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### December 18, 1986

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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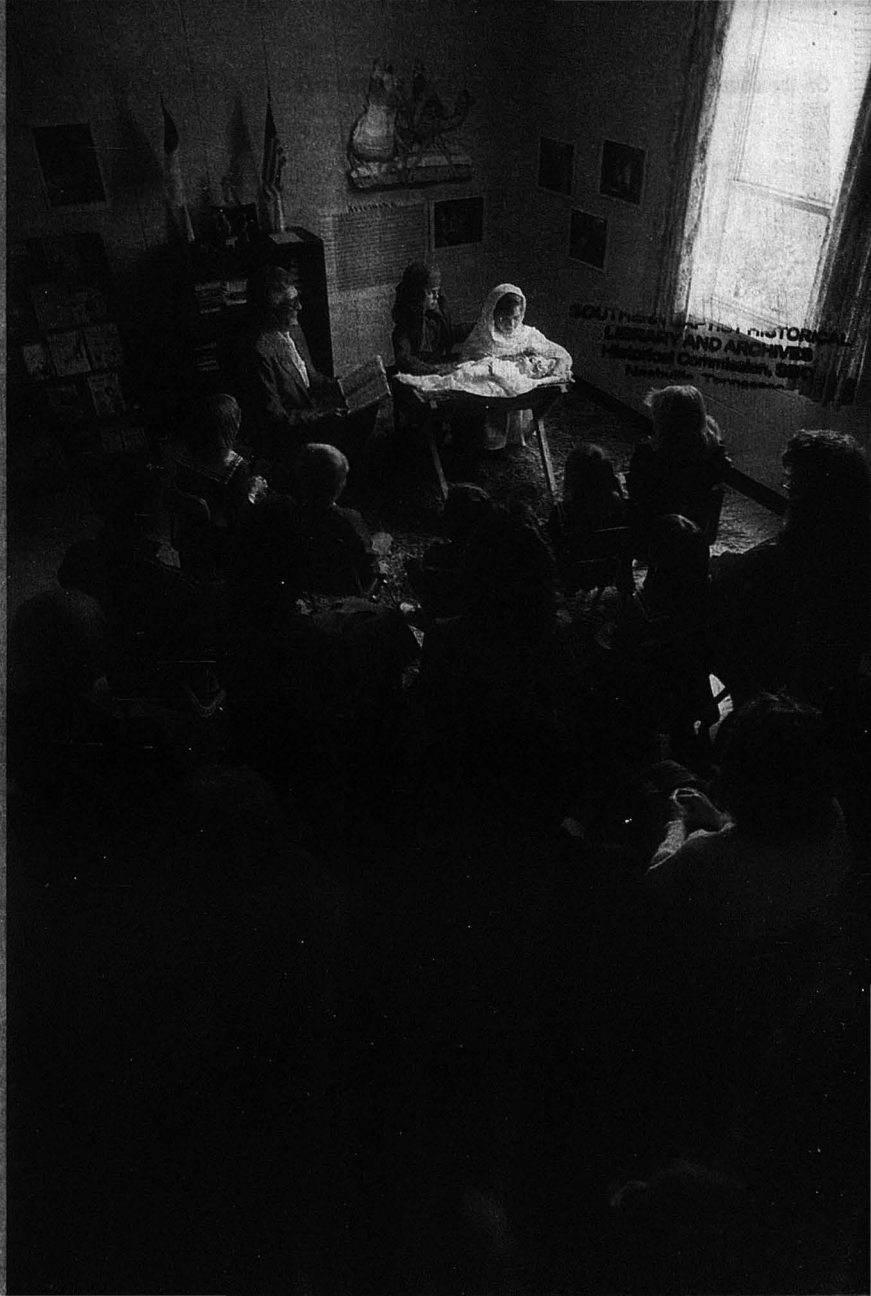
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# Arkansas Baptist

Newsmagazine

December 18, 1986



## On the cover



BSSB photo by Jim Veneman

Sunday School teacher Ellen Vineyard reads the story of the birth of Jesus as it is portrayed by Ryan Weeks, 8, and Jill Graves, 9, during a parent-worker meeting at First Church, Fordyce.

## In this issue

### 5 Baptist business

Members of the ABSC Executive Board met for their annual fall organizational meeting and laid the foundation for what they hope will be a year of progress for Arkansas Baptists.

### 6 laity unleashed

The solution to Bold Mission Thrust—Southern Baptists' goal of taking the gospel to every person by A.D. 2000—lies locked within the laity, one evangelism expert contends.

### Correction

The Nov. 27 ABN incorrectly reported an ordination service at Camden First Church. The article should have noted Bill Bustin and Marvin Murphree were ordained to the gospel ministry.

## Trantham appointed to OBU post

ARKADELPHIA—The board of trustees of Ouachita Baptist University recently approved the appointment of William E. Trantham, professor of music and chairman of the applied music department of the OBU School of Music, to the Addie Mae Maddox Endowed Chair of Music. The endowed chair is funded by a gift from Judge and Mrs. Edward Maddox of Harrisburg in honor of his mother, Addie Mae Scruggs Maddox.

Trantham has been a member of the OBU

faculty since 1960. He is a graduate of Southwest Missouri State University and Northwestern University.

In 1981, Trantham was chosen to receive the Musician of the Year Award from the Arkansas Federated Music Clubs, and in 1982 he was selected as Outstanding College Teacher by the Arkansas State Music Teachers Association. He also is a published author, contributing to both religious and secular publications in the field of music.

## Jonesboro First serves Thanksgiving dinner

First Church, Jonesboro, celebrates Thanksgiving in a special manner that has become a tradition at the church. Students who remain on campus, widowed persons, singles, and the homebound—in short, anyone in the community who wants to come—can have Thanksgiving dinner at the church.

The event is well-publicized by the church and local media, with a special invitation to international students.

Church members contribute by purchas-

ing the turkeys and whatever else is needed and by volunteer work. Turkey and dressing is provided by the church; the remainder of the food is brought by those who attend and church members.

Carry-out meals are taken to the homebound, and the fruit that decorates the tables, along with tracts, is taken to jail inmates.

This year, more than 70 meals were delivered and 118 people were served at the church, including 30 international students.

## Tillman resigns post at Southern Baptist College

WALNUT RIDGE—Jim E. Tillman, vice-president for development at Southern Baptist College, has resigned his position effective Dec. 31. During the 12 years Tillman has been with the college, he has been involved in fundraising, public relations, alumni affairs, and admissions.

The Tillmans will be moving to Dallas, Texas, where he will become associate pastor of the Prestonwood Church.

This past year was a peak year in fund-

raising for Southern Baptist College. The budget that needed to be raised was \$151,900, and \$165,000 income was reported in this portion of the budget.

The New Horizons Campaign, launched under Tillman, is trying to raise \$1.2 million for the college. Two of the multiple campaigns are reporting success at this time. Two other campaigns, the Trustee/Former Trustee Campaign and the Faculty Staff Campaign, already have exceeded their goals.

## Southern Baptists get \$3 million rebate

DALLAS (BP)—Southern Baptists covered by their Annuity Board's church insurance program received an early Christmas present this year. Their December medical premium was free.

The Annuity Board refunded nearly \$3 million to 21,989 ministers and church employees or churches in November, according to statistics released by the board.

The free premium could mean an extra \$30 for an individual, or up to \$250 for a family of three or more.

The rebate was an incentive in last year's "open enrollment" campaign to get new people enrolled in the medical plan and reward current participants who were covered since January 1986. The campaign opened medical coverage during October and November 1985 to all eligible ministers and church employees who had been denied participation in any medical plan.

Some 6,000 people enrolled in the Southern Baptist medical plan, a board spokesperson said.

## Cooperative Program dips during November

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program receipts dipped in November but remain ahead of last year's record pace, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

November's total, \$9,672,612, was 10.2 percent behind receipts for the same period in 1985, Bennett reported. However, receipts for the first two months of the 1986-87 budget year stand at \$20,609,728, or 4.04

percent ahead of the rate for October and November of 1985.

November's Cooperative Program dip follows the best October the program has enjoyed in its 61-year history. October receipts of almost \$11 million were 21 percent higher than those for the same period in 1985.

Bennett partly attributed the November dip to reduced oil prices and farm problems, noting the economy particularly has affected states such as Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana.

## A personal Christmas

## The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



We live in an age of depersonalization. Such things as the growing urban center, the use of computer numbers to keep track of individuals, and placing material values above human values all tend to depersonalize our society. Anything that tends to degrade the worth of individuals is wrong. Fortunately, Christmas emphasizes the value of personal relationships.

Personal relationships take on added significance at Christmas time. This is not only proper but helpful in our generation, when so much of life has become institutionalized. Our neighborhoods are not nearly as close-knit as they used to be, but at Christmas people are reminded of the necessity of personal friendships.

Celebrating Christmas is not difficult. Almost everyone in America will celebrate it in some manner. But making Christmas truly personal is much more involved. Properly personalizing the day requires a personal relationship with its founder, Christ.

When Christmas makes its arrival, it reminds us that we are creatures made in the image of God. Our God has given life to personal relationships and has given meaning to their highest significance. Thus both the pagan and the Christian alike are softened by the arrival of Christmas.

God's Christmas gift was not an ethical system; the world already had those. It was not a cold principle of justice or even mercy. God's gift was His Son, who came that we might have life in all its abundance. This gift, then, was highly personal.

A few years ago, a savings institution advertised, "There is no Santa Claus—earn—save." The advertisement had to be discontinued because of much protest. Christmas needs to be personal.

The question arises, "What makes the birth of Christ different from that of any other great man?" The answer lies in the miraculous conception. Jesus is the product of God himself, without physical union. There was never before any such event; there will never be another in the history of the world. God's gift to man was one who was totally God and totally man.

God's gift to man, then, is inseparably tied to the miraculous conception. Both Matthew and Luke give details of Christ's birth (Matt. 1:18-20; Luke 1:28-31). Luke, himself a medical doctor, gives these details regarding the angel's announcement to Mary, "... the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the most high shall overshadow thee; therefore also the Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

God's gift to man is highly personal; for without the gift of Christ there would be no salvation. God's gift includes the miraculous conception, the virgin birth, the sinless life of Christ, and the atoning death and resurrection of our Lord. The virgin

birth is necessary to provide an adequate Savior. In order for the gift to be bridged between man and God, one was required who was, at the same time, completely God and truly man. Jesus was man (Luke 2:42; John 4:6; Matt. 4:2), but he was also God (John 10:30; 14:9; 19:7; Mark 2).

Further, the virgin birth ties into the sinless life of Christ. W. T. Conner (*Christian Doctrine*, p. 52) tells us, "Luke 1:35 indicates that there was a connection between the holiness of Jesus and the fact that Mary was overshadowed by the power of the most high. Would not his origin in such an act of the Holy Spirit help us to understand how, of all men, he is the only exception to the fact that men live under the dominion of sin?"

We also would note that inseparably tied to the virgin birth is the totality of the lordship of Christ. The entire New Testament presents Christ as Lord in every area. He is Lord because of his pre-existence with the Father. He is Lord because of his unique birth and sonship. Since this is true, he is the head of the church and has right to total dominion over every life.

We also should consider that God was not only the one who put into the first Christmas a personal aspect. Those who received the first Christmas gave a personal response. In fact, their response was described as an emotional reaction.

The shepherds responded personally and emotionally since they were afraid. On the first thought this may sound strange, but the account is clear, as the Scripture says, "they were sore afraid." Had we been with the shepherds, we would have responded in the same way.

Herod also responded in a personal way. He was worried, because he felt that his place of authority was about to be challenged by the newborn king. The worry of this cruel man led to the execution of hundreds of children two years of age and less.

The wise men, too, were involved in a personal response to the first Christmas. In spite of their knowledge, they were lost. But their knowledge eventually led them to the King of Kings.

How should we respond to the personal gift of the King of Kings? Each individual should first respond by giving himself to Christ. Then he should respond by serving him.

As we enter the excitement of Christmas, let our hearts be filled with joy, because we are recipients of the greatest gift of all. We have a virgin-born, miracle-working, sinless, atoning, living, and someday-returning Lord who is available to us day by day. As we meditate upon these truths and reflect them to those with whom we have contact, we will discover the significance of a personal Christmas.

# Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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## One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

### *Doonesbury and Bloom County on hypocrisy*

No one would accuse cartoonists Berke Breathed or Garry Trudeau, creators of *Bloom County* and *Doonesbury*, respectively, of crusading for conservative morality in their comic strips. Although no one is safe from their political and moral satire, from the extreme right to the extreme left, it is right-wing causes that inspire the sharpest rapier strokes of these super-sophisticated social critics. Each did a strange thing in 1986, however, that probably unintentionally supports the case against alcoholic beverages.

The cartoonists could not resist pointing out one of the strangest inconsistencies—even hypocrisies—that has actually grown in the United States during 1986. A very encouraging development during 1986 has been the declaration of war on drugs, with our national leadership, governmental and non-governmental, mobilizing public opinion to produce a dramatic turnaround in the way the mass media (especially television personalities) deal with the issue of drug abuse. Yet one of the most discouraging

features of this movement is the usual omission of alcoholic beverages—the nation's number one drug problem—from their definition of drug abuse.

The catalyst for this national turnaround on drugs seems to have been the highly publicized tragic death of Len Bias, well-known basketball star from Maryland, who had just been drafted to play for Boston Celtics. In a nation where close to 50 percent of all automobile accidents are alcohol related, one wonders at man's claim to be a rational animal.

In spoofing mandatory drug testing, *Bloom County* pictured Chairman of the Board W. A. Thornhump III, as being in the front-line of the battle for a "purer America," while being served his six-martini lunch. More recently *Doonesbury* poked fun at the national campaign against drunk driving by predicting the next campaign would be against drunk voting.

Some progress has been made in the battle to weaken the privileged position of

alcoholic beverages. Movie actor Burt Reynolds turned down a very lucrative beer commercial, saying he couldn't live with the fear that someone might get drunk and killed as a result of his ad. However, the Washington, D. C., area still sells three times as much liquor as the national average, providing a hospitable pro-liquor environment for federal liquor legislation. And there is the amazing irony of Ernest and Julio Gallo giving \$3 million to the University of California at San Francisco for the study of alcohol abuse. They own the world's largest winery in Modesto, Calif. The most beautiful and expensive television photography continues to be found in the advertisements for beer and wine.

Sometimes the funny papers are not really funny, but portray our complex American dilemmas as a kind of tragic comedy.

**Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.**

## Letters to the editor

### *A tithing church*

I have just read the entire diary-report of the recent Arkansas Baptist Convention in the Nov. 27 issue and felt as if I had been a participating messenger. Excellent!

One thing that caught my eye was the task-force report that a total of 642 of our churches (about half) give less than 10 percent to our Cooperative Program world mission causes. This absolutely astounds me!

How can any pastor of these churches ask the members to follow the Bible's teaching on tithing and not insist that his church itself be a tither? I am not referring here to a Scripture-verse proof syndrome. I'm talking about down-home, every-day-common-sense and fair-play behavior. I'm suggesting hillbilly fairness of doing what is right! We are plenty capable.

Pastors, you can ignore it, turn away from it, act ignorant of it—whatever—but a group of baptized believers and dedicated folks should make dead certain that they operate a tithing church. When this happens (as a by-product) most of Arkansas Baptist money problems will be a thing of the past. It is purely up to the leadership of the church. If you think your church is being blessed now (as a non-tither), you "ain't see nothing yet" as to how God will pour out his blessings upon you. Count on it.—**Andrew M. Hall, Delray Beach, Fla.**

### *School based clinics*

This concerns the resolution passed by our state convention indicating opposition to school based clinics which provide contraceptives. School based clinics that provide comprehensive health services can be of value in promoting the health of our children. In addition, clinics that facilitate access to contraceptives have been shown to reduce the rate of teen pregnancy. Such programs do not encourage initiation of sexual activity or result in increased frequency of sex among those who are already participating in intercourse.

The situation that brought about the introduction of the resolution does not involve a regular school based clinic. It is part of an ongoing outreach program by a county health department. The program has provided immunizations and now also provides family planning services, one day every other month, to residents of a rural community. School facilities are used. Services include information concerning the various methods of birth control, medical history taking, provision of over-the-counter contraceptives, and referral. The program is available to all members of the community.

The resolution is evidence of the concern within the convention regarding adolescent sexuality. Clinic services can be of value, but simply providing contraceptives is not a total

solution. Reducing teenage pregnancy and sexual promiscuity involves teaching our young people to make wise decisions concerning their sexuality. Sound programs of sexuality education in our schools should be a part of this education effort (as should programs in churches and education by parents).

As parents, teachers, and church leaders, we are already educating our children about sexuality by what we say, what we don't say, by the attitudes we convey. Let me make some suggestions as to how to do a better job. Take part in sexuality education programs designed for parents. Enhance your own knowledge and experience in sexuality by participation in marriage enrichment programs. Some excellent programs of this type are sponsored by Southern Baptists. Participate in sexuality training programs designed for adults who work with young people. Finally, provide positive input (not just criticism) for programs proposed by your local schools.—**Michael Young, Fayetteville**

Letters to the editor expressing opinions are invited. Letters should be typed double-space and must be signed by one person, though the name may be withheld on request. Mailing address and phone number of the writer should be included. Letters must not contain more than 350 words and must not defame the character of persons. Letters must be marked "for publication." Only original letters will be considered.

# ABSC Executive Board prepares for new year

by Mark Kelly

ABN photo / Mark Kelly

The Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention convened for its annual organizational meeting Dec. 9 at the Baptist Medical System headquarters in Little Rock.

Executive Board members dealt with the customary committee matters, adopting the report of the Executive Board nominating committee and breaking into their various committees to lay the groundwork for their next year's activity.

Before taking up that concern, however, the Executive Board dealt with three nominations from the state convention nominating committee.

The Executive Board voted to fill three trustee positions left vacant after the annual meeting. They elected J.R. DeBusk and Larry Loggins as the Executive Board members from Calvary and Trinity Associations, respectively. Also elected was Stafford Kees of Heber Springs, who was placed on the trustee board of Southern Baptist College.

Kees was the focus of a disagreement during the annual meeting last month. The ABSC nominating committee report was amended to remove Kees from the Southern College post and replace him with another layman from Heber Springs. The action was moved by Jerry Kirkpatrick, pastor of Heber Springs First Church, who contended he knew Kees to be unsupportive of the Cooperative Program in the past.

Later in the annual meeting, David Miller, director of missions in Little Red River Association, challenged the assessment of Kees, and messengers voted to rescind their previous action and refer the matter to the Executive Board for action.

In presenting the committee's report to the Executive Board, ABSC Executive Director Don Moore read a letter from Kirkpatrick stating that, after conversation with Kees, he was satisfied about the nominees' support of Southern Baptists' unified approach to missions and education support and withdrew his substitute nomination. Executive Board members adopted all three nominations.

Executive Board members adopted a recommendation from their program committee which called for a major emphasis on new church starts beginning in 1988.

ABSC Church Extension Director Floyd Tidsworth told board members that Baptist church membership had increased only 60,000 between 1970 and 1980. During that same period of time, the state population rose 362,000, he said.

With 850,000 people unchurched in Arkansas and population increasing four times faster than church membership, Southern Baptists need to launch a major church starting effort, Tidsworth said. Board members concurred and adopted the proposal.

The operating committee brought two



Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Director Don Moore (second from right) is pictured with members of the 1987 Executive Committee of the ABSC Executive Board: (left to right) Rich Kincl, Jerry Wilson, Jere Mitchell, Ferrell Morgan, Dennis Dodson, and Lawson Hatfield.

recommendations to the board. The first dealt with the employment of Jack Ramsey, pastor of Whitehall First Church, as a field consultant and church planter strategist to assist with the emphasis on new church starts. Ramsey, who is awaiting appointment by the SBC Home Mission Board, will assume the position by Feb. 1, 1987. The position is jointly funded by the Home Mission Board and the state convention.

The second proposal involved a request from ABSC Church Training Director Bob Holley to participate in an overseas Baptist history and heritage tour sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board. Board members adopted both recommendations.

The following committees were appointed on the recommendation of the nominating committee:

Operating Committee, Jere Mitchell, chairman. (1987) Cary Heard, Dist. 5; John Matthews, Dist. 4; (1988) Jere Mitchell, Dist. 1; Jerry Kirkpatrick, Dist. 2; Bill Hargis, Dist. 8; (1989) Betty Moore, Dist. 7; Gary Fulton, Dist. 3; Shelby Bittle, Dist. 6.

Program Committee, Rich Kincl, chairman. (1987) Sardis Bever, S. Mikael Carrier, Ron Ford, Jim Gardner, Jimmie Garner, John Hawkins, M.M. Hill, Thomas Hinson, Ted Houston, Herman McCormick, Ray McLeod, Steve Patterson, Ted Richardson, Billie Sharp, Bob Stender, Dan Webb.

(1988) Charles Atkinson, Ronnie Bracken, Russell Burbank, Horace Gray, Billy Hammonds, Peggy Jeffries, Carl Kluck, Rich Kincl, Bonnie Margason, Mary Ellen Puckett, Ron Raines, Paul Seal, Joe Thompson, Noble Wiles, Larry Loggins.

(1989) Mark Brooks, Mark Coppenger, A. Hilton Lane, Curtis Mathes, Eddie McCord, William Piercy, Ken Price, Tim Reddin, Dorothy Ritter, Tom Smith, Sonny Simpson, Delbert Stone, Dale Thompson.

Finance Committee, Jerry Wilson, chairman. (1987) Winfred Bridges, Dennis Dodson, Charles Fager, James Gattis, Clytee Harness, Don Hubbard, Milton James, Greg Kirksey, Maxine Murphy, Jerry Mose, Troy Prince, Jack L. Ramsey, Eugene Ray, Paul Sanders, Joe Statton, James Weedman, J.R. DeBusk

(1988) Sid Carswell, Rick Erwin, Nelson Eubank, Randal Everett, Melvayne Friday, Bill Gunter, Joe Bill Meador, Ray Meador, Bryan Moery, George O'Neel, Emil Williams, Jerry Wilson.

(1989) Ledell Bailey, Marquita Butcher, Joel Faircloth, Alfred Gallant, Klois Hargis, Billy Kimbrough, David McLemore, Keith Robbins, Ed Simpson, Al Sparkman, Allen Thrasher, Barbara Tommey, John Wikman, C.S. Williams.

Nominating Committee, Dennis Dodson, chairman. (1987) Clytee Harness, Dennis Dodson; (1988) Ray Meador, Jerry Wilson; (1989) Eddie McCord.

Christian Life Council, Randal Everett, chairman. (1987) Thomas Hinson, Troy Prince, Joe Statton; (1988) Randal Everett, Peggy Jeffries, Sid Carswell; (1989) Ed Simpson.

Mark Kelly is managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

## Police to present evidence in missionary murders

by Marty Croll

SANNIQUELLIE, Liberia (BP)—Police were to present their case Dec. 6 in Sanniquellie, Liberia, against the man who has admitted the murder of a Southern Baptist missionary and her daughter.

Investigators were to tell a Liberian grand jury sitting in the Nimba County courthouse why Benjamin M. Morris, 32, should come to trial next month in the murders of Libby Senter and her 10-year-old daughter, Rachel.

Key evidence includes written and recorded confessions that resulted after missionary George Senter told Morris he forgave the man for killing his wife and child and asked Morris to confess.

Brown said Morris, a 1979 graduate of Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote his confession in flawless English for the joint security office in Yekepa, a mining town in northeastern Liberia where the Senter lives.

The office coordinates law enforcement between local and national police and a private security force working under the Liberian American Mining Company (LAMCO), an iron ore mining firm in Yekepa.

Senter and his son are scheduled to leave Liberia Dec. 17 for a month-long furlough in the United States. They will arrive in Greensboro, N.C., Dec. 18, but plan to return to Liberia Jan. 19.

## Evangelism expert tells Baptists to 'unleash the laity'

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—If church leaders will not be afraid to release their lay members to perform 'marketplace evangelism,' they will be amazed at how effectively the Holy Spirit will use them to reach non-Christians, a Southern Baptist lay leader told a seminary audience.

Reid D. Hardin, director of the evangelism support department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, challenged Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary students and spouses to consider the cities and careers in urban evangelism. Hardin was guest speaker for Southeastern's Urban Evangelism Banquet.

"Thus far we've only provided a skeleton for urban evangelism by providing pastors," said Hardin. "We need to mobilize the laity to flesh out the 'ameoba force' that can then penetrate all of our society."

Hardin said he sees Pat Henry, chief pilot for Ford Motor Company's jet plane fleet, as a prime example of lay ministry in action: "Pat Henry followed the call of God to Detroit, rather than return to the relative comfort and ease of his Florida home upon leaving military service. Today he has a vast ministry with corporation heads, airline personnel and contacts worldwide as he flies

Ford executives to the four corners of the earth."

Hardin calls these ministries "marketplace mission fields" and adds the cities are the major mission fields of the world. "The cities are pools of Bethesda, where the hurting of our world, the wounded and brokenhearted await a healing touch," he explained. "Lay ministries are one of our best hopes for touching those lives. At the New Mount Olive Branch Church in Denver, nearly 2,000 members are reaching out in small-group meetings in their homes, at their job sites, in their social settings or elsewhere in their community to meet such needs.

"What real impact are your churches having in the real world?" Hardin asked the future ministers. "We have to open our churches to the hurting people in this world, and at the heart of such missions is God's call to people in all walks of life to their own individual ministry under the leadership of the Holy Spirit." He emphasized the laity are not "amateurs" but are instead "first-class Christians," just like the clergy.

The Home Mission Board will promote "The Year of the Laity" in 1989, announced Hardin, adding the board is beginning now to plan ahead for that year by also promoting

lay awakenings in all Southern Baptist churches. "Ultimately," he said, "we hope to emphasize the laos, or the whole people of God, including both clergy and laity in united ministry.

"What is the Holy Spirit saying to the churches?" asked Hardin. "The Holy Spirit is saying to dream together, . . . sounding the call to ministry and evangelism!"

Hardin emphasized two ways in which local churches can help mobilize their own laity. He urged all churches to have weekly "missionary report, sharing times" when all members of the church can give testimonies and receive feedback on one another's ministries in the marketplace. Additionally, Hardin encouraged all churches to release their laity to go out to mission fields elsewhere and in this way free them up to God's service with power.

"This call to ministry for both clergy and laity in urban evangelism is a call to excitement on the cutting edge," he insisted. "God's power and promise are there to meet the challenges before us. Find out what the Holy Spirit is saying to you and your laity and do what God is telling you to do. Don't leave God alone out on the street corners of our cities while untold millions walk by daily."

## Baptist laity threatened by 'creeping universalism'

ATLANTA (BP)—"Creeping universalism, either professed or assumed, will ultimately strike the death knell for missions and evangelism" in the Southern Baptist Convention, the director of evangelism for Alabama Baptists warned.

Harper Shannon, former president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and former pastor in Birmingham, Ala., lamented that many Southern Baptist church members believe "some how, some way, some day everyone is going to be saved."

Speaking to Southern Baptist leaders in evangelism, Shannon said the problem is not that universalism is being preached from the pulpit or taught in seminary classrooms, but rather is among the laity.

"You won't hear universalism preached or taught openly from our pulpits or in our

classrooms, but I dare you to slip in unaware into some of our Sunday School classes and hear what is being said," Shannon said.

"The truth is that, for the most part, our people don't really believe that people are lost and going to hell. They believe that a good and just and loving God could not allow such a place as hell to exist."

Shannon noted, however, the Bible does not teach universalism; it teaches eternal retribution and judgment.

"If we ever allow ourselves to believe that people can get to heaven any other way than through personal faith and commitment to Jesus Christ, then there is no place for missions and evangelism," he insisted.

Baptists "need a fresh vision of what it means to be lost without Jesus Christ and what it means to be saved," he said, warn-

ing many do not like to use those words because they do not sound sophisticated.

Another speaker, Avery Willis of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said Baptists need to understand what an overwhelming task it is to set about proclaiming the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000.

He pointed out there will be 6 billion to 8 billion people in the world by the year 2000. Even if "pentecost were repeated every day" and Southern Baptists baptized 3,000 new converts a day—three times the current rate—it would take 5,479 years to baptize the whole world, Willis said.

To achieve the goal of proclaiming the gospel to every person in the world, Baptists will have to reach 1 million new persons every day until the year 2000, he said.

# Helpline

for the local church

January is such a good month! Weather and attendance are not usually too good, but it is good in that we can start over. A new beginning offers an opportunity for change and the



Moore

awakening of new hope. Let me suggest some things you can do in January that will spice up your services and add some variety to your meetings. People become draggy and disheartened when they can predict ahead of time everything that is going to happen in our services. And you know we preachers tend to be so affected by attendance that it is easy to be down in January.

With just a little planning and preparation, you can make every Sunday in January different.

**Jan. 4—** Have a Christian wills emphasis. Highlight the fact that Christian wills save money for the family, represent good stewardship, and provide continuing ministry for worthy causes after people leave this life. Help people to realize their stewardship responsibility for what they leave behind. "Make Your Will Month" will be a good ministry.

**Jan. 11—** Soul Winning Commitment Day should be of help at this point in the year. Do not have the day if you are not going to provide training and avenues of expression in soul winning. Our churches are struggling more today than they have in years with soul winning. Isn't it time we got back to a commitment on soul winning instead of just talking about it?

**Jan. 18—** Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. We encouraged this emphasis last year. We provided material for the day. Since legislation has not been enacted to curb the wholesale slaughter of the innocent for the convenience of the guilty, then more responsibility must be taken by parents and pastors to teach and preach biblical standards of morality for our people. This is a good time to do it.

**Jan. 25—** Baptist Men's Day. This is a good time to allow the men in your church to share their faith and inspire your people. There are many ways to highlight the role of the men in the church. I wouldn't think you would want to miss this opportunity.

These special emphases will provide variety, interest and education of the church family. Let us know if any of us can help you with anything related to these emphases.

#### Great opportunities outside your church:

**State Evangelism Conference—** Jan. 26-27. Held at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock, this conference promises to be a highlight with strong preaching and praying. With four successive years of decline in our churches' evangelistic efforts, our pastors and lay people need this time together. Those who can't come should pray earnestly for a fresh wind of blessing to blow on our efforts.

**Growth Spiral Workshops—** Jan. 12, 13, 15. This is proving to be an outstanding tool for planning and directing the efforts of our Sunday Schools. Nine different workshops are being conducted so that everyone will be within driving distance of one. Please see the locations elsewhere in "Helpline," and make your plans to attend if you are interested in Sunday School growth.

Those most likely to be helped by the workshops are pastors,

educational directors, age-group coordinators, Sunday School directors, and workers. If we had 200 churches that would begin to plan their work with the Growth Spiral, we would see dramatic changes in baptisms, Sunday School enrollment, and giving.

**Baptist Doctrine Study Preview—** Jan. 26. Held in conjunction with the Evangelism Conference for your convenience, this will give you early preparation for a major spiritual opportunity of 1987. *The Doctrine of Prayer* by Dr. T. W. Hunt is the 1987 doctrinal study. The man who wrote the book has the widest recognition as a mighty man of prayer and will be here to preview the book. This doctrine ranks extremely high in priority of need among Arkansas Baptists. I wish we could have 100 percent of our churches led by their pastors in this study this coming year.

**Media Library Clinics—** Jan. 19-22. Directors and workers of the media libraries of our churches can receive immense assistance from the four conferences being conducted these four days. These clinics will be in Wynne, North Little Rock, Fort Smith and El Dorado. Two consultants from the Sunday School Board will be here to lead these for us. I know you will have a productive time together.

## Good things in January

by Don Moore

**January Bible Study—** Jan. 5-9. This is the suggested date for the annual Bible study. We all know that each church has to work out the best schedule for its own people. Whatever your approach, do plan on studying the book of James together as a church. What a rich, practical book James is. Many of the problems we contend with in our contemporary society are addressed in this book. With real effort and a lot of prayer, you can revitalize your Sunday night or Wednesday night services with this study.

**Regional Skills Conference** for men who work in Baptist Men, Baptist Young Men and R.A.'s will be conducted at Camp Copass, near Denton, Texas, Jan. 28-31. Church and associational workers in these areas of Brotherhood work are encouraged to attend. You do not likely feel you have given Brotherhood or R.A.'s your "best shot." Start again in January by getting some good training.

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According to the church letters sent in this fall, there are some crucial needs in the churches. Some we may know. Some we may not know. We have tried to address many of these in our conferences over the past year. If you have some need to which you have just not been able to find answers, please give us a call at the Baptist Building. We will do our best to help you with it. At least we can suffer and pray with you in it. Some of the matters are organizational, some spiritual, and some are relational. It is our joy to help the Lord's churches be their best for him.

Some churches may not know they have need. A close study of trends in Sunday School enrollment and attendance, baptisms and stewardship will help a church to discover areas of need.

**Don Moore is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.**

This monthly Helpline is a cooperative ministry of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board and the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, designed to inform about and interpret the helping ministries of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention to the churches. Pages 9-11 are produced by the ABSC Executive Board.



## Bryant pastor shares approach to interracial ministry

by J. Everett Sneed

Alan Ellen, pastor of First Southern Church, Bryant, developed a series of unique ministries with blacks while pastor of the Trinity Church, El Dorado. These ministries involved both physical and spiritual assistance for blacks.

Ellen credits his openness to people of all races to his rearing. He said he grew up in an integrated community just outside of El Dorado. The area, now a part of El Dorado located on West 19th Street, was then on the Morning Star Road. Ellen said he was grateful that his parents never taught any kind of racial prejudice to their children.

Ellen observed that the Trinity Church, El Dorado, was open to ministering to all people. Trinity is in an area that bordered a black community but now is going through a transition and blacks are moving into the community.

Before Ellen became pastor of the Trinity Church, the congregation had conducted a Vacation Bible School which a few black children had attended. Ellen feels that this made it possible for him to involve the church in ministering to blacks.

Ellen also believes that the church will be able to continue ministering to blacks under the leadership of its new pastor, Gerald Taylor. Ellen said, "Taylor had been involved in working with blacks prior to coming to Trinity. While pastor of Lifeline Church in Little Rock, he was instrumental in developing a black congregation."

E. A. Porchia, pastor of the First National Baptist Church, El Dorado, asked Ellen to assist him in training his people in witnessing. Trinity's Church Training director, chairman of deacons, outreach leader, and Sunday School director all went with Ellen to First National Baptist Church and presented Evangelism Explosion. Ellen observed that the black congregation was very excited about the program.

To provide additional training for the members of the First National Church, Trinity invited the membership to become involved in an in-depth training program. A trainer went with two black trainees for a witnessing experience in the black community.

On one occasion when the teams were about to leave, one of the black women came to Ellen and said, "Be especially in prayer for me tonight. We're going to have a 'salvation party' at my house."

The black woman had invited about 20 lost people to come to her house and to hear the plan of salvation. This was the first of four such gatherings. In each instance, there were 13 to 15 people who accepted Christ. Among those who experienced salvation was the father of the woman who had organized the first "salvation party."

In addition to the joint Evangelism Explosion effort, Ellen was invited to lead a week of witnessing training at the First National

Church. He recalls that he put together a composite of the lay evangelism materials and the "Four Spiritual Laws." The church people went out on the last night and had excellent results.

Another involvement Ellen had with black Baptists was in a "gospel marathon" (a 24-hour singing and preaching non-stop service). This joint endeavor was with a neighboring black Baptist church.

Ellen recalls that he preached at 8:30 on Sunday morning. He said, "I really enjoyed this experience. The people were involved and were saying amen to every point in my sermon. Everyone expressed joy except for one woman. When the invitation was given she came forward and accepted Christ."

Later Ellen was invited to a much larger black "gospel marathon" in Texarkana. Ellen recalls that he preached the Evangelism Explosion witnessing outline. He said, "Those present had not heard it, and the people responded very favorably."

Another involvement of the Trinity Church with blacks took place when Ellen learned through the El Dorado ministerial association that the Arkansas Rice Depot was giving brown rice to anyone who had need in Arkansas.

The Trinity Baptist men came to Little Rock and picked up large bags of rice. The church's WMU rebagged the rice in smaller containers. The church advertised that anyone who needed rice could come to the Trinity Church on the stated Saturdays and pick it up.

Ellen observed that at least three-fourths of those who came for rice were black people. Evangelism Explosion teams were on hand to present the gospel to those who had never had an experience with Christ. Approximately 40 people made professions of faith as a result of this endeavor.

He said, "Most of the people who made professions of faith knew the Scriptures but had never had them presented in such a way that it called for receiving Christ."

Another ministry in which the Trinity Church was involved with blacks came as a result of the purchase of a church building that had closed. When the congregation disbanded, it gave the property to the association. Trinity purchased the property from the association and started a new work. It was located near the mouth of a large mobile home park. Trinity decided from the outset that the new congregation, called Trinity North, would minister to all people regardless of race.

Ellen said, "There were a number of black people who lived in the area. Many of them came and enjoyed being involved in the services at Trinity North, but eventually joined black churches.

"This, however established the right of Trinity North to minister to any one regardless of race," Ellen continued.

Ellen feels that Trinity North will always be a church-type mission. The church has now called a retired man as pastor and is a vital congregation where many people have had life changing experiences.

Ellen said, "Often, as people moved, they wept because they were leaving Trinity North."

Ellen said that the original strategy at the outset of Trinity North was for him to train nine laymen to preach on alternate Sundays. He said, "It was a great experience for the laymen, the church and the community."

Another involvement with blacks came through a Backyard Bible Club. Ellen and his wife have conducted many Backyard Bible Clubs across the years. One of Trinity's families that lived near a black community on the South side of El Dorado invited the Ellens to conduct a Backyard Bible Club at their home. There were approximately 50 young people who enrolled with an average attendance of about 35. Most of these were black children. Ellen recalls, "When the children came, they were dressed as if they were going to a Sunday morning church service. Many of them accepted Christ as Savior."

Another involvement which led to ministering to blacks was a special ministry started for physically and mentally handicapped individuals. Ellen recalls that it started with a child with Down's Syndrome who was a part of the Trinity Church family. A lady in the church came to Ellen, stating that she felt impressed to work with special people. The ministry was open to any handicapped individual, and a number of black children participated. Some became members of the Trinity Church.

Ellen said that the ingredients for working with black people are relatively simple. He suggested that a pastor must be patient with his people and work slowly. A congregation must be assured that there will be no black take-over or radical change in the church. Finally, Southern Baptist pastors must work with the National Baptist pastors. They need to be assured that a Southern Baptist pastor is not trying to steal their members. Both Southern Baptists and National Baptists pastors need to see that they are working together to reach people for the Lord.

Ellen said, "It requires people who realize that in God's eyes there are no distinctions. A black lost man is as much the responsibility of a Southern Baptist church as is a yellow man or a white man. When a pastor and church are open to ministering to all kinds of people there will be great rewards and the church will have a joy that goes beyond expression."

J. Everett Sneed is editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

## Evangelism State Evangelism Conference

Good News Arkansas - Jesus Loves You. This is the theme and emphasis for our annual State Evangelism Conference. This conference will be conducted at the Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock, January 26-27, 1987. The objective of the conference is to help lead the people of our churches to share Christ with each lost person in Arkansas.



Shell

The Good News theme will be developed under the following session themes: "The Message of Our Witness", Luke 24:48; "The Mandate of Our Witness", Acts 1:8; "The Methods of Our Witness", Matthew 28:19-20; "The Model of Our Witness", Luke 19:10; and "The Motivation for Our Witness"-II Cor. 5:11. Our conference will begin at 1:30 on January 26 and close with a Commitment Service Tuesday evening at 9:00.

Dr. Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi, will be one of our keynote speakers. Dr. Pollard stated to me personally that he would rather speak in the State Evangelism Conference than any other meeting conducted by Southern Baptists. Dr. Pollard is an educated, enthusiastic, evangelistic orator of the Word of God.

Dr. Paul Powell will be another keynote speaker and Bible teacher. He is pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas. This has consistently been one of the leading evangelism churches in Texas. Dr. Powell is presently serving as president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He is well known as a Bible teacher and preacher across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Lloyd Elder, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, will be speaking two

times. Dr. Elder is very committed to evangelism. Under his leadership, the Sunday School Board devotes its entire effort to helping Southern Baptist Churches do a better job of reaching people, making converts, teaching the Bible, and training Christians.

Miss Sue Tatum, noted laywoman from Yazoo City, Mississippi, will be speaking one time to the main conference. She also will be leading a conference, "Women in Witnessing", on Tuesday afternoon. We are committed to saying to the women in our churches, "We want to help you in evangelism".

Jack Smith will be representing the Home Mission Board. Jack is in the Personal Evangelism Department and is leading in a strong emphasis on Relationship Evangelism.

Dr. Don Moore, our Executive Director, will open his heart to Arkansas Baptists concerning his burden for lost souls. Brother Jesse Reed, our former Director of Evangelism, will be speaking in the first major meeting since retirement on "The Glories of the Ministry". Jesse has finished fifty years of preaching the Word of God. Ed Hinson will be sharing his heartbeat for reaching people for Christ through the Sunday School. James Walker will speak on "A Growing Commitment". Billy Walker of Walnut Ridge will be representing the full time evangelists. Dr. Bill Bennett will speak on the subject, "The Church That's Wise Will Evangelize".

Testimonies will be given by B. J. Sams, local newsman; Jim Files, former professional football player; and Mark Coppersinger, pastor of First Baptist Church, El Dorado.

This program is designed and these personalities are committed to helping the churches of Arkansas do the job in evangelism that God has called them to do.

— Clarence Shell, director

## Church Training The Doctrine of Prayer

The Doctrine of Prayer is the theme of the 1987 Baptist Doctrine Study. Dr. T. W. Hunt, professor at Southwestern Seminary,

is the author of the adult book for this vital study. Dr. Hunt will lead a preview of the book in conjunction with the State Evangelism Conference on Monday, January 26. Following the afternoon session, pastors and others who are interested are invited to the Preview Study and a meal. Reservations must be made through the Church Training Department.



Hunt

Churches should also plan for youth, children and preschoolers during Baptist Doctrine Study Week. The book for youth is entitled *Our Father...The Doctrine of Prayer* by Carolyn Weatherford. Older children will study *What is Prayer?* and younger children will study *I Can Pray*. Special studies are also suggested for preschoolers.

Plan now to attend the fourth annual Baptist Doctrine Study Preview on January 26 and the Baptist Doctrine Study Week, April 20-24. — Robert Holley, Director



## Southern Baptists: A Missions People hearing, believing, living, telling His story

Southern Baptists are feeding hungry people and meeting emergency needs in 40 to 45 of the world's poorest countries each year.

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## Sunday School

### Growth Spiral Workshops

We, no doubt, know more now about how to grow a church than ever before! But, we are not growing them! (I know there are many growing churches for which I Praise the Lord, but state wide, taking all churches together, we are growing very little if any.) There are many factors involved and as a pastor, I know that the pastor is the key. In an effort to help the pastor, and staff, as well as lay leadership to apply the knowledge we already have, we have scheduled 18 Growth Spiral Workshops for 1987.



Hinkson

We will have 9 of these this January and 9 next August.

Monday, January 12: Jonesboro, Walnut Street; Monticello, First; Blytheville, First. Tuesday, January 13: Brinkley, First; Pine Bluff, Immanuel; Hot Springs, Second; Thursday, January 15: Hope, First; West Memphis, Calvary; Searcy, First.

We will begin at 9:00 and adjourn at 3:45. There will be general sessions and age group sessions. Each church should come with pastor and staff and all age group leaders.

There will be a \$10.00 registration fee per church, for which each church will receive a resource notebook with age group helps.

— Ed Hinkson

## Annuity/Stewardship

### Expanded Annuity Plan

Churches, pastors, and church staff members can improve their retirement benefits. The Expanded Church Annuity Plan makes this possible.

Effective January 1, 1988, the Expanded Church Annuity Plan encourages churches to match staff member contributions two for one. The Annuity Board suggests up to 5 percent of salary contribution from the pastor/staff member and up to 10 percent of salary contribution from the church.

The State Convention will contribute up to one-third of the church and/or member contribution not to exceed \$420 annually.

Churches may adopt the Expanded Church Annuity Plan in 1987. The Annuity Board will mail information and adoption forms in the near future. Adoption of the Expanded Church Annuity Plan assures ministers of the church's concern for their retirement needs.

The first \$210 of the State Convention contribution will provide protection benefits for the member. Protection benefits include survivor and disability benefits. Any amount above the first \$210 will be applied to the member's retirement account with no more than \$210 being applied to the account in a calendar year.

Churches desiring materials or personal conferences concerning the Expanded Church Annuity Plan may contact their State Annuity Representative at the Baptist Building. — James A. Walker, annuity representative



Walker

## Media Library

### Area Media Library Conferences

Area Media Library Conferences will be held in four Arkansas cities the week of January 19-22, 1987. The conference schedule will be the same in each location and is designed to provide training for Church Media Library staff and other interested church leaders.

Each conference will begin at 9:30 a.m. and adjourn at 4:00 p.m. Conference participants will choose one of two workshops, "How to Classify and Catalog Media" and "How to Process Media".

Jean Adkinson and James Rose, Church Media Library consultants at the Baptist Sunday School Board, will lead the two workshops at the area conferences. Jean Adkinson will lead "How to Classify and Catalog Media" and James Rose will lead "How to Process Media."

Area conferences will be held according to the following schedule: Monday, January

19 - Central Church, North Little Rock; Tuesday, January 20 - First Church, Fort Smith; Wednesday, January 21 - Wynne Church, Wynne; and Thursday, January 22 - Immanuel Church, El Dorado.

The appropriate development plan Church Study Course book will be the textbook for each conference. These books may be purchased at the conference. Persons attending "How to Classify and Catalog Media" will need additional resources such as "Sears", "Dewey" and "200 (Religion) Class."

"How to Classify and Catalog Media" is a basic conference where participants will review aids available for classification and cataloging.

"How to Process Media" will include processing and cataloging media. The method for classifying and cataloging media will be based on the use of cataloging information found in library aids.

Conference participants may choose the area meeting most convenient to their location and/or schedule. Contact the Church Training Department for additional information. — Gerald Jackson



Jackson



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

Goal: \$2,240,000

(Arkansas)

Christian Life Council

## Baptist Leaders In State Government To Be Honored

Baptist leaders in State Government will be honored in a special way Sunday night, January 25 at the First Baptist Church in Benton. This will be soon after the opening of State Legislative sessions in Little Rock. Dr. Randel Everett, pastor of the host church, is Chaplain for the Arkansas House of Representatives. Representative Lacy Landers, a deacon in the



Parker

church, is Speaker of the House. It is fitting that this event be held in the Benton church.

This event is sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, the Christian Life Council and the Christian Civic Foundation, John Finn, director.

Special recognition will be given all these leaders and their spouses at the evening worship hour beginning at 7:00 p.m. Dr. Don Moore, our State Executive Director, will be the speaker for this service.

Immediately following the worship service, a fellowship dinner will be served at the church. Further recognition and appreciation will be given these leaders at that

time.

If you are a friend or acquaintance of any of these Baptist men or women representing a section of the state where you live, please give a personal word of encouragement for them to attend.

State governmental leaders, like all involved in the political arena, have a tough task and need our regular prayerful support. This special occasion will be just one way of letting them know that Arkansas Baptists appreciate the fact that they are willing to serve in that way.

Pray for the success of this special time as these leaders and their spouses receive this recognition. — **Robert Parker, Director**

Church Music

## A Gift of Music

An old American folk hymn says:  
*Go tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hill and everywhere,  
Go tell it on the mountain,  
That Jesus Christ is born!*

The music ministries of our churches have been busy doing just that. I know this is true because of the things I read coming across my desk almost daily about exciting plans for music and celebration this joyous season of the year. I wish I could be in each of our churches to participate in that excitement. Many will share their celebration with the entire community by doing multiple performances or by moving out to shopping areas. I hope you will support your musicians in these ministries.

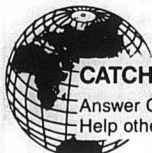
But the song says to tell the story "everywhere." Arkansas Baptists have a unique opportunity to do this in the coming year. The AMAR link-up is entering the final year of emphasis, and this would be an excellent time for your church to give a wonderful gift of a person, or persons, to that worthy endeavor.

Glendon Grober has challenged the Music men of Arkansas to take fifty men to Brazil for the closing days of the emphasis. They would provide music for the Crusade in the 70,000 seat soccer stadium, then they would become a part of the fifty teams needed to do house to house witnessing in the city of Manaus following the crusade.

We would encourage you to urge your

church to be a vital part of this by making it possible for your minister of music to have the time and financial resources to participate. One pastor stopped me at the Convention recently and assured me that I could count on his minister of music going. That leaves only 49!

We need to have the team put together by the Evangelism Conference in January, but confirmation from you next week would certainly simplify matters. We have given our Lottie Moon Christmas offering for missions around the world, now let's give the specific gift of music and musicians to the people of Brazil as the AMAR link-up comes to a climactic close. — **Ervin Keathley, State Music Secretary**



## CATCH THE VISION

Answer God's call to missions.  
Help others receive the call.

## Next month in Arkansas: January

**January 12, Growth Spiral Workshops**, Jonesboro Walnut Street Church, Monticello First Church, Blytheville First Church: designed to assist church leaders in understanding and implementing the Sunday School Growth Spiral (SS)  
**January 13, Growth Spiral Workshops**, Brinkley First Church, Pine Bluff Immanuel Church, Hot Springs Second Church: see Jan. 12 (SS)  
**January 15, Growth Spiral Workshops**, Hope First Church, West Memphis Calvary Church, Searcy First

Church: see Jan. 12 (SS)  
**January 18, Sanctity of Human Life Sunday**: an opportunity for Southern Baptist churches across the nation to focus on the tragedy of abortion and other evidences of disregard for human life (CLC)  
**January 19, Area Media Library Clinic**, North Little Rock Central Church: an annual event to train directors and staff members of church media libraries (CT)  
**January 20, Area Media Library Clinic**, Fort Smith First Church: see Jan. 19 (CT)

**January 21, Area Media Library Clinic**, Wynne Church: see Jan. 19 (CT)

**January 22, Area Media Library Clinic**, El Dorado Immanuel Church: see Jan. 19 (CT)

**January 25, Baptist Men's Day**: an annual opportunity to highlight the importance of men in lay leadership (Bhd)

**January 26, Baptist Doctrine Study Preview**: T. W. Hunt, author of "The Doctrine of Prayer," offers an overview of the 1987 doctrine study (CT)

## February

**February 2, State Vacation Bible School Clinic**, North Little Rock Central Church (SS)  
**February 2-3, ASSIST Training**, North Little Rock First Church (SS)  
**February 8-14, Focus on WMU (WMU)**  
**February 9, Regional Tax Seminars**, Fayetteville First Church; Baptist Medical Center, Little Rock (S/A)  
**February 10, Regional Tax Seminar**,

Hot Springs Grand Avenue Church (S/A)  
**February 15-18, Home Mission Study (WMU)**  
**February 16-17, Shared Ministry Conference**, Little Rock (CT)  
**February 19, Small Sunday School Leadership Updates**, Waldron Temple Church, Melbourne Belview Church, Dierks First Church, Jacksonville Military

Road Church, Russellville Bakers Creek Church (SS)

**February 19-20, Shared Ministry Conference**, El Dorado (CT)

**February 27-28, State Single Adult Conference**, Little Rock Pulaski Heights Church (CT)

**February 27-28, Volunteer/Part-time Music Leader Retreat**, Camp Paron (M)

## March

**March 1-8, Week of Prayer for Home Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (WMU)**  
**March 6-7, State Handbell Festival**, Little Rock Geyer Springs First Church (M)  
**March 17-18, WMU Annual Meeting**,

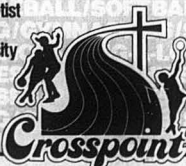
Camden First Church (WMU)  
**March 23, Church Building Conference**, Mount Ida First Church (SS)  
**March 24, Church Building Conference**, Fayetteville Sang Avenue Church (SS)

**March 26, Church Building Conference**, Gassville First Church (SS)  
**March 27, Church Building Conference**, Little Rock Calvary Church (SS)  
**March 28, Youth Choir Festival**, Little Rock Immanuel Church (M)

**Abbreviations:** Bhd - Brotherhood; CLC - Christian Life Council; CT - Church Training; Ev - Evangelism; M - Music; SS - Sunday School; S/A - Stewardship/Annuit; WMU - Woman's Missionary Union

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## Court refuses to reconsider rejection of Vatican appeal

WASHINGTON (BP)—Opponents of renewed diplomatic relations between the United States and the Roman Catholic Church lost a last-ditch effort to challenge the new arrangement at the Supreme Court.

The court issued a one-line order declining a petition for reconsideration from the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., and other religious bodies. The routine action ends an unsuccessful three-year bid to have federal courts invalidate President Ronald Reagan's appointment of two ambassadors to the Holy See.

Following Reagan's January 1984 appoint-

ment of an ambassador to the Holy See, 20 religious groups and more than 80 individuals filed suit against the president in the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania. That panel ruled in May 1985 that plaintiffs had no legal standing to bring the suit. Last March, a three-judge panel of the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia affirmed the lower ruling, setting the stage for a final appeal to the Supreme Court.

Despite the high court's refusal to reconsider its Oct. 20 rejection of the appeal, representatives of organizations that mounted the legal challenge were quick to

promise further action.

Robert L. Maddox, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, issued a statement pledging to press Congress for the relief denied by the courts: "We intend to seek a legislative remedy in Congress and to make sure the public understands the harm it is suffering today. I have no doubt that eventually the truth will prevail. My only regret is that such an egregious violation was ever allowed to take place. This action shows once again that if Americans want to keep their rights, they have to fight for them."

## 'Natural' healing advocates lose Supreme Court appeal

WASHINGTON (BP)—A husband and wife convicted of reckless homicide and unlawful practice of medicine in the death of an Indiana woman have lost a final bid at the Supreme Court to have their convictions set aside. Their appeal was based in part on religious arguments.

Harry and Ellen Graham were convicted three years ago in connection with the death of Sybil Bennett, a victim of breast cancer. Before Bennett's death in September 1983, the Grahams treated her at an establishment set up in their home, the Hoosier Health House, where they also sold vitamins, minerals and health foods.

According to the Grahams, treatment at the establishment was based on the teachings of Ellen G. White, acknowledged as a prophetess in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Both Grahams and Bennett belonged to the same Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

In their appeal to the high court, the Grahams wrote, "Natural methods of healing are a part of the Seventh-day Adventist religion and are to be practiced by the

faithful members."

Among the services provided Bennett were nutritional supplements, hot and cold compresses to stimulate circulation and colonic enemas and irrigations for nutritional and cleansing purposes.

All the while, however, Bennett was suffering from breast cancer. When the Grahams discovered a lesion that indicated such a possibility, they took Bennett across the state line into Ohio to consult with an osteopath who prescribed the controversial drug laetrile to cancer patients. He, in turn, instructed Ellen Graham—a registered nurse—to give Bennett laetrile injections.

For all these services—rendered over a 10-week period—the Grahams billed Bennett's husband for \$7,000.

When Bennett's condition continued to deteriorate, the Grahams finally gave up on their treatment and suggested to the patient's husband she be taken to a hospital. Within a few weeks, she died.

The Grahams were arrested in October 1983, convicted of reckless homicide and unlawful practice of medicine and sentenced

to two concurrent three-year terms in prison. Both a state court of appeals and the Indiana Supreme Court refused to review the convictions.

In their appeal to the nation's high court, the Grahams claimed the Indiana Medical Licensing Law "unduly" restricted their right to free exercise of religion. They also asked the high court to find the law vague and in violation of federal anti-trust laws.

Indiana Attorney General Linley E. Pearson disputed the free exercise claim, noting the Grahams had not raised the issue in their earlier appeals. Further, he wrote, the Seventh-day Adventist Church "does not encourage its members to reject medical care."

## North Little Rock church to dedicate organ Dec. 21

Riverside Church, North Little Rock, will hold an organ dedication on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 3:30 p.m. Russell Hodges, organ instructor at Ouachita Baptist University, will play the dedicatory recital.

The organ was given to the church by Mrs. Dorothy Holt in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley White Rhodes.

A reception will follow, and the public is invited. The church is located at 1602 Maumelle Blvd., North Little Rock.

### EUROPEAN TOUR

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## Convention Uniform

### *Born to redeem*

by Kenneth W. Overton, Arkansas City Church

Basic passage: Luke 2:1-20; John 1:14-18; Galatians 4:4-7; Hebrews 2:14-18

Focal passage: Luke 2:6-7; John 1:14-18; Galatians 4:4-7; Hebrews 2:14-18

Central truth: Jesus was born for one reason: to redeem man.

This has always been a special time of year for the Christian family. We have come to the season to remember the birth of our Savior once more.

The scripture tells us that the days were completed that Jesus should be born. The time for Jesus' birth was perfect but there was no room for Jesus. There was no room in the inn. So Jesus was born in a stable. He was born among the animals.

Though he was born in the stable, angels heralded his birth to shepherds in the fields. The shepherds came to the stable to see this wonderful blessing God gave the world. Wise men came to see Jesus and found him. The prominent men of their lands came to pay homage to a baby who was born in a stable.

Jesus was unique. Jesus was intimate with God. Jesus was God. And he came to live with us. The word "to dwell" came from the Old Testament word for tabernacle. The tabernacle was where God was intimate with man in the wilderness. Now he is "tabernacling" or dwelling with us through his birth. He is now intimate with us.

Jesus knew of our predicament as sinners. He was born into our situation. Jesus became subject to the domination of the very system he came to deliver us from. Jesus came for one purpose: to redeem us.

We have become children of God's family by our trust in Jesus was the Son of God. This redemption has made it possible for us to be intimate with Jesus. Fellowship, love, grace, mercy, joy and peace are only a small portion of what God offers through his redemption.

Because of his birth, temptations, sufferings and death, Jesus can identify with men. Therefore he sympathizes with man, feels with man and can help man. This is the real reason for Jesus' birth. It may be that there was no room for him in the inn but there was room for him on the cross. And because we believe in Jesus there is now room for him in our lives.

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## Life and Work

### *A Savior, Christ the Lord*

by Don Hook, Woodson Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Luke 1:1 to 2:20

Focal passage: Luke 1:26-28, 30-31, 38; 2:7-11, 16

Central truth: Obedience to the call of God is central to the celebration of Christmas.

The best news this world has ever received is in our scripture for today. It is the "glad tidings of great joy" that the Savior, Christ the Lord has made his advent into the world.

God used living instruments to bring this greatest of all events to pass. They were:

(1) A chosen and sent herald (Luke 1:26).

No one knows all that Gabriel had been chosen and assigned to do in the past but without doubt this was his greatest assignment and privilege. Joyously and obediently he accepted and fulfilled it.

(2) A divinely selected and highly favored virgin (Luke 1:27-28).

Mary certainly was aware that there would be wagging tongues, raised eyebrows, and pointing fingers but she chose to believe and obey God. Mary did not earn or solicit this favor. Any person who knows and obeys the will of God will also be highly favored. Any of us may know God's will for us if we wish. But how many of us know the joy that Mary knew from obeying God in the doing of his will?

(3) A chosen and highly favored town (Luke 2:4,11; Mic. 5:2).

What a glorious privilege any community has in being made host to the everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. What shame that many homes, communities, and countries are unaware of his presence, or maybe hostile to it!

(4) A chosen congregation (Luke 2:8).

Humble shepherds, going about their business, heard the first Christmas and the first Christian sermon. What a reward they received when they obeyed the revelation. The found the Babe just as God had said.

(5) A chosen choir and preacher (Luke 2:9-13).

What a service—singing and preaching about the greatest event ever to transpire up to this point in history!

All of these were used to present the only answer to mankind's greatest and deepest need. That answer is a Savior who can atone for sin, forgive sin, and save from the polluting, degrading, and damning power of sin (Lu. 2:11). Hallelujah, what a Savior!

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## Bible Book

### *Jesus as Messiah*

by Robert A. Parker, director of ABSC Christian Life Council

Basic passage: Luke 2:1-20

Focal passage: Luke 2:1,3-17

Central truth: The fact of Jesus' birth absolutely must be announced to all men everywhere that they might accept him as personal Savior and Lord.

Someone has said, "how odd of God to choose the Jews." In order for God to demonstrate his love to man, the choice of a people through whom he might come was made. His will in this began with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The grand culmination was the coming of the Messiah, 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem of Judea.

Though God chose just the Jews, one group of many people created in his image, he intends for all to hear and respond to his love in Christ. In essence, the angels announced at his birth that red and yellow, black and white, are all precious in his sight. Anybody of the past, present or future neglecting to declare God's love in Christ to all were and are tragically derelict in obeying the Great Commission.

As the shepherds and wise men of old came to pay homage to the baby Jesus, we too must be willing to respond by faith in worshipping and serving the crucified, risen, living Lord.

This Christmas let us reassert our love and devotion to God in Christ by prayerfully and humbly submitting to his will. We must spread the good news to all, beginning if need be in our own household. Groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter Day Saints must be outdone by the personal sharing of our faith founded solely in our living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us also re-read the Christmas story and reaffirm our love and faith to Jesus Christ whose birth we celebrate.

In a world constantly threatened by nuclear warfare and terrorism, many are seeing more clearly that Jesus Christ is the only hope! He is the Prince of Peace and wants us to be sincere, dedicated peacemakers. Our generation is best with temptations and other problems. God has not failed to provide assistance. He sent his Son to die to us and still gives encouragement and assistance through the Holy Spirit.

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## Convention Uniform

### Suffering Savior

by Kenneth W. Overton, Arkansas City Church

Basic passage: Mark 8:27-38

Focal passage: Mark 8:27-38

**Central truth:** Jesus willingly suffered to offer us salvation and asks us to commit fully to him.

Jesus confronted the disciples about himself. Much had been said about who Jesus was but he was most concerned about what his disciples knew him to be. When Peter answered, Jesus knew he had not failed to teach them. But more had to be taught.

The Jewish idea of the Messiah and his coming was not that of one who suffers but one who is a victor. Before the Messiah came there would be a terrible tribulation. Next, Elijah would announce his coming. And finally the Messiah would appear.

The Messiah would conquer all the nations that gathered against him. There would be renovation of Jerusalem encouraging all Jews to return. As a result, Palestine would become the center of the world and the Messiah would reign in a new age of peace and goodness.

This picture of the Messiah was the reason Jesus said not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. He did not come to fulfill man's concept of a victor but God's plan of a Suffering Savior. What others thought of the Messiah fell short of the truth.

Since the disciples had the same concept of the Messiah, Jesus began to teach them openly that the Messiah-ship meant suffering and death. But Peter was not ready to hear. He did not want Jesus to speak in such a way. Peter's rebuke of Jesus was identical to Satan's temptation to Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus would not yield to the temptation then or now.

Jesus went on to teach them about the commitment required of his followers. Not only did the Messiah-ship mean suffering and death but so did discipleship.

Jesus gave three conditions for being a disciple. They are giving up self, accept death as a possibility, and be continually loyal to Jesus.

Jesus was honest. There was no false pretenses for following Jesus. He spelled out what he required to be his follower. But whatever Jesus asks of us he was willing to face himself.

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## Life and Work

### Salvation for all

by Don Hook, Woodson Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Luke 2:21-52

Focal passage: Luke 2:22,24-35

**Central truth:** God sent his Son into the world to provide salvation for all people.

In the lesson last Sunday the angel announced that a Savior is born (Lu. 2:11). In Luke 2:21 we are told that his name was called "Jesus" before he was ever conceived in Mary's womb. Matthew 1:21 says that he would be called Jesus because he would save people from sin. So, his name, mission, and eternal purpose can all be summed up in one word—salvation. This salvation is:

(1) A revealed salvation (Lu. 2:26).

It is no secret. It is not something conjured up in the human mind. God wants all mankind to know about its reality and availability.

(2) A prepared salvation (Lu. 2:31).

It is prepared in God's eternal purpose and planning (Eph. 1:3-4). It is not pieced out and put together by philosophical reasoning (1 Cor. 1:21). It cannot be earned (Eph. 2:8). Nor is it preferentially offered to people on the basis of color, race, or imagined divine right. It is prepared for all people (Lu. 2:10,31). If it is not offered to all who will accept it, it is not offered to any.

(3) It is an adequately prepared salvation in the person of Jesus who satisfies all of God's demands. It also meets and satisfies all of man's needs. "All things are now ready" (Lu. 14:17).

(4) It is a visible and available salvation.

Simeon "held" him in his arms and "saw" the Lord's Christ (Lu. 2:26,28,30). God is looking for Simeons to "hold" Jesus up as the light of the world and the glory and consolation of Israel (Lu. 2:25,32).

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## Bible Book

### Jesus the Good Shepherd

by Robert A. Parker, director ABSC Christian Life Council

Basic passage: John 1:1-28

Focal passage: John 10:3-6,7,21,27-28

**Central truth:** The Good Shepherd parable teaches security of the believer and encourages greater faithfulness to our Lord.

Pet owners of the past or present know the ability of an animal to recognize the voice of its master. Sheep are not among the most intelligent of animals, but they certainly have enough sense to recognize their shepherd's voice.

If a so called "dumb" animal can know who its master is surely one created in the image of God can know his. The shepherd knows his sheep and sheep know their shepherd by his voice and by sight. A good shepherd will do everything possible to take good care of his sheep. As described in the twenty-third Psalm, he will see that they are adequately cared for. This includes assistance to those injured.

Jesus Christ has proven by his death on the cross that he not only is the great shepherd but is also, as John the Baptist stated, "the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."

Jesus described the heavenly Father as knowing when a sparrow falls from a tree and the number of hairs on our head. As God "came to earth" and as our redeemer, Christ Jesus certainly knows by name each of those who trust him as Savior, Lord, and shepherd of life.

Being possessors of "blessed assurance" since Jesus the Shepherd belongs to us and we to him, such a relationship should ever lead to greater dedication and faithfulness in his service.

Unlike animals who have human shepherds, we humans can recruit other sheep by sharing our faith regarding the great shepherd's care and service. Having such wonderful security for both the present and eternity, we do not well if the good news is withheld.

The beginning of a new year is a good time to reaffirm one's faith and love to Jesus Christ. He is our loving Savior-shepherd. He is our constant friend. His voice can be "heard" daily by prayerfully reading the written Word of God.

If you are not already doing so, have a special quiet time along each day with the good shepherd beginning Jan. 1, 1987, or today!

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## Hospitality House offers ministry of reconciliation

by Ken Camp

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (BP)—When a West Texas woman's car broke down while driving across the state from Odessa to Huntsville, she thought it was the end of the road for her marriage.

Her husband was serving a prolonged prison sentence in the Ellis II unit near Huntsville and she had been left with the responsibility of bringing up their eight-year-old son. After months of lonely labor, the woman felt all of her emotional, financial and spiritual resources had been depleted.

She had worked for months as a substitute teacher, saving her money. Finally, she set out for East Texas to save a troubled marriage—to renew family ties with a husband she hadn't seen in far too long.

When she started her trip, she knew it would take every penny she had saved. Visiting hours at the prison were short, and it wouldn't be easy making the 450-mile journey. But she believed it was her last chance for a reconciliation.

It looked as if a broken-down car would rob her of that chance. The unexpected expense of getting the aged vehicle running again left her nearly penniless, and by the time she and her son crossed the Walker County line, visiting hours for the weekend were over.

Fortunately, the West Texas woman had heard about Hospitality House. Sponsored by the State Missions Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Texas Baptist Men and Tryon-Evergreen Baptist Association, Hospitality House is a temporary home for the visiting families of inmates in Texas Department of Corrections facilities in the Huntsville area.

At Hospitality House, the woman met director Bob Norris. She told him her story and asked if he could do anything to help. Norris called the chaplain at the Ellis II unit and explained the woman's predicament.

"After I called to try to set up the visit, we prayed together," says Norris. "Before long, the chaplain called back. The prison had agreed to let the family have a four-hour contact visit. They had a long visit together, and the couple made reconciliation."

Making reconciliation and strengthening family ties is part of the ongoing ministry of Hospitality House.

"The two greatest rehabilitating forces in the correctional system are the strong ties of the earthly family and the eternal ties to our heavenly family," insists W. J. Isbell, Texas director of Baptist Men. "We need to visit those in prison, taking the gospel to them that they might be brought into a right relationship with God. We also need to help families visit their loved ones in prison in order to keep their family ties strong. The Hospitality House helps us to accomplish both objectives."

Helping to keep those family ties strong sometimes means service above and beyond

the call of duty for director Norris, such as one recent morning when his phone rang before dawn. On the line was a woman from Dallas whom he had never met, asking him for help.

Norris responded, rising from bed to meet the woman and her young son at the Huntsville bus station. There he learned she and her boy had used all the money they had to get to Huntsville in the hope of visiting her husband at the Ellis II prison unit.

Norris brought the woman and child to Hospitality House. As the woman stepped inside the doors of the building, tears streamed down her face and she cried out, "I didn't think there was anybody in the whole world

**"We need to visit those in prison, taking the gospel to them that they might be brought into a right relationship with God. We also need to help families visit their loved ones in prison in order to keep family ties strong. The Hospitality House helps us to accomplish both objectives."**

who loved us enough to do something like this for us."

"We're here to show the families of prisoners that they are loved by God and by us," says Norris, who lives in a four-room apartment at Hospitality House along with his wife, Nelda.

The house, the second of its kind in the United States and the first sponsored by Southern Baptists, is capable of accommodating up to 48 overnight visitors in dormitory-style rooms and includes a common kitchen where guests are able to prepare their own meals.

Each visiting family is asked to pay no more than \$5 per night to help defray the costs of laundering linens and to give them a sense of helping to pay their own way. Since its opening in mid-August, Hospitality House has hosted about 150 families. Seventeen persons have made professions of faith in Jesus Christ as a direct result of Hospitality House ministry.

"There are so many stories we could tell," says Norris. "There's one woman who had come up to Huntsville from Corpus Christi every other weekend for five years to visit her husband in the Eastham Unit. She and her son, who had Down's Syndrome, slept at a roadside park all that time because they couldn't afford a motel room.

"The Lord led her to one of our brochures at the prison when she was visiting her husband. Now she has a home here during their visits."

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