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■ **this
week's
news**

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MOVING? Cut out and mail address label and new address to *Baptist and Reflector*, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn.

Henry's message keynotes session

Long-range report adopted by TBC messengers

By Wm. Fletcher Allen
Baptist and Reflector

CHATTANOOGA — The 121st annual session of the Tennessee Baptist Convention was a mixture of good news, actions of impact, and skirmishes over resolutions and the Committee on Boards report.

Attendance was low as messengers approved recommendations of a long-range study, okayed a Cooperative Program budget of \$26,969,276, elected Ken Hubbard of First Church, Smyrna, as president, affirmed Woman's Missionary Union and family values, amended the TBC constitution, and approved reports of leadership committee nominees despite a challenge to Executive Board nominee Howard Olive of Maryville who eventually was elected.

Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando and a Tennessee native, closed the two-day session with a ringing evangelistic challenge. (See page 3). He was preceded by an extended concert by a massed choir of 300 from Hamilton County Association churches backed by a 50-piece orchestra and seven handbell choirs.

Other major messages were brought by James Porch, TBC executive director; Frank Hawkins, pastor of First Church, Kingsport; president's message; and Doug Sager, pastor of First Church, Concord, Knox County, convention sermon.



LONG-RANGE STUDY COMMITTEE
Chairman Gary Coltharp reports.

Unofficial messenger registration of 1,361 exceeded by two last year's low mark of several years. The all-time high of 2,238 was set in Gatlinburg three years ago.

The CP budget, showing an increase of \$784,642, passed without amendment. It continues a 62.5 and 37.5 percent TBC-SBC split. Messengers approved by show of ballots in a close vote a motion expressing "the mind of the body" that the Executive Board bring a 1996-

97 CP budget showing a half percent increase to SBC causes.

The motion also expressed that the SBC portion should be increased each year until 2000, making the split 60 percent TBC and 40 percent SBC.

The motion made by Mike Womack, pastor of Calvary Church, Erwin, originally asked messengers to instruct the Executive Board in the budget-making process. Parliamentarian Reed Dixon of Sweetwater ruled the body could not instruct, but could express its mind to the board.

Executive Director Porch reminded messengers that the percentages "are thoroughly reviewed every year in an intricate manner."

A 40-member study committee recommended a Long-Range Study for implementation. Chairman Gary Coltharp, pastor of First Church, Jackson, told messengers the committee "identified and developed six areas crucial to the work of Tennessee Baptists."

Messengers adopted Vision 2000: Reaching Tennessee for Christ as the ministry guide for Tennessee Baptists through 2000. They okayed two other recommendations from the committee, that implementation of the plan "be entrusted to the Executive Board," and that an advisory group of the three TBC presidents (Leonard Markham, Ray Newcomb, and Frank Hawkins) who have served during the planning, Chairman Coltharp, and two members from study committee's subcommittee to — See Long-Range, page 2

Messengers elect Smyrna pastor as TBC president

For *Baptist and Reflector*

CHATTANOOGA — Tennessee Baptist Convention messengers elected Ken Hubbard, pastor of First Church,

Smyrna, as their new president Nov. 15.

Hubbard received 532 votes to 261 (67 percent) for Carl Scarlett, pastor of Miracle Church, LaVergne.

Hubbard, a native of Lawrenceburg, was nominated for the position by Earl Wilson, a messenger from Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville.

He said that Hubbard has served as pastor of five churches in Tennessee, including the last seven years at First Church, Smyrna. During those years at Smyrna, the church has added 1,325 new members, with 459 of those by baptism, Wilson said.

He described Hubbard as a man whose "life embodies both missions and evangelism."

Scarlett, who like Hubbard is a pastor in Concord Association, was nominated by David Daugherty, pastor of Shellsford Church, McMinnville.

He described Scarlett, who has been at Miracle Church for the past 23 years as one who "lives and preaches the Holy Word of God."

Scarlett was president of the Tennessee Baptist Pastors Conference in 1993.

Following Hubbard's election, Murray Mathis, pastor of Third Church, Murfreesboro, nominated Scarlett as first vice president. He was opposed for that office by Hershel Chevallier, pastor of Cumberland Church, Knoxville, who was nominated by Calvin Metcalf, pastor of Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville. Scarlett was elected.

In a close three-way race for second vice president, Don Givens, pastor of St. Elmo Avenue Church, Chattanooga, was elected after a run-off ballot with Ken Clayton, pastor of Tulip Grove Church, Old Hickory. Kim Allen, pastor of Little West Fork Church, Clarksville, also was nominated.

Dan Ferrell, member, Clearview Church, Franklin, was re-elected registration secretary.

Gerry Mayes, member of First Church, Franklin, was elected recording secretary, after serving during the convention on an interim basis. □



ELECTED TO LEAD the Tennessee Baptist Convention during the coming year were, from left, Don Givens, St. Elmo Avenue Church, Chattanooga, second vice president; Carl Scarlett, Miracle Church, LaVergne, first vice president; and Ken Hubbard, First Church, Smyrna, president.

Long-range report adopted by TBC messengers....

— Continued from page 1
provide continuity.

Coltharp said he was pleased with "the positive reception and great vote to adopt the report.

"We must all unite in heart and vision to fulfill the vision expressed," he said.

The report, which has been a two-year process, dealt with Revival and Spiritual Awakening, Evangelism and Missions, Education, Ministry, Fellowship, and Stewardship. Coltharp said detailed action plans will be developed further.

"We have prayed and tried to discover the mind of God. We believe he has guided us in this venture," he said.

The committee early in their study developed a working mission statement: "The mission of the Tennessee Baptist Convention is to assist churches to evangelize, disciple, teach, and minister in Christ's name."

Chairman Coltharp answered questions and agreed with several minor changes to the report. Porch said he appreciated "the spirit of concerns" and that "each action plan deals with churches."

The chairman also said that specific action plans are to be developed by the year 2000. In answer to a query, he said the long-range plan probably does not change what the convention is now doing, except that the six areas of concern will get renewed focus of united efforts.

In the Wednesday afternoon business session, nominations were considered from the Committee on Boards and the Committee on Committees.

Chairman Raymond Boston's presentation hit a snag when Richard Holden, pastor of First Church, Alcoa, sought to replace the nomination of Howard Olive with Charles Bailey, pastor of Laurel Bank Church, Friendsville.

Olive, retired Maryville pastor and former Executive Board member and president, has ties with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. (The *Baptist and Reflector* during the week of the convention received official notification of Olive's election as the CBF's Tennessee field representative, a part-time funded position.)

Before any discussion on the substitute nomination, President Hawkins ruled that no negative comments could be made about any nominee. "Speak positively," he admonished messengers.

He also told messengers that the committees bringing nomina-

tions had thoroughly checked each nominee by established criteria, and that any substitutes would also be checked.

Hawkins halted proceedings so the committee could confer. After a few minutes, Boston reported that Bailey was qualified. A vote on the amendment lost narrowly. A ballot was requested and Hawkins ruled that a challenge to the chair's ruling had to be passed by two-thirds majority.

The challenge failed, but Hawkins called for a ballot, saying he felt there should be a ballot to please the messengers' feelings of fairness. The substitution failed by 256 to 244 in the balloting.

Credentials committee chairman Doug Sager and his committee were kept busy during that session.

In her Tuesday morning WMU report, Executive Director Katharine Bryan talked about the year's work in "the best of times and the worst of times."

Referring to FMB president Jerry Rankin's letter about WMU sent to SBC pastors during the summer, she said, "Our people are weary of being diverted from the missions task and want to get on with doing missions. We don't want to be seen or heard, but to minister."

Not only are these the best and worst of times, she said, "this is the only time we have."

The resolution on affirmation for Woman's Missionary Union drew sustained debate. Four similar resolutions were combined by the Committee on Resolutions. (They were offered by Marvin Cameron, West Hills Church, Knoxville; Calvin Metcalf, Central Church Fountain City, Knoxville; Wesley Shotwell, Hickory Hollow Church, Nashville; and Howard Olive.)

The first presentation of the WMU resolution on Wednesday morning was faced with attempts to amend it to include affirmation of the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board.

Before the amendment could come to a vote, time elapsed for the portion of business, and was continued during the afternoon.

An afternoon effort to table the resolution failed. Messengers then voted down the amendment and subsequently approved the resolution of affirmation by a large majority. The Wednesday afternoon business session could not be extended, though more time was needed, because previous matters had put the agenda 30-40 minutes



OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN at the annual convention. From left, Danny and Diane Klutts, First Church, Newbern, are welcomed by David Pittman, director of church services, Hamilton County Association, at the association's welcome center. The Klutts and Pittman families were fellow church members at First Church, Orlando, Fla., several years ago.

behind schedule.

In addition to Hubbard, messengers elected Carl Scarlett, pastor of Miracle Church, LaVergne, as convention vice president; and Don Givens, pastor of St. Elmo Avenue Church, Chattanooga, as second vice president.

Gerry Mayes served as interim recording secretary during the convention, and was chosen to serve again. She replaced Wallace Anderson, who had served for more than 30 years and had resigned. Dan Ferrell was re-elected registration secretary.

Messengers approved a motion by Mike Holloway, pastor of Ward's Grove Church, Milton, asking that "enough time be allotted for business." In several instances there appeared to be insufficient time to address business matters.

Messengers also approved several recommendations from the Executive Board. Three involved new or substantially changed Executive Board programs.

The program of worship ministry was approved. A new program, its purpose is to assist churches with leadership and resources "that will enhance their awareness of the importance of worship and will enable congregations to experience authentic, biblical worship." A new staff member will direct this work.

The current department of Stewardship and Cooperative Program emphasis will be separated, with an additional person joining the staff for one of those posts.

Other Executive Board recommendations were approved as follows: Tennessee Baptist Adult

Homes will be responsible to conduct camps for mentally handicapped persons, Harrison-Chilhowee Academy will add grades which will now provide curricula for kindergarten through grade 12, and the Executive Board will continue a current agreement with Baptist Hospital Inc. of Nashville.

Approval was given for the convention to enter a project relationship with Costa Rica Baptists through December 1996, with the probability of a three-year Partnership Mission developing for 1997-2000.

In other action, a constitutional amendment was passed on second reading. Executive Board members who have served two successive terms must be off the board three years (previously just one year) before being eligible again.

Reports from current partnerships were heard from volunteers and from Michael Collins, executive director of Michigan Baptists; Mark Edworthy, missionary to Poland; and Allen Schmidt, executive director for Canadian Baptists.

Music throughout the two-day session was uplifting, and drama and clowning acts gave a different approach. The Executive Board staff was introduced to messengers for the first time in several years.

The convention will meet next on Nov. 12-13 at Two Rivers Church, Nashville. Don Dixon, pastor of Highland Church, Tullahoma, will give the convention sermon, with Jim Growden, pastor of Hillcrest Church, Nashville, as alternate. □

TBC Executive Board acts on Linden land purchase

At the Executive Board's scheduled meeting on Monday prior to the convention's opening, members took action on a proposed land purchase.

After hearing a proposal from Executive Director James Porch, the board unanimously approved purchase of 29 acres adjoining Camp Linden, near Linden.

Cost of the property, which

will provide a safety buffer for the camp, is \$800 per acre.

Porch also explained that the funds would come from the General Fund.

After allocations for the colleges and Southern Baptist Convention were taken from the \$780,000 overage in the 1994-95 budget receipts, \$200,800 remained.

Porch said \$100,000 would

go into the Restricted Reserve Fund, \$50,800 for new church starts, \$25,000 for Student Center capital needs, and \$25,000 to Baptist Center capital needs.

Certificates of service were given to more than two dozen board members whose terms ended.

The board met again Nov. 15 to welcome new members. □

See next week's issue for TBC letters

At press time on Monday the *Baptist and Reflector* had received some letters regarding the annual meeting held last week in Chattanooga.

Because of the production schedule and the attempt to include all of the convention news in this week's issue, letters will be printed in the Nov. 29 issue. □



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SBC president ends TBC annual meeting on positive note

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

CHATTANOOGA — Tennessee native Jim Henry returned to his home state and issued a resounding call to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

Speaking at the closing session of the 121st annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention president gave a brief update on the SBC.

Acknowledging that Southern Baptists have had problems in the past, Henry observed "God is at work among us still."

Henry, who was pastor of Two Rivers Church, Nashville, before accepting the pastorate of First Church, Orlando, Fla., about 18 years ago, challenged Tennessee Baptists to stay fixed on their goal.

"If we keep focused on who he is, what he has called us to do in churches, homes, and denominations, the best is yet to come."

Using the biblical model of Joshua, Henry suggested several principal principles to help God's people do what God has called

them to do.

(1) Remember the purpose. Joshua was sent by God to plant his Word in an alien land, Henry said. Tennessee Baptists also live in an "alien environment," he added, noting that "people today are looking for spiritual meaning in a culture hostile to the Gospel."

(2) Make it a priority. Joshua was to go into Canaan to plant God's Word in an alien environment and "he did it," Henry stressed.

Henry reminded those in the final session that Jesus' last words were "to go and make disciples."

"If we don't do it, who will?" Henry asked.

(3) Have a plan. Joshua developed a plan to take Canaan, Henry said, noting that military leaders still study his strategy. "Joshua knew his purpose, made it a priority, and developed a plan to carry it through."

The SBC president observed that if Southern Baptists would "get focused with God's plan in their local churches, there would be a ripple effect through associations, state conventions, and the SBC."



SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION President Jim Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla., chats with, from left, Anne Nolan, Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain, and Herman and Mary K Sledge of Memorial Church, Hixson, prior to the last session of the 121st annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

(4) Remember there will be perils and problems. Some of the tribes didn't want to go into the Promised Land so Joshua had to deal with that, Henry reminded. "Anytime we carry out God's mandate we can expect the enemy (Satan) to come against us," he warned.

(5) Overcome fear. Joshua showed fear, but God told him three times not to be afraid,

Henry said. He noted that fear "will come at you when you're seeking to carry out" God's mandate.

Because Joshua was a man of vision, he stayed the course, Henry said. "God has given us a vision. Don't be afraid. He has overcome the evil one."

(6) Keep the passion. Joshua never lost his passion for taking over the Promised Land and planting God's Word

there, Henry said.

He noted that in today's dysfunctional world, it is easy to get stressed and to feel "how can I keep giving when so much is pulling at me?"

Henry told of a medical doctor who served during wartime who said he was told when casualties came in to look after the ones he thought he could save and "to never look in the eyes of a dying man because you couldn't leave him if you did."

"Jesus has called us to look into the eyes of a dying world so we don't lose our passion," he said.

(7) Remember his presence. God is always present, Henry said. "When you look into the future and carry out his mandate, his presence will be with you. Count on it," he stressed.

He concluded by reminding those in attendance that Southern Baptists have the message the world so desperately needs today — that Jesus Christ makes all the difference. "Press on Tennessee Baptists and plant the Gospel in an alien culture because it is the only answer," Henry challenged. □

Messengers express desire to increase CP giving to SBC

For Baptist and Reflector

CHATTANOOGA — During the Nov. 15 afternoon business session, TBC messengers expressed a will to increase Cooperative Program giving to national and worldwide causes.

Acting on a motion presented by Mike Womack, pastor of Calvary Church, Erwin, messengers expressed a desire to increase SBC giving by .5 percent for the next five years until there is a 60-40 split of receipts going to Tennessee Baptist and Southern Baptist causes, respectively.

Funds currently are distributed 62.5 percent to the TBC and 37.5 percent to the SBC.

Womack changed the wording of his motion when he was informed by parliamentarian Reed Dixon he could not "instruct" the Executive Committee to do that, but that the convention as a whole could express its will. Womack said "it is time to make a bold statement that Tennessee Baptists are cooperating Baptists. The motion passed on a show of ballots in what appeared to be a close vote. □

Tennessee is a missions field, Porch tells messengers

For Baptist and Reflector

CHATTANOOGA — Tennessee is definitely a missions field, James Porch told messengers to the 121st annual meeting during the opening session Nov. 14.

The TBC executive director-treasurer noted that while people get excited over global and national missions, they tend to be nonchalant about state missions.

Yet, Porch said, global, national, and state missions are related.

"I greatly fear that global and national commitment to missions and evangelism will not improve until we legitimize and declare a priority for state missions and maximize our efforts.

"Tennessee Baptists must see the Volunteer State as a primary mission field."

Porch cited statistics showing Tennessee is indeed a target for mission endeavors.

In 1970 there were 3,926,000 people in Tennessee, Porch said. That number grew to 5,175,240 in 1994, a 24 percent increase in population, he observed.

In 1970 there were 2,698 Baptist churches in Tennessee, or one church for every 1,455 persons, Porch said.

In 1994 there were 2,905 (an increase of 207) TBC churches or 1 for every 1,791 persons, he related.

"If we had maintained the ratio we had in 1970 we would have needed 651 more churches," the TBC leader said.

Resident membership in TBC churches increased by 164,845 from 643,801 in 1970 to 808,646 in 1994, Porch said.

Yet, at the same time the state's population grew by more than 1.2 million people. "We have not kept pace," he said.

A telling statistic is baptisms. In 1970 Tennessee Baptists baptized 28,089 believers, a ratio of baptisms to members of 23 to 1. In 1994 there were only 23,866 baptisms, a ratio of 34 to 1. There would have been nearly 35,000 baptisms last year if Tennessee Baptists had maintained the ratio of 1970, Porch said.

Tennessee Baptists must see their state is a primary missions field, he said.

"How do we become state missions minded?" Porch asked.

Basing his message on Luke 5:1-11, Porch suggested Tennessee Baptists change from "hook fishing" to "net fishing."

The purpose of a hook is to deceive the fish, Porch said. On the other hand a net is "encompassing, never selective."

Porch observed that "Jesus never talked about fishing with a hook. He always referred to fishing with nets."

In order to reach the state, Tennessee Baptists must be willing to change their paradigm (the way people see things) regarding missions and evangelism, Porch said.

"We have to keep up with the times," Porch said. "The message of missions and evangelism is still the same. It is the message of the living Christ who redeems."

"But, our perspective, our perception of doing missions and evangelism in the 1990s requires change. In essence, our paradigm shift must be one from the hook to the net. ... The kingdom of God depends on our nets," Porch challenged.



PORCH

The TBC leader reminded messengers that Jesus told his followers "to fish in the deep water." He knew that was where the fish were during the day.

"It is time for Tennessee Baptists to begin deep water fishing now. Baptist missions and evangelism have always been global," yet at the same time "a global perspective must include a local focus," Porch said. "This gives us a good balance and we affirm it."

"If Tennessee Baptists start fishing in deep water, we have the promise of God that we will have a catch," he continued.

And, finally, the passage in Luke gives a beautiful picture of what a state convention ought to be, Porch observed, relating how that when Peter and the others began catching so many fish and their boat began to sink, they had to call out to the other boats for help.

It is time for Tennessee Baptists to call out to the other boats, Porch said. "No one boat can handle it alone."

Porch noted a question Baptists have been asking for several years is "how do we restore trust?"

"We cannot restore our trust among each other until we really trust God," he said.

"We are all brothers and sisters in Christ," Porch reminded those in the opening session. "We may have differences but we have to put a priority on missions and evangelism."

Finally, Porch urged Tennessee Baptists not to get distracted from doing what God has called them to do. "If Tennessee Baptists become distracted, we won't be the fishers of men or the people God has called us to be," he concluded. □

Messengers adopt resolutions on values on home, WMU, more

For Baptist and Reflector

CHATTANOOGA — Tennessee Baptists approved resolutions on Christian values in the home, affirming Woman's Missionary Union, speaking out against homosexuality, and the traditional resolution of gratitude for those making the 121st annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention possible.

The resolution on Christian values in the home drew overwhelming support of the messengers.

Presented by *Baptist and Reflector* Editor Wm. Fletcher Allen, a member of Clearview Church, Franklin, the resolution noted "the spiritual strength and moral fiber of any nation depends on the solid foundation of home life based on Biblical values and that God's Word is the answer to all problems faced by families today."

The resolution also observed that "America must turn back to God's absolutes. The virtues of truth, love, honesty, sexual purity, reliability, right from wrong, and integrity must be taught, preached, lived, and related if our nation is to survive and prosper as a God-fearing standard in the world," the resolution continued.

Through the resolution Tennessee Baptists resolved to "keep Christian family values one of our highest priorities, to assist churches and associations in making this priority highly visible on a continual basis, to relate to our civic authorities the desperate need for Christian family values in all levels of government and law-making, to find ways to help churches deal with broken families, divorce, estrangements, abuse of any family member, and to urge regular prayer times, workshops, and retreats for families and churches."

The resolution also expressed gratitude to God "for his establishment of marriage and the home as two vital pillars in any stable nation."

Four resolutions about Woman's Missionary Union were presented. In the one brought back to messengers by the Resolutions Committee, WMU was recognized for the "valuable contributions it had made to the kingdom of God through missions education, involvement, and support."

Messengers resolved to voice "our support and affirmation" of both Tennessee WMU and SBC WMU and encouraged leaders of WMU, the Foreign Mission Board, and Home Mission Board "to make increasing efforts to forge a strong and positive partnership and united thrust to further mission work at home and abroad."

An attempt to amend the motion to include affirmation of the FMB and HMB drew heated discussion.

Steve Pearson of First Church, Spring City, moved to amend the resolution to include the FMB and HMB because they were mentioned in the last paragraph.

Jerry Nash, a messenger from Denton Church, Cosby, noted the intent of the resolution was to affirm WMU. It was not intended to affirm everyone, he said. To include the FMB and HMB "would be a slap in the face" to WMU, he said.

Wayne Allen of Briarwood Church, Memphis, spoke in favor of the amendment noting that if "we're to support WMU, surely we'd commend those (FMB, HMB) also."

An attempt to table the motion by Hoyt Wilson of First Church, Lexington, for the sake of harmony, failed.

In a show of ballots vote, the amendment failed and the resolution was later approved



TBC PRESIDENT FRANK HAWKINS, at podium, and parliamentarian Reed Dixon listen during discussion on resolutions, presented by Ron Davidson, center, acting chairman of the Resolutions Committee. Looking on from the side are TBC officers M.B. Howard, left, second vice president, and Wesley Pitts, first vice president.

with some opposition.

The resolution against homosexuality addressed a recent action of the National Education Association and was presented by David Carr of Tusculum Church, Greeneville.

Noting that "the Bible describes homosexual behavior as an abomination" and that the NEA at its July 1995 meeting "passed a resolution which included language favoring acceptance of homosexual behavior," the resolution affirmed that "the practice of homosexuality is declared a sin by God's Word."

The resolution also affirmed "the efforts of all teachers, administrators, and parents who oppose the growing support for the acceptance of homosexual behavior within our educational system and commit that we will lead our churches to uphold these teachers, administrators, and parents in our prayers and to work within organizations with which we are affiliated to affirm these efforts."

The resolution also pointed

out that "while God's Word condemns homosexual behavior, God's love through Christ offers forgiveness of sin to all persons."

The resolution on the recognition of God in American institutions was brought to the floor from the Resolutions Committee. It resolved that Tennessee Baptists "affirm the need for and role of acknowledging God through prayer in the lives of all persons" and supports "the fundamental right to recognize God and his moral standards as the guiding force in our nation."

The resolution also committed the convention "as a body and as individuals" to pray for government leaders at all levels "regarding the freedom to recognize God, the Bible, and prayer as necessary to ensure prosperity and the pursuit of happiness."

But when the original presenter of the resolution (Bruce St. Laurent of First Church, Greeneville) made an amendment (that was later approved by messengers) to add language the Resolutions Com-

mittee had taken out, the committee asked messengers to defeat the resolution.

Ron Davidson, pastor of First Church, Grand Junction, and acting chairman of the Resolutions Committee, told messengers they passed an amendment which had changed the resolution.

The amendment, Davidson said, moved from an area of individual freedom to government institutions. "I don't know that we can involve ourselves in government institutions," he said.

The resolution was defeated in a show of hands vote.

The resolution on gratitude affirmed TBC President Frank Hawkins, the Committee on Arrangements and its chairman Charlie Bryan, the officers and staff of the TBC, all individuals who served on committees, boards, and agencies of the TBC throughout the past year, the city of Chattanooga, the convention and trade center, and the news media, particularly the *Baptist and Reflector*. □ — Lonnie Wilkey

Partnership representatives from Poland, Canada, Michigan speak



REPRESENTATIVES of the three partnerships Tennessee Baptists hold with other entities spoke to the convention and include, from left, Mark Edworthy, missionary to Poland; Michael Collins, executive director, Michigan Baptist Convention; Terry Sharp of the TBC; and Allen Schmidt, executive director of the Canadian Baptist Convention.

For Baptist and Reflector

CHATTANOOGA — During the report of the Partnership Missions Department of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, representatives of the three partnerships the convention holds spoke.

Michael Collins, executive director of the Michigan Baptist Convention, said when he lived and worked in a state near Michigan, he longed for the help Tennessee Baptists were giving Michigan. When the partnership began 15 years ago, he said, the state only had 300 Baptist churches. Today it has 1,799.

However, the task for Baptists is still daunting there, he added. About six million of its nine million residents are un-

churched, which is an unchurched population larger than the total number of residents in the state of Tennessee.

"We thank you for your partnership in helping us reach Michigan for the Lord," said Collins.

Allen Schmidt, executive director of the Canadian Baptist Convention, reported after the first year of the partnership with Tennessee Baptists, he had heard only commendation and praise for the efforts.

He thanked Tennessee Baptists for helping Canadian Baptists report a record number of church starts — 119. Baptists also helped him do his job, which is to help Baptists scattered over an area 4,000 miles wide, he added.

Schmidt concluded by saying his personal appreciation for Tennessee Baptists is deep.

Mark Edworthy, missionary to Poland, reported Poland is home to 38 million people of which the evangelical community is 1 percent of the population and Baptists make up less than .001 percent.

Poland is the first country of the Soviet bloc to declare and gain its democracy, he noted.

Volunteers from Tennessee have helped Polish people find God by using sports to reach young people, by bringing eyeglasses, and by developing a seminary library, he noted.

"I give a plea to come, volunteer, and help us in the mission God has called us to," Edworthy stated. □

Convention had high moments, testy times

Before taking a closer look at events of the annual session held last week in Chattanooga, we first address the reality of declining interest.

It's sad that of some one million Tennessee Baptists from 2,900 churches, only 1,361 attended an important meeting, a decrease of 877 in three years.

Something is wrong. If each church had registered one messenger, the attendance would have doubled.

Some say that only matters of controversy can coax large numbers of messengers. Whatever the reason, attendance has declined dramatically since the all-time high at Gatlinburg, 1992. The trend already has been noticed—and is of prime concern. It begs for thorough study.

The committees that plan the annual programs are sensitive to seeking the best for the convention. When attendance is lacking, there is cause to plan differently. But care must be taken that time allotments are observed, and program content on target.

Now, let's look at the actions and events of the two-day session last week.

Probably no convention satisfies everyone, and this one was no exception. There were high and low moments.

On the plus side, serious differences were confined mostly to one session, Wednesday afternoon.

Differences were evident as messengers debated a resolution of affirmation for Woman's Missionary Union. Those in

favor of the resolution saw attempts to include affirmation for Home and Foreign Mission boards as diluting the intent of the resolution. The resolution eventually passed with the original intent intact, though there was lengthy discussion.

The brouhaha over the Committee on Boards' report apparently was headed toward more than one challenge before time expired.

Even so, there was enough tense discussion over the first and only challenge, Howard Olive's nomination to the Executive Board.

That the matter was hotly debated and closely fought is evidenced by the eventual balloting which favored Olive by twelve votes out of five hundred.

Whether spillover from Wednesday will alter fellowship and cooperation of Tennessee Baptists because of moderate and conservative views is not known. We hope and pray for the best.

Olive's ties with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship spurred the attempt to replace him with another candidate. There was strong support for Olive and for Charles Bailey, the substitute candidate. We must ask whether this will set the tone for future annual meetings. Debate is healthy, but it should not be the "tail that wags the dog."

This much is true. Jim Henry's superlative message on Wednesday night gives all of us sufficient cause to look at

our motives. This and other high moments in the sessions can prevail if we allow that kind of momentum.

It depends on how much we want this Tennessee Baptist Convention to succeed in carrying out our portion of the Great Commission, and how hard we are willing to try.

No accusing finger is pointed, but we expect some to say immediately, "We're not guilty." No matter. In most situations, no one is totally innocent and no one is totally guilty.

Overall, the pluses are many. The two-year long-range study was adopted, the CP budget of \$26.9 million was okayed without change, sound leaders were elected, resolutions affirmed WMU and family values, and challenging Executive Board recommendations were accepted. The 1995 Cooperative Program budget income was the largest in our history. The messages by Henry, Frank Hawkins, Doug Sager, and James Porch were excellent.

As we begin another year on the TBC calendar, it's time to re-examine and reaffirm personal and corporate allegiance to Christ Jesus.

The recommendations of the Long-Range Study Committee have been approved. As implementation begins, continual understanding is necessary. The committee is to be commended for long and arduous work.

Tennessee Baptists are doing many great things for Christ. If we major on these, he will be honored. □

■ one word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

And they gave thanks

They dropped anchor on the shores of a land with promise, new and unknown, on November 21, 1620.

They had crossed the wild and frightening Atlantic, uncharted in many places. They had crossed under stars and bright sun, sailing through dismal and foul weather at times, catching the full wind in billowing sails, and sweeping them ever westward.

They numbered a hundred and two, an insignificant band of hardy offshoots of a group of Protestants known as Puritans.



ALLEN

They were bold enough to believe they could purify the Church of England from within. When tyranny and the status quo

balked at every suggestion of change and blocked with violent reaction each attempt at renewal, these Puritans separated themselves and set up their own congregations.

They were separatists. Under the leadership of William Brewster, they fled persecution in England — thence to Holland — and in 1620 to form the beginnings of a Christian colony on the beaches of America. They were going to a strange, unexplored, virgin land of tall tales and great expectations.

Perhaps Brewster or William Bradford or another leaned against the prow on a bleak night and cried aloud to God for guidance.

There were forty-nine free men and some families aboard who gathered to forge an agreement of government. Men with names like Winslow, Allenton, Fuller, Martin, Warren, Fletcher, Rogers, Standish. Oh yes, John Alden, the cooper was also there.

There was something to be done before they put to shore. They talked about good government, these sea-weary pilgrims. The women prayed for good homes. They talked about stable leadership, civil and religious liberty.

They signed their guarantee, the Mayflower Compact. God granted their prayers and more. Less than a year later, the pilgrim Puritans honored God with a day of thanks. □

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Thanksgiving is family time

Thanksgiving is a national holiday set aside for remembering to be thankful to our beneficent creator for all the things he has done for us.

I encourage us to remember what God has done for us through our families. On the basis of these blessings, I imagine there are behaviors which most of us can and/or should plan in our families.

These behaviors should lead to renewal of bonds within the family.

As we think about remembering the benefits that God has given us through our families, I remind all of us that memory has a way of being selective both in choosing events to remember and the intensity of the events.

Good events are often remembered much better than they actually were. Bad events are catastrophized until their memory is unbearable.

We need balance as we try to remember the good without setting ourselves up for the failure of never being able to relive a good event that was memorially enhanced to the

■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor

level of impossibility of re-actment. We must also not so catastrophize our bad memories that we would never attempt to put ourselves in that kind of position again.

The corrected memory leads us to the need for revising our behaviors. In most of our lives, belief predicts behavior and attitude presupposes action. As we move toward the holidays, many memories of past holidays flood our minds.

We sometimes are led to believe that they can never be as happy since the children are no longer young and at home, or that a special family member (father, mother, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, or uncle, etc.) is no longer here.

Part of our rehearsal for behavior is to reframe the way we look at the holiday, without these past participants, as different but not devastating. What were the activities we enjoyed? How can we plan to-

ward participating in the same kinds of activities this year? What will be different? How do I need to prepare myself ahead of time to be able to make the most of the events despite the differences?

The holidays have always been portrayed as a family time and I believe that they are. These can and should be times of renewing and strengthening the bonds of family relationships.

As we remember the benefits God has given us through our families and rehearse the behaviors that will help us renew the bonds, we can make this one of the most blessed holiday seasons ever. The family is under attack in our day as never before.

I encourage each person to use the holidays as a special time to remember the benefits God has given us through our families, and to rehearse behaviors that will enable us to renew our bonds of relationship in this special season of the year. □



BARKLEY

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

Start with a smile

Doctor (to aging lady): "I think you ought to stop taking those sleeping pills every night. They're habit forming." Lady: "Don't be a drip, doc. I've taken them every night for over 20 years. They're not a habit yet."

Take this truth

Sow an act, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap a character, sow a character, reap a destiny. Habits rule the unreflecting herd. Threads turn to cords, cords to cables.

Memorize this Scripture

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers but delights in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1:1-2a NIV).

Pray this prayer

"Lord, help me to learn self control and to cultivate only the habits I am willing to let master me." □

Pastors hear messages on being 'A Good Soldier'

CHATTANOOGA — Several hundred Tennessee Baptist pastors gathered here at Red Bank Church, Red Bank, to hear good preaching and outstanding Gospel musicians in the annual Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference.

Many visitors were present also for the Nov. 13 session prior to the TBC annual session.

David Daugherty, pastor of Shellsford Church,

moved up from vice president to president of the group. He won over Verlon Moore, pastor of Hilldale Church, Clarksville, who was subsequently named vice president. David Thompson, Alta Loma, Nashville, is secretary.

Ron Herrod, Oak Ridge, president, presided over the program which featured messages by Bob Burch, Knoxville; Daugherty; Roger Freeman,

Clarksville; Steve Gaines, Gardendale, Ala.; Dean Haun, Hermitage; Herrod; Harold Hunter, Jacksonville, Fla.; Jimmy Jackson, Huntsville, Ala.; Hollie Miller, Knoxville; Paige Patterson, Southeastern Seminary president; and Herb Reavis. Musicians included Johnny and DeAnna Cabaniss, Lightshine, the Stone Brothers, Dick Thomassian, Huntsville, Ala.; and Scott Andrews. Sevierville. □



NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS of the Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference include from left, Verlon Moore, Hilldale Church, Clarksville, vice president; David Daugherty, Shellsford Church, McMinnville, president; and David Thompson, Alta Loma Church, Nashville, secretary.

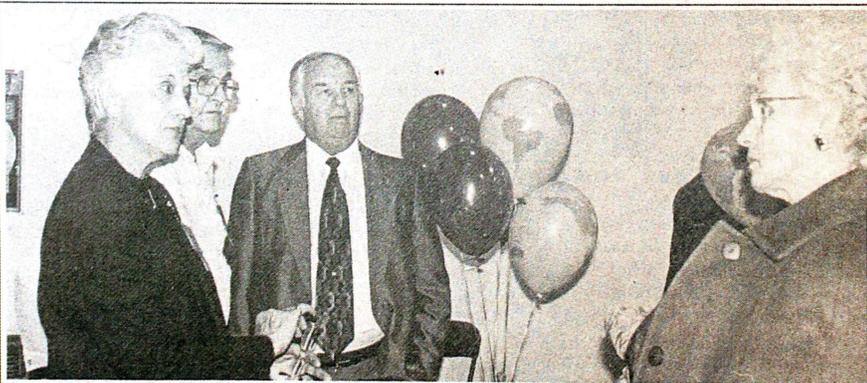


HOST PASTOR for the Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference was Fred Steelman, left, Red Bank Church. With him are two of the program speakers, Dean Haun, Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage; and Roger Freeman, First Church, Clarksville.

Woman's Missionary Union stages Missions Extravaganza



DANA SMITH, minister of music and education, Cumberland Homesteads Church, Crossville, enjoys a moment of rest with sons Justin and Andrew, who have visited the WMU Missions Fair with Dad.



RAE AND JAMES MOORHEAD, left, missionaries to the Philippine Islands, left, welcome old friends Clarence and Mary Lou Stewart to their exhibit at the Missions Fair at First Church, Chattanooga. Tennessee Baptists had a missions partnership with the Philippines several years ago.

CHATTANOOGA — First Church here hosted the second Missions Extravaganza of Woman's Missionary Union, TBC, on Nov. 13, prior to the convention's annual session.

More than 50 home and foreign missionaries representing the United States, Central and South America, Asian nations, Africa, and the Middle East were involved.

The missionaries had tables or booths with materials from their fields of service.

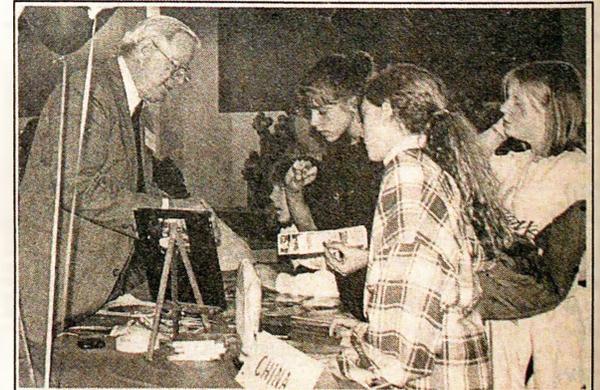
Representatives of the Poland, Canada, and Michigan

missions partnerships also participated. Parents of several missionaries were on hand also.

Activities included the Missions Fair during the afternoon and evening, and a dinner.

Three missionaries spoke during the dinner: Bill Black of Gatlinburg, Ramona Mercer of the Far East, and Sandy Wilson of Africa.

Missionaries were available at their tables to talk with the many Tennessee Baptists who took advantage of the opportunity. □



AUDLEY HAMRICK, Knoxville, Sevier Heights Church, short-term missionary to China, shows his exhibit to Acteens Lauren Sarten, Cherish Cleghorn, and Heather Hammonds, and Kari Sherman, center, leaning on table, of Lookout Valley Church.

Offers help to ministers in crisis

Ministers need renewed vision, says Sager

CHATTANOOGA — Ministers must become cognizant of the crisis among them and respond by renewing their vision, declared Doug Sager during the convention sermon Wednesday morning.

Sager, pastor, First Church, Concord, said ministers don't need to examine their calling, but their vision.

Moses got a vision from the burning bush. Ezekiel received a vision of God on his throne, and Saul of Tarsus saw a vision on the Damascus Road. Isaiah saw a vision which is detailed in Isaiah 6, noted Sager.

Just like Isaiah in that experience, ministers are going through a crisis. The king, who had been good to Isaiah's people in Judah, had died in shame and Isaiah's future was uncertain.

Some 5,000 ministers surveyed by authors George Barna and James Dobson reported the following — 90 percent of ministers are in a survival mode, 40 percent have considered quitting, only 37 percent believe the teachings of Jesus are relevant, and only 28 percent believe preaching and church are relevant.

Sager also said ministers have reported the following — 80 percent said the ministry was having a negative impact on them or their families, 33 percent said it was outright hazardous to them or their families, 75 percent said they had suffered significant stress related to their work, 50 percent said they were unable to meet expectations of them, 90 percent said they weren't adequately trained, and 37 percent said they had engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior in the last month.

"Every six hours a Baptist preacher is fired," said Sager.

On the local level, Tennessee Baptists aren't drawing young adults, Sager said. He asked the crowd to look around and acknowledge the lack of young pastors or young adults in attendance.

What is needed is hope, he said. Ministers don't need to organize into groups, but they need to "come into the presence of God and get a new vision."

"We must not place our hopes in anything that man can do. Isaiah didn't just go out and try harder. He met God."

To gain a new vision, Christians

lion, 1950 had 120 million, 1980 had 275 million, 1992 had 540 million, and 1995 had over 600 million.

During 1900, only 943 people became Christians every day, and in 1994 92,000 make the decision every day, he continued.

"God is at work," Sager said.

He also reported on Southern Baptist work.

Despite dire predictions, he said, foreign missionaries baptized 302,000 people in 1994 — a record for Southern Baptist missions work. That means that over 800 a day were baptized by Baptist foreign missionaries, he said.

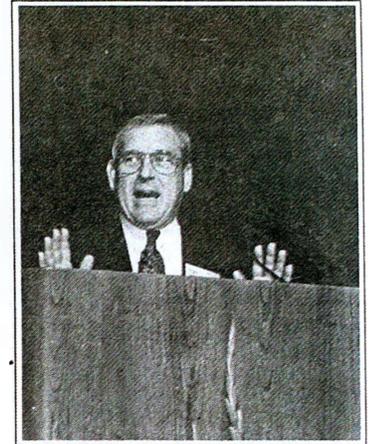
In what is termed World A by the Foreign Mission Board, referring to the unevangelized world where "traditional" missions efforts are restricted or difficult, baptisms in 1994 rose 500 percent over 1993.

"God is at work," he repeated.

"I get a little weary of the gloom and doom boys. Our best days are ahead of us, people."

Sager referred to a report in the Nov. 15 issue of the *Baptist and Reflector* noting the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions was the largest in its history.

He also noted that Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC plan with goals for 2000 A.D., was on the road to success. The Home Mission Board reported in 1994 Southern Baptists started 1,297 congregations. That brings the total number of congregations to about 48,000 — just shy of the Bold Mission Thrust goal of 50,000. Additionally, the Bold Mission Thrust goal of 59,550 missions volunteers has been surpassed. In 1994 about 79,883 people did such work.



SAGER GESTURES during his sermon to the convention Wednesday morning.

The Cooperative Program also is working, continued Sager. Gifts which stay in Tennessee were the highest ever given and exceeded the budget by \$708,000, he reported.

"Hallelujah; Praise God. That's what we ought to be doing. Don't listen to the crowd that says the Cooperative Program isn't working. It's working better than ever."

He asked the messengers to respond to a vision of God as Isaiah did by saying, "Woe is me." It is a response that is counter to the societal trend to claim victim status, he noted. "We have become a nation of victims."

After Isaiah received personal cleansing from God, he heard from him, said Sager. One sees, feels, then hears God, he noted. In response Isaiah said, "Here am I."

That kind of vision does not come from man or the church, "but from almighty God," he said.

"We will never come to the place of renewing our call until we renew our vision," concluded Sager. □ — Connie Davis

We must not place our hopes in anything that man can do. Isaiah didn't just go out and try harder. He met God.

— Doug Sager

must acknowledge the holiness of God and his presence, and seek cleansing, stated Sager.

The holiness of God separates and is not a single attribute, he added.

Sager explained he had come to a new understanding of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention. The controversy, which began in 1979, has resulted in a power struggle between two groups. "If we have a difference it comes not from our understanding of Scripture, but from our understanding of God."

"A holy God can produce a holy people. We must not limit him."

One can be encouraged by other statistics, said Sager. In 1430 A.D., only 1 percent of the population was Christian. The Christian population has grown as follows — 100 A.D. had 5,000, 1800 had 34 million, 1900 had 60 mil-



PERFORMING PRIOR TO THE convention sermon is the choir of First Church, Concord, led by David Hyers, associate pastor of music. The choir included 98 singers and 16 instrumentalists.

Daily Partnership Prayer Requests

November

- 22 —Praise God for Carol Spurlin, the new administrative secretary in the TBC Partnership Missions Department.
- 23 —Pray for Charlie Finger, a volunteer serving for two months in Poland. He is working at a Polish Baptist church using English as an outreach tool.
- 24 —Pray for Barbara and Charles Layton, volunteer coordinators of the Poland/Tennessee Partnership, as they seek an affordable van and as they travel throughout Poland.
- 25 —Praise God for the spiritual decisions made during a revival led by John Compton and Chip Leake in Gorzow, Wielkopolski, Poland.
- 26 —Pray for Madison Heights Fellowship Church in Michigan as they attempt to raise over \$100,000 by January 1996 to pay debts.
- 27 —Pray for Jeff Christopherson and for Mountain View Christian Fellowship in Calgary. The church started meeting this month in the 90 meter, ski jump tower on the grounds of the Canada Olympic Park.
- 28 —Praise God for August, which was the third highest month of Cooperative Program giving in the Michigan convention's history.

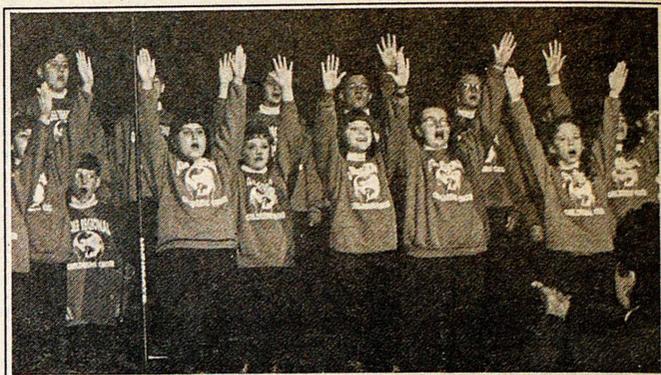
TENNESSEE BAPTIST PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS



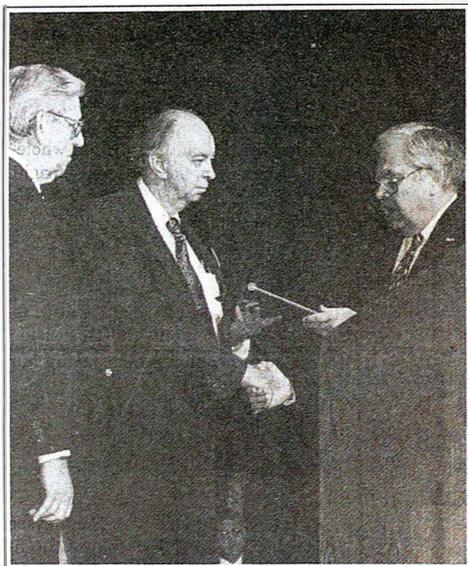
Annual conventions — a time for fun, fellowship, and work



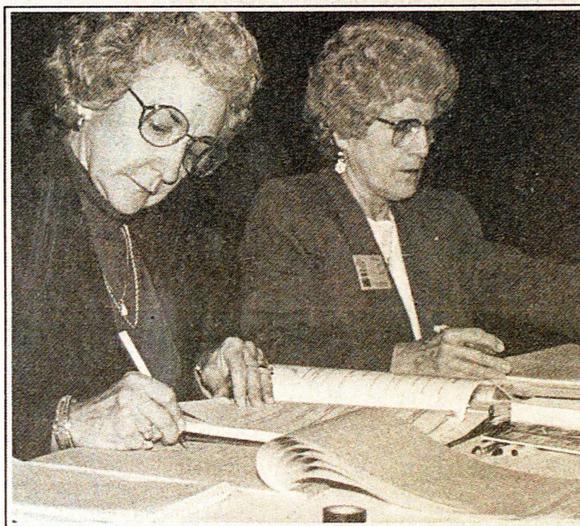
ANNUAL CONVENTIONS provide an opportunity for these wives of state directors of missions to get together for some fun and fellowship. From left are Sheila Skidmore, Weakley County Association; Polly Proffitt, Sevier County Association; Sarah Tydings, Grainger County Association; and Betty Smith, Western District Association.



PERFORMING DURING one of 'The Convention Ministers' portions of the program was the Ocoee Regional Children's Choir which included children from Bradley County and Polk County associations.



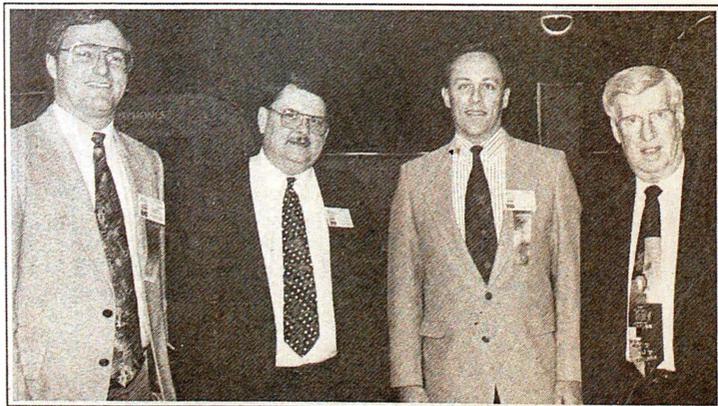
JAMES PORCH, right, TBC executive treasurer presents plaques to two state directors of missions who have announced their retirements. Receiving his plaque is Raleigh Brady of Bradley County Association while Robert Agee of Wilson County Association looks on. Another retiring DOM, Bill Hazlewood of Cumberland Gap, was unable to attend.



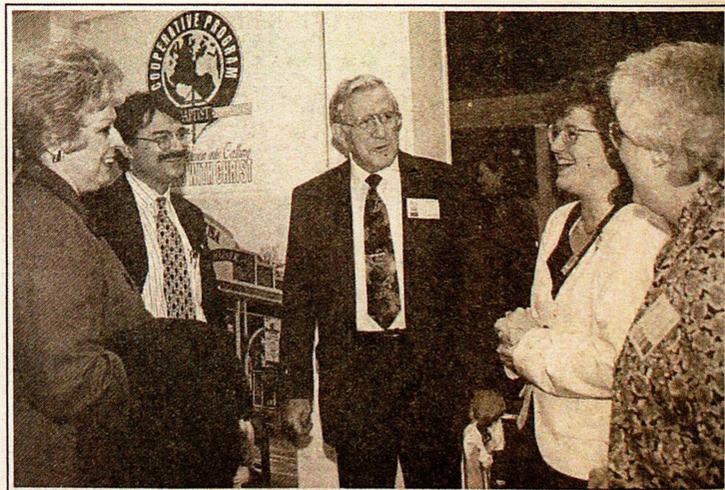
GERRY MAYES, left, served as TBC Recording Secretary during the annual meeting, filling in for Wallace Anderson who resigned. Mayes later was elected to the position for next year. She is assisted by Doris Clark of the TBC staff.



DAN HANSON, a member of First Church, Chattanooga, rings during a handbell presentation prior to Jim Henry's closing message on the last night of the convention.



A GROUP FROM CHILHOWEE Association has fellowship during the Tennessee Baptist Convention annual meeting. From left are Jim Snyder, minister of education at Broadway Church, Maryville; Charles Bailey, pastor, Laurel Bank Church, Friendsville; Bob Brown, Broadway pastor; and John Churchman, director of missions.



VISITING IN THE EXHIBIT HALL are, from left, Linda Kirk of Smyrna; Tim Hill of the TBC; Emery Farmer of Clarksville, retired director of missions, New Salem Association; Elizabeth Farmer of the TBC; and Margaret Farmer of Clarksville.

Refers to Long-Range Study Committee Report

Hawkins calls for vision of product of report

CHATTANOOGA — Now that Tennessee Baptists have adopted a mission statement, vision, objectives, and plans for the future included in the Long-Range Study Committee, they need to consider who and what they want to become, said Frank Hawkins during his presidential address.

Tennessee Baptists must adopt a vision to redeem and reclaim individuals, relationships, and churches, proclaimed Hawkins.

Commending the Long-Range Study Committee, whose report was adopted Tuesday night prior to his message, Hawkins said it was "on target. For just as we cannot view individuals and relationships as being unredeemable, let us not view churches and church members as being unreclaimable. Our mission field for partnership missions must be as narrow as every individual, as focused as every family, and as wide and inclusive as every church and every church member."

The pastor of First Church, Kingsport, called messengers to "be a people of forgiving, agape love. Whole people forgive a lot and love a lot," because they know that God has loved and forgiven them a lot.

Baptists should identify this vision of who and what we want to become because it can remain unchanged while where we want to be and how we get there is more uncertain. "Character is what makes prophecy certain; God's character transforming ours."

To catch a vision to reach individuals, Tennessee Baptists need only learn that three million people in the state are unchurched. Baptist history teaches all are redeemable, he said. "Our commandment and commission is to go after all individuals. Otherwise, the mission heart of our Father is divided itself," said Hawkins.

Tennessee Baptists must not be naive in their approach to others. Peo-

ple are busy shopping for a better supermarket, better entertainment arena, better church. Many individuals also are shopping for salvation, he added.

The focus cannot be limited to individuals, he continued. Individuals live in relationships and in family systems. "The call to wholeness must touch marriages and families," he declared. The author David Mace was right, Hawkins said, when he said that Christians need to stop viewing marriages and families as the villains of societies' ills and start viewing them as the victims. "They need our help," said Hawkins. He commended the convention for naming Don Mauldin as director of family life ministries for the TBC.

Hawkins noted the Long-Range Study Committee discovered over 68 percent of Tennessee Baptist churches are either plateaued or are declining.

"Surely this is not our vision of the

final product," he stated. A solution cannot be found in changing the independent status of the Baptist church, he said, because that independence fosters leaders who can choose the interdependence of denominational cooperation.

Keeping the autonomy/cooperation balance alive in churches are the state's Baptist colleges, said Hawkins, who referred to them as "dynamic cata-

lysts. For they give to our youth in a Christian environment, the kind of education which encourages mature decision-making skills to keep Baptist autonomy alive."

He encouraged the messengers to support the three Baptist colleges in Tennessee and to encourage young people to choose to do their college study at these institutions.

To grasp the vision of who and what Tennessee Baptists should become, said Hawkins, Christians must initially work to develop spiritual views of right and wrong and integrity since it shapes wholeness.

Truth and honesty do exist, he quipped. "Labels which are placed upon brothers and sisters which stereotype them as though their truth or lack thereof is fully known by the label, is not the truth which will set us free," he explained.

"People of integrity will tremble a lot

in their consciences as they talk about others; they will seek to understand people by communicating with them, not about them."

opposite. God holds Christians accountable for right and wrong, because he knows they can identify the differences, explained Hawkins. God also knows each produces a different outcome in every individual, family, and nation.

Wholeness is a unique Christian characteristic in that it can only come about by a love "which wills the well-being of others, even our enemies." He questioned the messengers about how their love compared to the kind of love out of Hollywood which is "something we feel or fall into or out of according to excitement, thrill, or labels."

God's "kind of love and its truth will not only set people free, it will make them whole. It does not do this by compromising what is right and what is true. To the contrary, it will die to bring people who have missed the truth back to the way of wholeness."

The newly adopted mission statement of the convention from the Long-Range Study Committee which includes evangelizing, discipling, teaching, and ministering to people reiterates the principles which lead to spiritual wholeness — people who have a sense of right and wrong, people who defend God's truth by seeking to live out its meaning in truthful and honest relationships, and people who live by our Lord's commandment that we love one another and others as he loved us, noted Hawkins. The mission statement and this vision also reveal a product which favors our father in character, he added.

The product of our vision should be "whole persons, people of integrity who are transformed transformers of a fragmented and lost society," said Hawkins.

"May God help us all as Tennessee Baptists to live out our vision of the final product ... and let us do it in a climate of restored and restoring integrity, trust, and reconciling love." — Connie Davis

People of integrity will tremble a lot in their consciences as they talk about others; they will seek to understand people by communicating with them, not about them.

— Frank Hawkins

Bivocational, small church pastors recognized at convention



BIVOCATIONAL PASTORS and wives honored at the convention were, from left, Steve and Marilyn Gallimore, Birds Creek Church, Paris, West Tennessee; Jim and Sherry Ledbetter, Liberty Church, Columbia, Middle Tennessee; and Johnny and Patty Carr, Shepards Chapel Church, Rogersville, East Tennessee.



PASTORS AND WIVES of small churches were honored by the convention with plaques also. From left, Ron and Jeanne Jones, Dumplin Church, New Market, East Tennessee; Don and Connie Cooper, Laneview Church, Kenton, West Tennessee; and James and Myrl Burrow, McBurg Church, Dellrose, Middle Tennessee.

■ convention news

Annual conventions — a time for fellowship and recognition



CARSON-NEWMAN COLLEGE President Cordell Maddox, right, visits with Moncrief and Diane Jordan in the exhibit area of the convention. Jordan recently retired as pastor of First Church, Jefferson City.



ENJOYING THE CONVENTION were Western District Association pastors Lynn King, right, Tony and Jane Crossnoe, of West Paris Church.



HYRAN BAREFOOT, left, is recognized by Belmont University President Bill Troutt during the college's report to convention messengers. Barefoot was attending his last TBC annual meeting as president of Union University. He has announced he will retire as president of the Jackson school next summer.



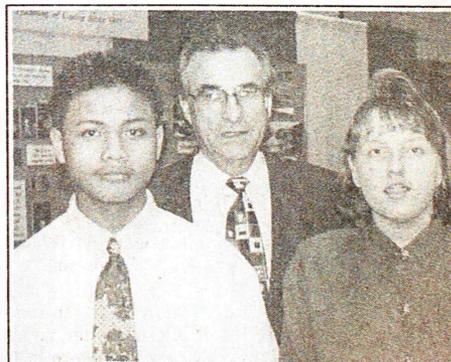
BILL PALMITER, right, pastor, Bethel Church, Greenbrier, receives from Archer Thorpe of the TBC the award for top Cooperative Program giving by a church per capita.



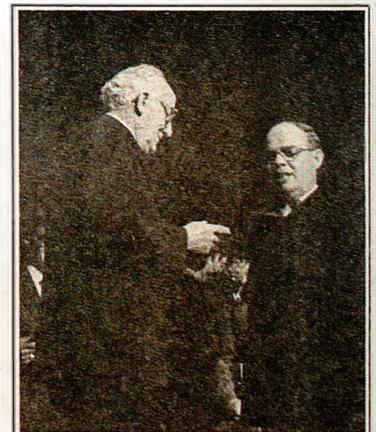
ACCEPTING THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM award for percentage giving by a church is Billy Bateman, left, pastor, New Hope Church, Bon Aqua, from Archer Thorpe of the TBC.



BELMONT UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT Bill Troutt visits with Middle Tennessee pastors Emerson Wiles, left, of First Church, Fayetteville, and Frank Samuels, center, of First Church, Waynesboro, during a break in the action at the annual meeting.



TWO YOUTH from the Chattanooga campus of Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes were greeted by TBCH President Gerald Stow prior to the TBCH report at the convention. Glenda Cross, right, is a 15-year-old member of Brainerd Church and Boonie Oudomrath is a 14-year-old member of Concord Church.



RECEIVING THE AWARD for top giving in amount by a church to the Cooperative Program is Thurman Prewitt, left, of Bellevue Church, Cordova, from Archer Thorpe of the TBC.

Two Rivers' youth minister takes stand on Donahue show

By Ken Walker
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Two youth pastors whose Halloween-alternative productions will be featured on "Donahue" said they felt awed by the opportunity to stand up for the Lord on national television.

"The big thing is it was such a humbling experience," said Phil Wilson of Two Rivers Church, Nashville. "I knew so many people were praying for me; some were fasting and praying."

"So few Christians and pastors have an opportunity to be in that kind of forum and make a stand for the truth of God's Word," said Keenan Roberts of Abundant Life Christian Center in suburban Denver.

The two men, along with Two Rivers senior pastor Jerry Sutton visited New York for a Nov. 9 taping of the nationally syndicated program. It will be aired sometime between mid-November and mid-February.

The youth pastors discussed their re-

spective Halloween-season presentations, Two Rivers' "Judgment House" and Abundant Life's "Hell House." Using drama to present the Gospel, the two churches recorded more than 1,800 decisions for Christ during their October runs; total attendance was more than 18,000.

Opposition to the churches on "Donahue" came from an official of Planned Parenthood and a lesbian pastor, both from Denver. The women claimed the churches were airing "right-wing political issues," Wilson said, but they replied they were showing biblical issues.

Wilson said they were before a hostile audience of about 150 people. "They directed venom at us for scaring teenagers," he said. "But I said we weren't doing a 'Friday the 13th' thing; we were trying to give them life, hope, and peace. We're giving them reality and showing people there is a heaven and a hell."

Objections from the audience included:

- How could you tell someone they're dying and going to hell?
- How could you judge anybody?
- You're scaring people into making a decision (for Christ). What do you do after you scare them to death?

Phil Donahue was expected to play the devil's advocate, added Roberts. Donahue's probing, the audience's reaction, or the guests' harsh criticism didn't surprise them, he said. "We were still able to do what we felt the Lord wanted us to do."

They were also careful to maintain their calm and not project defensive, hostile, or obnoxious attitudes, Roberts said.

This marked the fourth year Two Rivers has staged Judgment House. Wilson said it started after he came to the church in 1992 and member Jeff Atwood asked if he had ever done this kind of presentation at Halloween.

They drew on ideas from other congregations that year, but ever since they prepare a new script annually. This year's play required 240 volun-

teers per night. It was so well done the executive producer of "Donahue" saw a video and thought the church had hired a professional cast, Wilson added.

Almost 900 persons walked forward to make a public profession of faith during the three-week run, nearly twice as many who came to salvation at Judgment House's 1994 production.

Staging this kind of play during the Halloween season is a spreading phenomenon. Wilson said he knows of two other churches in the Nashville area, a third 90 miles away, and churches in Kingsport, Alabama, and Ohio that put them on this year. "We get all kinds of calls from churches who say, 'Can you help us?'"

Another highlight of the Donahue TV episode occurred off camera. When Wilson arrived in Manhattan on Nov. 8, a fax message wishing him well was waiting at the hotel desk. Four more showed up before he went to the studio. So did a special delivery Nov. 9 with 150 handwritten notes of encouragement. □

Kirk to lead TBC missions

For Baptist and Reflector

CHATTANOOGA — The Tennessee Baptist Convention's Executive Board unanimously elected Larry M. Kirk as director of the Missions Department Nov. 13, prior to the TBC annual meeting here. He succeeds Jere Phillips who resigned earlier this year to become the executive director of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists.

Kirk was the choice of the TBC Convention Ministries Committee, chaired by Russ Dunham of LaFollette.

A native of Mississippi, Kirk holds degrees from

Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Kirk joined the TBC Missions Department as a program associate in 1988, after serving 12 years as pastor of Liberty Grove Church, Jackson. He also has served as pastor of churches in Mississippi and Texas.

Kirk also has served in the Tennessee Air National Guard for 40 years and is the senior chaplain. He holds the rank of Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel.

Kirk and his wife, Linda, have three children. □



RUSS DUNHAM, left, chairman of the TBC Convention Ministries Committee, welcomes Larry and Linda Kirk to the TBC Executive Board's pre-convention meeting Nov. 13. The board elected Kirk as director of the TBC Missions Department, succeeding Jere Phillips, who resigned earlier in the summer.

TBC's Rodney Wilson accompanies CSI-sponsored tour to 'World A'

By Don Martin
For Baptist Press

LONDON — It's a cinch college students will be getting an earful about the unreached world because their state Baptist Student Union directors just got an eyeful.

Twenty-one state Baptist student directors, associates, and campus ministers, including Rodney Wilson, program associate for the Tennessee Baptist Convention Student Ministries Department, spent almost a week recently experiencing firsthand how Cooperative Services International workers reach World A for Christ.

CSI is the Southern Baptist organization that specializes in placing Christians into World A — that portion of the globe which has little or no contact with the Christian Gospel.

"I was astonished to discover how much of the Lord's work is already being done in what we call a World A situation," Wilson said.

"Jesus Christ is alive and well in that country and opportunities abound for students to assist him there in his work," Wilson added.

"I plan to lay out a map in front of my students and speak from the heart about all that I have seen," said Bobby Pruett, BSU director from Boulder, Colo. "This program, CSI,

makes me proud to be part of the Southern Baptist community."

"Amazing" was the word John Nance, director of student ministries for Canada, used repeatedly when describing his experience. "The openness of the opportunity is the impression that will stay," he said. Nance will share insights he gained with BSU directors across Canada.

CSI arranged for Pruett, Nance, and BSU leaders from 19 other states to see what CSI field workers actually do.

The directors traveled with field

workers — known as strategy coordinators or team leaders — into a restricted-access country to see how they craft and carry out plans for reaching a people group cut off from the Gospel. The country must remain unidentified to protect Christians there and their work.

Some BSU leaders were able to hear firsthand from Christians who have suffered persecution and even imprisonment because of their faith. Such glimpses are often beyond the reach of typical tourists. CSI named the week, "Project Discovery."

"We were able to lead these

BSU leaders into the inner circle of Christians in this country," explained one strategy coordinator. "It was an eye-opening experience. Some men actually cried when they later described encounters with these Christians."

Many BSU leaders jettisoned misconceptions about Christian work in closed countries during the week. Several participants were struck by the openness of people to talk about religion, recalled one CSI worker.

"There is a hunger for God that cannot be overlooked once you gain an entrance into the lives of a people who have been shut off from the Gospel," the CSI worker said. "Your life changes when you experience this."

Wilson noted that when promoting missions opportunities in the past, "I have always said, 'if you go, your concept of missions will never be the same.' After experiencing Project Discovery, God has altered my own personal concept of missions.

"To learn firsthand of the Lord's work in a place where I have not previously paid much attention is a humbling experience. He truly has the whole world in his hands.

"To encourage students (and others) to join him in places like this World A country continues to be the challenge," Wilson said. □

Associations conduct business at meetings

Churches added

One church, Marble Plains Church, Winchester, was voted into the fellowship of **Duck River Association**.

Recognitions

J. D. Evans, 83, sang the benediction of the 22th annual meeting of **Carroll-Benton Association**. Evans is a member of Prospect Church, Hollow Rock.

Lawrence County Association honored Fanny Williams and Marcella Luffman for working with association Bible drills. Each has led the children and youth who participate in the events for about 40 years.

The late Mrs. James Horney was honored by **William Carey Association** for her work in missions, especially in Woman's Missionary Union.

The minutes of the association were dedicated to her memory.

Western District Association honored Bill Smith, director of missions, on his 20th anniversary of service.

Deryl G. Watson, director of missions, **Hardeman Association**, was honored for 10 years of service. Watson and his wife, Frances, were recognized by the dedication of the annual to them along with Teddy Evans and Mrs. Ewell "Cecile" McKinnie.

Business

New Duck River Association celebrated its 50th anniversary. One of several speakers was Paul Tabor of Springfield, who spoke on its history. He is the son of the first associational missionary or director of missions,

C.D. Tabor. (Last week a report inadvertently reported Paul Tabor was the first associational missionary or director of missions of the association.)

Duck River Association heard a report on its office building, which is nearing completion. Volunteers have helped build the building — 128 from 19 churches and three from churches in three other states.

Indian Creek Association heard Morris Chapman, president, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, based in Nashville.

Campbell County Association voted to meet semi-annually instead of annually, in

October and April. **Western District Association** voted to buy a computer

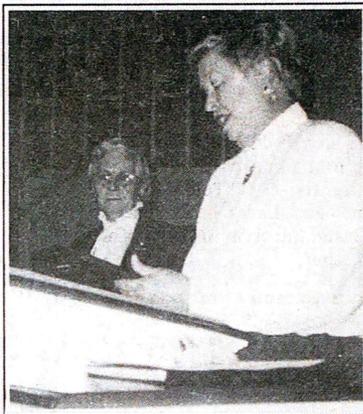
system and made constitutional changes in regard to the trustees and property commit-



LEADING THE OBSERVANCE of the 50th anniversary of **New Duck River Association** Oct. 23-24 were, from left, Bob Mizell, former director of missions (DOM); J. Harold Stephens, retired pastor; Paul Hall, former interim DOM; Paul Tabor, son of the late C.D. Tabor, first DOM; and Harold D. Smith, present DOM.



PRESENTING THE GAVEL to the new moderator of **Carroll-Benton Association** during its Oct. 16-17 meeting is Malcolm Norton, left, outgoing moderator, to Billy Murphy, center, new moderator, as James Humphreys, vice moderator, looks on. Norton is pastor of First Church, Trezevant. Murphy is pastor of Howse Church, Atwood, and Humphreys is interim pastor of Sugar Tree Chapel.



HONORING SUNDAY SCHOOL worker Irene Morris, left, of **Carroll-Benton Association** during the Oct. 16-17 meeting is Bettie Hill, Sunday School director of the association. Morris, who is a member of First Church, Atwood, was adult leader of an ASSISTeam



OFFICERS ELECTED TO LEAD KNOX COUNTY Association during its Oct. 17 meeting are, from left, Ray Kitts, pastor, Island Home Church, Knoxville, vice moderator; Norma Mynatt, Calvary Church, Knoxville, clerk; Larry Beeler, pastor, First Church, Fountain City, moderator; and Glenn Sullivan, pastor, Smithwood Church, Knoxville, outgoing moderator.

more convention photos



VISITING WITH the honored guest of the **NOBTS Tennessee alumni association luncheon**, Ed Young, second from left, is, from left, Mark Foley of the seminary; Tommie Palmer, mother of a current student and a member of Memorial Church, Chattanooga; and Dallas Roscoe, outgoing president of the association and a member of Memorial Church along with Young. He is 90 years old and a 1952 graduate.



THE MINISTERS' WIVES ASSOCIATION elected Deborah Markham, Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville, president. Outgoing officers are Paulette Phillips, left, Hixson, and Marie Atkins, Chattanooga.



ELECTED TO LEAD THE Tennessee Baptist Church Music Conference during its meeting at the convention were, from left, first row, James Justice, Springfield Church, Springfield, president; Doug Jewett, First Church, Clinton, past president; Lamar Puckett, Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga; John Parker, Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville; Tom Wickes, First Church, Cleveland, secretary/treasurer; second row, Richard Dickerson, First Church, Union City; Tracy Wilson, First Church, Dandridge; John McCall, First Church, Tullahoma, secretary/treasurer elect; Henry Simpson, First Church, Huntingdon, president elect; and Julian Suggs, TBC church music director. Officers include regional vice presidents.

■ the churches

■ **Trinity Church, Cordova**, will host a candlelight dinner Dec. 1 at the Cordova Community Center during which its cookbook, "A Taste of Trinity," will be introduced. The menu will feature recipes from the cookbook. Further information is available from the church at (901) 759-5955.



GATHERED WITH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL class she leads at New Providence Church, Loudon, is Ruth W. Dutton, left, who will be honored Nov. 25 at the church for service there and in the community since 1925. The reception will be from 3-7 p.m.



BURNING A NOTE representing debt for the educational building and gymnasium of Hillcrest Church, Dyersburg, are, from left, Joe Naylor, director of missions, Dyer Baptist Association; Earl Stafford; Joe Trybone, pastor emeritus; Danny O'Guin, pastor; Joe Gibson Jr.; and Joe Gibson III. The \$1.2 million debt was paid in five years.

■ the associations

■ **Nashville Association's** truckstop ministry is meeting in a permanent chapel, which is a tractor trailer chapel. It is led by Joe Shearon, chaplain of the ministry. Six people made professions of faith last month as a result of the efforts. Volunteers are needed and can get more information from the office at (615) 259-3034.

■ **"M" Night of Western District Association** will be

Nov. 27 and will feature Jerry Sutton, pastor, Two Rivers Church, Nashville.

■ the people

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

■ **Becky Todd** has retired as church organist and music secretary at Union Avenue Church, Memphis, after 30 years. She is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, and George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, which is now part of Vanderbilt University. Todd also served as organist for a church in Kannapolis, N.C. Todd and her husband, Larry, have moved to Grand Junction to care for her mother.

■ **Sammie Smith**, a member of First Church, Adamsville, for over 20 years, was licensed Nov. 16 to the ministry by the church.

■ **Orpha Adams** and **George Stanley** have been awarded the annual David Brainerd Award by Brainerd Church, Chattanooga. The award is made to individuals who have shown personal devotion, prayer commitment, and evangelical zeal. It is the first time the award has had co-winners. The award honors



PAUSING DURING A FELLOWSHIP TIME of the annual Nigeria Mission Reunion, which drew about 350 Oct. 20-22 to Toccoa, Ga., are, from left, Maggie Tarpley, Ruth Dyson, and Robert and Gayle Congdon, all of Woodmont Church, Nashville. Also attending were John Tarpley and Robert and Betsy Parham of Woodmont Church.

■ the leaders

■ **Don Long**, pastor, Chamberlain Memorial Church, Chattanooga, has re-

signed to serve a church in Florida. While in Tennessee, Long was president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference.

■ **Boiling Springs Church**, Baxter, has called **Willie Watts** of Carthage as pastor, effective Oct. 8.



RECOGNIZED FOR TENURE AND RETIREMENT at the Knox County Association Oct. 17 meeting were, from left, Lloyd Powell, Camp Ba Yo Ca director, 15 years; Tom Everett, Western Heights Baptist Center director, 20 years; Ken Casey, retiring as Knox County Lodge - Ridgecrest director, 5 years; and Joe Chandler, associate director of missions, 5 years.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

Thanksgiving in verse

By C. Ray Kitts, pastor
Island Home Church, Knoxville

The spirit of thanksgiving for Christians is more than the fourth Thursday in November. The psalmist wrote, "Let us come before him with thanksgiving."

I came across the following verse about praise and giving thanks which I had written as a rough draft some time ago. Permit me to share it with you this Thanksgiving season.

*Let us praise the Lord on every day
For the many blessings he sends our way.*

*There are people who never ask:
"Lord, today show me my task."*

*Let us praise you, Lord, every day
For showing us the path that leads your way.*

*I see the many weary souls about,
Then I must say, "Lord, I love you,
without a doubt."*

*Let us praise you Lord in every way,
And give thanks to you this Thanksgiving Day.*

*Your blessings come in many shapes I know,
Though none be greater than your love that grows.
In our hearts this season.*

When to celebrate Thanksgiving

By Roger Freeman, pastor
First Church, Clarksville

Thanksgiving is to be celebrated every day. God is good, and he loves to give. "Every good and perfect gift is from above" James 1:17. Here's a story about true thanksgiving.

The eminent Bible commentator Matthew Henry was robbed in his old age. That evening he wrote the following in his diary: "Let me be thankful — first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they

took my wallet, they did not take my life; third, because they took my all, it was not much; fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."

Day to remember peace

By Dan Francis, pastor
First Church, Nashville

For many of us, it almost completely slipped by. We might not have noticed at all except we missed our mail delivery. Yes, last Saturday was Armistice Day. On this day in 1918, the worst war in the history of mankind up to that time came to an end. The guns were silent in World War I.

Armistice Day is one of those "memory" days. It is a day when we remember those who died in the war that was to "make the world safe for democracy." On this same day in 1939, the song "God Bless America" had a somewhat delayed debut. Irving Berlin wrote it during WWI, but it was not sung in public until this day in 1939.

As we make our way to the Thanksgiving/Christmas holiday frenzy, it is a good thing to think about and remember the peace process. It is a good thing to be grateful for those who gave their lives for the national and international peace that we so often take for granted. But most of all, it is a good thing to remember the place that the Prince of Peace wants to occupy in our lives. Remember this well: Peace is not the absence of conflict, withdrawal, or a forced tranquility, but a deep abiding internal "rightness" that reflects the presence of God.

Correctly translated, Luke's account of the angel's message announcing the birth of Christ is not "Peace on earth and good will to me," but rather "Peace on earth among men of good will." Christ indeed is the Prince of Peace as those who know him find this "rightness" inside and the good will that results.

Decide now to seek peace. But remember, it is an "inside-outside" proposition. □

Texas Baptists shift 2.5 percent in funds from SBC to state causes

Baptist Press

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — By a nearly two-to-one margin, messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Nov. 13-14, in San Antonio, approved a \$42.6 million Cooperative Program unified budget that increased by 2.5 percent funds for causes within the state, doing so by cutting 2.5 percent in funds for Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The 1996 Cooperative Program unified budget includes \$1.5 million to help start 1,400 new churches by the year 2000 and \$350,000 for theological education through educational institutions related to the BGCT.

Messengers to the 110th annual Texas Baptist convention also elected as officers: president, Charles Wade, pastor,

First Church, Arlington; first vice president, Ophelia Humphrey, layperson, First Church, Amarillo; and second vice president, Noah Rodriguez, a layman from Primera Mexican Church, San Antonio. All had been endorsed by the moderate Texas Baptists Committed organization.

Wade drew 3,842 votes, compared to 2,414 for Gary Miller, pastor of Sagamore Hill Church, Fort Worth. He was endorsed by Southern Baptists of Texas, an organization supportive of SBC leadership.

Texas Baptist messengers turned aside two attempts to amend the 1996 budget as proposed by the BGCT executive board. The budget calls for using 67 percent of CP receipts in the state rather than the 64.5 percent in the 1995 budget.

The 1996 budget devotes 33 percent for SBC national and international missions efforts, compared to 35.5 percent in this year's budget.

The 1996 budget for Texas missions causes is an increase of more than \$1.6 million over the 1995 budget. Gifts to worldwide causes through the Cooperative Program are expected to total \$22 million.

Messengers defeated 3,954 to 2,193 (64.3 percent) an amendment by Jon Crosby of First Church, Little River, that would have restored the CP percentage for worldwide causes to its 1995 level; defunded the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, and Baptist Theological Education Committee; and reduced

the allocation to Baylor University by \$500,000. Crosby said Texas Baptists are funding programs that duplicates the work of SBC entities.

Speaking against the amendment, Dean Dickens of Cliff Temple Church, Dallas, urged messengers to "trust the leadership of Texas Baptists that we have appointed."

On a show of ballots vote, messengers, by a roughly two-to-one margin, rejected an amendment by John Avant,

pastor of Coggin Avenue Church, Brownwood, to retain at the 1995 level the percentage of CP funds for worldwide causes.

"God's call for our convention is not to change our formula but to return to him," Avant said.

The rationale for the budget as presented was that "Texas is a mission field" and that the state is "grossly under-churched," according to BGCT staffer Ed Schmeltekopf. □

Ohio exec announces retirement plans

Baptist Press

CINCINNATI — Messengers attending the annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, Nov. 5-7, learned their executive director, Orville Griffin, 63, will retire Jan. 15, 1997.

Griffin, a long-time Baptist

leader in the state, has been executive director since 1992.

In a major action, messengers voted to continue sending the *Ohio Baptist Messenger*, free of charge to Ohio Baptists. Earlier in the summer, the convention's executive board voted to switch it to a subscription basis. □

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**Life and Work Series
for November 26
Focal Passages:
Daniel 6:3-5, 7, 10-11,
16, 20-23, 26-27**

Loyalty to God

By Charles Parker

When Daniel could have taken the easy way out or just closed the shutters on his religious practices, he instead showed courageous loyalty to God. Such a virtue pleases the Lord and influences others to recognize his rule in the world. When Lottie Moon could have lived in relative security in America, she instead showed loyalty to God by going to China to serve 35 years as a missionary. When Martin Luther King Jr. could have confined his attentions to his congregation, he tried to lead the civil rights movement in non-violent ways. When you and I could be loyal, what do we do?

Life above reproach — vv. 3-5

Not only was Daniel known as an excellent administrator and statesman, he also had a reputation for being a faithful and exclusive worshiper of the one true God. "His God" (v. 5) was the God of Israel, Yahweh. With his political and civil life above reproach, and with no chance they could find any evidence of political corruption, his only apparent "Achilles heel" of vulnerability was in the area of his religion.

Refuse to compromise — vv. 7, 10-11

The identity of the King Darius in this chapter is unknown. The Persian conspiracy hatched to pull down Daniel and advance themselves included him only by pulling the wool over his eyes. Darius was tricked into signing an irrevocable decree that effectively prohibited prayer. Either Daniel's sterling reputation had not reached the king's notice or he did not make the connection. After the decree was signed, Daniel was faced with a dilemma. Should he compromise his loyalty to God or should he continue his daily devotions as before? He courageously threw open his windows and prayed three times a day as before. To every person come several choices in life when he or she must be loyal to God or turn away.

Do not give up — vv. 16, 20-23

The law of Medes and Persians could not be rescinded. Daniel was cast into a pit of hungry lions. While the king felt helpless to do anything except follow law and custom, he at least expressed the hope that Daniel's God would deliver him (v. 16). Many of us have heard this account since childhood. We need to hear it again through adult ears. Sometimes to stand for Christ means that we will be threatened with the loss of property, freedom, and even life itself.

In Daniel's case God spared his life. An angel had muzzled the lions. Daniel testified to the king that he had done nothing wrong and that God had stood beside him throughout the ordeal. God does not always deliver his people from dangers. It is well to balance the story of Daniel with those of John the Baptist and Stephen. However, in all these cases, the individuals were loyal to God. They did not give up!

Remember your influence — vv. 26-27

While it would probably be extreme to interpret these verses as meaning that King Darius became a devoted follower of Yahweh, Daniel's loyalty to God did have a positive influence on this pagan king. He was apparently convinced of the power and reality of God. His decree even advertised the event across his kingdom. The term "the God of Daniel" seems to exclude the king from being a true believer himself. But if the message did not get through to him, at least it does to us! □ — Charles Parker is pastor of First Church, Jacksboro.

Power of the Gospel

By Kim Allen

We come in these passages to Paul's Ephesian ministry. In targeting cities Paul goes to Ephesus, the largest city in Asia Minor, home of the goddess Artemis or Dianna where the power of the Gospel is shown in many ways.

Paul had decided to leave Corinth to go to Jerusalem and Antioch to rest. Priscilla and Aquila agreed to go as far as Ephesus with him. For some reason Paul had taken a Nazarite vow before leaving Corinth and now sailing to Jerusalem the appropriate time had passed so he cut his hair, probably saving the locks to offer in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Priscilla and Aquila set up shop in Ephesus and Paul made a short visit to the synagogue; but declined to stay longer — promising to return in God's good time (vv. 19-21). Verses 22-23 find Paul on the move again. He sails to Caesarea going immediately to Jerusalem. The question is why all the haste; was there a crisis in Jerusalem or Antioch or a Festival that caused him to hurry? He left Jerusalem and had an unexpected delay in Antioch, where some believe he wrote his letter to the church in Galatia. After a while he continues to hop-scotch, always heading toward Ephesus.

Verses 24-28 find Apollos coming to Ephesus teaching about Jesus but knowing only of the Baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila spoke to him explaining the way of God more completely. Apollos leaves Ephesus going to Corinth preaching Christ.

God's power at Ephesus — ch. 19:1-20

In Ephesus, Paul met disciples of John the Baptist, baptized with the baptism of John, but with no knowledge of Pentecost or probably the cross or the resurrection. They believed Paul's preaching and were baptized. Paul laid hands on them and they received the Spirit and spoke in tongues.

In verses 8-10, Paul began in the synagogue but after eight months he moved the congregation to another loca-

**Convention Uniform Series
for November 26
Focal Passages:
Acts 19:1-6, 11-20**

tion, where he preached for two years where everyone in the province of Asia heard the Word.

Many Gentiles were coming to a saving faith in Jesus Christ but were being helped and healed by Paul

as God used him. The handkerchiefs and aprons are probably articles Paul wore or used in his trade as a tent maker and because he wore them, it seemed the application of these clothes on a troubled person, brought healing.

In verses 13-16 a group of fake exorcists traveled around casting out demons. They saw Paul casting out demons "in the name of Jesus" and decided to use it but when they did the demon said, "Jesus and Paul I know but who are you?" The possessed man beat and stripped all seven of them and sent them roaming through the streets of Ephesus. Many who had practiced magic, were found burning their books and forsaking their attempts at magical arts. They confessed their sin and repented.

Paul's future plans — vv. 21-22

Paul was planning a trip to Corinth, then to Jerusalem with an offering from the Gentile churches for Jewish believers, which is not mentioned here. He also hoped to travel to Rome. Meanwhile he sent Timothy and Epaenetus to Macedonia.

Near riot at Ephesus — vv. 23-41

Demetrius in verses 23-27 was one who made a good living from silver images of Diana. He inflamed the other image makers by saying Paul's work threatened their livelihood and religion.

Order is restored. A city official took charge, assuring the crowd of the greatness of their religion; urging them not to act rashly. He claimed Paul's innocence and if Demetrius thought he was guilty, then he should go back through legal channels. The official warned their actions could attract the attention of high government officials. In verse 41, he dismisses them. □ — Kim Allen is pastor of Little West Fork Church, Clarksville.

A time of celebration

By Phil Lovelace

Dedication of the walls — ch. 11:12

Nehemiah returns now to the story of the walls, which he had interrupted to tell about the spiritual work under Ezra.

It was necessary to get the Jews to live in the city, both for the good of the city and the glory of God. This of course, demanded faith. The leaders were dwelling in the city, but now they wanted the citizens to join them; so they cast lots and moved 10 percent into the city. Verse 2 indicates there were also some volunteers. The numbers in verses 3-19 total 3,044. If this represented 10 percent of the male population, we can see how small the remnant was in the land. Note the mention of singers (vv. 22-23). The Jews had no song in their years of exile (Psalm 137), but now had the joy of the Lord as their strength.

Chapter 12. The actual dedication of the walls is described in verses 27-47. Ezra and Nehemiah divided the people into two great companies, with Ezra leading one and Nehemiah following the other. They started probably at the valley gate. Ezra led his company along the east side of the city, then north to the temple area. Nehemiah and his company went straight north and then east, meeting the other company at the temple. It was a reminder, perhaps, of when Israel marched around Jericho and won

**Bible Book Series for November 26
Focal Passages: Nehemiah 11:1-2;
12:27, 30-31a, 43-47**

great victory. It was also an opportunity to publicly thank the Lord as they witnessed the work accomplished. Verse 43 indicates that the joy of the city was heard miles away. What a day of dedication that was.

Application: When dedicated people unite joyfully to dedicate God's work, they will always experience God's blessing.

Conclusion: A wealthy downtown church voted to relocate to an affluent suburban area. When the building was completed, the pastor and others realized that the inner city needed a Christian witness and ministry. A call was sent forth for volunteers. Who would stay with the old building and serve as a nucleus for a program to meet the needs of that community? The people received a tremendous surprise. The pastor offered to serve the remaining years of his ministry where he already had served for nearly 25 years. He stayed for what proved to be, in many ways, the most fruitful years of his life.

Israel's situation was not exactly parallel to the downtown church's but many features were similar. Jerusalem needed inhabitants to carry on the work in the big city.

A further look: chapter 11:1 —

the rulers, as administrators of the nation's affairs needed to live in the capital.

Verse 2 — those that volunteered were motivated by public spiritedness. Nehemiah gave them special recognition.

Chapter 12:27 — when a public facility was dedicated, happiness reigned. The "Thanksgiving" expressed the theme, and the "singing" denoted the form. Psalm 122 and 147 have been suggested as possible songs that were used.

Verse 30 — the leaders purified themselves — such as bathing, sprinkling with water or blood, shaving the body, washing garments, and offering special sacrifices were a part of the ceremonies of purification (see Leviticus 14:48-53) for purification of the people, walls and gates. And verse 31a — this ceremony was a political celebration because the walls stood for security but the affair was religiously oriented as the people recognized God's hand in the work.

Verse 43 — the people celebrated because God had overshadowed them with his presence.

Verses 44-47 — the Temple service was a time of celebration. □ — Phil Lovelace is pastor of First Church, Somerville.

House committee approves gambling commission bill

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives Judiciary Committee has approved a bill to establish a commission to study the impact of gambling in the United States.

The Nov. 8 voice vote by committee members provided a victory in an attempt to form a panel which would compile information on gambling's effects on families, economics, crime, and individuals.

The National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission Act (H.R. 497), would have three members appointed by the president, three by the Senate majority leader, and three by the speaker of the House. Rep. Frank Wolf, R.-Va., chief sponsor of the bill, has said he would like another panel member to be a governor from a state which has legalized gambling.

The House bill has the support of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. □

College prepares gifts for 3,000 prisoners

Baptist Press

ABILENE, Texas — Three thousand Texas prisoners will have a merry Christmas thanks to the Hardin-Simmons University Baptist Student Ministry.

For the second year in a row, the group is sponsoring a university-wide and citywide

drive to make a Christmas bag for each of the inmates of the French Robertson Unit in Abilene.

Items needed for the Christmas bags include 15,000 pieces of individually wrapped hard candy, 3,000 one-half-two-ounce tubes of toothpaste, 3,000 Gospel tracts, and 3,000 zip-lock bags.

"This is an exciting ministry because it gives us a chance to put the Gospel in the hands of 3,000 people," said Palmer McCown, Baptist Student Ministry director at HSU. □

West Virginia Baptists celebrate anniversary

Baptist Press

CEREDO, W. Va. — West Virginia Southern Baptists turned their convention's 25th anniversary into an occasion for missions boldness.

Messengers voted to hike the percentage of their budget devoted to Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program missions and ministries by one-half percent for 1996 and 5.5 percent for 1997. They also participated in a Foreign Mission Board-related "MissionsFest."

"Amazed in His Presence" was the theme for the convention meeting. A new book, *Go Tell It On the Mountain: A History of the First 25 Years of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists*, was released at the convention and a free copy was provided to every church present.

The convention was the first for new executive director, Jere Phillips, former director

of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Missions Department. Regarding the convention's step to increase their national CP giving, Phillips said "this is a bold increase for a small new work state convention, but we believe that we must have a larger world vision..."

Phillips added that he hopes the convention in future years will be able to increase giving even more. Phillips asked for prayer for the convention which has a goal of reaching one million unchurched people in West Virginia through evangelism, church growth, and new church starts. □



PHILLIPS

SBC registration secretary relocates

Baptist Press

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. — Lee Porter, Southern Baptist Convention registration secretary, has moved to Lawrenceville, Ga., from Panama City, Fla.

Porter's new address is 1765 Watercrest, Lawrenceville, GA 30243; telephone, (770) 338-7388.

Porter, a Baptist Sunday School Board retiree and former pastor of Bell Road Church, Nashville, said he and his wife, Pat, a former Tennessee Baptist Convention staffer and convention registration secretary, selected Lawrenceville as a location "in the middle of SBC life."

He said he intends to do interim and supply work in addition to his role as registration secretary, the post he was first elected to in 1977. □

New Mexico Baptists adjust convention dates

Baptist Press

GLORIETA, N.M. — New Mexico Baptists enjoyed a harmonious annual meeting when 400 messengers and 277 guests of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico gathered at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Messengers approved a budget for 1996 anticipating \$2,814,186 in Cooperative Program income from the churches, a reduction of \$109,674, or 3.75 percent from the 1995 budget.

After considerable debate messengers also approved a two-day time frame for future annual meetings. The rationale for the change was it would make it easier for bivocational pastors to attend and would also make it easier for working laypeople to be involved.

Tom Martin, pastor of First Church, Hobbs, was re-elected convention president. □

Arizona Baptists get new executive director

Baptist Press

PHOENIX — Steve Bass has been overwhelmingly approved by Arizona Southern Baptist Convention messengers as the state convention's new executive director-treasurer. The action took place on the opening day of the convention Nov. 14.

Bass, 38, has been a director of missions in Oklahoma since 1992. He recently was honored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as metropolitan director of missions of the year for the western United States.

He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Bass also has Tennessee ties, having earned his doctor of ministry degree from Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville. □

Hawaii Baptists hold first two-day meeting

Baptist Press

HONOLULU — The Hawaii Baptist Convention's 53rd annual meeting, Nov. 9-10, marked a change to a two-day gathering from the traditional

three days.

Paul Kaneshiro, pastor of Pukalani Church, Maui, was elected to a second term as president.

The recommendation to adopt a proposed 1996 convention budget of \$2,353,798 was referred back to the executive board for reconsideration because of the estimated shortfall in Cooperative Program receipts of \$67,000 during the first 10 months of 1995. The executive board will revise the 1996 budget at its January meeting. □

Illinois Baptists miss their executive director

Baptist Press

COLLINSVILLE, Ill. — While more than 900 Illinois Baptists focused on "Starting Something New" during their Nov. 1-3 annual meeting, an undercurrent of concern for Executive Director Gene Wilson permeated the proceedings. Wilson is hospitalized in Springfield, more than two months after suffering a massive brain hemorrhage.

Roger Ellsworth, president of the Illinois Baptist State Association who later was re-elected for another one-year term, gave daily reports on Wilson's condition and when it came to the time Wilson was to have preached, messengers held hands and prayed for him.

One messenger offered a motion to continue to provide full financial support for Wilson during his absence, but withdrew the motion when apprised of insurance and legal difficulties. A later word came that efforts to support Wilson are being explored independently of the IBSA.

In business actions, messengers adopted a 1996 Cooperative Program goal of \$5.4 million, with 59.25 percent remaining in Illinois and 40.75 percent being used to fund Southern Baptist Convention causes, the same percentages used in 1995. □

N.Y. annual meeting focuses on laity

Baptist Press

SOMERSET, N.J. — The 26th annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New York met in early November with the theme of "All God's People on Mission," focusing on the role of all believers being on mission, laity, and clergy. Messengers re-elected Sam Simpson as president and adopted a 1996 budget of \$2,703,243. □

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