The Reverend Charles D. Page assumed duties last Sunday as Pastor of the Thompsonville Baptist Church. He came here from Fuqua.

Reverend Page graduated from Mars Hill College and Wake Forest University and is now a student at the Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest. He was a teacher in Reidsville and Winston-Salem before becoming a minister.

His former pastorate was at the Mayo Baptist Church in Spencer, Va.

He is married to the former Sandra Groff, the daughter of Robert Groff of Reidsville. They have a son, David, 6.
REV. CHARLES D. PAGE

To Preach Week Here

The Reverend Charles D. Page will be the guest evangelist for Revival Services at First Baptist Church beginning this Easter Sunday evening and continuing through Friday, April 27 at 7:30 P.M. each evening. Rev. Page was guest evangelist for services last May and proved to be such a dynamic young preacher that he was invited to return for the services again this year.

Born in Roanoke, Virginia in 1939, Mr. Page moved with his family to Fequay-Varina North Carolina at the age of five and grew up there. He graduated from Wake Forest University in 1961. He taught Physical Education and coached basketball and football for seven years in N.C. and Florida - three of these in the Winston-Salem school system. Rev. Page is also a graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest and the School of Pastoral Care in Winston-Salem. While at Southeastern Seminary he served as President of the Student Body in 1970-71. Presently he is doing further study to earn his doctorate from Southeastern. Prior to becoming pastor of the Pocahontas Bassett Baptist Church in Bassett, Virginia, Mr. Page served as pastor of the Thompsonville Baptist Church in Reidsville for almost four years. Music for the services will be directed by Mrs. Weldon Gordon and Mrs. David White. Everyone is cordially invited to attend the services which begin at 7:30 P.M. each evening. Nursery facilities will be open for children thru three years of age.
Lawndale Baptist Church installed Dr. Charles D. Page as pastor Sunday night. Members of the church honored Dr. Page and his family at a reception in the church's fellowship hall.

Dr. Page becomes the third pastor in the church's more than 15 years of existence. He succeeds the Rev. Wayne Slaton who resigned the pastorate of the church several months ago. The Rev. Bill Wilson was pastor when the church grew out of a neighborhood mission established by First Baptist Church of Greensboro.

The new pastor is the son of a minister and has pastored Mayo Baptist Church in Spencer, Va., Thompsonville Baptist Church in Reidsville and Pocahantas Bassett Baptist Church of Bassett, Va.

Dr. Page was presented to the church Sunday by Sam Johnson, a Greensboro lawyer who was chairman of the pulpit committee. The new minister was installed by Dr. Claud Bowen.

Dr. Bowen has served Lawndale Baptist Church as interim pastor since last spring. He formerly was pastor of First Baptist Church here.

Dr. Page graduated from Wake Forest University, where he played varsity basketball, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he earned a Doctor of Ministries degree.

Dr. Page will reside in British Woods with his wife, Sandra, and two sons, David, 11, and Robbie, 4.
Support for a proposed downtown coliseum site, shaken by waves of protests from members of a nearby church, seems to be weakening even more, raising land costs and property restrictions.

Consultants to Charlotte's coliseum committee say the site, near Caldwell and 2nd streets, could cost more than twice the original estimate. It also could snag on thorny urban renewal land use rules.

Taken together, those developments have damaged support for the site.

"I personally have probably taken a 180-degree turn," said city council member Minette McCall, who said she had leaned toward the downtown site.

The location is one of three under study by the committee and its consultants, Hammer, Siler, George & Associates of Atlanta.

The others are Independence Boulevard at Tryon Street and the Billy Graham Parkway site.

Their report is due to go to the city council next week. The council then will decide whether to recommend one of the sites for a proposed coliseum bond issue next spring.

Jeff Wingfield, a vice president of the Hammer firm, said land for the Independence location would cost about $3.5 million and $25 million. Original estimates, based on current tax appraisals, put the price at about $1.9 million.

The Billy Graham Parkway site is city-owned.

In addition, City Attorney Henry Underhill said federal restrictions call for "affected property owners near the Caldwell Street site to approve any change in the use of urban renewal land inconsistent with a federal-approved plan. One such change would involve coliseum parking.

And Underhill said affected property owners almost certainly would include First Baptist Church on Davidson Street, which opposes the downtown coliseum plan.

Through letters and phone calls, its members have mounted what council member Dave Burchill calls "the most intensive campaign I've seen since I've been on council."

Trosch said, "At the beginning of this process I clearly said that I would like to see an urban coliseum if all factors are right for that to happen... now I think (the new information) has pretty clearly in my mind ruled out the 2nd and Caldwell site."

Wingfield said the rise in estimated land costs for both the downtown and Independence sites resulted in part from a review of recent nearby property transfers.

"I'm not suggesting the property has escalated since (tax appraisal) in January 1983 by a factor of two," he said. "I'm suggesting that our best judgment of what ought to be set aside for that property is substantially more than we originally thought."

"Jim McCall, a Mecklenburg County tax appraiser, said some increase in value could be expected since January. In addition, he said probable condemnation likely would drive costs much higher.

City officials say the 25 acres under consideration at Caldwell and 2nd streets are owned by a handful of landowners. The 42 acres near Independence sit cost about $20 million.

Consultants also say the Billy Graham Parkway site, though city-owned, would require road improvements costing about $12 million.

The Rev. Charles Page, pastor of First Baptist, said his congregation wouldn't accept a coliseum that would create a "psychological barrier" to its members and create security problems.

Page said the church, which has invested between $7 million and $10 million in its property, wants to protect me of the first investments in the old Brooklyn urban renewal area.

"We feel like we made a sacrifice to be integral part of the downtown community when we had options to move out of town," he said. "And now when they talk about coming in here with a coliseum that we feel would be destructive, we feel the way we would be betrayed."

Council member Ron Spaugh Jr. said, "I would like to keep it in the uptown area if I could. But I think putting it next to the church would be bad."

Ron Lumber, a city council member who supports the Billy Graham Parkway site, said much of the public favors a site away from downtown.
The Rev. Charles Page will be on familiar ground when he reports to his office at First Baptist Church in Charlotte Monday morning.

He is returning to the 2,600-member uptown church nearly six years after he left it to become pastor of First Baptist Church in Nashville.

Page served First Baptist Charlotte, the mother church of Mecklenburg County’s 100-plus Southern Baptist congregations, from 1982 to 1985. His return comes two years after completion of a $5 million building program and 17 months after his successor, the Rev. Joe McKeever, resigned under pressure.

Southern Baptist observers say it is extremely rare for a pastor to return to a former pulpit. The exception cited most frequently is the Rev. Frank Pollard, who was called back to First Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., after a pastorate in San Antonio and a stint as president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

“This is quite unusual,” Page, 51, said in an interview last month. “It’s not often that somebody goes back a second time, so I’m really excited about it.”

Page said he intends to avoid the political controversies that have divided the 14.9 million-member Southern Baptist Convention along fundamentalist and moderate lines.

“I have tried through this whole process to be a pastor and nothing more,” said Page, a former trustee.
Diana Travis, a Charlotte landscape designer, wants Charlotte leaders to say discriminating against gays is not OK.

Supporter says law would send message

By CAROL D. LEONNIG

Diana Travis wants a simple statement from leaders of her native Charlotte: Discriminating against gays is not OK.

Last year, Travis was among the gay women and men urging city council members to forbid restaurants and other public places from barring homosexuals. The council’s rejection disappointed her.

This year, the landscape designer flinched anew when hearing a council member describe gays as a blight on Charlotte.

“I have my own business,” said Travis, 46. “I’ve got 7 acres of property that I pay taxes on in the city. I volunteer my time. How am I a blight?”

Travis said including gays in the city’s anti-discrimination ordinance would send a signal to the larger community.

Then maybe, Travis said, landlords would think twice before tossing people out because they were gay. Employers would think again before rejecting gay job candidates.

“The scripture is in opposition,” said Rev. Charles Page of First Baptist Church, who opposes an anti-gas ordinance. He says “the scripture is in opposition,” and, as a minister, that means he is, too.

The Bible tells the Rev. Charles Page all he needs to know about his beliefs on gay rights.

The First Baptist Church minister opposed some city council members’ attempts last year to help homosexuals fight discrimination in public places. Page thinks an ordinance for gays would endorse a lifestyle that government should be discouraging.

“It is giving affirmation to something that’s immoral, that the scripture is in opposition to,” Page said. Page also warns that if a city ordinance tries to protect gays from discrimination in restaurants, the next step is forcing schools and city government to hire gays.

Page wonders what kinds of pro-gay policies would have to be adopted by agencies that receive government funding. Page said gay rights supporters tried last year to describe the city ordinance as a symbolic gesture of support for individual rights.

“If you look down the road there are all sorts of negative possibilities,” he said. “I think folks who say it’s symbolic are saying that just to relieve people who might be concerned about the possibilities.”

Carol D. Leonnig
Gift comes in on 2 wings and a prayer

By KEN GARFIELD
Religion Editor

Notes and comments from a cluttered desk:
Nothing can top the Christmas surprise already being cherished by the Rev. Charles Page of First Baptist Church in Charlotte. In honor of the preacher's fifth anniversary, the 3,000-member congregation surprised Charles and Sandra Page by flying in their son and his family from England. Page was walking down the aisle after the benediction last Sunday when his church family sprang its surprise.

"They've been working on this for three months," said Page. "I can't believe they were able to keep it a surprise. I think it was the most thoughtful thing anyone's ever done for me. Both Sandra and I boo-hooed like babies."

David Page teaches computer science at Oxford University. He and his wife, Lauren, and their three children will be here with the Pages through Jan. 2. The family will be easy to recognize this weekend — they'll be the ones basking in each other's love.
By KEN GARFIELD
Religion Editor

The Rev. Charles Page of First Baptist is temporarily leaving his Charlotte church to undergo a bone marrow transplant for cancer.

One of the area's most prominent pastors, Page will preach on Christmas morning, then fly to Little Rock, Ark., to begin procedures expected to keep him at the Arkansas Cancer Research Center for three months.

Page, 57, expects to have a second transplant next summer. He just finished a second round of chemotherapy and cortisone treatments that have left him with a raspy voice. Already, though, he's joking with his uptown congregation of 3,000 about another side effect.

"As I have told many of you," Page wrote in the weekly church newsletter, "it is not all bad to be able to comb your hair in the morning with a wash cloth. It saves on power with the blow dryer."

Page disclosed in May that he has multiple myeloma — cancer of the bone marrow. He has continued church activities since then, including preaching Sunday mornings and serving as vice chairman of the Billy Graham Carolinas Crusade. First Baptist's service is televised three times each Sunday in the Charlotte area.

With Page about to leave, former Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry has arranged for a series of prominent guest pastors to preach Sunday's service at First Baptist. Among those lined up for March are Henry, of Orlando's First Baptist, and Baptist Sunday School Board President Jimmy Draper.

In Little Rock, the Rev. Rex Horne of Immanuel Baptist (President Clinton's home church) will furnish a car for Sandra Page, who will accompany her husband. Such acts of kindness, especially from First Baptist members, have moved Page.

"The church said 'You just go do what you need to do,'" he said Thursday. "In this whole process, I never cried any tears of sadness. Just tears of joy."
Election success secondary for pastor

BY KEN GARFIELD
Knight Ridder News Service

CHARLOTTE — If senior pastor Charles Page of Charlotte’s First Baptist Church loses the race for president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, don’t look for him to demand a recount.

When you’ve beaten cancer, and when you lead a thriving uptown church whose 3,500 members generally love you as much as you love them, life’s far too sweet to worry about an election.

Just ask the candidate.

“God’s given me an extension of life,” Page said. “If I lose, I didn’t want it anyway. It’s really no big deal for me.”

One of North Carolina’s best-known preachers, Page is favored to defeat layman Raymond Earp of Beaufort when the state’s 1.2 million Southern Baptists choose their leader Nov. 13 in Winston-Salem.

If he wins, look for Page to try to build a kind, gentle Baptist convention — one that sticks to its conservative guns without going out of its way to alienate moderates. Page, for example, disagreed with Myers Park Baptist’s letting a lesbian theologian preach from its pulpit. But he said he’d never have joined the anti-gay protest whose leader last week used such words as “vile” and “deviant” outside the church.

And he has noticed a decline in attendance and energy at the Southern Baptist Convention’s annual meeting, where the diehards go to pass resolutions many find inflammatory. “I think a lot of people feel left out,” Page said, noting how some Christians seem to love conflict: “I suppose they were born with certain genes.”

Page is conservative; listen to one Sunday sermon and it’s obvious. But to truly know the pastor, you need to come by the fellowship hall on Wednesday and watch him serve up sweet tea and small talk to 500 uptown workers who attend the businessperson’s weekly lunch and devotional.

This is a church and a pastor that evangelizes with a smile, and that won’t change just because Page gets a gavel.

“If I know my heart,” he said, “I know I don’t have any personal agenda.”

He also doesn’t have cancer. Doctors found Page, 62, had multiple myeloma — cancer of the bone marrow — in 1996. They gave him little reason for optimism. But after two bone-marrow transplants and a unique prayer campaign, he is free of the disease.

They called it the Urgent Prayer Support vigil. Every time a First Baptist member spotted a UPS truck, they paused to pray for Page.

But it explains so much more. This is a man who feels too blessed to be burdened by incidentals. When he preaches, when he and his wife, Sandra, walk four miles each morning, when they celebrated his birthday Tuesday at a Belmont fish camp with 100 friends, Page wasn’t thinking about politics and partisanship.

He was thinking about faith, prayer and hope, and how blessed he feels to be here to savor them all.
November is just around the corner and so is Fall Revival at Wake Chapel. We are very pleased to have this year Dr. Charles D. Page, Senior Pastor, at the First Baptist Church, Charlotte. Many of you remember his parents, Rev. and Mrs. W. M. Page who pastored for many years at Fuquay-Varina Baptist Church.

Dr. Page grew up in Fuquay and graduated from Fuquay Springs High School in 1957. He graduated from Wake Forest University in 1961. He later attended Southeastern Seminary and obtained a Master of Divinity in 1971 and then went on to acquire a Doctor of Ministry in 1974.

Dr. Page is married to Sandra Groff Page from Reidsville. They have two children, David who is 19 and Robbie who is eleven.

Please join us November 5-8 at 7:30 p.m. for some fine Gospel singing and preaching. A nursery will be provided.
The Fuquay-Varina Baptist Church extends to you a personal invitation to participate in an experience that could change your life. Dr. Charles Page will present the claims of Jesus Christ in a series of messages beginning Sunday morning, Oct. 19 and continuing through Wednesday night. The services begin at 7:30.

Dr. Page grew up in Fuquay-Varina and his father, Rev. W. M. Page, served the church as pastor for 17 years. He and his wife Sandra, and two sons, David, age 11 and Robbie, age 4, are living in Greensboro where he is pastor of Lawndale Baptist Church.

He taught school for 7 years (physical education and coach) before surrendering to the call to preach. God has blessed him with an unusual talent for preaching the gospel. He has averaged over 7 revivals a year while serving churches in Virginia and North Carolina.

A Revival Choir will lead the congregation in singing gospel hymns. You are invited to sing with this choir. Meet them in the choir room each evening at 7:00. The Puppeteers of our church will present a program of Bible verses and choruses each evening at 7:15 for the children. On Wednesday evening at 6:15 the church family and their guests will gather for a fellowship meal hosted by the deacons. Make reservations in the church office if you plan to come. A nursery will be provided at each service.
lion; Hallelujah Goal, $3.5 million. In reaching the Victory Goal almost immediately, the church saved almost $3 million in interest had this sum been borrowed. Members responded to the challenge, “Not equal gifts but equal sacrifice.”

Other highlights of the 1985-1990 period include:

- An expanded communications effort which included an enlarged and improved format for the weekly newsletter and the use of newspaper, radio, TV, billboards, and signs on buses and at the airport to share the gospel and the ministry of the church with the community.
- For the first time women and ordained ministers were among deacon nominees in 1986. Five women were nominated and three elected to begin terms in 1987.
- Continued tradition of worship and fellowship with First Baptist Church of Capitol Hill, including joint services with Messiah Chapel and Hispanic Mission.
- Church buildings and land appraised at more than $16 million in 1988.

The Making of a Pastor

At the age of sixteen, Charles David Page felt a distinct call from God to become a pastor, yet he evaded that call for seven years after he graduated from college. Even after he entered the pastoral ministry, there was a time when he prayed that God would call him from the pulpit to foreign missions.

Born August 28, 1939 in Roanoke, Va., Charles is the son of a Baptist preacher, W. M. Page, who served as a pastor in Virginia and North Carolina for forty-five years. Charles recognizes today that his parents and their Christian home were the major influences in shaping his life.

“I became a Christian as a ten-year-old boy in a tent meeting in Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina,” Charles recalls. “I came under conviction and felt the need of God’s forgiveness for my
sins and went forward. Later I talked with my father and made
known my decision in the church where he was pastor. My father
baptized me in September, 1949.”

His parents had yielded their son to the Lord, and both felt
that Charles would become a preacher. That same conviction
came to Charles before he finished high school, and he enrolled
at Wake Forest University to begin preparation to fulfill his
calling.

When he was at Wake Forest, however, a coaching oppor­
tunity opened up that appealed to him, and he “put on the back
burner” his call to preach. Seven years of “wilderness wandering”
followed before he was back on track.

He taught physical education and coached football and bask­
etball in public schools for three years in Winston-Salem, North
Carolina, for three years at Reidsville, N. C., one year in Venice,
 Fla., and back to Winston-Salem for another year.

“That last year I was in coaching was a year of despair,” he
recalls, “because I knew I was not in the will of God. Nothing
ever eased the pain. I went into a deep depression and could not
eat or sleep. That call of God to preach never left me during that
time. Every year I wrote for a seminary catalog.”

While in Florida he tried to “burn out” the call by becoming
more active in church. He became a deacon, served on countless
committees, and accepted other leadership roles. He helped
build the church and parsonage.

One day his wife, by now a bit impatient with his restlessness,
said to him, “You have done everything else; why don’t you get
up in the pulpit and preach?” His pastor also “hit him between
the eyes” when he asked, “Are you running from something?”

On a bleak day in March, 1967, he asked his wife and son
David to give him some time alone. He took out his J. B. Phillips
translation of the New Testament and underlined all the passages
he could find on faith and the will of God. Soon the pages were
soaked with his tears.

“At last I prayed, ‘Lord, I don’t care where you want me, even

in China, I am yours,’” he remembers the moment vividly today.
“Within a couple or hours I had made the decision to go to
seminary and prepare myself for the ministry.”

It was not an easy decision. They were building their first
home, and because they would have to move they lost the down
payment they had made. His wife Sandra also had a hard time
when he “dumped it all on her.” But the Lord dealt with her as
He had done with Charles, and soon she became a part of his call.

Those years in coaching were not wasted. Charles believes
God was using that time to accomplish His purposes in his life.
He learned to relate to people, especially to youth and their
families, and to minister to their needs as he went out many nights
to look for student athletes who were on a binge and to bring them
home. He led many of them to the Lord. Coaching also was an
outlet for his need to compete.

Charles has been in organized sports since he was seven,
mainly in basketball, football, and baseball. He was captain and
leading scorer of his high school basketball team at Fuquay­
Varina, and one of the great disappointments of those years was
to learn that he was not good enough to make the varsity at Wake
Forest. However, he was voted the outstanding student athlete
in seminary and was a successful seminary basketball coach.

“But all of that is in the past now,” he declares. “I have never
looked back. If UCLA called me today and offered me a head
coaching job, it would be no temptation. I still enjoy sports, and
many of my sermon illustrations come from those years, but I
know the pastorate is where the Lord wants me.”

Boy Meets Girl

As a junior at Wake Forest, Charles’s roommate was from
Reidsville. One day he asked his roommate if there were any
pretty girls in Reidsville, and the roommate showed him a picture
of Sandra Groff, a high school majorette. In October, 1959
Charles dated her for the homecoming festivities and took her to
church twice on Sunday. In December the fast-working swain asked her to marry him; and they were married July 9, 1960 in Reidsville, Charles's father and Sandra's uncle, also a Baptist pastor, performing the ceremony.

"It was both fun and tough being married while both of us were in college," he says. "We lived in a mobile home; and I tried to go to school while holding down three jobs: a paper route, a laundry route, and working in a dairy. We would not trade that experience for anything, but couples can make it a bit easier on themselves by being better prepared for marriage than we were."

Their first son, C. David Page, Jr., was born March 21, 1963, while Sandra was a sophomore, and she was forced to drop out of college. However, she later graduated from the University of South Carolina. Robbie Page was born November 22, 1970.

"Sandra and I are a lot alike," Charles points out, "and usually we get along very well together. Both of us are soft-spoken and even-tempered, and both of us like peace and tranquility."

"I was green as a gourd when I went to seminary," he confesses. "I had taught nonacademic courses as a coach, and the thought of studying Greek and Hebrew paralyzed me with fright. My first day in class I was scared to death."

The young student-husband-father gave top priority to his studies and was surprised to find that Greek was his favorite course. He graduated cum laude as president of the student body of Southeastern Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree in 1971. He completed the School of Pastoral Care, Bowman-Gray School of Medicine, in 1971.

A month after he entered seminary, Charles was called as pastor of a small church, and the years from 1968-74 were spent in student pastorates, usually at a salary of about $75 a week. Then the church at Reidsville, where Sandra's uncle had served as pastor, called him with the understanding he would return to seminary to complete his training.

He received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Southeastern in 1974.

Billy Graham was a powerful influence on the young preacher, even before he entered the ministry. On Sunday afternoons in the fall, usually there was a "pickup" football game on the lawn of the Page home. But at 3 P.M. the other players knew Charles would leave the game to go inside and listen to Billy Graham's "Hour of Decision" radio broadcast with his pastor-father. Later Charles met the famed evangelist several times and once was pastor to Grady Wilson, a member of the Billy Graham team.

Life Before Nashville

Before coming to Nashville, Charles Page was pastor of the following churches:

1974-77 — Lawndale Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC
1977-82 — First Baptist Church, North Augusta, SC
1982-85 — First Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC

"All of my pastorates have been brief," he observes, "but I have never wanted to leave a church. It was a heart-shattering experience for us to come to Nashville. We loved Charlotte, and there was much work to be done. There was a lot of unfinished business there with a building program on the drawing board. We said no three times before the Lord showed us He wanted us here in Nashville."

He recalls that he met three times with representatives of the pastor selection committee before he realized there must be something in the committee's persistence, and he began to pray in earnest about the call. A sense of frustration began to interfere with his sleep, and many times he paced the floor in the middle of the night.

"Finally, I closed myself up in my study and told my secretary to let me be alone," he recalls. "Almost in anger I confronted the Lord and asked, 'What do You want me to do?' God's answer
was, 'I want you to go.' I told Sandra I believed God wanted us to
go to Nashville and called the committee chairman to let him
know of our decision."

But in Nashville, storm clouds were gathering, blown up by
the controversy that stifled the Convention. Some church mem-
bers feared that Charles Page was "in the conservative camp." They
wanted him to appear before a group to answer questions.
When Charles learned of this lack of support and trust, he asked
the pastor selection committee to remove his name from con-
sideration.

Realizing that their choice as pastor was about to slip away
from them, the committee swung into action. Fifteen committee
members got on a multiple telephone hookup and urged the
Charlotte pastor to reconsider. "Do not allow Convention
politics to interfere with the will of God," they pleaded. But it
was seven months from the time the committee first contacted
him until Charles Page agreed to accept the call to First Baptist,
Nashville.

"I expected the Nashville pastorate to be tough," he confes-
ses. "I was fearful of trying to preach to so many leaders I had
admired and respected for many years, people who knew far more
Greek and Old and New Testament than I did. But it was not at
all like I had envisioned. I never felt threatened by any of those
leaders; in fact, I never felt more support and encouragement."

Second Thoughts

The honeymoon was to be short-lived, however, and soon
Charles even questioned whether he had misread God's will in
the matter. Rumors persisted that the conservatives "had Char-
es Page in their hip pocket." Adding fuel to this fire was the fact
that Charles Stanley, then president of the Convention and a
leader of the conservatives, had asked Page to serve as chairman
of the Convention credentials committee, although the two men
had never met. Then the church elected some women deacons,
and immediately many labeled the pastor of FBC as "liberal"
because he had not opposed the election.

"That helped me to see how foolish it all was," he says. "I
decided it was time to declare myself, so I announced from the
pulpit one Sunday: 'I am neither a moderate nor a fundamen-
talist. I am a Christian, and I don't want to hear any more about
it!'"

Page inherited the issue of women deacons. In 1984, a year
before the church called him as pastor, the church appointed a
committee to study the role and qualifications of deacons. This
committee mailed a questionnaire to all church members. A
majority of those responding said they felt women deacons were
both Scriptural and desirable. On April 20, 1986, the church
approved by a 60 percent majority the recommendation of the
deacon selection committee that deacons be selected from "adult
church members." This action led to the election of the first
women deacons.

Page had told the pastor selection committee he personally
did not favor women deacons, but he approved the church's plan
to study the matter. He said he would gladly abide by the decision
of the church provided the issue did not divide the church hurt-
fully. This position parallels that of Paschall thirty years earlier
regarding the grading of adult Sunday School classes.

More recently he has been relieved to find less suspicion that
he might "sell the church down the river." He believes it is more
difficult to maintain a middle-of-the-road stance than to be
aligned with any faction. He also believes that most of the
congregation prefer to get on with the greater mission of the
church than to become embroiled in denominational politics. As
for the pastor, he enjoys neither politics nor controversy.

As a young preacher with three brief pastorates behind him,
Page might have been threatened by another factor at FBC,
Nashville: he would follow in the footsteps of two legendary
pastors who between them had served the church more than sixty
years.

"There were other things that frightened me as I came to
Nashville, but not that,” he insists. “It was an honor to follow two of the greatest preachers in the denomination, but my call to the pulpit is so profound that I have always had confidence in that call. Besides, I had followed great pastors before — Carl Bates, former Convention president, at Charlotte, and Bill Wilson, now pastor at First Baptist, Brentwood, at Greensboro.”

He has found all the challenge his competitive spirit needs in the ministry of a downtown inner city church.

“I have pastored suburban churches, and if you open the doors and offer a good ministry and a little preaching, you will have fifteen to twenty additions every Sunday,” he declares. “In a suburban church, I would enroll 75 percent of the families I visited. Here we are lucky if we get 25 to 30 percent. Here we have to work harder, do better, be more innovative.”

Some members have been critical of the percentage of the church budget that goes for staff salaries, but he points out that in a downtown church few people live close to the church and there is less volunteerism. A larger staff is needed to carry the workload often shouldered by volunteers in a suburban church.

“Many of the stereotypes of the downtown church do not apply here,” he believes. “Many people think of a downtown church as cold and formal, made up of wealthy, socially prominent people. I have never worked with more loving people. It is a great church with a great witness.”

A Pastor’s Priorities

Surprisingly, this man who is so positive about his call to pastoral ministry places the church only third in his order of priorities. Not surprising, of course, is the top priority he gives to his personal relationship with the Lord.

“I’m an early riser, usually up about 5:00 or 5:30,” he notes. “I leave home about 6:30 and am one of the first to arrive at the church. I like to spend those first hours of the day with the Lord, in prayer, Bible study, meditation, and reflection. If the doors to my office are still closed when my secretary arrives, she knows I’m still ‘in conference’ and not to be disturbed.”

Priority No. 2 is his family. Because of other demands, time with his family must be “here a little and there a little,” but he and Sandra make a special effort to participate in school events, athletics, and other activities with their sons.

“When Robbie was about twelve, I made the decision that when he wanted to talk I would put down whatever I was doing and listen,” he says. “Now these talks are important to both of us.”

His third priority is the church, although he confesses it has not always been that way.

“Early in my ministry I realized that if I died tomorrow the church would go on without me,” he reflects, “but I am the only husband and father my family has. A pastor does not always have to be ‘front and center’ in a church and do everything. The staff must be free to do its thing.”

There was a time in his ministry, however, when the church too often took priority over his family, and both suffered because of it. When both home and church are given proper priority, he finds they become allies rather than foes and the two no longer compete. But usually it takes time and maturity to make this discovery.

The history of FBC confirms Page’s view regarding the tenuous relationship between pastor and church. During the first one hundred years in the life of FBC, only two pastors served longer than ten years.

The pastor’s weekly calendar is full, but a glance at it reveals where he invests most of his time: study, visitation, and staff relations.

Building a Winning Team

Much of his time on Mondays and Tuesdays is spent in staff
meetings and staff relationships “because staff relationships are the key to the overall spirit of the church.”

Wednesday and Thursday mornings and most of Friday are spent in study — sermon preparation and refinement, article writing, and study for personal training and enrichment. Time is reserved on Saturdays for “sermon soaking” as he allows the messages God has given him to take hold of him.

Weekday evenings when meetings or wedding rehearsals are not scheduled usually are given to visitation — hospitals, nursing homes, homebound, and prospects. Tuesday nights and Saturday afternoons usually are devoted to prospect visitation.

“Friday night is date night,” he points out. “I try to reserve this time for Sandra and me and the boys. Saturday nights are frequently family nights for us. Sundays, of course, are full. I have no regular day off each week. I take that a little at a time where I can.

“In staff relations I see myself as a player-coach and the pastor and staff as a team. They are professionals, and they should be free to exercise their gifts. I try to demonstrate confidence in them. My role is to mold their gifts and personalities into a team. When this is done, the church picks up on it and patterns after this team concept. Jesus said he came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and pastor and staff should adopt His servant role.”

Staff Rapport and Personnel

In relating to the staff, the pastor uses several key words as guidelines:

*Interest* — “I develop a sincere interest in each staff person, including his or her personal and family life.”

*Trust and confidence* — “I have found that if I let them know I expect them to do a good job, they come through.”

Honesty and integrity — “I am always up front with them and let them know they can trust me.”

Support — “I will always support my staff, both in private and in public. I will not lie to them or for them, but I will recognize and commend them at every opportunity.”

The staff see their leader as democratic and developmental, with a strong emphasis on spiritual growth and personal development. He encourages them to share their faith wherever they are.

“Charles is personally involved with the staff,” says one staffer. “His door is always open from the outside. Our staff retreats are not so much for planning as for developing personal relations. Each staff person gives him a list of concerns, and these become the agenda. Open meetings with everyone contributing are his bag.”

His methods have helped develop a staff that is second to none. A personnel director who has spent a lifetime studying staff organizations and relationships in churches and businesses across the country has labeled the FBC staff a model that other churches and businesses would do well to follow.

Because of his emphasis on the player-coach role and a team approach to church administration, it is difficult to evaluate the pastor apart from his ministerial staff. Following are brief thumbnail sketches of other members of this winning team.

Minister of Education and Administration

Jimmy F. Dunn has been the right-hand man in church program planning and administration for both Page and Paschall. His area of responsibility is extensive, including the supervision of several professional staff ministers and even more in support positions. (See staff organization chart in Appendix.) Since Jimmy joined the staff in 1978, the church has made significant progress in many areas. A few highlights:
• A Fair and equitable benefit program for all staff persons, with the same basic benefits for all;
• A church committee structure with more than 300 members serving on active committees;
• A system of computers for more efficient handling of the growing volume of church business;
• A public relations program that makes use of all media to make the community more aware of FBC and its ministry.

Goals Jimmy expects to lead church program organizations to achieve include continued growth in church membership; growing enrolment and average weekly attendance in Sunday School; greater participation in discipleship training, including Church Training, Continuing Witness Training, MasterLife, New Member Training, and other areas; and growth in stewardship through Planned Growth in Giving, with the goal of keeping a smaller percentage of church income for local needs and giving a growing percentage for missions.

A native of Starkville, MS, Jimmy is a graduate of Mississippi State and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Before joining the FBC Staff he was minister of music and education at First Baptist Church, Bogalusa, LA, and a consultant and supervisor at the Baptist Sunday School Board. He and wife Eleanor have two sons, Jim and Brad.

Minister of Music

The extent of the role of music in the life and ministry of FBC is difficult to comprehend. Almost four hundred persons are enrolled in the program, including more than one hundred in the preschool and children’s choirs, and 150 in the sanctuary choir. Other groups include chapel choir, young adult ensemble, adult handbells, college ensemble, and brass ensemble.

Heading the music ministry is Mark Daniel Edwards. Mark is ably assisted by a staff that includes Sandi Keown, music assistant; Sharron Lyon, organist, who has served the church more than a quarter century; Richard Brown, pianist; Sam Sanders, ensembles director; and Allen Adcox, sound systems coordinator.

“One of the special interests I have is in the ministry of music as it affects the congregation,” Mark says. “Congregational worship, and particularly congregational singing, is something I spend a great deal of time planning. Our congregation has truly become the largest choir in our church, and they have learned how to sing with understanding and with a higher level of musicianship than most congregations.”

Mark is a graduate of Howard Payne University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His many honors include serving as president of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, 1989-91, and as a member of the Baptist Hymnal Committee. He is in wide demand as a conference leader and choral clinician. In addition to writing for a variety of religious publications, he has had a number of music compositions published.

Mark is married to the former Barbara Sue West. Their children are Weslee Anne and Nathan Daniel.

Minister of Evangelism and Discipleship

Although everyone knows him as “Rus,” the minister of evangelism and discipleship is Cleatis L. Roach, Jr.

One of Rus’s goals is that all members of the church become sensitive to the lost and unchurched persons around them. “Our one thousand or so active members touch tens of thousands of lives daily,” he points out. “If we were sensitive to spiritual needs, we could win this city in a matter of weeks. Every church member should have at least one person they are actively trying to win to the Lord. Most of us do not even know a lost person, much less trying to win that person.”

Other goals of the leader in evangelism and discipleship:
Every church member having some quiet time with the Lord daily;
100 members trained in MasterLife and 100 trained in Continuing Witness Training;
A twenty-four-hour prayer ministry;
500 additional members trained in evangelism.

"All of us are to do the work of evangelism," he says. "Some of us have a unique ability to reach persons for Christ. Some of these will be called into full-time vocational service. But most of us will continue to make a living some other way as we reach associates, neighbors, and acquaintances with the gospel."

A graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Rus has served as pastor of a number of churches in Texas. He is married to the former Deborah Cameron. They have three daughters, Holly, Heather, and Hailey.

**Associate Pastor: Missions and Special Ministries**

Many church members are scarcely aware of the extensive ministry of William L. Blackwell, associate pastor: Missions and special ministries. Bill heads the FBC Counseling Center, providing professional help and Christian ministry for family, marital, and personal problems.

Other supervisory responsibilities of the associate pastor include the following:

- **Language Ministries**—Provides a ministry to Nashville's large international and Hispanic populations. Eliab Saenz, Hispanic pastor.

- **Messiah Baptist Chapel**—Located at 88 Lafayette, the chapel maintains a program to meet the needs of persons living in the inner city. Eric Knowles serves as pastor.

Bill is the senior member of the ministerial staff, having come to FBC in 1972. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, University of Tennessee School of Social Work, and a former pastor in Louisiana. A licensed professional counselor, Bill is also experienced as a writer, editor, and conference leader. He is married to the former Muriel Fontenot. Their children are Lauren and Lloyd.

**Minister to College and Youth**

One of the goals of Carolyn Aultman Jenkins, minister to college and youth, is to see FBC in time ministering to 400 students and 200 youth. Those goals are already well within reach. The college ministry has 375 enrolled in Sunday School, and the high school ministry reaches more than 130 for Bible study.

Other goals of this dynamo whose energy level more than matches that of the youth she works with include:

- More small groups participating in mission trips.
- Special interest groups for youth who feel called to ministry.
- Continued leader training and discipleship training.
- Three youth departments.

Carolyn graduated magna cum laude from Tift College and is now studying at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. She has served as a teacher, writer, and conference leader. She is married to Wayne Jenkins of the Sunday School Board. Their children are Randall and Clare.
"My favorite thing to do," says Carolyn, "is to help parents and youth leaders understand teenagers."

**Director of Properties and Food Services**

Probably no one else on the staff is more taken for granted than Bill Temple, director of properties and food services. FBC serves more meals than many restaurants, and everyone expects these meals to be prepared on schedule, served quickly, and suited to the taste of all. About the only time anyone gives a second thought to this process is on those rare occasions when something goes awry.

Bill plans the menus, buys food, and oversees cooking for all church meals, banquets, receptions, and dinners for all church groups and others using FBC facilities. He also supervises and trains cooks and volunteer help and supervises cleaning and preventive and regular maintenance of all church properties, including buildings, parking lots, and vehicles. Other duties include the supervision and training of employed custodial and maintenance personnel.

Bill joined the staff in 1986. Prior to that time he was associated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention and also worked in electronics. He is married to the former Cecelia Well.

**Minister to Single Adults**

Jay Daniel Jones joined the FBC team in 1983 as a recreation assistant. Shortly afterward, he became the part-time minister to college students.

Later this position was expanded to minister to college and single adults. Because of the rapid growth of the single adults ministry, in 1988 Dan was named minister to single adults.

Since 1985, the church’s ministry to single adults has grown from one department with 150 enrolled to three departments with more than three hundred enrolled. This is a full-time min-

istry to singles, including Discipleship Training, Bible study, athletics, mission activities, ministries to families and the divorced, and other activities.

Dan is a graduate of Samford University, where he was active in student government, music, drama, and missions. He is married to the former Jane Meadows.

**Minister of Recreation—Senior Adults**

As minister of recreation-senior adults, Randall Cash supervises a wide range of activities at the church recreation center and beyond. In 1988 he presided at a special breakfast for seniors at the church at which the following FBC superlatives were recognized:

- **Longest continuous membership in the church** — Eura McMurry, 70 years
- **Sunday School teacher with longest service** — Josephine Pile Broaddus, 42 years
- **Longest service as a deacon** — Herman F. Burns, 49 years
- **Longest service in the choir** — Quanah Williams, 45 years

Randall came to his position in 1986. Randall and wife Sue are graduates of East Texas Baptist College, and he is also a graduate of Southwestern Seminary. They have two sons, Nathan and Ryan.

**Ministry to Children**

FBC's ministry to children is second to none. Completing the ministerial staff of the church are Rubynelle Dixon, minister to preschool and children, and Henrietta Powell, child care center
director. Their ministry reaches into hundreds of homes in the community as they seek to meet the needs of children.

Rubynelle joined the First Baptist staff in 1976 as a part-time minister to preschool. In 1984 she became full-time minister to preschool and children.

She is a graduate of Southwestern Seminary. Husband Tommy is at the Sunday School board. Their sons are Rick and Chris.

Henrietta became director of the FBC child care center in 1982. In less than three years the center had a full enrolment of seventy-five, a waiting list, and a staff of nine full-time and six part-time teachers.

A graduate of Duke University, she is married to James L. Powell, a former pastor now with the SBC Stewardship Commission. Their children are Peter and Reid.

Support Staff

Matching the ministerial staff in dedication and commitment are the members of the support staff. This group is appreciated by the entire congregation for its efficiency and congeniality.

The education staff includes Jean Benton, office coordinator; Eloise Carter, outreach secretary; Amy Chastain, public relations coordinator-receptionist; Sandra Gentry, preschool-children assistant; Gail Phipps, office secretary; and Glenda Turner, records secretary.

The finance staff is comprised of Ann Beasley, financial secretary; and Kim Hester, financial assistant. Shirley Freed is the pastor’s secretary.

A Personal Philosophy

Charles Page’s “life verse,” and also a succinct summary of his philosophy, is First Thessalonians 5:23, “And the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Each one of us is a three-part person,” he explains. “God gave the plant world one part, the body; He gave the animal world two parts, body and feelings. But He gave us body, emotions, and spirit. We alone can commune with the Father. I feel that I am not really being a good steward unless I do something daily for all three parts of my God-given life.”

He has been a runner since 1965, and both he and Sandra run regularly together. He has participated in several marathons, or runs of more than twenty-six miles. The Pages are also very diet conscious, eating only those foods most beneficial to their good health. Even so, Charles must constantly guard against overweight and high blood pressure. “Fat preachers,” he believes, “are not the best testimony.”

Flying is another major interest of Charles’s, which he took up in part to overcome a paralyzing fear of heights.

“My mother taught me that if there is something out there you are afraid of, the best way to overcome that fear is to stand up and face it,” he recalls. “I obtained my pilot’s license in 1978, and one of the great thrills of my life was to fly the mission plane while in Tanzania in 1986.”

All who hear Charles preach are impressed with his zeal for missions. He has served in Kenya and Indonesia as well as Tanzania and believes a part of his role as pastor is to keep mission needs before the church. During one three-year period in his ministry eight persons were called to become career missionaries.

“I believe the heart and soul of missions is the local church,” he says. “Without the support of the churches, mission fields would soon dry up.”

He wrestled with the call to missions in his own ministry, but finally laid that struggle to rest in 1983 when he was invited to become pastor of an English-speaking church in Africa. He worked through that experience with the Lord, once more being
impressed that God had called him not to the mission field but to be pastor of a local church.

Incredibly, the greatest fear in the life of this man who today preaches with such power and apparent ease was not heights but public speaking. As a schoolboy he once passed out cold while trying to deliver a part in a school play. Again following the advice of his mother, he overcame the fear by facing it head on.

**Looking Ahead**

The pastor has no ambitions for FBC to become a "megachurch." He does believe, however, that it holds a unique position for ministry in the heart of the inner city. Although one of his goals is to baptize an average of more than one hundred converts a year, his major emphasis is not on numerical growth. He wants the church to sustain its world mission vision, continuing to send volunteers for home and foreign mission service, and providing training in evangelism and opportunities for members to win the lost to Christ. He believes a church will grow if it is a praying church with a world mission vision and belief in a miracle-working God.

"Purchasing the Associates Capital property was one of the boldest things this church has ever done," he avers. "This will provide the space we need for decades to come. If we can provide additional parking, perhaps south of the present church property, this should take care of needs for the foreseeable future. Now we can give more attention to taking better care of the property we have, giving it a glow and making it more attractive."

As he reflects on his first five years as pastor of FBC, he concludes: "The one great experience of my life is to serve as pastor of this church. I never saw myself as pastor of a great church like this. I am humbled and awed by the opportunities God has given me here to minister, to go to the mission field, to participate in revivals and conferences, to write. It is all absolutely mind boggling. I can only say that any person who follows the leadership of the Lord will be amazed at what He can do with you and through you."