

# 1998 TENNESSEE'S BAPTIST & REFLECTOR

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## this week's news

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## TBC CP gifts increase in December

For Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Tennessee Baptists gave in December \$2,803,741 to the Cooperative Program.

After two months of the 1997-98 fiscal year Tennessee Baptists have given \$4,878,137, compared to \$4,507,744 after two months last year. December gifts were \$294,948 over budget needs. Year-to-date gifts are \$139,449 under budget requirements.

"Missions and ministry for Christ continue to be a priority among Tennessee Baptists," said James Porch, TBC executive director-treasurer. ■

## Evangelism conference set for Jan. 19-20

For Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — The annual State Evangelism Conference will be held Jan. 19-20 at Judson Church, Nashville.

Theme of the two-day event is "Magnify Jesus '98."

Headlining the list of program participants are Richard Jackson, evangelist, Brownwood, Texas; Fred Luter Jr., pastor, Franklin Avenue Church, New Orleans, La.; Rick White, pastor, First Church, Franklin; and Darrell Robinson, North American Mission Board staff member, Alpharetta, Ga. Well known recording artist Squire Parsons of Leicester, N.C. will provide special music throughout the conference.

Sessions begin on Monday, Jan. 19 at 2 p.m. Scheduled to speak are Robinson, TBC President Doug Sager, pastor, First Church, Concord, Knoxville;



JACKSON



LUTER



ROBINSON



WHITE

Mike Glenn, pastor, Brentwood Church, Brentwood; and Jackson.

The Monday night session begins at 6:45 p.m. Scheduled speakers are White and Jackson. Special music will be provided by the Tennessee Baptist Chorale and Parsons.

On Tuesday the first session begins at 9:30 a.m. Speakers include Kevin Shrum, pastor, Inglewood Church, Nashville; Phil Glisson, evangelist, Memphis; James Porch, TBC executive director; and Robinson.

The Tuesday afternoon ses-

sions begin at 1:30 with messages by Ray Newcomb, pastor, First Church, Millington, and Luter. The afternoon session also features the Tennessee School of Evangelism where participants can choose from several training sessions.

Laymen's Night is the focus of the Tuesday evening session at 6:45. Messages will be given by Luter and White. A testimony will be given by Jerry Currey, a layman from Tully Grove Church, Old Hickory.

For more information about the conference, call (615) 371-2058. ■

## During 1997

## Partnerships, record CP year among top TBC stories

For Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Stories involving Tennessee Baptist partnerships and a record-setting year for Cooperative Program giving highlight the top news events in the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 1997.

Tennessee Baptists began a new partnership in Costa Rica, concluded one in Poland, and voted to begin a three-year venture in Brazil during 1998.

In January, 28 Tennessee Baptists participated in the first partnership missions project in Costa Rica. Team members led simultaneous revivals which resulted in 88 professions of faith and 220 other decisions. Also in Costa Rica, a team of Tennessee Baptist disaster relief volunteers, led by Tim Bearden, state disaster relief director, helped Costa Rican Baptists in their first ever disaster relief workshop.

In April a five-member team from the TBC Executive Board traveled to Brazil to study a possible foreign missions partnership with the Carioca Baptist Convention in Rio de Janeiro. The team recommended it to the Executive Board who proposed that Tennessee Baptists enter into the partnership. Messengers to the TBC annual meeting in November unanimously adopted the partnership.

Fifty-three Tennessee Baptist volunteers led simultaneous revivals May 18-28 in Poland. The revivals were the primary focus during the last year of Tennessee Baptists' partnership in Poland which ended Dec. 31. During the revivals more than 3,000 people heard the Gospel for the first time and about

200 people made professions of faith.

Also in 1997, Tennessee Baptists gave a record \$30,046,449 to the Cooperative Program. It was the first time gifts have exceeded \$30 million.

Other top stories in 1997, in no particular order, are:

Tennessee Baptists came to the aid of residents in West Tennessee following a tornado and severe flooding in March. Volunteers provided flood relief particularly in Obion and Dyer counties. A Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief team also was dispatched to Madisonville, Ky., to provide relief there.

Several long-time Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board staff leaders stepped down in 1997 — Greer Ruble, former director of the Sunday School department who was executive assistant when he retired; Katharine Bryan, executive director of Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union; and Bill Wilson, Ministry Coordinator. Another long-time staffer, Jerry King, evangelism associate, was granted medical disability.

The lottery failed to come up for a vote in the 1997 state legislature. Tennessee Baptist Public Affairs Consultant Bill Bates, however, cautions Tennessee Baptists that the issue likely will surface this year. Tennessee Baptists should contact their legislators and make their feelings known about the lottery, Bates said.

Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes officials dedicated their new state office headquarters in July at the Franklin campus. For more than 30 years the state offices were located in the TBC Executive Board

building in Brentwood.

The TBC Executive Board heard a report from a site feasibility committee which recommended the Executive Board offices remain at the Brentwood location.

Hundreds of Tennessee Baptist men attended the "Stand in the Gap" rally in Washington D.C. in October. The event, which drew an estimated 500,000 to one million men, was sponsored by the Denver, Colo.-based Promise Keepers organization.

For the first time anyone could remember, messengers went to the annual TBC meeting knowing the candidates for president. On Oct. 6 Knoxville pastor Doug Sager, during a rally sponsored by Concerned Tennessee Baptists, an East Tennessee conservative group, accepted an invitation from CTB officials to be a candidate for the TBC presidency. Earl Wilson, retired president of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation, announced in a statement to the Baptist and Reflector he too would be a candidate. Sager defeated Wilson by a vote of 968 to 850.

Eighteen former TBC presidents met in Brentwood Oct. 23 at the invitation of TBC President Herbert Higdon to pray for the convention and to discuss issues.

A Relationships Focus Group was named by Higdon at the TBC annual meeting to focus on "ways to maintain and strengthen our relationships" in the TBC. The move came at the request of the TBC Executive Board, which earlier in the year had rejected a motion to name a similar committee. ■

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# Texas Baptist study plan judged as top 1997 story

By Bob Allen  
For Associated Baptist Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A Texas Baptist plan distancing the nation's largest state Baptist group from the conservative-dominated Southern Baptist Convention led a ranking of top news stories in 1997 by Baptist state paper editors.

In an informal survey conducted by Associated Baptist Press, editors ranked the November adoption of a Texas Baptist "Effectiveness/Efficiency" report as the top story of the year.

The historic document affirmed "autonomy" of the 2.7 million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas and opened the door for the state group to appoint missionaries, offer options for theological education, and publish its own Sunday School literature. Those activities traditionally have been the domain of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Texas conservatives said

the plan distances the moderate-led state convention from the SBC and later organized their own alternative state convention, making Texas the second state (with Virginia) with separate groups relating to the national convention.

A Southern Baptist boycott of the Walt Disney Co. came in second in the editor survey.

In the 1996 editor's survey, a similar story also held the second spot. That year, the convention passed a resolution threatening a boycott unless Disney changed policies including offering domestic benefits to partners of gay employees and allowing homosexuals to hold "gay days" at theme parks. At its 1997 annual meeting in Dallas, the SBC followed through on that threat, urging 16 million Southern Baptists to "refrain from patronizing" Disney and its subsidiaries.

Editors ranked an assembling of half a million men in Washington at the Promise

Keepers Oct. 4 "Stand in the Gap" rally as the third biggest story. The event was said to be the largest religious gathering in American history and one of the two or three largest events ever held on the Washington Mall.

Coming in fourth was a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in June striking down the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Rounding out the top five in the editors' survey was the official establishment of the North American Mission Board, the centerpiece of a denominational downsizing by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Other top stories in the editors' ranking were:

▶ A demand by Chinese Christian leaders that Southern Baptists stop "clandestine" mission work in China and work exclusively with the China Christian Council. Officials at the SBC International Mission Board denied that missionaries are in China illegally

and said the agency intends to continue a "multi-track" approach in China.

▶ Religious persecution overseas. The U.S. State Department issued a report detailing the plight of Christians. Religious groups, including evangelicals, sought to raise awareness about religious persecution abroad and pressured the U.S. to impose sanctions on nations which persecute Christians.

▶ Continuing controversy over Mercer University President Kirby Godsey's book, *When We Talk About God ... Let's Be Honest*. One Georgia Baptist committee judged the book to contain heresy while another studied the Georgia Baptist Convention's historic relationship with the Baptist university in Macon.

▶ Famine in North Korea and the successful cloning of the adult sheep Dolly tied for ninth in the survey, rounding out the top ten. ■

## SBC CP receipts down in December

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for December dropped 6 percent compared to the previous year's December, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

For the month of December 1997, a total of \$10,518,445 in CP gifts was received, compared to the same month in 1996 of \$11,205,531. The \$687,086 difference is 6.13 percent.

For the first quarter of the SBC fiscal year, October through December, the CP gifts total \$35,564,253 compared to the same period of the previous year of \$37,454,705, a difference of \$1,890,451 or 5.05 percent.

Designated gifts for December were \$2,661,053 compared to December 1996 of \$2,748,662, a difference of \$87,609 or 3.19 percent. For the year to date, designated gifts total \$7,707,660 compared to the previous year of \$6,898,843, or an increase of \$808,816 which is 11.72 percent.

For the SBC's Cooperative Program Alloca-

tion Budget, the December total was \$1,830,311 under the required monthly budget figure of \$12,348,756, or 4.82 percent. For the first quarter of the SBC fiscal year, the total gifts are \$1,482,015 short of the budget goal of \$37,046,269, or 4 percent.

The SBC Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions, and fellowships for distribution according to the 1997-98 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions, world hunger, and other special gifts. State and regional conventions retain a percentage of CP contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries. ■

## B&R — bargain and best friend

The *Baptist and Reflector* is the only official news publication that provides Tennessee Baptists with TBC-related news.

That makes the paper a good friend for its readers — and it is a great bargain as well.

Churches are good stewards with their finances. For those unfamiliar with the *B&R* bargain in news value, we encourage you to look at the column on the left side of this page to find the cost.

The *B&R* has been a family friend for more than 160 years. Contact us today about the budget plan for all church families. — *B&R*

## Partnership Prayer Requests January

- 7 — Pray for Bob Spears, a Canadian Baptist layman at Pineview Church in Prince George who has a severe case of arthritis.
- 8 — Pray for Donald Schlosser and Paula Abernathy who are teaching at the annual Baptist music camp in San Jose, Costa Rica.
- 9 — Praise God for Kevin Madden, associate pastor of Hillcrest Church in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, who defended his faith recently in a radio debate with an atheist.
- 10 — Pray for the Tennessee/Costa Rica partnership and that it will be a blessing to the people of Costa Rica.
- 11 — Pray for the family of Adam Young who drowned recently. His mother, Kim Young, is a member of Garden Park Church, Winnipeg.
- 12 — Pray for FBC, Smyrna, whose team will be sharing the Gospel through drama at Heredia Church in Costa Rica.
- 13 — Pray for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan's Baptist Men's retreat to be held Jan. 16-18.

## Interfaith witness associate training on Mormonism slated for Feb. 5-6 at Union

For *Baptist and Reflector*

BRENTWOOD — There will be an interfaith witness associate training session in the area of Mormonism Feb. 5-6 at Union University in Jackson. The conference begins at 2 p.m. on Feb. 5 and concludes at 2:30 p.m. the following day.

Jimmy Furr, a missionary serving as regional director for interfaith witness through the North American Mission Board, will be the instructor.

The intensive 16-hour training is offered through the language church extension/interfaith witness office of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. The training will help provide some of the basics as to what Mormons believe and how Christians can more effectively witness to them.

The registration fee is \$15 and the deadline is Jan. 23.

For more information call Tim Hill or Judy Hurst at (615) 371-7916. ■

# Memphis church provides home to sister church

By Lonnie Wilkey  
Baptist and Reflector

MEMPHIS — Last April the congregation of Hollywood Church in the Frayser community here decided to relocate.

Hollywood is one of about 14 Southern Baptist congregations within a six-mile radius of each other, located in a community which has over the years changed from a predominantly white, middle class, to a lower income, African American neighborhood.

"Through the transition of the community we felt for our church to survive we had to relocate," said Pastor Kelly Smith, who acknowledged the decision to relocate, while needed, was painful. "That's the way it is when a church has to look at transition," Smith observed.

The church put their property up for sale and bought 13 acres near Bartlett. Thinking it would take a long time to sell the congregation was not prepared when their church building sold within a matter of months, Smith said.

The church found itself not ready to build and without a home, Smith noted, adding they searched for about four months trying to find a place they could continue to meet until they built.

A sister church about a mile away stepped forward and offered a helping hand.

Sky View Church, led by Pastor Ricky Ray, offered the use of their old sanctuary which Sky View had been using as Sunday School space.

Smith said he talked with Ray and Sky View invited them to come and share their



**SKY VIEW CHURCH** in Memphis has extended a temporary home to Hollywood Church, a sister congregation in the midst of relocation.

facilities. Hollywood made the move in October.

"Through their invitation we kept all of our ministries functioning," Smith said.

In addition, two other nearby churches — Ardmore and Eudora — allowed Hollywood to store some of their property at their churches at no cost.

"Without all their help we could not have done this," Smith said. Hollywood pays no rent but pays a portion of the utility bills.

Hollywood hopes to break ground for their new facility in March and be relocated by late fall, Smith said.

In the meantime there has not been any major problems with two churches at the same location, he said.

Each church has its own worship and Sunday School

space. The congregations share a fellowship hall and nursery workers. During the Christmas holidays there was an occasional scheduling conflict but the two congregations were flexible and worked them out, the two pastors agreed.

"Ricky and I have a good relationship," Smith said, noting the two congregations have had several joint worship services. The venture has been a good example of brothers and sisters in Christ working together in cooperation, Smith said.

Hollywood has been able to maintain a church office with its own secretary. Sky View provided a separate phone line so Hollywood could receive its own calls, Smith said. "Our people are very thankful," he added.



Having another congregation around has not negatively affected Sky View, said member Benny Murray.

"We had room," Murray said. "They're maintaining their identity which is important to them."

Michael Johnson, another Sky View member, agreed.

"This has not affected us. I'm glad we could open up the doors to another church."

Ray said he sees the relationship as an experiment — autonomy with partnership. It also provides an option to churches in transition, added Ray, who noted that Sky View too is in the process of purchasing property with intentions to eventually relocate as well.

As for the Hollywood congregation, which had seen its attendance at its old location drop to the low 70s, they are anticipating an opportunity to grow at a new site. "We're moving to an area which is the second fastest growing area in Shelby County," Smith said.

"We're very excited about the opportunity before us as a church. Our people are taking a very large step of faith.

"We had been in a maintenance mode for a long time. It's exciting to see their step of faith," he noted. ■



**LEADING THE EXPERIMENT** with two churches at one location have been pastors Kelly Smith, second from left, Hollywood Church; Ricky Ray, second from right, Sky View; and deacon leaders Hollis McCoy, left, Hollywood; and Dean Guyer, Sky View.

## Tennessee bricklaying team ministers across nation

By Chris Menees  
Special to Baptist and Reflector



**JAMES VINSON**, right, president of Tennessee Baptist Bricklayers for Christ, works on a building for Greater Hope Church in Union City, a ministry of Sunswept Church with additional support from the 42 churches in Beulah Association. Handing him bricks are Sunswept pastor James Kinsey and Opal Jones, a member of Sunswept.

UNION CITY — Bricks and mortar may be a necessity for building, but God is the foundation for the Tennessee Baptist Bricklayers for Christ.

The organization is a team of committed Christian men and women dedicated to be used by the Lord in the building of churches, according to James Vinson of Union City and member of Calvary Church, president of the organization.

The group was formed in 1990 as part of the Gibson County Association construction team.

But as the team grew to include more members from a wider area, including other states, the decision was made to separate from Gibson County and to organize as a specialized team.

Now, the team is comprised of some 50 members from nine associations and three states. They have completed nearly 30 new churches or additions since 1990.

The bricklaying team is a family-oriented ministry, with most of the wives and families included in the work. Their jobs sometimes include

bricklaying, cooking, Bible Schools, cleanup, and other chores as needed.

Members usually pay their own expenses, although some churches and Sunday Schools contribute individually. At times, some of the churches where the team works provide accommodations in the church or in the homes of church members.

The bricklayers' jobs are selected through a committee from requests received throughout the year. The final selections are based primarily on financial need and the church's potential growth and outreach to the lost, according to team members.

Since its formation the bricklaying team has completed projects at churches and ministries across the nation. Last September the team worked at Greater Hope Church in Union City, a ministry of Sunswept Church and an effort supported by all 42 churches throughout Beulah Association. The effort was coordinated locally by Vinson and fellow team members Leroy Perryman of Second Church, Union City, and James Tuck of Central Church, Martin. A number of volunteers from local churches, including Greater Hope, worked along-

side the bricklaying team.

"Really, the hardest part is trying to discern where the need is greatest," said Carolyn White of Brownsville, secretary of the organization. "We do a lot of praying and asking the Lord to lead us where to go."

While there is never a shortage of work, there is never a shortage of laborers either," White said. "And there's something for everybody to do.

"Everybody just comes together, and even when your fuse gets short, everybody still gets along," she added. "It's amazing how the Lord works it all out."

From the very start, most of the members of the bricklaying team were hooked on doing the Lord's work, she said. Many of them now plan their vacations around the team's projects so they can be involved.

"If you ever do it one time, you get such a blessing out of it," White said. "When we leave, there's going to be a church where there can be worship, where souls can be saved, where lives can be mended. That's such a blessing to us." ■ — Menees is religion editor of the *Union City Daily Messenger*.

By Temple Church, White House

# Football fever in community drives ministry



By Connie Davis  
Baptist and Reflector

**WHITE HOUSE** — The 5,000 residents of this community located north of Nashville have Blue Devils fever, but it has nothing to do with Satanism. In fact, many members of the Blue Devils high school football team are turning to God, and leading their friends to do the same.

Many of the athletes made their commitment to God, they report, because of Temple Church here. Before this year's football season began, about six of the team's members were attending the church. Then the congregation reached out to the Blue Devils team in some unique ways.

### Quarterback makes first play

Temple Church has an active youth program and a lot of members who are fans of the Blue Devils. They attend games and sit together as a group, explained Jim Witherington, pastor.

Then during the past summer, Jonathan Finch, quarterback of the Blue Devils, made his profession of faith at the church and Ryan Cole, another team member, responded to God's call to preach.

Witherington said he and the other leaders of the youth ministry decided the church ought to try to minister to other Blue Devils players. So the congregation invited the entire team, the coaches, and family members to a special worship service prior to the beginning of the season.

Head Coach Jeff Porter, a member of

Tri-County Church, White House, accepted the invitation and agreed to personally invite each family via a letter.

### Special service

White House Football Sunday at Temple drew a record crowd for the church. About 60 of the Blue Devils players attended. During the service they saw three of their fellow players and two middle school football athletes baptized, said Witherington.

As the football season began, several more players began visiting the church. Soon about 17 Blue Devils players or staff and about 10 middle school football players or staff were participating in church activities, along with family members and friends. And during the season, Blue Devils fever grew as the team won game after game.

Witherington and the church's youth leaders decided to build on the momentum and hold another special service at the end of the season. Coach Porter agreed to the plan.

"We started the season in church so we should end it in church, whether we win or lose (the championship)," he said. Porter explained he can take such Christian stances because of the support of the school's administration and the community.

Then the Blue Devils team, with a 15-0 record, won the Class AAA state championship.

### Another special service

Dec. 14 was Blue Devils Celebration Sunday at Temple.

Finch, who was later named Most Valuable Offensive Player, Mid-State, Class AAA, gave his testimony. Ryan Cole, a de-

fensive and offensive lineman, preached, and Matt Armistead, another lineman, led the music.

Coach Porter attended again. He later was named Coach of the Year, Mid-State, Class AAA. In attendance were many players, including Chad Rogers, linebacker who was named Most Valuable Defensive Player, Mid-State, Class AAA.

They and the rest of the crowd heard Jeff Cordell, high school principal, pray, a youth choir sing, and saw a youth creative ministries team perform. Then they viewed the baptism of eight people, six of whom were athletes, including Rogers, noted Witherington.

This crowd was the largest ever gathered at the church, larger than the last special service for the athletes. This time the church had prepared an overflow room where people could watch a broadcast of the service. Finally, the day was topped off by the decision of a middle school football player to believe in Christ.

### Impact of one church

Witherington is not surprised by the response of the young athletes to the outreach of Temple. The ministry was a natural response, he said, to the community's involvement with youth sports. But he is surprised at the impact of a small church. Temple has about 300 members and he is the only staff member.

However, he is quick to explain that something miraculous has been occurring because the church's members have obeyed God. And the ministry has expanded to reach basketball players and cheerleaders and their family members.

"It's what the Lord is doing. It's not one person or program necessarily. It's God's touch in their lives. They're bringing their friends to Christ one at a time — girls and guys alike."

One impact on the church has been growth. During the 1996-97 church year the congregation welcomed 96 new members and since Oct. 1 more than 20 people, of which 18 were making their initial faith commitment. And the congregation is seeking a youth minister.

The outreach also helps the community, added Witherington, which looks to leaders like Porter, who sets a Christian example.

The ministry helps the church in other ways, said Witherington, who wasn't an athlete himself, but has coached youngsters. "All of the time that we invest in these kids will come back to us in the future. Not only do we get the joy of seeing their lives change, but we get to enjoy the fun and fellowship." B&R



## Team members lead ministry



For Baptist and Reflector

**WHITE HOUSE** — Jonathan Finch, 18, a senior at White House High School and the quarterback of this year's championship team, has always wanted to excel as an athlete and as a leader, hopefully directing people to what is right, he explained.

But he didn't know what right really meant until this summer, he said. That was when he committed his life to God.

Finch credits his grandmother for his goals because she introduced him to God when he was a child. He also credits her for his faith, which was not a reaction to his struggles, he said. Finch's mother is ill and his parents are divorced. So he lives with his grandmother and helps her and his dad care for his two younger brothers.

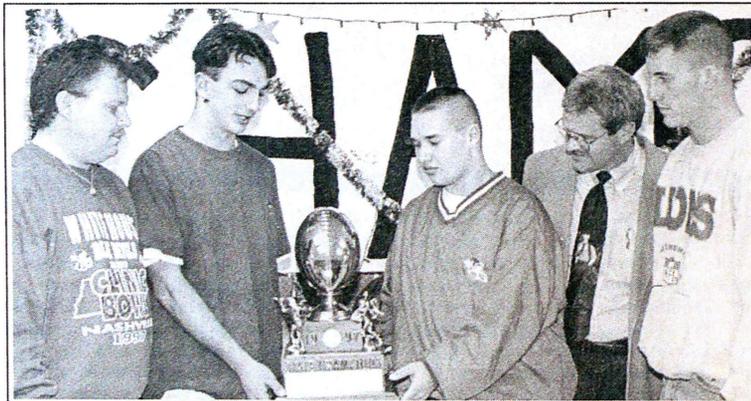
Finch said he's glad now he can be assured he's a good example to his peers. "I want to set a good example for them because they do look up to me," said Finch.

### Lineman Ryan Cole

Ryan Cole, 15, has been active at Temple with his family since the church began 10 years ago. This summer during a camp he responded to God's call to preach.

### Linebacker Chad Rogers

Chad Rogers, 19, a senior linebacker, said he made a profession of faith recently because of Finch's example. "When I saw him stand up for what he believed in, that's what I wanted to do. I feel a lot better about myself now." B&R — Connie Davis



**LEADERS OF THE** ministry at Temple Church show the trophy the White House high school football team received recently after winning this year's Class AAA state football championship. The ministry leaders include, from left, Jeff Porter, coach, Jonathan Finch, Ryan Cole, Jim Witherington, pastor, Temple Church, and Chad Rogers. — Photo by Connie Davis

## Fellowship of Tennessee evangelists holds pre-conference meeting

For Baptist and Reflector

The annual meeting of the Fellowship of Tennessee Baptist Evangelists held prior to the annual State Evangelism Conference will be Jan. 20 from 10 a.m. — noon in the chapel of Judson Church, Nashville. The church is the site of the conference.

Phil Glisson, president of the fellowship, said the meet-

ing is "an opportunity for pastors of the state to be exposed to evangelists in the state because we feature different individuals each year that would be available to come to their churches."

Speakers this year are evangelists Michael Duff of Springfield, Billy Edmonds of Oliver Springs, and Skip Youngcourt of New Johnsonville.

Leading the music will be Tim and Amy Wuester of Gallatin. The couple also hold the office of music directors for the fellowship along with Benny Jackson of Germantown, who is



GLISSON



WUESTERS



DUFF



EDMONDS



YOUNGCOURT

vice president of the organization.

For more information con-

cerning the meeting, individuals may contact Glisson at (901) 324-3459. B&R

# Putting last year behind; unwrapping '98

Whether you have already jotted down some important dates on the 1998 calendar, maybe you should do it right now.

Write down those appointments, vacations, trips, meetings, workshops — don't risk forgetting.

But before we move totally into 1998 and forget 1997, remember the rare events such as the dazzling performance of Hale-Bopp Comet, that brilliant visitor from outer space. Wrap up those memories for future reference.

Many of those God-sized miracles belong to all of us, such as the comet, the sunrises and sunsets, seasons.

One of the most important memories is how we celebrated Christmas — going beyond the "joy" of returning or exchanging presents, or even the pleasure of family gatherings.

Think of the gifts you were able to give, gifts of blessing and not just convenience or "chic." Leave it to God to bless us with a rare gift, the Messiah, given in such an unusual way. Never mind that it shouldn't have been a surprise, because it was promised and reported in Scripture hundreds of years before it was given.

But no one knew the actual date, and surprise, surprise — the Savior King was laid down in a feeding trough. He didn't have friends or family who expected much

more than that.

And so as we enter 1998, let's remember the humility of Christ.

There will be opportunities to practice Christianity. But, as Henry Blackaby says, we need to get out there and find out what God is doing. *We can join him.*

It's okay to glance over the shoulder, but we also have to look to the future. Here are a couple of ideas worth remembering as we do that:

On family life — in an interview by Leah Glasheen, historian Doris K. Goodwin says that television's role is "perhaps the most fragmenting force in all our cultural history." She says it "is so ironic [especially since] back in the '50s it created more bonds among us rather than [few-

er]." She also believes that America yearns for family and community, while at the same time being challenged by technological advances and first glimmerings of explosive social changes. It was true in the '50s, and faces us now also.

Some view the '50s as naive or stifling, but Goodwin also sees in those years "some timeless good qualities," and "a certain kind of security and community and connectedness that was provided for many of us."

Recapturing some of that '50s history is worth a try. Seeing through the hype and concocted "culture" of supposedly rich and dangerous, and/or famous people is a naiveite we all could use. — *Wm. Fletcher Allen*

## Help us implement a long range plan

When the numbers on the calendar click over to 2000, we want to have a *Baptist and Reflector* long range plan in place.

This has been a focus of the staff, a recognized need, and implementation of ideas and data gathered by Craig Communications will facilitate the dream.

Craig's study and focus groups' results eventually will be employed to strengthen every phase of Executive Board ministries.

Meanwhile, regular *Baptist and Reflector* readers know that the paper in 1998 will omit two more issues — giving sub-

scribers a paper weekly except for the weeks of July 4, Aug. 26, Christmas, and New Year's. The paper will also be limited to eight pages for twenty issues.

These are cost-cutting measures, but the quality of the paper will not be diminished. Until new plans to increase readership get underway, such measures will enable the paper to be financially stable.

In December our emphasis was on Light. This month we hope to keep us aware of Life, and for February, Love, all reminders of Christ. *WFA*



## just for today

by Fred Wood, pastor emeritus, Eudora Church, Memphis



### Start with a smile

Jan: "I like her. She and I have one important thing in common."

Fran: "Does she like the same people whom you like?"

Jan: "No, she dislikes the same people whom I dislike."

### Take this truth

Politicians make strange bedfellows. So do questionable motives. Are your friendships and alliances based on things that matter? They are the things that endure. If you must hate something, be sure it's the sin; not the sinner.

### Memorize this Scripture

But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. — Revelations 2:6

### Pray this prayer

Lord, help me to be wise and discerning in choosing friends and loyalties. ■

## Finding a place for yourself isn't always easy

### One word more

by Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor



Francis Drake, the great English corsair of the 16th century, knew there was trouble ahead when his ships sailed off the map.

Undaunted, he relied on prayer, logic, enthusiasm, and a natural feeling for navigation. As a result, he discovered prized information about the sea route around the southern tip of South America.

It was 1578, and little was known about that part of the world. Some cartographers had insisted that an equal amount

of land lay south and north of the equator — and that for each route in the north, there was a sea route in the south.

They were wrong — and Drake proved it.

He was a man who, when he didn't know where he was, he immediately found out.

Few sailors had taken the risks he took — few left their names in the history books as explorers of great magnitude.

So when Drake and his men encountered the fierce storms of the Antarctic in the deep south, they sailed on.

When he determined they were in uncharted waters, he insisted they go ashore on a small, rocky island, now known as Cape Horn. A few of them climbed a precipice, and he had his men tie ropes to his

ankles and he flung himself southward off the highest spot — dangling due south.

"This is the southern-most spot on the earth where any man has ever dared to go," he shouted into the wind.

We can thank Drake and others like him who changed the world by daring to stretch past the known to challenges of the unknown.

We need the kind of daring possessed by those explorers. Much of their derring-do was about gold, silver, or fame. But because they dared and challenged, the world has become more friendly.

They stared danger and despair in the face — and won.

Last month many Americans paused to mark the 25th anniversary of man's last walk on the moon. It's old news now.

The exploits of those space pioneers has almost faded from memory.

The average person — like us, probably thinks of pioneers, explorers, and space travelers as a few people blessed with intrepid talents.

We know they made, and still make, a difference in affairs of the world. We know that today we have few frontiers left to explore.

But, you know, each one of us has a special gift from God, something that no one else can do as well as we can.

We have opportunities to be pioneers, explorers, adventurers. Christians are challenged to use every talent, every spiritual gift, every blessing — to make a difference in our world.

But hasn't that always been our challenge, our goal? ■■■

## Hope says never give up, God still answers prayer

### families matter

by Paul Barkley counselor, professor



lives, we tend to roll over and give up, sensing that we cannot possibly hope to accomplish anything positive.

Years ago when I was a high school student and playing football, Paul "Bear" Bryant was coaching at University of Alabama. Our coach used a saying of Bryant's: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Robert Schuller in his book, *Move Ahead with Pos-*

*sibility Thinking*, defines hope as "Hanging On, Praying Expectantly." In my early days as a pastor, I came across a German proverb that said we should "pray as though no work could help, and work as though no prayer could help."

It is difficult for many believers to make the commitment in the family to keep on keeping on. How often must you try before you give up? How many times must you explain the same old problem to your spouse before he or she understands? How often must you correct your child before he or she learns the lesson? I wish I had a simple answer. Let me share a story that Schuller uses in his book.

In Sacred Heart, Minn., there is a beautiful nursery where rows of prize-winning trees and shrubs are grown. Clarence Flagstad is the successful owner, successful because he would not give up hope. At the beginning of World War II, the family worked to eke

out enough to make mortgage payments. His brother was drafted and later was killed in the war. Clarence and his father worked harder to keep up the payments. Then his father died. Young Clarence was devastated.

He tried to handle the pressure from the financial institution in Chicago that threatened foreclosure if Clarence couldn't make the payments.

Clarence, a farm boy who had never been to Chicago, hopped a freight train. On the way he prayed to God to help him find the office. God helped him, and Clarence's persistence paid off with an interview with the company's president.

That meeting got Clarence a refinancing package that he could manage, and taught him that trusting God and persistence works.

Our families are worth the effort — and God still answers prayer. ■

# Gambling disorders on rise: study

Associated Baptist Press

**BOSTON** — As legalized gambling has exploded during the last 20 years, the number of people with gambling disorders has risen sharply, according to a recent study by Harvard Medical School.

While the number of problem gamblers in the United States and Canada remains statistical-

ly small, the incidence of gambling disorders is on the rise among adults in the general population, the study said. Analyzing studies published between 1977 and 1993, researchers estimated that 0.84 percent of adults were affected by a gambling disorder. Looking at more recent studies from 1994 through 1997, the rate of prob-

lem gamblers had grown to 1.29 percent of the adult population. Researchers estimate that 3.8 million adults in the U.S. and Canada suffer from serious gambling disorders. Researchers cited the increased availability of casinos and state lotteries across America as the likely culprit. ■

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### Executive Board Position Opening

Applications are being accepted for the position of Ministry Specialist for Black Church Extension in the Evangelism/Missions Strategies Group of the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. This position will provide leadership in starting Black churches in Tennessee as a member of the Church Extension Team. All persons interested in the position must complete an application to be considered. Applications and additional information may be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Office, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024; (615) 371-2013.



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### Associational Staff Positions

Peninsula Baptist Association of Virginia is seeking to fill two staff positions. A Minister of Mission Development and Planning is needed to assist the association churches in developing and implementing plans for missions ministry, evangelism, church starting, and growth. An Associate Minister of Urban Centers and Services is needed to give leadership to the association's center ministries. These ministries are an avenue of service and compassion of the Association's churches for the sharing of the Gospel with people of the urban core of the cities. Please send resumes to Peninsula Baptist Association (Search Group), 863 Cloverleaf Lane, Newport News, VA 23601.

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## Sexual abuse

By Ron Blankenship

### Focal Passage — II Samuel 13:1-39

I want to approach sexual abuse from a pastoral and theological context. Sexual abuse is an ugly sin that we would rather not talk about. The abused person often feels abandoned by God and may feel God is angry and wants to punish the victim. The abused person may even ask, "Why didn't God stop this?" The victim needs to be reminded of the church's and of God's acceptance and love, and that the sin was not his or her fault.

Teach about the grace of God. Be sympathetic. Abusive families do exist, even among church families. Sometimes we pretend every family is wonderful because they go to church. This illusion only brings feelings of isolation to the abused. Survivors need a community allowing them to question, hurt, and heal without condemnation. Forgiveness that suppresses the rage is abusive in itself. Acknowledge the abuse and the rage going along with it. We don't handle anger and abuse well in churches. Most often, in fact, we can add to the problem through dysfunctional conflict in the church system. If we take the approach of silence, the ones abused may feel God is silent too, and that the issue is too bad even for God to speak to it.

Other emotions to acknowledge are grief and loneliness. A loss of self-esteem and trust has occurred, so grief is the result. The feeling of isolation leads to loneliness. Since the body has been violated, feelings of an inferiority complex set in, so you need to remind the individual of his or her worth in Christ. Feelings of guilt and shame result, but again they need to be reminded it was not their fault. There is disbelief this has happened to me. Because most sexual abuse crimes happen in the context of family, feelings of betrayal set in. Remind the abused one that these feelings are normal and listen to them without judgment, only compassion.

As you teach the lesson, get in touch with your own feelings of embarrassment, ambiguity, and reluctance to teach on the subject. Know who you are speaking to. Are there any victims of sexual abuse in your class?

Remember too that people may want God to be a quick-fix artist. It takes a lot of time, prayer, usually therapy by a professional counselor, and endurance working through the process of pain before the emotional and spiritual issues can be resolved. One thing for sure, when you deal with this hot issue, you will receive some kind of response. Be ready to answer with grace, love, and acceptance. That's what Jesus Christ would do.

Another biblical text besides II Samuel 13 relating to sexual abuse is Judges 19:11-30. A good book is Marie Marshall Fortune's *Sexual Violence: The Unpardonable Sin*. A lecture I attended in 1989 by Alexis Smith has helped me to understand this difficult issue better.

A course offered by the YWCA gives some stages of recovery for victims: (1) isolation/procrastination/denial; (2) awareness and admission; (3) involvement in therapy and seminars leading to hope and change; (4) integration leading to harmony and new value system; (5) self-actualization of whole person in balance, moving beyond being a victim to help others, self-esteem improves; (6) some road blocks to recovery are: "I choose not to get help," "Yeah, but no one can help me," neglecting one's natural feelings, and I would add not depending on the strength and comfort of God to get you through this crisis. No problem is so big that God is not bigger. Ultimately only your relationship with Jesus Christ can give you purpose to go on and find renewed purpose and joy for living. Resurrection comes after crucifixion. — Blankenship is pastor, Haywood Hills Church, Nashville.

## Becoming God's people

By Hal Poe

### Focal Passage — I Peter 2:10

Peter brings this passage with one of the most important theological terms in the Bible: therefore. In chapter one he reviewed the Gospel message and how a person comes to be saved. In chapter two he begins to explore the implications for believers of this great salvation. Paul had done something similar in Romans 12 where the therefore implication is for Christians to offer spiritual sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1) just as Peter urges here. A similar use of therefore appears in Hebrews 12 after a lengthy discussion of the faith that leads to salvation. In Hebrews 12:1 the therefore implication is for Christians to throw off everything that hinders running the race. Peter makes the same kind of statement when he urges Christians to throw off everything that hinders growing up in Christ.

### Family Bible Lesson

The apostles are not suggesting that people can rid themselves of sin. Quite the contrary. By always beginning with the Gospel and restating the basis for salvation, they stress that *since Christ has already dealt with our sin* we should not cling to it any longer. It is crucially important to recall that this letter and the letter's of Paul are written to Christians who have already believed and been saved.

These are not evangelistic tracts like John's Gospel. They are intended for an audience of people who have already tasted salvation. The qualification for being able to rid oneself of sin is always that one has already experienced salvation. The therefore means that we should continue to walk in Christ.

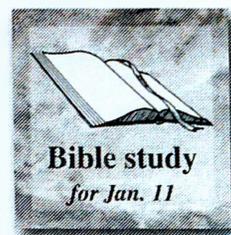
One might note the remarkable consistency of the two apostles' teaching in this matter. They lived and worked in different places until the time of their deaths in Rome. They ministered to different spiritu-

al crises. They used different vocabularies and grammatical constructions. Yet, they repeatedly deal with the same themes in a similar way.

So much has been made of differences in style, expression, local context, and philosophical framework during this century when studying the New Testament that scholars have tended to overlook the consistency of the message of the letters. The implications of the Gospel may be different in terms of specific issues individual churches may face, but the broad, universal application appears consistent among the apostles. This consistency is what one might expect if the Holy Spirit guided the development of the New Testament.

When Peter begins to explore what it means to be a part of Christ, he uses the image of Christ as the "living stone" and of Christians as individual stones added to the spiritual house of God. It is interesting to note that Christians "are built up" into this house. They do not do the building, Christ does the building. This statement has implications for the spiritual development of the individual believer, for the growth and development of the local congregation, and for the broad advance of the Gospel across the globe. Christ does the building with stones offered to him as a sacrifice.

The passage reflects the teaching Peter received from Jesus who declared "on this rock I will build my church." The Catholic Church has taught that this passage means Peter would be the foundation of the church, but Peter taught that Christ was the foundation stone and that Peter and all other Christians are stones added to Christ. Jesus used these teachings from the prophets to indicate his role in salvation. Jesus had also taught that he himself would become the new temple and place of worship when he said "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19). — Poe is dean, Academic Resources and Information Services, Union University, Jackson.



## Staying on track

By Rocky Churchwell

### Focal Passage — Genesis 35:1-15

#### Where you have gone

When someone around me becomes a Christian, I always try to make sure they get a New Testament with their name inside the front cover, and the date they made the decision.

This is a little thing I know, but it is done in the hope that later on, when the devil tries to plant seeds of doubt, they can point to the date in their Bible and say, "See, I made a decision to follow Christ, and I don't have to worry about it now."

We all need to be reminded of where we came from. After 20 years, Jacob was called on by God to return to Bethel, the place where God first spoke to him.

Jacob had come a long way, and it was time for God to remind him of where he was going. It was also time for Jacob to lead his family to put away all of their foreign gods, and build an altar to the Lord.

### Explore the Bible Lesson

#### Where you are now

From time to time God will call on each of us to "Put away the strange gods," that are allowed to accumulate around us and separate us from a close personal relationship. We have to renounce the idols of this world, so that we can once again worship God completely. This is a daily thing and calls us to renew our commitment often.

Jacob renewed his commitment to God, and built another altar in the place where he had committed himself long before (Genesis 28:18-22). God in turn appeared to Jacob with a blessing and a promise. Jacob would be the father of a great nation, and the land which was promised to Abraham and Isaac would be his as well. God promises all of us great blessings. We are not only to be blessed in the future, but we can

expect God's blessings right now. Accepting Jesus brings about a "right now" experience that is immediate.

#### Where you are going

God calls all believers to "Stay on track" spiritually. If we do not we often miss the blessings of God. We stay on track by reminding ourselves of what we committed to long ago. As we walk with God we are compelled daily to do away with the things which separate us from God, and put on the new garments (Ephesians 4:24). But there is more. God calls us to move on.

Notice that Jacob did not stay in Bethel. He moved on to Ephrath. Christians are called to follow God but are never promised the walk will be easy. During the trip, Rachel gave birth to a son that Jacob named Benjamin, and died in the process.

How is your walk with God today? Are you growing in your faith, or do you need to once again be reminded of the commitment you made with Jesus? — Churchwell is pastor, First Church, Jamestown.

## churches

■ **Everett Hills Church, Maryville,** is renovating its facility.

■ **Haywood Hills Church, Nashville,** will host a World Missions Conference May 17.

■ **On Jan. 14 Two Rivers Church, Nashville,** will offer DivorceCare, a 13-week program which will meet from 6:15-8:30 p.m. each Wednesday. It includes video instruction and small coed group participation. For more information, call (615) 889-3950, ext. 129.

■ **First Church, Salltillo,** recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. Dennis Cooper, pastor, Trinity Church, Michie, spoke. A special guest was Carl McNeil, former pastor.

■ **First Church, Allardt,** has begun meeting in its new sanctuary, which was constructed by a building team from the correctional facility in

Morgan County.

■ **Moodyville Church, Byrdstown,** held a revival recently. Raymond Phillips, pastor, Columbia Hill Church, Clarkrange, spoke.

## schools

■ Broadcasting students at **Union University, Jackson,** will be using new equipment for electronic field production and digital non-linear editing, thanks to a \$90,000 gift from a West Tennessee business leader. Currently students produce "Jackson Tonight!," a 30-minute news magazine featuring community news which airs on the local cable network.

## associations

■ **Indian Creek Association** is coordinating a ministry at the expanded Wayne County Boot Camp.



## state event

■ **A Conversational English Workshop** sponsored by Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board ministries will be held Feb. 5-7 at Guaranda Drive Church, Johnson City. The meeting will train people to teach English as a Second Language to those with no or little English. To register call Lacey Maragni at (423) 929-8042.

## people

■ **Williston Church, Williston,** ordained **Steve Reeves, Richard Jenkins, and Charlie Jones** as deacons Nov. 9. Bob Campbell, director of missions, Fayette Association, delivered the charge to the new deacons.

■ **First Church, Jamestown,** ordained **Roy Lee Mundy Jr., Bill Tant, and Joe Pile** as deacons Dec. 14.

■ **Bible Hill Church, Parson,** recently ordained **Kevin**

**BEING** recognized by **Brainerd Church, Chattanooga,** are **Burl Newport and Peggy Pryor,** who were presented the annual **David Brainerd Award** of the church. Recipients are recognized for personal, devotional life and evangelistic zeal. Brainerd was a missionary to Native Americans.

**Cagle and Billy Crittendon** as deacons.

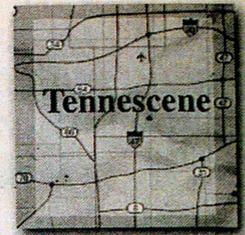
## leaders

■ **Round Lick Church, Waverlytown,** has called **Reece and Linda Duke** as senior adult coordinators, **Nathan Wilkerson** as minister of students, and **Don Herron** as bus minister.

■ **Billy Trice,** pastor, Fall Creek Church, Norene, was honored recently for 26 years of service.

■ **Bruce Howland** has been called as youth minister, New Salem Church, Soddy-Daisy. Howland is a graduate of the University of Maryland and recently of Tennessee Temple University, Chattanooga.

■ **Bethany Church, Loudon,** has called **Nathan A. Huff** as pastor, effective Nov. 1. A native of Loudon, Huff is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He has served churches in Nevada, Tennessee, and South Carolina and



formerly was pastor of a church in Johns Island, S.C.

■ **Rocky Hill Church, Knoxville,** has called **Rush Harrison** as minister of worship, effective Jan. 1.

■ **Richard Hallmark,** minister of music, Rome Church, Lebanon, has been called to the staff of a church in Lawrenceburg.

■ **Larry Hayes,** pastor, Salem Springs Church, Murfreesboro, has resigned.

■ **Rocky Branch Church, Walland,** has called **Jay Westbrook** as pastor.

■ **Rick Baggett,** pastor, Eastland Church, Nashville, has been called as pastor of Adairsville Church, Adairsville, Ga.

■ **Billy Moorefield,** minister of education, Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage, recently celebrated his 10th anniversary of service there.

■ **Rubynelle Dixon,** minister of preschool/children, First Church, Nashville, recently celebrated her 21st anniversary of service there.

■ **Ebenezer Church, Knoxville,** has called **Paul Moseley** as minister of education and students. He is on the staff of a church in Florence, Ala. He is a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.



**PARTICIPANTS** of the 14th annual Mission Round-Up of Cumberland Plateau Baptist Association gather. About 220 children competed by churches in field events. Lantana Road Church children placed first, Westel Church won second place, and Cumberland View Church earned third.

# Beulah Association ministers to arts and crafts festival vendors

By Chris Menees  
Special to Baptist and Reflector

**UNION CITY** — It's service with a smile — and an extra helping of God's love.

The vendors at the Reelfoot Lake Arts and Crafts Festival are becoming accustomed to the Southern hospitality served up every year by Beulah Baptist Association and its member churches.

Gallons of coffee, dozens of doughnuts and hundreds of sandwiches — all given away free of charge — are the vehicles used for sharing Christ with the hundreds of artisans who converge on the lake the first weekend in October each year.

The vendors are thankful — and receptive.

In return, many of them attended a Sunday morning worship service sponsored by Beulah Association and held beneath a huge white tent along the shores of Reelfoot Lake.

Last weekend's ministry at the lake marked the third consecutive year the

Baptist association and its member churches have ministered to the vendors. Volunteers distributed breakfast and lunch booth-by-booth Friday and Saturday and offered breakfast at the tent prior to the church service Sunday.

Volunteers gathered in the early hours of the morning to distribute coffee and doughnuts to vendors before the festival opened each morning. Then they made dozens of sandwiches for the vendors' lunch.

Sandwiched in between the food were booklets outlining a plan of salvation and handbills inviting the vendors to the worship service.

More than 150 vendors attended the church service this year, and many of them turned in response cards asking for prayer or making decisions for God, according to Rich Burton, evangelism director of the association and pastor, First Church, Woodland Mills.

Burton said the arts and crafts ministry has continually grown since its inception.

Several years ago, the association

had an arts and crafts booth where cold water and Gospel tracts were distributed. But then an idea was planted in the mind of then-evangelism director Jimmy Brown, pastor, Pleasant Hill Church No. 2, Union City, and the arts and crafts ministry began.

Last year, five vendors made initial commitments to God during the church service. And this year, long after the service had ended, many of the vendors returned to the tent to talk more extensively with association director of missions Jerry Esary, who spoke during the service. ■ — Menees is religion editor, *The Messenger* of Union City.



**MEMBERS** of Beulah association churches assemble sandwiches for vendors of the Reelfoot Lake Arts and Crafts Festival.