

Baptist and Reflector

July 26, 1995

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STATEWIDE EDITION

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Procter & Gamble rumor resurfaces; still no truth to it

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — The old rumor linking Procter & Gamble to Satanism is once again making its rounds in Tennessee Baptist churches. And as before, there's no truth to it.

In recent days the *Baptist and Reflector* has received calls about a form letter urging people not to purchase Procter & Gamble products because of the company's support of Satanism.

According to the latest rumor, the president of Procter & Gamble appeared on the Phil Donahue talk show in March and said he supported Satanism.

"None of this is true," according to P&G spokeswoman Elaine Matthews. "The president of P&G has never appeared on any talk show to discuss Satanism."

Matthews said the latest rumor is a variation of "the lie that was spread in 1981-82, 1984-85, and 1990."

To counter the rumor, Procter & Gamble has released an informational packet that includes letters from several religious leaders, including a rep-

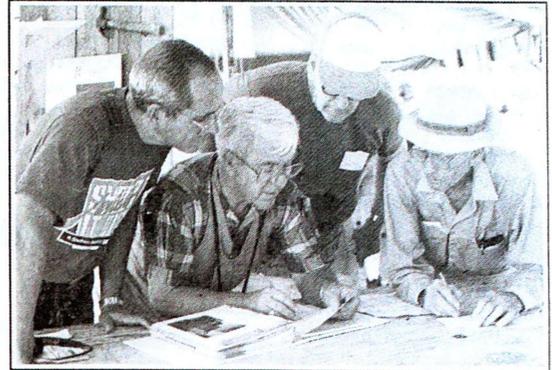
resentative of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Jerry Falwell, SBC President Jim Henry, and others. The letters note the rumor is untrue and discourage people from spreading it.

Henry, in his letter, said he feels Procter & Gamble has "successfully disproved the charges and went out of their way to assure the public these reckless statements were unwarranted." He noted that those in the Christian community who bring the matter up "should be given a deaf ear."

The packet also contains a letter from Donahue himself. "The president of P&G has never appeared on Donahue, nor has any other P&G executive.

"Anyone who claims to have seen such a broadcast is either mistaken or lying. It never happened!"

Persons spreading the petition or rumor need to be aware that the company has "successfully filed lawsuits over the years against a number of people who were intentionally spreading this lie, and will do so again if necessary," according to Matthews. □



Missions festivals

Southern Baptist Jericho missions festivals use hands-on activities, interactive displays, practical conferences and other methods to break down barriers that keep God's people from joining him on missions. The 1995 festivals are set for July 29-Aug. 4 at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center and Aug. 12-18 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. These Jericho participants, from a previous festival, led by Tennessean M.B. Howard, left center, of Oak Grove Church, Covington, study plans to build pews.

SBC hunger gifts drop for 1994

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist giving to world hunger was down by almost \$1 million or approximately 12 percent last year, from \$7.93 million in 1993 to \$6.96 million in 1994.

Reasons for the decline are difficult to assess since giving

to other SBC causes including the Cooperative Program were strong for the year, according to Christian Life Commission hunger consultant Ben Mitchell. The drop threatens ministry to hungry people in the near future, added Foreign Mission Board human needs consultant Jim Foster. □

'Ordinary' men share passion for evangelism

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Art Stacer, Joe Cowan, and Travis Johnson insist they're "common, ordinary people."

Yet together they distribute 250,000 evangelistic tracts a year, and in one week this summer they reported more than 500 professions of faith.

The three men live in San Antonio, Texas, where they have jobs and families. But as the Holy Spirit leads, they go to America's largest cities to witness in the poorest neighborhoods.

Cities they've been to include Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Houston, and Dallas. They said their strategy comes from — See 'Ordinary,' page 2

Help spread the word: *Baptist and Reflector* will celebrate 160 years of journalistic service

The Aug. 16 issue of the *Baptist and Reflector* will be a special issue no one will want to miss.

That is the paper that will be sent to churches observing *Baptist and Reflector* Day, which is Aug. 20 on the Tennessee Baptist Convention calendar.

The Aug. 16 issue also will focus on 160 years of ministry of the *Baptist and Reflector*.

It will take a look back over the years at the events that have shaped Tennessee Baptist history.

Readers have been invited to share special memories of the *Baptist and Reflector* or congratulatory messages. Those must be received by Aug. 9.

The issue also will focus on the present. "The Macedonian Call," the newsletter of the TBC Partnership Missions Department, will be included in the Aug. 16 issue. It is a good presentation of the TBC's focus on missions and evangelism through partnership ventures in Poland, Canada, and Michigan.

Tennessee Baptist churches that do not

currently subscribe to the paper for their members are urged to take advantage of our offer to send, at no cost, the number of papers needed to give to every member in the church.

The staff of the paper encourages every church to order some papers for members not receiving the paper. Help us remind Tennessee Baptists of the rich heritage of their state paper. Clip out the form below and order papers for *Baptist and Reflector* Day now. Mail form to *Baptist and Reflector*, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024.

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CBF to study denominational issue; OKs faith statement

By Herb Hollinger
For Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Although it struggled with the issue of whether the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is a "denomination," the General Assembly of the four-year-old moderate Baptist organization did approve the CBF's first identifying mission statement at its July 20-22 annual meeting here.

Registration for the General Assembly was 2,969, compared to last year's registration of 4,433.

Initially, an attempt to force a vote on the "denomination" issue was ruled out of order, but later officials decided the issue will be studied in depth by the group's coordinating council.

The CBF was formed in 1991 by moderate Southern Baptists critical of a decade of Southern Baptist Convention leader-

ship. CBF leadership has consistently denied the group is a denomination but SBC leaders disagree, charging the group is competing for mission monies of Southern Baptist churches.

The "denomination" issue was brought in the form of a motion by Bill Montgomery, a retired Texas chaplain, who wanted the CBF to vote on it at its 1996 meeting. But his motion was ruled out of order by moderator Carolyn Crumpler, whose ruling was upheld in a challenge.

CBF's new moderator, Patrick Anderson of Lakeland, Fla., told the General Assembly the coordinating council was aware of the issue and it would be addressed. Some attending the meeting wanted a clean break with the SBC and a unique identity for the CBF, while others feel a break with the SBC might drive many of the churches, now funding both, to stay with the stronger SBC. CBF claims

nearly 1,400 churches as contributors, but admits some of those are passing on designated gifts from church members but not including CBF in their church budgets.

CBF's first "mission statement" declares the group is a "fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice. Our mission is to network, empower, and mobilize Baptist Christians and churches for effective missions and ministry in the name of Christ." The lengthy statement also lists seven priorities, four Baptist principles, and six initiatives.

In other action, CBF approved its first July-June fiscal budget. The new budget is \$13.3 million, including \$3.2 million of the CBF global missions offering. Heretofore, the group operated on a calendar year budget. □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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House committee approves partial-birth abortion ban

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — A House of Representatives Judiciary Committee divided along party lines has approved legislation banning a late-term abortion procedure.

The committee sent to the full house by a 20-12 vote the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act (H.R. 1833) after contentious debate spread over

two days. Despite Democratic attempts to weaken the bill, no Republican supported the amendments. In the end, all 20 Republicans on the committee supported the bill July 18.

"We are delighted that this legislation has passed handily," said James A Smith, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's director of government relations. "This

is an important step on the road to regulating an especially abhorrent abortion method," he said.

The procedure, named "partial-birth" by the bill's sponsors but commonly known as "dilation and extraction" (D and X), occurs in the second half of pregnancy. With ultrasound for guidance, an abortion doctor uses forceps and his hands to deliver

a living, intact baby feet first until only the head is left in the birth canal. The doctor thrusts surgical scissors into the base of the baby's skull. The doctor then inserts a catheter into the opening and suctions out the brain.

"This procedure is completely indefensible," said Rep. Charles Canady of Fla., chief sponsor of the bill. □

'Ordinary' men share passion for evangelism ...

— Continued from page 1

the New Testament. "Jesus Christ went from city to city," Cowan explained.

This summer the trio was in Atlanta during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. As messengers voted for officers and discussed restructuring, these men witnessed in housing projects surrounding downtown. In five days, they recorded 504 professions of faith.

"We're not heroes. The Spirit

of God is simply working in clay vessels," said Stacer, a member of First Church, Castle Hills, Texas.

At 60, Stacer is the group's leader. Working in inner-city evangelism for 24 years has convicted Stacer about the role of laity.

"Jesus Christ never said pastors are supposed to go out. Pastors equip," said the retired military airman. "The Lord has an assignment for every saint in the world, a God-

called purpose."

The men shun publicity — they did not want their picture taken — but they agreed to discuss their work to encourage more people to be involved in evangelism. "Anyone can do this," Stacer affirmed.

As the men travel, they live in a white van that Johnson uses in his painting business. They go to housing projects armed with New Testaments and Gospel tracts. They encourage those who make pro-

fessions to read the Bible every day, pray, and "find a good Bible-believing church."

The men keep lists of those who make professions so they can pray for them. They also give lists to local churches.

Even when they're home they're committed to witnessing. Johnson and Cowan paint houses to earn an income, but they save a few hours every afternoon to witness with Stacer. "It's a daily ministry, and it's massive," Johnson said. □

TBC seeks missions director

Nominations for director of the Missions Department, Tennessee Baptist Convention, will be received through Sept. 15.

Nominations should be sent to the State Missions Director

Search Committee, TBC, P. O. Box 728, Brentwood 37024.

Wendell Boertje, Knoxville, is chairman.

All nominations will be reviewed carefully by the committee. □

ACTS telecasts SBC messages

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — A June 29 ACTS and FamilyNet broadcast of edited versions of evangelist Billy Graham's and SBC President Jim Henry's sermons to the Southern Baptist Convention during its June 20-22 annual meeting in Atlanta resulted in decisions for Christ and prayer request telephone calls from 13 states.

The edited versions of Gra-

ham's and Henry's messages will air again on FamilyNet July 28 at 7 p.m., central time.

In late June, ACTS and FamilyNet, the cable and broadcast television services of the SBC Radio and Television Commission, also telecast edited versions of two events celebrating the convention's 150th anniversary that resulted in people from 26 states calling RTVC volunteer counselors for various reasons. □

Daily Partnership Prayer Requests July



- 26 — Pray for the Baptist leaders in Poland as they spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 27 — Pray that teams will continue going to Poland and that a chapel can be built at the seminary.
- 28 — Pray for Michael Collins, executive director, and the staff of the Michigan Baptist Convention.
- 29 — Pray for the team from Silver Springs Church, Mt. Juliet, as they lead in VBS and BYBC at Victory Church, Clare, Mich.
- 30 — Pray that new churches will be started in Poland and that the Polish people will be open to the Gospel.
- 31 — Pray for the team from Salem Church, Dayton, as they travel to North Battleford, Canada, to do construction.
- Aug. 1 — Pray for Tennessee Baptists who are considering and praying about what they can do in partnership missions either in Canada, Poland, or Michigan.

Flexibility key to HMB's newest witness training process

By Sarah Zimmerman
For Baptist Press

RIDGECREST, N.C. — Flexibility is the key characteristic of the newest witness training process developed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Titled "People Sharing Jesus," the process teaches a number of witness approaches, said Jerry Pipes, HMB associate director of personal evangelism. It can be taught in a variety of settings, and the materials can be adapted for churches with smaller budgets.

"Seventy-three percent of Southern Baptist churches are not doing anything to equip people in personal evangelism," Pipes said. "With People

Sharing Jesus, we've tried to give them what they've asked for and something that will fit into their existing church structure.

"People Sharing Jesus equips congregations to share Christ where they live, work, and play," Pipes continued.

Based on a newly published book by Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism, the process is relational and intentional. Participants are taught to develop relationships with non-Christians and to share Christ with them.



ROBINSON

"This is a tool to help you witness according to your own giftedness and personality type and the need of the person with whom you're sharing," Robinson said.

The process can be taught in small-group discussions, retreat settings, worship services, a seminar series, or individual studies.

Participants learn to share Christ by using evangelistic tracts, an illustration that demonstrates how sin separates people from God, Scripture from John 3, and their personal testimony. They also are taught the importance of an intimate walk with Christ and that sharing Christ is the natural result of that relationship.

People Sharing Jesus resources include:

(1) *People Sharing Jesus*, book written by Robinson. It includes study questions with each of the 12 chapters.

(2) Leaders' guide which includes teaching outlines, art for use with overhead projectors, and other helps.

(3) A special New Testament with 31 devotions written by Calvin Miller, author and professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. The devotions encourage Christians to fulfill the Biblical command to be fishers of men.

(4) Two 60-minute tapes which are a condensed version of the book.

(5) Audio seminar of four

90-minute tapes with 12 noted speakers including Zig Ziglar, Marge Caldwell, Bill Bright, Steve Camp, and Roy Fish who share insights on each chapter of the book.

(6) Media kit with the book, leader's guide, two posters, a bulletin insert, and press releases.

Pipes said People Sharing Jesus could be taught if the leader only had the book and leader's guide.

Pricing information about People Sharing Jesus materials can be obtained through HMB customer services, 1 (800) 634-2462. After Aug. 1, the materials also can be purchased in Baptist Book Stores and other Christian bookstores. □

Penn/Jersey board charges 'abuse' of SBC trustee election process

By Herb Hollinger
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — The Pennsylvania/South Jersey convention's executive board has charged "abuse" of the trustee election process at the June Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta and has called for SBC officials to "speak out against this abuse and confront those responsible for propagating it ..."

A member of the SBC Committee on Nominations, however, said the Penn/South Jersey nominations followed the guidelines of the committee as well as the SBC constitution and bylaws.

The criticism from the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey came in the form of a resolution adopted by its executive board June 7 in Harrisburg, Pa. A letter, signed by the state convention president, Jerry Cowan, and the president of the executive board, Ray Wise, accompanied the resolution, both sent to SBC Executive

Committee President Morris H. Chapman, Nashville; Bob Hutcherson, chairman of the SBC Committee on Nominations, Smyrna, Ga.; and SBC President Jim Henry, Orlando, Fla.

The resolution cites the "shared commitment" of the churches, associations, state conventions, and national body, charging there was outside intervention in the nomination process for the state's SBC Executive Committee representative and circumvention of the nomination process in a state vacancy for the board of trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Messengers to the SBC annual meeting June 20-22 approved a slate of more than 200 nominees from the Committee on Nominations for eligible trustees and director slots at the SBC's 19 agencies, boards, commissions, and related groups.

Noting the state had two representatives on the Committee on Nominations, as prescribed by SBC bylaws, the resolution said "a certain layman from Virginia, who, through serving on the

SBC Executive Committee, (had) no position on the Committee on Nominations nor standing in the (Penn/South Jersey state convention), as an outsider nevertheless sought to put forth his own choice for the Executive Committee representing our state convention."

The resolution said "a handful of members of the Committee on Nominations, consisting of only 10 percent of the whole, including a certain pastor from Kentucky who was assigned to follow up on the nominee from Penn/South Jersey, rejected the nominee put forth by our own representatives on that committee and in turn ratified the Virginia layman's choice."

The only layman on the SBC Executive Committee from Virginia is T.C. Pinckney of Alexandria. He told Baptist Press July 18 he would have no response.

It was done, the resolution continued, without the "knowledge or approval of our representatives on the Committee on Nominations and in direct contradiction of printed guidelines

of the (committee)."

The resolution also charged that the nomination of the state's representative on the trustee board of Golden Gate Seminary, filling a vacancy, was done also without the "knowledge or endorsement" of the state's representatives on the Committee on Nominations.

Not so, said Michael W. Routt, the nominating committee member appointed to a seven-member subcommittee of the Committee on Nominations whose responsibility is to provide nominees just before the SBC annual meeting (for last-minute changes, such as resignations, deaths, ineligibility, etc).

Routt, a Kentucky pastor, said he followed the committee's guidelines.

Chapman told Baptist Press he is in the process of reviewing the matter with David C. Waltz, Penn/South Jersey convention executive director.

Hutcherson told Baptist Press July 19 he had not yet receive a copy of the resolution. Henry was out of town and unavailable for comment. □

Europe hostile ground for Baptists, leader says

Baptist Press

INTERLAKEN, Switzerland — Europe's 750,000 Baptists are a minority church group who must contend with state-sponsored churches that are often hostile, Baptist leader Karl-Heinz Walter told Baptists attending the 35th summer assembly of the European Baptist Convention.

Walter, a former German Baptist pastor, is executive secretary of the European Baptist Federation, comprised of 47 Baptist unions in Europe and the Middle East, including the English-speaking European Baptist Convention. He led a conference at the assembly attended by about 900 European Baptists July 8-13.

Walter covered a broad range of historical and political factors which have defined European Baptists in four lectures. The area is strategic for Southern Baptists, who support more than 450 missionaries in the region through the Foreign Mission Board. Southern Baptists have expanded their forces in Eastern Europe dramatically in recent years.

Although large Baptist groups exist in Great Britain, Ukraine, and Romania, many national Baptist unions have fewer than 10,000 members. In most countries Baptists are outnumbered by members of state churches, including the Roman Catholic Church in Russia and several other Eastern European countries. Prob-

lems arise when the predominant churches try to define national identity in terms of church identity, he said.

"If you live in Poland and want to be a good Polish citizen, you have to be Roman Catholic. If you live in Romania and you're not a Roman Orthodox member, you have problems. If you're in Bulgaria and not a Bulgarian Orthodox or in Georgia and not a Georgian Orthodox, you have problems," Walter said.

He noted that it is hard for Europeans to change their religion "because it means changing cultural and national identity."

An advantage, however, of being a minority church is higher commitment, he said. □



Award recipient

David Carr, right, director of the Christian Life Department of Holston Association, presents the Christian Citizenship Award to Ann Bennett of First Church, Kingsport, as her husband, Kevin, watches. Bennett, Christian Life director for Sullivan Association, was recognized as one 'who has courageously and effectively applied moral demands of the Gospel and the principles of the Christian faith to engage our culture for the cause of righteousness.'

Tennessee music evangelists find new calling in radio

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

WHITE BLUFF — It took an unusual combination of events for Duane and Mary Alice Jeffrey to become owners of a radio station.

Take a heart attack, add a log skidder and presto — the Jeffreys ended up with station WQSE, 1030 AM.

The bottom line, however, is it was entirely God's will, the couple agreed.

For the past few years the Jeffreys have served as music coordinators for the Fellowship of Tennessee Evangelists.

In order to supplement their music evangelism ministry, Jeffrey operated a firewood business out of his home in McEwen, where the couple are members of First Church.

Almost two years ago, however, Jeffrey suffered a heart attack during the Christmas holiday season. He knew he would have to give up his firewood business.

Jeffrey, who has been in and out of radio for many years, had dreamed of owning his own station. In fact, he had tried to buy WQSE four years ago, but it was financially out of the question.

Last August, Jeffrey was on the verge of signing papers to purchase a mobile home park. The weekend before he was to go to the bank he received a call from a friend in North Carolina advising him of the availability once again of the White Bluff radio station.

Jeffrey called the real estate agent who owned the property and discovered he was willing to take \$85,000 for the station, considerably less than the



DUANE JEFFREY watches as his wife **Mary Alice** broadcasts live on **WQSE**, a Christian radio station based in White Bluff.

\$200,000 asking price four years ago.

The agent told Jeffrey he would take \$1,500 down; \$1,500 that Jeffrey did not have.

The agent was willing to work with the couple. When inquiring as to what the couple had, the agent discovered Jeffrey had a John Deere log skidder that he was wanting to sell.

The agent worked out a deal with Jeffrey to accept the skidder as a down payment, plus eliminate payments for one year.

A few weeks later on Sept. 15, WQSE, a former country music station, was back on the air with a Top 40 Southern Gospel music format.

The couple believes the events that led up to acquiring the station were no accident.

Just two months before the deal was arranged, the Jeffreys were driving to Joelton to a singing engagement. At-

tempts to find some "good Gospel music" on the radio were futile as stations would fade in and out, Mary Alice recalled.

"I told the Lord we could sure use a Christian radio station in the area and that Duane and I were willing," she said. In less than three months "we were on the air. That is a miracle and the Lord at work," she affirmed.

"We're grateful the Lord will use us. It's his radio station," the couple agreed.

WQSE is only a 1,000-watt station, but a 457-foot tower helps get the signal out over a 50-mile radius, including parts of Nashville, Clarksville, Columbia, and Lebanon, Jeffrey said. It is on the air from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. daily.

In 10 months of existence the station is gaining wide acceptance, especially in its main coverage area of Dickson County.

Churches of all denomina-

tions have signed on to sponsor 15-minute segments of Gospel music throughout the week, Jeffrey said.

In addition, the station is now doing live broadcasts from churches and other locations on weekends for nominal fees.

Though broadcasting during the week is primarily the Top 40 Southern Gospel format, weekend programming features local groups not on a national recording label.

"We don't judge talent. If they're one of God's children and they have a studio-produced tape, we will play it, the couple said.

The station also airs Scripture reading, prayer requests, and local church announcements. The prime focus, however, is on music.

"Every song is a mini-sermon," Mary Alice said, noting most of the music they play is Scripturally-based.

"It has been fun getting the Lord's Word out," she added, noting that there are people who will listen to their radio station who will not attend church.

The effort has been hard work and there have been some "rough roads" thus far, the couple agreed. The station does not have any full-time employees. Volunteers broadcast when the Jeffreys, who divide broadcast time, are not at the station. They have an engineer, Ron Cassidy, who is on retainer and charges a minimal amount for his services. "He's truly a gift from God," the couple affirmed, noting there is nothing he can't do.

The work is paying off.

An example of listener satisfaction and loyalty happened

just recently when the station sponsored its first annual "Chicken Barbeque and All Day Sing."

The event started out, however, on a sour note. During preparations for the barbeque, lightning struck and burned the station's transmitter, knocking the station off the air. Parts needed to repair the damage cost \$1,797.

The Jeffreys went on with the barbeque and were insistent that it not become a fundraiser. Others at the event had different ideas and before the day was over, more than \$1,800 had been collected to help the Jeffreys pay to have the transmitter repaired. Another check from a local church came in the next day, pushing the total to more than \$2,000.

"Many in the Christian community here are behind us," the couple said.

The Jeffreys are totally committed to the idea that what they are doing is a ministry.

"People can go out and buy tapes; the ministry is the connection with the people who are listening," Jeffrey said.

He noted the station has received up to as many as 70 requests a day. In addition, people call in special prayer requests that are shared over the air.

"They can call us here and we can ask our entire audience to pray," Jeffrey said, noting listeners have told them how requests have been answered.

The couple agreed that it has been a great 10 months. "We don't regret a minute of it."

"It's more than a job, it's a joy," Mary Alice added. □



Cooperative Program effort

Children attending Vacation Bible School at First Church, Covington, collected an offering of \$444.62 for the Cooperative Program. Total enrollment for the week was 321. Among those leading the effort were Pastor Bill Northcott, third from left on back row, and VBS Director Susan White, third from right on back row.

BSUer cares for Romanian teeth, souls

For Baptist and Reflector

With her dental license just a week old, April Buffington, a member of the Baptist Student Union at the University of Tennessee — Memphis, joined other Baptists to help Romanians June 9-20.

Buffington, who is now practicing with her father in West Memphis, Ark., and is a member of First Church, West Memphis, joined Bryan Schmidt, Mitchell Godat, and Brad Goodchild, other UT BSU members, in the effort.

About 60 Baptists worked in Brasov, Romania, a large city with a population which has many needs, Buffington said. One late afternoon she asked a patient how long she had waited at the clinic the American team had set up. The lady said she had arrived at 4 a.m.

Buffington explained the fall of communism has resulted in a lack of services such as health care. The team's doctors, dentists, and nurses treated more than 3,500 patients. Besides offering health care using their own equipment and medicine, the Baptists left about \$300,000

worth of health care supplies.

She was most astonished by how responsive adults were to the Gospel and how grateful they were when learning about it. She met one woman who said she was interested in learning about Christianity. After Buffington introduced her to the Christian faith, the woman explained she was an orphan who had always thought there was a God but didn't know how she could find out. She became a Christian, said Buffington. The team saw about 1,500 people make spiritual decisions.

Mainly the Americans operated clinics in eight sites and they were well assisted, added Buffington. They had excellent translators and other Romanians also helped them.

The Baptist missionary in Brasov, David Butts, has led one Baptist church there to begin 12 congregations. The Romanian Baptists had held a 24-hour prayer vigil for about three months to prepare for the effort.

Buffington said she's glad she went because "there's nothing like really seeing it." □

So what good is soap — if not for cleansing?

A story is told about a rabbi and a soapmaker engrossed in discussing their life's work.

The two were talking as they walked along the village streets.

It was the soapmaker who made the first challenge. "What good is religion, rabbi?" he asked. "We have had religion for thousands of years and yet we still have poverty, crime, hunger, violence, and other evil. What good is religion?"

They walked a little further and as they came upon a group of dirty children playing in a mud puddle, the rabbi spoke. "What good is soap?" he asked.

"We have had it for thousands of years and yet children are dirty. What good is soap?"

"But rabbi," answered the soapmaker, "soap isn't any good unless you use it."

"Ah," answered the rabbi. "And neither is religion."

Yes, religion, to be real and meaningful, has to be practiced and lived out or experienced. Whether the rabbi and soapmaker story is true, it has merit.

There is a saying that you can't know a book by just looking at its cover. An American novel of the West, written about a century ago, had this interesting note on the inside back:

"There are two sides to everything," said the note, "including the wrapper which covers every one of our books." The reader was urged to "refer to the carefully selected list of modern fiction comprising most of the successes by prominent

writers of the day ... more than five hundred titles ... to choose from."

Some of the titles, no doubt, were just like soap that was never used. Flimsy, shallow, inept, weak, pandering to the base desires of the public.

Religion must be used in order to be effective. Religion must be applied to life — not to make it easy, but to give it meaning.

Jesus Christ did not move around asserting fancy "dos and don'ts." His days on earth were not filled with lists drawn from ease and propriety, or giving obedience to landholders or politicians.

Not that he left them out of his life — he was careful to include them. But all people to him were in the same situation — lost until they accepted God's free offer of salvation.

For example, the trappings of religion in today's world sometimes are more pervasive than ever.

While Baptists do not promote certain apparel, hair styles, or insignia as necessary to be religious, we have been guilty of adding on to what Christ would offer as singular guidelines.

We do like for everyone to believe as we believe, say things the way we say them, and to worship as we worship.

What good is religion? We have had it with us for thousands of years, but we still have poverty, war, murder, child abuse. What good is religion?

Just as the soap becomes a cleansing

agent when used (it can't do its work when packaged and set on the shelf), religion also can clean when it is applied with vigor to the lives of sinners.

Two examples:

Baptist leader Karl-Heinz Walter told those attending the European Baptist Convention last week that Europe is a hostile ground for Baptist witness.

He's right. Polish Baptist leaders have told Tennessee Baptists recently that for a Polish person to be a good citizen, the person must be a Catholic — not Baptist. There are similar feelings elsewhere and a watered-down religion won't work.

Culture and national identity usually are closely tied to religion, and vice versa. Thus, the minority Baptist groups must work harder, exercise faith, live their religion.

Second, a speaker at Ridgecrest has reminded a group of women leaders in a training session that church women today won't waste time.

She said that women's ministries offered in local churches must be worthwhile. The programs must help churches grow spiritually and numerically, and help develop individual spiritual gifts.

That is precisely what active Woman's Missionary Union groups have been doing for years. It still must be emphasized throughout the church. Missions in action!

In both instances, the accent is on living out one's spiritual beliefs, one's religion. Religion is like soap: it must be used to be effective for the Lord. □

■ one word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

The glory of it

"No, we did not plan that for the program."

It was Alex, our genial guide, who said it, almost with an apologetic tone.

Our small group had chosen a late hour to view the Cairo nightscape. Alex had said the sky would be better then.

We took our seats not far from the enigmatic Sphinx — almost in the shadow of the Great Pyramid.

In the early evening we had pondered Egypt's antiquities while gliding smoothly in feluccas on a very calm Nile.

The sun set. The stars came out. We made our way casually to the Sphinx and the pyramids.

And now we settled in for "Sight and Sound," a multi-dimensional show of Egypt the mysterious.



ALLEN

The narrator was telling us about the building of the pyramids, and the life-giving Nile waters.

It was Napoleon's invading soldiers who rekindled interest in Egypt, he said, and shortly thereafter archeologists uncovered the Sphinx.

We were lost in history when suddenly a shooting star burst across the dark sky, lighting it with a diamond-colored streak reminiscent of ancient lightning. And then Alex said, "No, we didn't plan that for the program!"

But how apt it was.

Moments before we had been captured by millions of stars and spotlights playing on the mammoth monuments.

Then the star lit up the heavens, silently and with a brief majesty. Oh, the glory of it. And then it was gone — leaving us with nothing but sighs and "Did you see that?"

Time for meditation. The show was lost. There were shows like that "star" long before Napoleon.

There were such "stars" eons before the antiquities of Egypt. Man, a tiny player on the stage of life, is but a speck.

But God chose us! For what did He choose us?

Certainly the miracle of second birth is more powerful, more enduring, more worthy than all the shooting stars.

The Light of the world still is shining on life's stage. ✪

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

Outlook determines outcome

■ families matter
By Paul Barkley, counselor

Start with a smile

Two shipwrecked sailors decided to pray. Joe went first: "Lord, I have done many wrong things. I cursed, drank, stole, and many other wrong things. If you save me, I promise ..." Jim: "Wait a minute Joe. Be careful. I think I just spotted land."

Take this truth

What is true prayer? On its highest level, it is worshipful communion with God. On its lowest level, it is merely asking for something for ourselves. Bargaining with God is not truly praying. How's your prayer life?

Memorize this Scripture

"Lord, teach us to pray... Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done" (Luke 11:1; Matthew 6:10).

Pray this prayer

Lord, teach us to be always in a spirit of prayer. Lead us to understand the highest concept of prayer is to listen and find God's will for us. □

Many families face the difficulty of dealing with family members who are gloomy, depressed and/or pessimistic. I want to share some suggestions to those family members.

The cognitive field of psychology views one's frame of mind or perspective on life as a contributing factor to these kinds of problems.

"Learned helplessness" is a concept that those who adhere to this view have developed. Laboratory animals were given tasks that they could not possibly perform and then punished (with mild electrical current, etc.) because they failed. These animals eventually refused to even attempt the tasks. Some therapists who deal with these depressive types of behavior in co-dependent people have come up with a phrase: "Because I never could, I never can."

I usually use examples to explain this phenomenon. When I was a boy, my father loved elephants. He sold feeds at his store and when a circus came to town he would sell the feed at cost and deliver it if he, my twin brother, and I could

go back and pet the elephants. One day I noticed that the chain that was shackled to one of the elephant's legs was not attached to the stake. When I told the keeper, he laughed, "That elephant has been chained to that stake so often that when he sees the chain by the stake he assumes he's chained."

Another illustration comes from western movies of my childhood. On Saturdays I used to watch Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, Red Ryder, and Wild Bill Hickok fight the bad guys. It bothered me when they would come racing their horses into town and jump off in front of the saloon, drape their reins across the hitching rail and run inside. I wanted to jump up and tell them the horses were going to get away because they had not tied them. Each horse, you see, had developed "learned helplessness." It had failed in earlier attempts, so it refused to even

try to get away any longer.

This kind of what Albert Ellis calls "stinkin thinkin" has robbed many Christians of the abundant life that Christ came to give. Each of us at times needs a reality check. Are things really as bad as they seem? Do all my past failures doom me to defeat? There is a sense in which attitude predicts action, outlook produces outcome, and expectations presupposes experience.

Two Scriptures come to mind. In Philippians 4:13 the Apostle Paul reminds us that "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us."

He also encourages us to stop our "stinkin thinkin" back up in verse eight where he reminds us, "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." □



BARKLEY

Union journalism major discovers Christians' role in media

For Baptist and Reflector

JACKSON — As "tabloid television" series and media circuses increase in frequency and popularity, it seems Christians in the media occupy an increasingly smaller place. One Union University journalism student, however, discovered Christians maintain a strong voice in the news industry.

Tim Ellsworth, a senior journalism and religion/Greek double major, was one of only 12 students selected from across North America to attend the recent Fieldstead Student Journalism Workshop in Washington, D.C.

The four-week intensive workshop, sponsored by the Coalition for Christian Col-

leges and Universities, met at the coalition's Dellenback Center on Capitol Hill. Funded by a grant from Fieldstead and Company, the workshop engaged students in seminars with media professionals and in field trips to wire services and media outlets.

A panel of successful Christian journalists gave presentations about their vocation and faith. Speakers included author/syndicated columnist Cal

Thomas, former *Times* magazine correspondent David Aikman, and *National Geographic* writer Bill Newcott.

"This was a great opportunity for Tim to see how journalism works in our nation's capitol," said James Edwards Jr., legislative director for U.S. Representative Ed Bryant and a former Union journalism professor. "He also met some great role models for young Christian journalists."



ELLSWORTH

Director Needed

Southern Baptist Assembly and Camp Managers Conference is seeking applications for the position of Part-time Conference Director. Applicant must have proven communication skills, administrative orientation, and be computer literate. If interested, contact George Coleman, c/o White Oak Conference Center, P.O. Box 360, White Oak, S.C. 29180. Deadline for applications is Aug. 31, 1995.

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Ellsworth was pleased to discover other young Christians seeking to become positive influences on the journalism profession.

"It's exciting to know I'm not the only Christian journalist out there; so many are already working successfully in the secular media," Ellsworth said. □

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**Life and Work Series
for July 30
Focal Passages:
Colossians 2:16-3:4**

Living by Christ's standard

By C. William Palmiter

In this passage of his letter, Paul gives us three warnings to heed if we are to enjoy living our lives according to Christ's standard: "Let no one judge you" (vv. 16-17); "let no man beguile you of your reward" (vv. 18-19); and "let no one enslave you" (vv. 20-23).

The first warning exposes the danger of legalism of the false teachers in Colossae. Whether it is a matter of eating or drinking unclean food or drink, or in the observance of special religious days, they must resist any effort to make them conform to legalistic demands since the law as a means of condemnation has been nailed to the cross of Christ. Paul insists on the liberty of the Christian from bondage to a set of rules.

Association with Christ in a union so close and real that the life of the Christian is changed is the main focus that occurs in this section (2:20 - 3:4). Paul's conclusion about the false regulations in Colossae is that they do "not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh" (v. 23). By "flesh" Paul meant that which distracted man from a right relationship with God. For the believer, this passage (vv. 16-23) provides Christ's standard for evaluating all religious rules, rituals, and regulations. Only those standards that help a person share spiritually in Christ's death and resurrection have any value at all.

After laying a doctrinal foundation, Paul proceeds to build an ethical structure for daily living. This is a transition from his theological statement to a practical rule for living. The goal of life on earth should be dominated by the standard of life seen in the glorified Christ.

God set the mark of his approval on Jesus by raising him from the dead. To be raised to life with Christ is to accept and share in a higher level of living which Jesus both embodies and makes possible. The "right hand of God" is the place of vindication, holiness, intercession and power. "To seek those things which are above" is to aim at following the example of Christ's life. Growth in the Word of God, the depth of prayer, and the consistency in worship and service become the goals which fill the believer's horizon.

Because we are "in Christ" through the work of the Holy Spirit, we died with Christ. We have available to us victory over the old sin nature that seeks to control us. We no longer belong to the world, but to Jesus Christ; the standard of living comes only from him. "Hidden in Christ" represents security and satisfaction. The Greek scholar, Dr. A.T. Robertson said of this verse: "So here we are in Christ who is in God, and no burglar, not even Satan himself, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:31-39).

The magnificence of living by Christ's standard is found in three dimensions: buried, raised, and appearing with him. Dying with Christ represents the radical break that we experience with our own sinful past when we come to Jesus in repentance and faith.

Being raised with Christ is the source of his new life that works in us to create a new concern and standard for living. Appearing with Christ looks to the glorious future when Christ comes again! This certain victory over sin, death, and evil enables us to live by Christ's standard in total trust and complete confidence in Christ. □

— William Palmiter is pastor of Bethel Church, Greenbrier.

Greedy leaders denounced

By Jerry Barker

If you see a number of warning signs, you better pay attention. The Bible contains many warnings about the dangers of covetousness and greed. Jesus warned that covetousness can so consume us that we miss life (Luke 12:13-21). Paul warned that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10). Micah describes in his book what happens when the leaders of a nation allow greed to consume their beings.

An overview of Micah — ch. 1-3

Micah prophesied in Judah about the sins of Israel and Judah. He prophesied during the last quarter of the eighth century B.C. Some of his messages were directed to Israel but most of his messages were directed to Judah. His messages to Israel were just before their fall in 722 B.C. (1:1). He lamented the coming ruin of Judean cities (vv. 10-16). Micah attacked greed and injustice (2:1-5). He didn't quit preaching when his critics sought to silence his words with their request for him to cool it (vv. 6-11). Micah predicted salvation for a faithful remnant after the judgment (vv. 12-13). Micah had harsh words for the leaders who acted as brutally as cannibals (3:1-4). He condemned those prophets whose preaching related to how much they received (vv. 5-7). Micah spoke for justice (v. 8). The leaders were guilty of injustice and harshness (vv. 9-10). Political and religious leaders could be bought with money (v. 11a). God's judgment was coming (vv. 11b-12).

Prophets in name only — vv. 5-7

"Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make people err, that bite their teeth, and cry, peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him." There were apparently a number of people who claimed to be prophets. The official prophets preached whatever the power structure

**Convention Uniform Series
for July 30
Focal Passage:
Micah 3:5-12**

wanted them to preach (I Kings 22). Micah made it clear that these prophets who suited their messages to how much the hearers gave them were prophets in name only.

A true prophet — v. 8

"But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." Micah's message, power, and strength came from God. Micah stood for "justice." The word "judgment" means "justice." He spoke for the oppressed and defended their rights even when it was not popular to take that stand.

Leaders who mislead — vv. 9-10

"Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity." The prophet did not mince words in condemning the sins of the leaders. They not only didn't uphold the justice for all the people but they actually hated justice. They did whatever would further their own cause.

Money talks — v. 11a

"The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money." If the judges, the priests, and prophets don't care for the welfare of the people then you have a sick society. It is so sad when a society bases everything on money and not on spiritual principles and values. What really takes the cake is that these leaders claimed God was with them. They thought God would bless them just because of who they were without any regard as to what they had done.

Let me close with one frightening question. Doesn't reading Micah give you the feeling that we are not just seeing Judah and Israel condemned but also our society? □ — Jerry Barker is pastor of First Church, Alamo.

God's patience runs out

By Clay Austin

Chapter 20 begins with the elders of Israel coming to seek the counsel of the prophet. Evidently, these leaders had come to hear good news about return to their homeland, which Ezekiel was unable to transmit to them. Instead of encouraging words, the prophet reminded them of the background of their current dilemma. God had repeatedly offered power and assistance to his people and in return, they had systematically failed to appreciate God's action on their behalf. Now God initiates divine chastening.

As we read the words of Ezekiel the question might be asked, "Why did it take so long for the exile to occur?" Israel had failed in their faithfulness, completely failed, on at least three occasions.

Strike One — the land of Egypt — ch. 20:5-9

The promise of God to the nation in Egypt was to bring them out to a land "flowing with milk and honey." As always, God fulfilled his promise by offering his best. Israel refused to follow God's admonition to forsake the idols of Egypt and to worship the Lord. Instead, Israel chose the path of rebellion, strike one.

God did not give up on his people. He persisted in his commitment to those who had discovered their own commitment. God wanted not only Israel, but other nations to witness his faithfulness to his people.

**Bible Book Series for July 30
Focal Passages: Ezekiel 20:7-11,
36-39; 24:13b-14**

Strike two — in the wilderness — vv. 10-27

Having observed God's awesome power of deliverance, one might assume the nation would now repent. Israel entertained no such thought. God once again gave his people clear directions and instructed them in his expectations. God wanted his people to be different! He still seeks a people who will be known as the "called out."

The sobering truth is that even now it is hard to distinguish the people of God from those who do not know him. Like Israel, we also have witnessed the power of God, accepted the grace of God, sought the love of God, only to rebel at the point of complete obedience. Even in the wilderness where God's provisions were required daily, Israel still was a nation in spiritual rebellion, strike two.

Strike three — the land of promise — vv. 28-31

Once again in spite of Holy disappointment, God sought to work with his people. He brought them to the land of his promise. In this new land Israel seeks the worship style and worship objects of a foreign god, strike three. This infidelity was a shocking return for the faithfulness of God in giving the land. But God

does not call Israel "out" after three strikes.

Punishment with a purpose — vv. 33-39

The love of God for a rebellious people is a wonderful truth. In Ezekiel's story God sought to redeem his people. This process involved judgment and punishment, yet its purpose was restoration and reinstatement. God forced them to look at themselves. God's act of judgment was followed by an act of deliverance. Even in the midst of demonstrating judgment, God's mercy was also established.

The foreign nation Egypt, the wilderness, the exile, were difficult places. Yet, in spite of their spiritual unfaithfulness, God did not forget his promises or his people. There is always hope for those who fail if they seek God. The greatest purpose of God evidenced in the Bible is salvation. The harshness of judgment is always tempered by the intensity of God's love for his creation. Jesus understood the Father's heart when he stated, "It is not the will of the Father that one of these little ones perish." Three strikes may equal being out in baseball, but not for those seeking to be in relationship with God. □ — Clay Austin is pastor of First Church, Blountville.

TenneScene ■ the people, their work

■ the people

■ **Ed DeZarn** was ordained as a deacon June 25 by Hickory Hills Church, Mt. Juliet.

■ **Clara Ellison** recently received recognition from Calvary Church, Lenoir City, for 75 years of faithful membership, not 50 as previously reported.

■ the leaders

■ **Charlie Ivey** retired July 1 as pastor of Bethlehem Church, Crossville. He is available for interim and supply work, and to lead revivals from his home in Crossville.

■ **Kenneth B. Basham** has been called as pastor of Russwood Church, Springville, effective July 9.

■ **Chamberlain Memorial Church, Chattanooga**, has called **Chuck Craig**, pastor, Piney Grove Church, Harri-man, as associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Craig attended Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and is a graduate of Luther Rice Semi-

nary, Lithonia, Ga.

■ **Bill J. Choate**, minister of music at First Church, Kingston, will retire July 30 after serving there for 12 years. He has served in three other Tennessee churches for a total of 35 years as minister of music.



CHOATE

■ **First Church, Chattanooga**, has called **Jamie Meaders** as minister of music.

■ **Eugene Roberts Jr.**, has been called as minister of music and youth at Oakwood Church, Chattanooga.

■ **Everette Cook** has resigned as pastor of Head of Richland Church, Bean Station, effective July 9.

■ **David Rouse**, a student at East Tennessee State University, has been called by Guaranda Drive Church, Johnson City, as minister of students. He began July 5.

■ **Wilson Parker** has been called to serve as interim pastor of First Church, Byrdstown, effective June 14.

■ the work

■ The youth choir of **Dalewood Church, Nashville**, will be touring July 31 - Aug. 6. They will be performing at churches in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

■ the churches

■ A recent revival at **Kirkwood Church, Clarksville**, has resulted in five professions of faith. The revival was led by Floyd "Lammie" Lammersfeld, evangelist from Gleason.

■ **Oak Grove Church, Washburn**, will hold homecoming activities Aug. 13. Former pastor, Freddie Parker, will speak.

■ **Central Church, Hixson**, is celebrating the opening of its new 55,000-square foot Hope Building and the renovation of the Worship Center July 23-30. On July 26 Stephen Flockheart of Dalton, Ga., will speak at 6:30 p.m. On July 30 a mini-concert will begin at 7 p.m. and feature Gary McSpadden. Ron Phillips, pastor, also will speak. The Hope Center includes the main entrance to the church and an overflow area with equipment which broadcasts the service. The effort is the largest construction project since the main worship center was built in 1976.

■ **Cumberland Home-steads Church, Crossville**, will hold Founders' Day and Homecoming July 30. L.C. Meadows, who was pastor 1957-66, will speak.

■ **Hillcrest Church, Nashville**, will hold its revival July 30 - Aug. 2. Ron Gleaves will speak and J. Gleaves will be direct the music.

■ **Ridgeview Church,**

will hold its revival Aug. 6-9. The speaker will be evangelist Phil Glisson of Memphis.

■ **Cherokee Church, Memphis**, will hold its revival Aug. 20-23. Evangelist Phil Glisson of Memphis will be speaking.

■ **Kirk Church, Collierville**, will hold its revival July 30 - Aug. 2. Dean Doster, personal evangelism coordinator for the Home Mission Board, will be speaking. Music will be led by Phillip McKibben of Memphis.

■ **Trinity Church, Cordova**, recently held "Police Day" honoring all members of the Memphis police department. Pastor Earl C. Davis and about 400 charter members founded the church last August.

■ **East Athens Church, Athens**, will have a dedication service for its new building July 30.

■ **First Church, Donelson**, will host the dinner theater, "Seeds of Joy," July 27-29. The church also will host a Michael James concert with special guest, Tuesday's Child, Aug. 4. Tickets are \$5.

■ **First Church, Clarksville**, will host a concert featuring Lisa Bevell and Big Tent Revival Aug. 26. For more information call (615) 572-1506.

■ **Inglewood Church, Nashville**, will host Linda Shipley in a piano concert July 30.

■ the associations

■ **Chilhowee Association** will host a state-directed Royal Ambassador Camp July 31 - Aug. 4 at Camp Tipton, the association's camp.

■ **Holston Association**

will celebrate its 210th year in 1996. To commemorate the occasion there will be a year-long celebration with an emphasis on ministry/mission action.

■ **Pat Johnson**, office worker for the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes - Chattanooga Campus, has been called as communications coordinator of **Hamilton County Baptist Association**. Another staff member, Frances Everett, office secretary for over 16 years, has retired.

■ deaths

■ **Gene Henderson**, 48, of Antioch, an editor of adult Sunday School materials for 10 years at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, and pastor of Smith Springs Church, Nashville, died July 19 of cancer. He had served the church for five months and also had served as pastor of Salem Church, Nashville. He was team leader of the adult Bible Book Series curriculum team in the board's Bible teaching-reaching division. He had been pastor of Ithaca Church in Ithaca, NY, and chaplain for Cornell University, Ithaca. He also had served as pastor of University Church in Thibodaux, La., and Bethany Church, New Orleans, La. Henderson is a graduate of Hardin Simmons University, Abilene, Texas and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, where he earned his doctor of theology degree. He is survived by his sister, Jo McCrary, also of Antioch.

■ **Deaurette June Harney** of Huntland, wife of James Harney, pastor of Hickory Grove Church, Huntland, died July 13. She was buried in Dechard.



ELECTED TO LEAD HOLSTON ASSOCIATION at its 209th bi-annual meeting April 18 were David Carr, center, moderator, who is pastor, Tusculum Church, Greeneville, being congratulated by current moderator John Yarbrough, left pastor, Unaka Avenue Church, Johnson City; while Steve Playl, assistant moderator, who is pastor, Woodlawn Church, Bristol, looks on.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

Work — a four letter word

By Michael L. Shea, pastor Parkway Village Church, Memphis

Work. That's a four letter word, isn't it? It's a word that causes an allergic reaction in some. You can really break up a good time in some gatherings by pointing out the things that need to be done. The word "work" doesn't leave the same emotional taste as the word fun, or another four letter word, play.

Work is often the biggest difference that separates individuals. There are many who have extremely high IQs and wonderful gifts who never seem to be able to achieve their potential. There are others who are average (or below)

who achieve far more than their contemporaries. What is the difference? It's their work ethic — not brains, not talents, not ability — but the passion to achieve.

Thomas Edison said, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." This is true not only in the business world but also in the life of any church. What is the difference that separates churches? Is it the presence of God, the Scripture, or the endowment of spiritual gifts?

In some cases, the answer is "Yes." Sin might cause the presence of God to be withdrawn; incorrect theology might erode the authority Scripture; a lack of true conversion might limit the

expression of scriptural gifts. But there are churches who desire to know God; who believe in the authority of the Bible; who have every gift necessary to fulfill their calling, and yet they see little spiritual fruit as a result of their ministry.

Why do some churches achieve more than others? Many factors exist, but one key ingredient is work. We might change Thomas Edison's quote to say, "Opportunity is missed by most churches because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." Opportunities abound, ability has been granted by God ... what is needed? Work!

Jesus said, "My father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working" (John 5:17). Jesus took ad-

vantage of all the opportunities the father placed before him. He was doing this when he encountered the woman at the well and explained to his disciples, "my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:34).

The concern that others would follow his work ethic is evident when he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37,38).

"The harvest is plentiful" means the opportunity is there. The need is the same as it was in Jesus' day: our need is for spectators to become workers. □