grace.

(4) Occasionally you will have opportunity to present the Gospel or plan of salvation to someone. You may be the only one who will ever personally evangelize a given individual, so be familiar with these texts: Romans 3:23; 5:8; 6:23; 10:9, and 13. Present these verses in this order. Ask the person to receive Christ and offer to lead him or her in a simple, short prayer of acceptance. Many have been saved as the result of a Christian friend using this method. □

Developing a vision

By Ray Sorrells, pastor
First Church, Erwin

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18a). In

recent years, many organizations have worked to catch that vision or to sharpen it by developing for themselves a mission statement. Thereby, they define their purpose or reason for existing. Not only service organizations but businesses of all kinds are identifying who they are and what they are to be doing with such statements of purpose.

In turn, this becomes the basis of goal setting and actions to reach those goals. Then, they constantly evaluate their progress and direction by the objectives they have as set forth in their statement of mission or purpose.

The church is also to do its work based on its God-given mission. The church is a special organization. Its founder is Christ. God has given the church knowledge as to its purpose in Scripture; yet,

sometimes churches need to redefine for themselves what their mission is in a clear and concise way so that all of its activities might reflect that.

David Dale in his book, *To Dream Again*, points out that churches need to re-dream the dream (vision) again every so often. Each church is also unique in the way God would have it do its mission for Christ where it is.

Your pastor and church council want you, as a congregation, to help us develop a mission statement for our church.

While people perish without a vision, where there is a vision from God, his people flourish. □