

# Baptist and Reflector

March 20, 1996

VOL. 162 ■ NO. 12

STATEWIDE EDITION

■ *this week's news*

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

## TBC advance team finds 'amigos' in Costa Rica

By Wm. Fletcher Allen  
*Baptist and Reflector*

**BRENTWOOD** — Remembering past partnerships with Venezuela and Chile, Tennessee Baptist missions volunteers soon may have to brush up on their Spanish.

A six-man advance team journeyed in the Central American country March 1-7 to investigate the feasibility of a three-year Partnership Mission venture with Costa Rican Baptists.

Any new partnership would be in addition to partnerships with Poland, Canada, and Michigan.

Headed by Terry Sharp, TBC Partnership Missions director, and James Porch, executive director, the team included Bill Wilson, Convention Ministries director; Ken Hubbard, TBC president and pastor of First Church, Smyrna; Herbert Higdon, Executive Board president; and Wm. Fletcher Allen, *Baptist and Reflector* editor.

The advance group traveled extensively and met with FMB mission leaders and Costa Rican Baptist leadership.

Approximately 90 percent of Costa Ricans are Catholics. Southern Baptist work dates back to the late 1940s. Baptist work is divided into several major groups, with about 75 churches and missions. The average church has about 50-70 members.

A positive recommendation will be made to the Convention Ministries Committee in April. Approval must come from the Executive Board May 7, and then by the TBC in session in November.

If approved, the Costa Rica partnership would begin in January 1997. TBC volunteers already are cooperating on an individual project basis.

TBC leaders emphasize that a new partnership would not weaken current TBC missions partnerships with Poland, Canada, and Michigan.

"Because of the outstanding volunteer missions spirit of Tennessee Baptists," said Porch, "we will continue our strong relationships with our three missions partners whether or not a partnership with Costa Rica is begun.

"We will have enough volunteers to answer the variety of projects needed by all these partners."

The advance team arrived in the capital city of San Jose in early afternoon March 1. Air travel time from Nashville to San Jose via Miami is about five hours.

The group traveled east across the mountainous rain forests to view new churches being planted near the Caribbean.

The remainder of the time was spent in San Jose and surrounding area, including several churches of the great Central Valley region.

Costa Rica is one of the smallest Central American nations, and is bordered by Nicaragua on the north and Panama to the south.

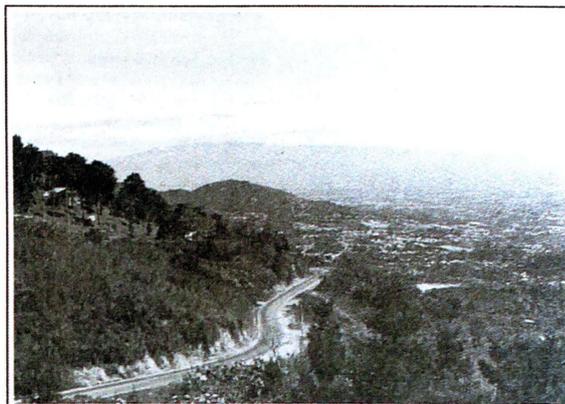
In width it stretches from the Pacific Ocean west and to the Atlantic on the east — from Punta Arenas to Puerto Limon.

About 27 percent of Costa Rica's 20,000 square miles is dedicated to national parks.

In addition to two-mile high volcanoes and an expansive rain forest, the country boasts more than 850 species of birds and 1,200 species of orchids. Some orchids and bromeliads sprout from tree limbs.

The beaches are just as spectacular as other natural prizes. Towering waterfalls plunge nearby swift and rocky streams which provide the best in white-water rafting.

Big game fishing, if you have time for it, is one of the



**BROAD VISTA** from a mile high sweeps across the busy city. San Jose encompasses a huge challenge for Baptist work. Costa Rican Baptists have dreams and plans for San Jose and the rest of the nation, and are ready for a Tennessee partnership.

top sports — but nowhere near as popular as the much revered soccer matches.

Costa Ricans, and Baptist missionaries tout Costa Rican coffee as the best in the world and the major crop exported. Bananas, pineapples, papayas, and citrus fruits also are sold in markets thousands of miles away from the farms where they are grown.

As more and more tourists recognize this peaceful land, tourism competes with coffee and bananas as the major economic "product."

Historically Costa Rica is a democratic nation, having an elected president and congress.

It is approximately the size of West Virginia and average daily temperatures of the populous central highlands region is about 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

Nestled near the equator in what formerly was called the "torrid" zone. Costa Rica has only two seasons.

The rainy season, or winter, lasts from May to November; The dry season, or summer, is from December through April. The main difference is that it rains more in winter, with the temperature varying little.

The Atlantic zone is very humid and hot, and has more rainfall. The Pacific area is even hotter, but less humid. — See TBC advance, page 3

### History of papers' association slated

A comprehensive history of the Southern Baptist Press Association is nearing publication date.

*Contending for the Right to Know*, a history of the SBPA, which was founded in 1895 by E. E. Folk, *Baptist and Reflector* editor, is scheduled for release June 1.

Published by the Association of Baptist State Papers (SBPA changed its name in February), the book is written by Bill Junker of Brentwood. Providence House Publishers of Franklin is the publisher.

The book covers the 100 years of SBPA history, reflecting on major SBC and state convention actions.

Wm. Fletcher Allen, *Baptist and Reflector* editor, is project manager.

More information about publication and costs is forthcoming. □



**ALEJANDRO SOTO**, right, shows where expansion is needed for Higuito Church in suburban San Jose. From left, Ken Hubbard, Herbert Higdon, Terry Sharp, James Porch, Bill Wilson, and veteran missionary, Clive Buttemere.

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# Record year forecast for LMCO

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — Projections show Southern Baptists last year gave a record \$89.1 million to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, establishing a three-year trend upward.

Calculations from early indicators predict an increase for the 1995 offering of \$3.17 million, or 3.69 percent, from last year's \$85.9 million. Those increases would be the largest in percentage and dollar amount since 1988. Increases in 1993 and 1994 were 2.37 percent and 3.66 percent, respectively.

"We are elated and praise God for the faithful support of Southern Baptists in giving almost \$90 million to the offering," said FMB President Jerry Rankin.

"The increase over a record offering last year reflects they are committed to fulfilling the



RANKIN

Great Commission cooperatively through the Foreign Mission Board."

The projected figure would provide \$3.73 million for capital spending needs such as new construction and vehicles.

About \$85 million would go to the board's 1996 overseas operating budget which primarily provides missionary support.

Southern Baptists had set a challenge goal of \$100 million for 1995.

"Although we were disappointed that we did not get closer to the \$100 million goal, the anticipated receipts will enable us to meet basic budget projections for a growing number of missionaries who reported unprecedented church growth last year," Rankin said.

The offering, generally collected in churches in December, is expected to fund nearly one-half (47 percent) of the board's 1996 budget of \$192.6 million. The remainder will come from the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, and other income such as investments and hunger and relief receipts. □

## New churches prove 'Last Frontier' reachable

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — "The Last Frontier" of missions might be unreached, but it's not unreachable.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries and their overseas partners proved that in 1995. They started 367 churches and baptized 6,548 new believers in some of the toughest places on earth. Those churches sprang up among people groups collectively called The Last Frontier or "World A" — 2,466 groups, adding up to 1.7 billion people, largely denied access to the Christian Gospel by hostile cultures, religions, and govern-

ments. Many live in the Muslim world of north Africa, the Mideast, and Asia.

The new churches account for nearly 15 percent of the 2,612 churches begun worldwide last year by Southern Baptist missionaries and their overseas partners. The Last Frontier ranked third-highest in new churches among the 10 world regions identified by the FMB.

Adding to the significance of this: Missionaries assigned to these peoples began with a support base of zero churches only a few years ago — not the hundreds or thousands of established congregations in older, stronger mission fields.

"These are the hardest places in the world," said evangelism and church growth analyst Jim Slack, who compiled the recently released FMB statistical report for 1995.

"They have the least number of churches, the least number of Bibles, the fewest literates. Christians there have to maintain their security while they plant churches, which doesn't allow them to fly the missionary or Christian flag to attract people. Yet, they get the job done even when world religions and governments actively try to stop them. When you look at the odds and barriers ... their achievements are phenomenal," he observed. □

## Judge sides with charities on national case

Baptist Press

DENTON, Texas — Justice has come down on the side of charities in a lawsuit that has threatened their ability to function nationwide.

Judge Don Windle of Denton, Texas, has ruled the Lutheran Foundation of Texas did not break any laws when it issued charitable gift annuities to a 96-year-old north Texas woman,

according to the *Denton Record-Chronicle*.

Charitable gift annuities allow donors to give large amounts of money to charity but continue receiving income from the proceeds of those gifts as long as they live. The donors receive tax deductions, and the charities receive the residue of the money when the donors die.

Relatives of Louise T. Peter of Wichita Falls, Texas, sued

the foundation, contending it did not have the legal right to issue the annuities.

Later, that action was expanded to a class-action lawsuit which included, among others, the Baptist Foundation of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention. Since the lawsuit was first filed in 1992, federal laws have been passed aimed at guaranteeing charities the right to issue gift annuities. □

## 'Experiencing God' to air in Russia

Baptist Press

MOSCOW — The first-ever broadcast version of the discipleship program, *Experiencing God* is scheduled to air over radio waves in Russia starting in April.

Broadcast versions are being developed in 10 languages.

The program will air for six months on Trans World Radio's short-wave transmitters from Albania in late evening Moscow time to cover western Russia and from Guam in mid-afternoon

Moscow time to cover eastern Russia. It will also air over Radio Teos, a local FM radio station in St. Petersburg.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary Joe DeLeon, who lives in St. Petersburg, will coordinate follow-up for the broadcasts.

A publication of Lifeway Press of the Baptist Sunday School Board, *Experiencing God* was written by Henry Petckaby and Claude King.

The broadcast version, which closely follows material presented in the workbook, was adapted for radio. □

## 15-year reunion planned for TBC missions partners

For Baptist and Reflector

Have you ever participated in a Partnership Missions trip?

A reunion has been scheduled for all Tennessee Baptists who have worked in any of the partnerships during the past 15 years.

The gathering is set for April 20, 11 a. m. at the Tennessee Baptist Convention Center in Brentwood.

**But, hurry, or it may be too late.**

Terry Sharp, TBC Partnership Missions director, says that reservations and luncheon checks for \$7 must be received in his office by April 1. The luncheon cost is non-refundable. Reservations are needed now. Call him at (615) 371-2064.

He also indicated that the event would be postponed or cancelled if interest is not sufficient. Only a few reservations have been received, and at least 100 are needed.

Sharp is joined by three former Partnership Missions directors in the invitation to celebrate volunteer missions in Tennessee: Carroll Owen, Clarence Stewart, and Jarvis Hearn. All three are expected to attend. The four men urge missions volunteers to attend the April 20 get-together.

The first partnership began with Michigan in 1980. Since then Tennessee has had partnerships with Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Venezuela, the Philippines, Chile, Poland, and Canada.

Activities will include lunch, exhibits, and testimonies from partnership missionaries, pastors, and volunteers. A representative from the Foreign Mission Board will give an update on work in those partnerships. □

## Stanley's wife drops divorce suit

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Anna Stanley, wife of First Church, Atlanta, Senior Pastor Charles Stanley, has dropped her nearly three-year-old divorce suit, according to her attorney.

A statement from In Touch Ministries, which oversees broadcasts of Stanley's sermons, quoted his wife as saying, "I am pleased to announce that Charles and I are making progress toward reconciling our marriage differences. This past week I canceled my petition for divorce." Her statement, which was read Sunday,

March 17, at First Church, continued, "Although we are not living together at this time, we are working toward that end. Thank you for standing by our family during this difficult time. We all feel that the progress made in the past several weeks is due in great part to your prayers."

The March 15 edition of *The Atlanta Constitution* quoted Stanley as saying he was "pleased and grateful to God for answered prayer" and for the church's "patience, support, and unwavering love for me through this difficult time." □

# WMU 'Missions Get Together' session draws 1,500

By Wm. Fletcher Allen  
Baptist and Reflector

**GATLINBURG** — Almost 1,500 Tennessee Baptist women challenged the weather to get involved with the annual WMU "Missions Get-Together" on March 8-10.

"Risk the Journey" was the Woman's Missionary Union theme, and participants did just that. An unexpected March blast of cold air and snow failed to put a "freeze" on the missions gathering.

A bevy of specialized conferences complemented the program of missions speakers and a business session. And on Saturday afternoon, the women were able to talk with missions workers firsthand in booths re-

plete with exhibits of missions reminders.

In the business session Carol Richardson of Memphis was elected WMU president, succeeding Ruth McNabb.

She is a member of First Church, Memphis, where she is Acteens leader. She has been WMU director for Shelby County Association for the past four years.

The group also elected three vice presidents: Sue Dowdy, Somerville; Creely Wilson, Brentwood; and Peggy Barton, Newport.

Phyllis Finchum of Strawberry Plains was named recording secretary and eight promotion directors were elected also.

In her annual report, Ten-

nessee WMU executive director, noted that the organization has a unique characteristic. She said the co-leadership of WMU lay people and the Brentwood staff binds them together.

"We are all partners for the journey, and we are risk takers," she said.

She said WMU experienced growing pains during 1995. But this was intended, she added. "Our emphasis was 'A Time to Grow,' and pain usually leads to further action or new action.

"Tennessee WMU is those women in the churches who gather for study and prayer, who serve in various missions responsibilities across the state and elsewhere," she said.

She detailed some of the pains and growth that WMU had experienced, and added, "It has been exciting to hear people who knew something would not work be thrilled with the outcome they never expected."

Bryan said it is worth the growing pains "when more and more preschoolers, children, youth, and adults in our churches are willing to 'Risk the Journey' of missions involvement."

Telling about missions during the meeting were several missionaries, including Betsy Draper, Boston; Clara Brincefield, retired from Chile; Earlene Jessee, Virginia WMU leader;

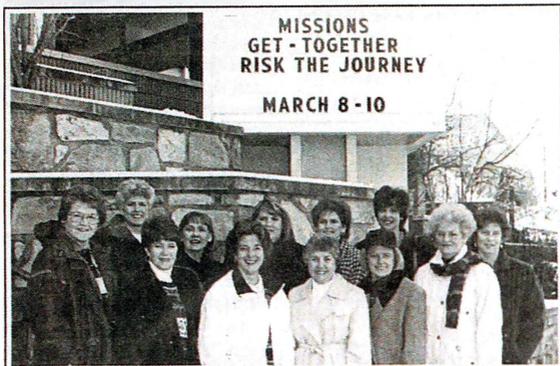
Vel Cross, Eritrea; Donna Mae Bobby, Chile; Anne McKnelly, Knoxville; Tim Cox, Memphis; Cynthia Howard, Swaziland; and Mike Pennington, Bledsoe Association.

The conferences were packed for almost every session. Topics explored included Charting Your Course, Ideas for Praying Women, Risking in Home Missions; Helping While I Hurt, Time Flies When You're Having Fun (and Even When You're Not); Staying Fit for the Journey; Emotional Fitness for the Journey, and several others. All proved to be popular. □



ABOVE, Vel Cross, missionary to Namibia, gives her testimony.

BELOW, Katharine Bryan, center, executive director, is flanked by new officers, Creely Wilson, Carol Richardson, president; Bryan; Sue Dowdy, and Peggy Barton. Wilson, Dowdy, and Barton, are vice presidents.



A DOZEN women from Clearview Church, Franklin, attended the Gallatinburg meeting. From left, Betty Allen, Judy Barnette, Connie Pendergrass, Joyce Rickman, Kim Claybrook, Wendy Satterwhite, Jean Overcash, Pam Bryant, Harriet Maloney, Becky Schmidt, Norma Acree, and Norene Miller.



## TBC advance team finds amigos in Costa Rica ...

— Continued from page 1

Now, let's look at the Baptists of Costa Rica and their work. Let's include the Southern Baptist missionaries, and their mission.

The Baptist Mission's administrative committee has Mark Grumbles as administrative chairman.

Other members include Sue Smith, who is volunteer coordinator; Ben Argil, Larry Hendricks, and Rick Lane.

Auxiliary members include Don Redmon, treasurer, mission chairman; Greg Smith, and Russell Kyzar.

The mission works mainly with the Union Nacional de Iglesias Bautistas (National Union of Baptist Churches), which has about 25 churches.

Jorge Arias, pastor of San Juan de Dios Church, is president of the UNIB. Luis Chavarria, pastor of Tres Rios Church, is vice president.

Other leaders of UNIB include Rodrigo Chacon, businessman and treasurer; Lillian Ruiz, secretary; Verna Rojas and Alejandro Soto, members at large; Horacio Lopez, parliamentarian; Rigoberto Aguilar, Ana, missionary; and Eterly Nunez, president of the Missions Board.

It was with members of these two groups that the advance team met with several times during the trip.

### Costa Rica: a 'happy medium'

■ **The people:** "The blood that flows in the veins of the people of this Republic is too generous. The Costa Ricans are a people of such excellent mettle; ardently patriotic, they are very proud of their independence, their autonomy, and of a prosperity due almost wholly to industry." — A. S. Calvert, 1901, *A Year in Costa Rica*.

■ **Their identity:** A national hymn says it this way: "A love for peace and respect for law has been expressed by your courageous children."

■ **History:** Christopher Columbus arrived on the Atlantic Coast in 1502, and was welcomed with gifts from native people. The land has survived and prospered despite conquest, regimes, revolutions, coups, to flourish with a democratic government so stable that there is no army, a peaceful and happy medium in today's world.

A second group, the Convencion Bautista de Costa Rica (CBCR), also with about 25 churches, at one time was active with the UNIB.

The advance team met with President Carlos Umana and other leaders one evening. There are approximately 30 other Baptist churches which are not related to either group.

Some of these, and perhaps the CBCR have some preliminary interest in the partnership. However, the main

projects Tennessee volunteers are doing.

The UNIB group had a short list of suggested projects. When both lists were compared, Jorge Arias remarked that the two lists were very similar.

There were several rounds of brainstorming about the kinds of projects needed, the numbers of volunteers for teams, the number of teams that could be expected in certain periods of time, and other related matters.

involvement would be with the UNIB, the group with which the Baptist Mission has close relationships.

Terry Sharp and other team members explained the previous and current partnership held by Tennessee Baptists.

It was also explained to UNIB leaders the types of

As discussions continued, sometimes around the lunch table, sometimes with other Costa Rican Baptists and missionaries present, a general consensus of agreement developed.

It became evident that a sound and productive partnership is very workable. UNIB already has approved a partnership with Tennessee Baptists.

There was an over-arching feeling during the entire process of the need for prayer and spiritual awakening.

In fact, the Southern Baptist missionaries and the UNIB leaders stressed that need among their groups.

Jorge Arias, during a time of prayer requests, asked that the advance team carry back to Tennessee Baptists this prayer request:

"Pray much for the national leadership of Costa Rica, so we can be strengthened, and for a broader missionary vision. Our pastors really feel a part of this partnership, and the members also. We feel a sense, a call to missions. Pray that our churches will be stronger, and our mission work will grow with boldness." □

*The Costa Rica story continues on pages 6-7, with photographs. — Editor*

## ■ about letters to the editor

- Make it concise, no more than 250 words. Letters may be edited for length.
- Name may be withheld for sufficient reason. Include address and phone number.
- Avoid personal attacks on the character or integrity of anyone.
- Send original copy. Form letters and "open" letters will not be published.
- Only one letter in a three-months period per writer will be published.
- If letter does not conform, it will be returned.
- Opinions and ideas expressed in letters are not necessarily shared by the *Baptist and Reflector* and its staff. □

### Thanks, Tennesseans

We are newly appointed missionaries to Ghana.

We want to express our deepest thanks for the beautiful way you hosted the Foreign Mission Board's appointment service and meeting in Knoxville recently.

Members of Wallace Memorial Baptist Church went the extra mile to make us feel welcome and comfortable. Baptists from all over Tennessee showed their support by attending a very moving appointment service.

## Watch for efforts to change Constitution

Soon Congress will be presented with proposals for a constitutional amendment on "religious equality." There are attempts by Congressmen Istook, Hyde, and Hatch; all are dangerous while sounding good. Baptists should be informed so we can speak out against these well-meaning proposals just as our Baptist forebears stood firm for freedom of conscience in their day. Here are some of the dangers:

(1) They would authorize tax dollars for parochial schools, and everyone from Farrakhan to Falwell would want a hand in the pot.

(2) They would cause division and competition for the limited public purses and for whose religion would be the one used in school prayers and other activities.

We will always look back at our days in Knoxville as a very special time. God worked through you to strengthen us for the work that lies ahead. Thank you for showing your Christian love and support.

*Jimmy and Jennifer Mauldin*

10013 W. 126th St.  
Overland Park, Kan. 66212

### Pastor search

I was quite troubled by a recent letter in the paper concerning pastors and degrees. It was expressed that perhaps more focus was being placed by ministers on seminary education and professionalism than on basic Christian principles and personal relations.

I do agree that the most important thing in a minister's life is the personal call of God, both to the ministry and to a particular place at a specific time.

The minister must have a consistent, strong, meaningful personal walk with God. I have been in the ministry for 15 years. I have served in five states. Every Southern Baptist pastor I have met, regardless of education, wanted to see people saved and Christians live Christ-like lives.

Perhaps churches can consider those items when working through pastor search committees. Too many committees, operating on an agenda provided by their church family, consider only ministers who meet stringent standards, including education. Churches have guidelines to narrow their search. But it is possible that the lines they draw, including educational requirements, may cause them to miss the person God has for them.

*Timothy W. Smith, pastor  
Dixie Hills Church  
Bolivar 38008*

### About creation

Your page one story, Feb. 28, reported on efforts by Tennessee lawmakers to encourage moral, responsible conduct among our citizens.

One bill would require those who teach evolution to clearly state that it is a theory, not fact.

TBC public affairs consultant Bill Bates was quoted as saying he felt most Tennessee teachers are teaching evolution as a theory rather than fact and is not sure whether a bill is needed to "tell teachers how to teach."

This bill would be excellent for at least two reasons. First, judging from the emotional outcry from many teachers and their union representatives against the new law, evidently evolution is being taught as fact in some public classrooms in Tennessee. This would help correct that situation.

Second, the enacting of this legislation would promote discussion all over our state about evolution and its shaky status as "science." Only God can measure the dehumanizing effect that years and years of teaching evolution as factual science has had on our society. Not one shred of real evidence has ever been produced to support any of evolution's basic tenets and there are evolutionists who will freely admit this.

To believe that evolution produced the incredible universe in which we live requires an amazing leap of faith and to promote this belief calls for religious fervor. This bill would bring a tiny flicker of truth into the dark deception of the teaching of evolution.

Wouldn't it have been encouraging to hear our public affairs consultant say so?

*Pam Anderson  
Arlington 38002*

must be treated differently, (e.g. McDonald's can't discriminate on the basis of religion, but a church isn't required to hire a non-believer).

(5) Amending the Constitution is serious business. Our Baptist forebears who struggled for religious liberty and who helped get the First Amendment into it would want us to protect their efforts for the good of all. We have many problems to address, but changing our basic structure would harm rather than help.

Coerced religion is not real religion. Let us work and pray for a stronger faith in a stronger nation where freedom is maintained, prayer is genuine, and morality is affirmed and practiced.

*Monty and Diane Jordan  
Talbot 37877*

### Cooperative giving

The reports of cooperative giving as listed in the Feb. 28 issue was interesting. Being from Knoxville I was happy to find five churches from Knoxville in the top 25. However I did not find the same churches listed in capital giving and only one Knoxville church in percentage giving.

What did this tell us? Being in the Bible belt where most of our Southern Baptist seminaries and colleges are causes me to be concerned with the teaching of the tithe — giving back to God as he has prospered the believer.

Are we failing to see or understand why crime, disease, broken homes, loose morals, un-natural acts of nature are taking place before our eyes? Are we not worshipping the God of materialism, sports, pleasure, rather than the God of spiritual blessings? Where are our priorities? God is a jealous God. What can we expect?

*Lillian White  
Knoxville 37920*

### Calling missionaries

About hiring and firing of missionaries or other employees of the Southern Baptist Convention, I have some thoughts.

I have enough confidence in the officers of the SBC to believe they are capable of doing their jobs. They know the doctrine of the Bible. They know what is right for our churches.

If I am a Baptist, I want to belong to a church that belongs to a convention that believes in all the Bible, that we hire people to carry the Gospel to the world that are firm, steadfast in the faith, that were delivered to the saints — not children tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

Southern Baptists believe we should stick to the doctrine of our faith, based upon God's holy Word; religion just like Christ gave it and taught it.

*Mrs. Paul Sliger  
Niota 37826*

### CP actions

I read the March 6 paper with mixed feelings concerning the action of the Northwest Baptist Convention and Golden Gate Seminary.

My first thought was the convention should not have unilaterally directed \$50,000 from their Cooperative Program commitment to the SBC without discussion concerning a change of the seminary funding formula with the SBC Executive Committee.

My second thought was based on the response letter of Morris Chapman which said, "It is not the prerogative of the Northwest Baptist Convention

to spend \$50,000 of the money allocated to the SBC, not even if the state convention messengers vote unanimously." I am a Baptist who holds to autonomy and cooperation. In our autonomy as Baptists our convention was formed along side the churches, association of churches, and state/regional conventions of churches. Each is autonomous to the other while cooperating in God's kingdom work. I do believe we should hold to that balanced tension called "autonomy and cooperation."

I regret the action of the Northwest Convention but, as a Christian called Baptist, I defend their right to do so. The right to act lies with each church, association, and convention. There should never be a time when any one Baptist body has a "prerogative" over the other. Actions taken unilaterally do affect programs and institutions but autonomous bodies in Christ have that right to act. I pray God will guide us to cooperation in our unique autonomy.

*Joe R. Stacker, pastor  
Belmont Heights Church  
Nashville 37212*

### Praises conference

The recent Youth Evangelism Conference was a great success. I was impressed with the TBC's willingness and effort to expend the energy and expense to reach thousands of young people with a sound Gospel message.

Renting Opryland, in spite of the risk of inclement weather, was a novel idea that should continue.

The TBC has the premiere youth conference in America. Other state conventions watch what we do. We must continue to do what is needed to reach people without compromising the message.

I want to thank the entire TBC staff personally. Many served during the weekend, laboring on a cold but sunny day. Special gratitude goes to Jay Austin, Jerry King and their staff. Their bold actions and planning were blessed as thousands of youth and leaders gathered.

When risks are taken, things such as cold weather may happen. You may not like the music. But trust the staff, they know the youth.

We need to take the church out of the building and into the world. We can no longer live with a fortress mentality that runs fearfully away from the untruths of the world. Our Gospel and Christ can take the scrutiny. More events like this will build bold believers.

*Kevin Shrum, pastor  
Inglewood Church  
Nashville 37216*

# Lifetime of pressing for quality in journalism

■ one  
word more  
By Wm. Fletcher Allen  
editor

On February 29, John Roberts retired after serving South Carolina Baptists for 30 years as editor of their state paper, the *Baptist Courier*.

For 17 of those 30 years I worked alongside him as his associate. Not only did he serve South Carolina Baptists well, he was instrumental in bringing Christian journalism to a higher, more respected level across the Southern Baptist Convention. For these and other reasons, I share a personal tribute to him in this editorial space. He has been a kindred spirit to me.

Paul puts it this way in his letter to the Philippians: "I thank God in all my remembrance of you."

I do that. I thank God for our shared memories, John and Helen Roberts; Fletcher and Betty Allen.

It was a warm morning in 1966, and I was minding my business in my office at Sonoco Products Company in Hartsville, South Carolina.

My secretary stepped in to tell me that John Roberts was downstairs and that he'd like to see me. He had walked in from out of the past. Well, I thought, no harm in letting him see me. I knew he had been named editor of the *Courier* recently.

Perhaps he wanted me to be a regional "stranger." We chatted. He told me he had been to the annual WMU meeting in Florence and on the way back to Greenville decided to talk with me about working with him.

I promised him I would pray about it (as a good Baptist) and think about it. We parted. He had an air of triumph about him and I was thinking, "Really, John!" That conversation developed into a long

Spring of letters and phone calls. Betty and I had just built our dream home adjacent to the Allen clan. Our salary was the best it had ever been. I could not shake the image of Betty and me and our little girls waving goodbye to that special place.

In June I received a letter from John which I still keep in memory's bank. There were a few amenities, and then he wrote: "God knows you ought to come. I know you ought to come. You know you should come. Why don't you come?"

On August 1, 1966, I joined John as associate editor of the *Baptist Courier*. We never looked back. It was a turning point in our lives. There we were. Two brash young journalists with ten children, two station wagons, and the best wives in the world. We had superlative trustees associates, and staff, and we had great times together meeting one challenge after another.

The circulation numbers of the paper soared. It was an experience of awe and giddy success. But I think we realized that South Carolina Baptists are great people, and they treated us very kindly. I walked along that path for 17 years and the memories can fill many hours of reminiscing. They are good.

I am reminded of what George Chisholm said about maturity: "So far in the history of the world there have never been enough mature people in the right places." John is one of the few. His actions always have been responsible and mature. The leadership he provided in the 17 years, and the 13 also — is a hallmark of journalistic endeavor and knowledge. It is marked with maturity, honor, integrity,

and valor. Nicholas Boilaeu-Despreaux described honor this way: "Honor is like a rocky island without a landing place; once we leave it we can't get back."

Well, we became brothers. We laughed and cried together, prayed together, planned together. Our girls played softball together. Our wives loved each other (and they still do). Perhaps I was the brother then that he never had and we developed that kind of relationship.

I discovered early that John knew more Baptists than anyone, and he was able to stand in one place talking to them longer than anyone else.

He was a teacher. I learned from him not to despair when disappointments come, and never to give in. The good ones always outnumber the bad, and stubborn kindness that shuns compromise will win the day. He also taught me to aim high, and never to trade insults. And I think we taught each other to write some therapeutic editorials and responses — and then to tear them up.

John and Helen will be missed not only in South Carolina, but among their peers in Southern Baptist life. They have been honored by the SBC Executive Committee and the Southern Baptist Press Association. But most of all, they have been loved by their peers and friends.

Not long ago he reminded me that what we built together for that paper may not have been duplicated anywhere in Baptist life in this century. He doesn't use flattery, so I know he believes it.

For all your patriots, I say thank you, John and Helen. You touched our lives, and you are forever friends, kindred spirits. □

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

## Revisiting old Irazu

The first time I saw Irazu was in the summer of 1975, 21 years ago.

I had never looked into the seething maw of a volcano before. I had accompanied a group of youth from our church in South Carolina, south to Costa Rica.

They were chosen by the Foreign Mission Board to conduct a Vacation Bible School for children of missionaries on



ALLEN

retreat, and then to spend a long week singing in the churches. Our eldest, Amy, a fresh high school graduate, was one of the group.

I like to think that lives were changed during those two weeks in 1975, and that hearts were opened to the leadership of God's Holy Spirit. I like to think that those days made a difference in the lives of the MKs as well as the visiting youth.

I want to think that missionaries were helped, since they were able to concentrate on matters other than the routine of daily assignments and taking care of their children.

I know that one life was changed — mine. That was my first out-of-the-country missions experience: I was blessed by the Costa Rican people, our youth, and our missionaries.

And now I have visited Costa Rica again, and climbed the two-mile high mountain to look once more close up at Irazu. It is still awesome, even splendid in its raw, latent, power. But there is more.

Other people and places have changed. Pastor Wilfred Watson of Siquirres has gone to be with the Lord. The church is not quite as healthy.

Jackie and Arlene Cooper moved years ago to Panama. Most of the Dan Sprinkle family is in active mission service elsewhere — except daughter Laura, who now serves as a missionary in San Jose with husband Rick Lane.

To the delight of the six of us who met with leaders of the Baptist Mission and Costa Rican Baptist leaders about forming a Partnership Mission, the main topic was Spiritual Awakening!

How appropriate for Tennessee Baptists, to stand on the threshold of such a grand undertaking, for Costa Rica and for us. ☺

# Some solutions for stress

## ■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor and professor

For three issues we have described stress in light of personalities, culprits, and conditions.

Now let's focus on some of the solutions for stress. No doubt every one of us has identified with all these areas of stress-producing factors. But what can we do about them?

I suggest five simple solutions to the high-risk candidate: a social support system, sources of reward and enjoyment, strong health habits, awareness of signs and signals, and simple expectations.

The first precaution against stress is a good social support system. Each person should have a group of believers whom we lean on for strength and support in tough times.

My wife and I are part of a group of four pastor and wife couples who have covenanted to get together monthly to eat together and go to a home for dessert and fellowship. We need this, and anticipate it each month.

A second source of strength is some simple sources of reward and enjoyment. Hobbies, community service, and enjoy-

able church service can be sources of stress deferring strength. For me, it is woodworking.

The third effort that can ward off detrimental effects of stress is strong health habits.

Good regular and nutritious eating habits are essential. Junk food is a big sidekick of stress today.

Appropriate exercise is important. We may think we are too tired to exercise, but exercise might be the very thing that gives us energy. Sleep and rest also are necessary.

A fourth significant safeguard against stress is the ability to recognize the signs and signals of stress. Irritability, chronic fatigue, and depression are all symptoms of stress in our lives.

It is not sufficient to say, "I'm a little tired" or "I'm in a bad mood." If you are always down and blue, the cause might

be stress. One of the major results of being in the stressful position of responsibility without making a decision is depression.

The final defense against stress is simple expectations. No one is perfect.

Jesus is the only Savior and that position has been taken.

We may set up ourselves for stress with unrealistic expectations.

None of us will do the job right each time. Give yourself a break. Sometimes you can accept 85 percent instead of 100 percent.

The best security system against the stress that threatens all of us will involve the five areas we have just discussed.

Remember them: a good social support system, some simple sources of reward and enjoyment, a commitment to strong health habits, the ability to recognize the signs and signals of stress, and simple expectations. □



BARKLEY

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

## Start with a smile

College co-ed on long-distance: "Daddy, I've been busy."

Daddy: "Doing what?"

Co-ed: "Picketing."

Daddy: "You do not have my permission. I sent you there to get an education. What are you picketing for?"

Co-ed: "Against increased tuition fees."

Daddy: "You have my permission."

## Take this truth

Never be satisfied with half truths.

When you learn all the facts about something, things often look different.

## Memorize this Scripture

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7).

## Pray this prayer

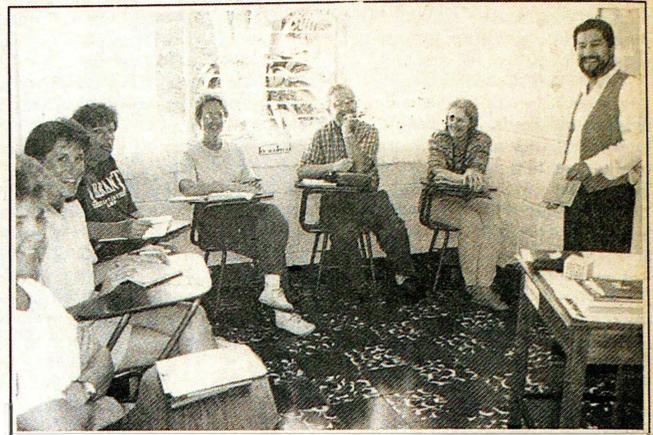
"Lord, teach us to study all sides of a question before we make up our mind to act!" □

## ■ Tennessee features

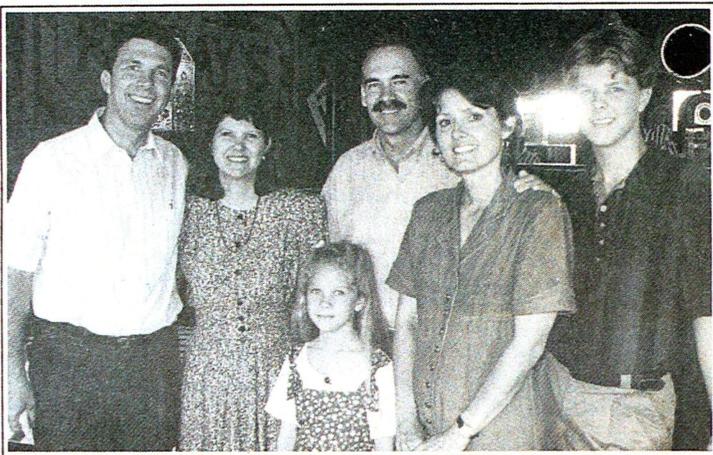
# Tennessee Baptists explore Costa Rica partnership



**AFTER SEVERAL** meetings about partnership missions work, leaders of the Union of Costa Rican Baptists sat down with the advance missions team for a photo. From left, front: Luis Chavarria, Alejandro Soto, Roberto and Maria Emilia Salazar, Lillian Ruiz, Jorge Arias (president), Verna Rojas, and Horacio Lopez. Back row: Terry Sharp, Herbert Higdon, James Porch, Ken Hubbard, and Bill Wilson. Foreign Mission Board Central America representatives Joe Bruce and Tom Warrington met with the two groups also.

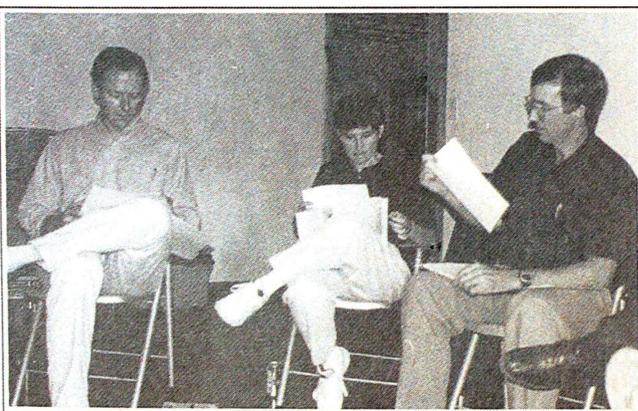


**THE SPANISH LANGUAGE** Institute is located in San Jose. FMB missionaries to all Spanish-speaking countries except Spain study here. This is a typical class.

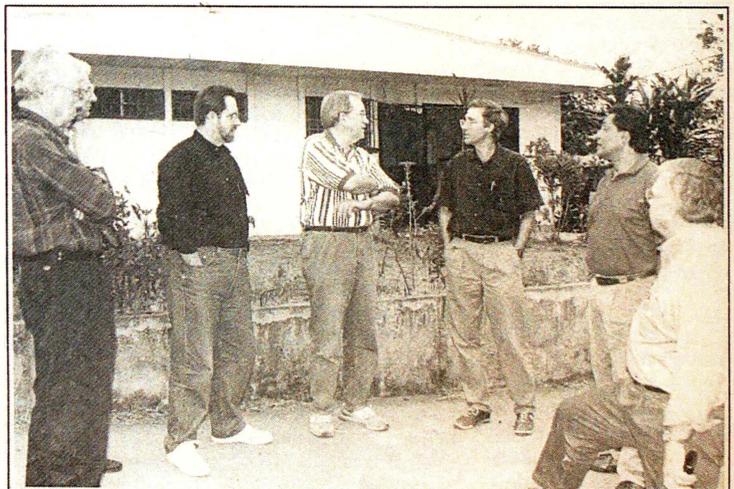


**RUSSELL AND MELINDA KYZAR**, left, daughter Robyn, center, and son Ryan, right, share a meal with the Don Coopers who are studying at the Spanish Language Institute. The Kyzars are from Mississippi and will be on furlough later this year.

**COSTA RICAN** Baptists make good use of their camp near San Jose. The kitchen and dining room are shown.

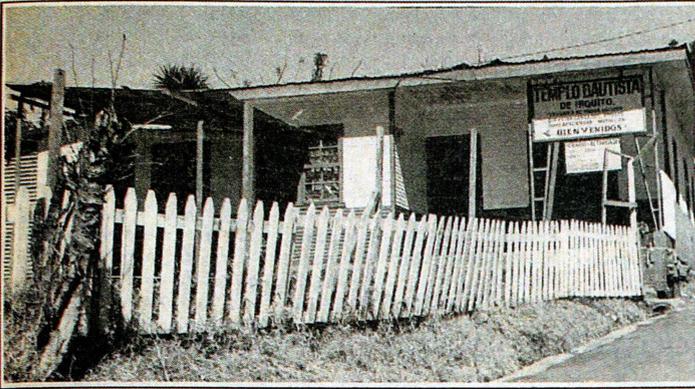


**RICK LANE**, Sue Smith, and Mark Grumbles, study the itinerary planned for the group of six Tennessee Baptist Convention representatives. The three gave the group an orientation at the Baptist Camp before they begin traveling and meeting.



**PASTOR ELOY ROJAS**, second from right, talks about his church near Heredia. From left, Herbert Higdon, Ken Hubbard, Terry Sharp, Bill Wilson, Mark Grumbles, Rojas, and James Porch.

## ■ Tennessee features



**HIGUITO Church, San Jose, has plans for a new building in front of the present structure. Pastor Alejandro Soto and members are ready to expand. The building is packed with no more space inside.**



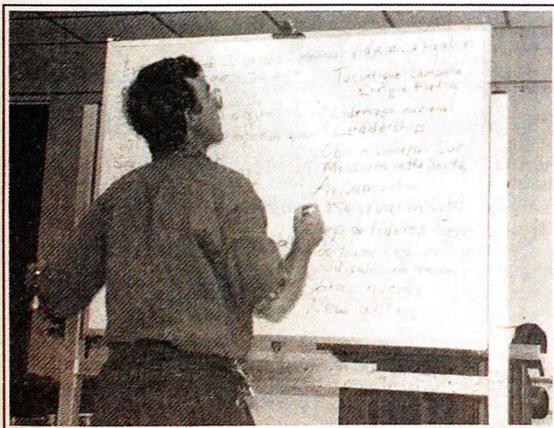
**LAURA AND Rick Lane both attended Carson-Newman, and are now serving as Southern Baptist missionaries in Costa Rica. He is a native of Greenbrier.**

### **Another missions partnership surveyed**

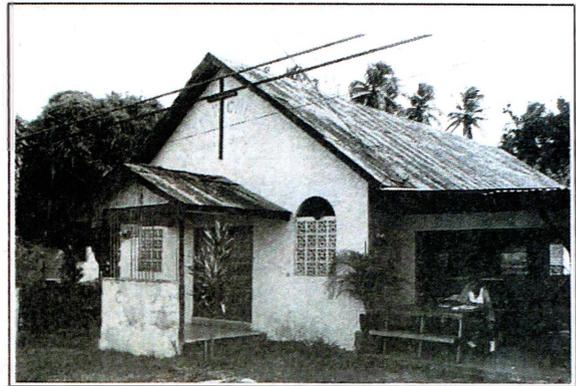
A team of six Tennessee Baptist leaders traveled to Costa Rica earlier this month to discover possibilities for a missions partnership. James Porch, Terry Sharp, Bill Wilson, Herbert Higdon, Ken Hubbard, and Wm. Fletcher Allen met with pastors, church leaders, and missionaries during the stay. Their report will be shared with the TBC Convention Ministries Committee when it meets in a few weeks. □



**WORSHIP at Tres Rios Church, San Jose, began early on Sunday. Luis Chavarria is pastor, and also leads the adult Sunday School. Missionaries Russell and Melinda Kyzar and family help with leadership.**

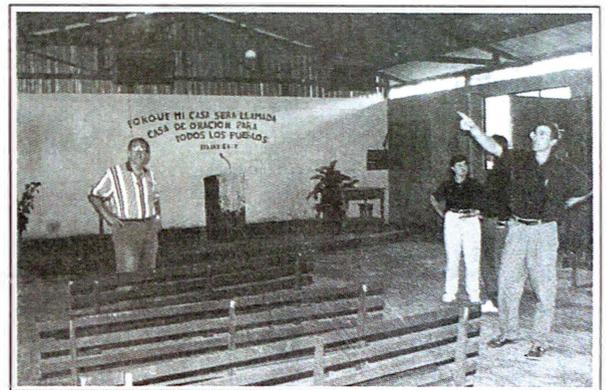


**TENNESSEE AND COSTA RICAN Baptists shared prayer needs at their meetings. Missionary Mark Grumbles writes the requests before the prayer time.**



**SQUIRRES Church is located in the eastern part of Costa Rica, not many miles from the Caribbean port of Puerto Limon. Membership is mostly from West Indies heritage.**

**POR TANTO ID Church is in Mercedes Norte. Missionary Mark Grumbles points out construction features. He and his family are members. Bill Wilson, left, and missionary volunteer coordinator Sue Smith, observe.**



**RAIN FORESTS are a national treasure in Costa Rica. About one fourth of the land is dedicated to national forestry. Viewing a mountain forest are Herbert Higdon, James Porch, and Sue and Greg Smith.**

## Registration still open for festival

BRENTWOOD — Registration is still open for the 1996 Tennessee Baptist Dramatic Arts Festival set for March 29-30 at First Church, Nashville, according to Eleanor Yarborough, director of the TBC Church Recreation Department.



Kyle & Susan Matthews

Featured guest artists are Kyle and Susan Matthews of Nashville.

The festival offers 128 different conferences designed to meet needs at all levels in the areas of drama, puppetry, clowning, mime, interpretive movement, and more.

For more information, call (615) 371-2033. □

# NOBTS trustees meet for first time under Kelley

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — The health of a seminary should not be measured by the number of students or the size of the endowment, the new president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary told trustees during their meeting March 13.

Rather, the health of a seminary should be measured "by

the health of the churches where its graduates lead," said Charles S. Kelley Jr, who was elected Feb. 23 as the eighth president of NOBTS.

Noting the affirmation of former president Landrum P. Leavell II and of administrators, faculty, staff, and alumni, Kelley said the seminary is "in the midst of a smooth handoff." He commended school administrators "for not just keeping

the school surviving" during the 13-month search for a new president, but for "keeping the school humming. They have done a superlative job," he said.

In other business, trustees elected three laymen as officers: William M. Hamm Jr., Shreveport, La., chairman; Arnold A. Burk, London, Ark., vice chairman; and William A. Hanberry, Hattiesburg, Miss.,

secretary-treasurer.

A new fee scheduled, rent charges, and salary information were included in the 1996-97 budget adopted by trustees. The new budget is a 5 percent increase over the current year's budget.

The new matriculation fee will be \$800 for the seminary's undergraduate, master's and non-degree programs and \$950 for doctoral degree fees. □

## Southeastern trustees address enrollment growth challenges

Baptist Press

WAKE FOREST, N.C. — The record rate of growth in enrollment at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary set the agenda for the spring meeting of the school's trustees March 11-12.

The student population has doubled in the last three-and-a-half years, according to President Paige Patterson, who noted the faculty "has grown

nowhere close to that rate."

Trustees responded by electing three new faculty members, calling for the creation of a task force to develop a master campus plan, giving the school's administration permission to move forward with additional married student housing, and approving a proposal to renovate the lower level of the woman's dormitory on the seminary's Wake Forest campus. Patterson said the enroll-

ment does not appear to be leveling off, citing admissions office figures which show the count of applications approved for admissions 33 percent ahead of the same time last year.

Sharing his vision of a new library, cafeteria and banquet

facilities, and additional classroom and office space, Patterson said work needs to begin at once to meet the immediate needs of the seminary. In agreeing with Patterson, trustees voted to employ an architect to draft revisions and plans for future development. □

## Daily Partnership Prayer Requests March



- 20 — Continue to pray for the transition in Canada from the Home Mission Board to the North American Mission Board.
- 21 — Pray for the foreign missionaries in Canada as their future is being decided.
- 22 — Pray for the Clown Evangelism Conference being held in Calgary, Alberta, March 22-24.
- 23 — Pray that Tennessee Baptists will volunteer to meet the needs of the many requests from Polish Baptist churches.
- 24 — Pray for Mark and Susie Edworthy and their family as their fur-lough winds down and they prepare to return to Warsaw in June.
- 25 — Pray for the new Hmong congregation beginning in Pontiac, Mich.
- 26 — Praise God that Charles Dill is now having to serve only one association in Michigan.

## Career Day cancelled

JACKSON — A career day scheduled for March 23 at Union University has been cancelled, according to Mary Allen of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Discipleship Training Department, one of the sponsors of the event.

Questions can be directed to Allen at (615) 371-2083. □

## Director of Missions

Beulah Association is seeking a director of missions. Interested persons should send a resume with cover letter to Search Committee, Beulah Baptist Association, P.O. Box 366, Union City, TN 38281, or Jimmy Brown, 688 Sublett, Union City, TN 38261. Deadline for receiving resumes is April 15.

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## Summer Camp Staff Opportunities

Camp Operations Staff opportunities are available at both Camp Linden (Linden, TN) and Camp Carson (Newport, TN) for 1996. If you are interested in a position of cook, lifeguard, lawn and maintenance worker, kitchen helper, dining room server, canteen/gift shop operator, or office staff at either camp, please contact the Human Resources Office, TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728 for an application, or phone (615) 371-2013.

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## FULL-TIME HOUSEPARENTS NEEDED

Baptist husband and wife teams are needed at four Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes locations.

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children, and childcare experience. Each home requires specific skills so please call the numbers beside each listing for detailed information.



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Memphis: Gene Gafford (901) 386-3961

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# TenneScene ■ the people, their work

## ■ the churches

■ **Second Church, Memphis**, will hold its annual outside drama April 3-5. It is entitled "The Way of the Cross." Guided walking tours will be every 15 minutes from 7-9 p.m. and last about 45 minutes. The church has held such an event for the past 22 years.

■ **Twin Hills Church, Westmoreland**, will hold a conference, "A Week Especially For Women," May 20-24. It has a non-denominational focus. Speakers include Pamela Carter, Joanne Culver, Clear Call, Lois Jane Huddleston, and Jackie Diel.

■ **Meridian Church, Crossville**, has begun building a new sanctuary and educational facility.

■ The college ministry of **Calvary Church, Knoxville**, is leading a missions trip to New York City during spring break. About 45 will participate. The church also is sponsoring

a Women's Spring Retreat March 22-23. Martha Hoke will speak.

■ **Rocky Hill Church, Knoxville**, will hold revival March 24-27. Claude Cone will speak.

■ **Eastland Church, Nashville**, will hold its 85th Anniversary and Homecoming Celebration March 24. Activities include a covered dish luncheon and afternoon service beginning at 1:30 p.m.

■ **First Church, Millington**, will host Crosspoint Weekend Challenge, a weekend sports camp for children in grades 4-8 sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board, on April 26-28. Sports featured include baseball, softball, gymnastics, soccer, and flag football. For more information, call Skip Arnhart, children's minister at First Church, at (901) 872-2264.

■ Four Memphis area churches will hold a March 27-29 revival hosted by **West Haven Church**. The other

participating churches are **Kirby Woods Church, Trinity Church, Cordova, and Christian Cornerstone Church, Collierville**. Ken Bradley, pastor, Christian Cornerstone; Robert Pitman, pastor, Kirby Woods; and Earl C. Davis, pastor, Trinity; will speak. All four church choirs will lead the music.

■ **Wilsonville Church, Newport**, set 15-year records March 3 in attendance at Sunday School Discipleship Training, morning and evening worship, and in gifts to the church.

## ■ the associations

■ **Shelby Association** is hosting author Henry Blackaby of the Home Mission Board March 21-23 for a conference, "Experiencing God: Toward the Next Great Awakening." It will be held at Germantown Church, Germantown. Other speakers include Ron Owens, Kerry Skinner, and Ron Gaynor. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. on March 21 and ends at noon on March 23.

■ **Beulah Association**, rather than Haywood Association as reported in last week's issue, will hold a Youth Evangelism Rally March 28 at Union City Civic Auditorium.

■ **Midland Association** will hold its annual Youth Conference March 23 at 7 p.m. at Emory Valley Church, Knoxville. Joel Ammons, pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship, Powell, will speak. The Seed Company of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, will lead music and New Hope Drama Ministry will perform. The youth group with the largest group will be honored.



**ROYAL AMBASSADORS** from First Church, Savannah, pose with bags of more than 6,000 aluminum cans they collected. Through the collection they raised \$66 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. The success of the project led the RAs to decide to raise funds all year long for missions.

## ■ death

■ **Phillip C. Padgett, 80**, retired director of United Tennessee League died in Nashville March 9. He served the league for 21 years from 1963-84. He was a member of Belmont Heights Church, Nashville.

## ■ the leaders

■ **Brownsville Church, Brownsville**, has called **Mario Maldonado** of New Orleans, La., as Spanish minister.

■ **Gerald Padgett**, pastor of Verble Church, Monterrey, instead of Verble as reported in last week's issue, has been called as pastor of Central Emmanuel Church in Cookeville.

■ **Meridian Church, Crossville**, has called **Bud Slaton** as youth minister and **Glen Davenport** as minister of education.

■ **Kris Olliff** of Clarksville has been called as minister of youth, Pleasant Hill No. 1

Church, Martin. Olliff is a student at Jackson State Community College in Jackson.

■ **Billy Bateman** has been called as pastor of Corinth Church, Dover. He formerly was pastor of New Hope Church, Bon Aqua.

## ■ the people

■ **Mount Hermon Church, Murfreesboro**, ordained **Brian Harrell** to the ministry Feb. 18 at the request of Southeast Church, Murfreesboro. Harrell is serving as bivocational pastor of Harvestview Church, Kittrell, a mission of Southeast Church. He also teaches school. Jimmy Edwards spoke at the service and Jere Adams led the music.

■ **John R. "Rusty" Holt**, single/college director, Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville, was ordained to the ministry March 3 by the church. Holt is a student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky.



**LEADING A COMMISSIONING SERVICE** for Ann W. Turney, center, to the Home Mission Board's Mission Service Corps Feb. 25 are, from left, Baylon Hilliard, director of missions, Duck River Association; Darrell Williams, First Church, Winchester; Turney; Alan Roggli, pastor, First Church, Winchester; and Dick German, TBC Volunteer in Missions Coordinator. The service was held at First Church, Winchester.

# Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

## Living above circumstances

By A. Richard Childress, pastor  
Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain

While waiting in my car in a shopping mall parking lot, I learned a lesson.

In a matter of minutes, three different cars parked in nearby spaces. First a 1985 two-door sedan pulled into place. I watched a man and a teenager take a wheelchair out. I then heard laughter and watched the happy exchanges of apparently a father, son, and handicapped mother as they worked together.

A few minutes later another car, a small Ford of mid-70s vintage, pulled into another nearby space. Four people got out. Interestingly enough, the driver also was handicapped, and a wheelchair was taken from the trunk to

transport him into the mall. Again, I was struck by the laughter and relaxed relationship which was shared by these people.

Then a car pulled up. I would have remembered the car just by the sight of it alone. Being a late-model, four-door Mercedes 500 SEL, it announced its own arrival. However, this black with gray leather interior car was occupied by three of the unhappiest looking, well-dressed people I ever saw. They got out of that car on healthy legs, having a full-blown argument while they walked away.

All of which says, not all happiness comes by way of late model cars, unencumbered health, and fashionable clothes. Oh, I don't mean to suggest there had never been a cross word spoken in the Ford. But I am saying that getting your priorities and values in order will help you live above your cir-

cumstances ... regardless of how old your car is!

Jesus said it best: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you" Matthew 6:33.

## 'People Count'

By Stanley Young Jr., pastor  
Edgemoor Church, Clinton

"God bless America, land that I love ... ." As citizens of the United States we have great love and concern for our country and our fellow citizens. Throughout this year our attention will be focused on political candidates who desire to lead our government.

However, all of their promises and endeavors will not meet the greatest need of people. Statisticians tell us that the U.S. is the third largest unsaved

nation in the world. There are an estimated 184 million people in America who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. There are about 400 counties in our country that do not even have a Southern Baptist church.

We have the responsibility and the means to help reach our nation for Christ. In addition to our personal witness for Christ, we must work with other Christians to call our land to Jesus. This is also the work of home missions that is supported by our regular giving and especially by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions that we receive each year at this time. Our church gifts will be used in our 50 states, the Caribbean, America Samoa, Guam, and Canada.

Pray for our home missionaries, give to support their work, and share your witness of Jesus Christ daily because in our world, "People Count." □

# Baptists urged to transcend 'right/left' labels at BCE conference

Associated Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Evangelical author Tom Sine called for a radical "third-wave Christian citizenship" to correct flaws of both the right and left at a Baptist ethics conference March 11-12 at Immanuel Church, Nashville.

About 155 people from 13 states attended the regional conference sponsored by the Baptist Center for Ethics, titled "Leadership Through the Culture Wars."

Sine said churches in America are being torn apart by polarization between liberals and conservatives.

"Many people, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and evangelicals, are looking for a new place to stand," Sine said. "They are not happy with the polarities of the right and left."

Sine offered "not a middle position between right and left" but "a radical biblical alternative" to both positions.

"My contention is neither side takes Scriptures seriously," Sine said. The Religious Right takes the Bible "literally," but doesn't bring it to bear on public policy issues such as poverty and injustice.

Churches on the left, meanwhile, have their identity tied up in being "social progressives," even if it means ignoring moral teachings of Scrip-

## Nashville Baptists share tips on advancing race relations

By Lonnie Wilkey  
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Two Nashville Baptists shared how their congregations — one African American, the other white — are advancing race relations through cooperation during a workshop held at the Leadership Through the Culture Wars Conference March 11-12 at Immanuel Church. The meeting was sponsored by the Nashville-based Baptist Center for Ethics.

Wesley Shotwell, pastor of Hickory Hollow Church, and Christina Crawley, minister of education at Simeon Church, both in Nashville, discussed how the two congregations have overcome racial barriers and in process are building trust by sharing the same facility.

The two churches have been using

Hickory Hollow's facility since last October. Their coming together came after a long study process, the two leaders said.

Crawley admitted to some apprehension when she attended her first meeting to discuss the move. Simeon had outgrown the space it was using at another Nashville Baptist church and needed more room. "I could feel a genuine love, concern, and openness," Crawley said. "They really wanted us here."

Shotwell said Hickory Hollow voted to invite Simeon by secret ballot and there were only three "no" votes. And, after the first months of the relationship, two of those have changed their mind, Shotwell noted. Shotwell said reaching out to the African American congregation "fulfills our mission to reach everyone in our community."

Each church has their own Sunday

School and worship services. In addition they sometimes hold special services and fellowships together.

They have two separate churches rather than one because of culture, Crawley said, noting that "church is very important to the African American." Regardless, however, people of any race are welcome at either service, Crawley and Shotwell said.

The relationship is getting stronger as trust builds between the two congregations, the workshop leaders agreed.

"We don't claim to have reached utopia (in our relationship). We still have some growing to do," Shotwell said.

Crawley observed differences between the two cultures are evident when the two congregations join together, "but we know we are under one umbrella — God's." □

ture, he said. "Many of our understandings of discipleship, missions, and social responsibility simply don't square with the Bible," Sine said.

Other speakers at the conference urged church leaders to confront and clarify thorny social issues for people polarized by political debate.

Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien told conference participants, "The challenge of the church today is to get the salt out of the salt

shaker and into the world where it belongs."

Bill Purcell, majority leader in the Tennessee House of Representatives, urged Baptists to help their legislators by speaking up for children.

Because loud partisan voices can gain the attention of legislators, misinformation is always a danger, he said. If churches are not heard, he added, "then the vacuum is filled by those voices you do not believe are right." □ — Bob Allen

## SBC pastors join call for GOP to stay pro-life

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Three Southern Baptist pastors, including SBC President Jim Henry, have joined other religious leaders in calling on the major Republican presidential candidates to maintain the party's support of a constitutional amendment banning abortion.

In a recent letter, 16 evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders expressed concern about the campaign by some prominent Republicans to delete or modify the pro-life

plank in the party's platform.

"As the Republican National Convention fast approaches, millions of Catholics and evangelicals will be anxiously waiting to see what route you will take on this issue," the leaders wrote. "We are praying that you will not abandon principle."

In addition to Henry other Southern Baptists signing the

letter were Adrian Rogers, Bellevue Church, Cordova, and Ed Young, First Church, Houston, Texas.

The letter was mailed to all Republican presidential candidates and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour. □

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# ■ Sunday School lesson commentary

**Life and Work Series  
for March 24  
Focal Passage: Matthew  
7:13-23**

## Steadfast commitment

By Charles Parker

Ruth Graham once told about a man who visited the counterfeit money department at Scotland Yard. "It must take years and years of studying counterfeits in order to know the real," he said. "Quite the contrary," replied the officer. "It takes years and years of studying the real to make sure you can spot a counterfeit." Some police services, we are told, will not even allow their officers to see a counterfeit until they are certain what a real dollar looks like.

Being a forgery, fake, or counterfeit is not hard. Jesus began to conclude his Sermon on the Mount by describing two ways, two trees, and two kinds of doers. This highlights the possibility that one can choose the false instead of the true. Jesus calls people to make a steadfast commitment to him and avoid the counterfeit.

### Popular way or narrow gate — vv. 13-14

Everyone has to choose. We cannot camp at the crossroads and wait it out. The term strait (not straight) is most commonly used today to speak of a narrow passageway connecting two larger bodies of water. Since daily life is a transition from one moment to another, it lends itself to the image of a road or way.

Many enter the broad way that leads to destruction, but it does not appear to be a bad way. Jesus' way is supremely precious. It is the way of salvation which cannot be earned or deserved, only chosen as a gift. But note the demanding nature of this gift. This narrow way fulfills the law, is in control of anger and lust, has a high view of marriage, loves its enemies, has deep prayer and devotional life, gives for the right reasons, and lays up treasures in heaven. This is an exciting way to live! But many miss it. Adolf Schlatter said: "When you do what the majority does, you destroy your life."

### Corrupt tree or good tree — vv. 15-20

Here Jesus personalizes the choice of commitment by mentioning the influence of our fellow travellers. Some of the sheep of the flock are really wolves travelling in disguise. The test Jesus offers is to look at the outcome of their lives. We are all called to be fruit inspectors. What kind of fruit does the tree of a person's life bear? The "good" is the spiritual good in a life, not whether it makes one healthier, wealthier, or smarter.

Someone said, "We are not required to judge others, to judge their intentions, or to judge their motives. We are not even required to identify what is evil. The only test is the presence of good fruit. When good fruits are found, we can be certain they did not come from thorns or thistles or a corrupt tree." Real fruit is an evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life.

### Talker or doer of God's will — vv. 21-23

These difficult words of Jesus make clear that being a kingdom person, a follower of Jesus, is more than saying the right words or even doing the right things. Not all religious activities, including prophecy, exorcisms, or miracles are the good fruit of verses 16-20. These words ought to be a warning to some who reduce salvation to the right formula in prayer once prayed, but not backed up with continuing spiritual growth. They are also a warning to any who reduce salvation to good works divorced from an inward change of heart.

If we boast and claim our deeds please God, we are on the same ground as the scribes and Pharisees whose faith Jesus sought to challenge. When we realize our imperfections, we enter the kingdom of grace by the strait gate and narrow way. □ — Charles Parker is pastor of First Church, Jacksboro.

## The three servants

By Kim Allen

**Convention Uniform Series  
for March 24  
Focal Passage:  
Matthew 25:14-30**

The parable we are looking at this week, usually called the parable of the talents, concentrates on the need for faithful stewardship as we await the coming Lord.

Our aim this week is to evaluate our faithfulness in the use of what the Lord has entrusted to us.

### Responses to the Master's trust — vv. 14-18

A talent was the largest sum of money in the ancient world equal to several thousand dollars today. The parable does not state what the servants were to do with the money but the owners' expectation implies faithfulness and wisdom until his return.

Each of the three were entrusted with part of the master's wealth. They were expected, because of this trust, to do with it as he would while he was away. As applied to our Lord, we are entrusted on earth with all that he has. Verse 15 denotes that not all are equal. Different amounts are given to different people relating to their abilities or talent.

The first two servants traded on the talents given to them in trust and doubled their master's money. There was some risk involved in putting money to work, but there is risk involved in the faithful use of the Lord's resources entrusted to us. The third servant simply dug a hole and buried the money.

### The Master's accounting — vv. 19-30

The return of the master after a long time represents for us the Lord's future coming. The master's settling of accounts is similar to the Lord dealing with his children at the time of judgment.

The servant with five talents was commended by his master. In so doing, he was evaluated by the saying "well done." He was called "good and faithful" and was rewarded with greater areas of responsibilities

and the joy of his master.

Verses 22-23 mirror the master's saying to the servant with five talents. Verse 15 shows that the Lord assigns responsibility according to individual capabilities. Verse 23 shows

that he judges and rewards on the basis of faithfulness. There was no criticism of the servant with two talents in not earning more. He was rewarded on the basis of what the Lord had entrusted to him.

Because the third servants primary feeling towards his master was fear, he dug a hole to protect what he had been given. His opinion of the master's character slanted his ability to do otherwise.

The master berates him that if that is what he thought of him, he should have placed the money in the bank to earn interest.

This is a severe distortion of the divine Lord. Many people have a view of God similar to the servant's view of his master, in that God demands what they cannot give. Their attitude towards God wavers between fear and indifference.

Everything we have has come from God. What we do with what God has entrusted us with determines whether we are judged faithful or unfaithful by the Lord.

People who trust the Lord and love him are willing to take the risks he asks us to. The third servant is typical of those who do not trust or love God. Unfaithful servants lose their lives in seeking to save them. Faithful servants find their lives because they are willing to risk all for the Lord.

Based on our God-given talent or abilities and our faithfulness, will we hear, "well done thy good and faithful servant?" □ — Kim Allen is pastor of Little West Fork Church, Clarksville.

## Leaders confronting problems

By Phil Lovelace

**Bible Book Series for March 24  
Focal Passage:  
Titus 1:1-15**

### Proclaim the Word — vv. 1-4

This formal greeting is a statement of the place of the Word of God in the life of the local church. Paul was a servant and apostle according to the faith of the church. His ministry was not apart from the church but tied directly to it. This "faith" is what Jude calls "The faith which was once delivered unto the saints." It is that deposit of truth that God gave to Paul and which he had given to Titus and Timothy.

One of the problems in Crete was an abuse of the grace of God. "God has saved us by grace," these believers argued, "so we are free to sin." Paul answers this by defining faith as the "truth which is after godliness." It means daily practical holiness. Later Paul explains that grace saves us and also disciplines us to live dedicated lives.

The message of grace also points ahead to the blessed hope of Christ's return. Titus was to preach God's grace to sinners, the holy life that follows true faith in Christ, and the daily expectation of his return.

### Organize the church — vv. 5-9

Titus had definite opposition to his ministry and there is the suggestion that he wanted to resign. As long as Christians are in this body of flesh there will be problems in our churches. When these problems arise, the answer is not to hide them or for officers to resign and find a new church. The answer is to face them honestly and prayerfully

and settle them according to the Word of God.

Titus was not to select the elders; he was to ordain those whom the churches had chosen. "In every city" in verse 5 indicates that the Gospel had spread from one place to another, which is as it should be. The bishop is a steward of God's blessings, both material and spiritual. He is to hold fast the faithful word. He must know the Word for two reasons: to be able to minister to the saints and to be able to refute the false teachers.

### Refute the false teachers — vv. 10-15

Wherever Christ sows the good seed, Satan follows with counterfeit seed and with false teachers. There were, in Crete, a group of people who contradicted the teachings of Paul and taught Jewish legalism and traditionalism. We must constantly beware of false teachings. When we mix law with grace, we end up with false doctrine. Paul describes these teachers as empty talkers, deceivers, and unruly.

Dietary laws and asceticism were key doctrines to these false teachers. Paul was dealing with the problem of clean and unclean foods. He is teaching that the believer who knows the Word of God receives all

foods as clean; the unbeliever has a defiled mind and conscience and therefore sees nothing as pure. Moral and spiritual purity is not a matter of diets; it is a matter of a clean heart and a good conscience.

How is Titus to treat these false teachers? Is he to unite with them and try to see their point of view? No. He must stop their mouths and rebuke them sharply. After all, their teachings were upsetting entire families. And their motive was simply to get money and not to honor the Lord. Verse 16 sums up the situation clearly: these false teachers profess one thing and practice another; they are denying Christ by their works, they are abominable and disobedient; they will never pass the test.

We have false teachers attacking the church today. It is one thing for a person to hold to a false doctrine because of ignorance, and quite another for him to hold it and teach it as the fact of God's truth.

Note the emphasis here on "sound doctrine" and "sound faith." This is not the healthy doctrine we met in Paul's letters to Timothy. False doctrines only lead to spiritual sickness in the body of Christ. □ — Phil Lovelace is pastor of First Church, Somerville.

## '48 Hours' set aside for students to witness

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Forty-eight hours in April have been set aside for a nationwide simultaneous effort for students to share the Gospel.

From noon Friday, April 12, to noon Sunday, April 14, youth and college students are challenged to find their lost friends, share the Gospel with them, and give them an opportunity to respond, said Dean Finley, Home Mission Board youth evangelism specialist.

Known simply as "48 Hours," the effort is multi-denominational and is designed to make students aware of the urgency of sharing Christ.

For more information about the emphasis, call Finley at (417) 862-1111. □

## RTVC series examines 'Morality in Media'

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — The Radio and Television Commission will be the first Southern Baptist agency to do a se-

ries of three television documentaries on the subject of "Morality in Media." The agency recently received its second \$50,000 grant from the Davidson Family Charitable Foundation for development of the series. The RTVC received its first \$50,000 grant last November.

The first "Morality in Media" documentary, to be aired by the NBC television network, is scheduled for completion this spring.

The host will be John Schneider, former "Dukes of Hazzard" TV star who founded FaithWorks Productions, a San Antonio, Texas-based film company dedicated to the production of quality family entertainment. □

## Corley to return to Southwestern faculty

Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Bruce Corley, dean of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of theology from 1990-95, was elected by the school's board of trustees March 13 to return to the faculty as professor of New Testament, effective June 1.

Corley resigned as dean last March to accept a teaching position at George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas.

"My family and I believe this to be God's will for us in the best stewardship of our lives in ministry," Corley said in a prepared statement.

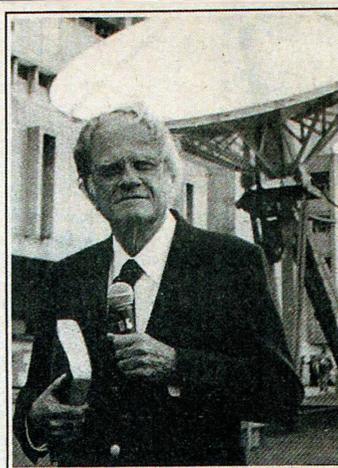
Corley said he is supportive of the direction of the seminary under President Ken Hemphill and expressed his regret for "past misunderstandings."

Hemphill said Corley's return "sends a very positive message about our trustees. I have found them to be very fair in their judgments and desirous of doing only that which they believe to be in the best interest of Southwestern." □

## Hastings joins CLC in communications

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The



## Graham to reach 2.5 billion people

For more than a decade, Southern Baptist evangelist Billy Graham has sent his Gospel message around the world by satellite. During April, the World Television Series will broadcast a special evangelistic preaching program and two dramatic films featuring Graham to every country of the world, with an anticipated audience of 2.5 billion people. The program will be aired on intercontinental satellite television networks in Asia and Europe, as well as on national television networks in more than 160 countries.

Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission elected Dwayne Hastings, news and information coordinator at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, as its director of communications during its semiannual meeting March 7.

Hastings, 1995 graduate of Southeastern, edited *Outlook* magazine and *The Olive Press* newsjournal and wrote for Baptist Press during his two years in the Southeastern news office.

As part of his duties with the CLC, Hastings will edit *Light*, the agency's ethics magazine. □

## Louisiana paper hits the Internet

Baptist Press

ALEXANDRIA, La. — The Louisiana Baptist Message is now "online."

For more than 100 years the paper has been mailed to subscribers in Louisiana and to some out of state. The numbers leaving Louisiana have been relatively few.

Since earlier this year, however, the paper has erased all borders by publishing a version of its weekly newspaper on the Internet.

"In a sense, this is an unbelievable development," said Editor Lynn P. Clayton. "To think that what we produce in Louisiana each week is available absolutely around the world staggers the imagination."

"At the same time, it is exciting to consider. Missionaries with Internet capabilities can now access news quickly." □

## William Carey selects Lee as new president

Baptist Press

HATTIESBURG, Miss. — Longtime Mississippi College administrator Rory Lee, 46,

has been awarded a five-year contract as president and chief operating officer of William Carey College in Hattiesburg.

The action is part of a 10-year plan for "strengthening the top management team of the Mississippi Baptist institution. The plan was recommended by Jim Edwards, WCC's current president and chief executive officer. Edwards will become chancellor and remain as CEO.

Lee has served at Mississippi College for 25 years. □

## FMB's Robert O'Brien plans early retirement

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — Robert O'Brien, senior overseas correspondent for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has announced plans for early retirement, effective Aug. 31.

He was managing editor of the board's news office and the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press from 1989 until last September when he accepted a senior correspondent position created during a communications office reorganization.

O'Brien, 56, will do contract work for the board as a writer, editor, and communications consultant.

O'Brien joined the FMB in 1980 after seven years as news editor for Baptist Press to develop his proposal for the overseas correspondent system that now includes missionary journalists based in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

He and his wife Shirley and two sons spent two years in Nairobi, Kenya, where he field tested the proposal.

O'Brien is widely recognized for his skills in written communication. In 38 years as a journalist O'Brien has received 64 awards in communications, including more than 40 for writing. □

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