

Baptist and Reflector

December 14, 1994

VOL. 160 ■ NO. 50

STATEWIDE EDITION

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Baptism increase expected in SBC, Tennessee

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — After two years of decline, Southern Baptists can expect a 2 percent increase in baptisms in 1994, according to an estimate by the Home Mission Board research division.

The estimate, based on information from state evangelism directors, indicates 356,000 baptisms in 1994, compared to 349,073 in 1993.

In Tennessee, the increase appears to be comparable, if not higher.

According to Jerry King, director of the

Tennessee Baptist Convention Evangelism Department, preliminary figures from 38 of the state convention's 68 associations show a substantial increase. Still to come, however, are reports from the state's four metropolitan associations — Nashville, Knox County, Shelby County, and Hamilton County.

King is optimistic. "I believe we're going to have higher percentage than the national figure," he said.

Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism, noted 1994 was "a good turn, and I think 1995 will be up even

more than that because of Here's Hope."

"Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" is the theme of a simultaneous witnessing effort scheduled for Jan. 9 to March 9. Southern Baptists are asked to share Christ once a day during those 60 days. Churches are asked to follow up with revivals in which new Christians are encouraged to make their decisions public.

HMB President Larry Lewis said his dream is Southern Baptists will baptize 500,000 people next year as a result of the Here's Hope effort, which will occur during the 150th anniversary of the SBC. □

Executive Board OKs Family Ministries program

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — During its first meeting of the 1994-95 year, the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board met Dec. 8-9 to hear reports on increased Cooperative Program funding of ministries and on plans for an enhanced Family Ministries program. The board also met the new associate in the Evangelism Department.

Gathered at the Baptist Center, the board heard James Porch, TBC executive director/treasurer, say Cooperative Program gifts last year met 95 percent of budget, an increase above gifts the previous year.

And in the first month of the new year — November — receipts were \$281,000 ahead of last year, he added.

"It is entirely possible to exceed this budget," said Porch, adding he had received letters from several congregations

saying they were going to begin giving to the Cooperative Program.

The CP emphasis at the annual convention in November was well received, he stated. The key is education, Porch said.

In other comments about the convention meeting, he noted because of a decline in attendance at recent conventions, the Convention Arrangements Committee will be studying new approaches to the meetings.

Porch also reported on response by Tennesseans to partnerships with Poland and Canada approved at the convention. Record numbers of potential volunteers have contacted the TBC Partnership Missions Department, he said.

Porch concluded his report by reporting the TBC staff will be studying its "delivery system" to Tennessee Baptists.

The board acted to support another Tennessee Baptist



BETTY WILLIAMS is congratulated by Wm. Fletcher Allen, Baptist and Reflector editor, for 35 years of service to the paper. Williams was honored during the Executive Board meeting along with other long-term TBC employees. She has served under five editors.

partnership, that with Michigan Baptists for the past 14 years. Members voted to continue making grants, loans, and supplements as funds are available to Tennessee Baptist churches through the Key 20 New Work Sponsorship Pro-

gram to support new congregations in Michigan.

During the Church Programs Committee report Porch shared plans for enhanced family ministry work. He announced Don Mauldin, program associate, Discipleship Training Department, has been named associate director of Discipleship Training, effective Feb. 1, with the assignment of family ministry. An associate director of the Sunday School Department also will be named, Porch added, to allow for more work in the areas of Bible teaching and early childhood weekday programs. Reorganization of staff assignments will also allow for an emphasis on church administration, he explained.

Other staff matters were reported to the board. The new associate of the Evangelism Department, Jay Austin of Nashville, was introduced after being elected by the Convention Ministries Committee.

— See TBC, page 2



CHAIRING TBC STANDING COMMITTEES for the coming year are, from left, Russ Dunham, LaFollette, Convention Ministries; Dean Haun, Hermitage, Executive Committee; Laurann Whetham, Luttrell, Christian Services; Executive Board President Paul Moody, Erin; Conyer Walker, Bruceton, Central Administrative; Mike Thrower, Brunswick, Church Programs; David George, Nashville, Education; and Richard Patton, Portland, Budget and Program.

Executive Board OKs Family Ministries program ...

— Continued from Board, page 1
Austin is a recent graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He also has studied at Belmont University, Nashville. Austin is a former member of Brentwood Church, Brentwood.

It also was reported Dwight Bass was elected as Baptist Student Union director, Roane State Community College, Harriman. Bass has been interim BSU director there.

Several retirements were announced. Cameron Byler, Brotherhood director, will retire on June 30, 1995, noted Mike Thrower, chairman of the Church Programs Committee.

Thrower reported the search committee for that position will include himself, John Holland, pastor, Salem Church, Knoxville, and Dan Arterburn, minister of music, Hermitage Hills Church,

Nashville. (See related story on page 3.)

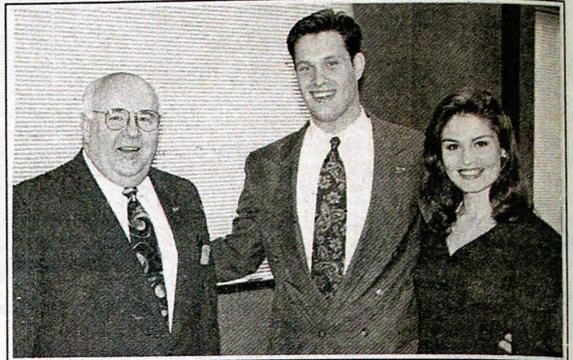
Others announcing or referring to retirements during the meeting were J.L. Ford, president, Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes, Inc., effective Dec. 31, 1995; Hyran Barefoot, president, Union University, Jackson, effective June 30, 1996; and Earl Wilson, president, Tennessee Baptist Foundation, April 1, 1995.

During reports by institution heads, Walter Grubb, president, Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour, discussed the school's somewhat tenuous financial condition.

The academy is operating in the deficit for the fourth year, he said, adding that the relationship between the school and the convention needed strengthening.

"Let's stay together for the children," Grubb said.

Another institution head, Earl Wilson, reported on the



TBC EVANGELISM DIRECTOR Jerry King, left, welcomes Jay and Melissa Austin to the Tennessee Baptist Convention family. Effective Jan. 1, Austin will begin serving as program associate in the Evangelism Department. His primary responsibility will be working in the area of youth evangelism.

Church Building and Loan Program which is managed by the Tennessee Baptist Foundation. Last year the program helped three churches construct buildings by loaning \$70,000 and 14 congregations

began with loans of \$472,500. The program receives funds from earned interest and allocations from the Golden State Missions Offering.

The board's next meeting will be May 9-10, 1995. □

Annuity Board trustees take step toward mutual fund environment

Baptist Press

DALLAS — Trustees of the Annuity Board met in a called session Dec. 5 and took another step toward restructuring its investment program into registered mutual funds.

Chairman Richard C. Scott explained regular trustee meetings do not allow enough time to consider the complicated issues and processes neces-

sary to move from the current offering of four investment funds to an environment regulated by both the federal Securities and Exchange Commission and securities laws of 50 states.

In 1992 trustees approved staff work to explore the registered mutual fund environment with the understanding that regular reports would be made and trustees would de-

cide future actions at appropriate times.

The only action taken by the board Dec. 5 was adoption of resolutions that were prepared by Annuity Board and SBC Executive Committee representatives Nov. 29 in Nashville. The resolutions authorize continued work and ensure Executive Committee or SBC involvement in the process.

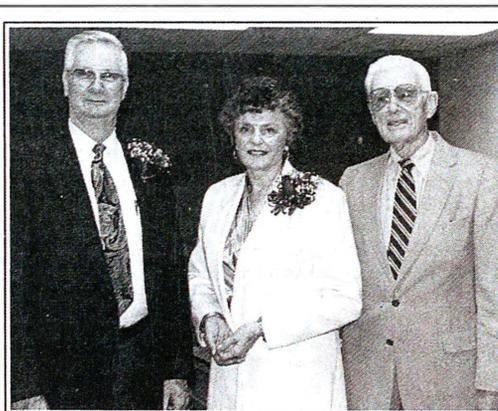
The Dallas meeting included a lengthy presentation by outside legal counsel, a question and answer period, and an audio-visual presentation reviewing current investment structure.

Annuity Board Chief Operating Officer W. Gordon Hobbard Jr., estimated the implementation of a mutual fund structure would not be earlier than 1996. □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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Employees honored

TBC employees were honored during the recent Executive Board meeting at the Baptist Center. In photo to left, Jarvis Hearn and Fonda Johnson were recognized upon their retirements from the Partnership Missions Department. With Johnson was her husband, E.E. In photo below, employees were recognized for years of service. From left, front row, were Carol Growden, 10; Renate Wilson, 25; Betty Williams, 35; Martha Norris, 10; Barbara Owen, 20; Mary Allen, 30; Fonda Johnson, retiree; back row, Cameron Byler, 5; Felton Clark, 5; Johnnie Hall, 35; Roger Johnson, 5; Greer Ruble, 10; William Choate, 10; and Jarvis Hearn, 25.



BSSB suspends Genesis Records

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Genesis Records, the recording label formed by the Baptist Sunday School Board in 1993, will be discontinued, effective Jan. 1, 1995, due to budget considerations.

Mark Blankenship, director of the board's music department, announced the decision on Nov. 29 "because of budget constraints for new ventures."

He said Genesis, which had signed vocal artists Amy Roth, Brent Lamb, and Southern Gospel singing group Friends IV, would have required "three to four years to be a viable production entity."

The position of artist and repertoire consultant for Genesis, filled by Nashville booking agent Dan Mann, was the only full time job eliminated.

The print trade music imprint, Genevox Music Group, created by the board in 1986, will continue to produce music products for sale. □

Broadman & Holman decides against publishing textbook

Compiled from news reports

NASHVILLE — A textbook on principles of biblical interpretation will not be published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman Publishers as earlier planned and announced in a catalog because the manuscript did not meet doctrinal guidelines of the *Baptist Faith and Message*, according to Charles Wilson, vice president for trade publishing.

Hermeneutics and Theology: A Scriptural Approach by Charles J. Scalise was scheduled for release in August 1995. Scalise, associate professor of church history at the Seattle extension center of Fuller Theological Seminary, formerly taught at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

The *Baptist Faith and Message*, a doctrinal statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963,

is the editorial standard for all materials published by the board.

"When we contract with an author, we enter that relationship fully expecting to publish a book," Wilson said. "However, the publisher has the right to make a decision that a book should not be published. In this instance, we have exercised that right," he added, noting that while the action is "unusual," it is not "unprecedented."

Scalise, in a prepared statement, said, "By breaking its contract to publish this book, Broadman and Holman Publishers has demonstrated that it is an untrustworthy partner in the ministry of serious evangelical Christian publishing."

Scalise said after contracting with Broadman & Holman in late 1992, he submitted the final chapters of the manuscript in July.

John Landers, editor of academic

books for the Sunday School Board, disputed that the publisher broke the contract. "I would say we withdrew from the contract because we didn't have an acceptable manuscript," he said.

Landers said after reading the full manuscript, "I simply concluded it was not in the parameters of the *Baptist Faith and Message*."

Asked how the book violates the *Baptist Faith and Message* statement, Landers responded it was "more the tone of the book than any particular sentence, I think."

Scalise defended the book as "an attempt from a committed conservative evangelical perspective to offer an introduction to hermeneutics and theology to Baptists and other evangelical Christians."

A catalog containing information about the forthcoming release was distributed earlier in the fall, a develop-

ment Wilson called "unfortunate, but a necessary and routine process in the book publishing world."

Landers noted that word of the decision to withdraw the book created something of a stir at a recent professional meeting he attended. Rumors stated that the Sunday School Board is tightening its restrictions on writers and bowing to conservative political pressure in editing decisions.

"I think our doctrinal statement is the same it's always been, which is the *Baptist Faith and Message*," Landers responded. "I heard rumors that pressures were brought to me by certain people, but that's not true. I also hear people in Louisville were bringing pressure on me. Not true."

Wilson said all rights to the manuscript now belong to Scalise and he is free to seek another publisher. □ — Compiled from BP and ABP reports

Fire in Haiti slows down Southern Baptists' food distribution efforts

Baptist Press

MEMPHIS — Fire in a major power plant in Port-au-Prince has knocked out electricity in many parts of Haiti's largest city and has delayed Southern Baptist World Relief food distribution efforts by at least a week.

Mickey Caison of the Brotherhood Commission, coordinator of Haiti relief efforts, said two of the generators at the Haiti Baptist Convention's annex offices have ceased to operate after running long hours following the power outage Nov. 29.

The absence of all but one

operating water well at the annex has resulted in the need to ration water used by volunteers, Caison said. Not only is the fresh water used as a drinking source for volunteers, it also is used in the food distribution operation.

Distribution of family commodity packs containing rice, beans, flour, and cooking oil began Dec. 5. The delay due to the fire put volunteers about a week behind schedule, Caison said.

Needs still exist for volunteers as critical weeks remain unfilled. For more information about volunteer work, call 1 (800) 280-1891. □

Church facing tithing lawsuit encouraged

By Ken Camp
For Baptist Press

DALLAS — When the Justice Department reversed course in mid-September, no longer siding with creditors in a bankruptcy-related tithing case against a church, it was more than a small article in the back of the morning paper to members of Cedar Bayou Church in Baytown, Texas. It was a ray of hope.

In June the church was notified it was being sued by a Houston construction company to recoup tithes given by a member who had declared bankruptcy.

The church member was one of three men who had set up an air conditioning service

department for the construction company in the mid 1970s. In 1990, nearly five years after the trio had left the company, their former employer filed suit contending the construction company had overpaid them \$20,000 each. An additional \$30,000 was added to the suit for equipment purchased through the company.

After a jury ruled in favor of the construction company, one of the men, a longtime member of the church, declared bankruptcy.

This summer the construction company filed suit against the church. The suit declared the former company employee had given more than \$30,000 to the church between July 1,

1986, and Oct. 14, 1992, "without receiving a reasonably equivalent value in exchange for the transfer."

Although a motion to dismiss the suit was granted on procedural grounds, the church feared the plaintiff would try to correct the procedural defects in a refiled lawsuit.

But actions by President Bill Clinton Sept. 15 "took the steam out of the opposing attorney," according to Richard Steel, pastor of Cedar Bayou.

Clinton ordered Attorney General Janet Reno to reverse direction in a Minnesota court case that creditors have the right to seize money given to a church by someone headed for bankruptcy. □

Virginia conservatives study formation of 'state convention'

Compiled from news reports

RICHMOND — Southern Baptist conservatives in Virginia took an unprecedented step Dec. 8 with the announcement they will study the "procedures and requirements for the establishment of ... a separate state convention."

The action came during a meeting in Richmond of the group's executive committee which, according to a news release, unanimously passed a resolution starting the process.

Bob R. Melvin, the organization's president and pastor of Spotswood Church, Fredericksburg, will appoint a special committee to study the procedures and requirements and then recommend the action to the executive committee "not later than its May 1995 meeting."

The conservative group also invited Virginia Baptist churches "who wish to do so," to channel their Cooperative Program gifts for the Southern Baptist Convention budget through the "Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia" group. The organization listed a Virginia Beach address.

The news release advised Virginia

churches the SBCV "is not yet a state convention and has no annuity plan agreement with the SBC Annuity Board.

"Consequently, all churches should continue to send \$35 per month per annuity plan participant to the Baptist General Association of Virginia."

BGAV Executive Director Reginald McDonough expressed disappointment that "this group feels it necessary to take this action.

"I personally feel that a Virginia Baptist leadership is trying hard to give every person in the state an opportunity to stand on their convictions but at the same time be active in the Virginia Baptist program."

McDonough, who was in Costa Rica in conjunction with a missions partnership between Baptists there and the BGAV, said Virginia Baptists ought to be able to find cooperative ways to "spread the Gospel at home and around the world. They (the SBCV) have simply announced they are studying this. It's my hope that after studying the possibility, the greater advancement of the kingdom (of God) can be made by staying together rather than separating."

The Virginia conservatives' plan would be a historic and unprecedented step. Apparently, conservatives in Texas also are considering a new state convention and a charter for a new Texas Baptist convention has been filed.

T.C. Pinckney, spokesman for the conservative group in Virginia and a member of the SBC Executive Committee, defended the group's action in a commentary in the December issue of the Virginia conservative publication, *Baptist Banner*.

"As long as the Baptist General Association of Virginia constitution provided a level playing field where conservatives had a fair chance through education and inspiration to bring about change in Virginia through voting at the annual BGAV convention, conservatives around the state counseled that we should hang in there and work toward a voting majority. Achieving a majority vote is no longer possible," he said, citing a BGAV constitutional amendment passed last month.

□ — Compiled from Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press news accounts.

Search begins for Brotherhood head

Recommendations are now being accepted for persons interested in heading the Tennessee Baptist Convention Brotherhood Department.

The position will become open June 30, 1995, upon the retirement of Cameron Byler, TBC Brotherhood director since 1989.

Serving on the search committee are Mike Thrower, chairman, Church Programs Committee, from Brunswick; John Holland, Knoxville; and Dan Arterburn, Hermitage.

Resumes for this position should be sent to: Search Committee, Brotherhood Director, %Executive Office, TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024.

The cutoff date for recommendations and resumes is Jan. 31. □

■ about letters to the editor

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

Liked conferences

Two conferences we've recently attended are worthy of note and appreciation. One was the Drama Festival in Nashville directed by Ev Robertson. What an inspiration! With more than 300 workshops to choose from and uplifting worship services, one's heart was singing by the end.

Also, the conference on "Church Growth with Biblical Integrity" sponsored by the Baptist Center for Ethics gave us many exciting ideas and much hope for the future. A conference entitled "Family Works" is scheduled for Feb. 27-28, 1995, in Knoxville, and it promises to be just as good. For more information, contact

the Baptist Center for Ethics, Box 22188, Nashville, Tenn., 37202 or call (615) 383-0915.

We have much for which to be thankful, and these two excellent experiences point that up.

Diane Owen Jordan
Talbot 37877

Seeks pastor

We have a small mission chapel in Rapid River, Mich., on the Upper Peninsula. We are seeking a bivocational pastor with strong leadership ability. The pastor should be able to work with young people and able to reach out to help bring in new members.

We are seeking someone who is willing to accept the challenge of a new mission chapel. Please send resumes to me. Contact me if more information is needed.

Linda Creel
First Baptist Chapel
8350 25th Lane
Rapid River, Mich. 49878

Prayers helped

Each week as the *Baptist and Reflector* arrives in the homes and churches of Tennessee Baptists, I have been assured of your faithful prayer support for our Chile/Tennessee Partnership. As our partnership draws to a conclusion, I express:

- Thanks to Fletcher Allen and staff for the weekly publication of daily prayer requests for Chile in our state paper;
- Thanks to the Tennessee Baptist Convention for providing departmental prayer requests to share with our Chilean brothers and sisters so they could partner with us in prayer;
- Thanks to the *Green Light* staff for including Chile prayer requests as a part of the monthly calendar;
- Thanks to Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union for the office support of this ministry;

• Thanks to Jarvis Hearn and Fonda Johnson for their cooperation and leadership; and certainly

• Thanks to you, Tennessee Baptists, for consistently surrounding our volunteers, missionaries, Baptist leadership, and ministries with your fervent prayers throughout these three years.

Judy Trivette
Chile/Tennessee
Prayer Coordinator
Knoxville 37918

Doesn't like news

In the Nov. 30 edition, I read an article that was offensive to me and that was totally inappropriate. Information was given about Lloyd Householder being named director of the Nashville office of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

This was offensive to me because I don't want to read about the CBF organization, nor its officers. If I wanted CBF information, I would join its organization. Since this "fellowship" grows by siphoning from our Southern Baptist ranks, it is offensive to me. When I read the *Baptist and Reflector*, I expect to read about Southern Baptist and Tennessee Baptist ministries and other ministries that genuinely cooperate, not compete with their ministries.

This was inappropriate because of our emphasis upon the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in November and December. The CBF has its "Global Missions Offering" emphasis going on at the same time. These two are competing for the same mission dollars. Your article gives credence to this organization and as a result to this "competitive offering." As a Southern Baptist, it is improper for you to recognize this missionary-sending "fellowship" when we are challenging our people to give sacrificially to support our own missionaries.

Larry Beeler, pastor
First Church, Fountain City
Knoxville 37918

An incarnational ministry

This past Oct. 11, we were in the hospital in Davao City, southern Philippines, experiencing the birth of our third child, Ethan William. Like any other birth, it was a painful but joyous experience. We experienced the "becoming flesh" of our dreams of a healthy and happy third child.

He was our first child to be born in the Philippines, and so we had some new experiences and feelings. Would the hospital facilities be adequate? After all this is still a developing country. What if the baby was sick or if the mother had serious complications? There is no specialized equipment to take care of them like in the United States.

By God's grace all turned out well. And we began to realize that many of our fears had been unfounded: natural, yet unfounded. We also realized that we had now entered a step deeper into our host culture, the Philippines.

Missionaries are called to "incarnational" ministry. The word "incarnate" literally means "to become flesh" and this is what missionaries are called to do in an often hostile and resistant culture. We are called to "become flesh" of the Gospel and live out the embodiment of Jesus' love and teaching in order to reach out and make contact with a lost and dying world.

For nine months Ethan was in his mother's body, and we knew that he was alive and growing. Yet it wasn't until he "became flesh" at birth that we could actually hold him and touch him and give him the full love we desired to give.

In the same way, the lost people of this world, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Animist, or whatever, need to experience the love and ministry of Jesus Christ which is real to their feel and touch. Your Southern Baptist missionaries are the "becoming flesh" of our commitment to incarnational ministry.

Of course, the greatest incarnation was that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is the "Immanuel" or the God who became flesh and who dwelt among us. He came to fully show us God's love, and he is our pattern for incarnational ministry.

This Christmas as you give to missions, don't let it just be another gift. But rather focus on the fact that you are supporting through the lives of your missionaries the incarnational Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Jeff and Regina Palmer
Daniel, Sarah, Ethan
P.O. Box 80322
8000 Davao City, Philippines

Virgin conception

"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God" Luke 1:30.

Thus the angel Gabriel began his announcement to Mary that she, a peasant girl, would bear the Son of God. "Favor" should read "grace" (charin).

The first question about the possibility of a virgin birth came from Mary herself, not from some skeptic. "How shall it be, seeing I know not a man?" (v. 34). "Know" is a present tense. She had never known a man sexually and did not intend to except in marriage.

The answer was that she would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 35). "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (v. 37). Literally, "Be-

■ Baptist beliefs
By Herschel Hobbs,
Baptist theologian

cause not impossible alongside God any single word." What God says he can do. With that Mary said, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord" (v. 38).

Luke was a physician. His medical training alone would negate the idea of a virgin birth. But after thoroughly researching the matter (Luke 1:1-4), perhaps even talking to Mary herself, he wrote the most complete account of Jesus' virgin birth on record. As a physician Mary would share with him more than to anyone else about the birth of her firstborn Son. I like to think of his account as Jesus' birth certificate. □



HOBBS

Daily prayer requests for Chile/Tennessee Partnership December —

- 15 — Missionary Eddie Graves is participating in the Rotary Club in Concepcion. May the contacts he makes in this community service club lead to many opportunities to share Christ.
- 16 — May the students graduating from the Baptist Seminary and the Bible Institute be led by the Lord into godly careers.
- 17 — David and Martha Miller are traveling today from Chile to the United States for a brief furlough.



- 18 — Hawk and Carol Hawks' puppet ministry in the Girls Children's Home in Temuco is working on a Christmas program to be presented in a mall.
- 19 — Pray for the development of a Christian Health Education Center in Coronel, as well as missionary Marilyn Graves as she ministers through nursing.
- 20 — Chileans David Zapata, Julio Rousseau, Pedro Quezada, and Hector Fernandez serve as home missionaries among their own people in Chile.
- 21 — Retired missionary Lois Hart is celebrating her birthday.

Revisiting the problem of low attendance

■ one word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

Over the shoulder, a backward look — perhaps a revisiting of the annual meeting is in order.

In a time when strong churches and bold Christian witness is desperately needed, when some say churches are retrenching and looking inward, strong relationships are vital.

If attendance to state convention meetings is the criterion, we're sliding. But there are other considerations. Even though the wolves are not circling the campfires, Tennessee Baptists need to strengthen ties that bind us together.

Historically we know those ties are actions — evangelism, missions, education, and several unique ministries that warrant specialized attention. The Tennessee Baptist Convention is alive and healthy. There is every reason to express confidence in the future.

No, most churches are not retrenching. It is true that every church that's planted does not survive — but most do more than just survive, they grow.

So why don't Tennessee Baptists attend their state convention sessions? And would better attendance make for stronger ties and better cooperation?

For several years there has been a clamor and protracted discussion relating a need for greater participation in convention matters. Much has been said about involvement in the planning and programming processes. Yet in some cases committees have fewer nominees.

Why then the steady decrease in at-

tendance at convention meetings?

Is there a lack of interest in TBC affairs? Only 1,359 messengers were registered for the Nov. 15-16 annual meeting. That total is less even than the 1,458 in Nashville in 1993, which was the lowest since 1980. Great facilities and services were provided in both cases, so what prevented people from coming?

Several reasons have been advanced.

Distance is too far. According to present rules, protocol dictates that annual meetings alternate westward: east, central, west. An easy solution for some would be to "eliminate" Tennessee's Three Grand Divisions designation.

Since the meetings alternate thusly, there unavoidably will be some long-distance travel. However, the convention has been condensed to six sessions over two days — which should alleviate some of the travel-related costs.

Not enough famous personalities. When the meeting was shortened to two days, it was decided that three major speakers are sufficient. That leaves enough time for business, elections, reports, music, and theme emphasis. The thrust is not only presentation of messages. Though important, business and other matters also rank high.

Meetings are boring. If meetings lack fire and zest, perhaps messengers can share some of the blame. Controversy is not the answer in building attendance, though it seems to work.

Messengers who spend their time in the sessions rather than the hallways probably

will be more involved. They will find the sessions less "boring."

For example, the mini-series drama presented last month at Bellevue was promoted as an ongoing story of how the Cooperative Program helps families.

The drama was not without flaws, but the effort was mammoth and the purpose was bold. Messengers who spend most of their time in sessions usually gain valuable information without boredom.

There may be several other reasons for not attending the annual meeting, such as lack of a desire to be involved, feeling overlooked and/or left out, lack of concern, unwillingness to sacrifice the necessary time, misunderstanding of what an annual meeting should be.

Probably all these and more are reasons for low attendance. We suspect, however, that two leading factors may be disinterest and lack of concern, though others may contribute. Convention elected and salaried leaders, committees, and every Tennessee Baptist who is concerned — should work for a solution.

It has been said that more laypersons could attend if meetings were held on weekends. Even then interest would have to be boosted by pastors.

If poor attendance can be cured, let's do it. Strength in relationships and cooperation are keys to success in ministry. Involvement is possible and needed.

A long, hard look must be taken. Answers must be found. Perhaps some people who want to attend may need help. Controversy, though it may draw crowds, is not the tie that binds us in Kingdom work. □

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Surprise visitors

We were surprise visitors, the four of us. It was 1974.

A hasty phone call about an hour in advance set the stage for a lovely evening.

No doubt Penrose and Jessie St. Amant would have preferred a quiet evening at home, or a stroll along the river that cut through their magnificent Swiss city.

They replied, however, with an emphatic "yes" to our well-intended query as to whether they would be at home.

He had taught at Southern Seminary; she is a Tennessean. Not only did they show us



ALLEN

around the magnificent Ruschlikon Seminary campus in Zurich, where he was president, the St. Amants invited us to dine with them in an elegant downtown restaurant — and later, for talk in their home.

The evening was perfect. We were joined by the then SBC president, Owen Cooper, and Mrs. Cooper.

St. Amant ordered for us — because we trusted his acumen for taste and essence.

Seated in the "swanky" but warm, friendly restaurant, we could easily have had visions of grandeur, enjoying fellowship and excellent food there in the heart of Zurich.

But our hosts did not let us lapse into that nothingness of false pride. They kept bringing us back to earth with snippets of Anabaptist history, tales of troubled times that swirled about the Reformation.

We knew more about our free conscience, priesthood of the believer cousins when we finished the meal and journeyed back to their home.

In the hours that followed, we mentally walked through history, always coming closer to our own heritage, our own heroes, our own church.

What a gracious couple. Owen Cooper reminded the rest of us, for those whose past had crossed and overlapped the trail of Baptist history, there were no such surprises.

Why, we silently thought, they really walked here, and left a bright path for all of us! Now Penrose has moved up, and we wish the best for Jessie, the Brownsville lass. □

■ just for today

By Fred Wood
pastor emeritus
Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile

Bank employee to president: "Terrible news! The treasurer ran off with my wife."

President: "It could have been worse."

Employee: "How?"

President: "He could have run off with our money instead of your wife."

Take this thought

Have you been to a carport sale? What is one person's trash is another's treasure.

Most of us don't think something is very bad unless it happens to us. We need to get our minds off ourselves by being interested in others.

Memorize this Scripture

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Pray this prayer

"Lord, help me be sensitive to the suffering of others. Being wrapped up in myself makes a small package." □

Help for Christmas blues

■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor and professor

Last week we looked at some causes of the depression that is experienced at this

time of year. This week let's consider some cures for this condition.

The tyranny of the season with its demands on our time, seemingly endless lists of presents to buy, and temptations to over-indulge, combine to rob us of the joy and peace of the season.

In spite of our Christian commitment and the acknowledgment of the reason for the season, many find this a melancholy and sad time. My suggestion for combating these feelings is to be involved with others, get proper rest, eat properly, and learn to set appropriate limits.

The first inclination one usually has when depression begins is to withdraw and keep to one's self. It is possible to be in the middle of a Christmas party and feel desperately alone because one has walled himself off and refused to interact with others. For some it

will require real effort to "join in" the party, but this is one way to defeat the holiday blues.

I made an earth-shaking discovery when I was a freshman at Oklahoma State University. Being from Alabama and separated from my twin brother for the first time in my life, I was forced to learn how to meet people. I discovered that they were as eager to know me as I was to know them. Only some of them had the courage to make the first move.

We have acknowledged the rush of the season, so it may be needless to suggest that we need to get proper rest. It takes a great deal of emotional energy to fight off depression — energy we do not have when we do not get proper rest.

It is important also to eat a balanced diet. Much of the good holiday food is loaded

with sugar and supplies a burst of energy that is soon depleted. The letdown that follows this burst of energy when coupled with the lack of rest only tends to deepen the depression.

Many people struggle with diets in an attempt to control their weight. In an effort to make up for some of the sweets they have eaten, they tend to cut back on the more wholesome foods. This simply exacerbates the problem.

We want to be with all those whom we love, and we may get pulled in many directions. We must learn to set appropriate limits. It is hard for most of us to say, "No, I can't make it." It might be easier if we tried to say instead, "I can't come at that time, but what about ..." and suggest a time that you could get together.

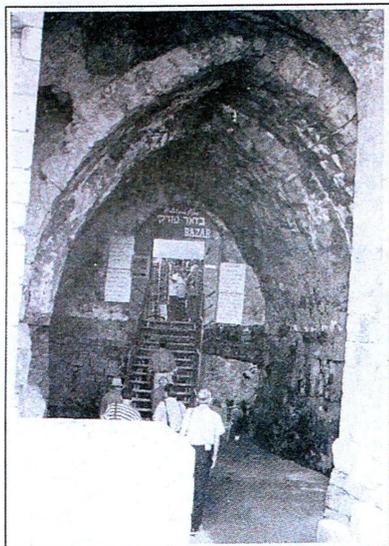
These suggestions will not cure all holiday problems, but I think they can be effective in curtailing some of the depression that always seems to abound at this time of year. □

Dr. Barkley invites questions and comments from readers.



BARKLEY

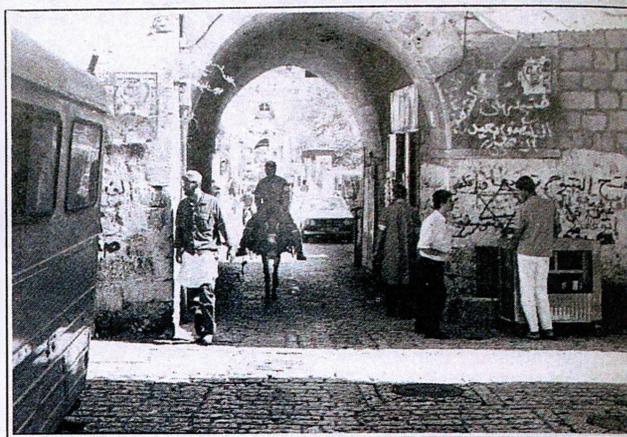
■ Tennessee features



PORTAL OF Crusaders fortress standing in old Acco on the Mediterranean Sea.



AT LEFT, PORTION OF old city wall on Mount Zion, Jerusalem. Below, along the 'Way of the Cross,' old city, Jerusalem.



Israel offers beauty, antiquities to pilgrims, tourists

By Wm. Fletcher Allen
Baptist and Reflector

JERUSALEM, Israel — The dateline could be as easily Bethlehem, Haifa, Tel Aviv.

Very few travelers who visited Israel through the centuries missed any of the major great cities or Biblical sites.

From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A. D. and the subsequent diaspora of the Hebrews, people have been eager to get to Jerusalem the Golden, crown of the Holy Land.

They have had their reasons. Control of trade routes and liberation of sacred places, conquests by Muslims, Byzantines, Turks, and yes, Christian Crusaders, they have come. Most of them, despite their motives, also have left.

In parts of the Old Testament, the kingdom divided, slipping away from monotheism, with the north being called Israel and the south, Judah.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, and some of the minor prophets called them by other names.

In the long centuries between the destruction of Jerusalem and modern times, yet other names became prominent — the Holy Land, Palestine.

But most people who journey to Israel today and trek its length and breadth, are just plain tourists.

Certainly some are business executives, others may be Jewish settlers from elsewhere, some come specifically for religious reasons — but most are tourists interested in seeing a beautiful country bathed in sunshine and saturated with history.

That's the description of a small group of Baptist editors I traveled with in October.

Accompanied by Ari Marom, executive director of the Southeastern states for the Israeli Government Ministry of Tourism, we picked up Tomer

Bar'on, our guide in Tel Aviv, and traveled to our hearts' content.

True, we are tourists, but we also have come to learn. Most of us are not novices, but each day more and more of Israel's history unfolds before us.

Every hillside is a museum. Each valley is a treasure trove of antiquities. Almost every city has a lineage stretching back over centuries.

We are learning that each school child is a potential archeologist — at least on the amateur level. Everywhere we go we encounter children accompanied by teachers and at least one soldier.

Our deepest concern is not personal safety — safety is certain — but is it deciding which parcels of history to see each day. Where will we explore today? What new facts will we learn about ancient heritage?

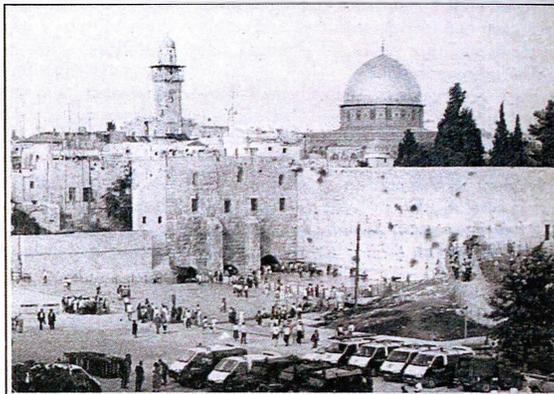
We ask. We get clear, concise, direct, correct answers.

Tomer proves to be a walking encyclopedia — majoring in the "I" section, for Israel.

Each brings new surprises — whether it is a stop on the Zippori site of a magnificent Roman villa replete with a mosaic floor, a visit to the Crusader City in old Acco — or a meditative moment looking across the Syrian border, or perhaps an underground trek to see recent excavations of the foundation for the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

We will revel in the broad expanse of arid areas, stones and rocks, Mount Hermon, Nazareth, the Galilee, Masada, the Jordan River, and yes, a shepherd's field near Bethlehem — a land of contrasts.

Amazement conquers atti-



JERUSALEM'S FAMED Western Wall with Dome of the Rock.

tudes and words. We are really speechless much of the time. Our own "look ats" seem juvenile. To live here must mean that one has to decide on a set portion of amazement each day. In such a place it is easy to understand that each new building, any road construction, a private garden — could have to wait for an archeologist to clear the site. Yes, the land is a living museum.

You don't just tinker with heritage or antiquities for the sake of expediency, haste, or a whimsical decision.

The tourist may soon get caloused to references of how the land looked a millinium or two ago. It's easier to take a nap while the guide rails on about this and that.

However, if you are sensitive to history that helped shape the world of Bible times and even now; if you are the least bit quizzical about how people lived centuries ago — and why, you don't rest your eyes in the land of the Bible, Israel.

And so we shun the temptations to rest weary bones, and

tried to keep our senses sharp. Even for veterans of a half dozen previous trips there is much to learn, more unexplored places to see.

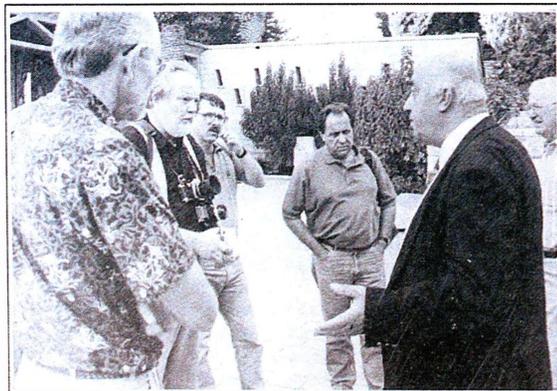
On this journey we take note of opportunities.

There are all the easily recognized places for us to see once more — more of Jerusalem, Tiberias, Tel Aviv, Nazareth, the Dead Sea area, Haifa — but this time there are different roads to travel, deeper digs at which to marvel, parts of cities where we have not walked.

Officials of the tourism ministry asked us for ideas before the trip began — and we gave them. They acquiesced. We were blessed.

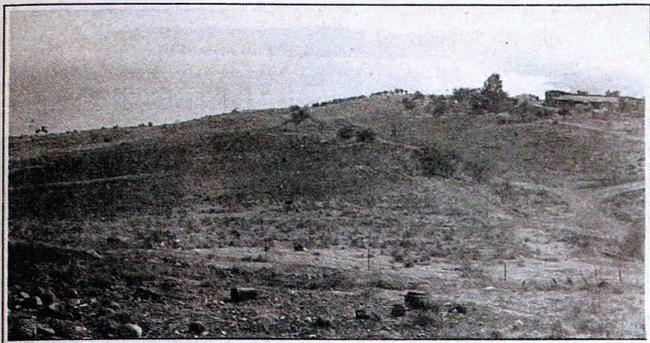
The half dozen of us visited with Baptist mission representatives, Israeli government officials, local authorities, and ordinary citizens. Our time of Oct. 26-Nov. 2 coincided with the official signing of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty. □

Editor's note: This is the first of a series. Next week's issue will have an emphasis on the Christmas season.

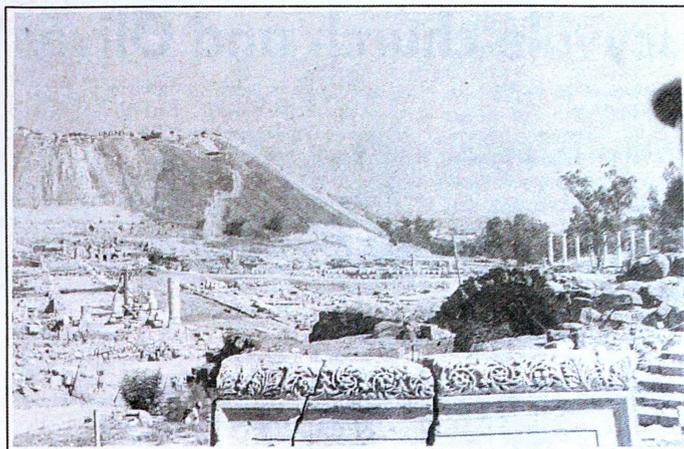


EDITORS LISTEN: Antoine Shaheen, director of tourism of the northern region, right, shares facts of Nazareth with Southern Baptist editors (from left) Glenn Brown, James Watters, Ari Marom, Israeli tourism; Lynn Clayton, and Guy Henderson.

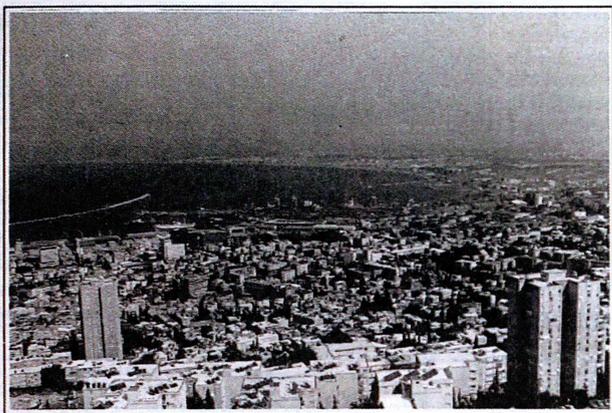
■ Tennessee features



GENTLE SLOPE, LOOKING from hill, southeast toward modern day Tiberias. This place on northern shore of Galilee, could be where the multitudes heard Jesus speak the Beatitudes.

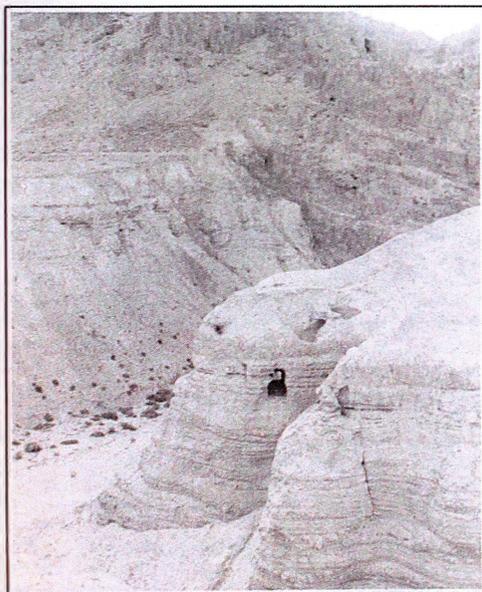


EXCAVATIONS continue on eastern edge of Beth Shean, south of Galilee. Here archeologists are finding ruins of colossal Roman city, and perhaps more (see tell in background). The digging continues as history unfolds almost daily, bringing ancient times face to face with today's world.



MODERN MEDITERRANEAN port city of Haifa swells with trade and beauty. From Mount Carmel, visitors can look over city and across the harbor. Photos on pages 6-7 by Wm. Fletcher Allen

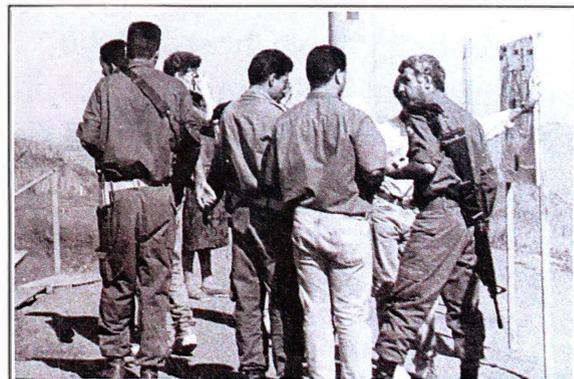
ANY TRAVELER HEADING east from Jerusalem will encounter scenes such as this one. The highway forks as it approaches Jordanian border — leading north to Galilee, south to Masada and Dead Sea. Jericho is nearby, an oasis amid arid hills.



BETWEEN the Jericho turnoff and Masada, astounding treasures were found in caves of Qumran in the late 1940s, Bible scrolls predating and corresponding to those dependable texts already in use. See caves in center on cliffside where scrolls were discovered in ancient clay vessels.

Israel: ancient crossroads of the Middle East, battleground for centuries, historic, always called the Holy Land

STUDENTS AND SOLDIERS pause to look at Golan Heights area of Kuneitra in Syrian territory. The town was abandoned by Syrian forces during the Six Day War of 1967, but Israel later returned Kuneitra. The Israeli-Syrian border cuts through the town.



Maryville church and Olives serve together for 30 years

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, Editor
Baptist and Reflector

MARYVILLE — You can say that from the first it was real love. It's also true that through the years, they grew together.

This is the way it has been with Monte Vista Church here and the Howard Olives.

They have just kept going and going — until 30 years passed and the pastor reached the time for retirement.

Howard Olive's long tenure as pastor ends when he retires Jan. 15 next year.

It's a long way from Chapman (his birth place), Canoe, Ala., and Maryville — and Olive says it has been interesting.

He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, and served with the U.S. Army in Korea.

Later Olive was interim pastor and public school teacher in Canoe, Ala., for a few months prior to schooling at Southern Seminary.

While earning the B.D. and Th.M. degrees at the seminary, he was pastor at Port Royal, Ky., for five years.

He was a teacher at Carrollton, Ky.,

for a year, and was pastor of First Church, MacClenny, Fla. from 1959 to 1964. In December 1964, he came to Monte Vista as pastor.

Olive married the former Jean Key of Carthage in 1954 while they were students at Vanderbilt.

The Olives have five children.

Olive, who served several years on the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Executive Board and a term as board president, said, "This is an exciting time of opportunity.

"I hope Tennessee Baptists stay with heritage and fly the flag of individual freedom for the people and for the church."

He added that, "There is a great need to provide a way for Baptists to continue to cooperate while maintaining the autonomy of the local church."

Cooperative missions has been an important aspect of his ministry. He has been involved in Baptist higher education, and also has served the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes as a board member.

He led Monte Vista Church in active missions work in South Dakota, Michigan, Kentucky, and Chile.

Olive has served also as president of the Tennessee chapter of the Southern Seminary Alumni Association.

He has been an advocate of Baptists cooperating together to retain separation of church and state.

"Our generation successfully 'sold' the idea of cooperative missions funded through the Cooperative Program," he said, "and we won the battle against government funding for parochial schools."

The success of the Cooperative Program and defeat of efforts to secure government funds for church schools have been highlights during Olive's tenure as a pastor.

The Korean War veteran also served on the Maryville City School board.

The Olives moved to the 8-

year-old church 30 years ago when it was much smaller than its current membership of 1,000.

The church will honor the retiring pastor and family early in 1995. □

Stay with heritage and fly the flag of individual freedom.



HOWARD AND JEAN OLIVE reminisce about service for the past 30 years with Monte Vista Church of Maryville. Olive, who retires in January, was attending his last Tennessee Baptist Convention meeting as pastor of the church. The Olives were messengers to the annual meeting at Bellevue Church, Memphis, in November. The photographer caught up with them between sessions.

The Greatest Gift

No matter our age or status in society, the giving of ourselves — through time, talent, and most of all, our love — is what truly makes Christmas a joyous time of year.

The best example of this is the Greatest Gift of all, Jesus Christ, God's only Son. He was given to the world in the form of a tiny babe and taught us lessons of love and sacrifice that humble the sinner and empower the faithful to follow Him at all costs.

Thanks to your spirit of giving, Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes can give homeless children not only shelter and food, but the everlasting gift of Christ and the promise that in the uncertainties of life, He will never leave or forsake them.

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Dr. Gerald L. Stow
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TenneScene ■ the people, their work

■ the churches

■ **Cornerstone Church, Jasper**, will host a Christmas mini-concert Dec. 18 at 6 p.m. Michael Ake, Kelley Ake, and Beth Froning, students at the University of Tennessee — Chattanooga, will present the concert.

■ **Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga**, will host "The Messiah" Dec. 18 at 6 p.m. It will be performed by members of the Chattanooga symphony, soloists, and the church's sanctuary choir and orchestra.

■ **First Church, Jasper**, celebrated its 85th anniversary on Oct. 23. The anniversary/homecoming service featured Lucille Feathersen, Lona Lee Goforth, Dorothy Hinch, Barbara Holloway, Clifford and Marie Matthews, and John Pinnix. The church received a photograph of the members in 1911 in honor of Paralee Graham Turner and the G.A. McGrew family gave a Bible dated 1869.

■ the leaders

■ **First Church, Madison**, has called **Daniel Brown**, a recent graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., as minister of education and youth, effective Dec. 18. Brown is



DEMONSTRATING HOW TO MAKE a gingerbread house is Dara Wade, right, as, from left, Caroline Rose, Mary Rose, and Holly Rose watch. The demonstration was part of a Christmas Craft Workshop led by the Woman's Missionary Union of Fort Hill Church, Knoxville. It was held to reach adults in the community as a followup to Backyard Bible Clubs and a Kids' Night Out program started this fall.

from North Carolina.

■ **Rock Springs Church, Greenbrier**, has called **Frank Evans**, retired director of missions, Robertson County Baptist Association, as pastor. The church has called **David Brandon** as minister of children and youth. He has been on the staff of several churches and with "On the Go Ministries" in Springfield. **Sarah Hord**, organist, Flewellyn Church, Springfield, also has begun serving the church as organist.

■ **Carolyn Jenkins**, minister to students, First Church,

Nashville, for almost 15 years has resigned. Her husband, Wayne, has been called to serve on the staff of First Church, Alexandria, Va.

■ **Olive Hill Church, West, in Guys**, has called **Jimmy Switcher** of Corinth, Miss., as pastor.

■ **Dwayne Ulmer** has been called as minister of youth, Immanuel Church, Nashville.

■ **Tom Lewis**, minister of administration and senior adults, Leawood Church, Memphis, has served on the church staff for nine years. He also



BREAKING GROUND FOR the worship center of Second Church, Millington, in October are, from left, Scott Walker, pastor; Ken Childress; Ray Newcomb, TBC president and pastor, First Church, Millington; Mrs. I.C. Crawford; John McBride, director of missions, Shelby County Baptist Association; Bruce Schleisher; Melba Dease; and Bill Brown. The new building will be a 13,650-square-foot center. About 150 people attended the ceremony featuring Newcomb, McBride, Jim Phillips, president, Millington Area Chamber of Commerce, and State Rep. Ed Haley of Millington.

was minister of education at the church.

ordained **Aaron Melton**, **Michael Sheridan**, and **Derick Smith** as deacons Dec. 4.

■ **First Church, Dresden**, ordained **Ken Mansfield** as a deacon recently.

■ the people

■ **First Church, Madison**,

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

A hymn writer

By Michael S. Lester, pastor
North Etowah Church, Etowah

Many of the hymns which have become so dear to the church were written by Charles Wesley. You will probably remember that the Wesley brothers, Charles and John, are credited with founding the Methodist denomination. John's fervent preaching and Charles' passion for hymn writing was the result of their upbringing in the well-disciplined yet loving home of Samuel and Susanna Wesley.

Susanna displayed seemingly inexhaustible patience with her 19 children, nine of which she reared to maturity. Each of the Wesley children had chores to complete. Each was wakened by the clock, learned to talk by repeating the Lord's prayer, and learned to read by reading the Bible.

Observing his mother's devotion to God and her daily disciplines made a profound impression on young Charles. Later, as an adult, Charles would reflect on this God who "so loved the world" and wrote this hymn in 1747.

*Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;*

*All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, though art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love though art;
Visit us with thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart. □*

Where is Santa?

By Timothy Walker, pastor
Dalewood Church, Nashville

In *Reader's Digest* this month, a father told about overhearing a conversation between two boys. In the middle of all the holiday preparations, the seven-year-old was relaying all his worldly knowledge of Santa Claus to a neighbor's four-year-old.

"Santa Claus works real hard making all the toys," he said, "and if you're not good, you won't get any."

"Well," the four-year-old replied, "he can't be working that hard. He's always hanging out at the mall."

That's a good observation by the four-year-old. Santa wouldn't get a lot done if he was always at the mall. Let's remember that while Santa has his concerns, the Lord God is concerned about all of us, and he is able to handle everything.

God is able to handle all the concerns of this world. God is able to hear your prayers and answer your requests. □

Experiencing Christmas

By Don Farmer, minister of adult education and administration
Concord Church, Chattanooga

Christmas can be experienced at its best only when we look at it from the spiritual perspective. God gave first and I John 4:19 says, "We love, because he first loved us."

Someone has said you can give without loving, but you can't love without giving." That is what Christmas is all about — loving and giving.

The stage was set by God himself when "He gave his only son" We give back so little in return, but still we can give and share out of his abundant love and grace which "God has shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us," Romans 5:5.

I hope you will experience his love this Christmas in a new way. □

Gifts for missionaries

By Frank Kemper, pastor
First Church, Adamsville

The Christmas season is a wonderful time of the year for several reasons.

The first and most important reason is that this is the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Another important reason for Baptists is the emphasis placed on foreign missions.

What better way is there to celebrate the birth of Christ than to give a gift to those who are spending their lives telling the world about him. Many are in harms way every day, but they believe that serving and sharing Jesus is "Worth the Risk." So get in the spirit of Christmas and give generously to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this year. □

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.

Tennessee couple reach youth in South Africa

By Kim Davis
For Baptist and Reflector

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa — At a time when 50 percent of South Africa's population is under the age of 20, Southern Baptist missionaries Alan and Andrea Duncan are finding that the doors are open for youth evangelism that is resulting in many professions of faith.

"We have seen many young people and adults trust Christ since we have been here two and one half years," Duncan said.

Duncan, the son of retired Southern Baptist missionaries, considers Cleveland his hometown while his wife is the former Andrea Ogle of Greeneville. Duncan is a former associate pastor at First Church, Cleveland.

The couple have found a variety of methods successful in reaching young Africans for Christ. By working with

local Baptist pastors, they are helping to develop youth ministry leadership. Camps, youth rallies, and preaching in local churches all contribute to meeting the needs of youth interested in the Gospel.

An exciting opportunity to share the Gospel has been through leading Bible classes in the public schools in Port Elizabeth and local townships. Although the Duncans aren't sure how long this open door will stay open with changes in education by the new government, they are making the most of the opportunity at present.

Mrs. Duncan has been just as involved as her husband in evangelism through ministering to women and children. She recently led an area-wide women's rally.

Also, a new door of ministry has opened for her as a volunteer teacher at the Reubin Birin School for the



LOCAL PASTORS meet in the home of missionary Alan Duncan. Duncan and his wife, Andrea, both consider themselves native Tennesseans.

Hard of Hearing. This school of about 80 Xhosa children needed a music teacher as well as someone to instruct the students in volleyball. Her musical talents and knowledge of sports gave her the opportunity to teach.

"I've wanted to work with deaf people since coming to South Africa, but I thought that God wasn't opening that

door because my sign language was so limited," she said.

"So I began to study more signs, and I discovered that the signs are completely different here anyway than in America."

Not only do the Duncans hope to see converts from the deaf ministry, but they are considering a sports evangelism project as well. Basketball is a popular sport in South Africa, but few really know how to play. Duncan hopes to conduct basketball clinics in the local townships, opening another door for youth evangelism.

While doors are opening for planting churches where the Duncans live, that has not always been the case. And, still safety is a concern for the Duncans and other white missionaries in the black townships.

"We continue to ask for people back home to pray for our safety in the Port Elizabeth townships," Duncan said. He noted the township has a reputation for violent crimes and car hijacking, and it's not limited to missionaries only. "Many of our Baptist pastors also are threatened by these crimes," he said. — Davis is missionary press representative in Johannesburg, South Africa.

New Home Church celebrates 100 years of ministry in Martin community



In 1894, a few baptized believers in Christ had a vision of a lighthouse in the Martin community. Those believers founded New Home Church.

During the ensuing years the vision has never changed; instead it has expanded.

Several changes have occurred in the church's facilities. In 1986 the sanctuary was remodeled to its present state.

To celebrate its 100 years of history, members this year

erected a steeple.

The church has observed its centennial throughout 1994. Every third Sunday during the month, a former pastor returned to preach. On Oct. 16 the church held "Come Home to New Home," a special celebration Sunday. Former pastor

Mayo Mansfield preached and Dwayne Erwin dedicated the steeple. Beulah Association Di-

rector of Missions Bill George presented a plaque to the church. □



Union honors director of missions

Doyle Neal, right, director of missions for Beech River Association, was named West Tennessee's Outstanding Director of Missions at a recent chapel service at Union University, Jackson. The award was established by Union trustees to recognize West Tennessee directors of missions for outstanding service. The award was presented by John Adams, vice president for religious affairs.

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■ Sunday School lesson commentary

God promises glorious future

By Elizabeth Howard

Many people worry about the future. Where can I find happiness? Do I have enough money? Will I stay well? Because of their anxiety, they read horoscopes, consult fortune tellers, turn to cult leaders. Some believe death is all there is; others have no hope in the future. They reason like the jaded speaker in Ecclesiastes: "Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry" (Ecclesiastes 8:15).

Although Micah saw many troubles facing the nation of Israel, he saw great hope for the future, a future of peace and plenty. He turned from warnings and dire predictions about the present or near future to a picture of a glorious time in the more distant future when God's people would come home, physically and spiritually, a time he called "the last days."

Future for all nations — ch. 4:1-2

Micah's vision of the homecoming can be interpreted literally or figuratively. The literal interpretation is a beautiful picture of people from many nations streaming to Mount Zion, Jerusalem's mountain. It has become chief among the mountains, raised above the hills. This probably refers to its importance rather than its actual elevation.

The figurative interpretation, which is just as beautiful as the literal, is a description of people seeking God's truth and taking it with them wherever they go. There is a sense of urgency and joy, a great flowing of

the message of salvation and love from nation to nation.

Future of peace, security, and faithfulness — vv. 3-5

In our day, war takes up a goodly portion of the nightly news, but in the last days (the Messianic Age), peace will reign forever. God, or Christ, will settle all disputes between nations. No nation will need to spend its resources on weapons, but can use its money, technology, and manpower for peaceful purposes, such as agricultural tools.

Every person will sit, unafraid, under his own vine and fig tree; this is a picture of prosperity, security, and leisure. Hunger, poverty, homelessness, crime, and fear will be things of the past.

In Micah's day as in ours, the peoples of the earth worshiped many different gods, but that will not always be so. In the Messianic Age, all people will be faithful to the one true God.

Future through promised Messiah — ch. 5:2, 4

Israel was walled about, under siege, and the ruler was suffering humiliation (v. 1), but Micah saw beyond the troubled days of the present to the future birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem, the ancestral home of David, one of the smallest villages in Israel.

Like David, the Messiah would be both ruler and shepherd, powerful but gentle, able to protect and feed his flock. He was from ancient times (eternal), and his greatness would reach to the ends of the earth, from pole to pole, from east to west. A glorious future indeed! □ — Elizabeth Howard is a member of Cumberland Homesteads Church, Crossville.

Life and Work Series for Dec. 18

Focal Passage: Micah 4:1-5; 5:2, 4

Working together in Christ

By Ray Fullilove

We come to the conclusion of one of the most loved of the epistles of the Apostle Paul.

When the joy of Christ is underlined, thanksgiving from the heart is uttered, and every born-again believer is exposed to the ultimate experience of communication with God, which is praise.

When the people of God begin to praise the God of glory together, a cooperative spirit begins to develop as we learn to work together for Christ.

In the middle of our battles, confronted with continuous challenges, and faced with the pressurizing demands which surround us, is it possible for the living church of the living God to witness to a society which is falling apart in competition and witness to the fact of the grace of God which cements our relationship as we work together for Christ?

The words which speak clearly to our hearts, mark the clear call of the church, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the word ..." (Philippians 2:14-15). There are reasons why we can remain a cooperative fellowship for Christ.

His power — vv. 2-9

Disagreements do develop, and dissensions do happen. We may be redeemed by the grace of God, but we are always faced with the fact of

rebellious emotions.

Paul addresses some individuals in the church to reconcile themselves and "be of the same mind in the Lord" (v. 2). The reconciling grace of Jesus not only comes from God to men but also from man to man (II Corinthians 5:17-19).

We are able to cooperate with one another because of the power of Christ. It is the power of Christ which 1) forgives in the love, in the loyalty, and in the liberty we find in Christ (vv. 2-3); 2) which fulfills and causes us to rejoice in Christ, to radiate in Christ, and to remain alive with expectant faith (vv. 4-5); and 3) which fills our hearts (vv. 6-9) with alertness (v. 6a), in spiritual activity (v. 6b), with spiritual abundance (v. 7), with spiritual assessment (v. 8), and with spiritual aim (v. 9). The power of Christ is adequate to keep us reconciled with God and with one another.

His presence — vv. 10-13

When we become conscious of the available power of Christ, we will desire to abide in the presence of Christ as we work together. The presence of our living Lord who gave to us the absolute avenue for amazing grace (John 15:7) underlines the necessity for the saint of God to stay in the presence of Jesus. One fact is certain — we will learn how to work together for Christ.

Bible Book Series for Dec. 18

Focal Passage

Philippians 4:2, 4-13, 16-19

The presence of our reconciling Lord will cause us to revive compassion (v. 10), to reflect contentment (v. 11), and to reveal our Conqueror (vv. 12-13). The presence of Jesus Christ picks up our spirit, puts heart into our service, and pulls us together.

His provision — vv. 14-23

If we become conscious of the power of Christ, the presence of Christ, we will become aware of the provision we have in Christ which can pull us together for the glory of God. We can still do "all things in Christ which strengthenth us."

The reconciling grace of Jesus generates gratitude (vv. 14-16), generates growth (v. 17), and generates the knowledge of the endless and everlasting grace of God (vv. 18-19). It is this marvelous grace which still attracts (v. 18a), activates (v. 18b), accents (v. 18c), which is accessible (v. 19), and which will, forever, amplify joy in Christ (vv. 20-23).

How do we stay together in Christ? By being consumed by his power, his presence, and his provision. Indeed, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" as we work together for the glory of God. □ — Ray Fullilove is pastor of Poplar Avenue Church, Memphis.

Convention
Uniform Series
for Dec. 18
Focal Passage
Matthew 1:18-25

Jesus is born

By Samuel Dean

In my younger days I sought expressive, catchy titles for my sermons. During one Christmas season, my sermon on Joseph was posted on the outdoor sign: "What Do You Do When Your Fiancée is Pregnant?" It accomplished my purpose!

In our pious approach to Scriptures, we frequently forget the pathos of the human drama involved. Real people confronted grave problems and had raw emotions of love, hate, fear, courage, anxiety, and faith. The Christmas story depicts common people caught in difficult situations where God made his presence known.

Joseph's dilemma

The joy of a forthcoming marriage to Mary dissipated with the news that she was pregnant. Joseph knew that the child was not his. It was reasonable to assume that Mary had been unfaithful to him. Shock, anger, and humiliation descended on his withering spirit.

Reality dictated that Joseph had to reassess his planned marriage. Unfaithfulness destroyed the bridge of trust between the two. Being a devout man of the law, he had grounds to "put her away" (divorce her). Instead of going public with her condition, he kindly planned to "put her away privately." A quiet termination of the relationship (betrothal) seemed preferable.

However, just when he had his plans resolved in his mind, God threw in a new factor in the balanced equation. The child was of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit. Thus, Mary had not been unfaithful. Putting her away now was wrong, for the child was none other than God who had come to be with us (Emmanuel).

The new challenge was greater than the first! How does one deal with such things of God? Joseph had no course in parenting a divine child. Even Dr. Spock could not have helped him! Assuming responsibility for such a child was awesome. In addition the community would never believe the story. Lingered always would be the gossip.

Joseph's faith

Joseph's response to the situation was that he "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him." He altered his plans for a divorced relationship, married Mary, and "knew her not till she brought forth her firstborn son." For Joseph, believing in a virgin birth was more than a theological idea; his whole life and reputation rested on it.

In our Hall of the Faithful, accept my nomination of a common man, a carpenter from Nazareth who believed God, loved Mary, and adopted Jesus as his own.

Truths for us

There are valuable lessons to be learned from our story:

1. The Good News is not just the transmission of God's will; rather it is the revelation of God in the person of Jesus.

2. When God comes, he calls for a rearranging of our plans. We may have "grounds" for certain acts, but he calls us to a higher ethic than legalism.

3. In our dilemmas in life, let us be careful before we embrace improbabilities and impossibilities. God has a strange way of creating unusual exit signs.

4. When it comes to obedience, just do it. Joseph became a silent carpenter fulfilling his family responsibilities. No songs did he write, no messages did he preach, but his life has spoken in quiet responsibilities. □ — Samuel Dean is pastor of First Church, Clinton.

Michigan Baptists elect Collins as exec Baptist Press

BURTON, Mich. — Messengers to the Baptist State Convention of Michigan recently elected Michael Collins as their new executive director.

Collins, church services and business support director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, will succeed Robert B. Wilson, effective Jan. 1. Wilson is retiring after 24 years as Michigan Baptists' executive director.

Collins was elected by a 188-11 vote, or 95 percent. He has served 21 years in Ohio.

In other business messengers adopted a Cooperative Program budget of \$1,276,001 and will send 32 percent of that, a half-percent increase, to national causes. Convention officers, including president August Peters, were unopposed for another term. □

Transportation ministry helps 600th missionary Baptist Press

HOUSTON — A Southern Baptist group organized to meet a pressing transportation need of furloughing missionaries has assisted its 600th family.

The Macedonian Call Foundation was organized in 1979 to provide automobiles for Southern Baptist foreign missionaries on furlough, according to Harvey Kneisel, of Houston, one of the group's founders.

Missionary Don Phelps became the group's 600th benefi-

ciary when he accepted the keys to a 1981 Oldsmobile 98 at a ceremony in late November in Houston.

Missionaries on furlough need dependable transportation for the extensive travel often involved in their speaking schedules, Phelps said. Yet most missionaries can't afford to buy a car and then resell it at a loss a few months later when they return to the field, added Phelps, who serves with his wife, Linda, and four daughters as a church planter in the Philippines.

"Macedonian Call takes a lot of worry off the missionary. The cars help us spread the message about the work the Lord is doing all over the world. It's not only a vehicle for travel, but it's also a vehicle for missions encouragement and support," Phelps said. □

1994 SBC Annual error mixes ministers Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — The 1994 SBC Annual contains a mixup involving a switch of headings for ministers of music and ministers of youth.

The SBC Annual, which carries directories of church personnel in even numbered years, was recently mailed by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee office to churches, Baptist associations, state conventions, and SBC entities. The section coded "MM" is the director of ministers of youth, while the section coded "MY" actually is the director of ministers of music.

The mixup resulted from the creation of diskettes used in the production and proof-reading processes.

Penn/Jersey Baptists approve slight CP increase Baptist Press

MIDDLETOWN, Pa. — The Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey approved increasing its portion of Cooperative Program gifts by .15 percent for national and international causes, and agreed to enter into a partnership with the General Baptist Association of Virginia during its 24th annual meeting in November.

With 213 registered messengers the convention approved a 1995 operating budget of \$2,018,368, including a CP budget of \$594,800. The Virginia partnership will be for a three-year period.

Ray Wise, a pastor from Hershey, Pa., was re-elected president of the convention. □

New Mexico Baptists adopt record budget Baptist Press

CLOVIS, N.M. — The 429 registered messengers at the annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico approved a record budget and elected new officers.

The proposed Cooperative Program budget of \$2,858,581 was approved. With the exception of \$66,000 in preferred items and exceptions applied before the Southern Baptist Convention CP percentage is figured, 30.5 percent of the budget receipts will be forwarded for SBC national and international ministries.

Tom Martin, pastor of First



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
National Goal:
\$86 million
Tennessee Goal:
\$7.5 million

Church, Hobbs, was elected convention president over Joe Bunce of Bloomfield. □

Stringer to retire as Arizona exec Baptist Press

PHOENIX, Ariz. — After four-and-a-half years at the helm of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, Dan C. Stringer has announced his retirement.

In a letter to ASBC President David Butler, Stringer announced his intention to retire as executive director of the state convention, with the retirement taking effect "at the discretion of the Executive Board." He plans to remain until a new director is elected.

This will be Stringer's second "retirement." He first retired as executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention in 1989, but came out of retirement 18 months later to help the financially troubled Arizona convention. The convention "is in the best position now to move forward than it ever has been," said Stringer, a former Arizona Baptist pastor and state convention staffer. □

Wyoming Baptists adopt lower budget Baptist Press

GREEN RIVER, Wyo. — Messengers to the 11th annual session of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention approved a smaller budget for 1995, but voted to increase the percentage of budget designated for Cooperative Program gifts to the Southern Baptist Convention by .5 percent.

The convention's overall budget was set at \$983,046, compared to just over \$1 million last year.

Casper pastor Wayne Spencer was elected convention president over Buddy Sirman of Wright, who was then elected first vice president. □

Billingsley resigns as Utah/Idaho executive Baptist Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah-Idaho Southern Baptists heard a farewell message from the convention's executive director, re-elected Salt Lake City pastor Mike Gray as president, and adopted a total budget about \$64,000 less than the previous year.

The first session opened with the announcement of Clyde Billingsley's resignation as executive director. He has accepted a similar position with the Montana Baptist Fellowship, effective Dec. 1. □

Alabama paper taps Sentell as acting editor Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Johnie W. Sentell Jr., associate editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, has been named acting editor by the newspaper's board of directors.

Sentell was named four days after the sudden death of Hudson Baggett, who served as editor of the paper for 28 years.

A search committee will be appointed after "a season of prayer," according to Mike Shaw, board chairman. □

Renown church historian dies Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — C. Penrose St. Amant, 79, Southern Baptist church history professor for more than 50 years, died Nov. 19 at his home in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

A specialist in modern and American church history, St. Amant taught at four of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, as well as at the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, where he also served as president.

"Southern Baptists lost their premier church historian," said Landrum P. Leavell II, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a former student of St. Amant. He is survived by his wife, the former Jessie Davis of Brownsville, Tenn. □

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