

Wide Edition **Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists** Vol. 172 / No. 38; Oct. 18, 2006

both construction and spiritual work

More volunteers needed for Gulf Coast relief efforts

Donnie Davis Bushey
st and Reflector

ENTWOOD — Volunteers are still
ed for the Gulf Coast relief work of
ennessee Baptist Convention based
lport, Miss., reported David Acres.
ris Loudenbeck, full-time volun-
with the project from Faith Baptist
ch, Bartlett, said he has met with
families who were victims of Hur-
e Katrina who assure him they can
care of repair to their homes them-
s. Then a couple months later, they
dmit they are at their wit's end.
o many are almost to the point that
are beyond hope," reported Acres,
disaster relief director for the TBC
here.

There are many reasons why volunteers are still needed more than a year after the storm, he explained. The devastation was so extensive. "We're not close to being done with relief," he stated. For example, tree and debris removal are still needed although heavy equipment would be required, Acres. Families are still dealing with insurance companies, he reported. Many families of Waveland, Miss., Pearllington, Miss., have waited recently to return. Acres noted.

One reason is the Bay St. Louis Bridge is still out, which makes travel around the area more difficult.

"We are committed to help these people for another year," said Acres. The TBC with help from five metro Baptist associations in the state — Knox County, Bradley, Nashville, Chilhowee, and Mid-South — developed the project. The Tennesseans are working with the Gulf Coast Baptist Association based in Gulfport.

The project is being led by Chris and Carrie Loudonbeck based at Robinson Road Baptist Church, Gulfport. The church has been equipped by the TBC to host 140 volunteers a week, said Acres. About 1,071 volunteers have served since it began in March.

The Loudenbecks have served since March at Robinson Road Baptist and much of last fall after the storms as TBC disaster relief volunteers, reported Acres.

Chris had a landscaping business which he felt called by God to suspend so he and Carrie could lead the effort. They have been helped by Phil and Aline VanDixon of Ramer Baptist Church, Ramer. This fall they will be helped by Jim and Bonnie Sellers of Belle Aire Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, and Frank Metcalfe of Harmony



MEMBERS OF Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett, work on a house in the Gulf Coast area of Mississippi as part of the TBC project there. They are Don Loudenebeck, left, and Tommy Shelton.

Baptist Church, Adams.

Volunteers are needed to do construction-related work but also spiritual work, said Acres.

"So much of the spiritual side of things needs to be taken care of," he explained. People still need to talk about the storm and its impact on them. Others need to hear why the Baptist volunteers are there — because of their

faith in God, said Acres.

Tennessee Baptists could take a six-pack of coke and as they distribute them in a neighborhood, visit with folks. They could visit parks and get to know children and families there. They could hold block parties. They could prayerwalk neighborhoods and get to know residents.

— See More volunteers, page 2



Editors tour Holy Land in Jordan

Southern Baptist state paper editors recently had the opportunity to tour the Holy Land in Jordan, courtesy of the Jordan Bureau of Tourism. Editors visited several historic biblical and archeological sites. They also had the opportunity to visit with leaders of the Jordan Baptist Convention, including JBC president Nabeeh Abbassi, pictured far right. Editors, from left, include Bill Webb, Missouri; Gary Barone, California; Jim White, Virginia; Tony Cartledge (behind White), North Carolina; Don Kirkland, South Carolina; John Loudat, New Mexico; and Bob Terry, Alabama. The editors attended church service on Sept. 24 at Husn Baptist Church. See pages 6-7. — Photo by Lonnie Wilkey

ACP gets new look

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — For more than 80 years churches have faithfully reported the activities of their church during the past year, but never like this.

This year churches are encouraged to go online to submit their Annual Church Profile (ACP), says Libby Eaton, information specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

TeD, or Tennessee Electronic Database is the repository for the statistical and leadership information provided each year by churches, Eaton related.

For the first time churches were provided user names and passwords and encouraged to go online and enter their data directly into TeD, she said.

"We were not sure exactly what to expect" she noted. "Everyone has a different degree of comfort or understanding of computers and of the Internet. We believed most folks would appreciate having the ability to

go online and enter data for themselves. And they have."

"I love it" said Sylvia Manley of Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett. "This process is so much better for me than the paper process we have used before. I like being able to go online and edit the leadership data myself," she noted.

Eaton said many others have expressed similar feelings.

"Overall, this has been a great experience. We

have had several folks call and tell us they did not have access to a

computer at home or church, so they went to the public library to enter their church's data. That is the beauty of the internet — you do not have to be sitting in the church office to use it."

Data entered online by a church is immediately available to the association and state offices. In previous years data entry was done at the association and state offices and could take several months to complete, Eaton said.

— See ACP, page 11



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Montana case to be appealed

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Attorneys for the Alliance Defense Fund say they will appeal a federal judge's decision from September that ruled a Montana Southern Baptist church violated state law when it backed a proposed constitutional marriage amendment without reporting its support to the state.

In 2004 Canyon Ferry Road Baptist Church in Helena, Mont., placed petitions for a proposed state constitutional marriage amendment in the church foyer, and its pastor, Berthold G. Stumberg III, encouraged support for it from the pulpit. The amendment passed that year by a margin of 66-34 percent.

In March of this year, Gordon Higgins, Montana's commissioner of political practices, ruled that the church violated state law because it did not fill out paperwork reporting itself as an "incidental political committee."

The lawsuit by ADF on behalf of the church seeks to overturn Montana's election law as well as Higgins' ruling, arguing that both violate the church's religious freedoms guaranteed under the First Amendment. Montana's law is one of the strictest in the country regarding church involvement in political issues.

In his Sept. 26 ruling, U.S. District Judge Donald W. Molloy, a nominee of President Clinton, ruled that the law was constitu-

Netherton addresses C-N faculty after no confidence vote

Baptist and Reflector

JEFFERSON CITY — One week after receiving a "no confidence" vote from the faculty at Carson-Newman College, President James Netherton met with them during their weekly meeting on Oct. 12.

While news media were not permitted to attend the meeting, Netherton's remarks were released to the *Baptist and Reflector*. Netherton also released a statement to the press noting he will not be conducting interviews on the matter at this time. "It is a matter that is being dealt with by our board of trustees, faculty, and administration, and the full board has not yet met to discuss its plan of action. Therefore it is not appropriate for me to engage in public dialogue or questions and answers," the statement read.

Netherton acknowledged his vote of no confidence. "That vote was a serious matter expressing deep concern for the future of Carson-Newman College. The voice of the faculty is very important. Your action sent a strong message to this administration and our board of trustees. And it is being taken very seriously by the administration and the board.

I appreciate very much your attendance at today's faculty meeting so that we might begin a dialogue to identify and address all concerns. Creating a stronger future for Carson-Newman and those who serve here is a goal that merits our best effort."

Netherton noted he has sought counsel from people with experience in conflict resolution and

reconciliation. "It appears that we need no much conflict management, but conflict transformation. We should transform a negative judgment into a constructive process," Netherton said.

He noted the "issues with which we are currently dealing can create anxiety and confusion among our students, which can negatively affect retention."

"I would like to remind us all of a principle I know to be true. Each person in this room is a professional — teaching faculty, recruiter, hiring officer, counselor, minister, and advisor — and every person in this room has an important interface with students."

"Addressing our challenges should be a priority among us and the board. We have a responsibility to help students not get caught up in these matters but focus instead on their education. Exercising professionalism faithfully and appropriately is good for students, for the college, and in turn good for each of us," he said.

Netherton expressed sorrow that "it has come to this point. I deeply regret that I as your president have not been able to help bring about the needed change in a more successful and unified way."

"I am personally committed to doing everything in my power to be the president you need this college need and to work with you in securing a better future. ...

"If we go about this quest with respect, openness to new ideas, and charity, we can be successful. And I earnestly pray that we will be."

tional. ADF attorney Dale Schowengerdt criticized the ruling, which will be appealed to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

"Churches should not be punished for speaking out on important social issues of the day," Schowengerdt said in a news

release. "After all, that's a big part of what churches do. We are appealing the district court's decision in this case because the Constitution should never be construed to require cumbersome reporting requirements in order to exercise First Amendment rights." □

DSCC students celebrate history, pray for future

Baptist and Reflector

DYERSBURG — Students at the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at Dyersburg State Community College are hosting "Haystack Awakening '06" this month. The concept goes back to 1806 when the last great awakening in this country found its roots in the haystack prayer meeting of five college students at Williams College in Williamstown, Mass.

"Our students have a deep desire to see God move on our campus," said Sam Stephens, president of the BCM at DSCC.

"We are praying around a haystack behind the BCM all month and will be hosting worship on the hillside on Oct. 18 and 19."

The outdoor gatherings on Oct. 18-19 are open to college students and local youth groups. The BCM Praise Band will provide music, with drama by the BCM Drama Team, and Bill Oakley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Trimble, will bring an evangelistic message each night.

On Friday night, Oct. 20, the BCM will host the "HE Brews Coffeehouse" from 7-11 p.m.

The coffeehouse will feature an open mic and allow students to share in song and poetry or readings, as well as testimonies about what God is doing in their lives.

Stephens said the local group of students are driven, much as the group was 200 years ago, by a deep desire for personal revival. The students are seeking personal direction in their lives through the event, as well as

spending personal one-on-one time sharing their faith with other students.

Last summer 12 students who are active at the BCM at DSCC spent their summer as student missionaries across Tennessee, in other states, and in some international settings. During this academic year, the BCM at DSCC is offering seven mission trip opportunities for students to serve.

"Through the Baptist Collegiate Ministry, we strive to help students discover the gifts God has given them, and then help equip them to serve not only in their local church as leaders, but also to be missional in their lives," according to Stan Cavniss, director of the BCM on the campus of DSCC.

"There are many people all around us that are hurting emotionally and spiritually," Cavniss said.

"Their lives are empty and we want to introduce them to a loving God who can fill the void. Our ministry is about equipping students to share the love of Jesus Christ every day, wherever they are. A college education is a great way to prepare for a future career; BCM can help students prepare for a better future." □



STUDENTS active in the Baptist Collegiate Ministry program at Dyersburg State Community College have been gathering in small groups around a haystack to pray. From left are Nastasha Hodges, Sam Stephens, Jessica Muse, Alex Sims, and Emilee Perry.

More volunteer

— Continued from page 1

Volunteers serving in a kind of ministry can receive help from John Morrell, church planter who has begun working with the Gulf Coast Association, related.

Another opportunity available for Tennessee Baptists is the NOAH re-build project of the North American Baptist Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, said Acres. NOAH stands for New Orleans Housing.

"There is so much need in New Orleans," Acres stated.

Volunteers are housed at the World Trade Center in New Orleans. Volunteers can serve in re-build work in meal preparation.

Costs for volunteer projects are minimal. Currently volunteers with the TBC project have to pay for their travel and from Gulfport, said Acres. At this time food is being provided by the TBC.

Re-build projects are well, he said. Those who have worked on have supplies available when volunteers are working.

For more information contact Elizabeth Holmes at TBC disaster relief office 800-558-2090 ext. 7920, 371-7926, or eholmes@tnbaptist.org, or the TBC Gulf Coast relief office at 1000 Road Baptist at 615-371-7926, or tnbaptist.org. □

Belmont students peacefully protest TBC decision to sue

nie Wilkey
and Reflector

ENTWOOD — While it is circulated that between 100 Belmont University students were coming to the Belmont Center Oct. 10 to protest the Tennessee Baptist Convention's decision to file a lawsuit against the school, only a few students showed up.

The students, who initiated the protest, were welcomed by Executive Director James Porch, who invited them to the meeting for a time of dialogue.

The students prepared a statement which they released to the media.

Today, we wanted the voice of the students at Belmont University to be seen, not just heard. We believe that the legal action that the Tennessee Baptist Convention has taken against the university will affect the quality of the education and environment provided to its students," the statement read.

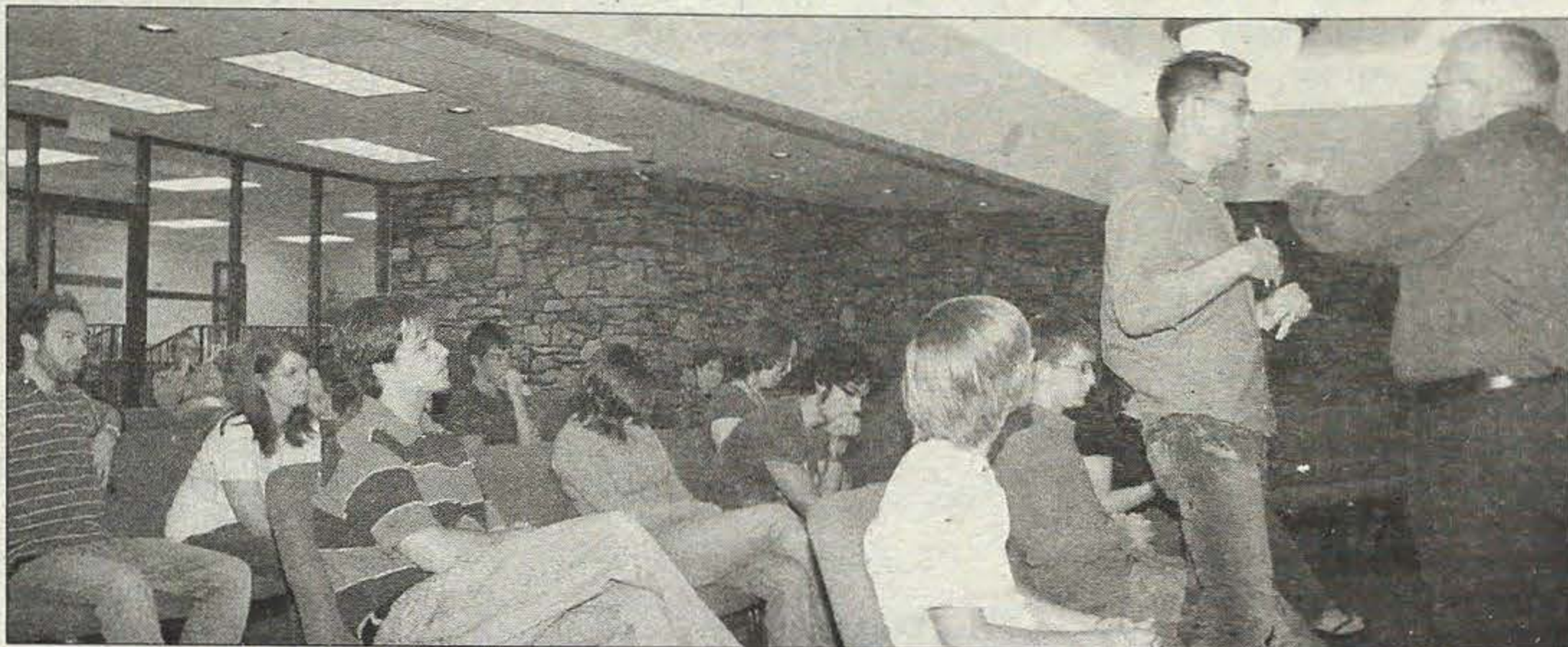
As students do not represent

the university or its administration, and they have not endorsed our actions today. We are here speaking as ourselves for ourselves to let the convention know that, should they be successful with this litigation, the people they will be hurting most are the students that attend Belmont University," the statement continued.

"We do this with the utmost respect for the Tennessee Baptist Convention and are conveying our concerns from one Christian brotherhood to another," the statement concluded.

During the time of dialogue students were courteous in asking questions and listened intently.

Porch affirmed the students for choosing a quality educational institution for their studies. He continued the dialogue by providing the students with a short history about the formation of the school and the written agreement that was signed by both parties in 1951. "Belmont made a choice to disassociate from the TBC. There is an



BELMONT STUDENT Kevin Smith of Central Baptist Church, Bearden, in Knoxville, asks a question of James Porch, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

agreement that is binding and it must be dealt with in the proper way," he told students.

Several students acknowledged the legal aspects of the agreement and at least one student agreed that it had been broken by the university.

Many of the questions posed by the students referred to the convention's mission and purpose, the funds that will be expended for the action, and

how the lawsuit seems to go against Scripture's admonishment not to sue.

Porch stressed that it is his desire and that of the Belmont Study Committee that the matter will be settled before it ever goes to court. He observed that such desire also represents the feelings of many Tennessee Baptists.

"We have made overtures to Belmont. We continue to make them. The door is open," he

assured the students.

"We are hopeful and prayerful that the convention and Belmont representatives will continue to work together for a mutually acceptable resolution. We are open for continued, good-faith negotiations to keep the matter from going to court," he said.

The meeting lasted for about an hour before students had to return to campus. □

Frequently asked questions — the Tennessee Marriage Amendment

and Reflector

ENTWOOD — Following are a list of questions and answers regarding the Tennessee Marriage Amendment which is on the state ballot Nov. 7.

Tennessee Baptists are encouraged to use the information provided in the *Belmont and Reflector* to inform their members of the importance of voting for the amendment.

The Tennessee Baptist Convention provides resources including art that is available for download from tnbaptist.org. A recent addition to the web site is a sermon outline by Ray Bomb, pastor of First Baptist Church, Millington.

What is the Tennessee Marriage Amendment?

The Tennessee Marriage Amendment proposed amendment to the state constitution specifying that marriage in Tennessee is recognized as a legal contract between one man and one woman. If adopted, marriage between one man

and one woman would be the only marital contract recognized in Tennessee. If another state or foreign country were to issue a license to marry that is prohibited by the Tennessee Marriage Amendment, that marriage would not be recognized in Tennessee. Therefore, this amendment, if adopted, would prohibit marriage between homosexuals in Tennessee.

(2) Isn't marriage between a man and a woman already protected in Tennessee?

Yes, Tennessee law currently recognizes marriage only between one man and one woman. However, concerns have been raised that the law could be overturned by a judge or a court. As an amendment to the Constitution approved by the voters of Tennessee, marriage between a man and a woman would have greater protection.

(3) Why should I support the Ten-

nessee Marriage Amendment?

Marriage between one man and one woman is God's plan. Jesus said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). We believe marriage between a man and a woman is biblical and leads to the healthiest families and societies. "Marriage is not a short-term option. It is a contract for life; it is ordered by God," Billy Graham wrote in the May 2004 issue of *Decision* magazine.

(4) What would happen if the Tennessee Marriage Protection Amendment did not pass?

In the short term, nothing would change. Tennessee law recognizes marriage as a union between a man and a woman. However, a failure to adopt this amendment opens the door to the possibility of the state law being overturned. The next step could be adoption of a law

allowing gay marriage. Also, passage of the amendment would prohibit legal recognition in Tennessee of gay marriages sanctioned by other states. As Rep. Bill Dunn of Knoxville wrote in an August 20, 2006, editorial in the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, "To define marriage to include any lifestyle is to define it to include every lifestyle."

(5) How can I support the Tennessee Marriage Amendment?

The amendment will be on the ballot statewide on Tuesday, November 7. Vote for the amendment and urge others to do the same. To be adopted as law, the amendment must receive at least one more vote than all votes cast in the Governor's race. Therefore, it would be possible for the amendment to receive a majority of votes but fall short of the number needed for the amendment to be added to the Constitution. A person who votes for a gubernatorial candidate but leaves the ballot blank regarding the marriage amendment in effect is voting "no." □ — Linda Lawson



Dockery voices common ground for both Calvinist, Arminian views

Note: The following article is an updated version of a previous Baptist Press story.

Press

OKSON — Are Southern Baptists Calvinists? Yes and no, David S. Dockery, president of Union University. Yes, because some Southern Baptists subscribe to Calvinist beliefs in predestination; no, because all do not.

Dockery told church leaders that there is a renewed interest in Calvinism and Arminianism in the Southern Baptist Convention. "We get hung up on these issues, rather than concen-

trate on a lost world," he said, "we have missed the boat. We must find areas of commonality and then give freedom in some areas where we disagree."

Dockery urged Baptists to consider the issues in their historical context. He traced the history of Calvinist and Arminian thought from the 16th century to today and emphasized the rich Calvinist heritage in Southern Baptist history, including the contributions of James P. Boyce and B.H. Carroll and the modified Calvinism of

E.Y. Mullins, W.T. Conner, and W.A. Criswell.

Dockery noted that two of the most influential Baptist leaders over the past 50 years, Herschel H. Hobbs and Adrian Rogers, were both modified Arminians. While both believed in the sinfulness of men and women and in the eternal security of the believer, both emphasized the free agency of men and women to make a choice for the gospel.

Dockery stressed that "our history and heritage has room for those who love the gospel message and who are committed to evangelism and global missions, whether modified Arminians, modified Calvinists, or consistent Calvinists and we need to find room in today's Baptist

family for representatives of those positions today.

"The final fault line between the two is eternal security," Dockery said. "If you believe in eternal security, you are probably a Calvinist in some form as opposed to an Arminian. Are you a four- or five-point Calvinist? Maybe not."

The two overarching issues, Dockery said, are God's sovereignty and man's freedom to choose, which could be considered contradictory. He said he did not believe the ideas were a contradiction but were, instead, an antimony, which is defined as a combination of two thoughts or principles, each of which is true but seem incompatible.

"There are issues we will not be able to fully grasp," Dockery said. "A lot of it remains a mystery to us. These questions have not been discussed only in Baptist life but also in other denominations as well. However, if you believe there are people in the world who are sinners and need salvation, that God initiates salvation, and that the means for salvation are necessary within the sovereignty of God, then we have common ground."

The gospel is intended for all, Dockery said, but only effective for those who choose to accept it.

"I believe that God saves believers and that He does this through men and women who take His gospel and share it. We cannot lose sight of that." □



DOCKERY

Has urgency

If editor Lonnie Wilkey wanted a fire storm of comments from those who consider themselves "reformists" he may get it. His premise that "Calvinists" have no sense of urgency shows that he is not up to speed on what Calvinists believe. In fact, I'm sure he would be surprised to find out that he falls in line with most of Calvin's teachings. However, his comments regarding the fact that we have no sense of urgency are totally and completely false. In fact, all of the reformed pastors that I know have an extreme desire to evangelize the lost and see people become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Yes, I am a reformist, not because of Calvin's teachings but because I too have studied the Word of God and find that God is a God that chooses. I'm sure that editor Wilkey will agree that Israel is God's chosen people (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). God chose them not because they were great in number but He chose them because He loved them and made them a "people for His own possession." Does this mean that the other nations were not chosen? I think the answer is pretty obvious. I'm sure that editor Wilkey will agree that Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of that great nation (Genesis 12:1). I'm sure that editor Wilkey will agree that David was God's chosen king for Israel, not Saul (I Samuel 16:3). I'm sure that editor Wilkey will agree that the 12 disciples were chosen by Jesus. "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and (that) your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you" John 15:16 (NAS). I'm sure that editor Wilkey would agree that Paul was chosen by God on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6). I could go on and on but I think you get the point.

Why do we have such a hard time believing that God chooses? We have no problem saying that "We cannot save ourselves." When we talk of conversion and God's grace, we have no problem saying that "We did nothing to deserve God's grace." Yet, when it comes to this issue of predestination we say, "It cannot be! Man has free will! God has given us the freedom to choose Him or reject Him." Believe it or not, I too believe in "free will." The Bible clearly teaches this doctrine as well. How do we reconcile the two? Well, as Charles H. Spurgeon once said to a man who asked the same question, "There is no need to reconcile friends." Even in man's free will we must attest to the fact that there are limitations. For instance, man cannot choose not to die. Does that mean that we are predestined to die? Yes it does! Man is limited in his freedom.

Without the prodding of the Holy Spirit none of us would seek God.

I have the same urgency to share that love with all around me as Jesus did. Not because I have a hard time reconciling pre-

destination and free will, but because I don't have to. I don't know who God is going to redeem, but I do know that it is my responsibility to do as the Lord commanded. I am to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

To say that "... they (Calvinist's) do not seem to have that sense of urgency that Jesus had," is completely out of line. I for one do not fall in that category!

Mark S. Martin, pastor
Smoky View Baptist Church
Maryville 37801

On target

Thank you for your thoughtful editorial on the burgeoning influence of Calvinism in our denomination. Your advice that we have the same urgency that Jesus had to reach the lost of our world is right on target. I hope Tennessee Baptists take your advice and move beyond 16th century theological debates to the current tasks at hand to reach those who are dying without Christ.

Marvin Cameron, pastor
First Baptist Church
Kingsport 37660

Shouldn't discuss

There were a couple of topics we friends should never discuss. One is politics and the other is religion. The reason is that it always creates a win-lose and sometimes even a lose-lose situation. Yes, my friend, you have stirred us up, but with my little finite mind I do have the answer. The answer to this question is what makes us Baptist.

My Armenian mind tells me that "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness: but is longing suffering toward us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). The gospel in a nutshell John 3:16 blesses my soul.

Then my Calvinistic mind pipes up and reminds me that "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestined us unto the adoption of children of Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of us will," Ephesians 1:4-5. And "For whom He did foreknow" truly gives that knock out punch.

Now I am in a quandary. If God is sovereign and omniscient how can He not know who are the elect but at the same time are we simply pawns on a chess board that God moves about as He chooses? I like the idea of grace on the part of God and faith on our part.

Can God create a rock so heavy that He can't pick it up? I do remember my seminary days when the professors reminded me that God can handle my intellect.

My question is can we finites handle the infinite wisdom of God? This is genuinely a Baptist debate. I know because we just can't agree. I do believe that God is sovereign and all knowing so that must make me about two

and three quarters Calvinist or is that what makes us Baptist?

Mike Mayo, pastor
Union Hill Baptist Church
Goodlettsville 37072

Several fallacies

It is my belief that there are several fallacies in the Sept. 27 editorial by Lonnie Wilkey on Calvinism. I would certainly agree that anyone who falls back on his Calvinism to the neglect of the Great Commission has adopted a hyper position that is clearly unbiblical. While we may never fully understand divine sovereignty and human free will (and both are true), we all should be passionate about reaching people with the gospel.

However, to suggest that Calvinists have no sense of urgency at this point is contrary to the evidence. Did Charles Spurgeon have no sense of urgency in his evangelism? His amazing ministry, as well as his writings, declare that he was very passionate about evangelism.

Are we prepared to suggest that William Carey (a Baptist and a Calvinist), founder of the modern missions movement, had no sense of urgency? Carey literally blazed a trail for missions and evangelism as he sought to bring Christ to India. In more modern times D. James Kennedy has founded Evangelism Explosion which now impacts every country of the world. Is there a man or church in our generation that has proven more evangelistic? Though Kennedy is not a Baptist, it is certainly clear that his Calvinism does not negate evangelism.

Some of our greatest Southern Baptist statesmen are men like Al Mohler and Timothy George who are Calvinistic, while at the same time passionate about biblical missions and evangelism. Clearly, you don't have to be a Calvinist to know that there is nothing in reformed theology that minimizes the Great Commission. History shows that those who hold to a balanced view of predestination have had a heart for the world and were passionate in reaching it with the gospel.

One could say that, if anything, a biblical view of election motivates the believer in evangelism, because he knows that there are people out there who will respond to the drawing power of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, it is erroneous to suggest that Calvinists have no urgency for getting the gospel to the world. Furthermore, I don't see how such a suggestion contributes toward preserving unity among Southern Baptists.

I dare say that if the broad brush were applied to all non-Calvinists by calling them Arminian there would be a strong reaction. I fully recognize that not all non-Calvinists are Arminian, and I think it's time for someone to say that not all Calvinists are without urgency in evangelism.

Marc Drake, pastor
Cherry Road Baptist Church
Memphis 38117

Achieved goal

I appreciate your work as editor and look forward to reading your editorial "Reflections" in each edition of the B&R. I find your writings thought provoking and your opinions insightful. In the Sept. 27 article you addressed the issue of Calvinism and stated "I probably am predestined to get into trouble, but part of the task of an editor is to make his or her readers think, so here goes." I do believe you accomplished your goal of making your readers think.

My reflections upon your editorial are that it does not present an accurate picture of reformed theology. In one paragraph you summarize Calvinism in a "nut-shell." One of the dangers of trying to summarize a theology for debate is that arguments are made based on either the extremes or a distortion of that theology.

There are hyper-Calvinists who are unevangelistic; however, this cannot be taken as descriptive of the whole. One of the primary tenets of reformed theology is that "we exist for the glory of God." Instead of this being a hindrance to evangelism, it is the impetus. Peter states that "we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). Laborers are needed because that is the means through which God brings glory to His name. Jesus did minister with a sense of urgency, yet He also had confidence that God was working. So much so that He stated, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes I will never cast out" (John 6:37).

If hyper-Calvinism, which is unbiblical, is embraced, then the result would be dangerous. Striving to understand biblical texts with the goal of being obedient can only result in healthy, strong, evangelistic churches. The issue is not determining if John Calvin (or for that matter Jacob Arminius) is the correct theological system. The issue is striving to understand God's Word and being obedient to it.

Thank you for your work and continuing to address the issues in the convention.

Mark Harrod, pastor
Trinity Baptist Church
Jonesborough 37659

Straightforward

Thanks for the article on Calvinism. I appreciate the straightforwardness that you used. It would seem by the responses that you hit a nerve! I, for one, think it is time to deal with this before it divides our convention (if it isn't too late already)!

We as Southern Baptists have never identified ourselves as five-point Calvinists. It is true that the London Confessions, the Winchester Confession, and the Philadelphia confession did have Calvinism embedded in the documents. However, as Baptists

went south to Sandy (Calvinism is missing from documents. Than as we for identified ourselves in 1963, and again in 2000, we don't identify ourselves Calvinist. It is true that in the early formation of our convention there were leaders were Calvinist. However, the next generation of leaders moved away from this position.

I deplore the practice of pastors with this theology telling this to a Pastor's Committee. I can name churches that found this out AFTER they called a pastor. Deception does not glorify God.

Furthermore, I have great difficulty with five-point Calvinism talking down to those who hold their position. In the *Founders Journal* on the Internet, many of the people hold their church membership grossly unlearned because they don't believe as they do and claim to have to re-educate in order for the church to be what church they should be.

Roger Briggs
Fayette & Haywood
Associates
Somerville

Timely article

Thank you so much for an excellent and timely article in the Sept. 27 *Baptist & Reformed*. I was surprised by the recent Calvinist figure quoted in the LifeWay study. Is this the case of a very vocal minority being heard over the silent (suffering) majority? In our society today, the vocal minority has been quite effective in changing perceptions of what's right, wrong, what's decent or in what "tolerance" is, what is divisive and should not be tolerated (like Christian T-shirts), shaping society's values, and even some laws that the same thing is happening within our church and institutional walls from that percent.

One year ago, our church called a new pastor who was a strong Calvinist. The members were unaware as a matter of fact, most knew little or nothing about TULIP Calvinism.

Shame on us — this never happen again! We are still here, what I call a "3:16" church. For a year I listened to his five-point Calvinist theological beliefs. In many ways he has encouraged those who do not agree with him to leave and find another — some already have and more are looking.

Our Bible believing, minded church is "reformed," whether we be or not.

With all of that going on in this small world, it was good to read your article and see that we are buying into the spirit of our heritage.

As a church friend, "You can't hold the Calvinist responsible; they have it in the matter" (that's too).

Name withheld

MA needs support of all Tennessee Baptists

est
umnist



By Mike Boyd

Faith is what will make a difference in overcoming evil in today's world. We must trust God. There is a spiritual war, and the battle is in the home — our home.

Satan is relentless in his attack on humans. He is destined for a diabolical doom throughout all of eternity and is bent on taking a plethora of people with him. Anything to undermine society and weaken the resolve of God's people only strengthens Satan's opportunities. He knows that the foundation of civilization is the home.

First, his strategy is to disrupt the offspring. Children are under attack with godless philosophies of life being massaged into children's books, movies, and television shows. The anti-authority attitudes produce great stress in the home.

Secondly, the husband/wife relationship has been the target

of his demonic strategy. Affairs, co-habitation, and divorce have contributed to the destruction of matrimonial relationships. Weakening the foundation of the home produces a weakening of societal structure.

Thirdly, redefining family has had an adverse effect on marriage. Someone commented that "those Christians" are attempting to make us all look like "Ward and June Cleaver" (of the TV show "Leave It to Beaver"). Their thought process is that the traditional marriage is passé and not realistic. It is not to be viewed as the norm.

Now, the attack is even more focused. Instead of being male

and female, the sinister desire is to include two women or two men in the definition of marriage. What is to say that one man and a dog or one woman

and a cat make a marriage? How far will all of this go?

Biblically, all of this has already gone too far. We must take a stand in our culture for what God has designed for interpersonal relationships. This is not a political issue. It is a moral issue. It is a theological issue. It is an integrity issue with Christians. **WE MUST TAKE A STAND!**

The only biblically acceptable criteria for marriage is one woman and one man totally and freely committed to one another



Regardless of position, it is time for a cease fire

est
umnist



By Reggie Weems

Indians; Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, a First Great Awakening pastor and evangelist respectively (Whitefield was a dear friend and co-laborer of the non-Calvinist John Wesley); Adoniram Judson, the first Baptist foreign missionary; and Charles Spurgeon, a 19th century paragon of evangelism who considered Calvinism "a nickname for Christianity." Neither the Calvinistic founders of the Southern Baptist Convention or the Convention's Calvinistic presidents for its first 50 years of existence lacked urgency, as the documented history of that missionary enterprise reveals.

Once past its egregiously erroneous title, the article begins with an unnecessarily sarcastic statement about predestination and is afterward replete with broad, sweeping, unsubstantiated accusations founded on the self-confessed ignorance of a subject chosen by the author. In short, the article should not have been written without more factual information or Christian charity for fellow-laborers in Christ. If Calvinistic pastors comprise no more than 10 percent of SBC pastors, it is statistically impossible for the former to be responsible for a decline of urgency in the convention. Complacency about evangelism in the SBC is a matter of disobedience in any church or pastor regardless of their position on Calvinism. As such, parties on both sides of the aisle are surely guilty of impotence in evangelism. Misleading statements about the effects of Calvinism do not address the real issue or solve the real problem.

Charles Spurgeon, arguably the most successful evangelist of his generation, never offered a public "come forward" invitation at the end of his sermons. The Lord Jesus certainly never expected that the fulfillment of

the Great Commission would rest on one individual offering a single invitation one day a week. This is congregational disobedience to Matthew 28:18-20 and pastoral disobedience to Ephesians 4:11-12.

From the pulpit or in official papers it is all too easy to hit the Baptist hot buttons that are sure to evoke automatic "Amen's" and immediate applause. These tactics only further polarize the already convinced. Such thinking by our own religious pundits is a short-term gain at best but detrimental to the convention in the long-term.

The very people who cry against Calvinism's lack of evangelism use the pulpit to give unbelievers every reason not to become part of God's family. Who wants to join a family that attempts to publicly embarrass its own? No one is going to knock down our doors to get in when the "C" in SBC stands for Cannibals. If evangelism is our common goal, genuine love for one another is a large part of Jesus' answer to the problem.

It is much more difficult, though much more beneficial, to sit down and intelligently, objectively discuss matters of disagreement. Dialogue requires hard study, intellectual integrity, and Christian deportment. It is to the church's shame that we often witness secular debaters, treating their ideological opponents with the respect that requires each side to understand the other's position while rationally, calmly, defending their own perspective.

Too many of our leading pastors resort to name-calling, branding, and innuendo. Further, easily influenced preachers reading a newspaper or magazine, perhaps returning to their churches from a state convention or pastor's gathering not

only articulate what they heard but also the manner in which it was spoken. Thus, we are teaching a new generation of pastors to resolve conflict from behind the sacred desk in ways that are not sacred. An ill demeanor may be temporarily forced upon a congregation or accepted by fellow pastors but such pastoral conduct will not advance the cause of Christ in the world. No one is going to bully a non-Christian into believing the gospel.

After enumerating the positive effects of the Spirit's filling, Paul defined Spirit-filled believers as those who "crucify the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). Those "passions and desires" are then identified as personal "conceit" and the "provocation" of brothers (Galatians 5:26) both of which are a "transgression" of the law of the Spirit (Galatians 6:1).

Regardless of one's perspective on the issue of Calvinism in the SBC, everyone benefits from the honest appraisal of another's view, the proper representation of all sides and generosity, kindness, and respect.

Calvinism should not be the immediate issue. Even before we begin to discuss Calvinism, the shouting should stop and we should understand that our very character is being tested and revealed before God and the world.

Our real beliefs are showing up in our behavior and it is not appealing to anyone, inside or outside of the Convention. Christian character and integrity are simply the adorning of doctrine (Titus 2:10) which is the application of what we believe. Thus, who we truly are and what we sincerely believe is best defined by how we behave. It is as important as what we say. — Weems is senior pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Johnson City.

heart
talk



By James Porch

A true friend

I grieve, amid the joy, of the heavenly home-going of my gracious friend, Bill Wilson.

Between 1992 and 1997, we ministered with each other as state missionaries of the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The word "with" best describes our working relationship. Bill gave me daily support, wise counsel, and the nurture of faith, grace, and prayer. He held with value the respect of the Executive Board staff, especially through careful listening, a mediating trait, and a candor to offer insight into our planning and caring through our kingdom work. His consistency of being and doing made big tracks across this state Convention. Day by day, day in and day out, he lived a patient presence of just enjoying being Bill Wilson.

No word in English exceeds "friend" as an expression of genuine relationship. I called Bill friend. We shared compatibility of personalities, confidence in each other, and trust born out of a mutual calling to serve our Lord through Tennessee Baptists.

In closing, I borrow an old but appropriate epitaph, "While passing through, Bill Wilson lived the Christian life." — Porch is executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

First person

Old and New Testaments come alive during Jordan tour

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — When I decided to accept an invitation from the Jordan Tourism Department to travel to that Middle East nation, questions ranged from "Are you crazy?" to simply "Why?"

And, I admit that I had reservations. After all, with all the turmoil currently taking place in the Middle East, why take any unnecessary risks.

Yet, as I prayed about the decision, I never felt at peace about not going. So, I accepted the invitation and joined nine other Baptist state paper editors in Jordan from Sept. 22-Oct. 1.

I am glad I was given the opportunity and equally grateful that I took advantage of the offer.

About 10 years ago I visited Israel, but had not been to Jordan. During the tour we visited many historical and archeological sites such as Petra, but the places that excited me most were those that brought Old and New Testament Scripture to life.

We also had an opportunity to visit Baptist work in Jordan, including a church service on Sunday evening and a visit to the Jordan Baptist Convention offices. One of my most enjoyable times was worshipping with Jordanian Baptists at Husn Baptist Church near Amman on the first Sunday we were in Jordan.

My first thought as I watched members enter the sanctuary was Baptists are Baptists no matter the country as the back seats filled up first.

And then I understood clearly that praise to God is the same, no matter what the language, when it comes from the heart.

It was especially striking to note that these Jordanian Baptists were freely worshipping Jesus Christ in a predominantly Muslim country that rejects Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Even though I understood none of what was said or sung, I could sense the Holy Spirit at work and I knew that I was in a true "worship" service. A young



JORDANIANS participate in a worship service at Husn Baptist Church near Amman.

man in the church who could speak English was able to translate some of the message for us so we were not totally clueless about what was said or done.

At the close of the service the church observed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper and we eagerly joined our Jordanian brothers and sisters in Christ in this special occasion.

Interest continued throughout the week as we visited locations in Jordan where biblical history took place.

Mount Nebo

Early in the week we traveled to Mt. Nebo. This is where Moses is believed to have stood and looked over into the Promised Land before his death.

As one stands there and looks over into present-day Israel with the city of Jericho in sight and a distant view of Jerusalem, one can only imagine what Moses must have felt. The land was more than just a place for the people Moses led out of bondage from Egypt. The land symbolized God's goodness and mercy as He kept His promise to His chosen people. It reminded me that God still is in the promise-keeping business today.

Looking in the direction from which Moses led the people I can't imagine it looking much different today than it did then — just barren land for as far as one can see. I, for one, would not have wanted to spend 40 years

wandering in that wilderness.

King's Highway

On route we traveled down the King's Highway, the world's continuously used communication route, according to a Jordan tourism booklet. The King's Highway was first mentioned by name in Numbers 20:17 as Moses led the exodus out of Egypt through southern Jordan. Our journey led us through where Sodom and Gomorrah are believed to have once stood before being destroyed by fire. The area has a cave in which Lot and his two daughters is believed to have fled following the destruction. Time constraints kept us from stopping or spending any time in this area. I would have loved to have been able to walk through there and just reflect on how evil those cities must have been. It is hard to fathom how they could have been any worse than our own country is today. Our world was wicked then and remains so today. We have an advantage those long ago residents of Sodom and Gomorrah didn't have — a Savior who died for our sins.

Petra

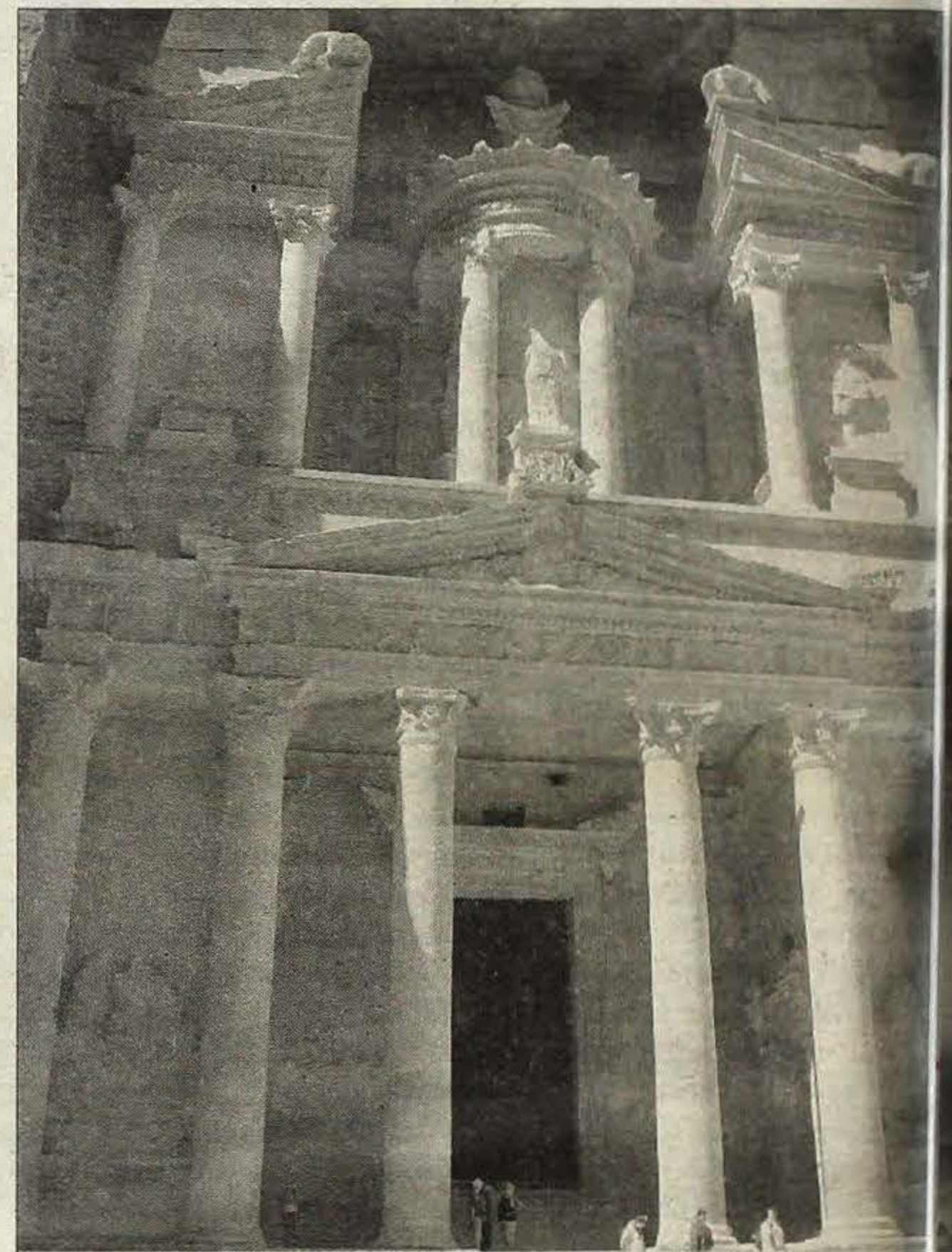
The ancient city of Petra, the capitol city of the former Nabatean kingdom, is a must see in Jordan. The site is located in the area previously occupied by the Edomites of the Old Testament. One can see from Petra "Aaron's Tomb," where, Aaron, brother of Moses, is believed to have been buried. One can still see the water channels that were developed to bring scarce water into the city. Remains of old rock houses can be seen as are numerous tombs carved into the rock walls. After walking a long narrow path between mountains of rock, it is breathtaking to see the "Treasury" a magnificent edifice that was built to be a royal tomb. Movie goers will remember this structure from one of the Indiana Jones movies that were popular years ago.

Bethany beyond the Jordan

Most of the remaining days of our trip were spent in the Jordan Valley region near the Dead Sea. This area is referred to as



A HERD of goats graze on sparse vegetation on top of a mountain near Petra.



THE TREASURY in the ancient city of Petra. The people entrance give a perspective of how massive the structure is.

Bethany beyond the Jordan.

We visited the area where John the Baptist is believed to have preached the coming of Jesus and then to the site where Jesus is believed to have been baptized.

While there is a site in Israel that is promoted as the baptismal site, recent archaeological evidence gives credence to the fact that Jesus is more likely to have been baptized on the Jordan side in this area. We spent several hours with Ruston Mkhjian who supervised much of the work around the area referred to as Elijah's Hill. This is where the prophet Elijah is believed to have ascended into heaven and also is where the bulk of John the Baptist's ministry is thought to have occurred.

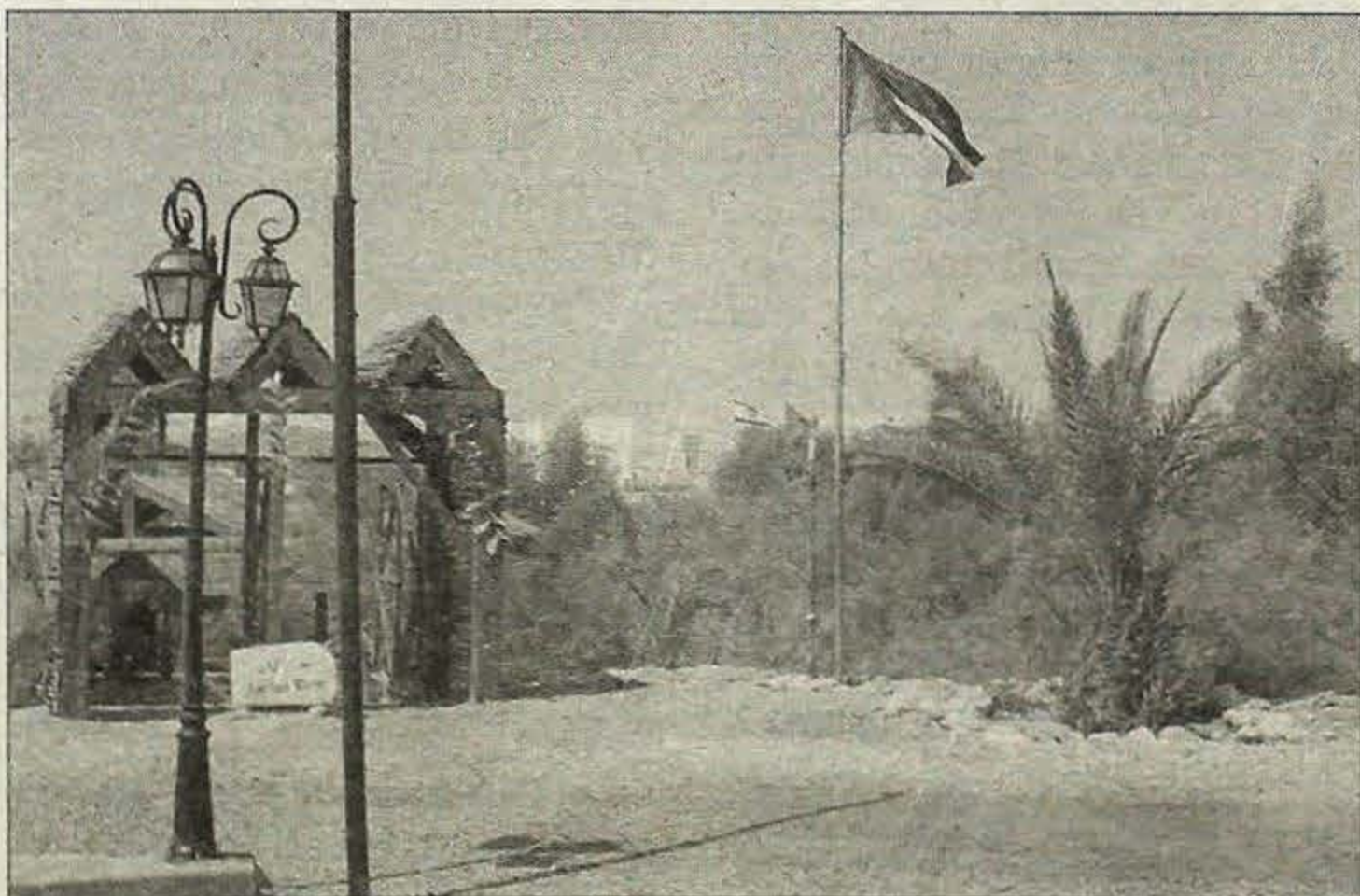
Mkhjian cited John 1:28 which says Jesus' baptism occurred in "Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing," according to the NIV translation. The King

James Version uses the word "Bethabara" instead of Bethany but notes it is "beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."

No one can actually know the spot of any of these locations. Most, however, have been rowed down due to biblical evidence, archaeological findings, tradition, and recent churches from early centuries which indicates those who felt the sites were authentic.

Whether or not I stood at the exact spot where Jesus was baptized doesn't matter. Moses actually stood to the Promised Land doesn't matter.

I didn't need to go to be convinced the Bible is true because through faith, that the Bible is true is any doubt. I went to experience my spiritual "roots," where Jesus and other giants lived and mini-atures of them. I am grateful for the opportunity I was given and I was blessed with the experience. □



THE JORDAN RIVER separates the countries of Israel and Jordan. Here in Jordan, at the site many believed to be where John the Baptist baptized Jesus, the Jordanian flag waves proudly. In the distance one can see flags on the Israeli side of the river.

Baptist work is alive and well in country of Jordan

Annie Wilkey
and Reflector

JORDAN — National Baptists are continuing work by Southern Baptists more than 50 years ago.

In the 1950s the then International Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) invested a lot of resources and personnel in Jordan, beginning hospitals, schools, and helping churches be established.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the IMB began a parish shift from maintaining existing institutions to more on direct evangelism and church planting projects.

Though the IMB maintains a presence in Jordan, most of its ministry is coordinated through the Jordan Baptist Convention which began in 1994. The convention now consists of about 1,350 members and 3,000-5,000 regular attendees in 20 churches.

During a recent tour of Jordan, sponsored by the Jordan Tourism Department, 10 Baptist editors visited several areas where Baptist work is strong in the predominantly Muslim country.

Editors also had an opportunity to visit with John Brady, IMB regional leader for northern Africa and the Middle East, at the home of Nabeeh Abbassi, president of the Jordan Baptist Convention.

Brady calls Jordanian Baptists "an incredible success story" noting they support their own convention, pastors, and institutions.

Brady described the IMB's relationship with Jordanian Baptists as "a friendly-brotherly relationship."

"We have a sense of pride in how Jordanian Baptists moved forward," Brady said.

The IMB regional leader said limited resources forced the IMB to spread out to reach the largest number of people. There are 137 people groups in the Middle East and northern Africa without any Christian witness, he related.

"As the IMB, our job is to go out to the next level of lostness," Brady remarked. He noted there are 420 million people in the Middle East region and 90 percent of them are Muslim.

A couple of IMB missionaries work at the Baptist School of Amman and the IMB is working with Jordanian Baptists to improve facilities at their House of Faith Conference Center in Ajloun, site of a former IMB hospital.



STUDENTS at the Baptist School of Amman began their day in a morning assembly. The school has 1,250 students in grades K-12. Approximately 40 percent of the enrollment is Muslim.

Brady said the Jordan convention and IMB are still "family with different roles. We walk alongside each other and have a frank and cordial relationship."

Abbassi, while pleased with the IMB's regard for the Jordan convention, is not as sure that his convention matches up to Brady's glowing remarks.

"I don't see us as mature as we'd like to be," he acknowledged, but agreed that the relationship between the convention and IMB is improving.

Abbassi also noted the convention would like to have more IMB workers.

The convention, which has limited resources, maintains two Baptist schools (one in Amman and one in Ajloun) which was begun by the IMB and the conference center.

One IMB worker who lives in Amman is Shaun Shorosh, who was reared in Cleveland. His dad, Fuad Shorosh, was a North American Mission Board missionary who served for many years in Hamilton County Baptist Association, based in Chattanooga.

Shorosh, who is a strategy associate for the Middle East area, told editors the IMB is working with convention churches to equip laypeople for ministry. "My role is to encourage church leaders and laypeople to be salt and light that makes a difference in their communities," Shorosh said.

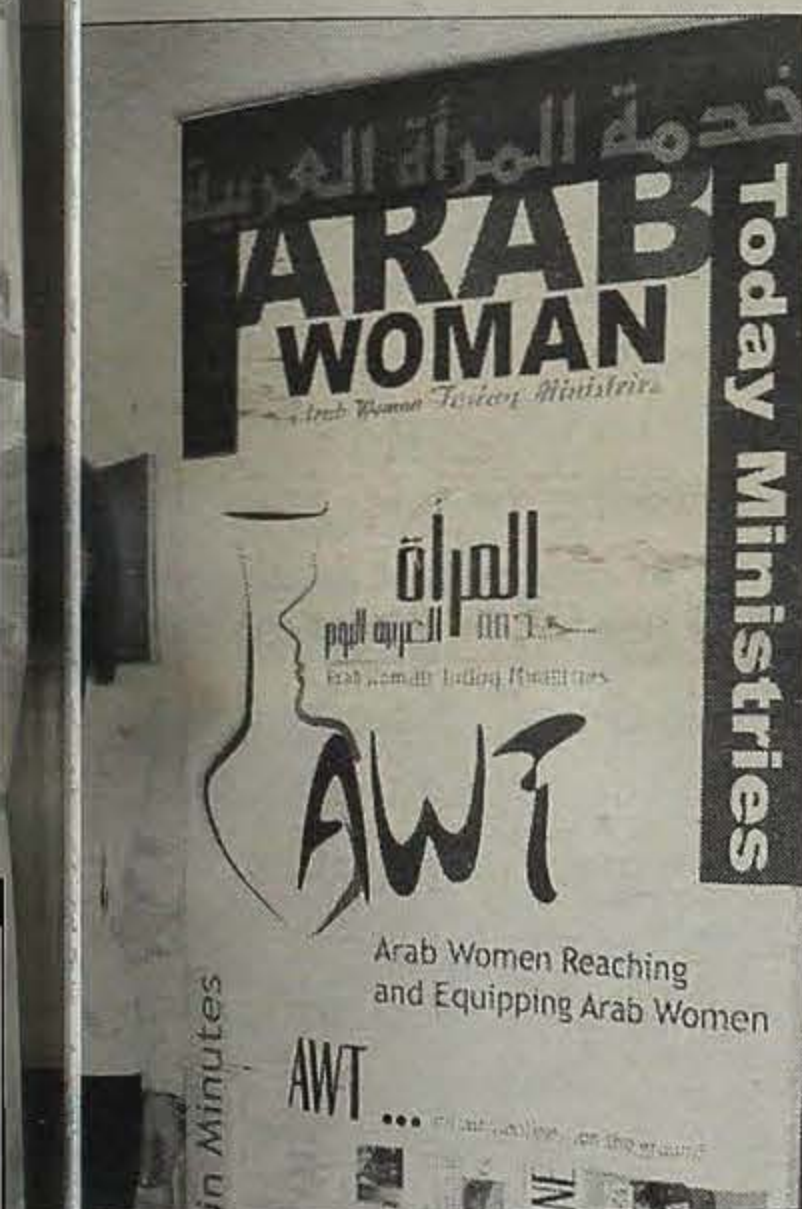
The former Tennessee Baptist invited Baptists from the United States "to come to Jordan and work alongside the Baptists here." □



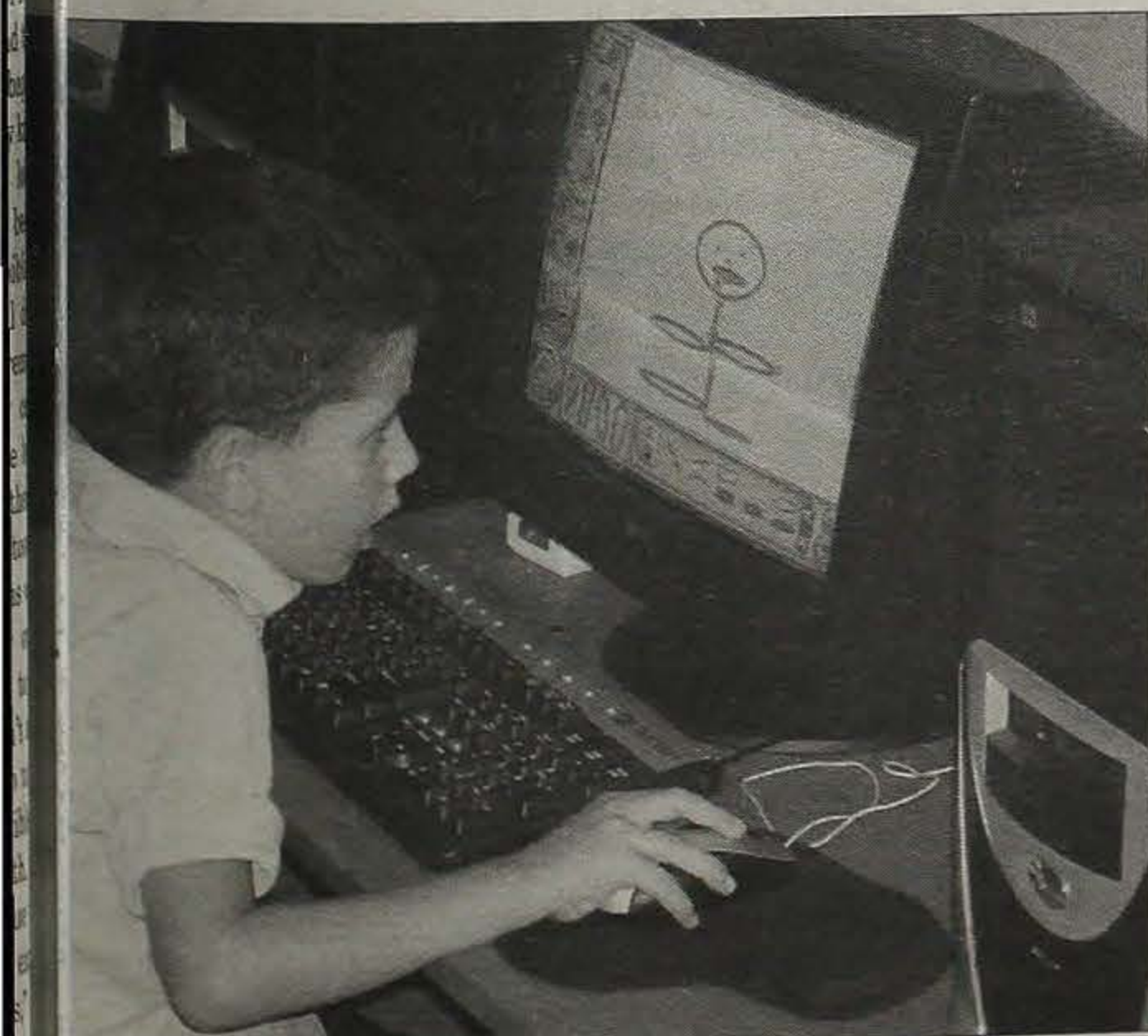
NABEEH ABBASSI, center, president of the Jordan Baptist Convention, shares history of the convention's House of Faith Conference Center in Ajloun. The conference center, which will be used to train leadership, is located on the grounds of a former Baptist hospital that was begun by the SBC International Mission Board. The hospital was later sold to the Jordanian government and relocated to a new facility nearby. Assisting Abbassi with the briefing is Ala Badra, chairman of the board of trustees for the camp. Taking notes are editors John Loudat, left, New Mexico, and David Williams, Minnesota-Wisconsin.



TERRY BARONE, editor of the California Southern Baptist, interviews Essar Mazahreh, principal of the Baptist School of Ajloun, the oldest of the two Baptist schools in Jordan. Like the one in Amman, this school also was started by the International Mission Board, but is now operated by the Jordan Baptist Convention. The school has 286 students in grades K-9. It is the only evangelical presence in the city, Baptist leaders say.



ABBASSI coordinates an internal ministry for Arab women that is a radio broadcast via Trans Radio. Abbassi notes there are 420 million Arab women in 22 different countries.



KIDREN at the Baptist School of Amman are trained to be computer literate at an early age. Students at the school, which was founded by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in 1974, are taught in both English and Arabic.



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Stokely Chapel Remains a Tennessee Baptist Life Landmark

In 1948 Tennessee Baptists resolved to open and operate camps for the training and nurturing of boys and girls. Carl Dow, pastor of First Baptist Church, Newport, spearheaded the effort to make Camp Carson a reality.

Tennessee Governor Ben Hooper and Colonel Charles Rhyne, also from Newport, donated the land on English Mountain where Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center/Camp Carson stands today. The first buildings were military barracks that were brought in from Fort Oglethorpe, Ga.

Camp Carson was opened on July 11, 1949. In the weeks that followed, 1,329 young people attended the new facility. It became apparent that a primary meeting facility was needed if the camp was to continue to grow and prosper. The plan was drawn up to build a stone chapel with classroom space. Construction on the chapel was begun on faith that funding would follow.

However, because of a financial shortage in early 1952 discussion began about trimming back on the chapel design. William Stokely Jr., president of Stokely Brothers Cannery in Newport, stepped up to provide the funding to complete the construction. Stokely Chapel was dedicated on July 1, 1952.

Named for Stokely's parents, Mr. Mrs. Will Stokely Sr., the stately chapel stood for the last 50 years as a testament to God and the faith of a family. Countless thousands of lives have been impacted within the walls of native stone quarried a few miles from where the Chapel now stands. Boys, girls, young people, and adults all been able to experience a unique spiritual encounter with their creator at this mountainside chapel. Missionaries, pastors, and other ministers point to Stokely Chapel as the site where God called them to a unique service.

In 2004 after 52 years of constant use, renovation of Stokely Chapel began. With the support of the William B. Stokely Foundation and the Stokely family and the work of countless volunteers the work is nearing completion. On Nov. 5 the renovated chapel will be rededicated to provide a place for worship and ministry for future generations.

Each year since 1952, 5,000-10,000 youth, children, and adults utilize Camp Carson and Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center for retreats and camps. Stokely Chapel continues to serve as a physical landmark of Carson Springs and a spiritual landmark in the lives of thousands of Tennessee Baptists.

Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

Oct. 22	Connect, Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville
Oct. 26	Music & Worship Leader Roundtable - Lower East Tennessee, Concord First Baptist Church, Chattanooga
Oct. 27-28	National Sunday School Director Seminar, Baptist Center, Brentwood
Oct. 30	Music & Worship Leader Roundtable - Lower West Tennessee, Kirby Woods Baptist Church, Memphis
Nov. 4	Hispanic Family Congress, Third Baptist Church, Murfreesboro
Nov. 6	Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer
Nov. 8-11	Preschool/Children's Fall Getaway, Baptist Center, Brentwood

For information on upcoming events, see the TBC web site at www.tnbaptist.org.



Chapel as it looked before renovations



As of October 2006, landscaping, new walkways, and a new bridge complement the outside renovations of Stokely Chapel.



the downstairs hallway of Stokely Chapel before renovations.



Downstairs hallway is near completion in Stokely Chapel with new drywall, paint, and carpet to make the classrooms more accessible and inviting.



Chapel worship center as it looked prior to renovations.



The newly renovated Stokely Chapel center has already been the site of several events, which now has a seating capacity of around 400.



Viewing towards the back of Stokely Chapel with balcony prior to renovation.



Viewing the back of Stokely Chapel after renovation, which has opened up more space without the balcony.

Stokely Chapel Renovation Service to be held

You are cordially invited
to attend

A Dedication Service

To celebrate

Stokely Chapel Renovation

Sunday, November 5, 2006

3:00 p.m.

Stokely Chapel

Carson Springs Baptist

Conference Center

Prayer Walk and Reception

to follow.

R.S.V.P. (877) 704-6336 or

(423) 623-2764.



Couple who lost family in Katrina receives help

By Marcia Knox
Baptist and Reflector

MURFREESBORO — A Murfreesboro couple who lost their parents/in-laws during Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 continue to draw upon their faith in God and the ministry of Tennessee Baptists as they recently reflected on the one year anniversary of their relatives' deaths.

"As believers we should see God at work in our lives each day," said Chuck Kerr, who along with his wife Linda, both members of Belle Aire Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, are grieving the loss of Chuck's parents. His parents died during a 28-foot storm surge which destroyed their home, located three-fourths of a mile from the beach in Pass Christian, Miss.

As they learned of the deaths of their family, "we were blessed multiple times by the people He sent to minister to us," said Chuck. "This fellowship and support continued in the weeks afterward."

He noted the recovery will take years to complete so "it is a comfort to know that Tennessee Baptists have made long-term commitments to the area."

Chuck's parents Charlie and Betty Kerr, 79 and 75, retired from St. Louis, Mo., to a subdivision near the beach almost 12 years ago to be near other relatives. "They were experienced hurricane survivors," said Linda Kerr. Charlie and Betty had evacuated to Murfreesboro during Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

However, as Hurricane Katrina churned in the Caribbean Sea, Betty Kerr was recuperating at home following total hip replacement surgery. This time evacuation to Murfreesboro was going to be difficult due to Betty's condition and Charlie's impaired vision.

Chuck and Linda called his parents Aug. 27 and Aug. 28 to discuss coming to Murfreesboro or going to an emergency shelter.

Hurricane Katrina began to grow larger and larger. On Sunday the hurricane was reported to be heading for New Orleans, La. Betty e-mailed her son saying that they were not going to a shelter, asked for their prayers, and wrote, "We're just going to let go and let God."

Chuck and Linda prayed and shared their prayer concern with their church.

Pass Christian became part of Hurricane Katrina's Ground Zero Aug. 29 around 10 a.m. in the morning with high winds and the storm surge. In southern Mississippi telephone

poles and cell phone towers were downed and 70 percent of homes were either destroyed or uninhabitable.

Linda began calling her in-laws to no avail. She was able to reach the Mississippi National Guard to find out the area was devastated and that no one could enter it. The Murfreesboro couple continued to watch the news reports and pray for their relatives.

After two more days with still no word from the parents, Chuck and Linda decided to head for Pass Christian. "Chuck rented a recreational vehicle (RV) with his parents' comfort in mind," noted Linda. They also took a Jeep and water, food, and lanterns.

"We saw God's handiwork," she said, in making the vehicles available and Chuck's planning.

They arrived late Sept. 1 in Gulfport. The town had no lights and no sounds could be heard. There were military guards stationed at major intersections.

God allowed them to enter, said Linda, despite the curfew and martial law in effect.

They stayed that night in a truck stop and left the next morning in the Jeep heading for the house in Pass Christian.

"We again prayed as we went. We saw no birds, no trees with foliage, no standing power lines, no road signs as we weaved in and out of neighborhoods trying to find their house."

When they arrived at his parent's subdivision, the brick homes were partially standing with all the windows and doors blown out or open. Continuing to pray they walked up to the elder Kerrs' front door and found "Coroner X 2" scribbled on the door in black marker.

"With God's help we went inside the home to find the ceiling, drywall, and roof gone, the furniture spun around the room like a washing machine, and everything covered in mud and sewage," Linda cried. They left to find the coroner who was reportedly working at a temporary morgue in Gulfport, according to local fire department workers.

When they arrived at the temporary morgue, a local funeral director who was serving as the coroner was shocked that Chuck and Linda had managed to travel into the area.

Chuck and Linda were informed that the bodies of the elder Kerrs were removed from the home two days after the hurricane and positively identified.

While at the temporary



CHARLIE AND BETTY KERR of Pass Christian, Miss., before their deaths as a result of Hurricane Katrina. They are the parents of Chuck Kerr of Murfreesboro.

morgue the funeral director/coroner directed Joe Collins to them. Collins is a Baptist chaplain. He was glad to minister to the couple, who were among the first people to come to the morgue and find that their relatives had been positively identified.

They quickly learned that Collins was former pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, Tenn., and former chaplain of the Dickson County Jail, Dickson, Tenn., and a graduate of Belmont University, Nashville. Currently he was chaplain of an adult detention center and a sheriff's department in the area so he became a first responder to Katrina victims.

"It was an honor to have an appointment to minister to the Kerrs, to pray with them, and to be used by God in the middle of this tragedy," Collins said.

The Kerrs were informed that the Federal Emergency Management Agency had authority over the local coroner. DNA testing would be required and that it may be weeks before the bodies might be released.

Chuck and Linda returned home to Murfreesboro to make arrangements for a memorial service since the elder Kerrs had asked that their bodies be cremated.

Three weeks later the bodies were released.

While working on memorial arrangements, Chuck and Linda found that the staff and members of Long Beach Presbyterian Church, Long Beach, Miss., where the elder Kerrs were members, had relocated. They also found that the neighbors of the elder Kerrs did not remain in the area.

They contacted a funeral home in Gulfport, about holding a memorial service. Since no pastors were available in the area to do the service, Linda called Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief to inquire if a pastor was in the area.

Mike Overcash, retired Tennessee Baptist Convention staff member who was serving as a disaster relief volunteer out of TBC office in Brentwood, learned of the need. He put Chuck and Linda in contact with a 14-member team from New Duck River Association, Shelbyville, which included a minister. The team was en route to the Biloxi, Miss., area.

Soon Linda was talking to team chaplain Steve Murphree, pastor of Midland Heights Baptist Church, Shelbyville.

She asked him to conduct the memorial service. He agreed.

Even though there was no mail service, no local newspapers, and only minimum communication services for emergency services, over 50 people learned about the service and attended. They included members of Long Beach Church, former neighbors, and people who had worked at Mississippi Power Company with Betty Kerr, who was a temporary employee.

"The turn out for their memorial service touched our hearts," said Linda. "At least 50 percent of the attendees were senior citizens who were displaced people. This was overwhelming for our family."

She also recalled that the large number of widowers at the service expressed joy that Chuck's parents were able to go together to heaven. Another important part of the service was the plan of salvation, said Linda.

"It was a sweet funeral service," she reported.

Months later a call came to Murphree at his church from a man who attended the Kerrs' service. He told Murphree that he had rededicated his life during the service.

"We were the rock in the pond that made the ripples," Murphree said. "The ripples we made continue in people's lives. The Lord had a plan and that's how He thinks."

As Linda and Chuck consider the past year, they have been able to "see how God has worked in our lives and how He meets people's needs," said Linda.

The couple also appreciates Belle Aire Baptist, which entered in 2005 into a partnership agreement for two years with First Baptist Church, Gulfport, after receiving the assignment through the North American Mission Board, Alpharetta, Ga.

Since January of this year, monthly construction teams

have gone from Belle Aire Baptist into the Gulfport area to help with three additional Baptist churches and a schedule to assist Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers working out of Rob Road Baptist Church, port. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — PASTOR

A northeast Tennessee Southern Baptist church with a membership of over 1,000 is seeking a full-time senior pastor. The church conservatively subscribes to the SBC Faith Message doctrine. To be considered, an applicant must be grounded and love the Word of God, have a passion for expository preaching and counseling of the whole counsel of God. All applicants must be willing to undergo thorough questioning and submit to credit and background screening. If led, resume to the Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1000, Kingsport, TN 37664.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Philadelphia Baptist, Waynesboro, a rural traditional church accepting resumes for the position of full-time or bivocational pastor. Parsonage available. Send resumes to Jeff Allen, Hwy. 99, Waynesboro, TN 38591 or e-mail icba@netease.com.

MINISTRY — MUSIC

First Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., is currently accepting resumes for a full-time minister of music. Send resumes to the Personnel Committee Chairman, Rob Barker, 220 Robbie McKenzie, TN 38201.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Lenoir City, Tenn., is seeking a bivocational/part-time minister of music. For more information contact Tyson Brewster at (865) 6900 or e-mail bbush@life.org.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

First Baptist Church, Crossville, Tenn., is seeking an interim worship leader for a congregation size of approximately 250+ members. Blended style is preferred. Please resume to FBC of Crossville, Attn: Music Search Committee, 712 S. Main St., Crossville, TN 38555.

MINISTRY — OTHER

Nashville Baptist Association accepting resumes for assistant. The successful candidate will have the following: computer skills; desktop publishing; bulk mail experience; organized; detail oriented; good communicator. Accepting resumes Oct. 1-31, 420 Main St., Nashville, TN 37206.

Retired TBC staffer reflects on church planting

arcia Knox
st and Reflector

RENTWOOD — Tennessee church leaders need to see new church planting as an evangelistic method instead of a church competition method, according to a recently retired Tennessee Baptist Convention staff member, who has seen a lot of changes in church planting in the last 10 years. Historically, Tennessee Baptists have seen new church planting as competition or not needed, because existing churches are not growing," said George, a TBC church planting strategist since 1996, who retired Sept. 29. "Our existing churches must realize that new church starts are fulfilling the Great Commission, and new church starts are evangelism." George cited figures on the state of Tennessee from the

Glenmary Study, which revealed: three out of five people in the state are unchurched; 82 percent of Tennesseans are not in a church; and 49 percent of Tennesseans claim no affiliation with a church (which includes non-Christian churches).

"More Americans are turning from the Christian church to find an answer for their spiritual need, and they are turning to other religions and philosophy," he noted.

"If we are going to effectively impact lostness in the 21st Century, first, there must be a people who will cry out to God for a movement of His Spirit; second, there must be a renewed passion for reaching the lost; and third, God's leaders and members of local churches must become more kingdom minded. That means doing whatever it takes in the church."

"When I came to the church

planting team, there was no tool available to know if a person could be a good church planter. There were no assessments and no training opportunities available. Now we have an assessment tool, and we provide the basic training for church planters. In Tennessee, we now host four training events a year for church planters."

According to George, from the beginning of the church planting team, there were funded and non-funded churches. Today, as a result of working with churches and associations, there are over 500 new church starts in the state and the church planting team has worked with 375 new churches. Within the last 10 years, this translates to 5,423 people saved in the church plants and \$3 million going to the Cooperative Program.

"The church planting team has attempted to assist churches in planting churches," he said. "We will also assist in helping churches find a planter."

Before joining the church planting team, George, a native of Wynnburg, served for several years as a pastor in Tennessee and Michigan and director of missions for Beulah Baptist Association, Union City. His ministry motto has been walking by faith.

George grew up on a farm near Ridgely and was saved at age 10 at First Baptist Church, Ridgely. As a senior in high school, he was called to the ministry there.

He attended Union University



BILL GEORGE, and his wife, Linda, were honored during a recent retirement reception for George, who stepped down Sept. 29 after serving 10 years as a church planting strategist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention. — Photo by Connie Davis Bushey

ty, Jackson, and Belmont University, Nashville, where he met Linda Arbuckle on a blind date whom he later married in 1961. The couple recently celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary. Over the years, George has served eight Tennessee Baptist churches.

The family traveled to Michigan in 1984 for Bill and Linda to become volunteer staff for the Michigan Baptist Convention. "While on staff as a convention volunteer, God raised up churches and individuals to support us," George said. "We did not solicit support."

George returned to Tennessee in 1990 to work for Beulah Association for six and a half years. He joined the TBC as the Anglo church planting strategist for the entire state in 1996 and

also served in associational work strategy planning.

"When I came as the church planting strategist for Tennessee, I worked with anglo and black churches. The budget before 1996 was \$5,500; now it's risen to \$816,000 for new church starts provided through the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions.

"In addition, the church planting team has expanded into three regional church planting strategists and two statewide ethnic strategists.

"God uses people to accomplish His tasks," George noted. "And when God is working the task is done."

George will continue to serve as a contract worker for church planting efforts for the next year in West Tennessee. □

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ACP gets new look ...

— Continued from page 1

This process is definitely more efficient and more cost effective. And since the data is being entered by the churches, it should be more accurate as well, she continued.

Eaton explained the process.

Once a church has entered their statistical data, they can print out reports for use in their church. Three reports are available to churches. Current year ACP statistics provide churches with a hard copy of the data they just entered so they may keep it in their files. Church Trend Profile does a five-year trend analysis complete with graphs of a church's program and financial information. The Multi-Year Digest provides a summary of ACP data for the church going back as far as 1980.

"The reports are great" said Rodney Arnold, assistant pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, Knoxville.

"These reports are a great way to track the growth of our church. Being able to see a members to baptism ratio is a great tool for evaluating the health of our church. Numbers aren't everything, but these reports are a great encouragement to a

small, growing church," he said.

The process has not been without its challenges, Eaton acknowledged. The screen asking for a User Name and Password is a pop up. Pop up blockers must be turned off or set to allow pop ups to the TeD site.

"Most folks don't realize how many pop up blockers they have on their computer. Internet Explorer has a built-in blocker. Google, Yahoo, MSN, and eBay tool bars all have blockers. Some settings on Norton or McAfee will block them, too," she observed.

After churches go online to enter their data, they are still encouraged to send in their "hand written working document" to their association office. "After this year we may see that this step is not needed" Eaton reports. "However, we wanted the association offices to have the churches' original documents in case there were discrepancies in what was reported online. Typos happen."



EATON

Churches are not required to enter their data online. They may still submit their paper ACP forms to their association office. Churches who have not yet submitted their Annual Church Profile may contact their local association office for their user name and password and for instructions on how to enter their data online. Statistical data may be entered online and reports printed through Dec. 31. Leadership data may be updated year round. Note: Most associations ask that statistical data be entered/submitted sometime between mid-September and mid-October in order to be included in the association annual report.

ACP data collected in TeD is used to help evaluate progress in reaching our state for Jesus Christ and to identify areas of strength or weakness in our ministry efforts, Eaton observed.

Additionally, data supplied by churches is used to calculate the number of messengers churches may send to the annual Tennessee Baptist and Southern Baptist conventions and to provide required support information for individuals nominated to state convention committees and boards, she added. □

'Facing the Giants' movie made by Georgia church

By Joe Westbury
Baptist Press

ALBANY, Ga. — This time, when it comes to southern accents, Hollywood gets it right.

But it's not because a Hollywood studio displayed sensitivity in overcoming stereotypical speech patterns. Rather, it's due to the Deep South producers who made "Facing the Giants," which opened in theaters nationwide Sept. 29.

In fact, not only are those real southern accents behind the actors' voices, those are real flesh-and-blood southerners — not professional actors — who stepped onto the gridiron to bring the feel-good movie to the silver screen.

Hollywood was closely watching the opening weekend to see how a faith-oriented movie such as Facing the Giants fared on the open market. The box office receipts from the first few days will telegraph an important message to the continued funding of a venture such as this production by Sherwood Productions, the media arm of Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Ga.

"If Christians want to send a message to Hollywood, a message that family values movies are what we want to see, this is the weekend to do it," said Jim McBride, former wrestler/carnival barker, Sherwood Baptist's executive pastor and official "bad guy" playing the role of opposing coach Bobby Lee Duke.

"Hollywood reads its mail through opening weekend receipts," McBride told *The Christian Index*, newsmagazine of the Georgia Baptist Convention. "Those numbers help determine how wide of a distribution a movie will eventually have."

And, apparently the movie more than held its own, according to WorldNetDaily. The film grossed \$1.4 million on only 441 screens. Officials say the production ranked No. 12 for all films over its first weekend, even though other films had up to eight times as many screens. Its per-screen average of \$3,149 was fourth among the top 10 grossing weekend films, reported WorldNetDaily.

McBride noted, however, "This is not our movie; it's God's movie. We have just been stewards of it on His behalf."

The fact that a Georgia church made a feature-length film, using one camera and an all-volunteer cast — with \$100,000 in various donations — is a miracle in itself. For that movie to catch the attention of Hollywood — where it premiered Sept. 28 at the ArcLight Theater on the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Vine — and garner national distribution is even a greater miracle.

In addition to a strong story line that plays well on multiple levels — addressing such life issues as respect for authority and parents, infertility, and submitting oneself to God's direction — volunteer actors with those believable accents put their heart and soul into six of the most grueling weeks of their lives.

Brothers and Sherwood church staff members Alex and Stephen Kendrick spent three months in early 2004 writing the movie, then six weeks shooting it in and around Albany — the same geographic setting as their first movie, "Flywheel," which was released in 2003. Then the first six months of 2005 were spent in film editing.

It was those hurry-up-and-wait weeks between April and June 2004 which pushed the actors to their limits, several of them told the *Index* in a final interview just days before this week's national release.

"It was a grueling process for all of us. We all had our day jobs and had to put in our time on the set."

Stephen Kendrick, who co-wrote, produced and directed Facing the Giants with his brother Alex (who plays lead character coach Grant Taylor), said all cast members were asked to "say no to their personal schedule during the filming — say no to watching TV, going out to dinner, whatever if it conflicted with the shooting schedule. We would need them on the set when we needed them, and we had to depend on their 100 percent commitment to being there."

"We basically asked them to be on call for nearly two months of their lives, and they responded with an unbelievable commitment," Stephen Kendrick said. "It was not uncommon for several of them to work a full day and then to show up in the evening and work until 2 or 3 a.m."

Shannen Fields, who plays the role of Taylor's wife, Brooke, remembers wearing heavy fall clothing in 80-degree summer heat and humidity to shoot outdoor football scenes — and working until 2 a.m., getting to bed by 3:30 a.m. and waking up three hours later to get her children ready for school and be at work by 8 a.m. Evening shooting often could not begin until 9:30 because the movie was set in the fall when football games occur after dark.

"Perhaps one of the most important lessons I learned was to stay humble and to be available to God," Fields said. "He can do so much when you realize that it's not about you, but about your availability to Him."

Eighteen-year-old Bailey Cave developed spiritual muscles as well as physical stamina

in playing the role of kicker David Childers.

"What pushed me to keep going when there were days when I couldn't kick the ball through the goalposts if my life depended on it was knowing that God was in control. It was not about me, it was about Him," said Cave, a 2006 graduate of Sherwood Christian Academy who played football for the team until cracking his shin halfway through the season.

"Filming this movie was like hugging the Titanic," said Tracy Goode, who plays Coach Taylor's assistant who finds himself sitting on the fence in his allegiance to Taylor after multiple losing seasons. "It was just so big you couldn't put your arms around it."

"I remember working nearly six hours to set up a scene that was eventually cut from the movie," Goode said. "It's amazing how many factors go into getting everything right for just one scene. ... The lighting has to be right, no gnats can be flying in your face, no airplanes flying overhead when we were shooting two miles from an airport. You have to jump through a thousand hoops ... be willing to stand around for four hours to shoot a 10-second shot."

"It was not uncommon to have 60 people waiting on the set to shoot a scene, praying that a massive storm cloud would pass us by," Goode said.

Brandon Glow, 19, another former Sherwood Christian



FORMER PROFESSIONAL wrestler/carnival barker Jim McBride, who serves as executive pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Ga., plays intimidating coach Bobby Lee Duke in "Facing the Giants."

Academy football team member who plays the character of Zach Avery, said the lessons he brought away from filming Facing the Giants will stay with him the rest of his life.

"It taught me what Christianity is all about. In keeping with the theme of the film, life for a believer is about praising God and going out to tell others about Him," Glow said.

Stephen Kendrick could not have stronger words of appreciation for the hundreds of volunteers who worked to bring Facing the Giants to the big screen, as well as the Sunday School class members who provided the catering. Terri Catt, spouse of Sherwood senior pastor Michael Catt, volunteered as the wardrobe director and was one of four individuals who worked in casting.

Kendrick credits Catt with having the vision to bring Facing the Giants to the screen. The pastor, as the movie's executive producer, provided the spiritual fiber to overcome seemingly endless obstacles that would have been daunting for others, Kendrick said.

The Kendrick brothers learned a lot, they say — to already have them talk about a third movie.

"We're trusting God to change lives across the country with this film, whether they are Christians," the pastor said. □ — Westbury is managing editor of *The Christian Index*, the Georgia Baptist Convention's magazine. For more information on Facing the Giants, including local showings based in your area, visit www.facingthegiants.com.

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Leaders

Springfield Baptist Church, Springfield, recently called **Shannon Meadors** as men's minister.

First Baptist Church, Lexington, has called **Gilbert Cub** as interim minister of education and **Bob Hull** as interim minister of music.



ELECTED OFFICERS of the Tennessee Baptist Fellowship of the Blind at the annual retreat held recently were, from left, Donnie Helton, president, Sims Chapel Baptist Church, Sevierville; Randel Beasley, vice president, Third Baptist Church, Nashville; Henrietta Baldwin, secretary/treasurer, Isoline Baptist Church, Crossville; and Sharon Bragg, consultant with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Glenwood Baptist Church, Nashville. During the retreat 37 walkers raised \$1,800 for Appalachian Outreach in Jefferson City in a prayer walk-a-thon. Speakers were Beverly Smothers of the TBC staff and Mark LaRue.

22-25. Shawn Parker will speak. Tim Donahoe and Bobby Crabb will present the music. For information, call the church at (731) 239-8538.

◆ **Westwood Baptist Church, Murfreesboro**, will hold its 30th anniversary homecoming celebration Oct. 29. For more information, call the church at (615) 896-5537 or contact Lynn Battle at wbcmt@bell-south.net.

◆ **Shelby Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville**, gave away free furniture, clothing, shoes, linens, and appliances to the public on Oct. 14.

Associations

◆ **Nashville Baptist Association** will sponsor "A Call to Prayer for Moslem People" Oct.

20 at Grace Baptist Church, Nashville. For information, call the association at (615) 259-3034.

Events

◆ **The Tennessee Baptist Convention** will host a Max Team Health conference Nov. 2 at the Baptist Center, Brentwood. The training will be held from 9 a.m. - lunch. Margaret Slusher, nationally-recognized builder of max health church ministry teams and consultant/coach to highly-effective church staffs, will speak. Archer Thorpe of the TBC staff said, "Harvest-focused churches are discovering that teams are biblical and therefore highly effective." For more information, contact Thorpe at athorpe@tnbaptist.org, 1-800-558-2090 or (615) 371-2017.



MARGARET AND AL PATTERSON hold a plaque during a reception held for them recently recognizing their 25th anniversary of service at Copper Basin Baptist Association, Ducktown. Al Patterson is director of missions of the association and he and Margaret are North American Mission Board missionaries. The event was held at the Copper Basin High School.



ROY DAVIS, left, director of missions, Cumberland Plateau Baptist Association, Crossville, accepts the gift of a trailer from Mike Pender of First Baptist Church, Fairfield Glade. The trailer will be used for disaster relief re-build work.



MARY BETH WALTON was honored Sept. 24 for 30 years of service as secretary of Woodbine Baptist Church, Nashville. She stands with Ben McGinnis, left, pastor; and her husband, Bill. Walton has served with six pastors, five interim pastors, and six ethnic mission pastors. She received a money tree and other gifts.



ROSE GARY is baptized by Pat McGee, left, pastor, Piney Baptist Church, Oakdale, recently in a swimming pool located near the church. Deacons help and her husband, Sam, right, watches. Rose is handicapped so she couldn't use the baptistry of the church. Deacons helping are Taylor Smith, center, and Bill McGee. The couple have become active members of the church. Rose signs for Sam, who has some hearing loss and hopes to start a ministry to others who have hearing loss.

Preaching and Teaching the Letters of John January Bible Study Preparation

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East Tennessee Fall 2006 Pastors' Conference
October 31, 2006



David Crutchley
Professor of Religion
Carson-Newman College
Jefferson City, TN

Understanding John's Letters



Harold Bryson
Visiting Senior Professor of Religion
Carson-Newman College
Jefferson City, TN

Preaching from the Letters of John

Time: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Thomas Recital Hall Registration begins at 8:30 AM
Cost: \$15 per person, includes lunch and conference materials
Contact Kathy Lawson, (865) 471-3218 or klawson@cn.edu

Third generation Graham holds first crusade

Baptist Press

GASTONIA, N.C. — Nearly 60 years after his grandfather held his first citywide crusade in Charlotte, William (Will) Franklin Graham IV held his first U.S. crusade just a few miles to the west of here.

Among other similarities between grandfather and grandson: Billy was pastor of one church before beginning his crusade work, the Chicago-area First Baptist Church in Western Springs, while Will was pastor just over a year at Wakefield Baptist Church in Wake Forest, N.C.

Will Graham opened his three-day Greater Gaston Celebration Oct. 9, with a crowd of more than 4,500 on hand at Sims Legion Park. He was introduced by his father, a beaming Franklin Graham, who has taken over the reigns of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. After the introduction, Franklin then left the platform to watch from a tent for Graham family members, letting his son take center stage.

Will Graham's connection to his grandfather's legacy also was evidenced by longtime song leader Cliff Barrows directing the community choir.

People began flowing into the small baseball field nearly two hours early. The grandstand quickly filled and an overflow crowd ringed the baseball diamond when former "American Idol" contestant George Huff began leading in worship.

With the characteristic Graham look and voice, the third-generation evangelist quickly called the crowd to examine whether they had sin in their lives.

"Have you disobeyed your parents? Have you stolen anything?" Graham asked. "Have you murdered somebody? Have you told a lie? Black lie or white lie, it still breaks God's law."

Tackling various issues in today's society head-on, Graham took a clear stand, for example, on abortion: "Society says that abortion is a choice, but that's redefining what it is; it is murder."

Targeting his own generation, Graham noted what he sees as two of the greatest prob-



WILL GRAHAM, grandson of Billy Graham, recently led his first crusade in Gastonia, N.C.

lems today: society's acceptance of sin and coveting others' possessions. "The greatest need we have today is to have our sins forgiven, not buy a new house or flat screen television," he said. "Before we can have a new start, we must first have a new life. The cross of Christ provides that." □

20-somethings disengage from spiritual activities

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Half of all teenagers attend a church-related service or activity in a typical week and some of those are quite avid in their faith, but a new poll by The Barna Group found that most of those teens will disengage from active spiritual activity during their 20s.

Barna found that, compared to older adults, twenty-somethings have significantly lower levels of church attendance, time spent alone studying and reading the Bible, volunteering to help churches, donating to churches, attending Sunday School and small groups, and using Christian media such as radio and magazines.

In fact, Barna said 61 percent of today's young adults were churching at one point during their teen years but now are spiritually disengaged. Only 20 percent have maintained a level

of spiritual activity consistent with their high school experiences.

"The current state of ministry to twenty-somethings is woefully inadequate to address the spiritual needs of millions of young adults," David Kinnaman, director of the research, said in a Sept. 11 news release. "These individuals are making significant life choices and determining the patterns and preferences of their spiritual reality while churches wait, generally in vain, for them to return after college or when the kids come. When and if young adults do return to churches, it is difficult to convince them that a passionate pursuit of Christ is anything more than a nice add-on to their cluttered lifestyle."

It's not as if twenty-somethings are totally abandoning their faith, Barna noted, since 78 percent of twenty-somethings say they are Christians compared with 83 percent of teenagers. They just need some-

thing to help them stay plugged into church life as they navigate the transition period from adolescence to adulthood.

"Much of the ministry to teenagers in America needs an overhaul — not because churches fail to attract significant numbers of young people, but because so much of those efforts are not creating a sustainable faith beyond high school," Kinnaman said.

"There are certainly effective youth ministries across the country, but the levels of disengagement among twenty-somethings suggest that youth ministry fails too often at discipleship and faith formation. "A new standard for viable youth ministry should be — not the number of attenders, the sophistication of the events, or the 'cool' factor of the youth group — but whether teens have the commitment, passion, and resources to pursue Christ intentionally and wholeheartedly after they leave the youth

ministry nest," he added.

For more information, www.barna.org. □

Clear Creek leader to resign

Baptist Press

PINEVILLE, Ky. — Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College since 1988, has announced resignation effective at the end of the 2006-07 academic year.

"The time has come for me to turn the leadership task over to another," Whittaker, 63, wrote in a letter announcing his resignation.

The Bible college is an affiliate of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

LaBelle Haven Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a part-time children's minister. Interested applicants may send resume to, 6825 E. Holmead, Memphis, TN 38141, fax 901-547-1650 or labellehaven@earthlink.net. Attn: Winford Br...

Theologically conservative, methodologically creative Tennessee church seeks full-time minister for children and young families. Please send resume with references to Children's Minister Search Committee, Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, 3508 Wildwood, Maryville, TN 37804.

New Union Baptist Church, Dayton, Tenn., is seeking a full-time preschool/children's minister. If interested, contact the church at (423) 775-0515.

Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., seeks full-time director of childhood education. Prefer seminary-trained with large church Sunday school and children's worship experience. Send resumes to Gary Waters, 506 Lake Park, Tupelo, MS 38801.

MINISTRY — STUDENTS

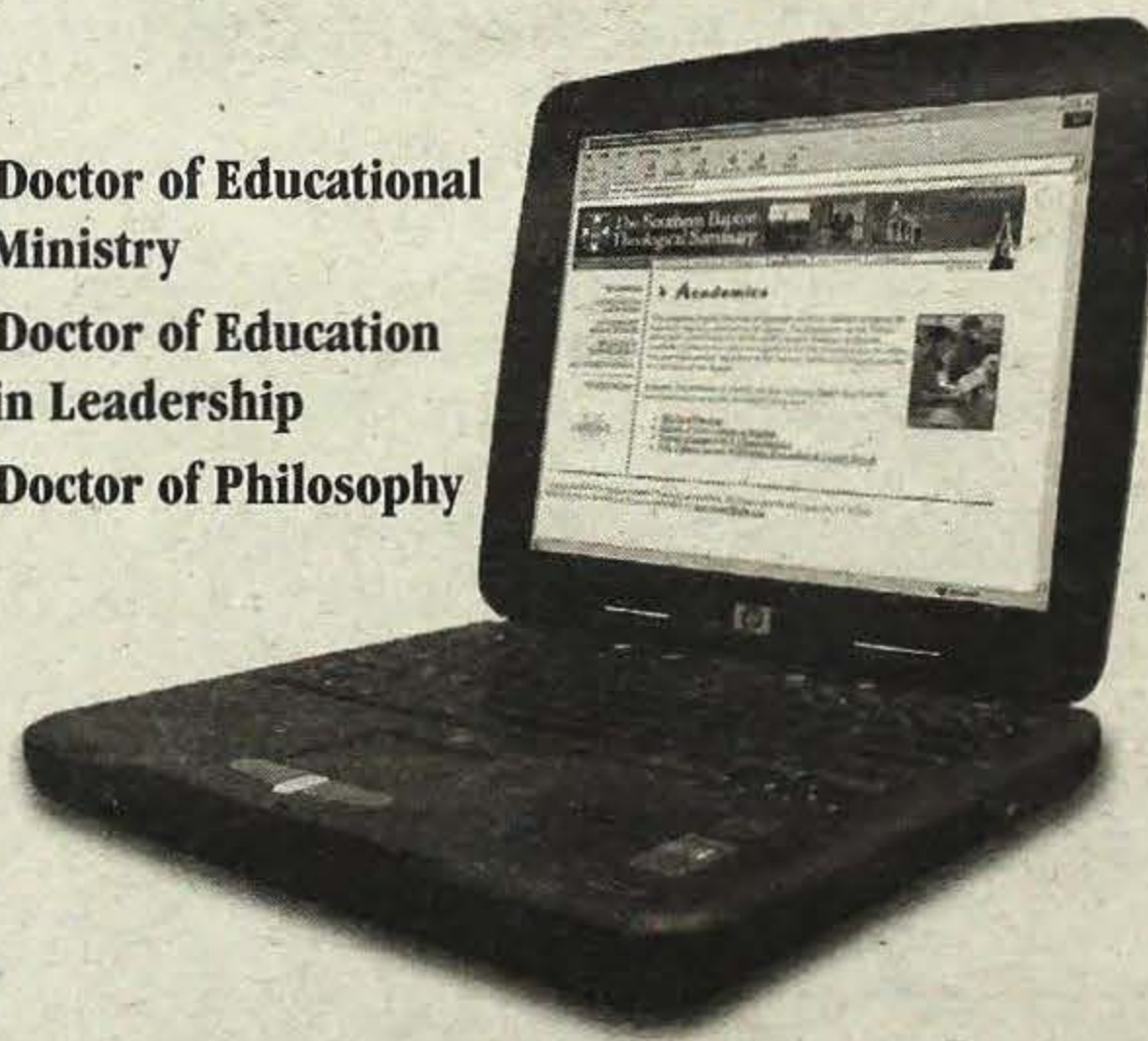
Theologically conservative, methodologically creative Tennessee church seeks full-time minister for youth. Please send resume with references to Youth Minister Search Committee, Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, 3508 Wildwood, Maryville, TN 37804.

New Hope Baptist Church, Dyer, Tenn., is searching for a bivocational minister. If you are interested, please contact Pastor John F. Hays at (731) 414-4566 or Ch... may send resume to New Hope Baptist Church, 876 No. St., Dyer, TN 38330.

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guest columnist

Take hold of usefulness

By Craig Christina

Focal Passage: II Timothy 2:14-26

When we are used by God, we engage in kingdom building. The Holy Spirit works through us to make an impact for Christ. When we are not used by God, we contribute nothing to God's kingdom and have zero impact.

Therefore, Satan's goal is simple: get God's people focused on something, anything other than building the kingdom of God. Fight about music (what a field day Satan is having with that one). Argue about which generation gives the most money (doesn't the Golden Rule say that those with the gold make the rules?). Spend practically all of our resources on keeping people happy (have you ever calculated how much of your church's budget is spent on programs versus evangelism?).

For many, if not most of our churches, the goal is to take care of our current members (and even pull a few away from other churches if possible). In our consumer mindset, many families want to go to the church with "the best programs for my kids." Doctrine: what's that? Evangelism: that's what we pay the staff to do. Just keep the people happy and content. In other words, make the church useful to them.

The church should be useful to Christians. It should offer great programs. But God calls pastors and staff to equip the saints for works of service (Ephesians 4:12); that is, to prepare God's people for usefulness! So Paul offers four ways

to take hold of usefulness.

Be a player. Of what things did Timothy need to remind the Ephesians (v. 14)? We are here to serve God. We should live our lives like a soldier who doesn't become entangled in civilian affairs (v. 4), an athlete who competes to win (v. 5), and a farmer who shares in the bounty of the harvest (v. 6). Instead of coming to church to sit, soak, and sour in the pew, we come with the attitude of training to serve God throughout the coming week. Move church members from sitters to servers, from attendees to attendants so that they will become players on God's mission field.

Be productive. Some people are born debaters. They live for the argument and the joy of winning. Unfortunately, church conflict takes a toll on the less mature and leads to the ruin of the hearers (v. 14). To protect the church, members must first decide if the issue is worth the fight. Getting churches to shift the focus from serving self to serving Christ is worth the fight. Always ask, "Is this an issue about my agenda or God's agenda?" In other words, "Is this about protecting my preferences or reaching people for Christ?" God's agenda is always reaching people with the word of truth (v. 15).

Be prepared. Paul uses a great analogy about silver bowls versus clay pots (vv. 20-21). To be set aside for special use, we must prepare ourselves by being purified. A true servant of the Lord will seek to remove any obstacles to service such as obvious sin, a poor reputation, misplaced

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priorities, lack of care/management of the family, or a bad attitude. When we walk through the church door, do we come to serve or be served? When we walk back out into the community, do we go to serve or be served? God has gifted you to serve. You are a "10" in some area. The only question is whether or not we will set ourselves apart to be consecrated for His use.

Be passionate. Paul understood the "youthful passions" with which Timothy naturally struggled (v. 22). So he challenged Timothy to pursue the godly passions of "righteousness, faith, love, and peace" that will come with a passion for Jesus. If we want to impact our community for Christ, we should be passionate about Him; so much so, that we actually try to share the good news with others. If we truly desire to reach people with the love of Jesus, the opportunities are limitless. It is the workers who are few (Matthew 9:37).

One of the greatest challenges facing churches in the 21st century is whether or not they will take hold of usefulness. God wants to use us to reach the lost and build His kingdom. Most of our churches are plateaued or in decline because they are focused on maintenance, not ministry. That strategy used to work, but not any more. Will we? □ — Christina is pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson.

Tell the truth

By Bob Orgeron

Focal Passage: Hebrews 8:1-9:28

Superior ministry (8:1-6a). In verse 6, the ministry of priests in a sanctuary made according to the heavenly pattern is obviously one of great dignity.

Jesus' ministry in the heavenly tabernacle is of incomparably greater dignity and worth. He chooses to bring this out by using a comparison of the two covenants. Jesus is the mediator of a "superior" covenant. Christ mediates between people and God. It is He who establishes the new covenant, Hebrews 7:22; says ... *Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.* This new covenant is better than the old because it is "founded on better promises" — it concentrates on spiritual things (e.g., the forgiveness of sins).

Superior covenant (8:6b-9:1-10). We are told of a completely new covenant with four significant differences outlined in verses 10-12. First the kindness and the love of God are brought out by the reference to taking the people "by the hand" in verse 9, ... *to bring them out of Egypt.* The metaphor is that of a father or mother taking a little child by the hand to lead him or her to safety. From the failures of the past, the vision turns to the future — a covenant made with "the house of Israel." The prophet looked for a time when people would not simply obey an external code but would be so transformed that God's own laws would be written in their inmost beings.

The second point in the new covenant is that there will be a close relationship between the God who will be "their God" and the people who, he says, will be "my people." When people have been saved at the awful cost of Calvary, they are the people of God in a way never before known.

In verse 11 we find the third significant feature of the new covenant, which is all who enter it will have knowledge of God; there will be no need for anyone to instruct his or her "neighbor." Everyone in the new covenant will have his or her own intimate and personal knowledge of God.

Verse 12 is the fourth significant thing about the new covenant in that in it sins are forgiven. "For" shows how important this point of: God's forgiveness is. It is because sins are really dealt with that the blessings enumerated earlier become possible. God's wrath no longer rests on sinners and God does not bear their sins in mind. They are completely forgotten, because of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

In verse 13 the writer picks out the word "new" and sees it as making his essential point. It implies that something else is "old" and that the old has to be replaced; it means that the old one is "obsolete" and ineffective, unable to meet people's needs.

The writer now concentrates his attention not on the temple but on the long-vanished tabernacle.

In verse 1, the writer is contrasting two ways of approach to God—the old covenant that has been

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superseded and the new one that Jesus has now established.

The old way not only had regulations but also a sanctuary described as "earthly." This sanctuary belonged to this world in contrast to the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus ministers.

In verse 8 the limited access into the Most Holy Place was meant to bring home the fact that ordinary people had no direct access to the presence of God. However, people do have such access through the finished work of Christ.

In verse 9, *This is an illustration for the present time.* That is, the real meaning of the tabernacle can now be understood. The writer is here contrasting the limited access that once was with the free access to the presence of God that Christ has made possible for His people. The trouble with the sacrificial offerings of the old covenant was that they could not "clear the conscience of the worshiper." The ordinances of the old covenant had not been able to come to grips with the real problems of man. The new covenant Christ brought has replaced all the deficiencies and inadequacies of the former. May each of us rejoice and celebrate our incredible freedom in Christ Jesus our Great High Priest. □ — Orgeron is pastor of Park Avenue Baptist Church, Nashville.

Stopping Internet gambling

By Bill Frist, Senate Majority Leader, Tennessee

Before it wrapped up business in late September, Congress passed a new law to make it easier to crack down on illegal Internet gambling. I believe that America needs new law because Internet gambling presents a serious and ongoing problem that existing laws don't address. The new law passed because members of the pro-family movement including many Southern Baptists — brought the issue to the attention of both Democrats and Republicans. Internet gambling has grown out of control. Although major federal laws and hundreds of state policies make it illegal to gamble on the Internet, enforcement has proven almost impossible. Since all significant online gaming web sites operate outside of the United States, they lie beyond the reach of federal or state regulators. This hurts families. Although Internet gambling did have a prominent place on either party's radar screen a few years ago, its explosive growth and potential for devastating families made it a very important issue to address in many others in Congress.

In fact, online casino web sites have the potential to turn every personal computer in the country into a mini-version of the Las Vegas Strip. Rigorous state enforcement means that brick and mortar casinos make a faith effort to keep minors away from gambling. The same isn't so for online casinos: A web site can't tell whether someone is 13 or 35. The existence of Internet gambling, moreover, makes a mockery of laws in states that forbid all gambling. Experts who testified before Congress agreed social trouble has increased as a result: People who gamble online are almost twice as likely to be problem gamblers as those who gamble in other settings. Problem gambling destroys lives and families. The new law, which President George W. Bush signed on Sept. 13, makes it much more difficult to send money to Internet gambling sites. Internet casinos that want to use credit cards, Internet bank transfers, or any other form of gambling payments will find themselves blocked. The government also will be able to ensure that web site operators don't provide links to gambling web sites. Finally, anybody who violates the Internet gambling law will have all gambling licenses revoked.

Some believe that Congress should have gone even further in amending and strengthening current laws, but the enforcement tools provided by this legislation are an initial step towards ensuring that we uphold the current law and punish those who break it. We already have evidence that the law will work. After the president signed the bill, shares in the United States' largest online gambling companies dropped more than 50 percent on the news of Congress' action. At least one major online casino has decided to pull out of the market altogether and others likely will follow suit. Internet casinos, which made a fortune violating existing laws, bet against Congress taking them on. Thanks to citizens concerned about America's families, their bets didn't pay off. □ — Baptist Press

a way with words

The church volunteer

By Hugh X. Lewis

They never ask for praise or thanks, awards, applause, or cheers, they gladly serve among the ranks of faithful volunteers.

It matters not what kind of work or thankless jobs they choose, but one task do they ever shirk: to help others might refuse.

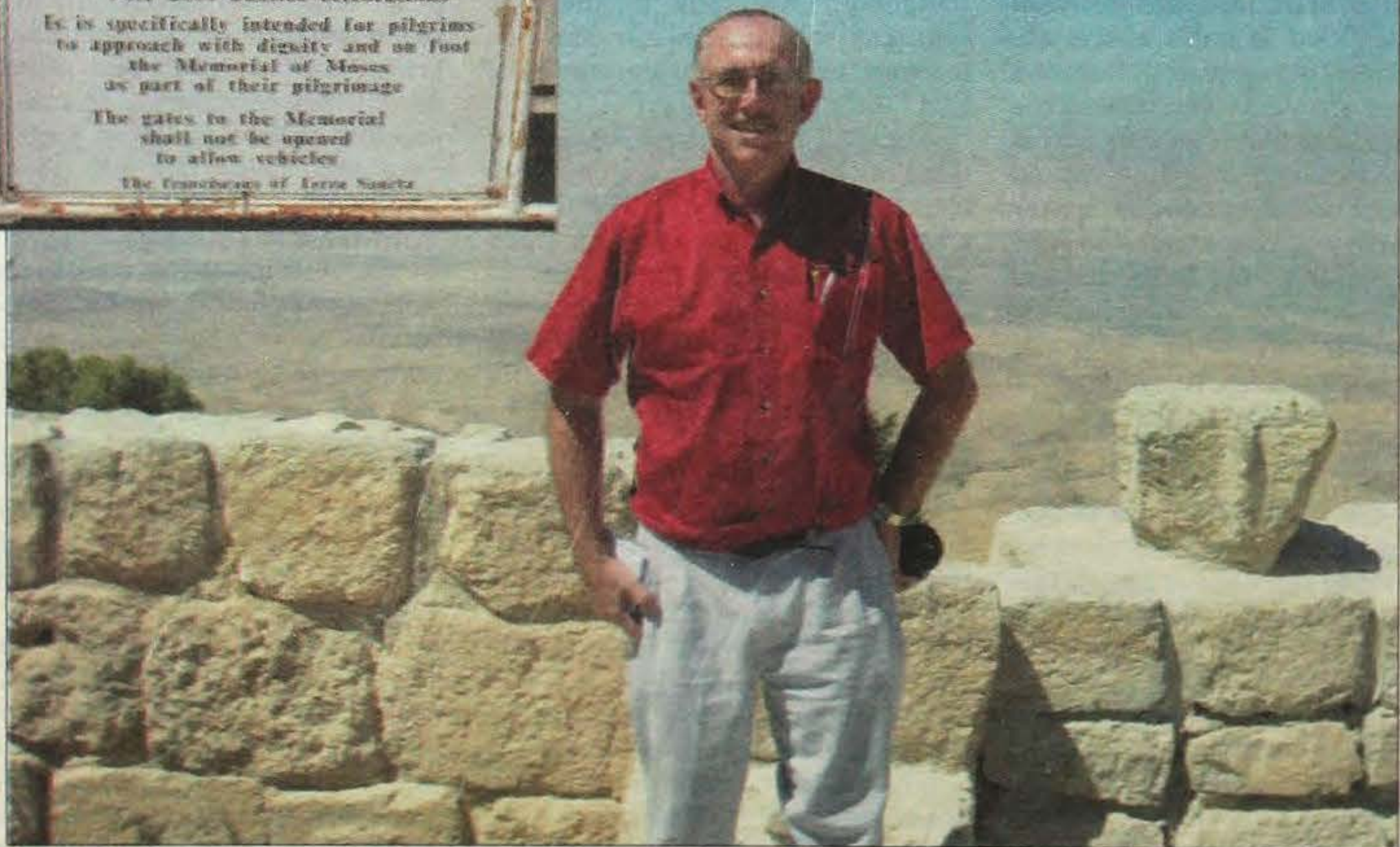
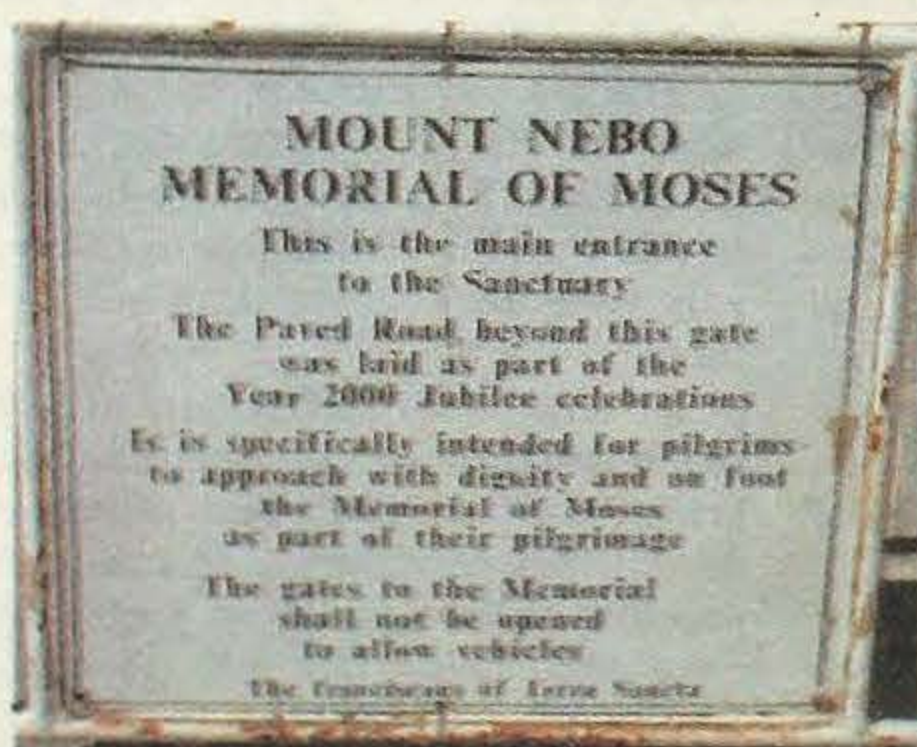
It is a special soul who really cares in our presence here, and one of our most fervent prayers, O God, bless this volunteer. □

Copyright by Hugh X. Lewis. Lewis, a Baptist layman, is a laureate of Christian country music in Tennessee. He has written more than 250 songs and is featured daily on Southern Gospel radio stations throughout the country. For more information, call (615) 883-0086.



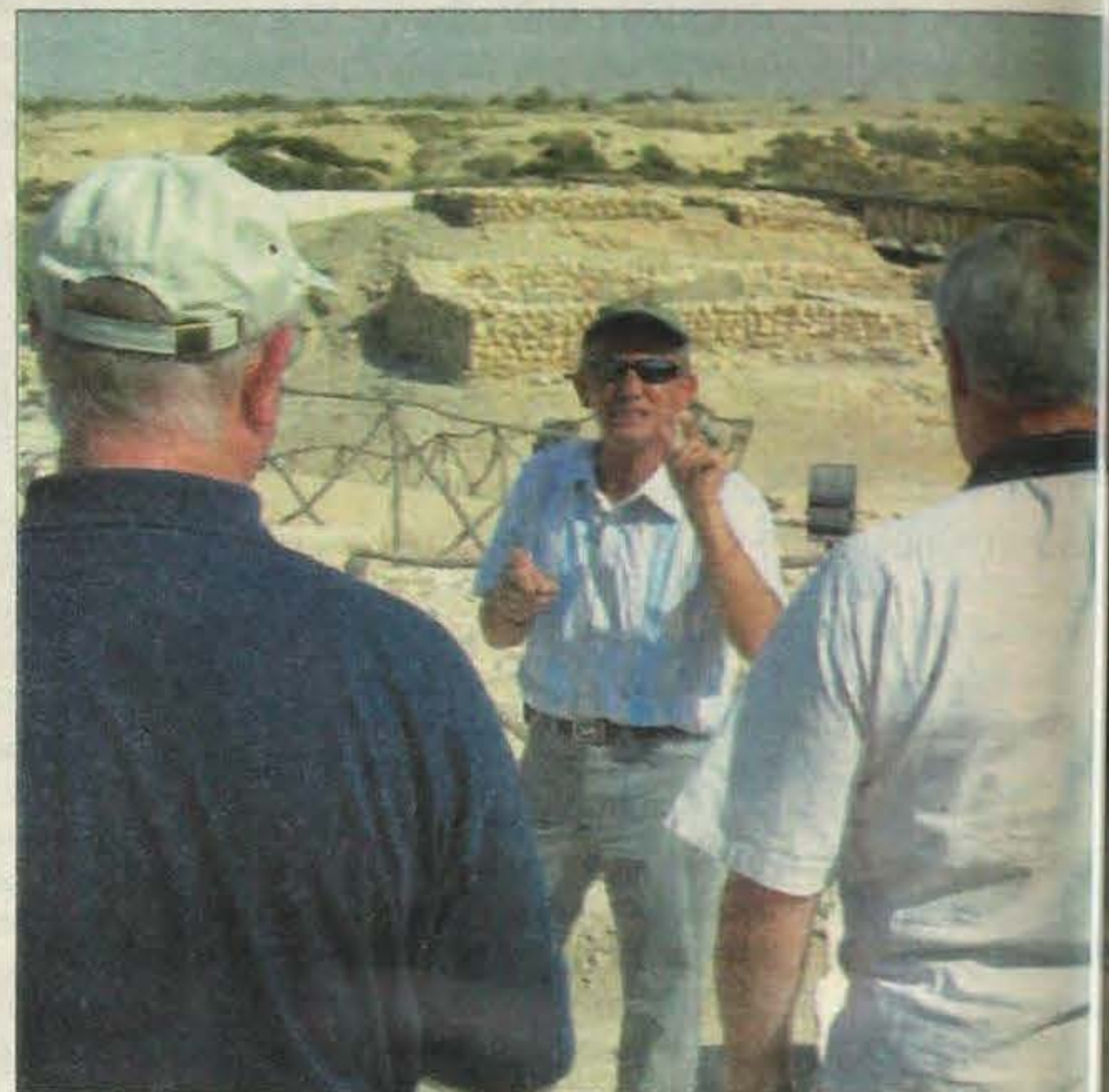
SUNSET at the Dead Sea in Jordan.

THIS VIEW from a restaurant about one hour from Amman, Jordan, overlooks the hills of Gilead. In the background is a small lake created from damming the Jabbok River. The Jabbok, according to Genesis 32:22-32, is where Jacob wrestled with an angel and was given the name "Israel."

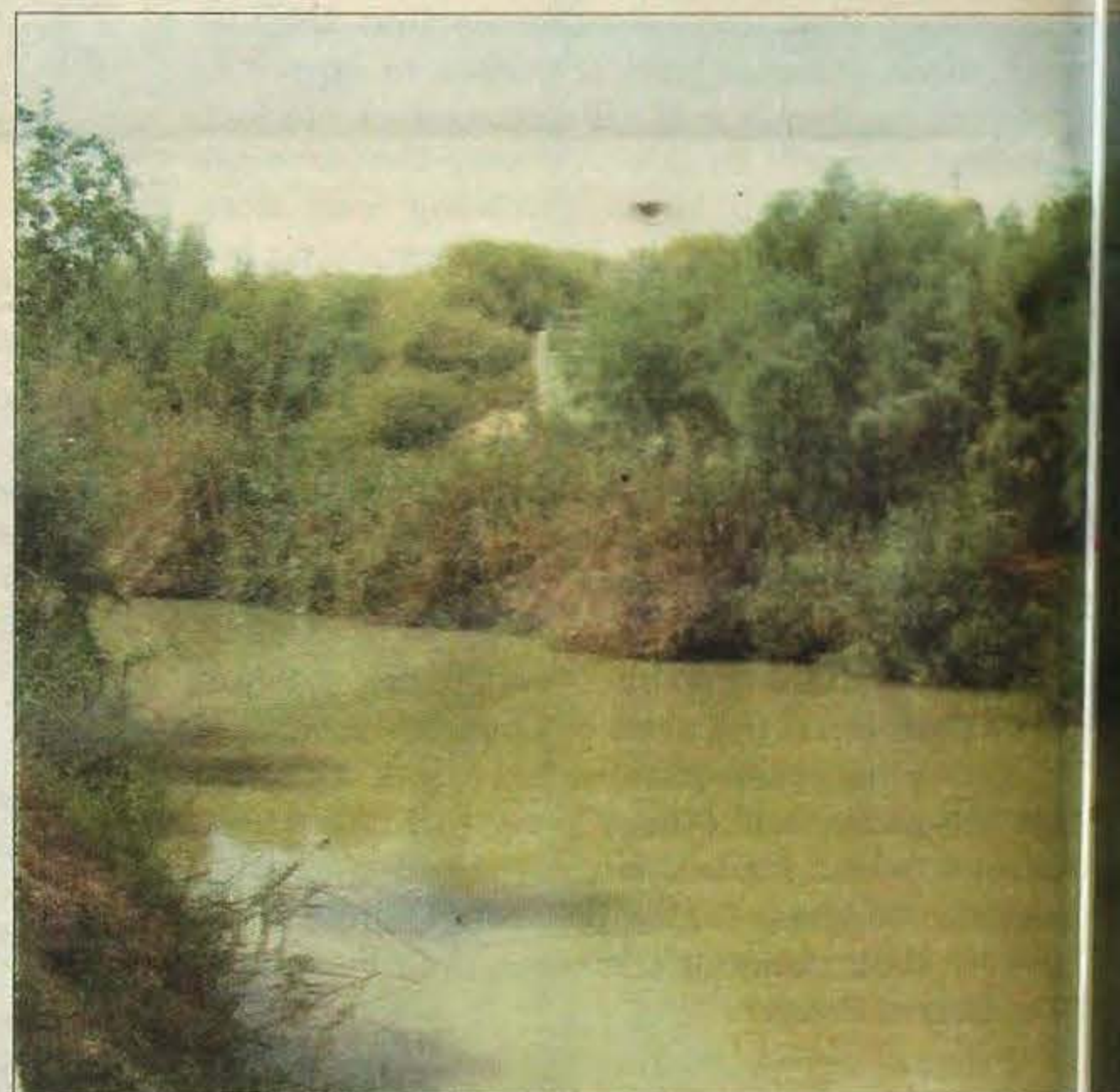


LONNIE WILKEY, editor of the Baptist and Reflector, stands at the top of Mt. Nebo, believed by many to be where Moses viewed the Promised Land before his death. In the distant background is Jericho. See Deuteronomy 34:1.

Old and New Testaments come alive in Jordan



RUSTUM MKHJIAN, center, assistant director of the Baptist Commission of the Jordan Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, provides a history lesson to Baptist state paper editors at "Elija" near the Jordan River, believed to be the site where Elijah called up by God into heaven.



JUST DOWNSTREAM of the Jordan River is where tradition holds that John the Baptist baptized Jesus.



THIS VIEW IS from the ancient city of Umm Qais in the eastern part of Jordan. It is the site of ancient Gadara, a site Jesus visited. This is where, according to Mark 5:1-20 Jesus drove demons from a man named "Legion" into a herd of pigs in the Sea of Galilee, upper left corner.