

this week's news

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RTVC facilities to continue in use after SBC move

By Art Tolston
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — The facilities of the Radio and Television Commission will continue in use in Fort Worth, Texas, in the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, according to a report received by the SBC Executive Committee Sept. 16 from its Implementation Task Force.

A new North American Mission Board, to be formed in a merger of the SBC's current Home Mission Board, RTVC, and Brotherhood Commission, will be based in suburban Atlanta, according to previous recommendations from the 10-member ITF, created by the Executive Committee after SBC messengers approved the "Covenant for a New Century" convention-wide restructuring during the 1995 annual meeting in Atlanta.

The ITF's Sept. 16 report noted NAMB's radio-TV "executive leadership team" would be based in Alpharetta, Ga., site of new facilities opened by the Home Mission Board in 1995, while radio-TV "operational facilities" will remain in Fort Worth, where the RTVC has been based since 1955.

The ITF said its decision on the Fort Worth facilities involved much discussion and incorporated input from Coopers & Lybrand consultants with expertise in media and technology.

The Brotherhood Commission facility in Memphis, however, "has been officially listed for sale," the ITF reported to the Executive Committee.

Among other matters reported by the ITF Sept. 16:

(1) "Benefits for retirees of affected agencies shall become the responsibility of successor corporations or the Executive Committee."

(2) Efforts are being made to assure "that no issues or people 'drop through the cracks' in the SBC downsizing."

"Great care is being exercised toward reasonable and fair compensation" to affected employees, the ITF said. ■



Recognizing, entertaining senior adults

Johnnie Hall of the Tennessee Baptist Convention hands out a box of Goo Goo Clusters to Billy Hill, left, pastor, Richland Church, Nashville, and Tony Long, right, minister of education, Third Church, Murfreesboro, to recognize them for their work with seniors. Hall is assisted in his annual tradition of recognizing seniors by Oran Creasman, pastor, Eastanallee Church, Riceville.

Belmont dedicates leadership center

For Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Belmont University held its dedication ceremony Sept. 19 for the Anna & Ernest J. Moench Center for Church Leadership.

The Moench Center, part of the School of Religion, was developed with the mission to serve in partnership with Baptist churches, associations, conventions, and other Christian groups in providing premier professional education and development opportunities to equip servant leaders for more effective ministry in local churches.

"The Moench Center will not only affect the ministers who participate in the center's training, but consequently the congregations of the churches also," said Lloyd Elder, director of the Moench Center.

The center will pursue its mission through at least six strategic programs: training and instruction, consultation and development, research and resources, leadership materials, a journal publication, and academic instruction.

The center is named in honor of Ernest J. Moench Sr. and his wife, Anna. Before his death in 1992, Moench made a

\$500,000 endowment gift to Belmont's School of Religion. His wife later added a trust gift of \$1 million.

Elder expressed gratitude for the Moench family on behalf of the entire Belmont community. "I have become acquainted with the Moench family and appreciate the vision Mr. Moench had for practical leadership training for ministers. The family has asked nothing for themselves. Belmont honors them and deeply appreciates their generosity," Elder said.

During the past year Elder and Associate Director Joyce Byrd gave leadership to a year-long pilot project of research and development for the center.

Elder reported the Tennessee Baptist Convention will join in partnership with the Moench Center. He related a conversation with Gary Rickman of the TBC in which Rickman said the TBC will provide scholarships for church ministers attending Moench Center seminars and use Moench Center materials, especially for training bivocational ministers.

The celebration included a luncheon hosted by Belmont President William E. Troutt and the center's premier leadership conference led by Reginald McDonough, executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. ■



BELMONT UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT William E. Troutt, right, presents a plaque to Anna Moench, center a member of Belmont Heights Church, Nashville, during the founding day celebration for Belmont's Anna & Ernest J. Moench Center for Church Leadership. Looking on are Lloyd Elder and Joyce Byrd, director and associate director, respectively, of the center.

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Elliff gives update on convocations

Floyd reiterates call for fasting and prayer

By Art Toalston
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptists would find power in agreeing on the need for revival, said Ronnie W. Floyd, reiterating an Oct. 27-Nov. 3 call to fasting and prayer across the Southern Baptist Convention.

"There is power in agreement," Floyd told members of the SBC Executive Committee meeting here Sept. 16. "Baptists are not known to agree a lot together," Floyd, the committee's chairman, acknowledged. "But we ought to become known as a people who know how to agree with one another about the right things. And we might have to repent over some past things in order to move on to agree on the right things.

"And what is right?" Floyd asked. "That God would move in our generation. What is right? That we will call the people of God to repentance, to be holy, to exercise the righteousness of God that they have already been clothed with ... through Jesus Christ and the power he gives to each one of us."

Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., first voiced the Oct. 27-Nov. 3

call to fasting and prayer during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting last June in New Orleans when he delivered the convention sermon. Four thrusts are involved in the emphasis:

(1) on Sunday morning, Oct. 27, preaching on the subject of fasting and prayer, calling Baptists to fast and pray on Oct. 30.

(2) on Sunday evening, Oct. 27, holding a "solemn assembly" of prayer to call people to repent of personal sin and the sins of the nation, asking God for mercy on his people.

(3) observing Wednesday, Oct. 30, as a day of humiliation, prayer, and fasting for personal, church, and national revival.

(4) On Sunday, Nov. 3, in both morning and evening services, preaching on the subject of personal, church, and national revival, challenging God's people to do whatever it takes to see revival in America.

Floyd noted: "While the rest of America thinks that the future of this country will be determined two days later in the ballot box, we are saying, 'No, that's not where

the future of this country will be determined.'" It will be determined "in the prayer closet," he stated in comments based on Psalm 63:1 and Joel 2:12-13.

Tom Elliff, the SBC's new president, also addressed the Executive Committee Sept. 16.

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Church, Del City, Okla., had just concluded a series of convocations emphasizing the crucified life and prayer for spiritual awakening that included stops at the SBC's six seminary campuses and the Home Mission Board.

Saying he "came away from every one of those convocations deeply, deeply moved," Elliff voiced an urgency to issue an appeal to Executive Committee members "from my heart to your heart ... an appeal which I believe has been borne in the heart of God.

"It is simply this: In the midst of all that we're saying, and in the midst of all that we're planning to do ... in the midst of all of the programming, please don't you forget to pray."

It would be easy "to preach about praying, to write about praying, to call people to pray" — and yet not pray, Elliff said during his message. ■



FLOYD

Executive Committee approves funds, acts on referrals

By Herb Hollinger
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — In a relatively quiet — and quick — meeting, the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee granted \$150,000 to a Baptist schools association following the early closing of the Education Commission and declined to act on a number of referred motions from the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans.

The Sept. 16-18 regular meeting of the Executive Committee concluded Tuesday at mid-afternoon following a one-hour plenary session where there was no debate and all votes on recommendations were apparently unanimous.

A shortened meeting appeared likely when the schedule eliminated a budget request presentation by each of the 19 SBC agencies, a regular part of the September meeting. Officials decided to do all of the budget preparation for the 1997-98 SBC year at the February meeting because of the denominational restructuring which reduces the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12, including a new North American Mission Board which won't officially function until June 1997.

The Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) will receive \$150,000 over two years in a request from the Education Commission approved by the Executive

Committee. The Education Commission will dissolve Dec. 31, 1996, and commissioners asked the Executive Committee to grant the funds from the commission's budget to help ASBCS get started. ASBCS will assume some of the functions of the Education Commission following its closure.

The Executive Committee took action, by declining to act in most instances, on 16 motions referred from the SBC annual meeting:

(1) declined to recommend any change to Bylaw 16(5). The referral sought to prohibit agency heads and their elected staffs from suggesting candidates for service on their governing boards.

(2) affirmed the SBC in annual session should continue to "exercise with care its right to elect qualified ministers and laypersons as its officers and declines to recommend any change in the SBC Constitution." The referral would require either the SBC president or a vice president to be a layman.

(3) declined to recommend SBC Bylaw 28(2) be amended. The referral would require convention entities to report to the maker of a motion any disposition of a motion referred to the agency by the convention. The Executive Committee said the referral is "announced to the messengers and published in the proceedings. ..."

(4) said it interprets SBC By-

law 28(2) as requiring entities to provide specific information to the convention when declining to act on referred motions and declined any further action. The referral would require the agencies to provide a full explanation when declining to act on the motions.

(5) said guidelines "are sufficient" for determining messenger credentials in declining to study the matter further on a referral seeking a mechanism to determine when a church is in violation of Article III, Membership of the SBC constitution.

(6) said the committee will continue its current practice of responding to requests for information about certain groups and organizations but declined to broaden that practice as, apparently, sought in a referral which named the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and Alliance of Baptists specifically.

(7) declined to publish a list of African American churches which have been targets of arsonist because lists are available from Christian Life Commission and Brotherhood Commission.

(8) requested the CLC study the feasibility of a system of voting by proxy all investments held by entities of the SBC "so that Southern Baptists' moral views can positively impact corporate America."

(9) declined to adopt a policy of scheduling SBC annual meetings during the third week of June.

(10) declined action to study holding annual conventions in northern and eastern states after the year 2002. The committee said these geographical locations are already considered in the current policy.

(11) declined to research holding satellite or regional meetings of the Pastors' Conference and the SBC annual meeting, citing no direct responsibility for the Pastors' Conference and increased costs for the annual meeting.

(12) declined to act on a motion to hold annual meetings in a city where Southern Baptist work is not well established.

(13) will refer to the new North American Mission Board a motion to develop national television and radio spots to reach people for Christ, strengthen families and enhance the image of Southern Baptists.

(14) affirmed the SBC's Inter-Agency Council for its plans to support Christian schools and home schools and the Baptist Sunday School Board's weekday education program assignment, in recommending no further study.

(15) declined to study the establishment of a four-year, liberal arts university owned by the SBC.

(16) declined to create an additional track of Cooperative Program giving asked in a referral, citing current practices dating since 1925 which "have served the SBC well." ■

Virginia conservatives form new state convention

By Tom Strode
For Baptist Press

RICHMOND — Conservative Southern Baptists in Virginia voted unanimously Sept. 16 to form their own state convention in an apparently unprecedented action in the 151-year history of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Virginia now has two conventions identified with Southern Baptists: The Baptist General Association of Virginia and the new one, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, a name which may be changed as transitional decisions are made. It appears to be the first time Southern Baptists have had competing conventions in the same state.

About 500 messengers to the annual meeting of the SBCV raised their ballots in support of their executive committee's recommendation to form a new convention. When no one raised a ballot in opposition, the messengers stood and applauded in the auditorium of Richmond's Grove Avenue Baptist Church. The SBCV already had 115 member churches before voting to become a state convention.

Virginia conservative lead-

ers cited three primary reasons for the historic action:

(1) Theological differences with the moderate-dominated BGAV.

(2) A desire to support fully the Southern Baptist Convention rather than continue as part of a convention identified with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national, moderate organization formed in reaction to the conservative resurgence in the SBC.

(3) An inability to change the BGAV because of bylaw changes on messenger representation.

"We are clearly a group of people that really stand unanimously on the Word of God," said Bob Melvin, outgoing SBCV president.

"Another thing that gave birth to the convention, or at least to the SBCV, was really our total commitment to the Southern Baptist Convention, especially how God had brought about the resurgence there," Melvin said after the afternoon meeting. "We just began to sense that there was a falling away from the Southern Baptist Convention on the part of, unfortunately, some Virginia Baptists, especially when they incorporated and

brought in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. We just sensed there was no place for us there."

While conservatives had expressed dissatisfaction for several years with the BGAV's direction, they had not actively pursued forming a convention until a vote at the BGAV's November 1994 meeting changed the basis of messenger representation from the amount given to the Cooperative Program to the amount contributed to the BGAV. A month later, the SBCV executive committee voted to study becoming a convention. The study and executive committees did not recommend the formation of a state convention at the SBCV's November 1995 meeting, citing a 50-50 split by conservatives over such action.

Reginald McDonough, the BGAV's executive director, said he was disappointed but not surprised by the SBCV's action.

"I think there are certain theological differences between the conservatives and the more moderate Baptists in Virginia," McDonough said Sept. 17. "So I don't rule out the theological differences.

"One of the significant

things to me is the fact that the more conservative brethren feel like they have been excluded from the decision-making process in Virginia" like moderates in Virginia have felt excluded from the SBC in recent years, McDonough said.

McDonough said he believes the 1994 bylaw change would have cost conservatives about 300 to 400 messengers to the BGAV, not 2,000, as he has seen by some estimates. However, McDonough said, "in (the conservatives') mind, it was considered a punitive action."

Many questions surrounding the SBCV's decision deal with relations to the national convention and its agencies.

"Our legal counsel advises us that the Southern Baptist Convention relates directly to individual churches from the various states through the messengers the churches select for that purpose," said Bill Merrell, the SBC Executive Committee's vice president for convention relations, in a written statement.

"The bylaws do not prevent cooperation with more than one convention of Baptists from a geographic area" he noted. ■



'At the pole' event yields varied results

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Early reports indicate participation at this year's "See You at the Pole" varied around the country, with most schools reporting an increase in attendance from previous years. See You at the Pole is a national day of prayer for students to gather at their school flagpoles and pray for their communities, schools, and friends. It was scheduled this year on Sept. 18.

In Virginia, Bristol High School reported a turnout so large that students circled the front parking lot instead of the flagpole. The school principal led the first prayer, followed by people praying around the circle twice.

Atlanta, Mich., had different results. The only participants were the two children of the pastor of First Church. Through an on-line reporting process, the students asked for prayer for the school and community and for more youth willing to take a stand.

A total number of participants is not yet available. Updated results from this year's event are to be posted on the Internet at <http://www.ozarksol.com/youthsb.c>. Results also can be sent to the CompuServe address of 103441.2742, called or sent by FAX to (417) 862-1111, or mailed to Youth Evangelism Office, 906 S. National, Springfield, MO 65804. ■

Political parties have failed on abortion, researcher says

Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Both major political parties have failed the nation by failing to adequately address the abortion issue, Gary Bauer told religious broadcasters Sept. 4.

"You're not going to get a revival of family values in America until you deal with the issue of abortion," declared Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, the public-policy arm of James Dobson's Focus on the Family ministry.

He compared the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision which legalized abortion in America with the court's Dred Scott decision, which at one time allowed slavery to continue in America. Despite pundits saying the Dred Scott decision settled the slavery issue, that decision eventually was proved to be wrong, just as must Roe v. Wade, Bauer said.

"Like slavery (abortion) sticks in our throats," he said. "As much as pundits de-

clare this issue is over, it will never be over."

Both political parties "ought to be ashamed on this issue," Bauer declared.

"The Democratic Party, the party of the little guy, ... has abandoned the littlest guy of all," he said.

However, Bauer reserved his harshest criticism for the Republican Party, which he described as the "pro-life party" which he and other religious conservatives have joined for that very reason.

"There is something rotten in my party," he said.

At the Republican National Convention in San Diego this summer, Republican leaders "fell silent" on the abortion issue, Bauer said. "They could not find the courage, speaking to a national television audience, to defend the right to life."

Bauer, a former Education Department official in the Reagan administration and former chairman of Reagan's special

working group on the family, said religious conservatives have waited 16 years for Republican leaders to fulfill their pledges of opposition to abortion. He recalled how early in the Reagan administration abortion and other social issues were put on hold in order to deal with economic issues.

After 16 years, the wait has been too long, and Republican leaders must be held accountable, Bauer suggested. "It's time for them to put up or shut up."

Earlier in the same speech, Bauer warned: "If we continue to play footsie with one party without demanding that it get serious about our issues, we're going to continue on a treadmill forever. We must never sell ourselves cheaply."

Bauer noted the Republican Party needs the heart and passion of religious conservatives. "We're the ones who can make them stop sounding like accountants and start sounding like caring people." ■

TBC pastor gets national award

Baptist Press

ST. LOUIS — Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church, Cordova, will be among the honorees at Religious Heritage of America's 46th annual national awards program Oct. 14 in Memphis.

Rogers will be honored as "Clergyman of the Year" by

Religious Heritage, a St. Louis-based interfaith organization, seeking, according to its mission statement, "to help America reclaim the religious values upon which it was founded by demonstrating how these values add to the quality of life."

Rogers is a former SBC president. ■

House overrides Clinton veto of partial-birth abortion ban

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House of Representatives voted Sept. 19 to override President Bill Clinton's veto of a bill outlawing a late-term abortion procedure widely decried as gruesome.

The victory for the measure's supporters was tempered by the fact the override attempt faces a greater obstacle in the U.S. Senate.

House supporters of the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act gained a favorable vote of 285-137,

thereby achieving the two-thirds majority required for an override.

The Senate, however, approved the measure originally by only a 55-44 vote. If all 100 members vote, supporters of the legislation will have to achieve a gain of 13 for an override. The override vote was expected late last week.

The procedure banned by the bill involves the delivery of an intact baby feet first until only the head is left in the birth canal. The doctor then pierces the base of the baby's skull and suctions out the brain. ■



opinion

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.
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- ▶ 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.



Partnership Prayer Requests

September

- 25 —Praise God for all the Tennessee volunteer groups this summer who assisted six Michigan churches in Oakland Association.
- 26 —Praise God for the 90 new Christians that have joined the Baptist church in Alberta, Canada, in the last three years. Ask God that each new Christian will remain responsive to his work in their lives.
- 27 —Pray for the Polish Baptist Theological Seminary as they teach God's Word.
- 28 —Pray for Orion Oaks Church in Orion, Mich., and Oakland Woods Church in Clarkston, Mich.
- 29 —Praise God for a Costa Rican seminary student who witnessed in a bar in Tucurique. Six people accepted the Lord. The bar owner asked for prayer and offered his building for future evangelistic efforts. Pray that the bar site will one day be the location of a thriving Baptist church.
- 30 — Continue to pray for Colson Bargain in Saskatchewan, Canada, who was born with heart complications.

Thanks volunteers

As pastor of Evergreen Church in Cadillac, Mich., I am writing to tell you how very grateful we are to all our brothers and sisters in the Volunteer State. Thank you Tennessee for your love, faithfulness to missions, and obedience to our Lord Jesus.

We are absolutely in awe of what God has done this summer. A year ago we sent a request to Terry Sharp of the TBC Partnership Missions Department for help in constructing a much needed building.

God spoke to the hearts of his people in Tennessee and this summer seven separate teams responded and came to Cadillac to accomplish a miraculous work.

The teams came from Mt. Olive Church, Knoxville; Lawrence County Association; Cumberland Plateau and Sequatchie Valley associations; Georgetown Church, George-

town; First Church, Blountville; and Grace Church, Knoxville, and Brainerd Church, Chattanooga.

In two short months Tennessee volunteers did what seemed impossible for our small fellowship. They built a church to the glory of God.

Tennessee Baptists, you can be very proud of those who came to represent your state. Each man, woman, and teen gave of themselves above and beyond the call of duty, and each one exhibited the abundance of Christ's love during their stay with us.

It was with many tears we said goodbye to each group as they left. Moreover, the people of Cadillac are still talking about "all those Baptists" who touched the hearts of our community. Your witness left an extremely positive testimony for us at Evergreen Baptist.

*David Cummings, pastor
Evergreen Church
Cadillac, Mich. 49601*

BSU reunion

On Saturday, Nov. 16, there will be a Baptist Student Union reunion for those attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, during the 1950s when Griffin Henderson (1950-52) and Elbert Williams (1952-61) were BSU directors.

Both men plan to attend the reunion and luncheon, which will be held at 11:30 a.m. in the UT Baptist Student Center. This is also UT homecoming weekend.

Further information/reservations are available from Bob Hall, UT Student Director, Baptist Student Center, 1811 Melrose Ave., Knoxville, TN 37916-3483; phone (423) 546-8272.

*Louise Winningham
Knoxville 37922*

72 years

On Aug. 12 our 89-year-old mother, Mary Moore Cum-

mings, passed away. At the time of her death she was teaching the Dorcas Sunday School class at First Church, Medina. She has taught this class for over 25 years. She began teaching Sunday School at age 17 at West Jackson Church, and over the years, taught at Poplar Heights, Ararat, and Westover churches, all in the Jackson area.

We do not know if teaching Sunday School for 72 years is a "record," but if not, it surely is an "honorable mention."

Her Christian life and example has influenced many lives over the years, most especially her five children who are all living and are members of Baptist churches.

Besides her children, she leaves 11 grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Her dedication to the Lord was her first priority in life and her influence will live on for many years to come.

*Linda Graves
Dyersburg 38024*

Writer discovers there's no such thing as 'minor surgery'

All my life I've heard people talk about their aches and pains. In my family I have a great aunt who, to hear her tell it, has been on death's door for years. But she's in her late 70s and to my knowledge is still going strong.

Now, though, I will never doubt her again when she's "ailing."

A recent experience has given me a new perspective about health.

I recently underwent hernia surgery. Now, to most people, that would be considered "minor" surgery. In fact, I consid-

ered it minor until I needed it.

I now have a new appreciation about what's considered minor surgery. Even better, I have a new definition: Minor surgery is that operation performed on someone else.

When you're "going under the knife," no operation is minor. No illness is minor to the one who has it. A person's health is always going to be major to that person.

I'll never forget my first experience. I was a coward. I'll admit it. For the first time in

an occasional word

— by Lonnie Wilkey, associate editor

38 years I was going to the hospital to have something done specifically on me.

For people who have never been in the hospital before, it is frightening when they get you on the bed and hook you up to an IV. And, when they come to "put you under" (what a terrible expression), you simply have to trust God you will wake up. Well, I survived. I did wake up following the surgery, of which I have no recollection — thank goodness.

And, I was the typical ill first time patient, according to my wife.

Joyce still laughs about some of the things I supposedly said to the nurse after waking up. But, with Baptist Hospital Sunday approaching in October, I'll plug Baptist Hospital. I could not have received better treatment at their outpatient center. I was given first-class attention.

The experience reminds me to keep things in perspective. What's minor to me can be major to someone else. ■

What must I do legally if I suspect child abuse or neglect?

families matter

— by Ivy Scarborough, attorney, mediator

In the last three months I have been asked this question by four ministers from three denominations; three of these involve sexual abuse. Child abuse kills an estimated 2,000 children a year. Experts believe only a minority of these cases are reported. This is certainly true of sexual and emotional abuse, which are more difficult to spot. The first four years of my legal career were spent handling child abuse and neglect cases for the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Nothing is so heart rending as the frightened eyes of an unloved child who has been repeatedly molested or abused.



SCARBOROUGH

Child abuse includes: physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Spanking is not deemed physical abuse unless it is extreme or causes injury. However, physical abuse may cause no apparent injury. Sexual abuse encompasses a range of behavior from inducing a child to watch sexual acts to actual molestation. Emotional abuse is even broader though it

usually involves berating or humiliating a child verbally. Criticisms of a child's appearance, behavior, or performance in school, etc., can so damage his sense of well being as to be abusive.

In every state, laws require those who have knowledge of abuse or neglect to report it, either to law enforcement officials or social work agencies. In Tennessee, it is a crime punishable by a brief imprisonment and a fine to fail to report. The law applies to parents, school teachers, doctors, neighbors, family friends, ministers, church workers, psychologists — anyone who has evidence of abuse or neglect. The identity of the reporter is kept secret.

Tragically, reports of abuse are not always followed through. By reporting to more than one agency, such as a Human Services office and local law enforcement, the reporter may ensure the case is investigated. The reporter has a legal right to inquire later whether the investigation resulted in a finding of abuse. Indeed, he

should follow through and ask what action was taken.

Sometimes, abuse is falsely alleged such as by ex-spouses or spouses when child custody or visitation are in dispute. But, on the whole, the willingness of others to report evidence of abuse is the primary protection for children. Ministers often feel torn between concern for the child and their desire to deal with the problem quietly especially if the offender is a church member. But the law doesn't permit that choice, and it's just as well. Too much is at stake. If there is no real accountability through outside intervention, frequently the abuse will continue. Child abuse is a grave offense against the most helpless members of God's kingdom. Christ's compassion for children was nowhere more obvious than in Matthew 18:6: "But if anyone causes these little ones to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

We can easily surmise what Jesus would say if we had the means to prevent abuse of a child and failed to act. ■

October 13 is World Hunger Day

What are we doing about hunger around the world? What are we doing to halt starvation epidemics?

Remember the first years of organized Southern Baptist help for hunger relief? The numbers of people who got involved was truly amazing, as well as the millions of dollars they contributed. **October 13 is World Hunger Day!**

Through the genius of First Church, Spartanburg, S. C., thousands and thousands of small rice bowls were used as collecting agents. They were placed on kitchen tables at home and at church, and in restaurants. The rice bowls became symbols of sharing.

Those of us who were blessed with jobs, incomes, and a national heritage of plenty — became friends with starving people, and we wanted to help. We set goals and we surpassed those goals. We gave and gave and gave. *Get a rice bowl, fill it with money!*

Contributions have steadily decreased. There are still hungry and starving people in the world. Some are here in the United States, but most of them are far away geographically.

We still have opportunity to obey Jesus' command to supply the water and the bread. We have learned many excuses and the offerings for world hunger has shrunk year by year. But there is nothing strange about the hunger equation.

Starving people still die, and they are replaced by more starving people.

In 1984 four of us from Maryland traveled many hours on a rugged, dusty trail strewn with rocks. We were going to Kijambura, miles and miles away from nowhere. Visiting in Burundi, East Africa, we wanted to see churches and pastors.

We arrived at meal time. The pastor and a deacon ushered us to a hut beside his living quarters. "He is

inviting us to eat with them," said missionary Dwight Jackson. We accepted.

They have no clean water. We washed our hands with dirty water and used a dirty cloth to dry them. We sat down at a very small table. And the pastor politely served us. There was enough rice in the bowl for two or three people. But there were four of the Marylanders, two missionaries, the pastor and the deacon.

The hosts put down two small plates and two forks. "That's all he has," said missionary Fred Sorrells. We grimaced, and dug in with dirty hands — but with exceedingly grateful hearts. We ate sparingly and made room at the table for pastor and deacon. It was a great feast, almost of biblical proportions, because of love expressed by a common bond.

Seldom do I eat rice without seeing the smiling

faces of the pastor and his deacon. Oh, for such gratitude, such enormous capacity to love and share!

God cares deeply about the plight of hungry people, and has compassion for them. October is the month for helping, and October 13 is the day. The Foreign and Home Mission boards are the agencies for distributing funds that are donated. Let's give at church!

You are one person — but one person, joined with others, can give hope to starving people. **B&R**



Getting a handle on gambling-related issues

Where do we stand on gambling and the proposed state-sponsored lottery?

Where does the State of Tennessee stand? Where do Tennessee Baptists stand? Where do you stand as one individual with voting power?

Better still, where do prospective candidates to the Tennessee General Assembly stand?

The November 5 elections are important on a national scale — but they also are important to Tennesseans because of the views of candidates in local elections.

We urge each Tennessee Baptist to be prepared to vote, not only on national issues, but on issues that peculiarly affect Tennesseans.

One of the primary issues is gambling, and specifically, a statewide lottery.

The maximum positive strength of voting power can have its greatest impact if Christians speak up.

On moral issues such as gambling, we positively can agree. Gambling is injurious to the health of the nation and the state, and is extremely harmful to the stability of the family unit.

Beginning with this issue of the *Baptist and Reflector*, we will present articles and suggestions on gambling, leading up to the November 5 voting date.

We welcome short opinion letters on the subject. We also welcome the cooperation of church people in their anti-gambling efforts.

Each citizen needs to become aware of legislators' voting records, and/or their views on a state-sponsored lottery. How do such issues affect our homes, our state? Which candidates are friends with gambling interests? Can we help them understand the dark, negative side of gambling? Will the lottery help or irreparably harm citizens' lifestyles?

Let's speak up, clearly and with conviction. **B&R**

Just for today

By Fred Wood
pastor emeritus
Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a smile

Salesman in sports department: "Would you like to see our bicycle that is on sale for \$2,999?"

Shopper: "No, but I'd like to stick around and see a nut that would even consider for a moment buying one."

Take this truth

What is one person's trash is another person's treasure. And vice-versa also. Aren't you glad you're not like everybody else?

Don't you suppose a lot of people are glad they aren't like you?

Somebody said, "Live and let live." I say, "Live and help live." Isn't that better?"

Memorize this Scripture

What does it matter? Anyhow, for ulterior ends or honestly, Christ is being proclaimed, and over that I rejoice (Philippians 1:18 Moffatt).

Pray this prayer

Lord, please help me to realize that everyone is different, but the thing that matters is whether or not Christ is Lord of our lives. Lead me to be sure he is Lord of my life. ■

Here's someone who never fails to keep his promises

Fayiz Sakhnini was in a peculiar situation. Upon invitation, he saw a golden opportunity to humiliate the missions preacher and to disrupt the entire church meeting.

After a few minutes of simple heckling, the teenager shifted in high gear. So did the preacher.

In something like the brevity in which a lamb shakes its tail, young Sakhnini felt himself being lifted by his ears by the preacher, hauled to the front of the building where everyone could see, and unceremoniously kicked in his pants.

We may not be able to grasp his feelings as he sat there. What would he do, would he depart and never to return?

Would he return to his seat and continue heckling? Would he apologize to the preacher? What would he do?

Well, he did return. And he did hear the Gospel preached. And eventually, he did give his heart to Jesus Christ, acknowledging him as Savior and Lord.

Later he encountered the preacher

one word more

— by Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

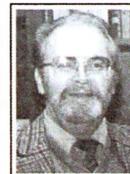
again in another place.

He introduced himself as the disruptive youngster of long ago, and he told the missionary about his acceptance of Christ and that he was serving him.

Tears rolled down the missionary's face. In glad realization that the earlier confrontation had brought young Sakhnini closer to the point of surrender, he accepted Fayiz the Christian, as a brother in Christ.

Fayiz Sakhnini, who was born and raised in Nazareth, Israel, became a pastor. Now he works through the Home Mission Board in Atlanta as a language missionary — with a completely different view of life.

I met him last week as we worked together with other missionaries in Shiloh Association's World Missions Conference.



ALLEN

His brother Fuad, another friend in Christ, is pastor of the Nazareth Baptist Church. He served many years also as a leader of the Southern Baptist School there.

Fayiz's testimony moved old and young Christians, and others, during the week. After one deeply spiritual meeting, a young lady handed him a letter.

In it she told how she wanted to know Christ's will for her life, beyond mere feelings. "Feelings go away," she wrote. "I want to know in my heart that missions is what he wants me to do. The only dream I have for myself is to be a glad surrender to my Lord. ... How do you listen with your heart to Jesus?"

Dear one, you already are listening. He already is speaking. You are hearing. Other voices may try to interfere, but I think you belong to Christ, growing into spiritual maturity — like your friend Fayiz. ■

Whoever you are, God wants commitment

think about it

— by Grover Westover, Harmony Church, Whiteville

When we study the Bible it is evident that God can take people of all kinds and make them suitable for his work.

God can take ordinary, little, and unknown people, place his spirit and power upon them and work with them and through them.

The Apostles are a good example. They were not the world's greatest people. The lives of some of them are still obscure; little is known of them.

For example, what do we know about James, the son of Alphaeus? He even is called James the Less (Mark 15:40). The original word actually means "little."

Little what? Was it stature? Was it age? Influence? It could be that he was a small young person with a personality not too commanding. To say the least, it is encouraging that the Lord does not depend on superstars.

You do not have to have the finest personality, a great education, a commanding voice, great leadership, unusual insight, or exceeding ability to be a servant for Christ. James the Less, Bartholomew, Simon the Zealot, were apostles. However,

they are marked by obscurity. The Lord used ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. He still does.

Hebrews 11, the great chapter on faith, names those who were outstanding. Then he refers to a host of unnamed people who through faith wrought amazing things. He said the world was not worthy of the silent heroes of faith.

The human instrument is not the focus — Christ is. Humble, ordinary servants who dare to trust, obey, and place their lives in the hands of Christ, can be used of him for remarkable service. It is not the instrument, but the Master's touch. ■

Pastor's ministry stretches from Honduras to state

By C.T. Smith
Special to *Baptist and Reflector*

BROWNSVILLE — Mario Maldonado took one look at Brownsville, or more specifically one look at the Spanish ministry at Brownsville Church, and he knew he was home.

The decision came that easily. He and his wife, Nora, visited in March and came to stay in April.

"Two things made me realize this was God's call," Maldonado says. "One thing was to see the Spanish people in the congregation so hungry for the Word of God. They still are. They want to know more. The other thing is the love of Brownsville Church for that ministry. I knew on my first visit."

Maldonado has a strong heritage of Baptist influence in Honduras. He and his wife have known each other since their childhood in Tegucigalpa, where his father was minister of the church and a driving force in the Honduran Baptist Convention, of which he was the first secretary when it organized in the early 1950s.

His father, Vincent Maldonado, also was president of the convention several times and was director of the Baptist seminary in Honduras.

His father's example impressed him but Maldonado was not so sure that the ministry was for him. "I rebelled against the call. I knew I had it, since I was very young. I knew God was calling me to be a minister."

While he worked through his indecision, Maldonado studied architecture at the University of Honduras while Nora re-

ceived a bachelor's degree in business administration.

When the Maldonados moved to New Orleans, La., he later transferred to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where he received a degree in church music in 1990.

After graduating from seminary he was called as minister of music at Hialeah Church in Florida.

In 1992 he returned to the New Orleans area when he became pastor of Calvary Church in Slidell. At the same time he and his wife owned and operated a music store in New Orleans.

After a break-in, the Maldonados closed the store before coming to Brownsville. The robbery, he says, was "a sign that we shouldn't be there." He said that the family agreed they would rather be poor and safe.

Perhaps that criminal visit planted a seed which would flower into a ministry in West Tennessee.

"I didn't have plans to leave New Orleans," he says. The family, which includes two daughters, was settled in a new house and was making plans for the future. Maldonado, however, felt a strange sense that "God wanted me to do more than stay in New Orleans."

About that time, while the Maldonados were in New Orleans praying for divine leadership, Brownsville Church was similarly seeking divine guidance for its 12-year-old ministry to Spanish-speaking West Tennesseans.

A seminary friend of Maldonado, who works at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, put the two seekers together.

Maldonado says he struggled with the invitation to come to Brownsville, but finally realized that he had been praying for and seeking God's will, and that he had been very reluctant to consider what very well might be that will.

The March visit confirmed that Brownsville was the place for him and his family. "If I hadn't seen the commitment from the people for that ministry, I probably wouldn't have come. The church is really, really committed to make this ministry work."

The Iglesia Bautista de Brownsville meets in a building adjacent to the church, though plans are underway for a whole new cluster of assembly rooms and classrooms in the church's basement.

On Sunday mornings, young and old gather to sing and worship in the language they know best.

The growing congregation of about 40 members is expanding its program. At Christmas, a choir from the congregation will perform a cantata, "Bendecid el Nombre de Cristo" (Blessed be the Name of Christ).

In only four months, the Maldonados have become Tennesseans — with a Honduran twang. As his ministry grows (and in between requests for his expertise as a computer consultant), Maldonado sees the fields as white unto harvest.

"I am very surprised at the amount of Hispanic people in this part of the country. There are a lot of people we need to reach, but the goal is not growth.

"The goal is for us to be good instruments in the hands of God. The rest will come." ■ — Smith writes for the *Brownsville States-Graphic*. Article is used with permission.



Tennessee couple elected by FMB

For *Baptist and Reflector*

RICHMOND — William G. and Debra Lewis Kerr have been named representatives of Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization.

The Kerrs will live in north Africa where they will use their skills in development of CSI-related projects in developing nations.



THE KERRS

Kerr, a native of Knoxville, also lived in Bartlett while growing up. He considers Whitten Memorial Church, Memphis, as influential to his Christian growth.

The Union University graduate served as minister of music and youth at Main Street Church, Lake City, and Parkview Church, Jackson.

Mrs. Kerr, considers Jackson her hometown and Parkview her home church. They have two children. ■



Team from Leawood ministers in Michigan

For *Baptist and Reflector*

MEMPHIS — Leawood Church recently sent a team of 43 youth and adults to St. Joseph, Mich., to work with Niles Avenue Church in a variety of ministries.

The major thrust was the presentation of a musical entitled "Hans Bronson's Gold Medal Mission." Three performances were given in the downtown bandshell for the tourists and residents of St. Joseph. One performance was held at Niles Avenue Church. Two men accepted Christ through this ministry.

Leawood volunteers also conducted a beach ministry and a Backyard Bible Club. They used the tract "More Than Gold" to witness to youth on the beach. Leawood youth would challenge other youth to a volleyball game and then share the tract with them afterwards. Four young people accepted Christ through this endeavor.

The Backyard Bible Club, originally planned to be held in the city park, was moved to a



TEAM MEMBERS from Leawood Church participate in clean-up efforts at Niles Avenue Church.



LEAWOOD VOLUNTEERS work with children during a Backyard Bible Club held in a local mobile home park.

large mobile home park near St. Joseph. Leawood youth invited children and youth to the BBC. They began with an enrollment of 28 and ended the week with 57 enrolled. Twenty-six of those children and youth made professions of faith during the week.

Leawood is grateful to the Niles Avenue congregation for extending the invitation, according to Charles Rogers, minister of education/missions at Leawood. "We have plans to establish a continuing ministry partnership with them." ■



HUNDREDS OF TOURISTS and townspeople attended the 'Brown Bag' presentation of Leawood's youth musical.

First, Dyersburg, ministers to group

For *Baptist and Reflector*

DYERSBURG — Early on Saturday, Aug. 31, secret service men, local law officials, White House staff personnel, and volunteers from the religious community converged on First Church's fellowship hall.

Located only a block from the court house square, the downtown church provided breakfast and lunch for between 150 and 200 local and traveling law officials. President and Mrs. Bill Clinton, along with Vice President and Mrs. Al Gore, had come to Dyersburg for a stop on the campaign trail.

When the local Police Chaplains' Association asked the church to assist, Pastor Raymond Boston and deacon chairman Buck Tarpley, secured workers and food.

Boston and his wife, Ann, along with a team of FBC members and local chaplains worked throughout the day. ■

Seniors — 862 — enjoy annual conference

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

PIGEON FORGE — Senior adults from Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, and North Carolina, 862 of them, gathered for the 23rd annual Tennessee Baptist Senior Adult Conference Sept. 17-19 in Pigeon Forge.

Seniors attended sessions on topics including spiritual growth, grandparenting, and romance, visited the exhibit area which featured informational displays, crafts for sale, and a book store, and fellowshiped with each other.

Most arrived early for main sessions because they knew Johnnie Hall of the Tennessee Baptist Convention would be there using his dry, raucous wit to recognize people through raffle-type drawings and his personal knowledge of them. Of course, he gave out his trademark gift — Goo Goo Clusters.

One of the many seniors recognized by Hall was Bessie Kimbro, 92, the oldest participant, who was from First Church, Madison.

At the last session, Hall, who will retire at the end of this year, spoke about his retirement. "I believe the best days are ahead for you because I believe the best days of my life are ahead of me. Thank

you for letting me be a part of your lives for these years," he said.

Seniors are growing as a percentage of the population, reported Dallas Roscoe of Memorial Church, Chattanooga, in his small-group session. In 1980, people over 60 years of age made up 16 percent of the population, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census. In 2050, they will make up 28 percent of the population. He also cited Dean Witter Reynolds Inc., which reported 60 percent of people over 65 would have incomes below the poverty line if they did not have Social Security benefits.

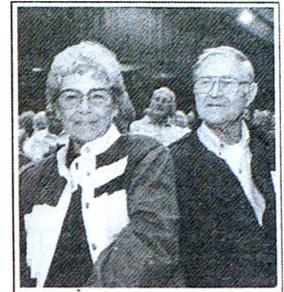
Roscoe said Baptists should be preparing for greater opportunities for ministry to senior adults.

Frank Hawkins, former president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and pastor of First Church, Kingsport, led the Bible study. He referred to a popular theology that teaches that only a certain number of people can be God's children. But that teaching is wrong, said Hawkins. The in-

itation is "open to everyone. No one is left out. ... Folks, let's be the people of the glad invitation." *B&R*



ADMIRING one of the dolls made by a member of a craft class at Virginia Avenue Church, Bristol, is Velma Orr, left, of First Church, Paris, who is helped by Ruth Edward, center, and Helen Smith of Virginia Avenue Church.



THE COUPLE recognized for being married most recently was Walter and Glenda Payne of Cumberland Drive Baptist Church, Clarksville. They married Aug. 17.



STRETCHING their legs during a break in a session are members of First Church, Trezevant, from left, Malcolm Norton, pastor, Brooxie Marshall, Rachel Akins, Elsie West, Mildred Moore, and Arlie Todd. The group's name, the Elderberries, appears on their T-shirts.



RESTING from shopping are members of First Church, Tullahoma, from left, Freda Baldwin, Hazel Dennis, Clova Caldwell, Liz Allen, and Lillie Willard.



BEING RECOGNIZED for having the longest marriages are, from left, Henry and Margaret Hill of First Church, Huntsville, Ala., who have been married 61 years, and Norm and Pat Schauman of Woodmont Church, Nashville, who have been married almost 61 years.



DURING the talent show Curtis L. Gravely of Morris Hill Church, Chattanooga, performs.



PARTICIPATING in a training session for professional leaders led by Dallas Roscoe of Memorial Church, Chattanooga, are ministers from across the state.



VISITING are, from left, Nell Seay of First Church, Huntsville, Ala.; Don Mauldin of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; and Ann Turney of Winchester and Dick German of Tullahoma, representing Volunteers in Missions in the exhibit area.

Deal with children one-on-one, evangelism materials urge

By Lacy Thompson
For Baptist Press

ALEXANDRIA, La. — Ever since Jesus instructed his disciples to "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them," Christians have struggled with exactly how to bring children to faith.

For some reason, many people associate age 12 with the age of accountability. Until then, they reason, a child simply isn't mature enough to understand what a faith decision involves.

Others cite studies showing a vast majority of people — 86 percent — come to faith in Christ before age 15.

Children should be reached as soon as possible, they insist; age makes no difference. They often point to instances of committed Christians who made professions of faith at early ages. The problem, however, is it can lead to pressing children into decisions they are not prepared to make.

So what's a person to do?

Camille Hamilton sees a middle road. "We need to share the Gospel with children at age-appropriate levels ... and we need to be prepared to deal with each child on an individual basis regardless of age," says Hamilton, author of "God's Special Plan" materials on reaching children, published by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"That's where we run into trouble a lot of times with children — because we try to deal with them as a group. But there's no way you can truly determine whether a child is ready (to make a decision for Christ) unless you sit down one-on-one and talk with the child, regardless of the age."

The HMB materials, including a special tract, help adults do just that, Hamilton says.

To begin with, adults must understand what a child needs

to know in order to make a decision for Christ, she says. Usually, if children indicate they know what sin is and believe themselves to be sinners, adults assume they are ready to make a decision for Christ.

However, Hamilton says children need to understand four things before making a decision for Christ:

(1) the meaning of sin.

(2) the fact the child is a sinner.

(3) the fact the child has sinned against God.

(4) the fact the child is separated from God due to sin.

The distinctions are important, she notes. Until a certain age, children determine what's right and wrong on the basis of pain and pleasure and whether others approve, she says. "It's not an inner sense of what's right and wrong. It's a case of, 'How do the people around me respond to me when I do it?'"

In that world, if children do something and it hurts or they are punished for it, it is wrong. If it feels good and they are praised, it is right. But there comes a time when children have to learn that some things are wrong because God says they are, Hamilton explains. "Children have to understand they did something that disobeys God, not just something that mamma doesn't like."

At that point, the true meaning of sin grows clearer.

Children also must understand the effect of sin — that it breaks their relationship with God, she says.

Thus, determining whether a child knows enough to make a decision for Christ is crucial in sharing the Gospel with children, Hamilton says.

But how is that determination made?

"The only way you can determine whether a child is ready is to ask questions and listen carefully to the answers," Hamilton says. She stresses both aspects — asking the right questions and waiting for children to answer instead of leading them to answers.

Hamilton offers several pointers at this point:

(1) Never assume anything. "Most people believe when a child starts asking questions, the child is ready to be saved," she says. "That may be true. That may not be true. This is a necessary stage children will go through in order to be saved. They start asking questions. ... They want to know."

Children may express an interest in making a decision — they may even come forward during an invitation for a variety of reasons. They may do so because they are genuinely ready; to get attention; because their friends did so; out of curiosity; because they have questions; or even out of fear.

For whatever reason a child comes forward or expresses an interest, however, adults need to be prepared to respond to questions and help the child understand his or her feelings, Hamilton says.

(2) Do not use "yes-or-no" questions. Hamilton has seen many well meaning counselors ask two simple questions of children — "Have you ever sinned?" and "Do you want to ask Jesus in your heart?" — before leading them to a decision for Christ.

If one should use a "yes-or-no" question, she says, immediately follow it with a question of "why?"

(3) Do not ask questions

with built-in answers. Hamilton recalls seeing one counselor ask a child, "You want to ask Jesus into your heart, don't you?"

She notes the counselor had "already built in the answer she wanted the child to say. So be careful that you don't ask questions with such built-in answers."

(4) Do not ask questions for which children have memorized answers. When children use phrases not normal for them, make sure they understand what the words mean.

(5) Ask questions in a language a child understands.

Obviously, every child is not going to be ready to make a decision for Christ the first time he or she asks a question, Hamilton says. Indeed, there are three possible decisions children may make at that time:

(1) Step toward God. Children must not be forced to make a profession of faith decision, she notes. She warned a premature decision for Christ can work like a vaccination giving children just enough of a religious experience to create a barrier they will have to cross in order to have a genuine conversion later in life.

But if children are not ready to make a decision, it is important they understand they are involved in a significant process, Hamilton says. They need to understand everything is OK at that time but will not always be OK, that there will come a time when they do not feel close to God and will need to talk more about these feelings.

(2) Profession of faith. Of course, some children will be ready to make a decision for Christ, she says. Again, a counselor must be careful to allow a child to make the decision on his or her own instead

of leading the child to such a point.

The "God's Special Plan" tract helps a counselor do this. It is designed to guide a dialogue between an adult and child and is flexible for an adult to adapt as needed.

(3) Assurance of salvation. At times, children who have made a decision for Christ will come forward to do so again. Perhaps the child did not understand the previous decision or has questions about it, Hamilton says. The key is to ask questions about how the child is feeling and about his or her understanding of Jesus and sin and the spiritual life.

While conversion is a one-time experience, she says a child who makes a decision early in life may feel a need to recommit himself or herself later on because of a deeper understanding of that act. This does not mean the earlier commitment was not genuine but that it is growing, she notes.

Obviously, Hamilton's approach to sharing the Gospel with children is not easily accomplished. It takes training and commitment. She urges churches to train adults specifically for counseling children and to set up an accountability system to make sure follow-up is done. Helps for doing both are included in "God's Special Plan" materials.

Tips for using mass evangelism to reach children also are included in the resource. But however children are approached, she comes back once again to the need to deal with each child individually.

"Do mass evangelism," she says. "Share the Gospel with groups of children. Give an invitation if you want to. But when it comes to prayer and it comes to the counseling, ... always deal with the children one-on-one." ■



Evangelism

Southern Baptist Historical Society begins transition, independence

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — The Southern Baptist Historical Society's transition from the Southern Baptist Historical Commission to Oklahoma Baptist University is under way. The SBHS, which has served history needs of Southern Baptists and their churches since 1938, selected OBU as its new home during its April 1996 meeting.

The offices of the Historical Commission will be closed effective June 17, 1997. Commission employees will re-

ceive a severance package if they remain with the commission through April 30, 1997. Effective July 1, 1997, the positions will be terminated.

Beginning in July 1997, SBHS officers have determined that the staff of the society will consist of director Slayden Yarbrough, an assistant director, and student help supplied by OBU. Plans call for Kim Medley, Historical Commission director of communications, to assume the position of assistant director beginning in July 1997.

Yarbrough, interim executive direc-

tor of the Historical Commission since June 1995, returned to OBU's campus Aug. 17 where he will not only continue to teach religion and Baptist history courses, but also make preparations for relocating the program of the Southern Baptist Historical Society to the Shawnee, Okla., campus.

Beginning in July 1997, the SBHS offices will be located in OBU's Mabee Learning Center in the area formerly occupied by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission. The state's historical offices were moved from the cam-

pus to the Oklahoma Baptist Convention's Baptist Building in 1995.

SBC Historical Commission staff are still working with the SBHS during the transition period.

The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives will remain open in Nashville under the direction of the Council of Seminary Presidents. Bill Summers, the current archivist, will serve as director of SBHLA.

For more information about the Historical Society, including how to join, call (800) 966-2278. ■

leaders

■ **Allen Marks** has been called as director of discipleship ministries of Central Church, Chattanooga.

■ **Jerry Essary** has been called as pastor of McConnell Church, Martin, effective Sept. 9.

■ **Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage**, has called **Vicki S. Hulsey**, minister to children and students, Hillview Church, Birmingham, as minister to preschool and children. She is a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

■ **First Church, Lake City**, has called **Brian Courtney**, pastor, First Church, Sneedville, for nine years, as pastor, effective Sept. 2. Courtney is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and Southern Baptist



HULSEY

Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

■ **First Church, Selmer**, licensed **Gregory Lynn Wyatt**, minister of youth/children at the church, to the Gospel ministry Sept. 15.

missionaries

■ **Mark and Melinda Duggin**, missionaries to Brazil, are in the states and can be reached at 5511 Melvin, Memphis, 38120. They consider Memphis their hometown.

■ **Bobby and Becky Coutts**, missionaries to Benin, are in the states and can be reached at 2511 Park Dr., Nashville, 37214. He is a native of Springfield.

■ **Ken and Ginger Collier**, missionaries to Brazil, are in the states and can be reached at 2010 Cooper Lane, Nashville, 37216. He considers Nashville his hometown.

■ **Steven and Dottie Babcock**, missionaries to West Africa, are in the states and

can be reached at Union University, Box 1812, 2447 Hwy 45 ByPass, Jackson, 38305. Both consider Milan their hometown.

churches

■ **Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage**, will offer two Sunday morning worship services and Sunday Schools beginning Oct. 6. The programs will be held simultaneously at 9:15 and 10:30 a.m. Although the congregation has committed to building a new worship center, the new program will allow it to grow without incurring a substantial building debt, the staff reported.

■ **Northside Church, McMinnville**, will be in revival Sept. 29 - Oct. 2. Phil Glisson, evangelist of Memphis, will speak.

■ **Washington Pike Church, Knoxville**, will have revival Oct. 6-9. Phil Glisson, evangelist of Memphis, will speak.

■ **Signal Mountain Church, Signal Mountain**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary Sept. 28-29. On Saturday evening activities include a meal, history presentations by Monty Jordan of Jefferson City, a former pastor, and Bruce Maples, a former minister of music, and a video. On Sunday morning Terry Peck, Mark Caldwell, a missionary in Thailand, and Diane Jordan of Jefferson City will lead the service. A groundbreaking will be held for a new sanctuary followed by a luncheon.

■ **Forest Hills Church, Nashville**, will hold a Divorce-Care Seminar/Support Group for 13 weeks beginning Sept. 29 at 4:30 p.m.

■ **First Church, Savan-**

nah, will hold revival Sept. 29 - Oct. 2. Rob Finley of Prayer Resources, Memphis, will speak. Jerry Rogers will lead the music.

the schools

■ **Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City**, honored John Wells, instructor of political science, Aug. 27 during opening convocation ceremonies with the Teaching Excellence and Leadership Award.

■ **Union University, Jackson**, has been ranked as

one of the South's five "best values" for regional liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News & World Report*.

■ **Carson-Newman College** set its second highest giving record from donors in its history, officials reported.



RECEIVING a piece of art to be hung in her honor is Irene Odom Keyes, who has taught Sunday School at Covenant Church, Nashville, for 44 years, from Lavan Modling Jr., pastor. The art is from the late Lorena Moore, who taught first graders with Keyes. The presentation was made Aug. 23.



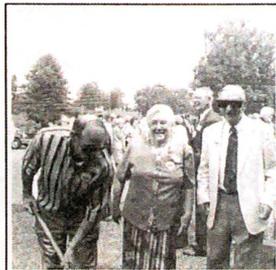
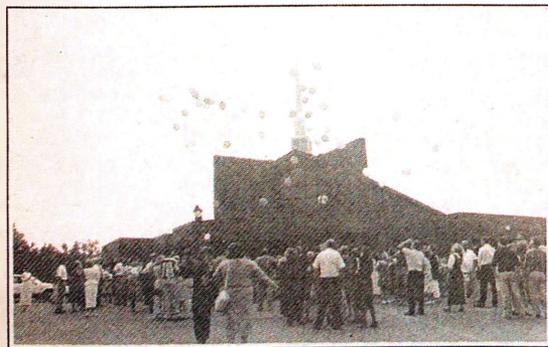
PRESENTING THE Eagle Award to Donnie Crone, second from left, assistant Sunday School director of Finley Church, Finley, is Roy Miller of the Tennessee Baptist Convention as Charles Haliburton, left, pastor, and Joe Naylor, right, director of missions, Dyer Association, look on. The award, which was presented Aug. 25, is for significant enrollment increases in Sunday School. SS average attendance and worship attendance has increased by 100 during this period.



BAPTIST STUDENT UNION members who served on a team of volunteers who painted the BSU center at the University of Memphis this summer included, from left, seated, Melenni Harris, Andrew Whelchel; second row, Ken Howell, Jennifer Stinnett, Bob McVay, Brooke Worrell, Christine Grace; and third row, Penny Carroll, Scott Capshaw, and David Alkema. The volunteers saved the convention about \$4,000 with their work.

First Church, Camden, celebrates its centennial anniversary

On Sept. 8 First Church, Camden, observed its 100th anniversary. After the morning worship service members, especially children, released balloons containing Gospel messages. A time capsule was buried and Royal Ambassadors rang the church's historic bell. A luncheon and afternoon service completed the day's events.



Burying a time capsule are members who were recognized that day, Doris Flowers, organist for about 60 years, and George Terry, right, 87, oldest member, with the help of Bradley Blackburn.



Special guests were, from left, S. Ray Jones, former pastor who is director of missions, Big Hatchie Association; Paul Veazey of Union University, Jackson, former interim pastor; Richard Adkinson, former pastor who is pastor, Hillhurst Church, Nashville; Gerald Hodges, pastor; and Paul Hall, retired from the Tennessee Baptist Convention, former pastor.

Opposition to gambling underscored in Scripture

By Lacy Thompson
For Baptist Press

ALEXANDRIA — The letter appeared in a Mississippi newspaper under the heading, "Bible doesn't say gambling is a sin."

A man named Roger wrote of searching his Bible and concordance and finding nothing in the Scripture to say gambling is a sin. However, there were several references to the casting of lots. Why, even the disciples used that method to choose a successor to Judas.

That being so, how could one oppose gambling on moral grounds? Easy, Joe Trull insists. Look again at the principles set forth in the Bible.

"Perhaps many Christians don't take gambling seriously because they cannot find a direct commandment against gambling and they read in the Bible that some leaders seemed to 'gamble' to determine God's will," notes Trull, professor of Christian ethics at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Of course, there are plenty of economic and social reasons to oppose gambling, Trull points out.

However, Baptists must begin in their opposition to gambling with an examination of God's Word on the issue, Trull suggests. They must come to an understanding that the Christian way is incompatible with gambling, he says.

"Whatever else we do, Baptist people must possess a clear biblical and theological understanding of this moral issue.

"Let me say at the outset, without stuttering or stammering, that the Bible is not silent about gambling.

"While no direct command jumps out of the Bible to guide us, the moral ideals of the Scriptures clearly oppose the practice of gambling."

The Bible provides insights and principles on numerous issues not specifically addressed in Scripture, Trull says. The key is to identify the principles as they are set forth in the Bible.

For instance, the first clear biblical reference to gambling comes in Isaiah 65, in which the

prophet protests against those who "forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny."

The deities mentioned in the passage — Fortune and Destiny — were the gods of fate and symbols of good and bad luck, Trull notes. "Israelites were trusting in chance rather than God. The prophet denounced (this) ... for biblical faith magnifies the providential care of God; the cult of luck menaces such faith."

But what about the "casting of lots" and how it relates to gambling? Trull acknowledges the practice is cited numerous times in the Bible. But he makes three key points about it.

First, the purpose of the practice was to find God's will, except in the case when the soldiers actually were gambling for the robe of Jesus during his crucifixion. Second, the practice eventually was discarded as early Christians "turned to the spirit of truth to guide them in their decisions." Third, Trull suggests the casting of lots could represent a practice God simply allowed his people to practice for a while until fuller revelation came along.

"The casting of lots in the Bible is not a justification for

modern gambling, nor does the fact that the Bible never specifically condemns gambling make it allowable or amoral," Trull notes.

"In many ways the Bible builds a powerful case against gambling," Trull cites several key biblical principles that should guide Christians in their moral understanding of gambling:

(1) Gambling questions the sovereign rule of God over our lives. "Can anyone deny that gambling majors on greed, the fast buck, and materialism?" Trull asks. "Jesus calls this idolatry. Gambling encourages our preoccupation with wealth; the Bible warns that the love of money is a source of all evil. Gambling is wrong because it displaces devotion to God with trust in the false gods of chance, fate, or 'Lady Luck.'"

(2) Gambling violates the central moral imperative of the Bible — the law of love. Jesus said the greatest command is to love God and others, Trull notes.

"Love imposes great demands upon us. ... Love leads us to always seek the welfare of our neighbor. ... Love meets needs; gambling exploits. Love

entreats; gambling mistreats. Love strengthens; gambling weakens. Love builds up; gambling tears down. Love never fails; gambling ever fails."

(3) Gambling encourages covetousness and stealing. Gambling violates both the commandment against stealing and the one against coveting, Trull insists.

(4) Gambling violates the biblical principles of the stewardship of possessions. Christians are called to be good stewards of all God has given them in this world and to use their resources for God's glory and human good, Trull reminds.

"Gambling is wrong because it encourages pleasure and profit at the loss and pain of other people.

"The evening news may tell the story of one winner, but it has not time to recount the thousands of suicides, broken homes, embezzled funds, thefts, frauds, and addictions that are a part of the story of every lottery and casino. Those who suffer most from gambling are the poor." ■



Gambling woes began with charity

Baptist Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Don't legitimize any type of gambling for any cause, counseled Paul Jones, executive director of Mississippi Baptists' Christian Action Commission. "I've never seen a gambling law that didn't have a flaw in it," Jones said.

In a state that now has 30 floating casinos and numerous mega-bingo parlors, Jones noted: "Modern gambling in Mississippi started with something as innocent as raffles." Legalized gambling started with religious and private organizations pressuring legislators to pass laws making raffling legal so the organizations could earn money, he said.

He noted Mississippi legalized charitable bingo in 1987 "because it was for a legitimate cause." Before long, however, the money was going to the gaming industry instead of charity, he added. ■

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All inquiries for the position should be addressed to Dr. James Porch, Executive Director-Treasurer, Tennessee Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728. Resumes and recommendations will be received through Oct. 31, 1996.

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Persevere

By L. Joseph Rosas III

Focal Passage — Hebrews 12:1-3, 7a, 10-11; 13:12-16

"It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game" is a cliché of the sports world. In the Christian life this simply is not true. God is not only concerned with how we run the race, he is also concerned with our finishing the course set before us. All of us are to go for the gold — the prize set before us.

Get rid of encumbrances (ch. 12:1). The "hall of faith" is filled with a great cloud of witnesses. They are witnesses in the sense their testimony of faith has been passed on and in the sense they now see more fully from a heavenly perspective the unfolding of God's redemptive plan. In addition each of us have individuals who have significantly impacted our lives and our churches in a kingdom direction. The race is not simply one of personal fulfillment or self-realization. It is an ongoing race to accomplish the redemptive purposes of God in his creation. We are graced to be on the team. Therefore, we are exhorted to lay aside every weight, those things which are neither good nor bad in themselves but become distractions to our race of faithfulness. Although there are various opinions regarding "the sin that easily entangles" in Hebrews it refers to the sin of unbelief — a failure to hear and heed the Word of God.

Follow Jesus' example (vv. 2-3). If a runner looks back she may stray from her lane, lose stride, and forfeit the race. We are to keep our eyes on Jesus. Paul reflects this spirit when he says, "forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize," (Philippians 3:13). Jesus is the "author" which means originator, founder, leader, or chief. He is also the "perfector" of our faith, he brings our faith to fruition. If our eyes are fixed on Jesus, we will not grow weary or lose heart.

Look for the benefits of enduring (vv. 7a, 10-11). Discipline refers to more than mere punishment. It includes the rigors of testing and training that produce endurance. The goal of discipline is correction. We are exhorted to accept various hardships as an opportunity for training in endurance. Discipline is a sign of love. Just as we set boundaries and correct our children, so God sets boundaries and corrects us as needed for our spiritual development.

Risk all to follow Christ (ch. 13:12-14). The salvation that is available in Jesus Christ is unique. "Outside the camp" of religious institutions and human control, Christ's death is the ultimate satisfaction of the righteousness of God. We are exhorted to willingly and fully identify with Christ. As the old Gospel song says, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through," ours is a heavenly calling.

Make a pleasing sacrifice (vv. 15-16). There is only one other sacrifice that brings pleasure to God, that of praise. Kierkegaard observed that "God is the audience" in Christian worship. Ministry and stewardship are twin manifestations that authentic worship has occurred. In the light of God's grace we have all we need to honor, serve, and please him. Paul's exhortation is our challenge, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship," (Romans 12:1). ■ — L. Joseph Rosas III is pastor of Union Avenue Church, Memphis.

Continuing to trust

By Kevin Goza

Focal Passage — Habakkuk 2:1-4; 3:17-19

Habakkuk had some serious questions. The question haunting his mind and heart is expressed in chapter 1:2-3: "Why, God, are you not listening to my prayer for deliverance? Wickedness is everywhere, but you are doing nothing!" Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

This brief book of the Old Testament explains to us God is always active. And, often God uses things to serve his purpose that amaze his children.

Q & A session — ch. 2:1-4

To Habakkuk's credit, he went directly to God with his questions. He did not spread his lack of understanding in a negative way to an unbelieving world. In response to his question in chapter 1, God told Habakkuk that he was raising up the Babylonians for his purposes of judgment. In chapter 1:12-2:1, Habakkuk asked how a holy God could possibly use wicked people to execute divine judgment. He then waited for God's response.

Note that Habakkuk's complaint was in the form of prayer. He is willing to listen to our complaints, so

Convention Uniform Lesson

long as we approach him as a holy God deserves.

Habakkuk then waited as a watchman waits. A watchman had to wait patiently, keeping alert to potential danger in the making. The prophet used this figure to illustrate the patience required to wait on the Lord.

God responded by instructing the prophet to make a record on tablets of what was about to be said. The need for a lasting record was indicative that the fulfillment of the words about to be spoken would be sometime in the future. The fulfillment would seem to

take a long time from a human perspective. However, the people were to have hope, for God's word always sees fulfillment. God's activity is not bound by human limitations of time.

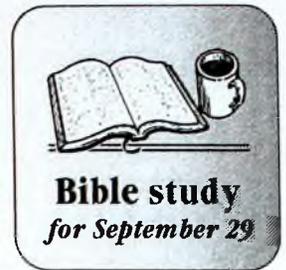
Verse four is the centerpiece of Habakkuk, and is the best known verse in the book. While the arrogant and wicked live in evil, the righteous person will live by faithfulness to God. In his writings, the apostle Paul made this a key text to affirm justification by faith. The emphasis is on total reliance upon God, not only for salvation, but for living the Christian life.

Praise session — chapter 3:17-19

The prophet described some of the worst things that could happen in Habakkuk's day. The people depended upon their fig trees, grape vines, olive trees, and the produce of their fields. They relied upon their sheep and cattle herds for daily and future sustenance. The prophet expressed his total dependance upon God, even though these necessities for life should disappear.

How could he survive in such a dire situation? He committed to rejoice in the Lord, and to find joy from his God. He could commit to such joy because he knew that God would keep his promise of deliverance, even though that deliverance might be far into the future.

Furthermore, he could survive because he drew his strength from God, and not from worldly things such as crops and herds. He confessed that God would be the one to lift him above his circumstances. Indeed, God would lift him to the heights. Like the sure-footed deer that navigates the craggy heights of a mountain, Habakkuk would find that God would give him stability in a world gone wild. ■ — Kevin Goza is pastor of First Church, Lebanon.



The new Jerusalem

By Tom Moncrief

Bible Book Lesson

Focal Passage — Revelation 21:1-5a, 21-22; 22:1-2, 10-12, 17

Christians have always faced opposition. Many times there is real persecution. It will not always be that way. Christ gives assurance of eternal victory for the faithful. This lesson gives insight into blessings of that victory after all enemies are overcome.

The New Jerusalem and its inhabitants (ch. 21:1-5a). The new heaven and new earth replace the old which pass away. They show us the regenerating power of Christ through the Gospel made known through the church. The redeemed earth along with God's redeemed people are his answer to the need of redemption for both sinful people and corrupted nature. The new Jerusalem "coming down from God ..." shows its origin and source. The sacred bond between God and his people is stressed by "prepared as a bride ..." The real blessedness of the church is found in her union with God, his presence with his people. This fellowship is so perfect that God eliminates sorrow, pain, and death forever.

The new Jerusalem described (vv. 21-22). Attempts are made to portray God's majesty which is ex-

hibited in its various attributes of wisdom, power, justice, and mercy. Precious stones symbolized divine presence among the Hebrews. The most impressive trait of the new city was that it carried God's glory. Communion with God experienced by every believer is so real that the whole city is a sanctuary. No temple is needed because the entire new Jerusalem is the dwelling place of God. All who inhabit it are conscious of his presence and serve him as priests.

Light and life in the new Jerusalem (ch. 22:1-2). Perfect tranquility and perfect peace are pictured in the city. The redeemed enter a full, meaningful, and abundant life which shall be known forever. Christian's spiritual life here and now is the first stage, though imperfect, of the life hereafter. The river of the new Jerusalem reminds one of the river in the Garden of Eden. It flows from the throne emphasizing the source of eternal life provided by God through Christ. Every thirst can be quenched by this water of life. The tree of life lines the river on either side and is in the midst of the street. Bearing fruit continuously, 12 kinds come forth 12 times a year denoting com-

pleteness and perfection. Also the leaves heal the nations. Thus, this tree provides the remedy for hunger and disease. The three basic needs to sustain life are thus provided: water, food, and health. This pictures the abundance of grace and life in store for the redeemed.

The coming of Jesus (vv. 10-12, 17). Prophets would often seal their message until time to deliver it. John is instructed to not do that. The message must be communicated for the end time has arrived. The unredeemed who have not responded to the message and its warnings find it too late to do anything now. They who have been unwilling to repent are now unable to do so. Full responsibility for one's character is laid upon every individual. Personal choices through life produce eternal destiny.

Only Christ judges each person's character. He comes for judgment or salvation based on each person's choices. Christians are encouraged to persevere and unredeemed are warned that judgment will soon overtake them. So believers are exhorted to go on growing in the grace of the Lord Jesus and to aid as many as possible to trust him. No one knows when Christ shall appear. ■ — Tom Moncrief is a member of First Church, Cleveland.



world news

Experiencing God to be aired in Middle East

Baptist Press

LARNACA, Cyprus — An Arabic-language version of the discipleship program *Experiencing God* is scheduled to be broadcast throughout the Middle East, beginning Oct. 28.

The signal will originate from a powerful AM radio station in Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea. It will be broadcast five days a week in

15 minute segments.

The first-ever broadcast version of the Southern Baptist program was aired over radio waves in Russia in April. Broadcast versions are being developed in 10 languages. ■

Marshall to retire as Kentucky exec

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — William W. Marshall has announced his intention to retire as executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Feb. 28, 1997, nine days after his 65th birthday.

In accordance with the KBC's constitution and bylaws, President Bill Tichenor will appoint a search committee to nominate Marshall's successor.

In retirement, Marshall and his wife, Alice, will serve as the first coordinators of the new Marshall Center for Ministry at Georgetown (Ky.) College. ■

Jim Henry to head BSSB effort

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Former SBC President Jim Henry will chair a national capital campaign for facilities improvement at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgcrest (N.C.) Conference Centers.

"I am pleased and honored to be part of this campaign to ready Glorieta and Ridgcrest for meeting the ever-changing needs of our congregations," said Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla.

Henry said the campaign will be targeted to about 500 people with the capability to make large gifts. No funds will be solicited that otherwise would go to a local church or to



HENRY

the Cooperative Program.

Henry will head a 16-person campaign cabinet comprised of Southern Baptist leaders from throughout the United States. Among them is one Tennessee Baptist — Chuck Snyder, vice president of The Maryland Group advertising and marketing agency, Brentwood, and member of First Church, Franklin. ■

BSSB offers crisis hotline for church staff

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A toll-free crisis hotline has been activated by the Baptist Sunday School Board's LeaderCare staff to offer help to pastors and other professional church staff people. The network provider service may be reached at 1 (888) 789-1911 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., central time, Mondays-Fridays.

LeaderCare, announced earlier this month, is designed to provide personal development for pastors and other professional staff. The service is conducted in partnership with state conventions, associations, and other minister support groups.

Brooks Faulkner, manager of the section, said the LeaderCare staff "is prepared to intervene, offer suggestions for direction, counseling, encouragement, mentoring, and restoration help when church staff persons face dilemmas that seem potentially catastrophic." ■

Christian schools leader joins BSSB staff

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A Christian schools leader and a specialist in children's education have been named manager and consultant, respectively, in the Christian schools and media services department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Glen Schultz, southeast director for the Association of Christian Schools International, based in Snellville, Ga., will become director of Christian schools, home schooling, and church weekday early education work at the board on Oct. 1.

Pam Boucher, a children/preschool specialist already on staff at the board, assumes the role of ministers of preschool-children's education consultant. ■

BSSB campers give \$227,902 to foreign missions

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A check for \$227,902.60 to be presented by the Baptist Sunday School Board for foreign missions projects is evidence young people care about spreading the Gospel to all parts of the world.

The money is a gift collected from 41,518 campers and counselors during 1996 Centrifuge and Mission-Fuge camps, sponsored by the board's discipleship and family development division.

BSSB staffer Joe Palmer presented board President James T. Draper Jr. the check during chapel services Sept. 6. Draper will present the check to the SBC Executive Committee for use by the Foreign Mission Board in a variety of locations and ministries.

A total of 132 weeks of Centrifuge and Mission-Fuge camps were conducted this summer at 15 locations across the United States. ■

Singles event draws 1,623

Baptist Press

GLORIETA, N.M. — An eclectic blend of musical styles greeted an equally varied blend of single adults at the 31st Labor Day Getaway at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board, the Getaway drew 1,623 people, ranging in age from 20 to over 60, from 15 states. Labor Day Getaways also were held in San Antonio, Texas, Ridgcrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, and Mississippi's Gulf Shore Assembly. ■

Lynne Jones joins HMB news staff

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Georgia native Lynne Jones has joined the Home Mission Board staff as associate director of news and information.

Jones has worked as an HMB research editor since February. In her new position she will primarily write news and feature stories for Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention's daily news service.

She is a 1988 graduate of Georgia State University. ■

IT'S BUDGET PLANNING TIME IN TENNESSEE!



Has your church begun planning its budget for the next church year?

If not, don't faint when you see how costs for paper, printing, and postage have gone up. And, according to Dan Ferrell of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Production Services Department,

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