

Baptist and Reflector

January 25, 1995

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STATEWIDE EDITION

■ this
week's
news

At new city arena

Nashville church takes stand against alcohol sale

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Members of First Church in downtown Nashville are letting city and state officials know they oppose the sale of alcohol at the new arena that is being built within a stone's throw of the church.

The arena, which is now just a large hole in the ground, is within 85 feet of the Nashville church which celebrates its 175th anniversary this year. The church has been at its present site since 1886. The arena is 15 feet too close to the church to qualify for a beer permit. Metro law requires businesses to be 100 feet (closest point to closest point) from a church or school to sell beer.

According to a report in the *Nashville Banner*, Metro is petitioning the state General Assembly to make an exception for the arena.

Approximately 250 church members unanimously approved a resolution during its

Wednesday evening business meeting Jan. 18 opposing "any change in law which would allow the sale or use of alcohol at the arena. We urge members of the state legislature to vote against this change."

The church's action was taken to clarify its position and to "clean up what had been misconstrued" through local media reports, according to Jimmy Dunn, minister of administration at First Church.

Earlier comments made by Pastor Dan Francis had been misinterpreted by some members of the local media to mean that the church was not against or had not taken a position on the sale of alcohol at the downtown arena.

That was not the case, Dunn said. "The church's position and the pastor's position have been the same," he said.

When contacted by the *Baptist and Reflector*, Francis said the issue revolved around the discovery of the law. There was not a change in either the church's or the arena's posi-

tion, he said, noting each knew where the other stood.

Francis told local media the church supported the concept of the arena and the revitalization of downtown Nashville.

"That was taken out of context to make it sound like we supported the use and abuse of alcohol," Francis said.

"Once we were taken out of context, we proceeded to get out the word of who we are and what we stand for," he added.

The resolution noted the church has "learned that the Nashville Arena under construction adjacent to the church property is not in compliance with an ordinance requiring a 100-foot distance from church property to allow the sale of alcohol."

"A bill has been introduced in the Tennessee legislature to change the law in this one situation to allow alcohol sales anywhere on the arena property. We want to clearly state our position in this matter."

The resolution noted the re-

cent death of a young woman and her unborn child at the hands of a drunk driver just "two blocks from our doorstep."

"Our mission is to proclaim and live the Good News of the living Christ, who offers freedom from the tyranny of alcohol. Any change in law which would promote the wider use of this addictive substance is inconsistent with our witness," the resolution stated.

Dunn said the resolution was discussed and supported by the deacon body Jan. 15 before being presented to the church on Jan. 18.

The *Nashville Banner* reported that should the state legislature "deny the beer exemption — which is possible given the strength of the Baptist church among state lawmakers — the issue could end up being decided by Metro Council."

Metro Council would then have to change the law for all Metro businesses in order to allow beer sales at the arena, the paper reported. □

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'How can I get my news in the paper?'

The staff of the *Baptist and Reflector* often are asked two questions: "How can I get my church news in the *Baptist and Reflector*?" or "Why isn't my church news in the paper?"

Both are legitimate questions.

Let's answer the second question first. Your news may not be in the paper because we didn't know about it. One of our most important news sources is individual churches. We want to hear from you!

Here are a few tips to remember when sending us news. These will help answer that first question.

(1) We are interested in leadership of your church — new pastor or staff members, deacon ordinations, etc. Regarding staff changes, be sure to include where the new pastor is from, education, and other pertinent information. Try to keep it brief. Mug shots of pastors are used when space permits.

(2) We will announce major events or revivals. We normally use only one announcement. If we use a story before the event, it is unlikely a followup story will be used, unless it is an event of unusual importance.

(3) The *Baptist and Reflector* staff would like to attend major events in our churches. But with almost 3,000 churches across the state and only three experienced journalists, this is impossible. If invited, we try to attend.

Please give us at least one month's notice before a major event when inviting us. If we cannot attend, we will let you know so you can arrange to have photos made and sent to us along with a story.

(3) Photos are important. Black and white photos are preferred. Good 35mm color photos occasionally may be used. Please do not send Polaroid prints because they do not reproduce well when printed. Photos normally are not returned without a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

(4) Send stories, announcements, or news tips promptly. They can be mailed to *Baptist and Reflector*, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024. Send them to the attention of the editor. Stories can be sent by FAX to (615) 371-2080.

(5) Please keep in mind that mail occasionally is lost or misplaced. If you haven't seen your story within three weeks after you send it, call us at (615) 371-2003.

(6) Put the *Baptist and Reflector* on your church newsletter mailing list. We use these to glean news items and also columns for our "Tennessee Sampler" section.

Tennessee Baptists are the finest and the staff of the *Baptist and Reflector* wants you to have the best paper. You can help us accomplish our goal. □

Japan earthquake provides ways for ministry, aid

By Mark Kelly
For Baptist Press

KOBE, Japan — Southern Baptist missionaries are finding opportunities to minister in the aftermath of Japan's deadliest earthquake in 47 years.

The Jan. 17 earthquake rocked Awaji Island, 20 miles from the major port city of Kobe in western Japan. The quake, which registered 7.2 on the Richter scale, shattered Kobe and caused significant damage in nearby Osaka.

In the hours immediately following the earthquake, missionaries Mike Brooks and Danny Hinson joined rescue crews digging survivors out of the rubble and taking them to hospitals, reported Tokyo-based missionary Linda Whitworth in a telephone interview.

— See Japan, page 2

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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Japan earthquake provides ways for ministry ...

— Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, missionaries Ron and Cynthia Reynolds translated for international relief teams at Kobe's Canadian Academy, a large school for children of missionaries and other foreigners, where up to 10,000 people have been evacuated from the devastated city center.

Missionaries also are exploring ways to assist as a massive relief effort gears up in the devastated city of 1.5 million located 280 miles west of Tokyo. Initial discussions have centered around water purification, medical assistance, and possible establishment of a distribution center at Osaka for food, water, and other supplies from military and relief organizations. Government officials estimate the cost of repairs between \$10-\$20 billion. More than 700 buildings were destroyed.

All missionaries of the For-

eign Mission Board are safe and accounted for, Whitworth said. The FMB has 182 missionaries assigned to Japan and 14 families assigned to the Kobe-Osaka-Kyoto area affected by the quake.

While mission properties sustained some damage, all were "still standing," Whitworth said.

All Japanese Baptist churches also are intact, although two reportedly sustained some damage, she said.

The earthquake also jolted people awake to spiritual as well as physical realities, Ron Reynolds told Baptist Press.

Elaborate earthquake precautions gave Japanese city dwellers a false sense of security, and affluent lifestyles distracted them with material possessions. But 20 seconds of pre-dawn terror shattered those illusions and left hundreds of thousands with only the clothes on their backs.

"Most people in Japan have no interest in spiritual things. They're completely wrapped up in their humanistic goals for themselves," said Reynolds, who is based in Kobe.

He was among thousands driven from their homes by the earthquake which has left more than 4,400 people dead and up to 300,000 people homeless.

"Sometimes it takes something like this to wake people up," he said. "You can't help but be thankful you're alive and realize material things mean nothing. I hope this will help Japanese people realize that what we have in our hand is not as important as what God can give us in our heart."

Reynolds starts churches in the Kobe area. He and his family joined as many as 10,000 people evacuated to the Canadian Academy. In the midst of chaos, they found open doors for ministry and witness. □

FMB missionaries in quake zone

- 182 FMB personnel in Japan; 14 missionary families in destruction region; none hurt
- Death toll above 4,400; 280,000 in shelters
- Send relief contributions to Human Needs, Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230



(BP) GRAPHIC By Marty Croll

FMB provides computer link to prayer needs

By Mark Kelly
For Baptist Press

RICHMOND — The dawn of a new year marked a revolutionary development in prayer support for foreign missions.

CompassionNet, a worldwide electronic prayer network sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board, went on-line Jan. 1 with SBCNet, Southern Baptists' computer network.

The launch of CompassionNet means that urgent prayer needs — from the most remote mission fields — can be communicated instantaneously to Southern Baptists ready to pray for them, said Randy Sprinkle, director of the FMB's international prayer strategy office.

CompassionNet comes along at a critical moment in history, Sprinkle added.

"We have entered a new era of kingdom history," he said. "God is at work in the world as never before. People who have never heard are hearing the Gospel. We're

seeing people from every area of the world coming to salvation. God has given us the tools to link the world instantly so the Gospel can be preached in power to every nation."

Letters from missionaries once were the only way prayer supporters could learn about spiritual needs — and overseas mail could take months to arrive. Mission publications and other media often speed up the delivery, but not always fast enough to meet urgent prayer needs.

The growing worldwide availability of telephone and satellite services — and the fax machines and electronic mail that go with it — now allow missionaries to instantly communicate needs and opportunities to supporters back home.

Prayer requests from missionaries are now posted immediately on CompassionNet, where users will find them filed under such categories as country, unreached people group, and mega-city (a city with more than one million population). Urgent

prayer needs can reach intercessors in a matter of minutes instead of months, Sprinkle said.

The FMB took a major step forward in getting prayer needs before Southern Baptists in 1986 when it launched the Foreign Missions PrayerLine (1-800-395-PRAY) that allows intercessors to receive missionary prayer requests toll-free by telephone. The service now logs more than 15,000 calls each month.

PrayerLine, however, is limited to one brief message at a time, while CompassionNet offers intercessors a comprehensive list of prayer requests from every area of the world.

Access to CompassionNet requires only a personal computer equipped with a modem and subscriptions to CompuServe and SBCNet. For a limited time, a free introductory subscription may be obtained by calling SBCNet at 1 (800) 325-7749. The kit includes a free month of CompuServe. □

Tennessee missionary helps find home for abandoned Rwandan infant

Baptist Press

BUKOKA, Tanzania — Annamary Neema is a product of the great shame of Rwanda — an orphan refugee deprived of her family by last year's ethnic slaughter and of her mother by death just days after she was born.

The infant, facing a bleak future, was taken to St. Mary's Hospital in Isingiro, Tanzania, where the Roman Catholic nurses fell in love with her, had her baptized, and named her.

Meanwhile, another "homeless" refugee from Rwanda got involved: Southern Baptist missionary Janet Hooten of Knoxville. Told of

the baby's plight, Hooten and her husband, David, searched for days for relatives, but no one knew anything about the baby or her mother.

Hooten later mentioned the orphaned baby to Felicia Caroli, who was working as a cook for the Baptist Relief Services Refugee Camp and is the wife of a Baptist pastor in Tanzania.

After weeks of dealing with government "red tape," Annamary finally had a home. The baby is one of almost 200 unaccompanied, abandoned, or orphaned children Baptist Relief Services has placed with suitable families within refugee camps in Tanzania. □

Tennessean heads NOBTS search effort; Midwestern also looks for new president

Two Southern Baptist seminaries are looking for new presidents.

Morris L. Anderson, pastor of First Church, Pigeon Forge, has been named chairman of the presidential search committee at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary.

The committee is charged with finding a successor to Landrum P. Leavell II, who retired Dec. 31.

Anderson was appointed by trustee chairman Edward D. Johnson, who noted he appointed "a very fair and balanced committee" who has no agenda "other than finding a godly, conservative president to lead this great seminary into the next century with the same zeal and commitment to evangelism and missions that

has characterized New Orleans Seminary for the past 20 years."

Recommendations for the New Orleans presidency should be mailed to Morris L. Anderson, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 98, Pigeon Forge, Tenn., 37868-0098.

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., also is looking for a successor to Milton Ferguson who will retire July 31, 1996.

A search committee will be accepting recommendations and resumes until March 15.

All correspondence concerning the presidency should be mailed to: Search Committee, Attn. Chairman, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 9868, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80932. □

FMB sets 1995 as year of prayer for the Muslim world

By Erich Bridges
For Baptist Press

RICHMOND — Muslims: They're at least one billion strong — one in every five people on the earth.

Despite deep and sometimes violent disputes among themselves, Muslims are growing in strength and numbers in many areas — including the United States.

They believe in one God — the God of Abraham and Moses. The Koran, Islam's holy book, recognizes and honors Jesus as a prophet, sinless and born of a virgin. But Muslims do not believe Jesus is the Son of God. And many live in places or cultures where they seldom, if ever, get the chance to hear and respond to the Christian Gospel. Those who do often risk their lives.

Only one thing will ever change these realities, Christian mission strategists believe — prayer.

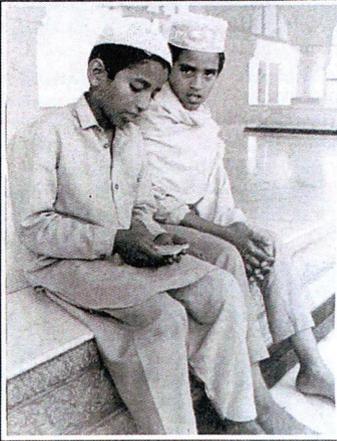
That's why a joint Foreign Mission Board task force urges Southern Bap-

tists to set aside 1995 as the "Year of Prayer for Muslim Peoples."

Why 1995, and why all year?

"The whole movement of Islam around the world is gaining momentum," explained Lewis Myers, chairman of the Muslim evangelism task force and FMB vice president for strategies to reach "World A," the most unevangelized peoples of the globe.

Islam has spread in Europe, North America, and North Africa, and strengthened in old Muslim strongholds in Central Asia as they have



THESE TWO boys seen in a Muslim mosque in India, represent the future of Islam. Will they hear the Christian Gospel? Or will they be part of a Muslim revival that keeps Christianity out — or drives it out — of whole regions of the world? How faithfully Christians pray for the world's one billion Muslims may determine the answer. — Photo by Warren Johnson

moved out from under communist domain, Myers said.

The "most intense time" of prayer for Muslims, Myers added, will unfold during Ramadan, the annual 30-day Mus-

lim period of prayer and fasting, beginning Feb. 1 this year. For the third year, Southern Baptists and other Christians will pray for Muslims as Muslims themselves are praying.

"This is a period of time when Muslims are particularly sensitive to spiritual matters, and they're praying for themselves and their relationship to God," Myers said. "It's an ideal time to call on Christians to enter into that prayer arena on behalf of the Muslims."

Resources for people who want to pray effectively for Muslims in 1995 include a 30-day prayer guide — ideal for the Ramadan period but useful any other time too — focusing on 30 different Muslim people groups. Also available: quarterly prayer guides (the first focuses on Muslims in the Americas), a special video available March 1, and other ideas and resources for observing the year of prayer in local churches.

To order any of these resources, call the FMB's customer services office toll-free at 1 (800) 866-FMB1. □

Baptist relief workers minister to flood victims in California

By Mark Wyatt and Joseph Lugo
For Baptist Press

GUERNEVILLE, Calif. — Long after the rain ended, floodwater receded, and sunny skies returned to northern California, Southern Baptist disaster relief workers continued ministering to victims of the state's most destructive flooding in a decade.

Southern Baptist volunteers were among the first to bring aid to flood-stricken inhabitants of communities along the Russian River in northern California. Baptist volunteers arrived early Jan. 9 to help comfort and feed flood victims as unprecedented rainfall continued statewide.

In hardest-hit northern Cal-

Volunteers needed for post-flood clean-up

Baptist Press

SANTA ROSA, Calif. — The flooding has ended, but the clean-up is far from over, says Don Hargis, disaster relief coordinator for the California Southern Baptist Convention.

Volunteer crews are needed to help victims of the northern California flood, he said. "It could take a month or longer to finish the clean-up, depending on how many volunteer crews we get," Hargis said.

People interested in volunteering for the flood clean-up work can call Hargis' office at (209) 229-9533. □

ifornia, torrents sent streams and rivers out of their banks and raging through towns like Guerneville, Santa Rosa, and Monte Rio, north of San Francisco Bay.

High winds and heavy rains

also battered southern California, flooding several communities and closing freeways and surface streets. Mountain passes north of Los Angeles had to be closed for a time as snowfall clogged highways at

higher elevations.

Leading Southern Baptists' initial relief effort in northern California were Sam Birky, director of missions for Redwood Empire Association, and Don Hargis, California Southern Baptist Convention men's ministries director.

Hargis received a call Jan. 8 from an American Red Cross official asking for helping feeding and sheltering flood victims. Within hours, one of the California Baptist convention's disaster relief units was en route to the flood area.

"We scrambled and drove all night and none of us slept until after 1 p.m. the next day," Hargis said. By then the feeding station was up and running in Santa Rosa. Hargis

and other workers slept in shifts so the feeding station would be staffed at all times. For nearly two weeks, Hargis and other Baptist relief workers had little relief.

Birky led relief efforts in the Guerneville area. He said one reason they were able to take charge of feeding efforts there was because they already had established a presence in the community by providing Thanksgiving dinners and summer missionaries in prior years.

"We're not strangers here," Birky said, explaining the contact Baptists have maintained with the local people through the years always has been one of providing different ministries. □

Churches receiving smaller share of members' income, study shows

Associated Baptist Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Church members are giving a decreasing percentage of their income to churches while going into debt to purchase more personal luxury items, according to an annual report on church contributions.

This trend may be caused in part by the failure of churches to communicate with members the needs of the churches and their mission agencies, according to researchers John and Sylvia Ronsvalle.

With assistance from the Lilly Endowment, the Ronsvalles are studying church member giving patterns in 29 U.S. denominations (including the Southern Baptist Convention) from 1968 to the present.

They recently released their annual report on "The State of Church Giving" with new data through 1992.

With analysis of the 1992 data, total member contributions to church causes lost ground to inflation for the second year in a row — the first back-to-back declines in the 25 years monitored in the study.

In addition, the percentage of members' income given to churches continued to drop, following a long-term pattern, the Ronsvalles said.

In 1968, church members gave an average of 3.14 percent of their income to churches. By 1992, the figure declined to 2.52 percent.

Hardest hit by the declining giving pattern are benevolent causes outside the local

church, such as support for missionaries. When viewed in constant 1987 dollars, total support for causes outside the local church has decreased 1.8 percent in the last 25 years, compared to a 24 percent increase in support for local church needs.

Despite giving less of their income to churches, church members fare no better in managing their money, the study showed, noting Americans continue buying on credit. Last year \$30 billion was spent on interest charges alone, the study said.

Factors for the decline include confusion about the purpose of denominational structures and the changing role of women, the researchers reported. □



Hunt leads staff retreat

Retired Baptist Sunday School Board staffer T.W. Hunt, right center, visited recently with Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Director James Porch, right, and TBC staffers Larry Kirk, left, and Barbara Owen during a TBC staff retreat held Jan. 16-18 at Camp Linden. Hunt led a study on "The Mind of Christ." Staffers also had time for planning and sharing about upcoming TBC events.

Red, yellow, black, or white: fact or fiction in SBC history?

By Louis Moore
For Baptist Press

Editor's Note: This is the seventh part in a 12-part series in "The Spirit of Southern Baptists, 1845-1995," produced by the SBC Historical Commission.

NASHVILLE — After the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in Augusta, Ga., in 1845, numerous African Americans were members of the new denomination, because the people who owned them or once owned them were members of church affiliated with the new SBC.

At that time, slaves usually were relegated to the balconies or backs of their masters' churches, but they worshiped with their owners nonetheless, according to historians.

Their presence underscored the raging debate among America's Baptists that had led to the schismatic beginning of the SBC — the refusal of Northern Baptists to agree to the appointment of a slaveholder as a missionary. Southern Baptists maintained a person could own slaves and at the same time practice the Christian faith by making sure those slaves and others were introduced to Christ and disciplined through the church. Northern Baptists maintained the immorality of slaveholding negated other good that might come out of it.

John B. Boles, a professor of religious studies at Rice University in Houston and author of *Black Southerners: 1619-1869*, says, "Even though to be sure there was discrimination and slaves

were second-class members, they had gained more privileges and received more equal treatment (in the church) than anywhere else in Southern society."

Within 20 years after the convention was formed — and after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freed the

birth of the SBC, powerful social forces again are transforming the denomination, but this time from all-white to a representative rainbow of ethnic and racial groups.

Despite the deep scars caused by the bitterness of slavery, African Americans are the largest minority group within the SBC, and their ranks are growing rapidly. But so too are the numbers of Span-

Dallas, seemed to signal the shift in the convention's attitude when at a press conference he confessed to an out-face in his own personal attitude toward integration.

During the 1970s and 1980s the number of ethnics within the SBC began to grow dramatically. By the mid-1980s, a national United Methodist survey showed that ethnic-minority memberships in the SBC was growing at the fastest rate among American denominations. The survey also showed Southern Baptists were leading the nation's denominations in establishing new ethnic-minority congregations during the 1975-84 period.

Today, these new SBC minority groups are confronting the same issue that thwarted and eventually drove out the first African American Southern Baptists: lack of power and influence. But this time their attitudes appear to be optimistic that changes will come.

In 1993, a special SBC task force appointed by then-SBC President H. Edwin Young of Houston called for more minority representation on SBC boards and agencies and in positions of leadership throughout the denomination.

Although not directly related, the convention in 1994 elected both of its vice presidents from among minority groups — one Asian American and one African American. □ — To receive free guidelines and to purchase resources to help celebrate the SBC's 150th anniversary, write the Historical Commission, SBC, at 901 Commerce Street, #400, Nashville, Tenn., 37203.

The Spirit of Southern Baptists 1845-1995

slaves and Union soldiers marched into the South to enforce the president's words — these first African American Southern Baptists began pulling out of SBC churches to form their own independent congregations.

By the end of Reconstruction in the South, as Jim Crow laws stamped segregation into the social order, the SBC was comprised "mostly of white, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking persons with a decided bias for Southern culture," says Chan C. Garrett in his doctoral report on racial prejudice for the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.

That ethnic description of the SBC reigned supreme for about 90 years — until the civil rights movement and SBC missionary successes overseas started in the mid-1960s to break the Old South's vise-like grip on SBC culture.

Today, almost 150 years after the

ish Americans, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and other ethnic minorities in the United States today.

The actual transition of the denomination from all-white to multiethnic dates to the turbulent 1960s when the SBC Christian Life Commission, SBC Home Mission Board, and various pastors and leaders began working diligently for change.

In 1964 the SBC, meeting in Atlantic City, refused to endorse the historic 1964 civil rights bill only days before it was passed by Congress. The next year the convention in Dallas seemed to take a more conciliatory position. That year the convention also began its annual Race Relations Sunday observance, now held on the second Sunday in February.

In 1968, the convention took a stronger stand calling for more SBC work in behalf of positive race relations. Then in 1971, former SBC President W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Church,

VBS clinics to train Tennessee Baptist workers

Four Vacation Bible School clinics for associational VBS teams are scheduled across Tennessee in February.

The theme for 1995 Vacation Bible School is "Windows on the World." The clinics are sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention Sunday

School Department.

Dates and sites for the clinics follow. Each clinic will be held from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., local time.

□ Feb. 13 — First Church, Morristown

□ Feb. 14 — First Church, Athens

□ Feb. 15 — Judson Church, Nashville

□ Feb. 16 — Englewood Church, Jackson

Leaders for the conferences met recently in Brentwood for planning sessions.

Leaders are:

Liz Lee and Roy Miller, TBC Sunday School Department; Pat Boone, South Gate Church, Nashville; Lou Heath, Two Rivers Church, Nashville;

Sylvia Clardy, First Church, Clarksville; Lew Reynolds, Gayle Haywood, and Debbie Hunter, Brentwood Church, Brentwood;

Linda and Phil Myers, First Church, Hendersonville; Joy Schleifer, First Church, Ooltewah; and Tom Lee, First Church, Jacksboro.

The team will train associational leaders, who in turn will conduct conferences for church VBS leaders.

Lunch and childcare for children through 5 years old will be provided by reservation only. For reservations, call the TBC Sunday School Department at (615) 371-2054, by Feb. 3. □



ATTENDING THE VBS leadership training in Brentwood recently were, from left, seated, Roy Miller, Tom Lee, Lew Reynolds, Linda & Phil Myers; standing, TBC Sunday School Department Director Greer Ruble, Liz Lee, Debbie Hunter, Sylvia Clardy, Lou Heath, and Pat Boone. They will be among those training associational VBS leaders in February.

Daily Partnership Prayer Requests

January

- 25 — Pray for bivocational church planter Alan Williams as he begins new work in Battle Creek and a house for Mike Collins, new state convention executive director, to sell in Ohio. Also pray for Collins as he leads Michigan Baptists into a new decade.
- 26 — Ask the Lord to lead the new DOM in Detroit to be all God wants him to be; ask God for a MSC couple to begin a ministry in Chateau Macomb Mobile Home Park; and pray for pastors for six pastorless churches in Northland and for three churches in crisis in Upper Peninsula.
- 27 — Pray for Eva Gulkowski, leader of Polish Baptist women's work, who had surgery Jan. 19 in Texas. You may write her in care of Michael Gott, P.O. Box 2107, Jacksonville, Texas, 75766
- 28 — Financial support is needed for the completion of Poland's educational center in Radosc.
- 29 — Pray for Yukiko, an international student from Japan attending the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He is not a Christian, but has attended church.
- 30 — Pray for the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists' new partnership with Lithuania.
- 31 — Pray that the work of Tennessee volunteers will contribute greatly to new church growth in western Canada during the three-year partnership with the Tennessee Baptist Convention.



Here's Hope strategy; share Jesus now

This year's denominational calendar is packed with days emphasizing witnessing and revival.

In an age when the venerable two-weeks revivals are merely memories, it is refreshing to have such strong strategy for taking the Gospel to unsaved people, and for regaining Christian commitment among the saved.

Here in Tennessee the churches are almost in the middle of the 60-days schedule of simultaneous witnessing to lost people. It began January 9 and concludes March 9. It is suggested to Southern Baptists to try to witness to 60 persons during that time period.

"Here's Hope, Jesus Cares for You" is the theme for that plan.

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Later this year churches will take part in simultaneous revivals with the "Here's Hope, Share Jesus Now" idea. And March 12 to September 30 are the suggested dates.

The goal is for participation of 15 percent of people enrolled in Sunday School. Across America that would result in 600,000 Baptists sharing the Gospel 36 million times.

Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president, says that this strategy would hopefully shape a new mindset among Southern Baptists.

So for sixty days, Tennessee Baptists, along with other Southern Baptists, are asked to share faith daily. Churches

have been asked to train members in soul winning beginning last fall. That is the first step. The second step is individual witnessing now through March 9. Then the revivals come.

In 1983, Billy Graham defined evangelism as "the offering of the whole Christ by the whole Church, to the whole man, to the whole world."

Delos Miles defines evangelism thus:

"Evangelism is being, doing, and telling the Gospel of the kingdom of God, in order that by the power of the Holy Spirit



persons and structures may be converted to the lordship of Jesus Christ."

He adds that one facet of that definition views evangelism as "a kingdom-of-God enterprise." It is the clear, strong proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It also is a work of the Holy Spirit, the Enabler, says Miles, and has "a razor-sharp cutting edge" aimed toward converting persons to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Bold Missions Thrust and all subsequent evangelistic strategies are alike in that that do not apologize for wanting to convert and disciple all people.

Paul of the New Testament is a priceless example of evangelism at work in the heart. Once he was saved, he could not wait to hit the fields, shouting as it were, the desperate plight of lost souls.

In the early years of Bold Mission Thrust, many Southern Baptists embraced the idea that this was a plan for Southern Baptists, birthed and controlled by Southern Baptists.

No, God was not left out of the planning and strategizing, but other Christian bodies were.

Jim Henry, SBC president, and Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president,

agree that unity is essential among evangelicals. Lewis told HMB directors last month that Billy Graham "is the key to

success, known around the world as the premiere Christian evangelist."

He said Graham is considering a request to convene a meeting of evangelicals from around the world to discuss a four-year international effort culminating with a Graham crusade broadcast to "every church in the world."

Henry said that Southern Baptists must not be diverted "even by good things." It is necessary, he said, to continue focusing minds and hearts on winning our nation and world to Jesus Christ, and "This must be our passion."

So Tennessee Baptists are the home players, and the Volunteer State is the field. The harvest is ripe and ripening. The Reaper is coming. Let us all be found faithful. Work the fields in 1995, for Jesus offers Hope. □

■ one word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen editor

Just another item?

Editors usually receive more than enough mail. I am no exception to this reality.

In addition to the scores of news items received here in the office daily, we also receive letters to the editor, many opinion pieces, countless pieces of junk mail, and some items which might be on the border line.

The "border line" grouping can include information from various institutions such as government agencies and messages from officials. This kind of mail merits a second look.

For two years now I have given attention to mailouts from the U. S. Department of Education. I get more than previously from that office, and Secretary Dick Riley was a classmate of mine.

He has a high view of education's importance and seems dedicated to improving schools across the nation. He doesn't believe money is the sole cure.

He thinks, for instance, that communities have to pull together to insure sound education for our children.

In a recent letter, he wrote that, "I believe all parents, regardless of income or occupation, have the capacity and obligation to teach their children not only a love of learning, but also other critical American values such as responsibility, respect, and hard work."

He also said that successful family involvement "is not a sporadic activity...Parents are children's first and most influential teachers. By reading to children or having them read to us, by making sure homework is done, by monitoring television use, by knowing how children spend their time, parents can have a powerfully positive effect on their children's learning."

He said also that parents need to slow down their lives and help their children grow.

I know he did not address single parents specifically, but I think he understands the situation.

I am happy the head of our national education thrust for children and youth believes in family values, and that he cares. It is the work for all of us.

Thanks, Dick Riley. □



ALLEN

■ just for today

By Fred Wood pastor emeritus Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile

Pastor: "I'm resigning to go to another church. Jesus led me to do it. Now we will continue our service. Who will request our next song?"

Deacon: "Page 358."

Guess what the song was! "What a Friend We Have In Jesus."

Take this truth

Some things we can do for ourselves. We should do them. Some we cannot do; the Lord must clear the way so we can do them. Some we won't know whether we can do until we try. Our job is to try. In all things, however, we should remember only in Christ are we "able for all things."

Memorize this Scripture

"I can do everything through him who gives me the strength" (Philippians 4:13 NIV).

Pray this prayer

Lord enable me to discern between doing and waiting, and to wait patiently when I have done my best. May I remember Your will as to when and how of your answer. □

A look at empathy, sympathy

■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor and professor

In working with family situations, I frequently discover some confusion between the meanings of empathy and sympathy.

We are taught that Christians should be kind, gentle, caring, and supportive. We interpret these to being sympathetic.

At times I have seen Christians become blinded, gullible, and even over-bearing—all in the guise of sympathy.

Empathy is the ability to see from another person's perspective. Sympathy often sees from the viewer's perspective only and is emotionally convinced that the other person has the same view.

We sometimes want to help someone so badly that we assume they have the same opinion that we do. This often occurs in the life of a person who tries to help alcoholics.

The concerned family member assumes that the alcoholic can see the drinking as the same kind of problem that the want-to-be helper has.

This often leads to situations where sympathetic persons become enablers. By failing to see the problem as does the alcoholic, the enabler be-

comes blinded to the possible choices that the alcoholic will make, which contribute to the problem.

Let's look at a second difference between the words empathy and sympathy.

Empathy includes the ability to remain detached while sympathy is "taken in" by the person with the problem.

Many well-intended Christians, in an effort to show sympathy, wind up being duped by others because their sympathy left them gullible.

In their attempt to identify with the other person, they may become enmeshed and tend to be vulnerable to the same bad thinking that gets the other person into the difficulty.

Another twist to the idea of sympathy is that some persons want to "fix" the other person so badly that their sympathy leads them to become overbearing in their attempt to make everything all right.

On the other hand, empa-

thy accepts people as they are so they can become all that God wants them to be.

I note here that God is very empathetic toward us in that He accepts us as we are but does not force us to do his will.

There is no question about his love or concern, but He allows us the dignity of self-direction. Sympathy cannot be used as an excuse to make decisions for others which they should make for themselves.

One final comparison will help us differentiate between empathy and sympathy. It has been said that sympathy feels for someone, while empathy feels with someone.

Many people may ridicule the President's remark, "I feel your pain." Those who take offense see a leader as saying that he will feel for us, thus making the decision how to relieve our problem.

If on the other hand, it is believed that he felt with us, we would believe that he understood and could be trusted to help find a solution to our problem. □



BARKLEY

Southern Baptist college enrollment up for 13th consecutive year

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Enrollment at the 51 Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities, including three in Tennessee, showed an overall increase for the fall semester for the 13th consecutive year, according to figures released to the Southern Baptist Education Commission.

Statistics for the 1994 fall semester show 113,065 students, a 2.4 percent increase

over the 1993 total of 110,409.

Schools included in the enrollment report are all members of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools. Not included in the total are enrollment figures from Wake Forest University and University of Richmond. Both schools failed to renew their

membership in the association for 1995. The enrollment figures include both full- and part-time students in college credit courses, but do not include students enrolled in non-credit courses. Enrollment statistics were released to the commission by each school.

Campbell University, Buies

Creek, N.C., had the largest numerical increase with 599 students. The University of Mobile (Ala.) had the largest percentage increase with 17.4.

Figures for Tennessee Baptist Convention-related educational institutions are: Belmont University, 2,960, up 3 percent; Carson-Newman Col-

lege, 2,163, up 1.7 percent; and Union University, 2,352, up .6 percent. □



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January is "Make Your Will" month throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. The staff and children of TBCH would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt thanks to our Heritage Club members for their insight and compassion as we work together to build a brighter future for the children of Tennessee.

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**Life and Work Series
for Jan. 29
Focal Passage:
Mark 4:3-8, 14-20a**

Jesus, Son of David

By Brian Courtney

How does a person see Jesus Christ? Some may see him as a baby in Bethlehem. Some may see him as the resurrected Lord. Some may see him as the one who was crucified. Some may see him as a fake or fraud.

The Gospels present Jesus in many ways. "Son of man," the "I am" sayings in John, and "Son of David" are a few of the many descriptions of Jesus. Maybe that's the point. One description cannot accurately describe who he is or his totality. If Christians focus too much on one description, they may miss another. Hear the following texts with open eyes!

The humble King — vv. 1-11

Jesus and his disciples were traveling to Jerusalem. Near Jerusalem Jesus sends two disciples for an "ass ... and a colt ..." (v. 2). That the owner released them probably indicates the divine authority and knowledge of Jesus, not prearranged plans. But why these two animals? The answer is the fulfillment of Scripture. Matthew combines Isaiah 67:11 and Zechariah 9:9 as an explanation for Jesus' action (vv. 4-5). These two

texts combine a right understanding of who Jesus is. Jesus is "king," but at the same time "humble." So the king approaches Jerusalem "humble and mounted on an ass" (v. 5).

The response of the people is an uproar. The disciples' garments served as saddles. People spread their garments and tree branches on the road. They shouted "Hosanna" which means "save us" and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (v. 9) which are lines from Psalm 118:25-26. The people proclaim him to be the "son of David" which caused a stir (a form of the word translated "earthquake"), with all the people asking, "Who is this?" The answer is not "the Son of David" but "the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee." Why? No answer is given. What is certain is all Jerusalem is disturbed by the presence of Jesus — the humble king.

Where is the disturbance of cities, towns, and villages today with the presence of Jesus? Could it be that

Christians are too triumphant, arrogant, proud, or misguided that people can't hear the Gospel for the examples they see? When professing Christians kill doctors who perform abortions, what do the masses see? When professing Christians have lifestyles reflecting greed, pride, and injustice, what do the crowds see? There is a lot of disturbance in Jesus' name. But do the cities, towns, and villages see the presence of Jesus — the humble king? Ponder the text!

The mighty judge — vv. 12-16

If the preceding text shows Jesus as the humble king, this text shows Jesus in a far different way. Having entered Jerusalem, Jesus goes to the Temple. There he drives out all those who are buying and selling, overturns the money changers' tables, and the seats of dove sellers. All these things were supposed to be a convenience to the worshippers. Some traveled great distances to worship and transporting sacrifices would have been burdensome. Some carried pagan money and could exchange it for temple-worthy money. But Jesus disliked these practices. Why? He gives quotes from Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 as a defense for his actions — God's house has become a den of robbers.

With the temple cleansed, the blind and lame come and he heals them. The children shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David." This action caused another stir with the chief priests and the scribes. Jesus replies with a quote from Psalm 8:2 which suggests that even the youngest knows who he is. What is clear is that the religious are disturbed by the presence of Jesus — the mighty judge.

What would Jesus do if he came to our churches? What practices would he dislike? Would he dislike any practice that made people feel unimportant because of their social, economic, or racial class? Would he dislike any practice that robbed people of true worship? Ponder the texts. Jesus is the humble king and the mighty judge. □ — Brian Courtney is pastor of First Church, Sneedville.

Responding to God's Son

By Elizabeth Howard

The parable of the sower is one of my favorites. I recall a childhood picture: my grandfather sowing grain by hand. He walked back and forth, gathering handfuls of grain from a bucket and scattering it across the field. It amazes me that the grain came up fairly evenly over the field, rather than in thick clumps here and there. Grandfather used the same method to sow the field as the sower in the parable. Tractors and modern machinery do the job much faster and more efficiently, but I have never enjoyed watching them roar back and forth.

As Jesus spoke this parable, he was sitting in a boat on the Sea of Galilee because of the large crowd on the shore. Perhaps, he could see a sower from where he sat. In any case, it was a sight familiar to his hearers.

The sowing — vv. 3-8

Jesus' parable does not focus on the sower, but on the types of soil in the field. Some of the seed fell on the path and the birds ate it. Some fell in places where thin soil covered limestone. This seed sprouted quickly, but soon withered in the hot sun because it lacked moisture and deep soil to nourish its roots. Other seed fell among thorns or thistles and was soon choked out. None of the seeds which fell in such infertile places produced fruit. But some seed fell in good soil, and it produced fruit in varying amounts, from good to bounteous.

Infertile hearts — vv. 14-19

The lesson of the parable was hidden to many of Jesus' listeners, but when he was alone with his disciples, he explained its meaning (v. 10). They may have been frustrated at the various responses to Jesus, just as ministers, missionaries, and others who witness are today. Jesus wanted them to know that the response, or lack of it, is not the fault of the sower.

Imagine a preacher before a congregation made up of people with many different experiences and expectations. Some who hear the message have hardened hearts, and Satan snatches the word from them, just as birds eat the seed that falls on a path where the ground is too hard for the seed to take root.

Opposite to those with hardened hearts are those whose hearts are shallow. They respond emotionally to the message, but as soon as times become difficult, they fall away. They have made no firm commitment to Christ, but their "faith" is rooted in soil too thin to endure periods of drought. They have not lost their salvation, for they never were truly saved in the first place.

The third type of soil is already crowded with thorns. These hearers may make some initial response, but their concern for wealth or other things soon crowds out their interest in Christianity. Some in this group may actually be Christians who live stunted lives because they are committed to worldly affairs rather than to Christ.

The fertile heart — v. 20a

My grandfather's field had a path, our path to Grandmother's house, and rocks and gullies, but there was also good soil which produced a good crop. So it is with the people who hear the Gospel message. Some respond wholeheartedly; they absorb nourishment from the word and grow and develop into productive Christians, bearing good fruit. □ — Elizabeth Howard is a member of Cumberland Homesteads Church, Crossville.

**Convention Uniform Series
for Jan. 29
Focal Passage
Matthew 21:1-11, 14-16**

Condemnation of false religion

By Ray Fullilove

It was a fearful time to present a fearless message. Such was the period when God called Jeremiah. The message which Jeremiah presented came from God for God's people. It was a message of condemnation. With the laws of God given to him and the love of God gripping his heart, Jeremiah was to preach in this way. There is a reason for God's message of wrath. God despises sin with a fury when his own people refuse to return to him. Judah had chosen the gods of those about them. Influenced by the "fast lane" existence, they turned to the gods of ritualism instead of the God of regeneration. The results was pride, not power; religion, not regeneration; formality, not faith; a god on the outside, not God on the inside; increased activity, but void of his holy presence. God's message was needed to bring his people back. Our task is very similar today. How do we proclaim such a fearless message?

Stand in the will of God — v. 2

The only way we are able to present the message of the wrath of God to his wayward people is to stand firm in his will. If God has called us to this task, it is certain God will complete his task in us. There may be problems, perplexity, and even frustration. However, we can go through adversity only if we know,

**Bible Book Series for Jan. 29
Focal Passage: Jeremiah 7:1-14;
26:8-24**

beyond any doubt, that we are obedient. Thus, like Jeremiah, stand in the gate of God, in the right place (v. 2a), with the right proclamation (v. 2b), and with the right pronouncement (v. 2c). When we stand in the will of God, we have a secure source, a sacred calling, and a specific message. That call of God is not only to present the Gospel to the unbelieving but, also, God's Word to the believing.

Word of God — vv. 3-13

Regardless of whether we speak with commendation from the Lord or with condemnation of the Lord, we must speak only his words. God's people had dishonored God in worship, disgraced God in their way of living, and disregarded him in their heart. His plan was one, they love him with all their heart as revealed in genuine worship (v. 3). This was to be shown with dedication (v. 4), discipline (v. 5), a demonstration of love (v. 6a), an allegiance to God alone (v. 6b), and a delight in God to bless them (v. 7). Two, God demanded his people to live separated from the world in the areas of dishonesty (v. 8), deceit (vv. 9-10), and desecration (v. 11). Three, God reveals his

condemnation in his sentence for their wickedness (v. 12a; see I Samuel 4), self-righteousness (v. 12b), and stubbornness (v. 13). When the wrath of God is to be proclaimed, we must stand on God's Word.

Way of God — ch. 26:8-24

When we preach the condemnation of God to God's people, what will be the results? We may be filled with apprehension, fear, and discouragement, but God stands by us. What was the results of Jeremiah's sermon? There was anger by the priests and the prophets (vv. 8-11), appraisal by the people (vv. 11-16), an affirmation from the Word of God of the prophets before him (vv. 17-23), and an awareness of the protecting hand of God (v. 24).

As we review God's condemnation to God's people, what lessons do we find? One, worship God with a sincere heart. Two, never take God's grace for granted. Three, repentance is required and necessary. Four, God's wrath is as sure as his love is everlasting. God give us his grace and power in the presentation of his Holy Word. □ — Ray Fullilove is pastor of Poplar Avenue Church, Memphis.

■ the churches

■ **Zion Hill Church, Englewood**, has celebrated its 172nd anniversary.

■ the people

■ **New Song Church, Mount Pleasant**, has ordained **Neil King**, who recently underwent liver transplant surgery, as a deacon. **Robert Gamble**, director of missions, **Maury Association** and **Dan Carlen**, pastor, led the service.

■ **West End Church, Athens**, has ordained **Jeff Hyde** and **Frankie Richeson** as deacons.

■ **Rick Wilburn** was ordained to the Gospel ministry Jan. 22 by **Hillcrest Church, Dyersburg**.

■ the leaders

■ **First Church, Memphis**, called **Kenneth A. Corr**, pastor, **William Trace Church, Sugar Land**, a suburb of Houston, as pastor Jan. 15. **Corr** has served as pastor of churches in Texas for 13 years and in Alabama for three years. He also was student minister at a Baptist university in Texas and a minister of youth in four Alabama churches. **Corr** is a graduate of **Auburn (Ala.) University**, and **Southwestern**

Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, where he earned a doctor of ministry degree.

■ **Pat Kough**, pastor, **Zion Church, Brownsville**, will be honored Feb. 5 on his retirement Feb. 26. **Kough** has served the church for nine years. He also has been pastor of **First Church, Bemis**; **Second Church, Russellville, Ky.**; and **Adams Chapel, Martin**. **Kough** has been president of the **Tennessee Pastors' Conference**; trustee for **Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes**; president, **West Tennessee Pastors' Conference**; and moderator of four associations. **James Porch, TBC executive director**, will speak during the morning worship service. A meal will be followed by music and a program at 2 p.m. **Bill Bates** of **Jackson**, public affairs consultant, **TBC**, will preside and **Dean Doster** of the **Home Mission Board** will speak.

■ **Dan King** has served as pastor of **Jones Chapel, Sevierville**, for one year.

■ **Melvin Carr** has served as pastor of **Richardson's Cove Church, Sevierville**, for four years.

■ **Raymond Fussell** has served as pastor of **Union Valley Church, Seymour**, for six years.

■ **Nathan Livingston** has served as pastor of **Knob Creek Church, Seymour**, for one year.

■ **Floyd Powell** is serving as pastor of **Zion Hill**

Church, Sevierville.

■ **Slate Springs Church, Crossville**, has called **Daniel Holmes** as pastor.

■ **Jonathan Blaylock** is serving as youth and music minister of **Oaklawn Church, Crossville**.

■ **Jeff Burris** has been called as single adult pastor of **First Church, Clarksville**, effective Jan. 15.

■ **Pat Van Dyke** has observed his first anniversary as minister of music at **First Church, Clarksville**.

■ **Martin Bowlin** has been called as interim pastor of **First Church, Riceville**.

■ **Robert Orr** has been called as interim pastor of **Bethel Church, Yorkville**.

■ **Bethel Church, Humboldt**, has called **James Sanders** as pastor.

■ **Keith Whited** has been called as pastor of **Union Grove, McMinn**.

■ **Frank Samuels** began serving **First Church, Waynesboro**, Jan. 8, as pastor.

■ **Green River Church, Waynesboro**, has called **Leo Doyle**, as interim pastor. **Doyle** is an evangelist from **Brevard, N.C.**

■ **Woodville Church, Ripley**, has called **Sam Webb** as pastor, who started serving Jan. 8.

■ **Rob Perry** is serving as minister of music and activities at **Concord Church,**



PRESIDENT OF HARRISON-CHILHOWEE Baptist Academy, Walter Grubb, second from right, receives a gift of \$11,411 from **New Hopewell Church, Knoxville**, representatives, from left, **Jim Williams, Wed Greer, and Mark Williams, pastor**. The gift, which was above the church's 1994 budget, went to the academy's **VISION '95 Annual Fund**. **Grubb** said the gift will be used to help needy students attend **The King's Academy**, a secondary boarding/day school operated by **Harrison-Chilhowee**.

Chattanooga.

■ **Ben Wood**, pastor, **Tom's Creek Church, Linden**, has resigned.

■ **Richard Tate** has been called as pastor of **Piney Church, Hohenwald**.

■ **Trace Creek Church, New Johnsonville**, has called **Harold Irby** as minister of music and youth.

■ **Sherwood Church, Memphis**, has called **Tim Akers** as associate pastor/minister of youth.

■ **Alpha Church, Morris-town**, has called **Thomas R. James** as pastor, effective Jan. 4. He is a graduate of **Stetson University, DeLand,**

Fla., and **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas**.

■ the schools

■ **Dallas Roscoe**, coordinator of the senior adult council, **Hamilton County Association**, and senior adult worker, **Memorial Church, Chattanooga**, was elected president of **New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary Tennessee Alumni**. Also elected was **Bob Davison**, associate, **Brotherhood Department, Tennessee Baptist Convention**, as president-elect.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

Here's Hope for dead?

By **Robert Gamble**, director of missions **Maury Baptist Association**

On Sept. 11, 1992, a very unusual parking ticket was given on **Peru Street** in south central **Los Angeles**.

At 9:46 a.m. an officer wrote up the ticket for a **Cadillac** that was illegally parked. There was no question that the car was in violation and the driver gave no indication that he objected to the ticket. In fact, the driver didn't say a word. He couldn't. He was dead!

The officer had taken time to observe the parking violation, write a ticket, then stick his hand through the open window (within inches of the body that was stiffly sitting upright behind the steering wheel) and place the \$30 citation on the dashboard.

He never noticed the man was dead. Paramedics said the man had been dead 10 to 12 hours when the ticket was given.

Every day we go about our duties and all around us there are dead people. Oh, they give signs of life. Certainly, more than the driver sitting at the wheel. Yet, they are dead and bound for

hell and don't know it.

Here's Hope — **Share Jesus Now** — 60 days of witnessing — is an effort to awaken Baptists to the lost condition of people around us.

We can imagine what the police officer's supervisor said about the ticket. But can we imagine what our Lord will say to us about our concern for those around us?

Everyone of us should renew our commitment to telling the lost about life in Christ. □

A closer examination

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

On a recent Saturday morning I drove my car onto the rack at a nearby service station for its 3,000 mile oil change. From the sidelines I watched as the car was lifted to the proper height for the attendant to begin draining the old oil. Venturing from the area where I was supposed to wait, I began to walk underneath the car for a closer look.

The view from the underside was far different from what I usually saw. Here there was no sign of polished chrome or

shiny paint or glistening glass. Rather, this angle revealed what was really important — the mechanical parts. From this viewpoint any problems could be more easily detected and corrected. Careful observation from a different perspective could prevent a breakdown on the road.

Could it be that there are motives, desires, or plans of mine that need correction? Perhaps from my limited viewpoint everything appears in order. That is why I need to pray as the psalmist did: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" **Psalm 139:23-24**. □

Preparing for new year

By **Garry Burkacki**, pastor **Beverly Hills Church, Memphis**

"Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim ..." **I Corinthians 9:26**.

This new year will be filled with many new surprises. As much as we plan and prepare each day, week, and month it remains a puzzle except to God. What can we do to grow and run

the race as God would have us?

First, lay aside every encumbrance and sin. Any willful behavior against God does nothing except destroy our ability to be what God wants us to be. You have potential to be everything God wants you to be. Ask him by his grace to help you abandon these extra weights. Second, concentrate on endurance. We all realize we need perseverance to plod through 1995. Do not let disappointments or setbacks take us out of the race, but accept that these too are part of God's divine plan.

Lastly, focus on Jesus! Look by faith to him, cast all your burdens and cares on him, for he truly cares for you. Daily prayer and personal times with Christ will help prepare us to live for him and serve him by "running" the race. □

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.