

Baptist and Reflector

December 6, 1995

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STATEWIDE EDITION

■ *this
week's
news*

global —

- Southern Baptists send relief aid to Bosnia. — Page 3

national —

- Law passed to protect nation's charities. — Page 2
- SBC Cooperative Program gifts up in November. — Page 3

state —

- Tennessee schools listed on honor roll. — Page 2
- Tennessee Baptists reflect on memories of Herschel Hobbs. — Page 3
- Memphis hospital opens College of Health Sciences. — Page 4
- Two churches observe 150th anniversaries. — Pages 4, 6

MOVING? Cut out and mail address label and new address to *Baptist and Reflector*, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024

Hubbard says evangelism, discipleship are keys

By Wm. Fletcher Allen
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Tennessee Baptists' new president says lost people should be top priority for evangelistic efforts.

Ken Hubbard, pastor of First Church, Smyrna, won the leadership post when messengers met for the TBC's annual session in Chattanooga Nov. 14-15.

In an interview last week, Hubbard said he plans to invest time in learning. "I certainly did not seek the office," he said.

When the TBC Executive Board meets Thursday and Friday, Hubbard says he will listen and learn. "I do know that I am very excited about Vision 2000 [implementation of the recently-approved Long-Range Study Committee recommendations]."

He added that there are yet many things to which he is eager to lend a hand.

He has been pastor of First Church, Smyrna for seven years and believes a growing church is strengthened by "a wholesome balance of discipleship, evangelism, and

pastoral care."

The Lawrence County native says he wants to be a "cheerleader," but hastens to add that Tennessee Baptists "have a good game plan" and he wants to be heavily involved in action.

He believes strongly in the missions partnership concept. "I am impressed with our Tennessee partnerships," he said. He preached in two Canadian churches in early summer and also has preached at the Michigan state Baptist convention.

Hubbard sees those two partnerships and the tie with Poland as a way to "put missions in the hearts of our people." It is a new kind of stimulus, he believes, augmenting what is always done.

"In this way, we become more aware of what we need to do around the world," he adds.

Hubbard and wife Faye were missionaries to Kenya 1969-73. "When church members return from a missions trip, they can share life-changing experiences with others. The church will become more missions-minded."

Hubbard is concerned about plateaued churches. "We must

find ways to help these churches rethink what they are doing," he added.

He said it is alarming that 1.5 million people are in multi-housing areas, with 96 percent unchurched. "There is a great need and the people are hard to reach. There is a cultural gap," he added.

Reaching people is a major concern, Hubbard said.

He is eager to attend his first Executive Board meeting Dec. 7-8, he said.

"Tennessee Baptists need to cultivate a vitality in working religion," he stated. "Churches must have a hunger to touch lives, to present the Gospel in a relevant way, appealing, but not just entertainment," he said. "We must be alive in our



TBC PRESIDENT KEN HUBBARD

services, and we have to overcome our spiritual laziness. We have always grown churches when we have knocked on doors and found the people. We have to show them that we really care for them," he said.

Hubbard is a graduate of Belmont College (second graduating class), and earned his undergraduate and Th. D. degrees at Southwestern Seminary.

— See Hubbard, page 2

1995-96 CP gifts from TBC churches off to great start

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Giving to the Cooperative Program is off to a great start, according to James Porch, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

In November, Tennessee Baptists gave \$2,551,812 through the Cooperative Program, \$975,745 more than the \$1,576,067 that was given last November.

In addition, gifts are \$304,373 above budget needs.

It was one of the best Novembers in recent years for giving, Porch said. "We're off to a grand start and we're very thankful for that," he added. □

Southern Baptist giant Herschel Hobbs dies

Baptist Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — One of Southern Baptists' most beloved and best known figures, Herschel Hobbs, died Nov. 28 in an Oklahoma City hospital. He was 88.

Hobbs was a legend in Southern Baptist life. Pastor, writer, teacher, theologian, and statesman were some of the titles Hobbs earned during a 69-year ministry.

A heart attack was listed as the cause of his death, according to officials at Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City, where he had been hospitalized three times in recent weeks, suffering from congestive heart failure.

Services were held Dec. 2 in Oklahoma City.

Hobbs was first and foremost a pastor, according to his biography, *Herschel H. Hobbs: My Faith and Message*, published in 1993. "If I had 10,000 lives to live, I would want to be

a pastor in every one of them," Hobbs said in his book. He was pastor of First Church, Oklahoma City for 23 years and pastor emeritus since 1973.

But to many he was "Mr. Southern Baptist" because of his leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention as a prolific writer, popular teacher and theologian, and esteemed statesman of the nation's largest evangelical denomination.

A former SBC president, the Alabama native is best known as the chairman of the 24-member committee to draft a statement of Baptist beliefs, known as the 1963 *Baptist Faith and Message*. It remains a foundational guideline of beliefs undergirding the SBC and its agencies.



HOBBS

In 1985, Hobbs was named to the 22-member Peace Committee that studied the SBC doctrinal controversy that erupted in 1979.

He served on numerous SBC boards of trustees and was known by millions of people around the world as the "Baptist Hour" preacher. He preached more than 700 sermons on the Radio and TV Commission-syndicated worship service in a ministry that began with a three-month agreement in 1958 but grew into 20 years.

Southern Baptists sat at his feet for 28 years through a quarterly Sunday School lesson commentary for adult teachers. He was the Baptist Sunday School Board's most prolific writer, writing Bible study textbooks and many other books and articles for the board. He had completed lessons through September 1996, according to board officials. □

Hubbard says evangelism ...

Continued from Page 1
While at Belmont, Hubbard served as pastor of Loretto Church as an 18-year-old. And when he was studying at Southwestern Seminary, he was pastor at Martins Mill Church near Palestine. He later served at Poynor, Texas.

In 1965 he was pastor of First Church, Manchester, until he and his wife were commissioned by the Foreign Mission Board as missionaries.

They served until 1969 in Kenya. He was a field evangelist with 27 churches in his charge until 1973. He also taught at Kenyatta Teachers College in Nairobi.

In 1973 the Hubbards returned to the United States where he resumed the pastoral duties at First Church, Manchester. In 1974 he became pastor of Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga, where he stayed until 1976.

He went to Mt. Olive Church, Knoxville, in 1979 and then to First Church, Smyrna,

where he has been since 1988.

At Smyrna he has seen what he calls an "evangelism explosion." Who would argue?

The church has constantly trained people and the members have become more active as witnesses to their own friends, Hubbard says with a smile. There were 95 baptisms in the latest figures.

"But the youth area is phenomenal," he explains. "They have really turned on to Jesus Christ."

Hubbard says the church had a banquet in January, recognizing the football players of the LaVergne and Smyrna high schools.

With excitement he relates that some of those young men were converted. "Then they began bringing their own friends," Hubbard says, "and about 45 teenagers were saved."

Pat Hood, Smyrna's youth minister, has a full-scale worship service on Wednesday nights for teens. There is also

major emphasis on discipleship at the same time.

The entire 90 minutes appeals to the youth, Hubbard says.

Hubbard's wife, the former Faye Walker, is a native of Milton, in Rutherford County. They met at Belmont College as students.

Their daughter Lisa is married to Bill Crawford, minister of music at Porter Memorial Church, Lexington, Ky. They have three children.

The second daughter, Lana, is married to Ed Webb, an architect in Chicago. She teaches history in high school.

Ken Hubbard, Tennessee Baptists' new president, is eager to work alongside churches and people, he said.

His one-year tenure as the top elected leader really gets underway this week as the Executive Board and its various committees organize.

And, he says, "I am really excited about the opportunities." □

Union trustees slated to vote on new president

Baptist Press

JACKSON — Union University trustees will meet Dec. 8 to vote on a successor for President Hyran Barefoot who will retire May 31, 1996.

The nominee is David C. Dockery, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the theology school at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

A Union spokesman confirmed news reports of Dockery's candidacy, but did not release more details.

Prior to joining the seminary's staff, Dockery, 43, was general editor of the *New American Commentary* series being published by Broadman & Holman, the publishing arm of the Baptist Sunday School Board. □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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Congress passes legislation to protect nation's charities

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House and Senate have resoundingly passed legislation to protect the nation's charities.

In back-to-back votes Nov. 28 and 29, the two houses of Congress passed the Charitable Gift Annuity Antitrust Relief Act of 1995 (H.R. 2525) and the Philanthropy Protection Act of 1995 (H.R. 2519) to clarify federal securities and antitrust laws.

The House passed the gift annuity bill by a vote of 427-11 and was unanimous in its support of the philanthropy act. The Senate passed both bills unanimously. President Bill Clinton is expected to sign them into law this week.

The bills affirm that antitrust and securities laws do not apply to charitable or-

ganizations and donations or gifts made to the charities in the form of charitable gift annuities or charitable trusts.

They were introduced in response to a lawsuit brought in U.S. District Court in Wichita Falls, Texas, demanding that the nation's charities return donations made through charitable gift annuities and charitable trusts and pay triple damages. The suit was certified as a class action in October. Among the defendants were the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Foundation of Texas.

The niece of a Wichita Falls woman filed the lawsuit, challenging a charitable gift annuity between her great aunt and the Lutheran Foundation. The suit contended that because many charities pay the same rate of return on such annuities as suggested by the American Council on

Gift Annuities, they are fixing prices in violation of antitrust laws. She also alleged such donations are forms of investment and should be regulated by securities laws.

Dismissal of the lawsuit will be sought as soon as the bills become law. Gift annuities have been used by the nation's charities and nonprofit organizations, including denominational entities, for more than 100 years. Simply, they offer a vehicle whereby a person can make a gift to a charity, receive credit for it for tax purposes and income from it. At the death of the donor, the residue of the gift goes to the charity.

The antitrust relief act was introduced by Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., while the philanthropy bill was introduced by Rep. Jack Fields of Humble, Texas. □

Tennessee Baptist colleges cited for character development

Baptist Press

RADNOR, Pa. — Three Tennessee Baptist schools are among 16 Southern Baptist colleges and universities elected to the 1995 Templeton Honor Roll for Character Building Colleges, designed to recognize institutions that promote the development of character.

Belmont University, Nashville, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and Union University, Jackson, were among 124 schools in 33 states selected for the honor.

All 16 Baptist schools are members of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

The honor roll serves as a reference list of schools for prospective students, their families and secondary school

guidance counselors, said John M. Templeton Jr., president of the foundation which developed the honor roll.

"The honor roll is based on the principle that character comes from three primary sources: the family, the religious community, and educational institutions," Templeton said. "These colleges are taking the important steps to make character development an integral part of the campus experience for their students."

Honor roll criteria include encouraging students to explore an individual moral reasoning process, fostering positive attitudes and overall well-being, encouraging spiritual growth and moral values, promoting community-building values, and advocating a drug-free lifestyle. □

Daily Partnership Prayer Requests

December

- 6 — Pray for the church in Gdynia, Poland, that is growing so fast they need to build a new chapel.
- 7 — Pray for Charles Nored, Brad Burke, and Kerri Cobb as they prepare physically and spiritually for a student conference in Edmonton, Canada, Dec. 28-31.
- 8 — Pray for the Polish Baptist Union youth committee as they plan for next summer's youth camps.
- 9 — Praise God for those who attended seminars conducted last month by the social ministries team in Poland and that many ministries will be started as a result.
- 10 — Pray for Mark and Susie Edworthy, missionaries to Poland, who are on furlough in Texas.
- 11 — Pray for Dr. Orest Hnidec as he travels to Tennessee Feb. 27, 1996 as a guest of Dr. Dewey Dunn of Nashville, and that his time here will be fruitful and enhance our partnership with Poland.
- 12 — Pray for wisdom for those who are working out details for the relationships between Canada and the new North American Mission and International Mission boards.



Prayer aids Bosnian peace agreement

By Art Toalston
For Baptist Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Untold hours of intense negotiations for a Bosnian peace agreement were quietly buttressed by the prayers of Christians especially in southwestern Ohio, where the talks were taking place at Wright Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton.

One example of the intercession occurred at First Church, Fairborn, the Southern Baptist church nearest the base. At the conclusion of the Sunday morning worship Nov. 19, one of the church's Sunday School teachers went forward to request prayer.

The teacher related that a member of his class involved with the negotiation's logistics had asked the Sunday School class to pray because "something would happen in the next two days or not at all," recounted David Rakes, pastor of

the 2,000-member congregation, a sizable portion of whom are military or civil service personnel at the base.

The teacher felt led to carry the prayer request to the church at large, so the congregation immediately had a time of prayer "that God would honor all those folks coming together" for the negotiations "and bring peace," Rakes said.

On Nov. 21, the presidents of three rival Balkan states — Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia — agreed to make peace, signing an agreement, capping 21 days of negotiations to end, as the *New York Times* put it, "nearly four years of terror and ethnic bloodletting that have left a quarter of a million people dead in the worst war in Europe since World War II."

The agreement calls for 20,000 Americans to be deployed as part of a 60,000-member NATO peacekeeping force in a war-weary land

where more than two million people have been uprooted from their homes — with most of them still refugees.

A deployment of 20,000 military personnel would include 20 to 25 chaplains, said Lew Burnett, director of military chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Three to five of those chaplains could be Southern Baptists, he said.

President Bill Clinton addressed the American people Nov. 27 about reasons for sending U.S. troops to Bosnia.

In his weekly radio address Nov. 25, Clinton said "our values, our interests, and our leadership are at stake" in safeguarding the Bosnian peace agreement.

"The Bosnian people have suffered unspeakable atrocities ...," Clinton said. The agreement is to take effect at a formal signing in Paris in mid-December. □

Southern Baptist relief aid headed to Bosnia, Croatia

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board released \$255,000 for relief to the former Yugoslavia region in late November, including \$120,000 for Bosnia-Herzegovina and \$135,000 for Croatia.

The appropriation to Bosnia is only half of what missionaries in the region actually requested, but the board's human needs office was forced to wait until more funds become available.

Since September 1992, after conflict broke out in the former Yugoslavia, the FMB has allocated nearly \$2 million for refugee relief and hunger relief ministries in the region.

Human need coffers for foreign fields have slid during the past year. Giving is down 15 percent this year from last year during the same period, and projections show that giving this year will equal only three-fourths of that in 1991. The board has only \$1 million left in its hunger funds and \$1.7 million in general relief funds. More than \$1 million in hunger requests are outstanding.

The request for Bosnia calls for missionaries to work with Croatian Baptists to buy and distribute 2,000 two-person food parcels in Sarajevo during a three-month period, and 3,500 parcels for three other areas to be distributed during a six-month period. □

SBC CP, designated gifts show increase

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program gifts for November were up 1.63 over November a year ago while designated gifts were up nearly 40 percent, according to Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president.

CP gifts were \$10,743,955, compared to last year's \$10,571,736. For the first two months of the SBC fiscal year, gifts are 2.67 percent below the same time last year.

Designated gifts for November stood at \$2,506,283, compared to \$1,792,440 in 1994. □

Involves Dickson County student

High court upholds zero grade on 'Life of Christ'

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court has allowed to stand an appeals court ruling upholding a Tennessee junior high teacher's refusal to accept a research paper on the life of Jesus.

The decision, a Southern Baptist church-state specialist stated, is a misinterpretation of the First Amendment and demonstrates why a constitutional amendment to protect religious expression is needed.

In *Settle v. Dickson County School Board*, a teacher refused to grant permission for a paper titled, "The Life of

Jesus Christ," and gave a grade of zero to Britney Settle. Subjects approved by the teacher included spiritualism, reincarnation, and magic religions.

The teacher in the central Tennessee county gave several reasons for rejecting the paper, including saying, "the law says we are not to deal with religious issues in the classroom."

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals held all of the teacher's reasons fell "within the broad leeway of teachers to determine the nature of the curriculum and the grades to be awarded to students, even the reasons that may be mistaken."

The Supreme Court announced Nov.

27 it would not grant a review of the appeal court's opinion.

"Miss Settle gets high marks from us for opposing religious discrimination," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the SBC Christian Life Commission.

"A failing grade should go to the court system which failed to protect her from religious discrimination.

"Lawyers and judges failed to interpret the First Amendment in a manner to protect her right to free expression about religious ideas and historical subject matter

"The life of Christ is history," Whitehead said. □

Tennessee Baptists recall life of Herschel Hobbs

Compiled from reports

NASHVILLE — Herschel Hobbs' death Nov. 28 is a great loss to Southern Baptists, numerous friends agreed. Hobbs had many friends in Tennessee who mourned his death and spoke of their memories.

Hobbs was a longtime friend of James L. Sullivan, retired Baptist Sunday School Board president and member of First Church, Nashville.

"Herschel Hobbs and I have referred to ourselves as 'the gold dust twins,' who were inseparable," Sullivan said. "This was not only because of our close and enduring friendship and associations, but also because we were both reared in the same geographical area, studied under the same professors, and saw nearly everything alike when issues arose

concerning theology or denominational loyalty. Our associations were many, and our affections for each other remained deep."

Another peer and good friend, H. Franklin Paschall, retired pastor of First Church, Nashville, said Hobbs' leadership (in the denomination) will be sorely missed.

"He was one of the outstanding Baptist leaders of all time," Paschall said. "He served his day and generation well, his writings are a fitting memorial," Paschall said, adding that Hobbs was a great "Baptist statesman."

BSSB President Jimmy Draper, a member of Two Rivers Church, Nashville, said, "Dr. Hobbs was the Sunday School Board's most prolific writer."

Hobbs spent a lifetime

telling people about Jesus.

Bob Norman, pastor of Clearview Church, Franklin, recalled his first encounter with the Christian Gospel occurred when he skated into a Baptist church in Birmingham, Ala., to get a drink of water. He was stopped by a large man in a black suit with a booming voice who asked him, "Son, do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior?"

Norman, whose family did not attend church, became a Christian in high school and only later learned the man he encountered by the drinking fountain was Hobbs.

Hobbs spoke this summer at Union Avenue Church, Memphis. "His love for our Lord and his church ... are ideals we should all emulate," said Pastor L. Joseph Rosas III. □



Trustee orientation

Retired Baptist Sunday School Board President James L. Sullivan, left, visits with new Executive Board members, Jane Hardaway, center, Germantown Church, Germantown, and Brian Courtney, pastor of First Church, Sneedville. Sullivan was one of several speakers during a trustee orientation held Nov. 28 at the Baptist Center in Brentwood. Other speakers included W.L. Childs, Tennessee Baptist Foundation; Herbert Gabhart, chancellor, Belmont University; and Randle Davis, TBC attorney.

Baptist Memorial starts new College of Health Sciences

For Baptist and Reflector

MEMPHIS — Rose Temple was inaugurated recently as president of Baptist Memorial Health Care System's new College of Health Sciences.

Baptist Memorial College of Health Sciences combines the former School of Nursing with Baptist Memorial's radiological sciences and respiratory care programs. The School of Nursing has offered a three-year diploma program since 1912, and the radiological and respiratory programs were one- or two-year programs.

The new college will continue the heritage and tradition of Baptist Memorial by offering four-year baccalaureate degrees in nursing, respiratory care technology, and radiological sciences for beginning students, and completion degree programs for professionals already in the health care fields.

The college is located adjacent to Baptist Memorial Medical Center in Memphis. Baptist Memorial is affiliated with the state Baptist conventions of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

Emphasis for the college, according to Charles Baker, system executive vice president of Baptist

Memorial, is to prepare students for "radically redefined health care delivery system of the 21st century." It will be built on the foundation of established commitment that Baptist Memorial has made to Christian education since 1912, he said.

Temple is former administrative dean of educational programs at Baptist Memorial.

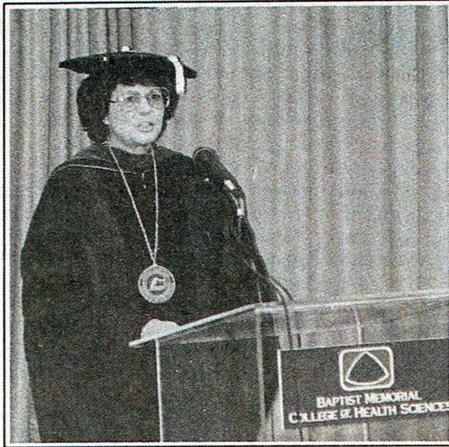
New programs, studies, and schedules will be added in coming months to replace what is offered currently. Already boasting a total of 251 students who enrolled in August, additional students are being accepted for general studies in January next year.

The college's curriculum is designed so that incoming students will spend the first two years in general studies such as English, algebra, microcomputer applications, research and statistics, health and society, philosophy, chemistry, psychology, ethics, health-care economics, and communication skills. Then they will branch out into major areas of study.

The college is housed on the site of the old School of Nursing. Plans call for the 10-story nursing building to be demolished late next year.

William H. Preston Jr., board chairman for BM-CHS, said, "I think this is where our strength will be,

and the role our college should take. It is a unique opportunity. The people we educate here are going to be



ROSE TEMPLE, president of the new health sciences college, believes in service and scholarship linked with the Bible.

It is going to be the most effective mission we have.

— William H. Preston Jr., board chairman for BM-CHS

sought after and exert tremendous influence by their attitude. It is going to be the most effective mission we have; certainly one of the most far reaching."

Creation of the college was based on a study that analyzed health care trends and how education can respond to those trends, college leaders say.

Paul H. Barkley, who writes Family Matters weekly for the *Baptist and Reflector*, is assistant professor of psychology and supervisor for student services for the new college. □

Deadline nears for letters about memories of Christmas

The deadline for receiving letters about memories of Christmas is Dec. 13.

Letters from readers about this special time are encouraged by the *Baptist and Reflector* staff. "If you have a special memory about Christmas, please share it with our readers," says Editor Wm. Fletcher Allen.

Allen said Tennessee Baptists have opinions and memories about Christmas which would interest other readers. They will be printed in the Dec. 20 issue. □

Raleigh Brady retires after nearly 43 years as director of missions in associations

For Baptist and Reflector

The biggest changes are going to come, said Raleigh Brady concerning the work he has given his life to — associational missions.

Brady is retiring Dec. 31 after serving almost 43 years as a director of missions — 41 of those years in Tennessee. He's also served as a pastor, but Brady accepted the role of being a pastor to other pastors, and a resource to churches — his view of the associational director.

The usually plegmatic Brady speaks with passion as he predicts possible changes for associational missions. Brady observed the associa-

tion must change to respond to changes in society.

People hold less denominational and church loyalty, he said. They may be harder to reach because they are constantly entertained by society. Thus, new methods will be needed to "stimulate an enthusiasm" for missions and training, he said.

Discipleship Training, in whatever form, he said, is the greatest need that Baptists aren't meeting, said Brady. And Brotherhood — missions education and opportunity for men and boys — may need adjustments to fit society's needs.

His greatest joy has come from leading Baptists in missions work, he said. Brady served in Clinton Association for 14 years, Central Association for six years, and Bradley Association for 20 years. Prior to his work in Tennessee, he served an association in Kentucky, was a pastor in Massachusetts and Kentucky, and was a summer missionary.

He has seen associational teams go to Mexico, Africa, Romania, and the Ukraine. He also has led Baptists in Clinton Association to build a lodge at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Assembly, and groups to begin weekday ministries in Briceville and Cleveland. Those ministries developed into the Friendship Center in

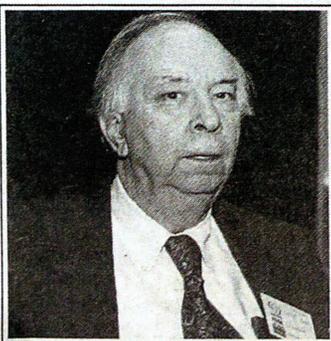
Briceville and the Blythe Avenue Center in Cleveland.

Another pleasure of his work has been working with church leaders and ministers, he said, but especially pastors, who he has tried to serve in the role of a pastors' pastor. In addition to relating individually, Brady has led groups of pastors to meet together and has developed discussion groups for them.

Changes in associational work also are needed because the denomination is not the same one in which he began service, said Brady, and the churches are not the same churches. "Everything's been changing rapidly in the last 30 years.

"Churches don't receive the respect at large that they received," he added. "The church has enemies today that it hasn't had."

Brady also commented on work within the denomination. "We need to give attention to our relationships with each other and recognize that each has his own opinions and feelings. We need to accept each other even though we may not agree on every detail of everything. And we need to find ways to work together in proclaiming the Gospel to every person, regardless of who he is or his station in life," he stated. □ — Connie Davis



RALEIGH BRADY

Mountain City church observes 150th year

For Baptist and Reflector

MOUNTAIN CITY — Pleasant Grove Church here recently celebrated its 150th anniversary.

Earl Neatherly, who began attending the church when he was just four years old in 1923, and who served on the church's history committee, reports he remembers walking two miles to the church on the railroad tracks to keep out of the muddy road. His research revealed the ecumenical congregation was begun during a meeting at a public school by four black and seven white people. That same year, 1845, the church joined Holston Association and sent two members as delegates to its meeting. The church became exclusively Baptist in 1873.

Pleasant Grove Church has begun other churches, including Friendship Church in 1855; a church near Shouns Crossroad begun in 1871 by the black members; one near Roan Creek Academy; Walnut Grove Church; and Nelson Chapel Church. In 1868, the church helped form Watauga Association.

The celebration included a message by David Miller, former pastor who is a retired missionary to Brazil, and the presentation of a certificate by Bob Polk, director of missions, Watauga Association.

"We are truly thankful to the Lord that this church has been allowed to grow and prosper through the years," said Neatherly. □

He was a giant; and Christ's love consumed him

It is not often that an individual is universally called a giant. But Herschel Hobbs walked tall enough in Baptist circles, in evangelical circles, to be called a giant.

We are tempted to say that when the master Bible expositor died last week he left a void among us.

No. He did not. For his legacy is strong enough, big enough, to last as long as there is a Southern Baptist Convention — or a Southern Baptist church anywhere on earth. Herschel Hobbs will be with us always.

What Baptist church is there without a class that uses Dr. Hobbs' Sunday School material to enhance other literature? His name is almost as familiar as the word "baptist."

He was a giant, and the love of Christ consumed him.

He was many things to many people, but to state Baptist newspapers, he was a friend. He probably knew each of us by first name, and never failed to greet an editor in passing and say a kind and invigorating word.

He believed in the role of the Baptist papers and the work of the people who are responsible for the constant struggling with decisions, deadlines, and critics. He believed in the distinct necessity of an informed people.

Most of all, Dr. Hobbs believed in the Word of God as the absolute authority in every phase of daily life. It was his road map — and he wanted others to have the same blessings.

While he may be best remembered as

a SBC president, leader of the reaffirmed Baptist Faith and Message, and a working member of the Peace Committee, it was his work with God's Word that makes him a giant in Baptist life.

He was a prolific writer — of books, lesson commentaries, letters, and articles about Baptist beliefs and Bible truths.

H. Franklin Paschall, former pastor of First Church, Nashville, captured his biography in this succinct statement, "Dr. Herschel H. Hobbs was a multi-faceted man of God of world renown, pastor, preacher, teacher, scholar, interpreter, author, statesman, authentic Baptist, and my devoted and helpful friend."

This is all true, and the high praises offered from across the Baptist world also are true.

But to this editor, and perhaps others called wordsmiths, Herschel Hobbs was a special man because his humility far outweighed his well-deserved accolades.

He never seemed too busy to discuss mutual interests with us. Whether passing in a meeting hall or engaged with some of the "greats," Dr. Hobbs would pause and give us undivided attention. We were on equal ground.

Not only did he possess total recall of Scripture passages, he knew our names, our faces, and the names of the papers which carried our meager scratchings.

He was ever the affirmer, the encourager. He promoted constantly a bright future for Southern Baptists, and was

the eternal optimist. He honestly believed that eventually our wounds would be healed and we would be family again.

When we last saw him at the Southern Baptist Convention, he looked frail, but nonetheless hailed this old friend and talked about things that Christ would do again.

All of him was totally emerged in God's world of lost people, God's work, and God's Word.

A legend is already growing. On the night before his death, it is said, Dr. Hobbs called his editor, "just to check on the status of my Sunday School lesson commentary" which was underway.

The tattered letters from him, and even the envelopes, are prized possessions. You see, they are in his own handwriting, beautifully formed with meaning and the words came from a giant.

To say that his commentaries for Sunday School are classics is certainly to understate the equation. More than that, they have been for many years a necessary tool to add more flesh to almost any lesson outline.

Filled with logical and sometimes poignant examples of the Word in our lives, his writings reached the common man, the ordinary student, the learned scholar. Yes, he was a giant.

But he left so much of himself in the many chapters of Baptist life that it is almost trite to say he will be missed.

Yes, Herschel the man will be missed, but Herschel the Baptist is still among us. He always will be among us. □

■ one word more

By Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

Sweet innocence

There is something about the Christmas season that speaks of innocence.

There is another feeling about Christmas that wants us to get into the season before we think it is the appropriate time.

We may feel as though time itself ought to stop, allow us to take a long respite, and then resume after observing the grand equation of God and man equals Christ.

I suppose there is a need for the respite.

But in truth, Christ was born, he later told us, not to heal those who need no physician, but to give health to the sick.

For those who are blind, he came to give sight — and not to those who can see.

He came, I now understand, into a wicked world, a world turned topsy-turvy, a world where honor is given to the dishonorable and might makes right. I am reminded each Christmas season that, "Long lay the world in sin and error pining — 'til he appeared, and the soul felt its worth."

On the anthem rings, telling us, "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!" And yes, gladly we would fall on our knees.

I realize then that the sweet innocence that we long for, can indeed be ours. Truly Christmas means that if it means anything.

The sins of the soul may be as dark and bottomless as the greatest black hole perceived by astronomers. Men with finite minds would say that sin is not real and that Christ offers nothing special, that he is merely a huckster setting out to bilk people of their minds and money.

Not so. The sweet innocence that we owned as babes can be ours again. The Christ of Christmas came as a babe in sweet innocence. He lived as a man in complete innocence.

Carrying the burden of all sin he became sin.

But he offers, as Savior Lord, the transforming power that can return that sweet innocence to every weary heart.

Ah yes, the sweet innocence of Christmas beckons us. ☺



ALLEN

By Wm. Fletcher Allen,
editor

Rejoicing and regretting at Christmas

The angels' announcement to the shepherds concerning the Savior's birth gave them reason to rejoice.

That same event would later cause great regret to mothers of sons killed by Herod. As we enter the Christmas season, there are traditions and family rituals that conjure up memories of great joy and gladness.

There are also incidences and crises that elicit regrets.

The Christmas season continues to produce these seemingly contradictory responses in many families.

This is one of the most happy and joyful seasons of the year for families who are looking forward to enjoying the fellowship and togetherness which this season occasions.

And others find this to be one of the most lonely and forsaken times of the year because they don't have anyone to share it with.

I affirm the joy and happiness of enjoying this season of the year. I am reminded that

■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor and professor

this does not happen accidentally. Even in the midst of the hectic schedules in which most of us live, we must plan in order to chisel out time to enjoy with the family.

It is important for each of us to make the effort that it takes to be with family and friends at this joyful time of the year.

The joy of the season is often lost under the tyranny of trying to make all the "parties" and find all the right gifts. Don't let the season rob you of the season.

Set aside time in advance for the family and make sure no one or nothing is allowed to rob you of the joyous memories that are made at this time of the year.

There are those who do not have family with them. They either live away from their families and cannot afford to travel home or beloved family members are no longer here

this Christmas.

Both cases require special efforts to make sure that this is a season of rejoicing instead of regretting.

If you cannot be with your family in person this Christmas, maybe you can be there by phone.

What about making a video for that loved one who will not be able to be home for the holiday and sending it to them so that they can enjoy it?

Be sure to be positive and share things that the person will enjoy and that will not just make them more homesick.

For those who have experienced the death of a dear loved one since last Christmas, you need to acknowledge openly that this will be a difficult Christmas.

It can, however, be a Christmas of rejoicing instead of regretting as long as you focus on the positive memories that you have of that loved one and on the loved ones that you still have around you. □

■ just for today

By Fred Wood
pastor emeritus
Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile

First-time astronaut to captain: "Why can't we go directly to the sun instead of the moon or Mars?" Captain: "Because if we got within 10 million miles of the sun we'd burn up!" Astronaut: "Why not go at night?"

Take this truth

We can be wrong millions of ways, but we can be right only one way. Robert Frost said, concerning the two roads, "I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference."

Memorize this Scripture

"Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 14).

Pray this prayer

Lord, help me to follow Christ unreservedly and enthusiastically. □

Smithwood Church observes sesquicentennial

For Baptist and Reflector

KNOXVILLE — Services at Smithwood Church were suspended at one time so the church's building could be used for sleeping quarters for Civil War soldiers.

This fact and others were learned by those attending the recent 150th anniversary observance. Participants learned that early baptisms took place in Fountain City Lake. The

property of the church, known as Smith's Woods, was donated by John Smith, who had purchased it from an early pioneer. The land was a 1778 land grant to the original owner. The site includes a cemetery where both Smith and his wife are buried.

The church's present auditorium, known for its classic beauty, reported Chris Alford, minister of music to the *Baptist and Reflector*, was built in

1916. The 800-member congregation has made additions to its campus until 1959.

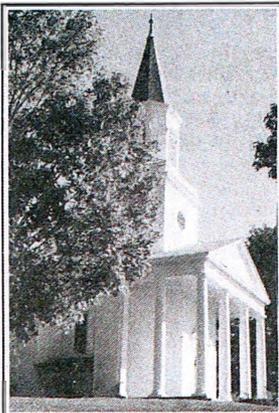
The church began Greenway Church in Knoxville in 1948.

During the two-day festivities, the history was presented through a display, commemorative items, a 20-minute documentary film, and

guests. Former pastors were special guests. They included Erwin W. Cook, pastor, Albert Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala., who served from 1973-90; Ralph L. Murray of the Nashville area, who served from 1948-69; and James W. Abernathy of Indianapolis, Ind., 1969-72. □



SPECIAL GUESTS at the celebration of Smithwood Church pose with C. Glenn Sullivan, left, pastor, and include, from left, Erwin W. Cook, Ralph L. Murray, and James W. Abernathy.



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University Position

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Nashville hospital foundation meets

NASHVILLE — The Baptist Hospital Foundation of Nashville elected Scott Jenkins of Gallatin, chairman; James W. Owen Jr., a pastor in Cross Plains, vice chairman; and L. Bracey Campbell III of Brentwood, secretary-treasurer.

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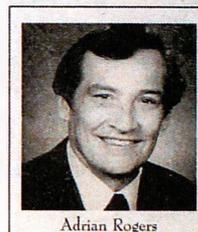
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Focal Passages:
John 6:29-40**

Sustainer with us

By Charles Parker

Someone has pointed out that while Christmas dinners and desserts make the holiday season memorable and special, the true meaning of Christmas is found in "bread," specifically in Jesus, the bread of life. Jesus didn't come to earth to give us a holiday; he came to give us life. We have a hunger that is more than physical, a spiritual hunger that can only be satisfied by Jesus. We can be sustained by Jesus Christ alone.

Many times I can almost "taste" Christmas. I have some favorite and memorable treats and so do you. But the real "flavor" of Christmas is summed up in Jesus' great word: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (v. 35). Christmas for me found its deepest meaning one January, several years ago, when I accepted Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior.

Spiritual hunger — vv. 29-31

John 6 contains two miracles, but most of the dialogue in the later part of the chapter relates to the feeding of the 5,000 (the only miracle told about in all four Gospels). This event did much for Jesus' popularity, having convinced some of his followers that he was an earthly king who would meet their physical needs. Jesus resisted their attempt to crown him king (v. 15), and he called upon them to labor for spiritual food (v. 27). As devoted law-keepers, some of them wanted to know what work they might do to get this food (v. 28). Jesus pointed them to faith, not a new work, but they quickly moved to a desire for another miracle that would dazzle and satisfy them (vv. 29-31). How hungry they really were, but they didn't even know it!

Spiritual provision — vv. 32-34

Jesus' Jewish questioners would have settled for manna from the sky like Moses gave. But Moses had not been the source of bread; he only announced what God was doing. The manna was not true heavenly bread. Jesus is "the true bread from heaven." Jesus wanted to go beyond Moses to satisfy their true hungers. They needed abundant life, not just a series of free meals. Jesus offered them himself. How often are we satisfied by the gift, when we really need the Giver?

Spiritual satisfaction — vv. 35-36

To come to Jesus is not a physical coming, which the crowd had already done, but a spiritual coming, a belief. Only that sort of coming can bring lasting, living satisfaction. How sad that standing right in front of this Jewish crowd was the answer to their deepest needs, but most of them would reject him. This Christmas many of our contemporaries will be happy to take the tinsel and trappings of the season, but they will reject the Christ of Christmas. Missionaries to Japan tell us that we Americans have been successful in exporting Santa Claus, trees, and gift-giving to that largely unevangelized country, but the people think it is just American fun like rock-n-roll or a soft drink. They overlook the Savior, for whom it is all about.

Spiritual security — vv. 37-40

All who come to Jesus in faith are secure in him. In verse 37 Jesus uses a strong double negative. In Greek this is grammatically acceptable. Literally, "I will not never cast out." We might say, "no way I'll never throw you out!" Seeing Jesus, eternal life, and resurrection are shown to go hand in hand. It is good to be reminded at Christmas that the Gospel message is complete, from birth to resurrection. Christmas is also about Easter. □ — Charles Parker is pastor of First Church, Jacksboro.

A time of encouragement

By Kim Allen

People of faith are not immune from despair and doubt. The last part of Isaiah deals with several of these passages where despair and doubt are handled by words of encouragement.

There are three strophes in this passage, each of which begins with the command to harken or to listen.

Deals with their heritage and hope — vv. 1-3

(1) Verse 1 deals with God's people being told to pursue righteousness and to seek God. The word harken in verses 1, 4, and 7, remind the people they must be willing to listen to God.

The word follow means more than follow him half-way but to pursue fully. Most people of any generation are not pursuing righteousness or seeking God with all their heart.

God brings to remembrance of who we are and whose we are with the words, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn."

(2) Remember your heritage of faith (v. 2). Remember is a big word, a command to recall how God had earlier led men of faith. People of faith in all generations are children of Abraham, therefore no matter how bleak times are, his faith should inspire us to trust and obey God.

(3) Be encouraged by God's promises (v. 3). Verse 2 said look back, now verse 3 says look to the future, and in doing so, find comfort and encouragement in the present. God told them that he was going to turn their wilderness into a new Garden of Eden.

The words joy and gladness, often found together in the Old Testament, normally indicated future bliss of God's people. At other times it described the present experience of people walking in faith with him.

**Convention Uniform Series
for December 10
Focal Passages:
Isaiah 51:1-6**

Bright hope — vv. 4-6

(1) A hope for all people (vv. 4-5). We see in verses 4 and 5 the maintaining of the future look of verse 3. Although the Old Testament people of God were receiving these

promises; they included people of other nations who would come to believe. At the end of verse 5, God says people in distant islands were waiting for his salvation.

Today many still have not heard and are still waiting for the message unto salvation.

(2) Eternal hope (v. 6). Verse 6 sets the stage for the announcement of the new heaven and the new earth. Although to us there seems to be a performance to the universe and we accept that all plants, animals, and humans shall die, the concept that the heavens and earth shall pass away astounds us.

The Bible reminds us that this is not true. Nothing is said here in chapter 51 about a new heaven and a new earth, only the end of the present. However, later in Isaiah 65-66 there is that promise made.

Fear not — vv. 7-8

(1) Human reproaches (v. 7). This begins the third strophe describing God's people enduring persecution. Although their tormentors are not named, they are probably understood to be Babylonians. Israel is exhorted not to fear the reproach of men or to be dismayed in their revilings. Even today people are ridiculed for their faith and sometimes fail to remember they have nothing to fear.

(2) The end of the ungodly (v. 8). Verse 8 deals with those who fight God and persecute God's people. They soon perish. What is now seen is that the salvation of God is the only enduring reality in a world soon to perish. □ — Kim Allen is pastor of Little West Fork Church, Clarksville.

From commoner to Queen

By Phil Lovelace

**Bible Book Series for December 10
Focal Passages: Esther 1:10-12;
2:1-2, 4-7, 16-17**

The book

The events recorded in Esther take place between Ezra 6 and 7. The "third year of Ahasuerus" (ch. 1:3) would be the year 483 B.C. "Ahasuerus" is the title of the Persian ruler, just as Pharaoh was the title of the Egyptian ruler.

The theme

"Esther" means "star"; Hadassah, her Jewish name, means "Myrtle" (ch. 2:7). Esther tells how the Jewish nation was rescued from extinction. It explains the origin of one of the nation's most festive holidays — the Feast of Purim. The word Purim means "lots", and refers to the casting of lots by Haman to determine the day of the slaughter of the Jews (ch. 9:26-31; 3:7). Purim is held the 14th and 15th days of the last month of the Jewish calendar (our Feb-March). It is usually preceded by a fast on the 13th day in memory of Esther's fast (ch. 4:16).

The spiritual lesson

In Esther, we see once again Satan's hatred for the Jews. Had Haman succeeded in his plot, the Jewish nation would have been exterminated. Any man or nation that has sought to wipe out the Jews has failed, as did Haman.

Ahasuerus the King — ch. 1

As mentioned in the introduction, "Ahasuerus" was the title of the Persian ruler; his name was Xerxes,

and he ruled from 486-465 B.C. History tells us that he was an impulsive ruler, and we can see this in the Book of Esther. Note how quickly the king gave great authority to Haman and then forgot what his decree involved! Note, too, how impulsively he put away his lovely wife, and then later regretted it.

The banquet — vv. 10-12

This royal affair was for the purpose of conferring with his chiefs and leaders in preparation for his war against Greece. Anxious to please his guests, Xerxes asked the queen to come to the men's banquet; but Vashti refused. The name "Vashti" means beautiful woman. No doubt, Vashti knew the king and his guests were under the influence of wine and that her appearance would only create further disturbance.

The banishment — ch. 2:1-2, 4

The king was stunned by Vashti's public refusal to cater to his whims. He turned to his wise men for counsel. These men advised him to depose of Vashti and make her a public example to the entire nation.

Esther the queen — vv. 4-7, 16-17

Between chapters 1 and 2, at least four years pass, during which Xerxes went on his disastrous Greek

campaign (481-479). He came home a bitter man, and it was only natural that he should seek some kind of comfort in his own home. He remembered that Vashti had been dethroned and he was without a queen. Of course, he had many women available in his harem, but he missed his beautiful queen. The counselors advised him to seek another queen. They knew if Vashti got back on the throne, they would be punished! Thus began the great search for the ideal queen, and this is where Esther comes in.

Esther, after a year of special preparation (v. 12) was presented to the king — and chosen! Verse 15 says that "she required nothing;" that is, she did not decorate herself with gaudy jewels as did the other women. She depended upon her beauty and her character, see I Peter 3:3-4. Esther was made queen in 479 and a great feast was held in her honor.

Conclusion

From a commoner to a queen — God can always take "nothing and make something of it" — as he did with Esther. His divine plan is always at work with his willing people. □ — Phil Lovelace is pastor of First Church, Somerville.

■ the people

■ **Narrow Valley Church**, Rutledge, ordained **Randall West**, **Roger Blanken**, and **Roger Phelps** as deacons Dec. 3.

■ **Alexandra R. Brown** of the Department of Religion at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Va., and a former member of First Church, Erwin, has published *The Cross and Human Transformation* by Fortress Press.

■ **First Church, Cookeville**, has licensed **Scott Caldwell**, a student at the University of Tennessee, to the ministry.

■ **First Church, Adamsville**, licensed **Sammie Smith** to the ministry Nov. 19.

■ **Robert E. Holt III** was ordained Nov. 5 by Shady Grove Church, Tellico Plains, as a deacon.

■ the leaders

■ **Gayland Heights Church**, Knoxville, has called **Troy Cody** as interim pastor.

■ **Susan Warren**, preschool director, Temple Church, Memphis, has received the Special Citation Diploma for completing 85 courses or about 425 hours in the Church Study Course Program of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

■ **Litz Manor Church**, Kingsport, has called **Edwin V. Talley** of Parkway Church, Lexington, Ky., as pastor, which was effective Nov. 19.

■ **Paul Clark**, minister of

music, **First Church, Jackson**, has worked in the Dominican Republic with **Joe and Terri Metts**, missionaries.

■ **First Church, Franklin**, has called **Kent Williams** of Texas as minister of students, effective Nov. 15.

■ **First Church, Whitwell**, has called **Tony DeYoung** as pastor.

■ **Stephen Hodges** has resigned as pastor of **Grassy Valley Church, Knoxville**.

■ **Rocky Hill Church, Knoxville**, has called **Paul Byrd** as minister to students, effective Dec. 26.

■ **Silver Point Church, Silver Point**, has called **Chuck Olson** as interim pastor.

■ **John A. Blevins** has been called as pastor of **First Church, Gainesboro**.

■ **Calvin Metcalf**, pastor, **Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville**, celebrated his 20th anniversary on the staff Nov. 26.

■ the churches

■ **West Jackson Church, Jackson**, has held a Christmas march for missions which involved placing gifts for the Christian Care Center of the church and money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions at the altar of the church.

■ **Monte Vista Church, Maryville**, is collecting coats and Christmas gifts for children to support its missions efforts in Pippa Passes, Ky.

■ The new piano of **Sharon Church, Knoxville**,

was dedicated Nov. 19, followed by a recital by **Dora Love**, church pianist.

■ The youth at **First Church, Old Hickory**, will deliver Christmas cards to raise money for a needy family.

■ **Antioch Church, Vonore**, is building a fellowship hall.

■ The Student Ministry at **Hermitage Hills Church, Nashville**, will hold a Christmas party for disadvantaged children through a community aid organization Dec. 7.

■ **Victory Church, Madisonville**, has added four new classrooms, new pews, and carpet to its campus. The church remains debt-free.

■ On Nov. 5 **Bluegrass Church, Hendersonville**, heard a report from **Betsy Wedekind** and **Jennie Boehmer** about their work in Japan. The church has a 12 year relationship with the city of Tsuru. That relationship has resulted in a partnership with **Fujiyoshida Baptist Church** there from 1996 to 2,000 A.D. The Hendersonville church has a Japanese congregation.

■ **South Gate Church, Antioch**, has sent coats, sweaters, and blankets to former Eastern Bloc countries through the organization, "The Voice of the Martyrs," in **Bartlesville, Okla.**

■ **First Church, Clarksville**, will host **David Thompson**, former pro-basketball all-star with the **Charlotte Hornets**, to conduct a clinic and rally for children, parents, and coaches Dec. 12.

■ **Southeast Church**,



LEADERS OF McMinn-Meigs Association pausing during its Oct. 23-24 meeting are, from left, **Huel Hooker**, pastor, **Clearwater Church, Athens**, moderator; **Oran Creasman**, pastor, **Eastanallee Church, Riceville**, vice moderator; **Carlos Peterson**, pastor, **First Church, Athens**, outgoing moderator; and **Roy Fowler**, director of missions.

Murfreesboro, will hold its 14th annual "Bethlehem Marketplace" Dec. 9-10. The walk-through drama runs from 1-6 p.m. each day and is free.

■ **Raleigh Church, Memphis**, burned a note Dec. 3 to designate the debt-free status of its sanctuary renovation.

■ **Central Church, Hix-**

son, held a tour of homes to raise money for the **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions**.

■ **West Hills Church, Knoxville**, will hold for the 27th year a Christmas party for about 100 children from **Western Heights Baptist Center** in Knoxville Dec. 7.



LEADERS OF PINEY GROVE CHURCH, Midtown, receive a certificate commemorating the 75th anniversary of the church Nov. 19 from **Bill Bargiol**, director of missions, **Big Emory Association**. The leaders are **Lula Bell Robinson**, center, church clerk, and **M.P. Hastings**, chairman of deacons.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

Remembering Rabin

By **Marvin Cameron**, pastor **West Hills Church, Knoxville**

Recently I saw some of my pictures from my trip to Israel and they brought back memories. They were memories of a wonderful trip to Israel in March. There were memories of looking in airports in America, France, and Israel for TVs to see the NCAA basketball tournament. There were other memories of a spectacular boat ride on the Sea of Galilee on a breathtaking morning. My mind went back to a camel ride in Jericho and a brief dip in the Dead Sea. I remember vividly the first glimpse of Jerusalem from a hotel balcony, a sight I hope to never forget.

All those pictures came rushing back in my mind on a day when the Prime Minister of Israel was murdered. The killer said that God made him do it. I remembered walking with **Bob Bruer** by the Prime Minister's residence in Je-

rusalem. We could almost see in the house one night when Vice President **Gore** was there visiting. I remembered the placards I saw which said, "Pray for the peace of Israel." All those images were brought back to mind as I watched those pictures from a beautiful, strife-ridden nation.

Finally some words of Jesus came to mind. As he entered that same city on a hill he said, "Jerusalem, if you only knew the things that make for peace."

You and I know the things that make for peace. Those pictures reminded me how far we are from it. This week, will you be a peacemaker? □

Lesson from Toy Store

By **Terry G. Carver**, pastor **Edgefield Church, Nashville**

At the **Nashville Baptist Association's** annual **Toy Store**, newly-purchased gifts are distributed to needy

families. These new toys are donated by hundreds of Baptists through their churches. I am glad that **Edgefield** participates in such a wonderful ministry. Last year over 1,200 families and over 3,500 children were served. The **Toy Store** is staffed by over 100 volunteers.

I greatly enjoyed serving as a counselor and being able to share the Gospel with some of the adults who came through the **Toy Store**. All the counselors together reported 61 professions of faith. It is good that God can use us to meet the physical and spiritual needs of so many.

As I began counseling with these individuals, God gave me an obvious illustration to use to make the Gospel clear to them. The people who came to the **Toy Store** had a great need that they themselves could not meet. The only way it could be met is if someone with the resources would be willing to meet their need for them. Fortunately, there were hundreds of loving people who purchased for them what they

could not buy themselves, and offered it to them free of charge. They only had to ask for it.

We all are needy people with the greatest of needs — salvation from our sins. We ourselves cannot meet this need for we do not have the resources. Fortunately, there was a loving person who could and did meet our need by giving of himself. God purchased our salvation with the blood of his own Son, **Jesus Christ**. Now he offers freely the gift of salvation to all who will believe in **Christ**. All we have to do is ask for it. □

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