

Baptist and Reflector

March 16, 1994

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STATEWIDE EDITION

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Big Emory church loses to 'takeover' group

By Wm. Fletcher Allen
Baptist and Reflector

KINGSTON — In a Feb. 18 ruling here in Roane County Chancery Court, a minority membership of Clax Gap Church lost in its move to keep the church within the Southern Baptist fold.

Court Chancellor Frank V. Williams III ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, a majority group and Pastor Gary Hensley, who had persuaded members to withdraw relationship from the Southern Baptist Convention. The church now has become "independent," cutting all Southern Baptist ties including contributing to the Cooperative Program.

Chancellor Williams ruled after hearing extensive evidence that church actions do not, as a matter of law, consti-

tute "a radical departure from established and distinctive practices and beliefs." He ruled on basis of court case *Beard vs. Francis*, (Tennessee App. 1957) where that was the decisive factor.

The ruling resulted in some confusion, but also sounded a warning, according to William Bargiol, director of missions for the local Big Emory Association. "If the new direction of the church is so radical that

the minority group has to leave in order to practice as the church was planned," he said, "that's about as radical as it could be." He also predicted that the same thing could happen elsewhere if churches don't take precautions. (See separate article, next page.)

"It's a sad, sad story," said Tom Pridden, former trustee. "I haven't been voted out, reprimanded, or ousted, but the church is gone." Pridden

served as trustee chairman and said he and others had once been friends with Hensley.

Pridgen said he and his wife are deeply hurt by what has happened. They question the court's ruling, and think the wrong decision was made.

He said there may be an appeal, but the minority group has no solid plans yet for another church.

— See Big Emory, page 2

Southwestern trustees fire Russell Dilday

Compiled from news reports

FORT WORTH, Texas — Russell H. Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary the past 16 years, was fired March 9 by seminary trustees during a meeting on campus.

"Trustees gave no reason for the firing, which was approved in executive session on a vote reported as either 27-8 or 26-7. The firing is effective immediately. After the decision, Dilday was locked out of his office.

Dilday emerged from the executive session and went immediately to his home on campus, but told onlookers he was no longer president.

Ralph W. Pulley Jr., newly elected trustee chairman and a Dallas attorney, acknowledged there was some discussion

about the termination prior to the meetings by some trustees but did not elaborate further.

Pulley reported the action to a gathering of more than 1,000 students, who booed and jeered in response.

Pulley read students a letter from trustees which offered no explanation for the action. "Why! Why!" students yelled. He asked students to make suggestions for Dilday's successor, to which they chanted, "Dilday! Dilday! Dilday!"

Later Pulley told reporters: "We just felt like the institution needed new leadership to move into the 21st century." He said the negative reaction

was expected and will subside in time. (Trustees later issued a statement. See page 4.)

Southwestern, one of six SBC seminaries, is the world's largest theological school with 4,022 students and more than 31,000 alumni. It has a 1993-94 budget of \$22,717,598.

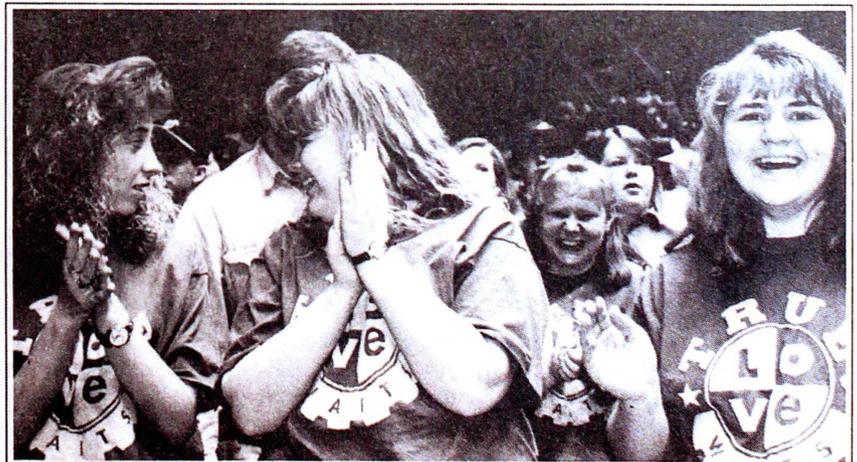
The firing "represents some years of frustration and gridlock with the existing administrator," said T. Bob Davis, a Dallas dentist and trustee secretary who has been critical of the formal approach of the seminary's music school. "They (trustees) felt like a breath of fresh air was needed."

But William Hightower of Charleston, S.C., a trustee who voted against firing, called the event "a black day in the life of the school and the life of Southern Baptists."

— See Southwestern, page 3



DILDAY



TRUE LOVE WAITS was an emphasis of the annual Tennessee Youth Evangelism Conference held March 11-12 in Nashville. Making a commitment were, from left, Barbie Pigg, Willa Jo Appleton, Michelle Nave, and Sabrina George of Shores Church, Goodsprings. True Love Waits is a commitment to sexual abstinence until marriage. See page 7 for more on the conference which drew about 27,000 youth. — Photo by Connie Davis

Big Emory church loses to 'takeover' ...

— Continued from page 1

Hensley and some church trustees had filed suit against the Bank of Roane County to recover funds on deposit to the church's account. The bank alleged that there was a dispute within the church with another group demanding the money. The bank filed a complaint against the minority group, and asked the court to decide which group represented the church. Four persons from the minority group then filed an intervening petition to join in the demand for control of church money, building, and real property. As a result, the plaintiffs and intervenors were contending for control.

In his ruling, the chancellor wrote that evidence showed the church had participated in the Cooperative Program from its founding in 1938 until a vote of the congregation in October 1992. Clax Gap Church also was associated with the Big Emory Association and the Tennessee Baptist Convention. The church has about 135 resident members and contributed \$2,605 to the Cooperative Program in 1992. In 1993, Historical Clax Gap Church (minority group) gave \$808.

The ruling came even though the chancellor noted that "the intervenors [those who sought to control the church's funds and keep the church with Southern Baptist identity] proved to the satisfac-

tion of the Court that the pastor, Gary Hensley, came to Clax Gap with the understanding that it was a cooperating Southern Baptist Church.

"The pulpit committee," said the ruling, "questioned him specifically about his willingness to support the Cooperative Program and were satisfied that he could and would continue in that relationship." The court said things went well for more than a year "before the pastor and others set their sights on breaking with the traditional participation in Southern Baptist missions."

Evidence showed also, said the court, that the church had made progress under Hensley's leadership, with increased attendance, building improvement, sizeable indebtedness paid, and "church funds are flowing directly to independent missionaries."

During the hearing, the pastor testified that he and "others" objected to what they viewed as high salaries paid to Southern Baptist officials at national and state levels, and that they objected to supporting SBC seminaries. Consequently he believed it better to support independent missionaries. He thus persuaded a majority of members to terminate contributions to the CP.

The intervenors argued that this in effect changed Clax Gap Church from Southern Baptist to independent, and they

claimed it to be a "radical departure from established fundamental practices and beliefs" as in the case of *Beard vs. Francis*, 309 S. W. 2d 788 (Tennessee App. 1957). They also claimed that dissenting members had been removed from offices held prior to Hensley's arrival in 1990, and some were disfellowshipped. They maintained that this indicated the pastor's intent to terminate the church's relationship with the SBC.

Williams said in his ruling that "proof also shows the pastor to be a skilled politician, quietly and systematically building his support from among some of the older members plus the new members who have joined since 1990, about eight of whom are members of his family." His conduct, wrote Williams, "has been calculated to systematically eliminate opposition within the church so as to solidify his control over the people, property, and business of the Clax Gap Baptist Church."

However, the court said the pastor's conduct did not bear on the Biblical doctrine he teaches and nothing was shown which would allow the courts to conclude that the doctrine now adhered to by the church deviates from the *Baptist Faith and Message* "which contains, according to expert testimony of Dr. James Walter Taylor, a general statement of

the fundamental tenets of the Baptist faith." Taylor, director of missions for Knox County Association, was called to testify specifically on the *Baptist Faith and Message*. Several others were called, including Ron Herrod, pastor of Central Church, Oak Ridge.

One of the defining elements of the ruling noted that the church is autonomous and is to be controlled by the majority vote of its members. The ruling said that termination of the Cooperative Program, use of independent teaching materials, already been ruled by the Tennessee Court of Appeals, is not a "radical departure from established fundamental practices and beliefs" so as to deprive the intervenors [minority] of their rights as minority members in and to church property.

The ruling also said "there is no higher earthly authority for this church." The result for the minority is that they "either bend to the will of the majority or separate themselves from the congregation, which some have already done."

Chancellor Williams dismissed the complaint and ruled in favor of Pastor Hensley and the majority group which had sided with him on eliminating the Cooperative Program giving. Court costs were assigned to the minority group. □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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Clax Gap ruling sends clear warning, says Big Emory DOM

KINGSTON — A court ruling here has authenticated a takeover of a Tennessee Baptist church by a majority group led by an "independent" Baptist pastor.

"I heard an alarm bell go off," said William Bargiol, director of missions for Big Emory Association.

Bargiol attended the court hearing last fall and the February court ruling concerning the successful majority group "takeover" of bank account and

property of Clax Gap Church, Harriman. The group, led by independent pastor Gary Hensley, cut ties with Southern Baptists and ceased giving through the Cooperative Program.

Bargiol believes this ruling (see accompanying article) sounds a clear warning to all Southern Baptist churches. "We have to be Southern Baptists when we talk and when we write," he said. "There are so many groups under the

great Baptist umbrella. We have to make sure this is legally verified in our church documents."

Bargiol believes there is at least one certain way to guard against such takeovers.

Since a majority vote was considered high priority in the ruling by Chancellor Frank V. Williams III, Bargiol says there is one recourse for any church that wants to guarantee remaining Southern Baptist.

"The only legal recourse to prevent this kind of thing from happening," Bargiol says, "is for the church to deed its property to the association or state convention, and have the recipient party to deed it back to the church with a reversion clause." In action similar to the Clax Gap case, the property and funds would revert to the "parent" group. Then no one could take over the church. Without it, there will be constant danger, he said.

"The February ruling," said Bargiol, "is nothing more than a license to steal for any group that can muster a majority for any purpose they have in

Maryville growth spiral conference cancelled

A Sunday School regional growth spiral conference set for March 22 at Madison Avenue Church, Maryville, has been cancelled due to a conflict with a luncheon sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board on the same day.

FMB President Jerry Rankin will address East Tennessee area pastors that day in Knoxville during an FMB-sponsored luncheon. The meeting was established through the Knox County Association office for local support.

Two other growth spiral conferences will proceed as scheduled.

On March 29, a basic growth spiral conference will be held at Englewood Church, Jackson from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. It will be led by consultant Andy Anderson.

A basic and advanced conference will be held April 26 at the Baptist Center in Brentwood from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

For more information, call the TBC Sunday School Department at (615) 371-2048. □

Southwestern Seminary trustees fire Russell Dilday

— Continued from page 1

Hightower said the firing came as a surprise even to some trustees. He attributed the move to "politics in the convention."

Dilday is the first SBC seminary president to be fired since "conservatives" gained control of the convention, in part by charging the seminar with liberalism.

Dilday's frequent criticism of tactics used by "conservatives" has brought him into conflict with trustees in recent years. Two earlier attempts to force him out failed.

Tension between trustees and Dilday surfaced during the first plenary session of the board's March 7-9 meeting.

In the course of the three-day meeting, trustees rescinded the seminary's invitation to R. Keith Parks, then president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, who now works with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group of "moderate" Southern Baptists, to deliver a commencement address in May, and delayed until fall consideration of a "rightsizing" recommendation from Dilday to reorganize the administration. Faculty tenure recommendations also were deferred until the fall. A proposed 1994-95 budget was approved but returned to administration with instruction to cut an additional \$305,940.

Rumors that trustees would move against Dilday himself circulated for more than a week before the meeting, most suggesting Dilday would be forced to retire earlier than planned. But, Dilday said, the issue did not surface in a job

performance review Tuesday night, March 8, in which trustees gave him a favorable evaluation.

Dilday said he asked the trustee executive committee members — including Pulley and chairman Damon Shook of Houston — about the rumors he would be dismissed. They said they knew nothing about such a plan, Dilday reported.

The following morning, as trustees gathered for their 11 a.m. session, Shook and trustee secretary Lee Weaver of Fort Worth asked to meet Dilday privately in his office, Dilday said. Waiting on them were trustees Pulley, Bob Davis, and Gerald Dacus.

Pulley said they wanted to offer him an early retirement plan, Dilday recalled. "I said I had no plans to retire and didn't need to see the plan because I wasn't ready for retirement. I said if they wanted me to announce my retirement plans, I would be glad to do that, but that they were for when I am 67 or 68. ...

"It was not my intention to retire immediately. God led me here and I had no leadership from the Lord that this was the time to retire."

Dilday said Pulley replied that the alternative then was that he be fired.

"I asked under what charges, what rationale, would they dismiss me," Dilday said. "His response was, 'We don't need a reason. We can do it. We have the votes and we will, and it will be with no provision for anything if you don't accept the early retirement plan.'"

Dacus, a trustee from Walnut, Calif., who was in the meeting and a supporter of Dilday, told Dilday the trustees had been polled and there were not enough votes to block the move to dismiss him.

Dilday said he told them, "You have to do your business as a board. My business is to determine my calling in life, and I am not planning retirement. So let's go. You do what you have to do."

The group then joined the other trustees, who immediately called for an executive session and excused press, faculty, and students. Only Dilday remained with the trustees during the 75-minute, closed door session.

Several events suggested trustees had laid plans for the dismissal well in advance:

- Within minutes of the firing, trustees changed the locks on the president's office and denied him access.

- Letters from trustees to students and faculty were distributed immediately. Two versions had been prepared — one

Baptists react to news at Southwestern Seminary

Compiled from news reports

The March 9 firing of Southwestern Seminary President Russell Dilday brought a multitude of reactions.

The *Baptist and Reflector* contacted Tennessee trustee Bob Burch, pastor of Calvary Church, Knoxville, for a reaction.

Burch was unavailable for comment. He later faxed a copy of an Associated Press story about the ouster which appeared in a Knoxville paper. A first-year trustee, Burch noted he "could not say it better. The momentum had been building for years." Burch was named to the search committee to find a new president.

SBC President Edwin Young of Houston called Dilday "a long-time friend" and expressed surprise at the firing. "I know they've had difficulty through the years — the trustees and Russell — but I had really thought there were fresh breezes blowing."

Since he is not a trustee, Young said, "I really don't know why he was dismissed."

Southwestern Seminary church historian Leon McBeth said he and his colleagues "are devastated" and "feel it's a very damaging thing to happen to Southwestern."

"Of all the tragic circumstances affecting Southern Baptists in the last decade, I think this is by far the worst," McBeth said. "On the Richter Scale, this earthquake is a big one. I think it is a killer."

Retired Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Roy Honeycutt called the dismissal "a tragedy and loss to all Southern Baptists."

Honeycutt questioned the method in which Dilday was dismissed. "His abrupt firing and the action of locking him out of the office and the treatment he is receiving is unprecedented among Southern Baptists. We've entered a new phase of the so-called resurgence among Southern

Baptists, and no one knows when it will end."

Jerold McBride, pastor of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said "it is a sad day" for both Texas Baptists and the SBC. Trustees voting for Dilday's dismissal "inflicted irreparable damage both to the seminary and the SBC," he said.

Robert Naylor, who served as president of the seminary from 1958-78, told reporters Southwestern will continue to be strong. "The substance for which the seminary stands will abide, that is more important than any one of us. ..."

Former trustee chairman Jimmy Draper, now president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, said "it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the actions of a sister institution."

He is, however, praying for the seminary, for Dr. Dilday, and the trustees." He urged "all Southern Baptists to do the same." □

Trustees withdraw Parks' invitation

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH — Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary voted to withdraw an invitation to former SBC Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks to speak at the seminary's May commencement. Parks is now affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Though the invitation was extended while Parks was still with the FMB, trustee Charles Lawson of Maryland, who made the motion to withdraw the invitation, said President Russell Dilday should have withdrawn it long ago. He should have known how the trustees felt about Parks and the CBF, he said.

The motion was approved by an overwhelming voice vote although at least one no vote was heard. □

if Dilday accepted forced retirement and the other if he were fired. Some faculty said they actually received the wrong letter, which said Dilday retired.

- Trustees voted on ballots prepared ahead of time.

- John Earl Seelig, a long-time seminary vice president (Seelig said he was not fired) by Dilday in 1989, was appointed by trustees to take charge of public relations. Seminary spokespersons were restricted in their contact with the press. Seelig, who was on the seminary campus March 9, was asked when trustees asked him about taking the position. "It wasn't today," he said.

Dilday appeared to have worked out conflicts with trustees, the most recent dating back to 1989. However, Pulley, a trustee from 1975-82 and a long-time Dilday opponent, was re-elected to the board in 1992, raising fears that the president would again be targeted.

Pulley, former deacon chairman at First Church, Dallas, has opposed Dilday since his election in 1978. In fact, Pulley presented an alternative candidate for president then (his brother-in-law, theology dean Huber Drumwright) but Dilday was elected.

During the trustees' March 9 deliberations, one trustee accused Pulley of carrying out a

personal vendetta against the president, a charge he later denied in a meeting with reporters.

Other trustees objected to the manner of the firing. Larry Brown of Convent Station, N.J., said he had served on boards of major secular corporations and had never seen such a "mean spirit" as that demonstrated by seminary trustees.

Brown's comments were overheard on a hallway speaker outside the closed meeting room. Trustees later had the speaker turned off. Afterward many trustees declined to comment on the appropriateness of the firing. Dilday was philosophical.

"They took the position that it was their right. And to be perfectly fair, it is true that the board can vote to change presidents at any time. The president serves at the pleasure of the board. I respect their authority to do that. But I think they should have good reasons."

Although the original motion to fire Dilday included no severance benefits, trustees later agreed to pay him his base salary — about \$85,000 — until he turns 65 in September 1995. He also will receive a housing allowance, medical and annuity benefits, and a \$3,000-a-month allowance for an off-campus office. He and his wife, Betty, must vacate

the seminary-owned president's home by June 7.

The provisions of the severance package require him to take no other employment for 60 days, not join a competitive venture, and do "only those things that are supportive of the seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention."

Dilday said he can abide by the restrictions, noting nothing in the provisions would prevent him from speaking out or speaking his convictions.

Dilday told news media and friends gathered at his house that "we are not defeated. ... I plan to do only those things supportive of the seminary and the convention." He said he was surprised by the firing and "it will be awkward and difficult for students for a while," but he urged them to continue on. He also urged about 30 faculty and staff members at the informal gathering to "do the same good job" they have been doing.

"I don't want anybody leaving or the faculty reacting," Dilday told reporters. "They need to stay with their work and the task to which the Lord has called them. I will be praying for them and supportive of them. I want this school to go forward." □ — *This article was compiled from reports written by Herb Hollinger and Tammi Ledbetter for Baptist Press and Greg Warner and Toby Druin for Associated Baptist Press.*

Abortion clinics

Some abortion clinics issued a joint statement that they never abort babies who have the potential of becoming leaders, scientists, plumbers, or auto mechanics. When they test a woman with the kindameter and find that she will give birth to one of the above, they tell her to go home and have her baby. They only abort those which will be a burden to, or of no use to, society.

In 1857 a U.S. Supreme Court declared that a Negro called Dred Scott was a piece of property which had to be returned to its owner. Today's court calls a baby a part of a mother's body that she can get rid of. Quite a similarity, is it not?

Going a step farther, today's court calls a person a racketeer when he tries to tell women about to have abortions that which is in them will turn out to be a baby unless they abort it. What a brilliant decision!

The Supreme Court has ruled that protest against abortion is a crime for which arrested protesters will have to go to court and defend themselves against. This is bound to decimate protesters. The justices, in reality, have legislated against freedom of expression. The courts seem to follow pop-

ular issues.

The nation's abortion clinics never issued the above statement. It was put here to convince readers that abortion kills people with potential of being useful or even necessary to society.

Warnings that God made the world too small are old hat. I would rather put my trust in God than in abortion clinics to show the way to a good life (see John 10:10). Violence is not necessary to turn the tables against abortion, neither is legislation. The Bible and the pulpit can make it lose its popularity.

Robert S. Dubiel
Martin 38237

Sad day

March 9, 1994, will go down in Southern Baptist history as one of our saddest days. On that date, the president of the largest and consistently highest rated seminary in the world was summarily fired and subjected to the indignation of having his office locks changed under watchful eyes of guards.

Why don't the trustees come clean and admit that this move was politically motivated? Obviously, Dr. Dilday could never be fired for his theology. His conservative credentials are impeccable. Obviously, he

could never be fired for poor job performance. Southwestern Seminary has thrived in every way possible under his tenure.

The trustees placed a gag order on Southwestern's director of communications in order that they might place their own "spin" on the events of the day, but Southern Baptists can read through any flimsy charges. I predict that the trustees have unwittingly hurt their own cause immeasurably. Thousands of Southwestern Seminary alumni who, like me, have endeavored to stay out of the fray will now be galvanized into action.

Gregory C. Bowers, pastor
First Church
Portland 37148

Silence broken

I have been silent as long as possible! The fundamental-conservatives have finally destroyed my faith in all that is fair, just, and right. I read with horror and a great sense of sorrow an article in *The Tennessean* (March 11) about Russell Dilday's firing as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

My husband was a student at SWBTS from 1978-1981. We knew firsthand what kind of fine and respected pastor, teacher, friend, and man of

God he was then and is today. Fundamentalists have made it their mission to remove all leaders who do not agree with them theologically and justified their actions all in the name of a "new direction" and what is best for them.

Christ speaks to all of us when he says "You hypocrite, take the plank out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5). The article stated that no reason was given for the abrupt move. There is no reason for such a reprehensible act.

President Dilday held to his convictions and his sense of what God would have him do. I am embarrassed and ashamed to claim Southern Baptist as my denomination — this is a sad day for all Southern Baptists!

Ellen Taylor
Murfreesboro 37129

Trends seen

In the past few years, I have become increasingly concerned about our churches' growing acceptance of the world and the use of worldly ideas. The trend can be seen in moderate churches as well as conservative churches. A desire to be acceptable to the world, to

make the church more comfortable to the world, drives the trend. Though the motives may often be admirable, the result is a gutted, shallow church.

I believe that the root cause of all of this is a deficient theology. The efficacy of man's efforts has been substituted for the sovereignty and sufficiency of God.

We need a wake-up call! We may have withstood the seduction of liberal worldliness only to succumb to conservative worldliness. Please do something to alert people to the danger!

Mark E. Smith
Manchester 37355

Not Catholic

This is a comment about Jay Pennington's letter in March 9 issue.

Mr. Pennington's church may have left the Catholics, but my church, a Southern Baptist Church, never, left or broke off from Catholics. My church was established by Jesus Christ, the son of the Living God. When he established my church, he said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Mrs. Paul Sliger
Niota 37826

Southwestern trustees answer questions about Dilday firing

By Art Toalston
For Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — "Irreconcilable differences between trustees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and former President Russell H. Dilday led to his termination from leadership of the school, according to members of the board of trustees."

The statement headed a press release issued March 11 in behalf of trustees who fired Dilday March 9 at the end of a three-day meeting on the Fort Worth, Texas, campus.

The statement was a sharp contrast to a news conference trustees held two hours after firing Dilday. Ralph W. Pulley Jr. of Dallas, newly elected trustee chairman, gave the media no reasons for the action except "... the institution needed a new direction for the 21st century."

He acknowledged there had been some discussion about the termination prior to the meeting by some trustees but refused to elaborate further.

Dilday was not quoted in the trustees' March 11 press release and was unavailable for comment to Baptist Press March 11.

The trustees' press release alleged Dilday's "reluctance to move in concert with policies established by the board brought constant concern to the trustees and often led to gridlock within the administration and to his

stonewalling the board."

"Also, Dr. Dilday has continued to speak out on political issues fostered by others, in contradiction to his earlier agreement with the trustees not to do so," the trustee statement said.

Trustees said they had written letters to the faculty and members of the Southwestern Council expressing their desire to see the seminary continue "its great heritage and the vision of the school's founder and first president, B. H. Carroll."

Trustees said "with the increasing divergence of views between the board and Dr. Dilday on the direction of the seminary under his administration, the trustees came to the conclusion that Dr. Dilday was not the right person to maintain that heritage and vision."

Trustees said their action was in keeping with Southwestern's bylaws, which state, "The Southern Baptist Convention has committed to the trustees the responsibility to operate the seminary for the convention and full authority in all matters of its operation."

An unidentified board spokesman was quoted in the press release as saying, "Everyone hurts when something like this happens. The trustees I know personally loved Dr. Dilday and wish things could have been worked out. However, for years we have tried to work under agreements and commitments that were made, and it just hasn't worked."

Trustees emphasized that while the difficulty in working with Dilday philosophically had reached a stalemate, he had earned high marks for his personal skills and relationships.

Trustees said Dilday "was offered an opportunity to accept early retirement, which he rejected. Board members further stated their action was 'simply dealing with a personnel matter that has no implications of moral wrongdoing on Dilday's part.'"

One unidentified trustee was quoted in the press release as saying trustees "have the utmost concern for the institution and its commitment to doctrinal integrity for the future and that no other changes are expected."

Damon Shook, pastor of Champion Forest Church in Houston, and immediate past chairman of the board, was quoted in the press release as describing his tenure leading the board as frustrating. He said the relationship between the president and board members was "difficult to deal with. He (Dilday) was confrontational and critical and the conflict seemed to accelerate in recent years with frequent attacks on trustees for lack of cooperation."

The press release said T. Bob Davis, secretary of the board and a member of Prestonwood Church in Dallas, told the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* March 10 that Dilday's termination "represents years of frustration and gridlock with Dr. Dilday." □

Daily prayer requests for Chile/Tennessee Partnership



March —

- 17 — These missionaries are serving as mission chairpersons: Rodney Irby, Gene Huckaby, Mike Racey, Lee Walker, and Lori Spikes.
- 18 — Missionary Donna Mae Bobby is serving this year as mission prayer chairwoman, helping to link Chile and Tennessee together in prayer.
- 19 — Tennessee Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women are gathered today in Jackson, focusing thoughts and prayers on the effectiveness of our Chile partnership. Retired missionaries Ken and Divina Park will share at this meeting from their many years of service in Chile.
- 20 — The association of senioritas in the Bio-Bio District is ministering to a home for girls.
- 21 — Focus on these Chileans who are lost and without a Savior: Manuel Sanchez of Temuco
- 22 — Focus on: Ziola Seguel's family in Talca
- 23 — Focus on: Juan Vergara.

Dilday's firing leaves questions unanswered

The timing of Southern Baptist Convention President Edwin Young's call for a halt to investigative reporting is ironic.

Speaking to the SBC Executive Committee February 22, he said there was no need for state papers to do investigative reporting of Baptist life.

The firing of President Russell Dilday by Southwestern Seminary trustees March 9 shows the irony in his opinion.

The episode of Dilday's firing behind closed doors touched off endless rumors. Handling of the situation surely would have been more acceptable and rumors squelched if Baptist reporters had been allowed to attend the meeting.

For example, the board of trustees could have announced at the outset that Dilday's performance would be discussed, and that a reporter would be allowed to attend. Credibility would have been much better served.

When will Baptist leaders learn that the people don't like closed doors? Investigative reporting will be necessary as long as there are closed door meetings where controversial decisions are made. Victims of past meetings could testify.

The Southwestern fiasco probably means that a majority of trustees would not wait any longer for Dilday's retirement.

But it was learned in the aftermath that his early retirement or resignation had been discussed earlier. He refused, and some fuses blew.

News articles in this issue of the paper give the views of trustees and others. Authority is not the question, but Christian actions are on trial.

Trustees must remember that they are *Christian* stewards, keepers of a sacred trust. Their role is not to force out leaders whose politics may not be acceptable to them even though their leadership and integrity are beyond question.

Investigative reporting? There has not been too much of it; there has been all too little. Reporting is never out of line when done legitimately, with good reason, and seeks answers that Baptists need and want to know.

Well-intentioned reporting also can probe for truth and interpretation. News is not always good, but it can be better understood when reported properly. When actions are taken without discrimination or malice, without violating Christian behavior, investigative reporting is not needed.

In the fallout of the firing, Southern Baptists look for answers. They want to know if reasons were justifiable, not just shallow words about new directions.

They need to know why it was done in such a shocking way. They will want to know why locks on his office doors were changed as he was fired. Is integrity missing here? Did the office files hold some information that had bearing on his innocence or job performance? Were there records helpful for his defense? Regardless

of the reason, it certainly was not appropriate.

Baptists want to know what happened to this 63-year-old Southern Baptist servant with a strong reputation as pastor, educator, and leader. When people, especially Christians, carry out Christian business in worldly ways, there are questions that should be answered. Finding those answers and reporting is necessary.

The damage to Southwestern, a flagship seminary, is beyond comprehension. The situation invites all sorts of criticism.

The damage to the Southern Baptist Convention, and to its reputation for quality leadership in missions, evangelism, and Christian higher education, is significant.

What happens next? Is it too late to draw back from the brink? Solutions can't be determined, because there are more questions than answers. We do know that a great reputation is at stake.

The truth is, this frustrating action will cause many Southern Baptists and friends to rethink past decisions and personal loyalty. Texas Baptists, who founded the school, are responding in big numbers. Numerous distress calls and letters already have come into this office.

Certainly it is time to wake up. Authority is vital for leadership, but so is responsibility — to God and to Southern Baptists. There must be a better way to settle differences. Baptists deserve answers, more facts. Until they get them, they have little reason to hope for the best. □

■ one word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

Two paragraphs

I discovered a disturbing fact three or four years ago, and I am still trying to understand it.

Being an avid lover of all kinds of maps, I was reading an essay on map-making.

To my chagrin, the writer questioned the credibility of most world maps of the past two centuries. And he awakened me to a reality.

The writer said that most world maps distort geographical sizes of countries and continents. I looked at some drawings of maps and realized he was correct.

Did you know that most mapmakers live in the Northern Hemisphere? Now you see his reasoning.

Usually the northern half of the globe is drawn larger, and the south is smaller.

The distortion is so great on some maps that it is ridiculous.

Why do we do that? Well, perhaps it is because most of the Southern Hemisphere is Third World, or new world. The opposite is true of the northern half.

Is this an exaggeration? Look at other evidence. In a major daily paper last week, a two paragraph article noted that *hundreds* of people had been murdered with bayonets by government troops in Burundi. That's a tiny Third World country in Africa. And it has happened before — and neglected before. Insignificant?

I would like to report that the United Nations or the United States had protested and was sending peacekeeping forces, but they didn't.

After all, Burundi has nothing the major nations need, and isn't likely to ever be a definitive power in Africa.

But Southern Baptists have missionaries there. There are lovely Burundi Christians there. I have friends there: Mganda Shamba Samuele, Paul Sanduga, Johanna Ndadogombe, and Etienne Bitababaje, and their families.

I would like to report that they are survivors — but I don't know. It's hard to find them on the map. They don't have anything of value to offer a greedy world, only love. ☺



ALLEN

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

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

Start with a smile

A courting couple, riding on horseback, stopped to rest. Their horses rubbed necks affectionately.

He said, "That's what I'd like to do."

She replied, "Go ahead, it's your horse."

Take this truth

We often overlook what is near by, fixing our eyes on something remote. People can do with opportunities as the child at the seashore — fill the hand with sand and let each grain fall one by one until they are gone.

Memorize this Scripture

"I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day" (John 9:4).

Pray this prayer

Lord, give us vigilance to watch for opportunity, daring to seize it, and persistence until we receive the reward. Let us remember if we seek and will not take when it is offered, we may never have the option again. □

Use 'vitamin C' in growing the family

We all have dreams of what we want our families to be. Remember the boy of the TV milk commercial who dreams of being a macho man? The announcer tells him that if he drinks his milk, he can achieve that dream. How do we grow our families in order to fulfill our best dreams and expectations?

One essential ingredient of a healthy diet is vitamins and one of the most important vitamins is vitamin C.

I suggest five sources for vitamin C, or Certainty in our quest for healthy and growing families. I recommend generous daily doses of *caring, communication, confidence, camaraderie, and celebration.*

Let's start by dealing with the first two sources of this mysterious "vitamin" that helps us grow the families of our dreams.

A good source for this basic component of a healthy growing family is *caring* relationships that are regularly and openly expressed. Children need daily massive doses of "I love you. I'm proud of you," along with bear hugs. These actions produce bright smiles, improved atti-

■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor and professor

tudes, and more self-confidence. Strange as it seems to young people, the reverse is also true. Parents respond positively to frequent portions of "I love you. I'm glad you're my parent," followed by a big hug. Parents sometimes have been known to

become more agreeable and supportive of teenage plans that accompany a regular administering of this component of "vitamin C" for the family.

Another way to get this important ingredient for healthy families is *communication*. Too many families today spend the larger part of their time talking at each other instead of talking with each other. There is little consideration of what the other family member needs or thinks. One major weakness in family communication is assumption.

Because we have lived together for some years, we assume the others know what we think or need. The only way others, no matter how close to me, will really know what I think or need is for me to tell them. Another

problem associated with assumptions is the understanding of the words themselves. We may not hear the word right. We may interpret it wrong.

I heard about an older couple rocking on the front porch when the wife began to feel a little romantic. She looked over at her husband of many years and said, "Honey, I am proud of you."

He answered, "Huh?" She repeated it a little louder. "Honey, I am proud of you."

He responded, "What did you say?"

She answered in a little louder voice, "Honey, I am proud of you."

This happened yet another time, and then she yelled, "Honey, I'm proud of you." This time he answered, "I'm tired of you too."

I recommend a regular routine of hefty helpings of both these sources of health producing elements of family life.

Next week we will look at the other three: confidence, caring, and camaraderie. □
Dr. Barkley may be reached at Union University, BMH Campus, 999 Monroe, Memphis 38104; or The Counseling Center, 6385 Stage Rd., Ste. 1, Bartlett 38134. — Editor



BARKLEY

Prayers of church bring health, leadership from friend

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

HERMITAGE — When First Church, Hermitage, needed an interim pastor they didn't have to look far.

In fact, their choice as interim was an answered prayer — literally.

For some time the church had been praying for Bob Dowdy Sr., father of one of the church's deacons, Bob Dowdy Jr. The elder Dowdy had been recovering from a bout with cancer and ruptured ulcers two years ago.

Dowdy, who has retired twice, first as a Baptist Sunday School Board staffer in 1985 and then again in 1990 after 22 years as bivocational pastor of New Hope Church, Readyville, had no illusions of returning to the pulpit two years ago.

"At that time I was just thankful to be living," said Dowdy, who nearly bled to death after the ulcers ruptured. In fact, doctors only gave him a 50-50 chance of surviving, said Rose Dowdy, his wife of almost 54 years.

Dowdy noted surgeons removed 50 percent of his stomach and he lost 40 pounds. "That's a tough way to lose weight," he laughed.

But right now "I feel as well as I ever have in many years.

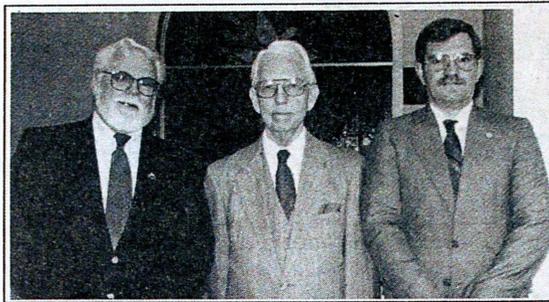
"The Lord has something for me to do, so he left me here," the veteran pastor, denominational worker, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, graduate concluded.

The younger Dowdy said he told his dad his church was looking for an interim. His dad replied he would be the interim if it was the Lord's will. "And, that's the way it worked out," said his son.

When the deacons at First Church, Hermitage, asked Dowdy to come as interim pastor for the month of February, Dowdy did not hesitate to accept.

They wanted me to come and see if I could physically do the job, Dowdy said. "Preaching again has given me new life. I'm a different person," he said.

And, Dowdy is doing much more than preaching. On a re-



INTERIM PASTOR Bob Dowdy Sr., center, of First Church, Hermitage, is flanked by his deacon son, Bob Dowdy Jr., left, and deacon chairman Anthony Westbrook.

cent Wednesday he made three hospital visits, one home visit, made 10 telephone calls, and then came to lead the Wednesday night prayer meeting.

"You have to let people know you're here if you're going to do any good," he observed.

First Church, Hermitage, is a small congregation which fits well with Dowdy's background. He readily admits his first love is for smaller churches.

Dowdy remembers a day in 1962 when, as a charter member, he preached the first sermon for a small church just beginning. Dowdy preached for 100 people on the night after the congregation was constituted as a church. One of the

people present, Bob Phelps, made a profession of faith to Christ and later became an evangelist who has won hundreds of people to Christ, Dowdy said.

What happened to that small church? It is Two Rivers, the

largest church in Nashville and one of the largest in the state. "Two Rivers has done pretty good since I left," Dowdy acknowledged with a laugh.

In 1964 Dowdy said God used him to help organize and establish Miracle Church in LaVergne. He helped launch that church which today is a thriving congregation in Concord Association.

Three years later Dowdy went to New Hope Church, a small, established church, also in Concord Association. He remained there for 22 years. Dowdy believes strongly that a long tenure is needed at a church. "A long tenure is the key to really helping people. You can't really help

people until you have been there a while," he said.

His time at New Hope proved fruitful. While there the church established Riverdale Mission in Murfreesboro. The pastor of Riverdale, Randy Sledge, had served as an associate to Dowdy at New Hope while he was in college.

New Hope signed the papers for \$250,000 with the Home Mission Board for the loan to begin the mission, Dowdy said. "It was something for that little rural church to take on such a responsibility," he noted. Riverdale is now a fully constituted church.

Good things also happened at New Hope. Prior to his retirement the church in 1989-90 had the largest percentage of baptisms (per capita membership) in Concord Association, said Dowdy, who also has been active in the Tennessee Baptist Convention, serving on various committees.

Though he had health problems after his retirement, he feels good about what he is doing for the Lord now. February has passed and Dowdy is still serving as interim pastor.

Instead of the job being too physically demanding on Dowdy, it has "done the opposite for me. It has given me new life," he affirmed. □

Sewing project draws Tennessean to Chile for partnership

It all began when Barbara Diers read in the *Baptist and Reflector* last year that the Tennessee/Chile Baptist Partnership was in search of someone for a community development project to teach quilting, crocheting, and knitting.

She phoned the Tennessee Baptist Convention in Brentwood. Last fall she was on her way to Chile.

She had some help before she boarded the plane, explained Diers. She had to pre-

pare to teach over 75 ladies.

Many different people helped, she reported, starting with Women's Ministries-United at Central Church, Bearden, Knoxville. Materials also were donated by locally owned fabric and knitting stores, local medical representatives, a local hospital, and a national thread company.

When she arrived in Valdivia she was impressed by the beauty there, she said. The city was located on a river

filled with colorful boats and lined with huge wooden houses built by German settlers, she detailed.

There Diers was joined by another volunteer, Jean Quinn, and Donna Mae Bobby, a missionary.

Their students had been chosen by Woman's Missionary Union groups, explained Diers. The students would become teachers who would lead classes for other women.

Items made as a result of the classes could be sold to provide income for families and churches, she noted. Sewing also can be a ministry, providing fellowship and a way to witness to others, added Diers.

The ladies in all the classes were "delightful," she said. "They worked so hard and they wanted to learn everything. All were very proficient in hand sewing so they caught on to the techniques quickly," said Diers.

While in Chile, Diers learned some of the culture. Every evening at 6 p.m. Chileans gather for oinsi, she reported. It is a snack including cakes and breads which were baked by the students.



STUDENTS LEARNING QUILTING, crocheting, and knitting in Osorno, Chile, work during a session, which was co-led by Tennessean Barbara Diers.

'God Bless America' was playing on the phonograph.

— Barbara Diers, volunteer

She especially enjoyed visiting new friends and their families in their homes. Usually extended families live together, she reported.

The people are poor compared to United States standards, said Diers. For example, Chileans still use horse drawn carts. They were gracious hosts. To make her feel comfortable, one family played "God Bless America" on the phonograph during her visit.

She answered a lot of questions about the United States, her church, and what women's groups in churches did, said Diers.

From Valdivia she went to Osorno, where a volcano towers over a lake near the city. Then she worked in the shadow of the Andes in Puerto Montt and Ancud, a small fish-

ing town with dirt roads, reported Diers.

After all the classes were finished she divided extra materials and tools, leaving enough for each church to make a quilt for a fundraising project. And she left additional items for newly trained teachers to use in their classes. One class already was scheduled before she left, noted Diers.

She also visited a government-operated orphanage in Valdivia. The workers and children there "need our prayers daily," she said.

On reflection, Diers said, "The people and country will always remain inside me. This experience also has brought a new and greater dimension to my relationship with God." □
— Connie Davis



LEADING MUSIC at the conference are the Stone Brothers — Rick from Huntsville, Ala., Randy from Ocala, Fla., and Rodney from Osage Beach, Mo. The crowd of 14,000 was replaced by another crowd which met in dual sessions during the two-day meeting. — Photo by Connie Davis

About 27,000 youth gather for messages, music

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

A near capacity crowd of 27,000 youth from Tennessee and surrounding states filled Nashville's Vanderbilt University Gymnasium to hear calls to surrender — their lives and in particular their sexual actions. Hundreds of youth made those commitments for the first time.

True Love Waits, a sexual abstinence project for youth, was an emphasis of the conference, which was held March 11-12. It drew Cable Network News (CNN), which covered the conference featuring the project.

Youth heard reports from their peers who have already committed to abstinence outside of marriage and were given an opportunity in smaller meetings to sign cards signifying their stance.

Knoxville conference on disabilities set

A meeting on physical disabilities will be held April 8-9 in Knoxville. Joni Eareckson Tada, Christian author and speaker who is disabled, will speak.

Sponsored by Spiritual Heritage Knoxville, Inc., an ecumenical group, the meeting includes a display of products for disabled people at Thompson-

Tennesseans Susan Fitzgerald and Paul Ballenger, students at the University of Tennessee — Knoxville, received a standing ovation after they explained their choice. Both are members of Tulip Grove Church, Hermitage, where the project began last year.

Abstinence is not an easy choice, admitted Ballenger.

"I'm not standing up here saying I've not been tempted. If you're physically attracted toward someone you're going to be tempted, but if your faith is strong enough ... you can resist that temptation," said Ballenger.

Youth must take responsibility for their actions, he added. He's from a single parent home, but that can't be used as an excuse for sexual promiscuity, he said.

"How great an honor it is to stand up here in front of the

largest bunch of virgins I've ever seen," he proclaimed.

Fitzgerald, who is dating Ballenger, said her commitment excludes a dating relationship with anyone who hasn't made the same commitment. The mutual understanding removes a lot of stress from dating relationships, she explained.

She wears a ring which is a "physical reminder of my virginity," she said.

About 5,000 Tennessee youth have already signed the True Love Waits commitment cards, reported Don Mauldin of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood. About 1,200 cards were on display outside the Baptist Center. Tennessee's goal is 10,000 commitments by June 1.

Youth also heard Rick Ousley and Kelly Green.

Ousley, a Birmingham, Ala., pastor who spoke on Friday, stressed God's salvation can't be found through church membership or baptism or good works.

When he was in the eighth grade, he had tried all three, he explained. It wasn't until he made a "personal release" of all that he had that he experienced salvation, he explained.

"The enemy wants to devour you. What are you going to do?" asked Ousley.

People can resist sex, drugs, alcohol, and other sins, but they can still go to hell, said Ousley.

"There are many of you here today who know more about being a Baptist than being a Christian," Ousley declared.

"Lost people only live in one dimension. Saved people live in two dimensions at the same time.

"When you're really saved you can't be happy sinning. Jesus is the way, the truth, the life. Translation — He's all you need," he explained.

Redirecting his comments to the Christian portion of the crowd, Ousley asked if they have allowed disappointments to weaken their faith.

"Christ is worth living for, selling out, giving up."

Christian teens also should consider their peers. "If they don't see a difference [in a life] they will never be convicted," Ousley concluded.

On Saturday Kelly Green, an evangelist from Mobile, Ala., cajoled the youth to surrender themselves to God to avoid the pitfalls of others.

He noted Madonna admitted in an interview she wasn't happy. And England's Princess Di has visited Mother Teresa to search for meaning in life.

From gang members to gifted students — all people are

searching for meaning or purpose, he detailed.

"Who cares if they have purple hair? Who cares if they have earrings? Jesus Christ can give you what you're seeking through drugs or immoral relationships."

All youth — even non-virgins — can participate in True Love Waits, he explained, because God forgives.

Some youth are "going home to WW III," said Green. "You look happy but on the inside you're dying."

"The God of Jesus Christ is enough. He loves you; he wants to change your life," he continued.

"I've been doing this 24 years and I don't understand it all. I just know he's the way, the truth, the life."

He joined Ousley in asking Christians to witness about their faith. While he was a teenager, Green said, he joined the Mormon church because his grandmother was a Mormon and because "they were the only ones who ever knocked on my door."

"We need to get out there and 'get dirty and look people in the eye and care about people and tell them about Jesus Christ.'"

People aren't searching for religion, they're searching for a relationship, said Green. □

Church's protest helps nudge company to make new television ad

Baptist Press

CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio — A fictional grandma swings in like Tarzan to swipe a bag of tortilla chips from a downtrodden Chevy Chase in a new Doritos ad — and a Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, church celebrates.

"It's exactly what we were asking for," said Jeff Scott, pastor of Broadman Church in suburban Akron and organizer of a protest against Frito-Lay, the Dallas-based maker of Doritos.

"I'm amazed that a little church in Cuyahoga Falls can

actually help align forces that make a multinational corporation change their advertising strategy," Scott said.

In October, Scott and a group of offended seniors steamrollered Frito-Lay products in response to the Doritos commercial in which comedian Chase valiantly rushes toward a grandmother figure about to get flattened by a steamroller. Chase saves the bag of chips she is toting and leaves the woman behind.

Scott asked Frito-Lay officials for an apology and a new commercial that portrayed seniors in a more positive light. He was pleased with getting both — even though he doubted the company would acknowledge his church's role in the new commercial.

Frito-Lay spokeswoman Lynn Markley said the protest played no part in the creation

of the new campaign, which has met with great reviews since its debut during the Super Bowl.

"Our first ad was meant to entertain and so was the second," said Markley. "We listened to the group. We understood their concerns. But we came back with this spot because it was entertaining."

In the new commercial,

Chase is fired from the commercial for having low ratings and is left only with a bag of chips. The grandma then swoops in and grabs the bag.

An advertising official for *Adweek* said it would not be unusual if the company had reacted to the protest.

"Corporate America does not like controversy," the official said. □

Director of Missions

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TenneScene ■ the people, their work

■ the people

■ Allen Church, Brownsville, has licensed **Lonnie Robinson** to the ministry.

■ Loveland Church, Knoxville, ordained **Scott Wolfenbarger** and **Mickey Green** as deacons.

■ Highland Park Church, Lawrenceburg, ordained **Bob Roysden**, **Richard Preston**, and **Tony Shults**, as deacons.

■ **Richard Workman**, **Dennis Hicks**, **Bill Carter**, and **Jim Ensor** were ordained as deacons Feb. 6 by Fairview Church, Watauga.

■ **Robin Clay Popplewell**, a student at Union University, Jackson, has been licensed to preach by First Church, McKenzie.

■ the leaders

■ **John Laida**, retired pastor, First Church, Clarksville, is serving as interim pastor, First Church, Dover, effective Feb. 20.

■ **Andy Roberson**, associate pastor, Falcon Church, Selmer, has been called as associate pastor, First Church, Bethel Springs.

■ **Bob Brian**, minister of music/golden agers, West Jackson Church, Jackson, was ordained by the church.

■ **Lewis Thomas** has been called as minister of music and youth at New Prospect Church, Lawrenceburg.

■ **Jim Hunter** is the new youth minister at Woodland Church, Brownsville.

■ First Church, Donelson, called **David Goddard** as minister of youth/recreation, effective March 1.

■ **Kevin Boyd** has been called by Hillhurst Church, Nashville, as minister of music, effective Feb. 27.

■ **Lowell Thompson**, bivocational pastor, Nolensville Church, Nolensville, was honored for ten years of service. Thompson, an editor in the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible Teaching-Reaching Division, and his wife, Betty, were presented several gifts and were honorees of a roasting.

■ **Albert G. Jewell**, pastor, Saulsbury Church, Watertown, will retire March 31 after serving 50 years there. A reception for him will be held April 10 at Wilson County Baptist Association office in Lebanon from 2-4 p.m.

■ **Jerry Essary** has been called as pastor of McConnell Church, Martin.

■ **Charles Halliburton**, pastor, Finley Church, Finley, will be honored for ten years of service March 20. A special morning worship service will be followed by a luncheon.

■ **W. A. Smith**, senior pas-

tor, Ridgeway Church, Memphis, has begun full-time evangelism work through Christ Above All Ministries, P.O. Box 382666, Germantown, Tenn. 38183-2666, (901) 573-1521. He will resign from his church work April 3. Smith has served churches in Albany and Rome Ga., in Mississippi, and Tennessee.

■ **Darron Byrd** has been called by Allen Church, Brownsville, as children/youth director.

■ **Jimmy Fowler** is serving as minister of youth and activities of Ooltewah Church, Ooltewah. Fowler, who is from Augusta, Ga., graduated from the University of Tennessee - Chattanooga, and Clemson (S.C.) University.

■ **Grace Church**, Tullahoma, has called **Sharon D. Kachelhofer**, as director of preschool and children. Formerly she was assistant children's director, Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham, Ala. Kachelhofer is a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

■ the churches

■ **Ooltewah Church**, Ooltewah, held a lay ministry weekend Feb. 25-27. Tom Brown, layman from First Church, Murfreesboro, led it.

■ **Jake and Victor Roudkovski**, brothers and students at Blue Mountain (Miss.) College from Kazakhstan, will lead revival April 1-3 at **Temple Church, Savannah**. Kent Wilson, another student, will lead the music.

■ A March 21-23 revival is scheduled by **Falcon Church, Selmer**. Charles Shipman of West Helena, Ark., will lead it.

■ A noteburning service to celebrate its debt-free status was held Jan. 23 by **Eastview Church, Ramer**.

■ **First Church, Hunter**, will hold revival March 20-24. Herb Reavis will lead.

■ **Munford Church, Munford**, will hold revival March 27-30. Terry Bradshaw, evangelist, will lead.

■ **Glenwood Church, Kingsport**, will celebrate the 107th anniversary of the church March 20.

■ **First Church, Iron City**, has completed the remodeling project on its building. It was dedicated March 6.

■ **Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga**, will dedicate its new sanctuary April 10. In addition to ceremonies during the morning worship service, an open house and reception will be held at 6:45 p.m. following the dedication of the new organ at 6 p.m.

■ **Mount View Church, Antioch**, will hold revival April 4-10. Dan Reynolds, a

pastor in Kentucky, will lead the services. Tommy Nokes, a minister at Immanuel Church, Murfreesboro, is in charge of music.

■ the associations

■ **Riverside Association** will hold a World Missions Conference April 24 - May 1. Twenty-two churches of the association's 26 are participating.

■ The Holston Truckers Chapel of **Holston Association** will be dedicated April 24. Its location is the Davy Crockett truck stop at Baileytown Exit of Interstate 81. The Tennessee Baptist Convention helped fund the project.

■ the schools

■ **Sarah Frances Anders** will lead the annual T. B. Maston Baptist Heritage Lectures of **Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City**, March 21-22. Anders, senior professor and Walker chair of sociology, Louisiana College, Pineville, will address "Staking Out Eternal Claims." For more information, contact the school at (615) 475-9061.



ANDERS

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

What is Lent?

Dan Francis, pastor
First Church, Nashville

It started again this week. Yes, this week, we Protestants began hearing strange sounding terms like "Fat Tuesday," "Ash Wednesday," and "Lent." Let me see if I can help with the translation.

Lent is to Easter what Advent is to Christmas. Just as Advent helps us to anticipate the coming of the Christ Child, Lent prepares us to celebrate the resurrection of the Christ Man.

Since the fourth century, this season has been devoted to Christian nurture through self-denial, reflection, and penitence. It is a 40-day period of soul refreshment that starts on Ash Wednesday. Fat Tuesday, as you might expect, refers to the day before which became a day of gluttony and carousing.

We Baptists often scoff at the formality of the observance, but it is not unlike our annual revival services. Both Lent and revival come up with annual regularity. Both have some pre-

dictable external trappings. But both also offer a clear opportunity for personal reflection and public recognition of spiritual failure and redemption.

The spiritual goal at stake here is not so much a rigid adherence to a church calendar, but the recognition that human beings need to be reminded regularly of their need for self-examination and a reopening of the self to grace. So, what will you give up for Lent this year? Let me offer a few suggestions from my files.

■ Give up complaining; focus on gratitude.

■ Give up pessimism; become an optimist.

■ Give up harsh judgments; think kindly thoughts.

■ Give up worry; trust divine providence.

■ Give up discouragement; be full of hope.

■ Give up bitterness; turn to forgiveness.

■ Give up anger; be more patient.

■ Give up pettiness; become mature.

■ Give up gloom; enjoy the beauty around you.

■ Give up jealousy; pray for trust.

■ Give up gossiping; control your tongue.

■ Give up sin; turn to virtue. ▽

God's great expectations

Tim Floyd, pastor
First Church, Columbia

Lately, it seems like God has begun to pour out his spirit anew here at FBC. Some things we are resolved to do:

1. See the people around us as human beings — not just things or the background for our own problems. Ask Christ to touch us again and let us love people in all their needs.

2. Treat other members at FBC as friends. Build bonds of trust through constructive conversation and compassionate conduct. Never let gossip break the bond.

3. Stop talking about evangelism and just do it! There are hundreds of ways to plant seeds of the Gospel in the lives of others: testimonies, tracts, ex-

hortations. Let's commit to point our friends to Jesus.

4. Stop hogging God's cookies. Everything we have belongs to him. God doesn't need us, but he does promise to bless us if we can give back cheerfully some of what he already owns.

5. Pray for additional spiritual leaders. We need an ever-growing crop of godly men and women who: a) are on their knees; b) on the move serving God; c) on a mission with things they are hungry to offer other people.

Sunday was awesome. Next Sunday might be even better. I'll see you in church. ▽

Articles included in "Tennessee Sampler — views, insights" are written by Tennessee Baptist church and associational leaders. The articles are chosen for publication from newsletters of churches and associations. The *Baptist and Reflector* does not necessarily concur with the views expressed.

Decline in youth baptisms to be focus of YouthReach

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — To reverse a decline in youth baptisms, Southern Baptists are asked to participate in a strategy called "YouthReach."

Churches received brochures and a commitment form about YouthReach in January, said Dean Finley, Home Mission Board youth evangelism specialist. Churches that return the commitment form will receive a packet of ideas for youth evangelism projects. The ideas include tips on how to make existing programs more evangelistic and how to use special events.

The first YouthReach was held in 1991 in response to the decline in youth baptisms, Finley said. That year, 89,595 youth baptisms were reported.

Last year, 80,438 youth were baptized, compared to 85,473 in 1992. The last two

years, youth baptisms accounted for 23 percent of Southern Baptists' baptisms.

Youth baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention peaked at 137,667 in 1972 when they accounted for 33 percent of all baptisms. Youth baptisms dropped until 1987 when they reached a 20-year low of 79,000.

The 1972 peak in youth baptisms can be attributed, in part, to the baby boom generation reaching its teen years. But baptisms have not kept pace with the youth population that has been increasing since 1989.

This year's YouthReach will culminate with a September celebration service in local churches. The service can include baptisms of youth who have recently made professions of faith and recognition of youth who were baptized earlier in the year, Finley said. □

Interfaith witness workshop scheduled

An interfaith witness workshop on the New Age Movement will be held April 21-22 at Central Church, Bearden, Knoxville.

The workshop is for people (pastors, church staff, Sunday School workers, WMU, Brotherhood, deacons, and Discipleship Training leaders) concerned about the influence of New Age teachers on churches and communities and how the New Age movement includes spiritism, secular humanism, drugs, and illicit sex, and who is interested in becoming an interfaith witness associate familiar with the New Age Movement.

The program begins April 21 at 2 p.m. and ends the fol-

lowing day at 2:30 p.m. Dinner and lunch will be provided.

All participants are required to attend both sessions.

A registration fee of \$15 (made payable to Interfaith Witness Department, Home Mission Board) should be sent by April 1 to Terry Sharp, TBC Missions Department, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024. □

CLASSIFIED

ORGANIST NEEDED: First Church, Murfreesboro, is seeking an organist to play Skinner Pipe Organ for two morning services and Wednesday choir rehearsal. Contact Jerry Neely at (615) 893-2514. Salary plus travel expense.

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Estate establishes \$2.7 million fund for China

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — The estate of the late Roy Cotulla of Cotulla, Texas, has established a \$2.7-million fund at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for ministries in China.

Cotulla, who died in July 1992 at age 86, asked the board in his will to use the money for work in China. The board has created a fund with proceeds from a liquidated stock portfolio that had grown from \$5,000 to more than \$3 million in the last 40 years.

The fund, named after Cotulla and his late wife, Lucille, should surpass \$3 million in the coming months, when a final settlement of the

estate released additional money, explained Carl Johnson, the board's vice president for finance. "We are so thankful for these resources which are a testimony to the meaningful lives of Roy and Lucille," added FMB President Jerry Rankin.

The couple owned a ranch in Hugo, Okla., and another ranch in Cotulla, a town of about 3,700 people between San Antonio and Laredo, Texas, that is named after the late Cotulla's grandfather, a Polish immigrant who founded it in 1881.

William Cotulla, nephew of the couple and executor of the estate, said his uncle became deeply concerned about China after several trips there. In 1975 Cotulla, who

had studied grassland cultivation, accompanied U.S. agricultural specialists to China to help in agricultural development.

"He left China with a deep burden for the Chinese. This gift is just a natural outgrowth of that concern and his commitment to Christ," said the nephew, who delivered a \$2.7-million check to the FMB March 7.

The size of the gift ranks in the top tier of donations made to the FMB.

Mission board officials have not determined details of how the money will be used in China. However, William Cotulla said his uncle had expressed interest in supporting the printing of Chinese Bibles. □

Union hosts spring Bible conference March 21-23

JACKSON — Union University's 23rd annual spring Bible conference will be held March 21-23 in the G. M. Savage Memorial Chapel.

Services will be led by well-known evangelists and authors Warren Wiersbe of Lincoln, Neb., and Junior Hill of Hartselle, Ala. Music will be provided by concert artists Ron and Pat Owens of Atlanta.

Wiersbe served almost 10 years as chairman of the board of the Slavic Gospel Associa-

tion and is a 10-year board member of The Evangelical Alliance Mission.

Hill has conducted more than 1,100 revivals across the United States and in several foreign countries.

Services will take place at 10 a.m., 3 p.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m., with the exception of the March 22 morning service which begins at 9:25 a.m. The schedule will change if Union's Lady Bulldogs play in the NAIA tournament Monday

and Tuesday nights.

For more information, call (901) 661-5160. □

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■ Sunday School lesson commentary

□ A miraculous healing produces controversy — Bible Book Series for March 20

By Edward North, pastor, First Church, Humboldt

The healing of the blind man is our Lord's sixth sign, and underscores the theme that he is the light of the world. This is the only case in the Gospels of someone healed who had been afflicted from birth. As was often the case with the mighty works of Jesus, this sign resulted in controversy.

Sin and suffering — vv. 1-7

The encounter with the blind man in the temple area prompted the disciples to question, "Rabbi who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" (v. 2) Inherent in that question are two misconceptions. One is the strange notion taught by some rabbis of prenatal sin. How else could the man's own sin cause him to be blind from birth? The second is the popular Jewish notion that all our suffering is caused by our sin (remember Job?).

□ The gift of life in Christ — Convention Uniform Series for March 20

By Ken Clayton, pastor, Tulip Grove Church, Old Hickory

In the first five verses of Chapter 5, Paul summarized the Gospel truth by using almost all the great "words," the great concepts, of our Christian faith. Paul used words like: "justified, faith, peace, grace, hope, glory, tribulation, perseverance, character, and love." Paul then invited his readers to consider the wonder of God's love.

Reconciled by Christ — vv. 6-11

Paul then turned their attention to the cross where the Son of God gave his life for all sinners. What we could not do for ourselves, being "without strength," Christ did for us (v. 6). All our human efforts to free ourselves from sin and to achieve a right standing with God on our own fail. Jesus came to our rescue. Jesus died that we might have life in his

Focal Passages John 9:1-7, 24-29, 35-41

Such a belief produces indifference and callousness to other's pain (they brought it on themselves), and flies in the face of the innocent Christ dying on the cross.

Jesus dismissed both ideas with the assertion that this man had been called to the high vocation of showing forth the miraculous works of God through his pain and affliction (v. 3). The structure of the Greek does not require the interpretation that God caused the man to be born blind that he might heal him, but declares that the work of God was not to make him blind but to give him sight.

No doubt sin sometimes does have physical consequences,

but we have no license to judge every man's suffering in that light. Sometimes our suffering is an opportunity for God to be glorified. As Jesus, the light of the world, brought light to the blind man's eyes, so he constantly seeks to illumine the ways of God to man.

Knowing and knowing — vv. 24-29

The Pharisees set about to discredit Jesus and his miracle. They questioned the man's parents and the man himself twice. In verse 24 they called him to take oath (give God the glory) and declared, "We know that this man is a sinner." They called Jesus a sinner because he had healed on the Sabbath. What they "knew" about Jesus was based on prejudice and narrow legalism.

The man responded, "Whether he is a sinner or not,

I do not know. One thing I know that though I was blind now I see" (v. 25).

His knowledge of Jesus was based on a personal, positive encounter. There is knowing and, then, there is knowing. Many know ideas, opinions, even facts, about Jesus. Others know what he has done in their lives. The healed man did not know theology, but he knew that though he once was blind he now could see. That is the final argument for Christ which cannot be refuted.

Believing and believing — vv. 35-41

The Pharisees were so incensed with the formerly blind man that they "cast him out" (v. 34). Jesus found him and invited him to believe on him as the Son of God. The man trusted Jesus as Savior. He began by calling Jesus a

man (v. 11), moved on to call him a prophet (v. 17), but finally confessed him as the Son of God (v. 38).

The man had a faith in Jesus' goodness and greatness all along, but that was not saving faith. It is possible to believe in the existence of God (the devil does), and the wisdom and power of Jesus, and still not be a Christian. One must finally come to believe in him as the Son God sent to redeem fallen man.

This truth becomes a dividing line for humanity. Jesus came to help the blind (those who acknowledged their spiritual need) to see, and to make blind (condemn) those who see (those like the Pharisees who think they have no spiritual need). Saving faith rises out of one's recognition of his own spiritual poverty. □

name. God's incredible love astonishes us. A person might be willing to die for us, "while we were yet sinners" (v. 8)! This demonstrates the depth of God's love given to us even though we do not deserve it nor can we earn it. The death of Jesus on the cross not only made us right with God, but saved us from wrath (God's punishment, hell) (v. 9). The death of Jesus on the cross changed our status from that of enemies of God to friends of God, those on his side (reconciled). Our new status of "reconciled ones" is secure because of the resurrection of Jesus (v. 10). In place of our fear in the presence of God, we are able to rejoice because on the cross Jesus paid the penalty for our sin (v. 11).

Our human condition — vv. 12-14

Sin entered God's perfect world with Adam's disobedience. Adam was the first man, who, along with his wife, Eve, was created by God on the sixth day and placed in the garden of Eden. Adam failed to keep God's command not to eat of a certain tree in the garden. His choice to disobey brought sin and death into the world (v. 12). As a result of Adam's sin, mankind inherited a sinful nature. This does not mean that we are guilty for the sin of Adam. Our guilt comes because "all have sinned" (v. 12), just like Adam. Of course, Adam and sin occurred before Moses and the Law. But the law of obedience to the Word of God had been in effect from the beginning. Adam broke this law. Adam was described as "the figure of him that was to come" (v. 14). This means that

Focal Passage Romans 5:6-17

Adam was regarded as head of the human race, while Christ is head of a new people, the children of God (vv. 13-14). The grace of our Lord is more powerful than Adam's sin or our sin. Sin and the resulting death entered history by one man. God provided another man whose obedience, even though it meant death to him, brought life to us.

God's free gift — vv. 15-17

These verses present a contrast that demonstrates the superiority of grace over sin. These verses may seem confusing, but Paul made his thought very clear in I Corinthians 15:21: "As by man came death, by man comes also the resurrection of the dead. For as in

Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Paul said that all men sinned in Adam. Death is the direct consequence of sin. After death there is judgment and condemnation. On the other side, contrasted with sin and death, Paul places God's cure for sin. God's cure for sin is his offer of eternal life to all who come to Jesus Christ. The free gift makes us right with God and covers our offenses. The free gift removes death from the throne of our existence, and replaces it with life. Outside of God's free gift mankind is involved in a situation from which there is no escape. Into this situation Jesus came. Jesus changed our situation forever by what he did on the cross. The free gift of eternal life is offered to all who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. □

□ Serve! — Life and Work Series for March 20

By Charles Bryan, pastor, Central Church, Alcoa

Last week, our church had a gentleman who works at Knox Area Rescue Ministries come in and share with us about the work they do with the homeless and about ways that we could help in their ministry. During a question and answer time, one of our members asked him why he was working at the Knox Area Rescue Ministries. He shared that about seven years ago he began to wrestle with the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He said he came to the conclusion that he was so he became a Christian counselor. About a year and a half ago, he felt that he should go and give back to the community in which he grew up so he went to work for Knox Area Rescue Ministries. Here was a person who felt a need to serve and

to serve in a less than glamorous place. This person made a lasting impression on me because of his willingness to serve. This is the message of our lesson today — we are to seek a place of service, not a place of status.

Service or status? — vv. 24-27

Do you remember the arguments that you had as children about whose dad was the strongest or whose mom made the best oatmeal cookies or who was the smartest? Weren't those arguments silly? And yet, we find the same type of argument among the disciples about who should be seen as the greatest. Jesus reminded them that being great in the eyes of God is not based on the size of a church or its budget or building

Focal Passages Luke 22:24-27, 31-38

or statistics, but upon the faithfulness of the people in their service. A church of 25 is just as important as a church of 5,000. We are measured not by our size, but by our service.

Are you able? — vv. 31-37

Being of service to God and his church is always a challenge. While we may think we will be faithful to our work, there are always situations and temptations which can cause us to be less than faithful in our service. Such was the case with Peter.

In verses 31-34, Jesus confronts Peter with the reality that Satan desires to put him to

the test. Jesus tells Peter that he has prayed for Peter to have the strength to face the trials. Peter is confident that he will remain faithful, even unto death. While Jesus has already acknowledged in verse 32 that this will only be a temporary failure, Jesus tells Peter that he will deny him three times. Peter was willing, but was not able.

In verses 35-37, Jesus tells the disciples that the times are changing. While in the past they had been able to go out and be received with hospitality, this will no longer be true. Now, they will be confronted with hostility. Jesus tells them to prepare themselves for such greetings. Does Jesus literally mean for them to buy a sword (v. 36)? No, but he is saying

that life is going to be tough in the days ahead so get ready.

Misunderstood — v. 38

The disciples had taken Jesus literally and presented two swords for his inspection. Jesus says, "It is enough." Did he mean two swords were enough? Probably not. Instead, he meant that was enough talk about swords. He intended for them to put a greater reliance on the resources of God instead of worldly sources of strength. They had misunderstood him. They were not yet able to fully rely upon the Lord.

May we learn to rely upon the Lord when trials come. May we learn not to confuse status and power with "true greatness." And may we each find our place of service and be faithful! □

Yemen hospital cleared of charges against Islam

Baptist Press

JIBLA, Yemen — A court in Yemen has cleared Southern Baptists' hospital in Jibla of charges that workers committed crimes against Islam.

Southern Baptist representative Bill Koehn, hospital administrator, has received a copy of the latest verdict. The faction that brought the charges has 40 days to appeal.

Last August, after a highly publicized hearing by a judge running for the legislature, Koehn was ordered to close the hospital and leave the country. But the orders were never enforced.

The hospital remained open while lawyers filed an appeal.

The case stems from accusations that two men tore up the Koran and threw it in the toilet because a doctor directed them to.

The Jibla hospital was opened in 1968 under the leadership of now retired Southern Baptist representative James Young. □

Southern Seminary given \$1.5 million

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE — Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has received a gift in excess of \$1.5 million that will benefit the seminary's extension center in the northeast and other seminary programs.

Charlotte Hoover, a long-time seminary donor from Annandale, Va., designated more

than \$900,000 of the gift for the establishment of the Hoover Endowment Fund.

Income from the fund will provide scholarships and help meet other financial needs related to the seminary's Northeastern Baptist School of Ministry.

The NEBSM conducts master's-level classes in Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Silver Springs, Md.

Other funds will go toward the Lawrence and Charlotte Hoover Chair of Pastoral Care and toward construction costs of the Honeycutt Campus Center. □

Aycock joins SBC Brotherhood staff

Brotherhood Commission

MEMPHIS — Don M. Aycock of Louisiana has been named special materials editor for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's Adult Division.



AYCOCK

Aycock, 42, joins the staff after serving pastorates in Kentucky and Louisiana. He is the author, co-author, or editor of 11 books. □

Boyles resigns Oklahoma pastorate

Baptist Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bobby Boyles resigned Feb. 20 as pastor of First Church, Moore, Okla., then met with about 460 supporters more than two

hours Feb. 23 at an Oklahoma City Ramada Inn to plan the start of "The New Southern Baptist Church."

Boyles, who was chairman of the 1992 SBC Committee on Nominations, was elected by SBC messengers last year to preach the convention sermon this year in Orlando.

Boyles resigned from the Moore church after deacons voted, in his absence, 32-3, as Boyles told the *Daily Oklahoman* newspaper, "We feel the First Baptist Church of Moore — our church, God's church — would be better served by a new pastor in the future."

Senior associate pastor Fred Powell, who will serve as acting interim pastor, said Boyles was not "immoral. He did not embezzle funds."

Powell said recently the deacons recommended that the personnel committee consider asking Boyles to consider whether his ministry there was finished. "Nobody ever said he had to resign and there was no effort to vote him out ... he was not made to resign," Powell said. □

New law in Bulgaria targets sects, cults

Baptist Press

VARNA, Bulgaria — A new law passed by Bulgaria's parliament targets religious sects.

The law, passed in late February, will require groups such as the Mormons, Jehovah's witnesses, and followers of Sun Myung Moon to re-register with the government within the next three months.

The measure apparently will not affect Baptists and

other evangelicals, who already have been victims of a months-long campaign of hostility and propaganda.

Some churches also have had problems renting public meeting rooms and constructing buildings.

Southern Baptist mission workers have had trouble getting residency permits to remain in the country.

Baptist leaders have publicly denounced the law anyway, charging it violates human rights, said Boshidar Igoff, general secretary for Bulgarian Baptists.

"Everybody knows that nobody from these groups will receive a new registration," Igoff said. □

Baptists operate kitchens on edge of combat zone

Baptist Press

LAS MARGARITAS, Mexico — While Zapatista guerrillas and the Mexican government negotiated for peace in early March, Baptists continued feeding hundreds of refugees from earlier fighting who fled to relief centers on the edge of the combat zone.

The government provides most of the food, while Baptists set up food kitchens and supply volunteers to operate them until July.

Baptists started setting up the kitchens in early February.

The Baptist Aid Committee of the National Baptist Convention of Mexico is one of the civilian relief organizations recognized by city officials in Las Margaritas. □

Ethnic diversity requires greater diligence, Romo says

Baptist Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — America's growing ethnic diversity requires greater diligence by Christians to reach people of other races in the 21st century, said the Home Mission Board's director of lan-



ROMO

guage church extension. "People are continually coming to America who are culturally and linguistically distinct," said Oscar Romo at the board's annual language mission leadership conference. "Many of them have no knowledge of what the Bible or the church is."

Southern Baptists have had a language missions program in America since the 1950s. Today, Southern Baptist churches worship in about 100 languages in America each week. The denomination has about 6,580 ethnic congregations.

Romo urged Southern Baptists to share the Gospel contextually and effectively. □

Barbara Chapman dies in Mississippi

Baptist Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Barbara Chapman, 82, mother of Morris Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president, died March 5 of respiratory failure at a health center here. □

ACTS celebrates 10th year; ministry programs most viewed

By C. C. Risenhoover
For Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — ACTS (American Christian Television System) is 10 years old this year.

The faith and values cable television service of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission was the vision of Jimmy Allen, former president of the RTVC who guided the network from inception through its formative years.



JOHNSON

"Jimmy Allen's vision was the cornerstone for what ACTS has become over the past 10 years," said RTVC President Jack Johnson. "What began as

a small cable service reaching a few people in a limited geographical area now reaches into more than 10 million homes nationwide. We must now take Jimmy Allen's vision into the next century, using all the new technology that becomes available to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

The growth of ACTS has not been without turmoil.

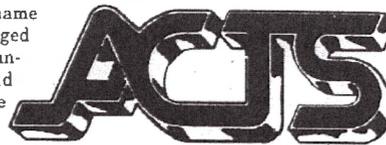
In July 1992, ACTS entered into a shared channel arrangement with VISN (Vision Interfaith Satellite Network), owned and operated by the National Interfaith Cable Coalition. That move was not well received by all Southern Baptists.

The channel was first called VISN-ACTS with VISN receiving 16 hours a day for programming and ACTS receiving

eight. Last January the name of the channel was changed to "Faith and Values Channel," though ACTS and VISN continue to operate as fully autonomous networks sharing a common delivery system.

"Some people got the idea it was a merger," said Johnson, "and nothing could be further from the truth. It is simply a shared channel arrangement. Prior to the shared channel agreement our programming reached into 8.2 million cable homes in a limited geographical context. Now we reach into every major city in the United States, important demographic and geographic areas for Southern Baptist outreach with the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Johnson said that VISN "has no control over our



SATELLITE NETWORK, INC.

(ACTS) programming and we have no control over theirs. This was not a merger, blending, marriage, union, coalescence, or linking of the two networks. This was simply an arrangement to share the same cable channel."

Johnson said ministry programs continue to be the most watched on the channel, and monthly telephone calls and letters requesting spiritual help have tripled since the onset of the arrangement.

Ministry programs such as "The Baptist Hour," "The Cen-

tral Message," "In Touch," "Invitation to Life," "Prestonwood Presents," "The Winning Walk," and "Word of God for Today's World" reach into 1.2 million cable homes in New York City where

there are only 12 Southern Baptist churches, Johnson pointed out. "Now that's evangelism, reaching millions of people who might otherwise not have an evangelical witness."

Johnson noted the TV ministries of preachers Frank Pollard, Charles Stanley, Ronnie Floyd, Ed Young, Jack Graham, Ron Phillips (pastor of Central Church, Hixson), and Robert Hamlin "are reaching the lost in all of our major cities because of the shared channel agreement." □