

Baptist and Reflector

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STATEWIDE EDITION

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

Storms dump up to three feet of snow

Churches give shelter, sustain damage

For Baptist and Reflector

Last week residents of northeastern Tennessee enjoyed electricity after power was restored to homes, sent their children back to school, and saw the ground for the first time since Jan. 6 after two snow falls.

About 5,000 Kingsport residents endured freezing temperatures without electricity, some for as long as six days, after the first storm dropped 14-16 inches of snow. To help those affected, First Church, Kingsport, opened its facilities and served as a Red Cross Shelter for 62 people Jan. 8-10. Church activities were canceled Jan. 7.

Red Cross volunteers were assisted by members of First Church, who stopped by to visit with those sheltered. Members also helped take people to their homes to check on them.

Frank Hawkins, pastor, First Church, said the custodians of the church responded in the early hours of Jan. 8 to open the church and did most of the work to make the facilities available.

When visiting the shelter he found children working on their homework, said Hawkins, since they were missing school. It was good to see the church being used in such a practical way, he said.

Colonial Heights Church, Kingsport, was on standby as a Red Cross Shelter to help residents and travelers since it is located near Interstate 81. Both churches have previous arrangements

with the relief organization.

Colonial Heights was damaged by the storm. The damage was done to a building which houses about a third of the church's educational space, reported Jim Royston, pastor. He assumed ice and snow blocked gutters which trapped what was melting on the roof. The roof, gutters, and ceilings on two floors were damaged. A cost estimate had not been made by the church's insurance company.

Further east in Watauga and Holston associations, no other churches reported damage and no residents suffered from lack of electricity, but the area was the hardest hit by the snowfall. Three feet fell in some areas.

Although most churches canceled all activities Jan. 7 when the snow was deepest, Roan Creek Church, Mountain City, did not. Most people in the area have four-wheel-drive vehicles, explained Dennis Wilson, pastor.

"It was a good morning for a four-wheelin' day," quipped Wilson. Even some of those vehicles, though, needed a push out of the church parking lot.

His philosophy is most folks get out to buy bread and milk, so they can exercise their faithfulness to church if it's safe. The response by Roan Creek members showed that faithfulness, Wilson said, which he appreciated.

To make good use of their efforts to make it to church, members called elderly members not in attendance to check on

them, reported Wilson. They followed up on needs by shoveling out driveways and helping in other ways.

Also meeting on that inclement day was Grace Church, Elizabethton, which is just 30 miles away. The church has a tradition of holding activities despite the weather. The 54-year tradition has continued throughout the church's history, explained Bill Green, associate pastor. Both morning services were held, drawing about 60 to the 11 a.m. service. A combined Sunday School was the only concession made concerning morning activities.

The tradition doesn't encourage anyone to take risks, said Green, because the church has many members who live within walking distance. Grace also is located on level ground, which allows easier access, he added.

In addition to efforts of individual members to help those stranded, about 10 church members participate in the Meals-on-Wheels government program hosted by Grace, said Green. Deliveries weren't made several days, but participants were called and asked to use a meal previously delivered to provide for such a situation.

Another casualty of the storms in Sullivan Association was reported in addition to the lack of electricity and the damage. For the first time in Sullivan Association's 18-year history, an executive committee meeting was canceled, said Rosalynn Gray, office worker. It was scheduled for Jan. 8. □ — Connie Davis

Appointment for missionaries set

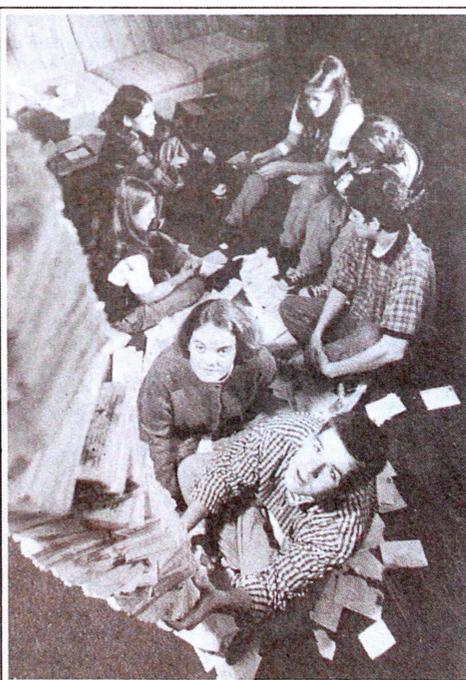
For Baptist and Reflector

KNOXVILLE — Thirty-one new missionaries — five with Tennessee connections — will be appointed to mission work around the world during a Feb. 13 service at Wallace Memorial Church in Knoxville.

The missionary appointment service of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will be held at 7 p.m. at the church.

The event will feature a colorful parade of flags representing some of the 131 countries where more than 4,100 FMB missionaries work. Featured speakers will be Jerry Rankin, FMB president, and Avery Willis, the board's senior vice president for overseas operations.

The board's trustees will be meeting Feb. 12-14 in Knoxville at the church and a local hotel. □



'Thru the Roof'

Members of the youth group at First Church, Conyers, Ga., open and stack 'True Love Waits' cards mailed in from around the world. The Georgia church is serving as collection site for the cards which will be stacked from the floor and 'Thru the Roof' of Atlanta's 27-story Georgia Dome Feb. 11 during Atlanta '96 Youth Ministry National Conference 5. The 'Thru the Roof' celebration will include music and testimonies from teenagers who have taken the 'True Love Waits' pledge to be sexually abstinent until marriage. As of December, more than 27,000 cards from all 50 states and more than 50 foreign countries had been received at the church. All cards for the Atlanta display should be mailed by Feb. 1 to 'True Love Waits,' 958 Milstead Ave., Conyers, Ga., 30207. Teens who signed cards for the Washington, D.C., event should re-sign cards and mail to the same address. Celebration tickets are \$13 each and should be ordered from the BSSB, MSN 152, 127 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37234-0152. — Photo by Jim Veneman

Baptist deacons — servants or business managers?

By Dwayne Hastings
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — In more than a handful of Baptist churches, the "board of deacons" seems to "rule the roost" at business meetings, exercising great authority in the midst of congregation rule.

"What this means is that all the recommendations of the church have to come back through (the deacons) before they go to the congregation," said Robert Sheffield, deacon ministry consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board. "They basically are the financial managers of the church. Out of 40,000 churches, it's hard to know how many are still operating like that, but there are thousands."

Ironically, this managerial mode insures the church will not grow, says Gary L. McIntosh, an associate professor at the Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, Calif. Rather than developing a "culture of service" and meeting people's needs, the church's strategies become "technical, intellectual, and sterile: they do not appeal

to the heart of the issue — sacrificial service," McIntosh writes in his book, *The Exodus Principle*, published last year by the BSSB's Broadman & Holman publishing arm.

On the other hand, McIntosh notes the deacon model found in Acts 6 is based on service. When the seven original deacons accepted their ministry, four church goals were met: Conflict was settled, the apostles were freed to focus on prayer and preaching, those in need were served, and many were saved (Acts 6:7).

And the core of church growth is spiritual, not technical, says McIntosh. "All experience shows that even a superbly organized and planned ministry will eventually fail without the active care, love, and service of people toward others."

William Bell Jr., dean of Dallas Baptist University's college of Christian faith, observes: "There is absolutely nothing in the New Testament to indicate that the deacons were ever to have anything other than a servant capacity. The deacons were to serve the elders or pastors. They were

to have no ruling function whatsoever.

The selection of deacons for their business acumen or popularity is a "perversion" of the early church's model," Bell says. "It is an honor to be a deacon ... but it isn't something which is given to all worthy and mature Christians just in recognition of their service. We don't have honorary Sunday School teachers. We don't have honorary janitors. We don't have honorary choir members.

"If a need exists, then let's appoint some people to meet it; if a need doesn't exist, then don't appoint them. I am thoroughly convinced that most Baptist churches have too many deacons," Bell says.

The BSSB's Sheffield suggests the Southern Baptist "board of deacons" is a tradition developed outside of scriptural truth. "We as Southern Baptists sometimes lapse into our traditions without checking them by Scripture.

"The Scriptures are to inform our traditions, not our traditions interpreting Scripture for us." □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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Nobles admits to theft at MC

Baptist Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Former Mississippi College President Lewis Nobles pleaded guilty Jan. 17 to two counts of mail fraud, two counts of income tax evasion, and one count of money laundering to conceal theft of donations to the Baptist-affiliated college.

U.S. Attorney Brad Pigott for the Southern District of Mississippi, in a Jan. 17 news release, stated, "In pleading guilty, Nobles admitted that continually during a period of more than 16 years, he devised and perpetrated a scheme to

defraud Mississippi College of money which private donors had intended to go to the benefit of the college and its students."

In exchange for Nobles' plea, federal prosecutors agreed to drop 15 charges, including additional counts of mail fraud, money laundering and tax evasion, and Mann Act allegations that Nobles transported women across state lines to perform unlawful sex acts.

As part of his plea, Nobles agreed to turn over four parcels of land and stocks to the college. □

At Dyersburg State

Kennedy to lead student ministries

For Baptist and Reflector

DYERSBURG — John Alexander Kennedy of Katy, Texas, began work Jan. 8 as full-time director of student ministries at Dyersburg State Community College.



KENNEDY

He previously was prayer ministry director and youth associate at

Kingsland Church, Katy.

He also has served churches in North Carolina and Virginia.

Kennedy will direct the Baptist Student Union program at DSCC, supervise volunteer directors at two satellite campuses, and assist Dyer Association in its youth ministry.

Kennedy and his wife, Christy, are both graduates of the University of North Carolina. They have two children, Joy Nicole and Zachary Bartley. □

Wilson County Baptists honor retiring director of missions

For Baptist and Reflector

LEBANON — Wilson County Baptists honored their retiring director of missions and his wife at a reception Jan. 21 at the association office.

Robert D. Agee will retire Jan. 31 after 15 years of service as Wilson County Association

director of missions.

With his leadership the association moved from temporary housing to a new modern association building in Lebanon.

A native of Hickman County, Agee is a graduate of Belmont University, Nashville, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist

Theological Seminary.

Agee surrendered to the Gospel ministry in 1955 and was ordained by Hickman Church in 1956.

He has served these TBC churches as pastor: Dillard's Creek, Chestnut Mound; Smith Fork, Statesville; Prosperity, Auburntown; Calvary,

Brownsville; and Gladeville, Gladeville. He also served as chaplain for Brushy Mountain Prison, Petros and associate pastor, Immanuel Church, Lebanon.

The Agees have three grown children — David, Denise, and Miriam — and five grandchildren. □



ROBERT AND MARIE AGEE received several gifts at the reception. Here, they open a present from association secretary Peggy Tramel.



PLANNING THE RETIREMENT reception for Robert and Marie Agee, right, were, from left, Albert Jewell, retired pastor, Saulsbury Church; Kenneth Griffin, pastor, Barton's Creek Church; and Anita Cunningham, LaGuardo Church.

FBC Atlanta unanimously elects Dwight Reighard

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — First Church, Atlanta, members voted unanimously Jan. 14 to call Dwight "Ike" Reighard as senior associate pastor.

Reighard will be the primary preacher for First Church's northeast Atlanta site, where leaders hope to bring the two worship groups together in one site.

Senior Pastor Charles Stanley continues to preach to those attending the Midtown location, which is for sale.

Reighard has served since 1978 as pastor of New Hope Church, Fayetteville, Ga. That

church has grown to more than 5,000 members.

Before the vote, Stanley called Reighard "the right man for this position." Stanley praised Reighard as a godly man, a good preacher, a pastor respected by his peers, and as an inerrantist in his views on the Bible.

Reighard will fill the pulpit vacated by Stanley's son, Andy, who resigned in the wake of divorce proceedings between his parents. The divorce suit, filed by his mother, Anna, is scheduled for a court date later this month. Charles Stanley's attorneys have asked for a jury trial. □

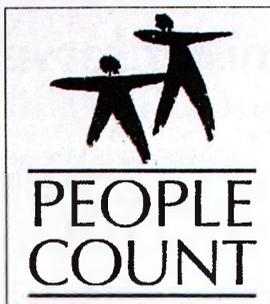
'People Count' is 1996 theme for home missions

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — With an emphasis on chaplaincy and home missionaries, "People Count" is the theme of this year's season of home missions.

The season, from mid-February to mid-March, includes the Week of Prayer for Home Missions (March 3-10), a home missions study (Feb. 18-21), a Home Missions Day in Sunday School (March 10), and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

Woman's Missionary Union has adopted a \$42 million goal for the 1996 offering. Last year, the offering



raised a record \$38.9 million. Tennessee Baptists have an Annie Armstrong goal of \$3,250,000.

The home mission study will focus on chaplains, who are endorsed by the HMB Chaplains Commission. With

the title "Going Where Others Cannot Go," the study showcases ministries chaplains can accomplish often better than a traditional church congregation, said Joe Westbury, coordinator for the study.

"I learned that chaplains are in a lot more places than I'd imagined," he said. "I didn't realize there are a tremendous number of chaplains serving in business and industry."

One Tennessean will be featured among the missionaries who will be profiled during the Week of Prayer for Home Missions — Richard Lee, an African American church starter in Jackson. □

Restructuring won't derail SBC stewardship, leaders say

By Keith Hinson
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — The excellence of stewardship education resources in the Southern Baptist Convention can continue — especially if national SBC leaders maintain and strengthen ties with state stewardship leaders, according to Ronald E. Chandler, president of the SBC Stewardship Commission and officials who work in stewardship education for state Baptist conventions.

State convention stewardship offices are "our strong partner," Chandler said. "We couldn't do it without them. They're a lot closer to the churches than we are."

"The responsibility they have is going to be even more important. Our depending on them is going to be stronger even than it is now. I don't think you can do it from a national office without the help of the state conventions," Chandler stated.

Under a restructuring plan adopted last summer by messengers to the SBC annual meeting, 19 SBC agencies will be reduced to 12.

One of the agencies eliminated will be the Stewardship Commission and its duties will be moved elsewhere. The SBC Executive Committee will assume responsibility nationally for promoting the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state conventions and, nationally and globally, the SBC.

Meanwhile, the Baptist Sunday School Board will receive the responsibility for church-based stewardship education, Chandler said. "How they're going to handle it at this point has not been determined. I'm sure they'll handle it well."

Harrell Cushing, director of stewardship and Cooperative Program promotion for the Alabama Baptist State Convention, was asked what the role of state conventions is likely to be in the restructured SBC.

"It's too early to know a definitive answer to that," Cushing said. "At this point in time, we are trying to have input with the Sunday School Board that we could have materials provided that meet our needs and the

church's needs."

BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. noted the board intends to be in sync with Baptist stewardship leaders and their needs.

"We intend to put our full energies behind a strong continuation of stewardship education," Draper said. "We expect to give the widest distribution of stewardship topics through the more than 90 million pieces of church literature we distribute annually as well as through separate stewardship-related items."

"We will work closely with the SBC Stewardship Commission and with state stewardship leaders to assure a smooth transition," Draper continued.

"We recognize that stewardship education in the denomination will be most effective as we work in partnership with our state conventions. We will be initiating efforts in this process if by-laws to implement the Program and Structure Study Committee recommendations are approved at the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention."

A partnership in stewardship education between the BSSB and state con-

ventions is essential because of competition from para-church organizations and other "delivery systems" of stewardship education, said Clarence E. Hackett, director of the stewardship department for the Florida Baptist Convention.

"I think the (BSSB) must work with state conventions because of the competitors and the competition that's really out there," Hackett said. "I think there needs to be in stewardship education a strong cooperative effort with the leadership of the state conventions. ... We've got to walk together in this effort."

The content of stewardship materials will be a key to success, Hackett suggested.

He said the BSSB "will need to integrate the concept of stewardship in the context of discipleship and worship in all their materials and products, rather than just isolated as a once-a-year event."

Hackett said Baptists must be led to see stewardship "as a matter of our faith, not just as a crisis of economics. It must be a Spirit-led approach." □

HMB abortion alternatives office gaining recognition, Boothe says

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Established eight years ago, the Home Mission Board's alternatives to abortion office offers resources and training to Southern Baptists interested in offering crisis pregnancy counseling.

Director Sylvia Boothe said the office has gained recognition, and work, as more people learn her office is available to help churches and associations respond to crisis pregnancies. "I think there's more awareness as we go along that there's some-

thing positive that we can do for these young women," she said.

The alternatives to abortion office offers 18-hour training sessions for churches and Baptist associations starting crisis pregnancy centers. Boothe also leads 12-hour conferences on other forms of ministries for crisis pregnancies. "The cry of people wanting to do something is coming from the pew and the local pastors," she said.

More information is available from the alternatives to abortion office at (800) 962-0851. □

WMU executive board reduces funding from HMB

Baptist Press

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Woman's Missionary Union will assume the financial responsibility for its work with language groups, relinquishing approximately \$195,000 in revenue from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

WMU's executive board, meeting Jan. 13-17 at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly, approved the recommendation from its finance committee that WMU fulfill a 1993 agreement with the HMB which called for WMU to reduce the funding it received from the HMB by the year 2000.

In 1993, WMU received approximately \$378,000 from the

HMB for its work among ethnic and African American congregations. WMU has reduced that amount drastically since. The WMU's latest action assimilates all costs related to the two areas of work.

During his report to the WMU executive board Jan. 15, HMB President Larry Lewis expressed appreciation for the board's action, saying the move would "free up additional money for work on the field."

WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien described the board's decision as a "step forward" in WMU's language work, saying it was an acknowledgement of "our responsibility to develop quality programming and materials that

meet the needs of Southern Baptists' language congregations."

O'Brien said WMU is "grateful for the partnership we have had with the Home Mission Board in the establishment of WMU work among the various language groups."

"While finances no longer dictate our working together, it is our desire that we continue to cooperate in these efforts. Joint planning and mutual support between WMU and the Home Mission Board will ensure our ongoing cooperation for the cause of missions."

The funding decision ends a financial relationship that was established in 1971 between the two entities. □

Clarksville minister serves as inspiration to church, community

For Baptist and Reflector

CLARKSVILLE — By most anyone's definition, Claude Weatherford is an extraordinary individual.

Born with no use of his legs and unable to get a formal education because of very poor eyesight, Weatherford has refused to let his handicaps keep him from serving the Lord.

Weatherford was born two months premature almost 68 years ago in Clarksville. Delivered by his grandmother, Weatherford recounts his family paid little attention to him after birth because they did not expect him to live because he weighed only two pounds.

"God never ceased nor does he ever cease to care for me. He definitely had a plan for my life," Weatherford says now.

Weatherford has had to overcome numerous handicaps. He has no use of his legs or feet. He was born with an eye problem that caused him to drop out of school after the first grade because doctors told his parents he would go blind

if he attempted to learn to read.

Not being able to walk, he got around by crawling until he was nine years old. Being reared in a rural community, there were no local facilities to help him with his problems.

When he was eight years old, he was sent to Nashville hospitals where he spent 13 months. After two operations and numerous physical therapy sessions, it was determined his problems stemmed from his premature birth and that he would never develop fully.

Weatherford returned home where he began to develop skills he did have such as an exceptionally good memory which he used to memorize most of the New Testament through the use of tapes and a strong voice which enables him to preach and testify without the use of microphones.

Weatherford felt the call to ministry at the age of 19 but many people discouraged him because he could not read or write in addition to his physical disabilities.



CLAUDE WEATHERFORD

Nevertheless, at the age of 20, he was licensed to preach. "At first I thought my only ministry would be to compose poetry and songs for the Lord's work. But soon I discovered that was not enough."

The turning point came when he heard a preacher remark, "What you have plus God is enough."

After surrendering to preach he was worried because he could not read the Bible but he soon learned he could get the Bible on records and cas-

sette tapes. With those he memorized the Scriptures.

Through the years he has preached and given his testimony in churches throughout Cumberland Association, said Director of Missions Wesley Pitts.

A long-time member of Mt. Hermon Church, Clarksville, Weatherford is associate pastor and on occasion still preaches even though he will be 68 years old on Jan. 28.

"He has been a source of inspiration to many people over the years," says Mt. Hermon Pastor George H. Cline.

"Claude has always believed God has had a hand in his life and has helped him overcome severe disabilities since birth for a purpose — possibly for inspiration to others who might be feeling overwhelmed with their own life's challenges.

Dot Gibbs, a member of Mt. Hermon, agreed that Weather-

ford's attitude and perseverance are an encouragement to others.

"It takes a lot of effort for him just to come to church," she remarked.

The church recently honored Weatherford by naming the median adult Sunday School class after him.

One of Weatherford's poems, "My Life's Ambition," best sums up his ministry.

"The greatest ambition I have in life is to do my best for Jesus Christ. To seek out those in a lost condition and lead them to Christ. That's my ambition. To sow good seeds along life's way; to try and brighten someone's day. To tell them that God's grace is sufficient to bring them peace and joy. That's my ambition.

"To help those who have fallen along life's way; To search for sheep who've gone astray. And if in life these goals I can achieve, deep in my heart I sincerely believe that when I close my earthly mission I can say: I reached my life's ambition." □

Tennessee churches celebrate milestone anniversaries in 1996

For Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Station Camp Church in Cottontown leads a large group of Tennessee Baptist churches that will be celebrating milestone anniversaries in 1996.

A list of churches with major anniversaries has been compiled by the Public Relations Office of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Station Camp in Bledsoe Association will be observing its 200th anniversary this year.

Three churches will celebrate 175 years of service — First Church, Lebanon; New Blackwell Church, Rut-

ledge; and Powder Springs Church, Powder Springs.

Eleven churches will be observing their sesquicentennial — Big Emory Church, Harriman; Chapel Hill Church, Milan; Clinch River Church, Sneedville; Friendship Church, Beech Bluff; New Hope Church, Readyville;

New Hope Church, Hermitage; First Church, Oliver Springs; Pinson Church, Pinson; Prospect Church, Hollow Rock; Union Church, Wartburg; and Woodlawn Church, Brownsville.

Sixteen churches in the state will observe 125 years of ministry — Barren Fork Church, McMinnville; Brown Springs Church, Mosheim; Caney Ford

Church, Harriman; Center Hill Church, Counce; Chinquapin Grove Church, Bluff City;

First Church, Coolidge; Cottonport Church, Decatur; Harmony Church, Elizabethton; Liberty Hill Church, Bybee; First Church, Maryville; Pine Springs Church, Greeneville;

Salem Church, Greenback; Sharon Church, Powell; Sycamore Church, Readyville; Union Church, Hampton; and Wildersville Church, Wildersville.

The largest number of churches — 20 — will reach their centennial year in 1996 — Adriel Church, Bean Station; Barfield Church, Murfreesboro; Beech Grove Church, Dyersburg; Beulah

Church, Kingsport; First Church, Camden; Cash Point Church, Ardmore;

Clear Springs Church, Mascot; First Church, Lawrenceburg; Luray Church, Luray; Lutts Church, Lutts; Mount Horeb Church, Ethridge; Mount View Church, Antioch;

New Hope Church, Fayetteville; Oak Grove Church, Flintville; First Church, Obion; First Church, Petros; First Church, Pulaski; Saint Clair Church, Spring City; West Point Church, West Point; and Zion Church, Elizabethton.

Tennessee Baptist churches celebrating anniversaries are encouraged to let the *Baptist and Reflector* know dates and times of celebrations. □

Lenoir City church leads Lights for Life Motorcade

For Baptist and Reflector

LENOIR CITY — Highland Park Church in Loudon County Association co-hosted the annual Lights for Life Motorcade, sponsored by the Lenoir City chapter of Remove Intoxicated Drivers (RID).

Each December RID schedules events to draw attention to National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. A strong focus is made on victims, survivors, and their families.

RID co-hosts the event with local churches in an attempt to generate public perception of alcohol and its impact on lives.

Pastor Tony Collins of Highland Park said the church had

a special service with prayer for victims and their families. He also preached a message about the evils of alcohol in society.

After the service between 50-60 vehicles participated in the motorcade, Collins estimated.

Bobby Hamilton, a Loudon County D.A.R.E. officer led the motorcade as the cars drove from the church, located on Highway 11, with headlights on through downtown.

"The purpose of the motorcade is to involve individuals in driving with their headlights on to express their concern about the tragedy of drinking drivers and to express sympathy to those whose

lives have been forever changed," said Caye Freels, president of the Loudon County RID chapter and a member of Calvary Church, Lenoir City.

"Those unable to attend are encouraged to drive with their headlights on that day to show support," added Freels, who has been a victim of drunk driving.

The motorcade has been an annual event since 1986, and it has grown each year, she said.

Collins said the event has helped his congregation become more aware of the evils of alcohol and introduced ways they can be involved in social issues. □

Daily Partnership Prayer Requests

January

- 24 — Pray for the beginning of a new Hmong work in Pontiac, Mich.
- 25 — Pray for the Baptist church in Szcztyno, Poland, as they begin renovations at the church.
- 26 — Pray for medical volunteers to serve in Poland this summer.
- 27 — Pray for the Poland seminary as needed repairs are made.
- 28 — Pray for missionaries Mark and Tatianna McNiel who have begun a new work in Bialystok, Poland.
- 29 — Pray for someone who can lead youth work at Victory Church in Portage, Mich.
- 30 — Pray for Jess Fairbanks, language director, who leaves Michigan to go to the Home Mission Board March 1.
- 31 — Pray for the beginning of a Hispanic work in Niles, Mich.

TENNESSEE BAPTIST PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS



CANADA • MICHIGAN • POLAND

Language abuse measures nation's culture

■ one
word more
By Wm. Fletcher Allen
editor

Rhett Butler (*Gone With the Wind*) would be embarrassed today if he could hear profane talk show hosts and others who use gutter words to communicate. We've been going downhill for years and Rhett's single profanity seems tame.

The theme of George Bush several years ago was about a "kinder and gentler" nation. It did not catch on, and it wasn't his fault. In fact, the drive toward coarseness continues unabated.

As a result, family life has been altered drastically for many. This is not to say that churches have failed and that Christians need to accept defeat. Not at all. But we have problems that degrade families, and our language is slipping. Quality of language is vital to culture because it is one way we communicate and express views.

But it is true that millions of Americans apparently accept the trend to a coarser culture. Often Christians contribute to the problem.

But we can make a difference, simply (1) by not participating, (2) by explaining why we don't, and (3) by pressuring the media to help stop it. The situation is moving from critical to deplorable.

A major concern for Christians in general and for Tennessee Baptists in particular is - what kind of nation do we want?

Do we want a coarse and vulgar culture that places little value on the stability of family life? Do we want to continue rushing toward moral decay?

Some would say that coarse language

and vulgar actions harm only those who have that lifestyle. That's not true.

As the trend toward coarseness and vulgarity continues, our culture plunges to the pits. Rap talk and contrived slang butcher a beautiful language.

A major network news program recently examined the prevalence of profane and obscene language among teenaged American students.

Students who were interviewed shrugged off their nasty talk as inconsequential, and as having little effect on morality. They laughed, saying vulgar words "are meaningless, harmless." Amazingly, the reporter said he agreed! He and the parents of a nine-year-old spoofed the boy's profanity.

Look at a similar problem. Movies and television programming have no shame in stuffing profanity and vulgarity into most of what they present as "family" oriented.

Shades of nudity, sexual misconduct, and violence do not deter the media. The sad part of this is when Christians, even though they usually know about the content, still approve by watching.

Right about here, some readers are going to express righteous indignation. However, no matter how strong the argument that "I'm not going to do these things so it doesn't harm me," Romans 12:9 says to shun evil and cling to good.

When Christians permit and participate, we know something has gone awry.

By Wm.
Fletcher
Allen,
editor

Extra and ordinary

The news of heavenly discoveries far beyond imagination had hardly been broken when additional word comes that is equally astounding.

Before Christmas we saw photo images produced from data collected by the amazing Hubble Space Telescope.

Scientists said then that we were seeing stars being born some 5,000 years before the birth of Christ. So far away was this birth event in the Eagle Nebula, they said, that



ALLEN

some of those same stars are already dead.

The location in God's heavenly space is 42,000 trillion miles from our galaxy, the Milky Way.

Would you like to see it firsthand, up close?

And now, the Hubble has photographed, using 10-day time exposures, "the faintest stars and galaxies ever seen," some four billion times dimmer than what is visible to the naked eye.

A leading scientist says most of the galaxies have never been seen before.

Those who doubt the existence of God are being exposed almost daily to more and more conclusive evidence of the Creator's life and handiwork.

However, even more conclusive than the Hubble discoveries, are just two phrases uttered by God himself: "Let there be light," (and there was light), and "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them I Am sent you."

Our God is an awesome God. His power and imagination stretches beyond Creation. His love demanded that he send his only Son to Earth, even Jesus the Christ, to get into the business of saving souls. Through his life, suffering, death, resurrection, he paid our ransom.

But it is just as extraordinary that he gives us responsibility to exceed with ministry anything accomplished elsewhere in his creation.

I can visit a sick friend, affirm a homeless stranger, comfort a distressed child, give hope to a wayward youth, give love and a saving witness to all with whom I cross lives.

I can help recoup a lost world, praise God for bluebirds, butterflies, honeybees, rain, sunshine, and a baby's smile. That's the wonder!

Three Ms of goal-setting

■ just
for today

By Fred Wood
pastor emeritus
Eudora Church, Memphis

■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor and professor

We have been thinking about moving into the new year with a sense of purpose for the family.

Many families find it difficult to set goals and reach them. A basic problem is the method used in determining the goals.

Whether one is attempting to take off a few pounds, quit a bad habit, or grow to new heights in a chosen area, a plan is a vital component for success of the process.

To simplify the process I use a plan I call the three Ms of goal setting. A good goal should be measurable, makeable, and meaningful.

First, all good goals are measurable. The family must know whether they reached the goal. If they did not, it is helpful to know how close they came to it. To know this the goal must be quantified in a descriptive way.

Some families simply may want to spend more quality family time together this year.

This sounds great, but there is no way to become accountable for that broad a goal.

Five minutes calmly discussing what kind of pizza to order could conceivably allow a family who has not gotten along last year to meet this

goal for the year.

Good goals have time limits, descriptive amounts and defined quantitative limits. A family that sets a goal to save more money this year might want to state that goal by saying, "We want to have \$1,000 in our savings account at our bank by Sept. 1, 1996."

By making it measurable, the family will not only know whether they make the goal, they will know how they are progressing toward the goal along the way.

Good goals are also makeable. (For English teachers such as my wife, I know this is not a real word). Some think that for a goal to be worthwhile it must be out of sight.

Many families set themselves up for failure by setting grandiose and unrealistically high goals.

The family alluded to earlier who had not gotten along at all last year does not need to

set a goal for this year that they will all sit down to dinner table each night and "make nice" with each other without any bickering.

A more realistic goal might be that they would monthly at least plan and enjoy a family outing that would include at least five out of six family members for at least a period of three hours. It is also measurable.

The limits for makeable goals will be different for each family in each situation.

Finally, good goals are meaningful. For it to be a good goal for the family, the entire family must have ownership.

The old TV show was called "Father Knows Best," but that may not always be true. □



BARKLEY

You're special to us

To the staff of the *Baptist and Reflector*, every church in the Tennessee Baptist Convention is special.

For the new year, our plan is 96 in '96. You're involved.

Our goal is to provide news and help for as many churches as possible. This includes you.

Read more about it in next week's edition. □

Start with a smile

Oscar married Millie and lived with her happily for 20 years. She died, and he married Tillie, living happily with her for 20 years. She died. He buried her in the same plot with Millie, leaving room for his own body. On his deathbed he told his family, "I loved both those women equally. Bury me exactly half way between them." He paused reflectively, "Maybe you should tilt me toward Tillie."

Take this truth

To play favorites is not a wise approach to life. When we serve as leaders, we need to avoid preference to anyone. It is difficult, but important.

Memorize this Scripture

"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism" (James 2:1).

Pray this prayer

Lord, help me to recognize that in God's work we are all equal. When Christ died for all, he made it that way. □

Older Christians give more

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Older Christians are more likely to be faithful in financial giving than younger Christians, according to Ronald E. Chandler, president of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission.

"The older people are still giving generously, regularly, and respecting the biblical teachings of tithing," said Chandler, who suggested the failure of younger adults to give generously is not entirely their fault.

"I wouldn't put the blame on the people as much as leadership," Chandler told Baptist Press. "I've been in this work for over 20 years. The leadership is afraid to talk about money, and the Bible says a great deal about it."

Several state stewardship directors largely agreed with Chandler's assessment.

"The bulk of giving stewardship in the churches is from people above age 50," said Rod Wiltrout, director of stewardship for the California Southern Baptist Convention. "Those who were raised in the Depression were also raised in the church. Boomers as a whole have not committed to stewardship in the sense of tithing."

"A lot of them left the church in the '60s, and they were never trained in the area of stewardship," Wiltrout said.

It should be noted some younger adults tithe and give faithfully, said Harrell

Cushing, director of stewardship and Cooperative Program promotion for the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

"I'm hearing all along that the boomers and young (people) are not as faithful, not as consistent in their giving," Cushing said. "We ought also to say that there are exceptions to that. We don't want to paint them all with the same brush."

A variety of factors may explain the lesser giving of younger adults to the church, stewardship officials said.

One such factor is the American desire to gain more and more possessions, noted Clarence E. Hackett, director of the stewardship department of the Florida Baptist Convention.

Hackett said he is convinced materialism is a factor in Florida.

He also suggested younger adults are largely ignoring the long-term effects of buying on credit. "They somehow have been taught that there are no real consequences of debt in their lives. They don't seem to worry about that. They want everything. They want instant gratification. They want it now," he stated.

When families plan consumer spending and borrowing, they don't always include giving to the church in their calculations, said Ty Salter, director of church services and

business support for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

A key to success in educating young adults in stewardship, Chandler said, is to ensure that preaching and teaching is rooted in Scripture.

"I think if we talk to them biblically, they'll listen, and they will respond," he said. "Preach and teach the biblical message. People respond to the Bible. They don't respond to manipulation."

Christian money management courses and seminars also can benefit young adults, Chandler said. "They need to learn how to manage their money better and postpone some of their wants that they think are needs. ..."

Stewardship education should emphasize the connectedness between worship and financial giving, Cushing said. In the Old Testament and the New Testament, "worship and giving were almost synonymous," he noted.

A remedy for future generations is early childhood training in stewardship, Salter said.

"Parents don't educate their kids about tithing. ... The parents should be teaching them stewardship," he said, suggesting they let children learn by tithing 10 percent of their allowance. □

If you've got a name, you can be a prospect

Baptist Press

MODESTO, Calif. — What's in a name? A prospect and a soul, according to the San Diego Southern Baptist Association.

The association gathered the names of more than 3,500 prospects during an area fair last summer by offering free name certificates.

The computer-generated certificates, suitable for framing, are imprinted with the individual's name, the literal meaning of the name, and a biblical character quality associated with that meaning.

The evangelism tool was featured during the 1995 California Southern Baptist Con-

vention annual meeting.

And now, the "What's in your Name?" computer program is available at no charge in a Word for Windows (c) format in the California library of the SBCNet state convention forum.

"It's a great witnessing tool because of the follow-up by local churches," said James Scott, director of evangelism for the San Diego association.

In San Diego, churches followed up by delivering free Bibles to those who expressed an interest. Scott said church members are eager to follow-up because prospects already are expecting a call from the church. □

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Tuesday, Jan. 30 — 7 p.m.

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**Life and Work Series
for January 28
Focal Passage: Matthew
5:21-26**

Maintaining good relationships

By Charles Parker

Anger and other destructive behaviors can destroy a relationship between people. Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that a kingdom person strives to overcome anger and be reconciled to others. This is an especially pertinent lesson, because many Christians have a pressing problem with anger.

Anger can destroy our heavenly prospects — vv. 21-23

We do not get to heaven by just not murdering someone. What is in the heart? Jesus goes below the surface to our real relationships to God and to others.

All anger is dangerous, but not all anger is sin. Not all anger leads to outward murder. While the present participle in verse 22, "is angry," may be translated "nurses anger," "harbors malice," or "continues to be angry," Jesus does warn about its results. Jesus himself became angry but acted responsibly. He was not guilty of an occasional fit of temper.

In contrast to Jesus, many murderers have testified: "I just lost my head." Their explosive anger became habitual, and the result was disaster and danger. Jesus' words influenced Paul's warning in Ephesians 4:26, where he quoted Psalm 4:4: "Be angry and sin not," or "be angry, but do not sin."

Taken to extremes, anger — even in the heart — can create hell within. Many unsaved people will never accept Christ because of hatred for relatives or grudges against friends. Prejudice (hatred of a group) keeps others from accepting Christ. To the Pharisees of Jesus' day, he declared that one may not be accepted by God just because he had never murdered someone else or been convicted. Although they thought they were righteous, they might excuse use of "Raca," an untranslatable term of contempt, or "fool," which attacked both intellect and character.

Anger can destroy worship — vv. 23-24

We worship God rightly only when our relationships are unbroken. If guilty of anger, a person often tries religion. But mere religious practice does not mean God is pleased with our behavior. He sees within the heart and will not tolerate a coverup. Clarence Jordan used to say that God won't let you cry on his shoulder if you're at fault.

Worship may be heaven on earth, but our angry behavior can undercut it. Jesus cites the example of sacrifice to show that reconciliation is more important than making an offering. Jesus urges his followers to do whatever is necessary to heal a broken relationship, then return to worship. The best commentary on this passage is Matthew 18.

Anger can destroy us — vv. 25-26

Jesus uses another example from the legal system of his day to emphasize the effort that we should make to resolve differences. He compares the destructiveness of imprisonment for debt to the destructiveness of a person's life by enmity nourished by anger. Booker T. Washington said, "I will allow no man to drag me so low as to make me hate him." The luxury of anger is one we cannot afford. It eats us up.

The alternative is to keep our relationships ever reconciled. Perhaps even as important is the effort, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to build healthy relationships before they deteriorate. The love of the kingdom person is to act before he has to react. □ — Charles Parker is pastor of First Church, Jacksboro.

The servant's victory

By Kim Allen

**Convention Uniform Series
for January 28
Focal Passages:
Isaiah 53:1-6, 10-11**

This passage in Isaiah is the most familiar of the servant passages. Most of these verses are quoted in the New Testament. An example was the Ethiopian Eunuch's reading of Isaiah 53:7-8 when Philip joined him and told him of Jesus.

Our purpose this week is to identify the aspects of Christ's sufferings and victory found in Isaiah's picture of the suffering servant.

From humiliation to exaltation — ch. 52:13-15

We find a summary statement of the servant's rise from humiliation to world renown. Verse 13 begins with the same words in the first servant song in chapter 42:1-4, indicating strongly that these passages belong together. Verse 14's description of the servant's initial humiliation relates to chapter 53:1-9, where verse 15 shows the dramatic reversal in the servant's fortunes.

Rejection of the servant — ch. 53:1-3

(1) Who is believed? (v. 1) — The words we, our, and us show that a group was speaking. Who were the speakers? Maybe (1) the Kings of Isaiah, (2) Israel as a whole, (3) a faithful remnant, or (4) the prophets. Although we cannot be sure who, we can answer the question. God revealed himself, but the people as a whole refused to believe his word or accept his revelation.

(2) A root out of dry ground (v. 2) — A root on dry ground has little to no hope for survival, much less flourishing. The last part of verse 2 as a description of the servant, gives the appearance the servant will repulse the people who looked upon him.

(3) Despised and rejected (v. 3) — The words "sorrows" and "grief" literally mean "pains" and "sickness." Was the servant sick of body or spirit or was it his participation in humanity? The last part of verse 3 reinforces the picture of rejection in the servant.

The suffering of the servant for us — vv. 4-6

(1) The cause of his suffering (v. 4) — The book of Job clearly shows us that some people who suffer are not being punished by God for their sins. Isaiah presents another kind of sufferer — one who suffers for others.

(2) With his stripes we are healed (v. 5) — There are

three points in verse 5: (1) the suffering of the servant resulted in his death; (2) the suffering and death was for our sins; (3) because of his suffering and death we can receive salvation. Peter's use of verses 5 and 6 shows how the early

Christians interpreted these verses.

(3) Our spiritual plight (v. 6) — Verse 6 reveals three Biblical truths about human sin: (1) Everyone has sinned; (2) the basic universal sin is that we all decide to go our own way and not walk with God in his way; (3) the result as we turn from God is that we are separated from God. The last line of verse 6 makes clear the servant suffered and died for our sins in accordance to God's will and plan for his life.

The servant's unjust death — vv. 7-9

The servant was the lamb of God who went silently to his death (v. 7). He was unjustly accused and killed (v. 8a). Through all that happened to the servant we are reminded by God that the servant died for the sins of the people (v. 8b). Through his death and burial, he was associated with the wicked of the world and the rich (v. 9a). The servant suffered even though he was innocent (v. 9b).

God's will and the servant's victory — vv. 10-12

(1) The fulfillment of God's will (v. 10). — The word "pleased" means the servant was in God's will, not that God found pleasure in seeing the servant suffer and die. Verse 10 points to God's will in the suffering and death of the servant, and in his victory and enduring success.

(2) Justification (v. 11) — The first part of this verse shows us that the servant is satisfied in fulfilling the Father's will. The last part refers to the New Testament belief of justification by faith. He makes us right with God.

(3) Intercessor for sinners (v. 12) — Isaiah sounds the victory call. The victory call. The servant will be exalted among the great and divide the spoils of his victory over sin and death (v. 12a). Because he died a sinner's death for sinners, he became the great Intercessor for sinners (v. 12b).

We can see through the servant's victory the victory God can bring out of suffering. □ — Kim Allen is pastor of Little West Fork Church, Clarksville.

Guidelines for Christian living

By Phil Lovelace

This chapter begins with the practical section of the letter in which Paul outlines our responsibilities in light of the truths he has revealed to us in chapters 1 and 2. It is not enough for Christ to be pre-eminent in the Gospel, the cross, creation, and the Church; he must also be pre-eminent in our lives. Paul states several areas of our lives in which we should "Practice the pre-eminence of Christ."

In personal purity — ch. 3:1-11

"Since you are risen with Christ, set your affection on things above!" In other words, let your earthly practice follow your heavenly position. Once you were dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1-3), but now you are dead to sin. Christ is in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27), and someday soon that glory will be revealed (v. 4). In brief, Paul says, "live up to what Christ has done for you!" This simple principle of Christian living is more powerful than all the rules and regulations men can devise. "You are made full in Him" (ch. 2:10); now live out that fullness in daily life.

Oriental, Greek, and Roman religions said little or nothing about personal holiness. A man could bring his personal sacrifices, say his

prayers, and go away from the altar to commit terrible sins, and nothing was said about it. Not so with Christianity! The new life within demands a new life without. Since we have died with Christ, we should put to death (mortify, v. 5) the members of the body that lead us into sin (see Romans 6). "Don't live the way the unsaved crowd lives. Christ is your life, and you died with him. Now, let his life show though you day by day."

In verses 8-11, Paul pictures the new life as a change of clothes: "Put off the old sins as you would a filthy garment, and put on the new life of holiness." But notice that we are able to do this because in Christ we have already put off the old man (v. 9); that is, in Christ the body of flesh (the sinful nature) has been put off through his true circumcision on the cross (ch. 2:11). Physical circumcision to the Old Testament Jew means the putting off of sin and the entering into of a covenant relationship with God. Our spiritual circumcision in Christ means the old nature has been put off and we may now walk in newness of life.

**Bible Book Series for January 28
Focal Passage: Colossians 3:1-17**

**In Christian fellowship —
vv. 12-17**

In Christ there are no barriers (v. 11); we are one in him, and he is "all Christ" is pre-eminent in our lives, then we will be able to get along with others for his glory. If there are differences, the peace of God will be "umpire" (rule) in our hearts as we feed on the Word and worship Christ. Christian fellowship in the local church cannot be legislated by a constitution; it must come from within, from the hearts of the believers. If a believer is out of fellowship with another believer, it is because one or both of the believers have gotten out of fellowship with God. "Do all in the name of Christ!" Paul admonishes. Read James 4 and you will see that wars and fightings come when Christians do things for their own selfish motives. Compare Colossians 3:15-18 with Ephesians 5:18-22, and you will see that being filled with the Word produces the same blessings as being filled with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit means simply to be controlled by the Word. □ — Phil Lovelace is pastor of First Church, Somerville.

■ the churches

■ The Woman's Missionary Union of **Central Church, Alcoa**, is collecting items for babies which will be given to the Chilhowee Baptist Center in Maryville. The church's Brotherhood has a Fix-It-Squad which does repairs for people.

■ **First Church, Clarks-ville**, will hold revival Feb. 18-21. Phil Glisson, evangelist from Memphis, will speak.

■ **Central Church, Martin**, had a "Wonder-full Weekend" Jan. 12-14 with Felix Snipes from Atlanta, Ga. A result was 140 people making spiritual decisions, of which 30 were professions of faith.

■ Revival services at **First Church, Crossville**, will be March 10-14. Phil Glisson, evangelist from Memphis, will speak.

■ **Tusculum Hills Church, Nashville**, gave Kurt and Wendy Urbanek, missionaries in the Dominican Republic, a motor scooter on Jan. 7 to help them in their work. The couple were visiting the United States. A team of 21 from the church worked with the Urbaneks in the Dominican Republic last summer.

■ **First Church, Maryville**, commissioned **Dick Evans** and **Pat Ellington** for their missions work in Ecu, Nigeria, West Africa.

■ On Jan. 14 **Highland**

Park Church, Columbia, celebrated its 81st anniversary. It was Second Church until it moved to Highland Avenue in 1953.

■ **First Church, Celina**, will be constituting its mission into a church on Feb. 4. It will become the Hermitage Springs Southern Church, Hermitage Springs.

■ The mission action project of **Monte Vista Church, Maryville**, is making baby clothes for University of Tennessee Hospital.

VanValkenburgh, choir director, Longfield Church, Lake City, as youth director, effective Dec. 24. He is a student at Roane State Community College, Harriman.

■ **South Harriman Church, Harriman**, has called **Samuel M. Leslie** of Mignon Church, Sylacauga, Ala., as minister of music. **Harry Fritts** served as interim minister of music from May 10 to Dec. 31, 1995. He has served as minister of music in several churches since 1951. Fritts is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

■ **Randy Crews**, pastor, First Church, Rutherford, is working in the Philippines Jan. 16-81.

■ the leaders

■ **Don Cooper**, pastor, Laneview Church, Kenton, is working in Belize Jan. 21-27.

■ **Litz Manor Church, Kingsport**, has called **Ed Talley** as pastor.

■ **James Loines**, pastor, Northern's Chapel Church, Rutherford, resigned in December.

■ **Jeff Doyle** has been called as minister of youth, activities, and education, First Church, Henderson. He has been a director of Crosspoint, a sports camp for youth and children sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Doyle is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

■ **Union Church, Wartburg**, has called **Charles**

■ the people

■ **First Church, Celina**, ordained **Ernest Harmon** and **Bennie Hestand** as deacons Jan. 14.

■ **First Church, Waverly**, will ordain **Charlie Musick** and **Phil Saffel** as deacons Jan. 28.

■ **Mack E. Steele Jr.** was ordained as a deacon Jan. 21 by First Church, Dunlap.

■ **First Church, Jackson**, ordained **Guilford "Gil" Fletcher**, **Rob Ousley**, and **Larry Sanderson** as deacons Jan. 14.

■ the schools

■ **Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City**, has established the nation's first chapter of the Collegiate Association of Professional Educators (CAPE). It is affiliated with the Professional Educators of Tennessee organization and champions the right of individuals to have final authority through their duly-elected representatives in matters of education and employment. During its Jan. 29 meeting, **Bill Carroll**, retired principal of Hamblen County's Alpha Elementary School, will offer advice to students on preparing teaching portfolios.

■ **Belmont University, Nashville**, trustees met in December and elected the following as officers — **Larry T. Thrailkill**, Brentwood Church, Brentwood, chair; **Ginnie Thornton**, member, Glendale Church, Nashville, vice chair; and **Mack L. Hannah**, pastor, Harpeth Heights Church, Nashville, secretary.

■ **Tennessee State University, Nashville**, has a new Baptist Student Union program coordinator. The Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board has named **Pierre C. Hambrick** of Nashville to that position, effective Jan. 15. He will assist **Chris Jackson**, BSU director. Hambrick is a graduate of Jacksonville (Ala.) State University and a member of St. James Church, Nashville.



LEADING THE CONSTITUTION OF **Central Church, Brighton**, on Jan. 7 are, from left, **John James**, evangelist who spoke at the service; **Dan Jerry**; **Curtis Taylor**; **John Andrews**; **Whit Wells**, **Howard Jerry**, minister of music at Central Church; **S. Ray Jones**, director of missions, Big Hatchie Association; **Johnny James**, moderator; and **Nickey James**. The congregation, which began meeting in September of last year, meets in the Brighton Senior Center and is buying property.

Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

Snow's cleansing

By Gary E. Baker, pastor
First Church, Sweetwater

Wasn't the weekend snow pretty? I know that not everyone enjoys snow — the child inside us has to be alive and well to really enjoy a snow — but, regardless, we can appreciate its quiet beauty. I believe we can see God at work in a special way when it snows. Winters are bleak, colorless times and then the snow falls leaving a beautiful blanket of white; the skies cleared to a radiant blue on Monday and again what beauty was ours.

But, now Tuesday and Wednesday follow — the snow begins to melt, and as it does what a mess is left behind! Car washes will be busy soon. We will need a rain to wash away the sand and salt left behind by road-clearing crews.

Isn't there a parallel here for us? Our lives are dull and bleak until Jesus Christ enters with his presence and gift of salvation. For a while we revel in that new revelation, and we are aglow with him.

But time passes; temptations come; Satan stalks us, and the beauty and

glow are diminished. Again we need the cleansing, refreshing rains of his daily grace to keep us washed and clean. Our relationship with Christ needs constant attention. We need his cleansings to keep us pure and fresh.

Perhaps the snow is one way he reminds us of our need for constant cleansing. □

Lessons from TV program

By Mark Edwards, minister of music
First Church, Nashville

Saturday night's snow covered us up and closed us down for services last Sunday. I got up about two hours later than usual and turned on the TV to get the latest weather reports, etc.

CBS's "Sunday Morning" was just coming on. I sprawled out on the den floor and began to watch. Halfway through the 90-minute program I caught myself wondering why (besides the obvious) I was enjoying this so much.

There was nothing particularly religious about it, although there was a segment about a guy in Houston who got out of gangdom and is now helping

young kids there stay out, and an extended piece about the Colorado symphony conductor.

Then it began to dawn on me. Whether they know it or not, CBS has captured something of Sabbath in "Sunday Morning." It is conversational and moves at a relaxed pace — headlines are replaced by story lines that are given time to develop; accompanying music is appropriate; and some silences give time to reflect.

The features hook to the positive, beautiful, and miraculous side of real life, demonstrating how ordinary people have become more than they were — like the once-gangster, the women-conductor, and a photographer who scales the utmost heights to number and shoot ancient dinosaur tracks petrified in the frozen Canadian rocky mountains.

It wasn't the production credits (which were large and slow enough to actually read) at the end of "Sunday Morning" that ended my Sabbath; it was the first five minutes of telecast of a well-intended non-Nashville Baptist church that followed. What a shame!

I'm sure there's a lesson here for a minister of music or a church? □

Using extra day of Leap Year

By Joe R. Stacker, pastor
Belmont Heights Church, Nashville

1996 gives us one more day since it's Leap Year. Now, what will you and I do with this extra day? I would like for us to use the extra day like we will the other 365 days, living God's love.

Each day brings new people into our circle of influence and witness. As we develop our networks of relationships for Christ, these days are critical. You will meet people who would not enter a church house unless they know some one they trust to attend with.

We as a church are at our best when we are away from the church house using our days for a ministry and witness. As a church, we have said our mission is to live God's love; how we do that makes all the difference in our being a church of trust and worth.

It will take **adoration, attitude, attendance, and anticipation**. Let's pray, worship, and minister to be a church that is getting on the cutting edge in 1996. □