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127 Ninth Avenue, North — Nashville, Tennessee

July 25, 1957

Teachers of Religion
To Meet At Ridgecrest

RIDGECREST, N. C.--(BP)--The College Association of Baptist Teachers of Religion will hold its annual conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly Aug. 28-29.

Eric Rust, professor of Christian apologetics, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, will bring three lectures. An annual business session and election of officers will be held.

E. C. Masden, professor of Bible, Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky., is president of the association. Other officers are Joe M. King, associate professor of religion, Furman University, Greenville, S. C., vice-president; and J. W. Angell, associate professor of religion, Wake Forest College, Winston-Salem, N. C., secretary-treasurer.

Expected to attend are teachers of Bible, religious education, religion, and related fields in Southern Baptist schools and colleges. Men who teach in these fields in state-supported schools are welcome also, Masden said.

The conference will open Wednesday at 2 p.m. and end Thursday afternoon.

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BP folks & facts

.....Miss Nell Taylor, who for the past 11 years has served as Baptist young people's secretary for Mississippi, is Louisiana College's new dean of women. She will succeed Miss Gladys Young, who had held the post since 1953 but recently resigned.

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.....Miss Louise Crowe, former librarian for Burlington, N. C., City schools, has been named head librarian at Gardner Webb College, Boiling Springs, N. C.

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BAPTIST FEATURES

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Church Gifts Increase Despite Lengthy Drouth

BALLINGER, Tex.--(BP)--Like farmers in other parts of the Southwest, those in Ballinger have seen their crops dry up year after year because of prolonged drouth.

The seven lean years, in which Ballinger seemed to be "in the cradle of the drouth," have tapped inner spiritual wells in the lives of farmers and others belonging to Ballinger's First Baptist Church.

The community lost population, yet average Sunday school attendance increased. Members of the church suffered financial reverses, but offerings increased year by year.

Encouraged by drouth-breaking rains in Texas this spring and summer, members of the church are hoping to see even greater progress in the church's Christian service during months ahead.

In 1948, just before the drouth set in, total offerings to the church amounted to \$44,131. Yet in 1950, the first year in which the city felt the pinch of the drouth, offerings were \$52,665. By 1956, with no end to the drouth in sight and many heavily in debt, church gifts rose to \$55,325 for the year.

From 1943 to 1957, Ballinger's Chamber of Commerce reports, the city lost 1300 people as population dwindled from 7500 to 6200. In 1943, Sunday school attendance averaged 301 per Sunday at First Baptist Church. In 1956, that average was 425 per Sunday.

Well grounded in tithing, members of the church were found to be tithing on money they had borrowed to make ends meet. One said, "I haven't made any money since the drouth began, but I must maintain my giving because a cutback now would hurt for years to come."

Another put it this way, "Sure, it looks unsound to tithe on borrowed money, but by faith I'll do my part, knowing that better days are bound to come. In spite of my temporary setback, I believe the Lord is still on His throne and will honor the steward that is faithful."

Their present pastor, W. LeRay Fowler, has been there less than two years, accepting the call during the middle of the drouth. "I continue to be amazed at their optimism and progressive spirit," he declares.