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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

6-17-1982

June 17, 1982

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

JUN. 17 1982

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a solemn appeal is made to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

For freedom

**Christ has set us free;
stand fast therefore....**

Galatians 5:1

Christian Citizenship Sunday

July 4, 1982

June 17, 1982

Arkansas Baptist
NEWSMAGAZINE

Stand fast therefore

by William H. Elder, III

July 4th and the Declaration of Independence arouse in Americans everywhere feelings of pride and hope. Could any American have anything but deep and genuine appreciation for the founders of our

great nation? The reason there's such an overwhelming and unanimous affirmation for Independence Day is that it possesses a meaning that touches a level of human experience even deeper than that of our heritage and our national roots. It touches the level of our most basic human values. These values are the lenses through which we see and understand life. The core value we most easily associate with our own American Revolution is freedom.

Our eighteenth century forebears struggled mightily for freedom — freedom from the tyranny of taxation without representation and freedom to determine their own destiny. These were worthy goals. How could anyone oppose such obviously good causes? Yet, there were some of the early colonists, Loyalists and Tories, who did not support the American Revolution, who thought it would be easier and better for all concerned if things remained the way they were.

This kind of thinking points out another dimension of the meaning of freedom. Freedom not only means release from oppression and opportunity for self-determination. Freedom also means change, uncertainty, and genuine risk. Freedom has both positive and negative sides. It's not a foregone conclusion at all that, when people are given the choice of freedom on the one hand or familiar chains on the other, freedom will win the day. That's why the courage of the eighteenth century American patriots must be seen as being far more than simply risking their lives on the battlefield. They also took the risk of a decidedly uncertain future. In its deepest sense, the American Revolution was a magnificent affirmation of freedom itself. It was an event based on the belief that freedom is more valuable than any present comfort, no matter how pleasant or satisfying that present comfort might be at the moment. The status quo is nearly always easier to maintain, but freedom is far better and is well worth the risks. This great value of freedom, in spite of inevitable risks, in the American heritage needs to continue if America is to mature and fulfill her destiny.

Christian citizens are especially suited for the pursuit of freedom. In the Exodus event, the Israelites learned from God's deliverance of them out of Egyptian bondage that the Lord is a God of freedom. Throughout the Bible, that insight into God's nature is confirmed again and again. It is worthy of special notice that Jesus chose a freedom passage as the text with which to launch his public ministry. "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, ... to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1-2). Christians must consistently champion freedom.

What does a Christian freedom cham-

panion do? God has arranged things in such a way that personal freedom can be known only when we commit ourselves to be obedient to the will of God. That's why Paul could speak about his being both free and a slave of Christ. The Bible shows that freedom in society is established where God's people work to apply moral values and principles of righteousness in the world. Obedience to God means living righteous and ethically sensitive personal lives and working for a just and morally responsible society. These are the central concerns of Christian citizenship. The good news is that it's through this kind of Christian citizenship that the gift of God's freedom can be transformed from a lofty ideal to a working reality.

Christian citizens especially join in the positive "freedom" feelings of all Americans on July 4th; and we seize this marvelous opportunity to commit ourselves to strengthening the values and continuing the ideals of the American Revolution. In freedom's holy light we seek to stand fast in support of the public righteousness without which no nation can long endure.

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore..." (Gal. 5:1).

Elder, an Arkansan, is former Director of Christian Citizenship Development for the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and is now pastor of St. Charles Avenue Church in New Orleans.

On the cover



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Arkansas Baptist
NEWSPAPER

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Ouachita Baptist University students participating in an internship program sponsored by Arkansas Baptists get hands-on experience in chaplaincy ministry, while boys and girls at the state's two juvenile correctional institutions get exposed to the gospel.

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R. G. (Gene) Puckett, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, has emerged as the new editor of the "Biblical Recorder", state journal for North Carolina Baptists. The search for a replacement for current editor J. Marse Grant was not without controversy. The new editor affirms, in a report compiled from Baptist Press and other news sources, that the state paper belongs not to Baptist executives, but to the people of the state convention.

New writer for 'lessons for living'

Raymond H. Reed, director of missions for Bartholomew Association, begins this week as a lesson writer for the ABN's "lessons for living" Sunday School commentary page. Reed will write the next four lessons in the Bible Book lesson series.



Reed

Reed has served Bartholomew Association 10 years. Prior to that he held pastorates in Texas, Spokane, Wash. and in Arkansas at West Fork and Springdale. He worked nine years as a professional in social welfare.

He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, the former Norene Allen, are the parents of three children, all grown.

*Cooperative Program:
it makes us Southern Baptists*

The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



The Cooperative Program has unified Southern Baptists, cut out the necessity for most special offerings and provided the mechanism for growth that no other evangelical denomination has experienced. Baptist groups which have used alternative methods of financing missions, education and benevolent projects simply have not enjoyed the missionary and evangelistic success of Southern Baptists.

To be a Baptist church, the members must subscribe to a certain body of doctrines. There are not a large number of these distinctive doctrines but the few we do have are of great importance. Among these are the absolute authority of the Bible, salvation by grace through faith only, believer's baptism by immersion, the individual priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church. To be a Southern Baptist, a congregation must, also, voluntarily engage in our distinctive method of supporting world-wide missions and evangelism.

In order to understand the advantages of the Southern Baptist program it is necessary to review the two major methods of mission support in early America and the Cooperative Program that was established by Southern Baptists in 1925. From 1639 to 1707 there was no organized support of missions. Many in that era felt that any cooperative effort would detract from the full and final autonomy of the local church.

Eventually, the need for greater cooperation began to be evident. In 1767, for example, the Philadelphia Association wrote to the newly-formed Warren Association stating that the "union of churches into one associational body may easily be conceived capable of answering those still greater purposes which any particular church could not be equal to."

Two methods of carrying out missions and benevolent work developed. The first, the associational plan, was begun by the Philadelphia Association in 1755. In 1766 a permanent missionary fund was established. The fund was developed through quarterly collections by the churches. The interest from the money collected was used to support "ministers traveling on the errand of the churches."

The height of the associational method of mission work was the plan adopted in 1802 by the Shaftsbury Association of Vermont. The structure they used was similar to the method adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. A committee of the association was appointed to handle mission contributions, examine candidates, recommend the time and place of appointment and pay

the salaries of missionaries.

Another method adopted by Baptists was the society type of structure. This method became prevalent because of its simplicity and because of the urgings of the famous missionary William Carey. The method was simple because a group of individuals could meet in a home without denominational authorization, take a small offering, and use the funds as they saw best.

By 1802 there were two methods of missions, each representing a different philosophy. The society method was used by Baptists in the North until 1907 and a similar approach is used among "Missionary Baptists" and "Independent Baptists" today. The associational method became the permanent plan of support by the Southern Baptist Convention which was born in 1845.

There are four major differences between the two methods: (1) The associational method was geographically based, while the society method was financially based; (2) The associational method usually involved a denominational structure supporting many benevolences, while the society method supported only one benevolence at a time; (3) Under the associational plan only church members were allowed to participate, while church membership was not necessary to the society plan; and (4) The associational plan was denominationally centered while the society plan was denominationally centered while the society plan was benevolently centered.

From 1845 to 1925 the Convention was plagued by financial offerings and indebtedness. An offering taken during a drought or flood received little support, as did causes with little emotional appeal.

The Cooperative Program, adopted in 1925 by the SBC, was born out of financial crisis and a desire for a more biblical plan of giving. An appeal was made to Southern Baptists to adopt a biblical approach of stewardship and tithing, with systematic giving week by week, rather than the financial campaigns.

Few leaders could have predicted the unity, cohesion and growth which Southern Baptists have enjoyed as a result of the Cooperative Program. The impact produced by the Cooperative Program is due to the realization that we should support missions, evangelism and several benevolences, and that the best way to do this is through a systematic budget approach centered around our denomination. Giving through the Cooperative Program makes us Southern Baptist, and it makes us strong.

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meeting the information needs of Arkansas Baptists.

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NUMBER 23

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Letters to the editor expressing opinions are invited. Letters should be typed double spaced and must be signed. Letters must not contain more than 350 words and must not defame the character of persons.

Photos submitted for publication will be returned only when accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Only black and white photos can be used.

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One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant/President, OBU

A growing American and world dilemma

Almost 40 years ago the Swedish social scientist, Gunnar Myrdal, wrote a book entitled *An American Dilemma*, highlighting the inconsistency of our democratic ideal of equality and the deep-seated practice of racial segregation. Fortunately we have struggled with that particular problem and the worst of it is behind us. With an unusual mixture of Christian conscience and public policy we have moved ideal and practice much closer together. Few if any in their right minds would suggest turning the clock back to racially segregated water fountains, eating places, rest rooms, and classrooms.

Unfortunately another American dilemma, actually a world dilemma, is growing by leaps and bounds. It is our nation's number one drug problem, beverage alcohol. Last year it was France, surprisingly, that announced a 10 year war on alcoholism and issued a report that received very

little publicity in the United States, even though we seem to be in a mad rush towards the same problem as France. The French government report gave staggering statistics that half of France's homicides, a quarter of its suicides, a third of its automobile and motorcycle accidents, and most of its cancers of the mouth and digestive track, are directly attributable to alcohol abuse. Almost a third of the hospital beds are occupied by people suffering from alcohol-induced ailments, and the figure is 40 percent in the psychiatric hospitals.

With a problem so tragic, why isn't it attacked with the same fervor as in the civil rights movement? Therein lies the dilemma, both in France and in the United States, not to mention most of the rest of the world. For a hundred years the powerful wine and spirits lobby in France has successfully fought tough anti-alcoholism laws. "Wine

is good for you," they say, and, "The state must fight against the abuse of alcohol but encourage its use." Powerful public relations forces in the United States purchase the most beautiful television commercials available to produce increased alcohol consumption. Our tradition of free enterprise, and our distorted slogan of "you can't legislate morals," have inhibited effective public policy against alcoholic beverages.

The 35-point program recommended by the French report included sharp increases in wine and liquor taxes, a major campaign to educate the public on the dangers of excessive drinking, the promotion of nonalcoholic drinks, rewriting textbooks to include up-to-date information about alcoholism, office and factory programs to help alcoholics and warn potential alcoholics, and tougher enforcement of laws against drunken driving.

But the American dilemma remains. How can we solve our nation's number one drug problem when such powerful and wealthy forces in our land are working to increase consumption of the problem drug, rather than to decrease it?

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University at Arkadelphia.



Woman's viewpoint

Ina Miller

A volunteer's view of missions

Having had the opportunity to go on a volunteer mission trip, I saw missions come alive. We visited the Baptist Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland. Nancy Pipkin, an MK, gave us a fine tour of the seminary. In Nairobi, Kenya, we listened to a lively discussion of missions today and tomorrow while we were in the James Hampton home.

Most of our time was spent in Malawi where we led the witness training. The hospitality of our missionaries was generous; we will always remember the family spirit, the sharing of homes, meals and fellowship. We saw Malawi through the eyes of three families who hosted us: the Ron Miller's, a first-team couple; the Bill Wester's, a veteran team; and the Darrell Garner's, our own Arkansas couple.

The kind spirit of the Malawians was evidenced by their welcoming us in their homes and church services. They were anxious for the evangelistic crusade to make an impact in their villages and towns. They wanted their families and friends to know Jesus as Savior just as we do here in Arkansas.

On our way home, we stopped in Cape-town, South Africa. The Harrison Pike's and

Clarence Allison met us at the airport and later introduced us to students at the Baptist Seminary. The Charles Hampton's showed us a new church where they worked as church planters.

In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, we visited the International Baptist Church that is pastored by Bill Moseley. We attended a night service in a mission directed by Frances and Claud Bumpus.

The people I have mentioned are just a few of the missionaries that we met. Their daily witness to all they meet has encouraged me to pray more specifically.

And while I am thankful that they represent us in many areas of the world, I realize that each one of us is accountable to our Lord Jesus as a witness of him day by day.

Ina Miller is a wife and mother of two. She is a member at Mountain Home First Church where she team-teaches with her husband, Russell, in a singles-career Sunday School class, sings in the choir, plays in a handbell choir and serves as Baptist Women Day president. She went to Malawi, Africa, in 1981 as a volunteer mission worker in the second phase of the Malawi-Arkansas cooperation.

Letter to the editor

Women were filled

So many people worked and planned and prayed to bring about the Arkansas Baptist Conference for Women, and we want to say thank you to everyone who organized and coordinated the recent conference in Pine Bluff. It was a tremendous undertaking done well. The speakers, singers, and workshops were excellent. One member in our group had four specific needs and found answers to all four. All of us were enriched spiritually by the women who shared God's word and personal experiences of God's working in their lives.

We went away realizing that our regal responsibility as a part of the "righteous remnant" is to become "mighty motivators not malicious manipulators". We came hungry and went away full, but with greater appetites than ever before to learn more about Jesus.

The conference couldn't have been better and when the next conference is planned, we want to be there. — Sue Lassiter, Hot Springs

Former Arkansas pastor joins Midwestern staff

Ray H. Kesner, former pastor of two Arkansas churches and currently pastor of Tower View Church in Kansas City, Mo., has been named director of denominational services and alumni affairs at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, effective July 12.



Kesner

Kesner, 45, accepted the newly created position at the Kansas City seminary after six years in the Tower View pastorate. Earlier, he was pastor of two Arkansas churches: Faith Chapel in Arkadelphia and Glendale Church in Booneville. He was also pastor of two other Missouri churches.

Kesner has served this past year as director of Midwestern's supervision program for the doctor of ministry degree.

Kesner is an alumnus of Midwestern Seminary with two degrees, the M.Div. in 1967 and the D.Min. in 1980. The native of Greenwood, Ark., is also a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.

Turner named vice president

ARKADELPHIA — Thomas J. Turner has been named vice president for academic affairs and dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Ouachita Baptist University, effective Aug. 1. He will replace Carl Goodson, who is retiring.



Turner

Turner is currently professor of physics, provost and chief academic officer at Stetson University in DeLand, Fla.

Before going to Stetson in 1978, Turner had taught at Clemson University, the University of New Hampshire and was chairman and professor of physics at Wake Forest University from 1956 to 1978.

He has served as secretary-treasurer of the Conference of Academic Deans of the Southern States in 1979, as vice president in 1980 and as president in 1981.

Turner is the author or co-author of more than 25 articles in professional physics journals and of "Good Science and Good Theology" in "Education of Christian

Missions," published in 1981. He has also read invited papers on solid state physics in several international conferences in the United States, Japan, Germany, England and France.

He received the bachelor of science degree from the University of North Carolina in 1974, the master of science degree from Clemson in 1949, and the doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Virginia in 1951.

Heflin named to New Orleans faculty

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has announced the addition of James L. Heflin to the faculty effective June 1.

Heflin, a native of Monticello, Ark., came to the Seminary after four and one-half years in the pastorate of the First Church in Greenville, Mississippi.

He will work in the Division of Pastoral Ministries as associate professor of preaching. His 20 years as a pastor of Southern Baptist churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas made him a top candidate for the faculty post.

Heflin graduated cum laude from the University of Arkansas at Monticello. He received the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Theology degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Heflin and his wife Wilma have a 13 year



Heflin

old son, James David.

McAtee steps down from Student post

D. C. McAtee, BSU coordinator for community colleges with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Student Department, retired from the position May 31 after two-and-one-half years' full time employment with the Student Department.



McAtee

During his 40 years in the pastorate, McAtee has been active in BSU work, serving as BSU director for East Arkansas Community College and before that Mississippi County Community College, while holding pastorates.

He has worked as public relations chairman for the Student Department's Third Century Campaign and has been a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive board.

McAtee is a native Arkansan, a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University. He received the bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in 1946. He and his wife, the former Clyta Verne Agee of Texarkana, reside in Forrest City. McAtee currently serves as interim pastor at First Church in Marvell.

McAtee plans to continue part-time work with the BSU at East Arkansas Community College, as well as revivals and supply work.

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Chaplaincy intern Tom Rice, a psychology major in his junior year at Ouachita Baptist University, jots down a scripture reference for a youngster at the Pine Bluff Youth Services Center. Rice is one of three students learning hands-on from a program sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Missions Department.

Text and photos
by Bob Allen

Education more than theory for Ouachita students

What kind of person winds up at Arkansas' two state correctional facilities for juveniles? The poor, kids from broken homes, those with a history of criminal behavior, ministerial students.

Ministerial students? Well, yes.

Two of the regular faces at the juvenile correctional facility at the Department of Corrections Pine Bluff Complex and one at the Alexander Youth Services Center seem out of place in at least three ways: (1) They are older than the 9-17 year-old inmate population — two are college juniors and one is a senior; (2) They are at the institution only two days a week; and (3) They want to be there.

The three Ouachita Baptist University



Intern chaplain Ron Butler, one of two Ouachita students serving at the Youth Services Center at Pine Bluff, preaches during a Sunday morning chapel service. A resident of Atkins, Butler hopes to apply what he has learned in the course to pioneer mission work in the Northwest U.S.

students participate in a program set up between Ouachita and the state institutions by the Arkansas Baptist Missions Department designed to give students interested in chaplaincy ministry a chance at some hands-on learning experience.

The Missions Department provides travel expenses and salary for three interns, which commute to Alexander and Pine Bluff to minister on weekends and return to campus for the remainder of a normal class load during the week.

Leroy Sisk, director of chaplaincy for the Missions Department, said the intern program is winding up its third semester at Pine Bluff and its first at Alexander. So far, he said, everybody is happy.

The interns' experience is two-dimensional: there is the educational end — which carries a demanding load of outside reading, conferences with supervisors and reports — and there is the ministry, which can be even more demanding.

Kerry Alley, a junior from Marked Tree serving under Chaplain Doyle Lumpkin at Alexander, said the ministry is a tough one, with measurable results few and far between. "It's got a lot of positive things about it, but this is just such a difficult group to minister to."

"They've got their own language," Alley said. "They don't understand terms like 'Christian'. They say 'I go to church.' You have to talk their language."

Alley leads Bible studies, coordinates special music, puts on skits and ministers one-to-one with the mixed population at Alexander. An average of 125 inmates are present at the school at any one time, most for a term of five to six months. All female juveniles age 9-17 sentenced through Arkansas courts serve terms at Alexander. Boys age 9-13 are also housed at Alexander as are all 14-18 year-old youths confined in the intensive training (maximum security) unit.

All the 750-900 juveniles processed an-

nually by the state pass through Alexander for evaluation, but the older boys are transferred to Pine Bluff for most of their stay.

Chapel is optional for youth, but it is well attended. Benny McCracken, chaplain at Pine Bluff, said attendance at chapel services averages 60 to 65 percent of the maximum of 193 inmates living in seven cottages. Lumpkin said attendance for some special programs at Alexander is 100 percent.

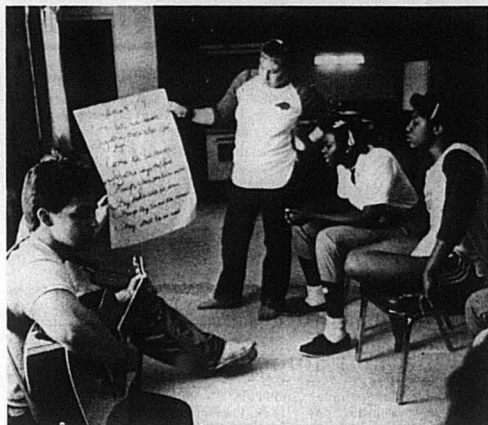
Sisk said the intern program is one of the most inexpensive ways to minister to the youth. Arkansas Baptists sponsor chaplaincy ministries at four state correctional institutions — the two youth facilities and Cummins and Tucker prisons. Southern Baptists were the first to provide chaplains for the adult prisons, Sisk said, and the juvenile centers would still be without chaplains without the work done by the state Missions Department.

McCracken is pleased with the intern program. "It's just triple what I can do here myself. Often they (kids at Pine Bluff) will talk to them (the interns) when they wouldn't come to me."

The interns classify the program as one of the best educational experiences of their college careers. Tom Rice, a junior psychology major planning to go into a counseling or chaplaincy ministry after attending seminary, described the class as his best at Ouachita. "You gain a more practical viewpoint," he said, opposed to the sometimes "sheltered", more theoretical view of ministry you get in a classroom setting.

"It's been excellent," Rice said. "I really wish it was greatly multiplied — not just two, three, four, five or seven guys — but where everybody out of the ministerial group (at Ouachita) could have something like this."

Sisk said he hopes to continue the intern program, and would like to set up a similar full-time program with a Southern Baptist seminary for a year-long program. "We think it's very worthwhile," Sisk said.



Kerry Alley (left photo), a junior from Marked Tree, leads group girls at the Alexander center in a singalong. Small group work is part of his ministry with the Alexander population. Rice (above) works with the choir during a chapel service at Pine Bluff.

missionary notes

Mr. and Mrs. Carl R. Hall, missionaries to Kenya, have returned to the field (address: P.O. Box 48, Namanga, Kenya). They are natives of Arkansas. He was born in Heber Springs and also lived near Monette and Manila and in Paragould while growing up. She is the former Gerry Wright of McCrory. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1970.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Howard, missionary journeymen to Liberia, have returned to the States (address: 202 Long Valley, Rt. 2, Brentwood, Tenn. 37027). A native of Florida, he was born in Winter Haven and considers Haines City his hometown. The former Cynthia Bennett, she was born in Texarkana, Ark., and considers Jacksonville,

Fl., her hometown. They were employed by the Foreign Mission Board for a two-year term of service in 1980.

Mr. and Mrs. Thurman Braughton, missionaries to the Philippines, will be on extended furlough an additional six months (address: 609 Bower, Hot Springs, Ark. 71901). The Braughtons serve as church planters on the southern island of Mendenow. They previously served seven years in Malaysia. They are extending furlough to allow their children to complete their education. They will return to the mission field Dec. 28.

Mr. and Mrs. Horace W. Fite Jr., missionaries to Brazil, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: Box 217, Cros-

byton, Texas 79322). He was born in Mena, Ark., and also lived in Texas. She is the former Salle Taylor of Lehman, Texas. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1950.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Spiegel, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 227 East "C", North Little Rock, Ark. 72116). He is a native of St. Louis, Mo.; she is the former Betty Wooten of West Manchester, Ohio. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1958.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy D. Hawkins, missionaries to Venezuela, have completed furlough and returned to the field (address: Apartado 358, Valencia, Venezuela). He was born in Parks, Ark., and lived in several towns in Arkansas and Oklahoma. The former Judy Palmer of Oklahoma, she was born in Tulsa and also lived in Sand Springs. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1973.

Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie G. Winstead, missionaries to Taiwan, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 1720 Willow, Independence, Mo. 64052). Born in Leachville, Ark., he moved with his family to Essex, Mo., during boyhood. The former Ina Jones of Missouri, she was born in Hayti and later lived in East Prairie and Essex. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1971.

DID YOU KNOW that the faculty at Boyce Bible School for the 1982-83 year consists of 10 people with the earned doctors' degree and five with the masters or equivalent?

Acteens (& G.A.) Camp Camp Paron July 5-9

Missionaries:

Mildred Cagle — Kenya
Valadean Gardner — Tulsa

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For more information write:

WMU
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Little Rock, AR 72203



by Millie Gill/ABN staff writer

James Finch

has joined the staff of the Rector Church as minister of youth and music. He has been serving a church in the Kennett, Mo., area.

Edgar W. Bryan III

has accepted the call to serve as pastor of the Matthews Memorial Church in Pine Bluff. He will begin his ministry there July 4, coming to Pine Bluff from the Mer Rouge Church in Mer Rouge, La. He and his wife, Barbara, have two children, Tabatha and Eddie.

Harold R. Green

of Bryant has earned the doctor of ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary. He has served as pastor of the Revdell Church for 23 years and also serves as assistant principal of the Bryant High School.

Clif Springer

has resigned as minister of youth at the Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock to begin serving as associate pastor of the Exchange Avenue Church in Oklahoma City, Okla.

James Peck

is serving as pastor of the Antioch Church at Colt. He was serving at the Palestine First Church.

briefly

Mount Hebron Church

at Searcy recently ordained Dewey Townsend as a deacon. Pastor Marvin Ogle served as moderator. Others assisting were Cecil M. Fuller, W. E. Kitts, Bert Edwards and J. D. Townsend, father of the candidate.

Hot Springs First Church

ordained Bob Sowell, minister of education, and Martin Thielen, pastor of the Augusta First Church, to the gospel Ministry May 31.

Arkansas graduates from Golden Gate

Vernon David Garrison of Camden was one of 74 students to receive degrees from Golden Gate Seminary at the school's 34th annual spring commencement June 4 at Mill Valley, Calif.

Garrison, son of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon C. Garrison, was awarded the master of divinity degree by seminary president William M. Pinson Jr. The commencement speaker was Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Radio and Television Commission.

Garrison is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University.

Mike Henderson

is serving as associate pastor of the Marion Church, coming there from the Antioch Church at Royal.

Edward Harrison Jr.

received the diploma in theology degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn. in May. A native of Alabama, Harrison presently serves Dollarway Church in Pine Bluff as pastor.

Ira Monroe Upton

of Mulberry has received the diploma in theology degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a native of Prairie Grove and currently pastor of Vine Prairie Church in Mulberry.

David Michael Fowler

received the master of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary during the May commencement in Memphis, Tenn. A native of California, the Elaine resident is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and pastor of Immanuel Church in Wabash.

Johnny J. Jackson Jr.

received the master of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a native of Camden and a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, currently employed in a secular occupation in Memphis, Tenn.

Robert William Massey

received the master of divinity degree from

Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a resident of Wynne, where he serves Fitzgerald Church as pastor.

Michael Loren Trammell

received the master of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary at its May commencement. A native of Hot Springs, he is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University currently serving a church in Houston, Texas.

John Wright Mahony

has received the doctor of theology degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a native of El Dorado and a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University currently serving a church in Dallas, Texas.

Joel Charles Slayton

has received the doctor of theology degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He was born in Gurdon, graduated from Ouachita Baptist University and serves as interim pastor at Grace Temple Church in Fort Smith. He is a Conway resident.

focus on youth

Fayetteville First Church

Girls in Action held a Recognition Service May 19, using the theme "My Promise to God." Roxanne Barker, Arlene Faulkner and Barbara Moore presented badges to the 14 GA's completing Mission Adventures.

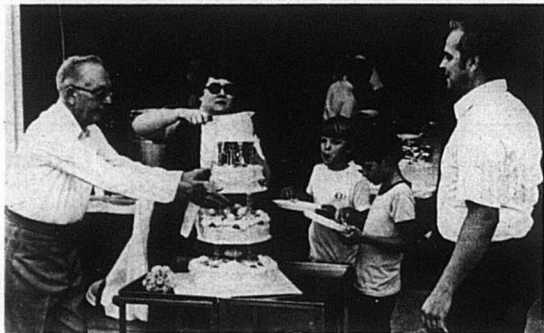


Photo: Joe Statton

Magnolia Central celebrates 75th

Central Church in Magnolia, organized May 26, 1907, in an opera house, recently celebrated its 75th anniversary. The church has grown to a congregation of 2,103 under the leadership of 11 pastors. The anniversary was observed with special activities May 23 and May 26. Pastor Jon Stubblefield (far right) looks on as Pastor Emeritus Loyd L. Hunnicutt (left) serves the anniversary cake at a Wednesday evening celebration that included an old-fashioned dinner on the grounds, games and testimonies. Dr. Hunnicutt, pastor at Central Church for 38 years, preached the celebration sermon on Sunday morning, May 23.

Crucial Questions for Christians

by Glen D. McGriff

"I am a Christian but I struggle with periods of depression. Should a Christian have such problems?"

Christians are not exempt from the problems common to all humanity. Depression can be significantly intensified by a fallacy in thinking that one should always be in a state of exhilaration. The Christian has no obligation to be cheerful, only to be real. It is perhaps in one's freedom to be real that the vitality of faith becomes obvious.



McGriff

Depression, like other physical and emotional dysfunctions, has precipitating causes. It is often difficult to determine such causes. Inadequate learning and fallacies in thinking structured in early childhood development is a common cause. These can be structured by circumstantial experience or cultural conditioning.

Factors such as an inappropriate self concept, guilt, rejection, anger, resentment and frustrated love may contribute to depression.

Emotions generate psychic energy. If the energy is not given an expression it exerts powerful impressions. Those impressions, or internalized psychic energy, are common contributors to depression. The energy created by emotional agitation will result in both explosions and implosions. The challenge to individuals is to choose an appropriate and responsible expression of all emotions. This will often demand courageous examination of false premises and faithful commitment to a program of re-learning.

McGriff is director of Ministry of Crisis Support, Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Inquiries, comments or questions to be used anonymously in this column should be sent to Questions, Ministry of Crisis Support, Medical Towers Building, Suite 660, 9601 Lile Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205.

Witness as you go

TAEJON, Korea — Sixty-one young people from Dae Hung Church in Taejon took advantage of their winter school recess to witness for Christ. Paying their own fares, the teen-agers took a one-day round trip by train to Taegu, 125 miles southeast of Taejon. During the journey and at the train station in Taegu, the group shared the gospel with 263 passengers; 168 prayed to receive Christ.



AEN photo/Mike Gill

Osceola East Side burns note

A noteburning service June 6 marked the end of a \$150,000 indebtedness for the Osceola East Side Church. Pastor J. Wayne Moore praised the congregation for giving sacrificially to make possible the payment of the debt in seven years. Director of Missions for Mississippi County Henry West was speaker. Homecoming and high attendance day were almost a part of this special occasion. Participating in the noteburning were front row (left to right) Steven Berry, Earl Duke, Vernon Butler, Pastor Moore, J. C. Nanney, a former pastor, and Jimmy Brown and back row (left to right) Walter Garner, Dom West, John Padgett, Jim Brown, Marvin Wilson and Bill Blaylock.



AEN photo/Mike Gill

Conferences examine 'theology of helping'

While Darrel Watkins (right) and Charles McCullin (left) were in Arkansas to conduct three area conferences in "The theology of Helping" they stopped in Little Rock to brief Christian social ministries workers for Arkansas. Watkins, associate professor of Social Work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and McCullin, of the Home Mission Board, led training sessions May 17-20 in Springdale, Little Rock and Forrest City. Arkansas CSM workers are (seated, from left) Bob Cross, director of the Hope Migrant Mission Center; Dean Preuett, Christian social ministries consultant for Central Arkansas; Ariel Hernandez, director of Bartholomew Migrant Mission Center at Hermitage; and Pete Petty, state director of Christian social ministries. Watkins addressed the "theology of helping", showing that the Bible teaches that Christians should be involved in helping others, and prescribing objectives to fulfill the obligation.

Family and Child Care

Family important in changing times

Our world is being altered in unprecedented ways: with nations coming and going, governments literally changing overnight, with economic uncertainty and talk of nuclear war. And in all of this conflict the family alone provides the basic place to stand. More to the point of my belief, the family built on a moral and spiritual foundation provides that longed for place to stand in a troubled world.

We must gain a new appreciation of the family as God's first institution — as his plan for man's living. The entire history of the human race teaches us that the family unit is the best way for men and women to live; the best way to raise children and provide the solid foundation upon which to build a strong nation.

So many of the children whom we serve have not experienced

the strong foundation of a family. Many have not felt the deep roots of personal affection and love which only caring parents can provide for their children. So many feel that no one cares about them. Others are angry and rebellious because they have been deserted, abused and treated without respect.

As a convention, we have something to say to these unmet needs. Arkansas Baptists have been concerned about the hurts of children for a long, long time. This spirit of caring will lead us into the world where we become involved in ministry to those who need the tender touch of Jesus Christ. In that spirit, the staff of Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services is reaching out boldly to others. — **Johnny G. Biggs, executive director**

Stewardship

Flake's financial laws

Arthur Flake, well known for his laws of Sunday School growth, also had something to say about church finances. He called his six laws "The New Testament Plan of Church Finance."

First, a weekly pledge should be secured from every member of the church and congregation.

Second, a weekly pledge should be secured to the church budget annually.

Third, a weekly pledge should be secured from all the members joining the church.

Fourth, every member who makes a pledge to the unified bud-

get should bring his offering to the Lord's house on every Lord's day.

Fifth, all extra-budget offerings should be planned and inaugurated in such a way as to give each member an opportunity to participate.

Sixth, a constant program of education and training in the New Testament plan of giving should be maintained throughout the year in which all members should be enlisted.

As in Sunday School, Flake's laws will work in church budget planning and promotion. — **James A. Walker, director**

Church Administration

Church secretary seminar scheduled Aug. 2-6

Church secretaries in Arkansas will have an unusual opportunity for training during the Church secretary's certification seminar to be conducted Aug. 2-6. The seminar will be held at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock and will be led by Lucy Hoskins, consultant in the Church Administration Department at the Sunday School Board.

Topics in the seminar include "My Role in My Church's Ministry," "A Look at Why I Act as I Do," "Records to Keep and How to Keep Them," "How to Get on Top of My Job," and "Practical Principles of Church Fi-



Holley

nance." There will also be laboratory sessions for practical experience.

The seminar is designed for any church, associational, or denominational secretary who wants to improve her secretarial and communications skills. Participation in the 32-hour seminar qualifies a secretary to receive a certificate for completing the basic certification level of training. An advanced seminar will be offered at a later date.

The seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. Monday and will end at 10:00 a.m. Friday. There are no evening sessions and Wednesday afternoon is free. For additional information about registration, please write me at P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203. — **Robert Holley, director**

Special Missions Ministries

Arkansas Campers on Mission rally

Arkansas Campers on Mission organization met on the campus of Southern Baptist College May 20-22. There were 39 registered for the meeting. Dr. H. E. Williams, vice president, arranged for the group to visit two historical sites on Friday — the Old Davidsonville State Park, 10 miles southwest of Pocahontas, the site of the first post office and first court house in Arkansas, and the Old Salem Church near Maynard, which is the mother for all Arkansas Baptist churches. W. O. Taylor share some of the history. The meeting was under the direction of Amos Greer, president of the group. Dr. Earl Humble, Southern Baptist College, led two Bible studies. Glen Ennes, Arkansas Baptist Music Department, directed the music. Pete Petty, Missions Department, works with the Arkansas Campers on Mission. The fall rally is scheduled for Aug. 26-28. — **Pete Petty, director**



Amos Greer, president, (in photo) talks with Benita Hardester, secretary, during the conference.

Church Music

Associational Music Schools

Associational Music schools led by the Church Music Department provides the opportunity for members from several churches to gather together for the study of music fundamentals and to have a choral experience. A leadership training session is also provided for the directors to assist them in worship planning, directing and working with their accompanist. Pictured above is the annual Benton County Associational Music School held this year at First Church, Centerton, with Ervin Keathly leading. Bedford Jackson is director of missions and Steve Tucker is the associational music director. — Glen E. Ennes, associate



Evangelism

The Continued Witness Training model presentation

The model presentation is the heart of the Continuing Witness Training process. This is shared with you to whet your appetite for the total process.

God's purpose for man is expressed fully. (1) A person receives eternal life as a free gift (Rom. 6:23b). (2) A person can receive this full and meaningful life right now (John 10:10b). (3) A saved person will spend eternity with Jesus in heaven (John 14:3).

The need of salvation is expressed to the lost person. A person without Christ is a sinner by nature and by choice (Rom. 3:23). A lost person cannot save himself (Eph. 2:9). A person without Jesus deserves death in hell (Rom. 6:23a).



Shell

God's provision for man's salvation is beautifully presented. Jesus is God and he became man (John 1:1, 14). Jesus willingly died on the cross for man's sins (1 Pet. 3:18). Jesus was gloriously resurrected from the dead (Rom. 4:25).

A person's response will determine if they are saved. Each individual must repent from sin (Acts 3:19a). Every person must place their faith in Jesus (Eph. 2:8). Each saved person will make Jesus Lord of their life (Rom. 10:9-10).

In the CWT process the apprentice memorizes the model presentation. The model presentation consists of the outline, scriptures, transitions and illustrations. This gives a complete perspective of the gospel to the lost person. I pray that God will bless you as you share Jesus with the lost. — Clarence Shell Jr., director

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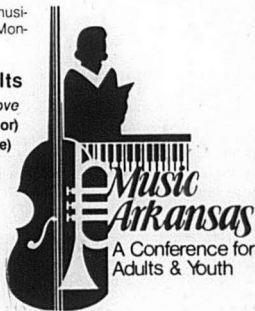
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The Father's Love
The Prodigal (Tenor)
The Father (Bass-Baritone)

Junior high

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Medium high — four
Medium low — three
Boys — four

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T. B. Maston recalls his journey in race relations among Southern

by Larry Braidfoot

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is an adaptation from an interview with T. B. Maston in the January-February 1982 issue of *LIGHT* published by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

T. B. Maston, retired professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, has been a champion of better race relations for more than 40 years. According to Maston, the highlights of his involvement in race relations have been in the areas of teaching, writing, and speaking.

The first thing Maston can remember writing on race was a pamphlet in 1927 entitled "Racial Revelations."

Beginning in the early 1930s he wrote about race relations in numerous Sunday School lessons, Training Union programs, and articles for the "Baptist Student." Maston's book, *Of One*, was published in 1946 in a series for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

It was about this time that Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary offered a course by Maston on "Problems of the South" which included the rural South and race relations.

Maston was elected in 1955 as the first chairman of the Advisory Council on Southern Baptist Work with Negroes. The Southern Baptist Convention's committee on order of business subsequently asked him to speak to the Convention on "Southern Baptists and the Negro." A chapter about Maston was included in a volume entitled *His Heart Is Black* by W. T. Moore produced in 1978 by the Home Mission Board's Black Church Relations Department.

While Maston was in high school in Tennessee, there was a race riot in Knoxville which made a lasting impact on his life.

"I think I can honestly say, though," Maston said, "that the greatest impact on my life regarding race and a good many other things was the reading of the Scriptures."

Maston was almost 17 when he was converted, and that following year he read through the entire Bible two or three times.

"I have never gotten away from some of the impressions that made on my life," he said.

The 1940s and 1950s were critical stages in race relations, according to Maston.

"The blacks were increasingly restless," he said. "As they became more vocal, many of the white people, including many in our churches, hardened their attitudes toward blacks."

One of the barriers Maston worked to overcome was the view that blacks were second-class citizens.

"I had a conviction, which I still have, that every church that claims to be a 'church of God' should not and really can-

not close its doors to any of God's children," Maston said. "A church may be at Corinth, at Atlanta, or at Dallas, but it is a 'church of God' and should never forget that."

Regarding the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing racially segregated public schools, Maston observed that most Southern Baptists at that time probably disap-



'For most of us prejudice has been caught like we catch the measles.'

— T. B. Maston

proved the action. He said it was fortunate, however, that the Southern Baptist Convention officially approved it that year in St. Louis.

"I was not at the Convention, but my understanding is that the motion to approve likely would not have passed if it had not been for a statesmanlike speech that J. B. Weatherspoon made," Maston said. "He was chairman of the Christian Life Commission at that time, and was a highly respected denominational statesman and teacher."

Maston wrote the book *The Bible and Race*, which was published in 1959, because he felt that Southern Baptists needed something on race, and *Of One* had gone out of print.

The same year, 1959, *Segregation and Desegregation* was published by the Macmillan Company. They had previously published a book of Maston's entitled *Christianity and World Issues*.

The criticisms of *The Bible and Race* were not as severe as those he had received after writing *Of One*, Maston remembers.

The Woman's Missionary Union requested Broadman to publish 50,000 paperback copies of *The Bible and Race*.

"I have been deeply grateful to the W.M.U. for its pioneer leadership in race re-

lations as well as in other areas," Maston said.

The upward educational and economic movement of blacks was one of the major factors that caused the civil rights movement to become such a major social phenomenon in the 1960s, according to Maston. As they moved up, he said, they became more aware of their inequities.

"It is impossible to measure accurately the contributions to improved race relations that were made by sociologists and others," Maston said. "I personally think that the publication of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* was a major factor."

"These kinds of things may be rather indirect, but the contributions trickle down and become very significant," he said.

From the strictly religious perspective, Maston said, the contributions of Martin Luther King, Jr. were the greatest of any religious leader.

"I think the strategy that he suggested of peaceful resistance was what he considered to be a Christian one, but it also was the best strategy at that particular time," Maston said.

Maston said Southern Baptists are definitely more responsive to minority groups and their needs today than 25 years ago, but that the response is still "spotty." He said there is still plenty of resistance to full racial desegregation and meaningful racial integration.

"We should recognize," he said, "that even churches that have opened their doors to blacks and have black members have not really integrated the blacks as well as other minority groups until they have utilized those members in the structures of the church."

"A church can theoretically desegregate without really integrating," Maston said.

Maston said he hated to admit it, but that the least noticeable progress made in race relations may possibly be in the religious area.

This is primarily due, he said, to the fact that in religious organizations there is not the pressure to change that there is in most other areas, that whatever religious progress is made has to be voluntary.

Maston said that there has been considerable progress in politics but not as much progress as there should have been, and that improvement in the economic area has been particularly slow.

Marked progress, he said, has been made in the educational area, but there is still a long way to go.

Maston believes that limited affirmative action is justified, but that blacks and other minority groups should recognize that it does not or should not relieve them of special efforts to prepare themselves so they

New North Carolina editor says state paper belongs to the people

from Baptist Press and other sources

can hold their own and compete on the level with the white majority.

When asked how the issue of race relations has affected our foreign and home mission efforts, Maston said he could speak more directly to the effect on foreign mission work since he has been rather deeply involved in a good many ways with the work of the Foreign Mission Board.

While Maston was in Uruguay in 1954, he met with some pastors and their wives in the home of one of the missionaries.

"Curiously enough, the very first question that I was asked was about the race issue in the United States," he said. "With rapid communication around the world, what is done here in the United States on Saturday night is known by Sunday morning almost everywhere else in the world."

Maston said the racial situation here in the States also tends to affect the missionaries and they go.

In overcoming racial barriers, Maston said we need to understand the nature of racial prejudice.

"For most of us prejudice has been caught like we catch the measles," he said. "We live in an environment where it is prevalent."

Maston said we need also to understand that racial prejudice is a two-way street.

"It has been and still is extremely difficult for us to get away from a paternalistic attitude toward those of other races, but this must be done if we are to reach them effectively," Maston said. "Fraternalism rather than paternalism needs to characterize our approach and relation to those of other races."

Asked how to avoid being overcome by frustration and pessimism, Maston said, "Strong, abiding faith in the sovereign God of the universe is the best insurance."

"We need to be sure that we are right, not only in our position, but also in our spirit and attitude," he emphasized.

Christians, Maston said, should respect all people regardless of color, culture, or condition of life; we should recognize that all people are created in the image of God; and we should remember that they are individuals for whom Christ died.

"This would give us a deep sense of their worth," he said. "We should reach out to them in a spirit of understanding and love."

Maston said local churches should be open to anyone to come to worship or to come into the membership of the church the same way that others are received from our own Southern Baptist churches.

"If blacks or other groups live in our area, then churches ought to put forth the same effort to reach them, to win and enlist them, as they do any of the white people," Maston concluded.

R. G. (Gene) Puckett, currently executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, has been elected editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, news journal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Puckett, 49, will assume the post Aug. 1, succeeding J. Marse Grant, who is taking early retirement in September after 22 years as editor of the 116,500-circulation weekly.

Puckett was elected on a split vote of the Recorder's 16-member board of directors, ending what a front-page story in the *Raleigh (N.C.) News and Observer* termed "a behind-the-scenes effort of some top Baptist State Convention officials to block his appointment."

The article quoted denominational leaders in the state as being concerned that Puckett, who was described as aggressive and hard working, may not cooperate with the convention or be a "team player."

Baptist leaders said control of the Recorder was a central issue in the search for a successor for Grant, the article reported.

Puckett vowed that the Recorder would remain independent. "Editorial freedom is not a negotiable matter. We must have it or we lose credibility," he said. "The paper doesn't belong to the editor. It doesn't belong to the people in the Baptist Building. It belongs to the people."

The Recorder's board voted 8-4 to elect Puckett, after a search committee interviewing him twice voted 4-3 not to make a recommendation.

The chairman of the board, Thomas J. Payne of Greenville, who cast the tie-breaking vote not to bring a recommendation to the full board from the search committee, was quoted as saying, "There was concern

that his coming possibly would continue the division within the state denomination. It is our hope those concerns will not be true, and our board is committed to providing him our positive efforts and attitudes."

Grant, who made a photocopy of the *News and Observer* story available to Baptist editors, has been in the middle of a controversy over the sale and relocation of the North Carolina Baptist Building.

The controversy began in May of 1980, according to Baptist Press, when the convention's general board voted to sell the downtown office building for \$1.7 million, of which \$600,000 would be in the form of a tax free donation. Grant editorially opposed the sale.

The offer was withdrawn, but another sale was announced in January, along with plans to relocate in a southwestern suburb. Recorder trustees voted to purchase a building site, but said a decision has not been made about whether the Recorder will move to the new building or build its own facilities.

The convention's general board passed a resolution expressing "profound interest" and asked for an explanation of the reasons for the Recorder relocating outside the Baptist Building and the "method of funding" a new building. Plans for the new building are now said to be on "hold."

Puckett told Baptist Press he is "aware of the controversy of the past, but I was not a party to it. My approach will be to the positive, cooperative and supportive of all Baptist leadership in the state."

In a letter accompanying the news story mailed to editors, Grant referred to the effort to block Puckett's election, saying "I personally feel this was almost a classic struggle for the independence of a state paper."

The news story quoted Puckett as vowing that the Recorder would continue to take stands on social and theological issues. "It is the responsibility of the paper to be on the cutting edge of the issues. If you are silent, it would raise questions why you are silent."

With his election, Puckett becomes the first man in Southern Baptist history to have been editor of three state Baptist newspapers. He has held the editorship of the *Maryland Baptist* and the *Ohio Baptist Messenger* and was associate editor of the *Western Recorder* in Kentucky.

He is a native of Kentucky with degrees from Campbellsville College, Western Kentucky University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.



Puckett

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James and John: Seekers of power

by Lynwood Henderson, Calvary Church of West Memphis

Basic passages: Mark 1:16-20; 9:2-8; 10:35-45; Luke 9:51-56; Acts 4:13-21; 12:1-3
Focal passages: Mark 10:35-45; Luke 9:51-55
Central truth: The path to greatness in the work of God's kingdom lies in meeting the needs of others in the name of Jesus.

1. Ambition, in itself, is not undesirable. In fact, the lack of ambition is the root of laziness. It's in the method used to satisfy the ambition that we have trouble. Power struggles and power structures whether in the denomination, the church of the home are completely out of place. The preacher who, under God's direction, gently guides; the deacon, who ministers to needs in the fellowship; the family member who, in love, does the menial chore will be the one to whom others will look for direction.

2. Many times we, like James and John, speak before we think. Someone has said that our mouth is in drive while our brain is in neutral. "Ye know not" would characterize our impatient actions so much of the time.

Our desire to hurt and destroy would become a desire to help if we only will allow ourselves to become helpers rather than seeking to become masters.

3. It's difficult for us to accept the concept of ruling by social prestige and power over others.

During his lifetime a person may be rated by the number who serve him. But, after his death, he is measured by the number he served.

Conclusion: Like James and John, our desire to do great things — even in the name of Christianity — often leads us to adopt unChristian methods. The results of ministry action might not be as fast as those of mastery, but they are more lasting.

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HOMECOMING June 27, 1982

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Dr. Burton Miley, evening speaker
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Life and Work

A caring society

by Jimmy W. Anderson, First Church of Leachville

Basic passages: Deuteronomy 23:15-20; 24:1-22

Focal passages: Deuteronomy 24:6, 10-15; 17-22

Central truth: A society governed by God's laws is a caring society that meets the needs of all with dignity.

Men are not to be deprived of dignity of eating properly (24:6). Grain was ground between two stones to make bread. Taking the upper stone for loan collateral would deprive the family of bread. The warning is to the creditor. They have obligations to borrowers to prevent them over extending themselves in financial matters.

The dignity of a man's home is not to be violated (24:10-13). The lender is forbidden from entering the sanctity of a family's home to choose what he would take as security. A man's home is his castle. For someone to enter and take what he wishes would be demeaning to the husband and father before his wife and children. A cloak taken as a pledge must be returned at night since it served as a cover for the bed, especially for the poor.

Workers are to be paid their wages when they are due (24:14-15). The poor live from hand to mouth and from day to day. To withhold wages even a day could mean a lack of food, medicine, shelter, or clothing for the family. All laborers are to be paid fairly as well as on time.

God rewards and punishes in accordance with how we treat or mistreat others (24:13, 15, 17). If God is concerned about people, he cares about how they are treated and will deal justly with the treatment. We do well not to forget that but for the grace of God things could be different for us. Never forget that we are undeserving of God's blessings and let us treat others with dignity as we would wish to be treated.

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Bible Book

God's guidance and David's praise

Basic passage: II Samuel 21:1-23:39

Focal passages: II Samuel 21:1, 3-4, 9, 14; 22:2-3, 29-31

Central truth: David can look at all of his life including victories, mistakes, defeats, disappointments and weaknesses as he nears the end and still praise God.

David characterizes God as a rock, fortress, deliverer, his refuge, shield, horn of salvation, stronghold and savior. He declares that God is his lamp and that he shows him the way in darkness. He gives victory in the battles of serving God. God is blameless; his word stands all tests and he is the eternal protector. As David nears the end of his life he praises God.

All of the emotions and experiences of life can become sweet when we see God for who he is and see ourselves for what we have been through. David made a gesture of restitution for a mistake of life (in this case it was someone else's mistake). We need to go back and face some of those who have been wronged and seek a satisfactory reconciliation.

Praising God is very important to our own spiritual well being. We have to have an adequate doctrine of God and an adequate doctrine of man to be able to praise God. Our inadequate understanding shows up when we say God loves so he isn't a part of judgment, or in judgment he is no longer loving! Some people cannot find God in a hurting world, especially their own.

We do not truly know God until we are able to praise him in all kinds of circumstances. Can you praise God from where you are right now?

How many people can you name to say that they have had a specific influence on your life? How many people would list your name as one who influenced their Christian lives? Praise of God comes first. Then there is a place where we should express our praise for those who are a part of our lives just as David recognized his leaders.

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Baptist leaders differ on amendment

by Stan Hastley

WASHINGTON (BP) — President Reagan's call for a constitutional amendment on public school prayer brought mixed reactions from some Southern Baptist pastors and executives.

Reagan announced May 6 — the National Day of Prayer — that he intended to keep a campaign pledge to support such an amendment. On May 17, he sent his proposal to Capitol Hill.

His proposed amendment reads: "Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any state to participate in prayer."

Among those opposing the president's call in a narrow Baptist Press sampling, were Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, and Grady C. Cothen, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Bennett said he is happy with resolutions on school prayer passed at annual meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention during the past 20 years since the Supreme Court struck down state-required prayer and Bible reading.

In 1980, the last time messengers addressed the issue, they "rightly resolved to support truly voluntary prayer while opposing 'attempts, either by law or other means, to circumvent the Supreme Court's decision forbidding government authored or sponsored religious exercises in public schools.'" Bennett said.

Cohen, who heads the world's largest religious publishing house, said the proposed amendment is unnecessary because it "makes no provisions for anything not now possible."

"As desirable as prayer in public schools may be, mandatory or supervised prayer is antithetical to our Baptist free faith," he added. "To make public prayer a political football is to deny the meaning of real prayer. To give this issue to each local community is to guarantee political confusion

over a sacred, personal, religious act.

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said of Reagan's proposal: "Nothing in the Bill of Rights is more fundamental than freedom from any coercion, manipulation or pressure regarding religion. Little children in public schools should not be required to defend their particular spiritual heritage.

"Compulsory school attendance laws make group prayer unfair and impractical. The proposed constitutional amendment would itself be a reversal of the First Amendment, impossible to implement, contradictory in content and contrary to our Baptist input into the Bill of Rights."

Jimmy Draper, pastor of First Church, Euless, Texas, favors passage. "I would not be unhappy with the wording of the president's amendment," he told Baptist Press.

Said Draper, a likely nominee for Southern Baptist Convention president in June, "I do not agree with those who suddenly say we cannot acknowledge God in the classroom. We acknowledge him in the Constitution itself and in other national documents."

Saying he favors time for silent prayer and meditation, Draper emphasized he does not favor mandatory, recited prayer. "A student should not be compelled to pray," he said, "but under the President's proposal, he would at least have the opportunity."

Ron Herrod, pastor of First Church, Kenner, La., appreciates Reagan's "courage for taking a stand."

"I think it's positive and I agree with it completely," said Herrod, chairman of the Bold Mission New Orleans Committee that is planning evangelistic events for messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting June 15-17. "I think there has been a decline in public moral stance since the Supreme Court rulings on prayer. I agree that no one should be forced to pray, but they should be allowed to pray."

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BALAKA, Malawi — Southern Baptist missionary kids in Malawi decided to designate their Vacation Bible School offering for missions in a "foreign" country — the United States. Through Southern Baptist missionary Mary Ann Chandler, they learned of a missions project the Acteens group of First Church, Columbiana, Ala., is sponsoring in the southwestern United States and agreed to send their offering to help.

Film draws crowd in Monrovia

MONROVIA, Liberia — Almost 2,000

people saw "The Hiding Place," the story of Corrie ten Boom, during its early April run in Monrovia, Liberia, according to Art Heyman, Southern Baptist missionary who helped place the movie in a local theater. During the showing, Baptist missionaries were able to distribute about 1,500 scripture portions and gospel tracts, plus applications for a Bible correspondence course from a table in the theater lobby. Because the film drew enough people to give the theater some profit, Heyman said he hopes the management will be willing to show other Christian films in the future.