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### February 6, 1997

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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# ARKANSAS BAPTIST



news magazine



*People Sharing Jesus*



**S**outhern Baptist  
Convention  
president Tom Elliff  
and Arkansas Baptist  
State Convention  
president Rex Horne  
were among featured  
speakers during last  
week's Arkansas  
Baptist Evangelism  
Conference.



# NAMB to employ 350; 165 jobs eliminated

Herb Hollinger and Art Toalston

Baptist Press

**T**he staffing pattern of the five key components of Southern Baptists' new North American Mission Board (NAMB) has been announced by the Implementation Task Force (ITF) overseeing the merger.

Each of the five groups will be headed by a vice president who will be a part of the senior management group of NAMB, projected to employ a total of 350 people. The 350 employees will fill approximately 165 fewer positions than the current combined level of the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission. Severance costs for the staff reductions will be about \$2.5 million, ITF officials added.

ITF officials previously announced that people eligible for severance benefits include employees at the three agencies who are notified that due to restructuring they will have no job available at their current location or are offered a job with NAMB at a lower pay level. Employees who will not have placement will be given four weeks' notice before their termination date. Due to the continuing transition process, severance policies will be continued through Dec. 31, 1997, said NAMB Communications Team chairman David Hankins.

## NAMB staffing plan

The 10-member ITF reported Jan. 30 that the NAMB staffing will include:

- Evangelization Group, 56 positions in four divisions: Direct Evangelism, Church Evangelism, Campus Evangelism and Ministry Evangelism. Ministry evangelism replaces the current Home Mission Board's ministry division and will oversee such areas as chaplaincy, Abortion Alternatives and Baptist centers.

- Church Planting Group, 26 positions in three divisions: Leadership Enlistment and Training, Strategy and Resource Development, and New Congregation Implementation.

- Media and Missions Education Group, 122 positions in five divisions: The largest division will be the media technology division, most of whom will be housed in Fort Worth, Texas, at the current Radio and Television Commission facilities. The other four divisions will be Public Relations, Publishing, Missions Education and Media Strategy, all to be located in the HMB's current facility in Alpharetta, Ga.

- Strategic Planning and Mobilization Group, 44 positions in four divisions: Associational Planning, Strategic Focus Cities, Strategic Planning Coordination and Research, and Volunteer Mobilization.

- Business Services Group, 86 positions in five divisions: Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, Information Services, Church Loans and Marketing Services.

Additionally, an Executive Group will have 16 positions, including the NAMB president, and all vice presidents and support staff. The staffing levels were announced by the ITF in the Jan. 30 issue of *NAMB Transition News*, circulated to employees of the three agencies slated for merger. Overall, the restructuring will reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12.

According to the ITF, NAMB's structure will be a matrix organization led by the Evangelization Group and the Church Planting Group and supported by the other groups. The ITF and a nine-member NAMB Logistics Transition Team are in the process of making recommendations of specific persons to fill the NAMB staff positions.

# ARKANSAS BAPTIST



news magazine

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# Pastor to the president

## Clinton's presidency keeps Immanuel, Horne in national spotlight

Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

**B**eing pastor to the president of the United States is not something you're ever ready for, Rex Horne admits. But those who know Horne say the experience has changed him and his church very little.

Horne, president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, is pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, where President Bill Clinton is a member. That distinction thrust Horne, and the 4,300-member church into the national spotlight in 1992, when Clinton was first elected president.

None of that attention was sought, and some of it — such as the picketers who paraded in front of the church to protest Clinton's social policies — was downright undesirable.

"It was totally different from anything you would expect on Sunday morning," recalled Russ Weeks, one of the members assigned to maintain security during the height of the protests. But the congregation was unfazed. Weeks said, "We kept right on preaching the gospel, saving souls."

"While it would have blown a lot of churches apart, this church is as strong as ever," Horne noted Jan. 19, on the eve of Clinton's second inauguration. Fewer than a dozen members have left Immanuel over the Clinton controversy, he said. "I've known churches that have lost more people over the color of the carpet," he added.

Things are a little calmer now around Immanuel. The protesters are gone, although many Christians — and many fellow Southern Baptists — remain adamantly opposed to Clinton and his policies on abortion and homosexuality.

Despite the distractions, the Little Rock church has continued to support both its pastor and its most famous member.

Horne, his family, the church's choir and orchestra and other members traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Jan. 20 inauguration. The 100-member choir and orchestra performed "Battle Hymn of the Republic" during the nationally televised ceremony on the west front of the Capitol.

Lyndon Finney, orchestra member and church organist, said the trip was non-political. "We were there to support a fellow Christian, and I firmly believe he (Clinton) is a Christian," he affirmed.

On the day before the inauguration, Horne and his family attended Columbia

Baptist Church in the Washington suburb of Falls Church, Va. Horne preached in place of Randal Everett, Columbia's pastor and Horne's cousin. Among those who came to hear the guest preacher were Bill and Hillary Clinton.

Horne has developed a close relationship with Clinton, who joined the Little Rock church, located a few blocks from the state Capitol, in 1980 while still governor of Arkansas. Horne has been pastor for seven years.



**This church is as strong as ever.... We've stuck by the stuff.**

**REX HORNE**  
Pastor  
Immanuel Church, Little Rock

Although the president spends little time in Little Rock these days, the two talk by phone, and Clinton frequently invites Horne to White House events.

"Many times I'll talk to him weekly," Horne said. Or if Clinton is unavailable, Horne leaves him an encouraging message.

The two men also talk about issues, Horne said. While plenty of people have suggested what he might say to the president, Horne said he tries not to abuse that influence.

"He has allowed me to address anything I want to, but I have to be very careful about what issues I should raise with the president and what issues I should not raise," he said.

Horne's unique and sometimes sensitive role has not been lost on Clinton, who made a point to thank Horne during his victory speech on election night.

"I was very surprised about that," Horne recalled. "I just kind of reflected that the times spent in talking and in prayer were some encouragement to him, that the things I had said and done toward him had been meaningful to him."

"Rex is a very personal person who carries that load himself and does not share it with the church," Finney noted. "He does not complain. He knows what his responsibility is as pastor to the president."

Church members and others credit Horne with setting a calm, forgiving tone for the church, even during the heat of the anti-Clinton protests in 1993.

"The thing that hurt us the most,"

Finney recalled, "was the people who purported to be Christians who got up in our face and screamed at us."

The church also was stung by an attempt in 1993 to exclude Immanuel from participation in the Southern Baptist Convention. Although the effort to deny seating to the church's messengers ultimately failed, Horne blamed the attackers for "recklessly...impugning the integrity" of Immanuel.

"Immanuel had always prided itself in being a conservative, Bible-believing church," said Danny Thomason, a longtime member and personal friend of the Clintons. "Then we were told by people we thought were on the same side that we were not a Bible-believing church."

"You get toughened up pretty quick by what comes your way," Horne said. "You decide if you are going to spend all your time defending yourself."

Once he realized he couldn't answer all the critics, Horne said, "it became liberating to me, frankly. The only one I have to answer to is God."

The church has refused to focus on the negative. Horne has mentioned the Clinton controversy "only three or four times" from the pulpit, he said. "We've stuck by the stuff."

In his sermon at Columbia Baptist Church Jan. 19, Horne preached on Christian citizenship. One duty of the Christian is to show respect for everyone, particularly governmental leaders, he said. "It is inconsistent to say we believe the truth and to be party to rumor and innuendo," he told the congregation.

Later he said many Christians have unfairly judged Clinton and his faith. "There will be those who will never give the president the benefit of the doubt or who will think he can't do any wrong. Both are a little off track."

Most of the criticism against Clinton has focused on his support for abortion rights and homosexuality. While Horne disagrees with the president on those issues, he said there are "some other issues that we need to raise."

"Christians have not focused too much on those two, but they need to bring equal emphasis to other issues," he said, citing racial injustice, prejudice and physical needs such as hunger and clothing.

"Rex is the same man he has been since he was 20 years old," his wife, Becky, shared. "His values and morals are the same."

## A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABCS Executive Director

The little girl probably looked forward to getting mail from time to time. For most children, this is a treat. Imagine the horror when the "letter" exploded. Lately, we have been reading about the damage done by mail bombs.

Pastors can understand. Most of them have received a "mail bomb" at one time or another. These rarely do physical damage, but these "mail bombs" still inflict pain. These bombs come in the form of anonymous letters of criticism and complaint. Pastors learn to recognize them before they open them. Usually they are typewritten or computer generated with no return address. They "blast" the pastor for whatever "sins" the anonymous sender has observed. The real damage is caused by the "bomber's" caustic yet "super-spiritual" attacks. These always include

the idea that if the pastor were really spiritual, he would do things just like the "bomber" wanted him to do them.

Once I read a "mail bomb" to my congregation. The church members expressed their anger and that was the last such letter I received. Most pastors suffer these attacks in silence.

The person who sent the mail bomb that injured the little girl was wrong. And he or she was a coward as well. The same can be said of those who send anonymous complaints to their pastors. Pray for and encourage your pastor and church staff. The church does not need any "mail bombers."

■ Have you read *Soul Management* by Wayne Schmidt (Zondervan, 1996)? This is a management book that is based on a study of Ecclesiastes. The best part is the author's extensive quotations and illustrations.

### Executive director's schedule:

Feb. 8-14 Executive Directors Meeting, San Francisco, CA

Feb. 16 (a.m.) First Baptist Church, Crawfordsville

Feb. 17-18 Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City

Feb. 20 (p.m.) Evangelism Conference, Mt. Zion Association

## Woman's Viewpoint



Sandra Hinkson

Markham Street Church, Little Rock

Do you ever catch yourself trying to help the Lord out because things aren't happening fast enough for you or you don't understand what's going on so you "figure it out" for yourself only to be very wrong? Throughout life I have found myself trying to get one step ahead of the Lord. After such an experience I think, "How could I be so stupid? Surely, I'll never do that again!"

A little over 13 years ago I had one of those valuable teaching times with the Lord. My husband Ed had begun a new ministry in Little Rock after pastoring 10 years in Pine Bluff. We had a house to sell before the family could move to Little Rock on a permanent basis. Our children, Eddie and Kim, and I commuted back and forth on the weekends from Pine Bluff to

Little Rock for 18 months as we waited for our house to sell. Towards the end of those months I had figured out the answer to my "Why, Lord?" The Lord was giving me time to learn to take care of all those things Ed had been taking care of because Ed was going to die. That had to be the explanation! For a couple of weeks I lived in fear and was near a nervous breakdown. Finally I realized I had to repent of my fears, my impatience, my running steps ahead of the Lord, and face life one step at a time with faith in my Savior.

As many of you know, the Lord did not take Ed away from me through death but through his work with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for the next 12 years. The Lord had been preparing me for something, but not what I in my impatience figured it to be.

I still occasionally want to get one step ahead of the Lord, but through experience I know it's much better to wait patiently on Him! (Psalm 40:1).

Sandra Hinkson is the minister of education at Markham Street Church in Little Rock. Her husband, Ed, is director of missions for Pulaski Association. He is the parents of two young adult children. Sandy is the president-elect of Director of Missions Wives.

## quotes



"God did not call us to embalm dead people. He called us to raise them to life by His spoken word."

—Evangelist Bill Fay

"Music catches the ear, speaks to the mind and moves the heart.

Music, as a tool for the gospel, has great impact."

—Rob Hewell, director,

Arkansas Baptist church music ministries department

"You cannot become a godly man without a personal love relationship with God."

—Jim Burton,

men's ministries director,

SBC Brotherhood Commission

# ARKANSAS BAPTIST

new magazine

Volume 86, Number 3 • USPS 068021

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The Arkansas Baptist (ISSN 1040-6058) is published bi-monthly by the Arkansas Baptist News Magazine, Inc., 6014 W. Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201. Subscription rates are \$6.85 per year (individual) \$6.36 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$7.08 per year (Group Plan). Periodical Postage Paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Arkansas Baptist, P.O. 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. Telephone 501-376-4701.

ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE

# Doctrine study highlights Baptist roots

**W**hen was the last time your church conducted a Baptist doctrine study? Amid all the Bible studies, missions programs, life application seminars, music training and softball tournaments, in-depth doctrine study often takes a back seat in most Southern Baptist congregations. According to the latest statistics from the Baptist Sunday School Board, fewer than 15 percent of churches hosted an annual doctrine study last year.

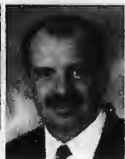
Why? There are countless reasons — and excuses — ranging from concerns that doctrine study is too dry and dull to questions about relevance and time priorities. The fact remains, however, that doctrine study is an essential ingredient in personal spiritual growth.

During a personal witnessing testimony at last week's Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference, Sam Dunham, pastor of Hopewell Church in Harrison, emphasized the importance of Christians having a strong doctrinal basis. Noting that he and his wife co-teach lay evangelism classes to their church members, he said they encourage members to memorize the articles of faith in the Baptist Faith and Message statement.

"When you teach people how to win souls to Jesus, give them a doctrinal basis," he urged. "When we send them out to witness...if they are grounded in the doctrine, they can rise above anything."

Dunham's challenge is especially timely this year as Southern Baptists have the opportunity to study the revised edition

**Straight  
from the  
Editor**



**Trennis Henderson**

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

of *The Baptist Faith and Message*, one of the last major works written by the late Herschel H. Hobbs.

During the annual doctrine study seminar held in conjunction with the Evangelism Conference, seminar leader John Gilbert noted that Hobbs was "a wonderful man of God" who "loved to preach, loved to write and loved Southern Baptists." Hobbs, a former Southern Baptist Convention president, was chairman of the SBC committee that drafted the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement.

Gilbert, pastor of First Baptist Church in Poplar Bluff, Mo., helped generate enthusiasm for the study among the 80 or so people who attended the training. Encouraging the leaders to "teach out of the overflow" of their own study as they present the seminar in churches and associations across the state, Gilbert clearly taught out of the overflow of his own extensive preparation and knowledge.

Citing common excuses for falling to

schedule a doctrine study, Gilbert said some people claim that "theology and doctrine are suffocating" while others voice concern that "doctrine employs the language of yesterday."

As a result, Gilbert warned, many Christians "have lost the ability to wrestle with great issues. We say we believe the Bible from cover to cover but we have substituted slogans for what the Bible really teaches us." He said church members need the opportunity to address such questions as: What does the Bible teach and what do we believe?

"Know who you are; know what you believe," he encouraged. "You will better serve God when you appreciate what your faith is all about."

Emphasizing the need "to fortify our people" through doctrine study, Gilbert pointed out, "We lose a lot of sheep. We need to protect our sheep. Protecting our people from heresy becomes a wonderful motivation for study."

This year's Baptist Doctrine Study is set for April 21-25 on the SBC calendar but churches can plan the study on any dates that fit their schedule. Additional details are available from the ABS' discipleship and family ministry department.

Affirming the importance of studying such biblical truths as revelation, illumination and inspiration, Gilbert reminded Arkansas Baptists, "The purpose of Scripture is that it has a very definite redemptive purpose....You need to know your roots."

## 'Ye are all one in Christ Jesus'

**C. Ben Mitchell**

SBC Christian Life Commission

Pastor Tony Evans has observed, "The apostle Paul, when faced with the racism of Christian Jews against Christian Gentiles, did not orchestrate a study, finance a sensitivity session or start a protest march; he confronted inappropriate action with simple, clear, objective truth."

Nowhere is the apostle's method more clearly seen than in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." In this one simple verse Paul demonstrates that racial barriers are impossible to maintain in the family of God.

First, with respect to salvation, we are all one in Christ Jesus. God's plan and purpose from the beginning was to redeem a people of every nation, kindred, tongue and tribe. In Christ, all differences pale. Without Him we are all lost sinners. In Him, we have new life.

Second, with respect to fellowship, we are all one in Christ Jesus. Being "one" in Christ means we enjoy the unity of fellowship through His redemptive work on Calvary's cross. God

doesn't relate to His children on the basis of their race, ethnic background or cultural heritage. Neither should we.

Third, with respect to mission, we are all one in Christ Jesus. Paul goes on to say, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (v. 29). What was that promise? The apostle reminds us in Galatians 3:8-9 that the covenant promise was twofold: God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and through Abraham and his seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

In light of these simple, clear and objective truths, what shall we do? We must refuse to perpetuate ethnic bigotry and hatred. Such is contrary to the gospel of the risen Christ. We should enjoy the fellowship that is ours through Him. In heaven we will worship with our brothers and sisters of every nationality and race. Let us begin to do so now. We have no time to squander on petty issues. Together all the redeemed have a mission to bless the nations with the gospel of justification through faith in Christ Jesus. We are all one in Christ Jesus, and we want to see others joined to Him in the unity of the faith and the bond of peace.

As Southern Baptist observe Race Relations Sunday on Feb. 9, rejoice in these simple, clear, objective truths.

**race relations**



Tom Elliff



Bill Fay



Don Wilton

# 'People Sharing Jesus'

## Evangelism Conference program features testimonies, sermons, witness training

**Russell H. Dillard**

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

An estimated 400 participants were urged to become "People Sharing Jesus" during the 1997 Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference held Jan. 27-28 at First Church in Little Rock. The event was marked by evangelistic messages, inspirational music, personal testimonies and witness training.

"The conference accomplished its intent of getting out the message of 'People Sharing Jesus,'" said conference planner Paul McClung, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department. "Those who spoke not only talk about evangelism, but role-model it."

McClung said the four "personal witnessing testimonies were excellent examples of people sharing Jesus with people in the context of their work. That's the message we wanted to get out and it did."

He emphasized that he was "very pleased" with the response of participating pastors. "The inspiration was there, but so were commitments. There were a couple of invitations given and that's a little unusual in the conference, but the response was positive. One pastor said, 'I went home with something in my hand, but something deeper in my heart.'"

McClung also voiced appreciation for the music, which he described as "an integral part of worship. These are God-called people with a vital message."

A variety of music played a significant part in the conference program. Participants heard Arkansas soloists Sandra Hitt, Barry Law, Glen Blevins, Johnpaul Moccia, Nancy Greer, Mike Franklin and Chrissy Lester. Participating choirs included the celebration choir and orchestra of First Church in Little Rock, the Master Singers

and Singing Women of Arkansas and the drama team of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock.

Rob Hewell, director of the ABSC church music ministries department, emphasized the tie between music and evangelism. "Music is a powerful communicator of values, possibly the most powerful of all. Music catches the ear, speaks to the mind and moves the heart. Music, as a tool for the gospel, has great impact."

Participants heard a number of out-of-state speakers at the conference, including Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., who shared "three keys to effective ministry" during the Monday evening session.

Preaching from Romans 1, he explained that "there is a great deal of difference between success and effectiveness."

Elliff said that to be effective in ministry, "you first must be confident in the Controller of your life." Reading from the passage, he highlighted the phrase, "Paul, a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." That is translated a bondservant. "If you have that kind of confidence in the Lord, your life will be a life that is marked...your life will be marked and it will be mastered."

Second, he noted, "You must be conscious of God's call in your life. The call of God is intuitive, it is more than logical...and it is immutable. You can argue and do something less, but it is always something less."

Elliff said the third key to an effective ministry is that "you must be content within the circumference of your life. Where has He planted you? Isn't it interesting how we always covet someone else's perimeters?"

Bill Fay, an evangelist from Englewood, Colo., said during the Monday evening

session that Baptists are guilty of "the sin of silence" by not witnessing. Fay, who told listeners that as an unbeliever he had been a businessman, racketeer and prostitution-house owner, is now chaplain for the Colorado Rockies baseball team and author of "How Can I Share My Faith Without an Argument?" witness training materials.

Preaching from II Kings 4, Fay emphasized that "Elijah was called to deal with the dead. We all have to deal with the spiritually dead. No matter where I go or in what denomination I'm in, there is a collective, persuasive sin, there is a collective deadness.

"We've found a modern way to deny Christ in our churches today—silence," he said. "God did not call us to embalm dead people. He called us to raise them to life by His spoken word."

"How do we say we have such good worship on Sunday and leave into silence on Monday?" Fay asked. "If you become keepers of your aquarium instead of fishers of men, you will become spiritually dead....Your churches will fossilize."

Participants also heard messages by Don Wilton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C., and Thom Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism, Missions and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

### Overcoming discouragement

Wilton told conference participants they can "Overcome Discouragement" by using six biblical principles found in Nehemiah 4. "Discouragement is one of the most dreaded ailments that affect pastors and ministers today," he said. "Discouragement is all across our nation and particularly among believers."

The six principles include: "Talk to God, never lose heart, remember who God is, prepare yourself, stick to the assignment and claim the victory."

Wilton then shared "seven practical realities" to overcoming discouragement, including: "Check your energy level, both physically, emotionally and spiritually"; "make sure that you have proper exercise"; and "spend time with someone who is not discouraged."

He said other practical realities include: "Do something for someone else"; "accomplish a task"; "attempt to learn important lessons from difficult situations and personal mistakes"; and "always remember that God has not lost His sense of humor."

Speaking during the conference's closing session, Wilton asked listeners, "How can I know that I know that I'm saved?" Acknowledging that he was "preaching to people at the top of their spiritual lives," he added, "Have you ever doubted your salvation as a pastor, as a minister of the gospel of Christ? The ques-



tion is not whether or not one can lose salvation, but is one saved to begin with?"

Sharing five scriptural "acid tests" for salvation, he said: "If you can answer these in the affirmative, you are saved." They include:

■ "If I am sensitive to sin (1 John 1:8). If we claim to be without sin, there are two consequences. We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

■ "If I am submissive to God's commands (1 John 2:3). I cannot serve the Lord Jesus Christ unless I submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

■ "Are we saturated with God's love? (1 John 3:14). There is only one way that other people know that you know Jesus Christ - it is because of the way you love them."

■ "If I'm filled with God's Spirit (1 John 4:13)."

■ "If I believe the Scriptures (1 John 5:13). These things do not contain the Word of God, they are the Word of God."

During the Tuesday afternoon session, Rainer asked, "What do we think about when we think about what we want?" Noting that the children of Israel "were going to go into a land of milk and honey" as they prepared to enter the Promised Land, he added, "It was good, but it was a change. Get ready to cross over into the land of Jordan."

Rainer said he found "two truths" from the Israelites' situation:

The first, he said, is that "the courageous believer accepts change as a part of God's plan. It was a new home, a new lifestyle and even a new way of battle...but it was God's plan."

Second, he added, "God's world that He created may change, but the Lord of Lords never changes."

During the Tuesday evening session, Rainer urged participants to "carry the light of Jesus" to the world. Preaching from Zechariah 4, Rainer said three truths in the passage include:

■ Some people see ruins, some people see rebuilding. "The people of Israel had a vision for the temple, for the opulence and material wealth, but now they saw ruins. God said, 'Don't see ruins, see Me and with Me, all things are possible.'"

■ God has called you and He will strengthen you. "Do you believe that the God who has called you will carry you through the completion of your mission?"

■ God will empower you if your single motivation is to bring Him the glory. "We are not rebuilding ruins that are brick and mortar, but we need to rebuild our own ruins for our temple."

"God has said to carry the light...despite the lack of success by earthly standards," Rainer concluded. "He has not called us to success, but to obedience."

## Testimonies highlight witnessing

Four Arkansas Baptists working in a variety of ministries shared personal testimonies during last week's Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference.

"During (a mission trip to Romania), we couldn't share the gospel fast enough. We saw 14 people saved at one time. I haven't yet had a day in Dixsonville where I saw 14 people saved in one day. That's exactly why we need to stay in Dixsonville. We can't give up on people just because there is a church in their town. God has taught me that some are ready now, but some are not ready yet. Some need our ministry of love before their hearts open up." Speaking about an unsaved woman in Dixsonville, she said, "The hours her tutor, Pam, has spent teaching her to read are going to matter to her. Hours working with Donna in the clothes closet are going to matter. We must tell them about Christ, not just with word and tongue, but in deed and love. People in Dixsonville or those that live down the street are saying, 'No one has told me about Jesus before.'" — *Diana Lewis, church and community ministries consultant for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, who leads a ministry in the rural community of Dixsonville*



"The Holy Spirit of God is doing its work. There has been a stirring of God in our church and in our community. We have 10 souls witness in our church. We've got 10 people that have the love of Jesus in their hearts. They have a vital, saving relationship with Jesus in their lives." To prepare laypeople to witness, "everywhere my wife and I have gone, we co-teach by evangelism. People have to have a doctrinal base. We teach lay evangelism materials, but we make them memorize the articles of faith in the Baptist Faith and Message. We give these people the basics. We study it perpetually. It gives them a strong missionary message and when we send them out to witness...if they are grounded in the doctrine, they can rise above anything. When you teach people how to win souls to Jesus, give them a doctrinal basis." — *Sam Dunham, pastor of Hopewell Church in Harrison, whose congregation has more than tripled over the last three years because of witnessing efforts of laypeople in the church*



"One of our volunteers told me that going through our entrance was like going through the gates of hell...and it is. But every day I go in there with a bucket of water. Many Christians are under the impression that every inmate rushes to the chaplain and asks, 'What must I do to be saved?' Actually, less than 20 percent of the inmates attend chapel. As your chaplain, when I get behind the pulpit...I unashamedly tell those inmates that Jesus Christ is the way to salvation. I've had a lot of people ask me, 'How do you stay in that ministry that long?' I'm reminded of the drug addict that came to my office. He had been using drugs all his life and had contracted HIV. He said, 'Chaplain, I'm without hope. What can be done?' I said, 'I can lead you to Someone who can give you hope in a hopeless situation.' I shared with this man the plan of salvation and he opened his heart and life to Jesus. Two weeks later he came back and said, 'I'm as happy as I've ever been.' He also led his wife to the Lord. That man will probably die of AIDS one day, but he will have a home in heaven." — *John Belken, chaplain for the Arkansas Department of Correction's North Central Unit in Calico Rock, who has been a correctional facility chaplain for more than nine years*



"To say Craig Harper was a nontraditional student is an understatement. He has a ponytail and is a member of a fraternity. He was very popular with students. I said, 'Craig, tell me about your relationship with the Lord.' He said, 'I'm not really interested in that right now.' This year when I asked him...he said, 'I'm still not ready for it.' At our annual student retreat...he got both barrels with Experiencing God. At the end of the retreat, I asked if anyone was ready (for salvation), but there was no hand from Craig. The next Tuesday, as I walked into the BSU, a student said, 'Jeff, Craig's ready.' I didn't have to ask what he was ready for. It was so exciting to be the first people to pray with him after he accepted Christ. The message that God laid on my heart is sometimes it takes a year, sometimes it takes more than a year. But there are many, many more Craig Harpers out there." — *Jeff Noble, director of the Baptist Student Union at the University of Arkansas at Monticello*







Festival of Evangelists officers are (left to right) Johnny Jackson of Little Rock, secretary/treasurer; Phillip Brown of Gurdon, president; Richard Sager of Berryville, music director; Cliff Mayton of Warren, pastor advisor; and Clarence Shell of Bryant, vice president.

## Festival of Evangelists affirms 'urgency' of sharing the gospel

### WILLIE GIBB

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

**T**he urgency of sharing the gospel in Arkansas and around the world was the emphasis for the fifth annual Festival of Evangelists sponsored by the Arkansas Vocational Evangelists Association Jan. 27 at First Church of Little Rock.

Cliff Mayton, pastor of Immanuel Church in Warren and pastor advisor for the group, told the listeners he believes Satan is working to destroy their joy as spokesmen for God. "However, Jesus has given you power to overcome his influence," he added.

Sharing the personal encouragement he received from the study of Joshua, he said, "As I studied this Scripture, I began to center around Caleb because he wholly followed the Lord, letting Him determine his character.

"In today's world there is a dichotomy which says what a man does publicly and privately are different," Mayton continued. "Therefore, there is a great deal of pressure to go with the crowd rather than having the unquestionable character and conviction of Caleb to stand for God regardless of what the crowd does."

He challenged the evangelists to saturate themselves with the Word of God so they too could have the confidence and courage of Caleb, who understood what it meant to trust in the sovereign God.

"We as pastors and evangelists are tempted to falter while doing battle with today's world and with the saints in the churches," Mayton concluded. "However, we too will have our conquest if we wholly

follow and trust in the sovereign God."

Paul McClung, acting evangelism department director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, noted two characteristics of unsaved people: they are scattered as sheep without a shepherd and they have no peace of mind because of their need to hold onto things of the world.

"These factors contribute to the statistics which show that seemingly 97 percent of Southern Baptist churches are not reaching a world which is dry rotting from the inside out," he said.

"Until Arkansas Baptists look with compassion on those one million in our state with problems, they will never be able to reach them," he said.

Rob Randall, an evangelist from Dallas, Texas, was the closing speaker for the festival. Speaking from 1 Kings, he said today's world is living in a time of drought. "If we do not see revival come soon, the drought is going to become more severe," he declared.

Randall noted that at one time there were about 1,500 Southern Baptists listed as full-time evangelists compared to the current listing of only 100. "Churches have gone from three-week evangelistic events to two weeks to one day and one-third of our SBC churches do not have any kind of evangelistic events for reaching the lost.

"God will not bless our disobedience for not reaching out to those who do not know Him," he added. "Today there are 28 million children who have alcoholic parents, 92 percent of our high school students drink. We need to become obedient and help them discover that nothing satisfies the soul like Jesus."

## Evangelist emphasizes 'How to Share Your Faith Without an Argument'

Detailing "How to Share Your Faith Without an Argument," Colorado evangelist Bill Fay told Evangelism Conference participants that the witnessing plan counters fear of rejection by focusing on the witness asking questions and then listening.

"Questions put you in control," he said, "because everybody has an opinion whether we know anything about it or not. How can they argue with you when it's their own opinion that is being stated?"

In Fay's three-step approach to personal witnessing, witnesses first present "the approach" by asking: "Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?" "To you, who is Jesus?" "Do you think there is a heaven or hell?" "If you fell over and died, where would you go? If heaven, why would God let you in?" and "By the way, if what you were believing was not true, would you want to know?"

"If their answer is yes, open your Bible," he shared. "If no, do nothing. It is the Holy Spirit's job to convict. It is your job to ask the questions."

Second, he said, "Have them read Luke 10:26 and ask, 'What does it say to you?'" He emphasized that "they will be doing the reading, they will be doing the talking, the Holy Spirit will be doing the convincing and God's Word will bring the conviction."

Finally, those witnessing conduct "the close" with five questions. "This is the part Christians fear the most," Fay said. But, he emphasized, witnesses must ask:

- Are you a sinner?
- Do you want forgiveness?
- Do you believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and rose again?
- Are you willing to surrender your life to Jesus Christ?
- Are you ready to invite Jesus Christ into your life and into your heart?

"If their yes is from the heart, they are saved," he said. "How do you deal with the no? Ask, 'Why?'"

Fay's other witnessing suggestions include:

- Do not use your 'big boomer' Bible, use a 'pocket dorringer' size Bible.
- "It takes 7.6 times for someone who hears the gospel to receive it."
- "Use the Bible. There is a different dynamic using the Word of God than when you do not. I'm not anti-tract, but there is a different dynamic." (10/11)



## Conference features three Arkansas leaders

Three Arkansas Baptist leaders were among featured speakers during last week's Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference. State convention president Rex Horne, executive director Emil Turner and Arkansas Baptist Executive Board president Chuck McAllister were among nine speakers who highlighted the theme, "People Sharing Jesus."

Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, preached from Ezra 3 during the conference's opening session. After the foundation of the temple was rebuilt and a celebration began, "people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people," Horne noted.

Warning that noise can produce false illusion, division and "senseless shouting," Horne asked, "What does our noise mean in our churches?"

"We have the message this is sure and certain," he affirmed. "We know what will stand today and what will stand for eternity. We know how to minister to people.... We should be able to make that message clear and understandable."

Preaching a second message from John 8 about the adulteress brought before Jesus, Horne said the scribes and Pharisees

"hated Jesus and gave their lives to trying to trap him."

Citing examples of condemnation, conviction and compassion in the passage, Horne noted that although the woman was guilty, her accusers were merely using her as an instrument to attack Jesus.

Highlighting Christ's compassion and the accusers' guilt, Horne added, "Christ did not condemn her....The ones who would stone her couldn't and the One who could stone her wouldn't....Who are we to cast a stone at those who are different from us when our Lord showed compassion?"

Emil Turner's message from Luke 7 focused on Jesus raising a widow's son in the city of Nain. Noting that "Jesus had a tremendous funeral ministry," Turner said, "If there is ever an example of evangelism by a pastor, it is the funeral ministry of Jesus."

Highlighting the importance of effective pastoral ministry today, he described such efforts as "the day-to-day movement in and out among our people."

Effective pastoral ministry "requires purpose, power and the presentation of the cross," Turner insisted. Explaining that Christ's purpose at Nain "was to raise the

dead," he said ministers today are called to bring people "from deadness to life."

"Evangelism for pastors must be purposeful," he shared. "There are people who need to be saved. Your job is to have that as your purpose."

Chuck McAllister, pastor of Second Church in Hot Springs, preached about "the sin of Job," emphasizing that "it's the sin of Job that's drying up our churches."

Although Job "reverenced God with all his heart," made his family a priority and was materially blessed, "it's the sin of Job that keeps us as Arkansas Baptists from experiencing a spiritual awakening."

Noting that Job's sin was not alcoholism, homosexuality, adultery, child abuse or any other prominent social sin, McAllister said Job's sin was that he was "at ease." Quoting Job's words in Job 16:12 that "I was at ease," he added, "We can easily succumb to the mentality of Job."

"The church has been at ease for too long," he declared. "Neighborhoods are going to hell in your community. Are you at ease? People in Arkansas are dying and going to hell. Are you at ease?"

"There's hope," he concluded. "Just don't be at ease. Accept the responsibility of telling others about Jesus."

## HMB directors cite keys to personal witnessing

Colleen Backus

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Emphasizing the importance of personal witnessing, two staff members of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board preached during last week's Evangelism Conference.

Describing himself as "a certified heresy hunter," Phil Roberts, HMB director of interfaith witness, said he sees his role as witnessing "outside the choir."

"Those who have a different notion of God or gods desperately need the gospel," Roberts said. Preaching from Matthew 7:15-20, he pointed out that Jesus' teaching to beware of false prophets relates directly to interfaith evangelism.

Citing three things that Jesus noted about counterfeit Christianity, Roberts said the first truth is that Jesus commented on the fact of false prophets. "He does not put it in a conditional mood," Roberts noted. "It's not 'if false prophets come' — it is a declarative statement."

Second, Roberts said Jesus pointed out the features of false prophets. "You will know them by the internal quality of their fruits. They aren't going to say, 'Hi, we're the local cult.' They are going to speak from the Bible."

Jesus also emphasized the fate of the false prophets, Roberts said. "They will be cut down, thrown down into the fire — no cult group ever lasts."

Jerry Pipes, director of the HMB's personal evangelism department, also highlighted the necessity of a Christian's commitment to witnessing. "Revival is not a meeting — revival is a Christian who is rightly related to God," he said.

"The disciples were marked by their quick obedience to the will of God," Pipes pointed out. The principle is found in the

context of Acts 1-2, he noted. "The Great Commission make one thing clear — it is God's plan to saturate the world with the gospel by every member of God's church being involved."

"Is quick obedience descriptive of our congregations?" Pipes asked. "No, most will never bring another person to the Lord. When we think about tough witnesses, we think about Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons, not Baptists or Methodists. What does God's Word say about being witnesses? Be my witnesses — tell what you know. Move your lips!"

The disciples also knew they could not do it alone, but needed the help of the Holy Spirit, Pipes pointed out. "They prayed for 10 days. Praying is admitting you need God — it is the first indicator of dependence." The second indication was that the disciples were hungry to grow in their faith. "They did not meet weekly, they met daily."

"How long has it been since you dreamed about your relationship with Jesus," Pipes asked. "Are there specific measurable goals that you want to accomplish with Christ?"

In a second message, Pipes cited the importance of having close Christian friends who inspire one another to excellence. "Why do Christians fail?" he asked. "Why do they make commitments for excellence and settle for so much less?"

The answer lies in Hebrews 10:23-25, he noted. "Here's the principle: if you want to be a winner, experience God's best, have a close circle of influence that will encourage and motivate for excellence," Pipes explained.

"If you want to be a winner, you need best friends who will challenge you for excellence," he said, adding that "you need to be that kind of friend — a person of vision. Vision is four things: the ability to see, the faith to believe, the courage to do, the hope to endure."



## User-friendly worship

### 'Casual' style, focus on the basics attract unchurched to Little Rock congregation

Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

**F**reedom of worship!" exclaimed Jerry Metheny when asked about his church's attraction to members. The Church at Rock Creek is part of a small group of Arkansas churches offering an alternative worship style to attract the unchurched.

"I came a year ago from a church I had been at for 14 years," Metheny said. What attracted him, though, was "more than freedom of worship. We had more songs, praise songs that felt like I was really talking to the Lord."

Pointing to the results of the relaxed, contemporary worship style of the church, he added that "new people are coming here every Sunday" because "they can see the friendliness and openness of people to each other."

Rock Creek, a Southern Baptist congregation, began its ministry Nov. 12, 1995, with a seed group of 25, said pastor Mark Evans. He noted that attendance has grown to approximately 400, including Gov. Mike Huckabee and his wife, Janet.

More important than the numbers, said Evans, is that "we have seen more than 50 people ask Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior and people who may not have gone to church or had problems and through Jesus living in them are getting over their problems."

The church's membership numbers, he added, are much less important than its

attendance. "If you join our church and in six months you don't show up, you're not a member here anymore. You're dropped from the rolls. People that attend is the number we look at."

Evans said the congregation follows a contemporary organization and worship style because "it's more user-friendly in today's culture. It's a place where people can come to church and feel like their lives fit into church, not that they have to change to fit into church."

## intentional innovation

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP IN ARKANSAS CHURCHES

### SECOND IN A SERIES

Evans noted that the church has only one target group: "people that don't go to church." He also has only one goal for members and visitors: "Every Sunday I want to step up there and be able to show how God and the Bible are relevant to their lives today."

While focusing on relevance, the church has utilized a variety of methods to get visitors through the door, including line dancing, advertising on a pop-format radio station and a promotional mailing.

Anyone who has grown up in the Southern Baptist tradition of worship needs only walk into a worship service at Rock Creek to notice differences. The church is located in a warehouse and office complex. To welcome the congregation prior to wor-

ship, instrumentalists play jazz arrangements of Christian music.

The congregation sings hymns while lyrics are flashed on an overhead screen. Following Evans' sermons, which he delivers in informal dress, no walk-to-the-front invitations are given. Members and visitors making decisions simply sign a card indicating their decisions. Church staff or other members follow up the decisions during the week.

The church's organization is just as unique as its worship style and location. "The biggest deal is not how we worship, but how we do church overall," Evans underscored.

A team of five lay pastors helps lead members in each of the church's five areas of focus: fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism and worship. Evans said the five-point emphasis, borrowed from Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, Calif., "is a baseball diamond. We want to take everyone from first base...to home plate, but everything's centered around the pitcher's mound, which is worship."

Part of that worship occasionally includes testimonies from the pews, or, in the case of Rock Creek, folding chairs.

One member testified that she is "single with no extended family. This church is my family....People let me be me and not try to fit me into a mold."

Another noted that "I didn't know what a Christian was. (The church) helped me get my life back together."

Members are equally candid away from worship. Nona White said she and her family "had been church-hunting for a year. This church is all about relationships — we feel love and acceptance here."

Thirteen-year-old Vanessa Keating said during her first Sunday at Rock Creek that she "liked it." She noted that Evans "has goals, he is humorous, serious and wasn't screaming and yelling."

Evans said church leaders have growth plans that include a multi-purpose facility which can offer a variety of opportunities for the lives of members and visitors.

Admitting that Rock Creek's style differs from most churches in the state, Evans emphasized, "That's not to say that our way is *the* way. It's just *a* way. That doesn't mean that churches that have traditional worship are wrong. They're great, too, because they will reach people that we will never reach."

"But people can come to worship no matter what their background," he added. "You can come to our worship service and sit next to somebody who hasn't been in church in 15 years, you can sit next to a former pastor or you can sit next to the governor."

Eddie Jones Sr. said his new ministry in Arkansas "is going to be great because of the opposition. The devil is trying to frustrate me," he noted, with everything from intestinal pains to telephone hookup problems to finding a home.

Despite the problems, Jones, black church extension associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department since Jan. 1, said he looks forward to starting new black works, even if one of the problems he faces turns out to be racism.

Jones has been involved in church starting in Mississippi since 1983, when he established that state's first black Southern Baptist congregation, Christ Temple Baptist Church in Moss Point. He also started two others, including Victory Temple in Greenville, as a Home Mission Board missionary.

Jones noted that Race Relations Day, which Southern Baptists observe Feb. 9, can be a good starting point for improving race relations in Arkansas, but warned that a one-Sunday recognition won't cure racism.

"It's easy to put a bandage on a problem and call it healed, but there's a lot more that needs to be done in race relations," he commented. "Just setting aside a Sunday out of the year to build race relations is not going to do it. The way you do it...from the local church perspective rather than trying to do it on the state or national level. We need to show love to the person next door or around the corner or the person in the project as well as we say we love the person in African countries. It's easy to say we love them, but what about the problem in our own back yard?"

"The local Baptist church can build the best race relations simply by knocking on every door in their community, involving the whole community and refusing to exercise white flight," he said. "When people see your actions, they will see your heart."

#### White fear, black distrust

Capt. Dawson Williams, the Arkansas National Guard's only full-time chaplain, said that racism relies on two factors to survive. "There is white fear and black distrust."

Williams, who is black, explained that white fear "is fear of the unknown. For instance, in a predominantly white organization, the top brass is afraid that, 'If we let these persons in, what will they do if they come into the inner circle?' So white fear is fear of shared power. 'Can we retain what we have if we share it?'"

"In predominantly white religious organizations, you need an amount of blackness to say you are inclusive, but every time one is about to be included in leadership, the fear comes in," he remarked.



# BLACK & WHITE

While Arkansas Baptists have made recent strides in race relations, how far do we still have to go?

Black distrust, he noted, "says, 'These are the people who resented any progress, such as the right to vote, and were last to embrace the civil rights efforts of the '60s.'"

"Fear will cause you not to empower people that you have reached and distrust will cause people to be less than the caliber of contributors they could be," he said.

Both Williams and Jones agree that the remedy for racism involves commitment to Christ and shared work.

"The answer comes when we adopt common ideals and common values and place them in priority above all else," said Williams. "They are at the apex of a triangle and, if you put one culture in one corner and another culture in the other, the closer they move to these ideals, the closer they are to one another. When being like Christ becomes our ultimate focus, it does the same."

"If we are concerned, we will help each other," agreed Jones. "Not just to say, 'We invite your church over, you invite us,' swap pulpits and claim, 'Race relations,

State missionary Eddie Jones says that race relations among churches are best improved through shared local ministry rather than special emphases.

we've done it.' That's baloney. 'Walk hand in hand doing projects together,' he urged. 'Walk hand in hand building churches together. Deal with the same problems day to day.'

Luke Flescher, minister of pastoral care and missions at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock, agreed with Jones. Although the predominantly-white congregation has celebrated race relations through joint services with the predominantly-black Gloryland Church in North Little Rock for the past four years, Flescher said the two congregations stress an "ongoing partnership."

"There's nothing wrong with having joint worship services," he said. "That's a good beginning, but that is not an end in itself. Our purpose is not to just have a worship service, but an ongoing partnership ministry."

Flescher, who is white, said good race relations has been a priority with the two churches "because we want to have a stronger sense of community," but added that "good relationships don't come without struggles and work."

"It's like marriage in a way," he commented. "We have our ups and downs, but underneath we realize that being a team, being Christians, is first. If that's not what we think, there's something sick with our relationship with God."

Organizationally, the key to Southern Baptist racial inclusion "is denying self," Williams remarked. "Self would say, 'I'm in a powerful organization that I must preserve for my children.' But, when you deny self, it says, 'I'm in a powerful organization that belongs to the Lord and it will be led in the future by whoever the Lord wants to lead it.'"

"Presently, we're seeing policy that is being made by Anglos. They set the agenda," noted Jones. "You will have to take blacks in at the very start and sit down at the table and talk, but you need to go a couple of steps further than that: We must be on a level field."

"We can speak in each other's churches, but what's going to happen when we get out there in the cotton fields, in a sense?" Jones asked. "That's how we build relations: picking cotton together. Once we do that, we can have fellowship on a level playing field. In Christ Jesus, it's level."

Invariably, Williams said, race relations boils down to a common faith. "Show me a white man who has the love of Christ, who has his hope built around what happened on the cross and is focused on the second coming and getting folks ready...that's my brother."

**The Volunteer/Part-Time Music Leaders Retreat** will be held Feb. 28-March 1 at Camp Paron. Glen Ennes, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, said the event "will train music directors, accompanists and children's choir leaders who minister in smaller membership churches." The program, which will begin Friday at 4 p.m. and conclude at 2:15 p.m. Saturday, will feature Baptist Sunday School Board music leaders Danny Jones and Martha Kirkland and ABCS executive director Emil Turner. The \$10 per person, registration fee will include materials and lodging. Participants must provide their own bedding and toiletries. Extension 5121.

**Two Literacy Missions training workshops**, to be held Feb. 20-23, will train literacy tutors for ministry. The Adult Reading and Writing Workshop will be held at the Central Association office in Benton, while the Tutoring Children and Youth Workshop will be held at Park Hill Church in Arkadelphia. More information is available from literacy missions coordinator Gail Williams at 501-922-4236.

**Celebrate Jesus 2000 packets** were mailed early from the Home Mission Board, said ABCS evangelism department associate Paul McClung, and his advice to pastors who have received the packets is to "hang on to them. You will be receiving more information and training from the associational office and state convention to go with the packet from the HMB." Celebrate 2000 is a strategy for local churches to reach every person for Christ in that church's local field by the year 2000. Extension 5222.

## TRAINING UPDATE

**The Handbell Festival**, set for March 14-15 at Sylvan Hills Church in North Little Rock, will feature two tracts to meet the proficiency needs of participating Arkansas Baptist youth or adult handbell choirs. In addition to training, Festival A is designed for experienced handbell

choirs and will feature a three- to five-octave mass choir, a festival concert and participants will ring for adjudication. New or developing choirs can attend Festival B, which will feature training and technique development, a three-octave mass choir and may ring solo with no adjudication. The festival cost is \$55 per choir. Extension 5121.

**The Church Media Library Conference** will be held Feb. 17-18 at Central Church in North Little Rock. The conference, which will train media library staff, will offer workshops in administration, book repair, classification, collection development, audio-visual maintenance and subject headings. The conference will feature leaders Pat Brown and Stephen Gateley, both media library consultants for the Baptist Sunday School Board, and Eva Nell Hunter, media library director for Central Baptist Church in Decatur, Ala. There is no cost for the event, but necessary resource books will be available for purchase at the book store at the event.

**The Southern Baptist Religious Education Association** will meet Feb. 13-15 in San Antonio at the St. Anthony Hotel. The program will focus on "turning our ministry challenges into victories in Christ," said Jeter Basden, president of the 1,100-member SBREA. The San Antonio-related theme is "Remember the Alamo! Turning Defeat into Victory in Congregational and Personal Conflict." Registration information is available by calling 817-292-7371.

**A web page for US-2 missionary applications** is available at [www.nambsbc.org](http://www.nambsbc.org). 5-2 missionaries are college graduates age 30 or younger at the time of application who serve two years. Completed application materials must be received no later than Feb. 18. A group interview session for selected applicants will be held in Atlanta April 11-13. Candidates who do not have access to the Internet may call the missionary personnel department at 770-410-6175.

For more information about Arkansas-related events, call 1-800-838-ABSC. In Little Rock, call 376-4791

## Winter Bible Study "EPHESIANS"

Friday, Feb. 7 - Sunday, Feb. 9



**Special Guest:**  
Dr. J.W. "Jack"

**MacGorman**

Distinguished Professor  
of New Testament,  
Southwestern Seminary

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Session 1: Feb. 7, Friday, 7-9 p.m.  
Session 2: Feb. 8, Saturday, 7-9 p.m.  
Session 3: Feb. 9, Sunday, 5-7 p.m.  
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# Building a legacy

Men explore ways to influence families, workplace at Legacy Builders Retreat

Communities are starving for positive male role models," Jim Burton told participants during a recent Legacy Builders Retreat at Camp Paron. He explained, however, that "men have the power to break the cycle of dysfunction within their family and to maintain positive attributes" by becoming men of God.

Burton, author of the Legacy Builders curriculum and director of men's ministries for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, led about 30 Arkansas men through the study Jan. 24-25.

The retreat was divided into four sessions that reviewed "The Profile of a Godly Man," "God's Man in the Home," "God's Man in the Church" and "God's Man in the Marketplace." Burton explained to the group that a man's legacy is "a measure of one's character, inner strength, conviction and direction. It's the part of you that lives on earth after your death."

Participant Lee Schoonover, a member of First Church in Ward, said his legacy is best seen from church-related work with boys.

"I'm not married, so I don't have a family and I work heavily in our community with the Royal Ambassador program," he remarked. "Seventy-five percent of those kids are from single-parent families and so, in a lot of instances, I'm the only man they know that goes to church."

"By far, these kids are my legacy. Their parents never darken the doorways of our church. They didn't even come to see them baptized."

Burton urged participants to become family leaders. Many men, he said, fall into the leadership categories of:

■ **Dictator.** "While he cares for his people, individual needs often go unmet."

■ **Sergeant.** "With this style, a team is built. There are good feelings about being on the team, but it is often a team that has an enemy. This leader needs something to conquer, something to be against."

■ **Coach.** "Again, team building is paramount. It is also cause-oriented. When individuals grow and use their skills for the good of the team, the team often wins. But he may manipulate his team for his career advancement."

■ **Mentor.** "It requires investing oneself in others. There is less pushing and more nudging, less talking and more listening. There are times, however, when a mentor needs to be directive."

Burton said that "a good leader is flexible, able to shift styles to meet the occasion. The best example of leadership was Jesus who repeatedly communicated His vision and always had the right words for those in need."

Brian Nagy, a member of First Church in Piggott, said he "was expecting to get information on how to encourage our men to be more active in the church and with their families," adding that "we got that, but on a more personal level. I felt like God spoke to us. It changed some areas where I need to

work on being a more godly father and husband."

Burton also emphasized the need to be like Bezalel in Exodus 31:1-5 in being a godly man in the marketplace. He noted that men should "be there, be your best, be goal-driven, be prepared and be patient" as they seek to be godly men in their respective marketplaces.

Harry Black, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Brotherhood department, said the retreat also was used as training for Legacy Builders leaders. "We now have three trained retreat leaders who can lead a Legacy Builders retreat for men in churches or associations."

Burton explained that because the Legacy Builders curriculum is produced by the Brotherhood Commission, it can be used for a men's retreat "to build on the excitement of men who have experienced Promise Keepers or used as an alternative to Promise Keepers. Since churches and associations sponsor the events, it's theirs."

While Burton said that more than 8,000 men had participated in Legacy Builders since its inception in mid-1995, "we're still getting too many church members. We need to bring in the lost guys."

Schoonover said the retreat led him "to try to do a little bit better in the way I act and talk and the things I do. Sometimes I get depressed because I see things not going in the direction I want them to. This gets you lifted back up."



**Legacy is a measure of one's character, inner strength, conviction and direction. It's the part of you that lives on earth after your death.**

**JIM BURTON**  
Director, Men's Ministries  
Brotherhood Commission

## Profile of a godly man

\* From Jim Burton at the Jan. 24-25 Arkansas Legacy Builders Retreat.

■ **Salvation.** You cannot become a godly man without a personal love-relationship with God. It's not enough to know about Jesus. Knowledge does not constitute a relationship. Relationship is formed through commitment, time and shared experiences.

■ **Calling.** A saved man is a called man. A man's calling relates to his family and his vocation. When laymen realize the power they have to minister within their family and marketplace, they begin to fulfill their calling.

■ **Wisdom.** God has called men to build a family that He will have control of the rudder. Give your family direction, and He will lead the vision that God places in your heart.

■ **Leadership.** Good leaders positively influence others in a family. There are some tough decisions that must be made in life that are always make being a family leader fun. How men make those decisions goes a long way toward shaping the personality of their children.

■ **Stick-to-it-iveness.** Too many men give up on their marriages, families and careers. They lack stick-to-it-iveness. Stick-to-it-iveness is the desire, commitment and ability to stay with a task until it's done.

## HMB study profiles 'typical' Baptist church

ATLANTA (BP)—The typical Southern Baptist church has 233 total members, including 168 resident members. The current pastor has been at the church three to four years. The church has 70 people in its Sunday morning worship service; reported five baptisms and five other additions during the 1994-95 church year; has 98 enrolled in Sunday School, with 55 in attendance; and gives 12 percent of tithes and offerings to missions.

This profile was derived by Southern Baptist Home Mission Board researchers from information supplied by more than 36,500 churches through the 1995 Annual Church Profile, according to HMB research director Phil Jones. "It is a picture of what I have called the 'typical' SBC church, which is a compilation of the median statistics of all the reporting churches," he explained. "That means half of all SBC churches are larger and half are smaller on any particular statistic."

The information indicates the current status of Southern Baptist churches as well as trends, Jones added.

"While large, growing churches receive a great deal of attention, the Southern Baptist Convention continues to be composed primarily of small churches," he noted. "Seventy percent of SBC churches have 400 or fewer members, and less than 10 percent have more than 900 members."

Jones also found that although most churches are small, 70 percent of Southern Baptists are members of larger churches. "A few mega-churches with several thousand members each can more than compensate for hundreds of small churches," he pointed out.

The study also shows that some growth indicators of the typical Southern Baptist church in 1995 may be smaller than the typical church 10 or 20 years ago, but Jones said reasons for declines are difficult to pinpoint.

"There were some problems with data collection the past couple of years causing some churches to not report, although I don't believe that would dramatically affect the outcomes," he said. "Some declines in the typical church baptism rate, Sunday School enrollment and attendance, and WMU enrollment appear to be due to declines in older established churches."

Jones emphasized that not all declines are negative. "The decrease in the median number of resident members is not really an unfavorable trend since the decline is due to the influx of new, smaller churches into the convention. In fact, the baptism rate would have declined even further if not for the starting of new churches in the convention."

The study showed substantial increases in church receipts. However, the increases were smaller when adjusted for inflation. "The income for the typical SBC church in 1995 would purchase just 14 percent more than in 1972," Jones said. Total mission gifts fared better, reflecting the "missions-mindedness of the typical SBC church."

Although the typical church has experienced some decline, statistics for the entire SBC continue to increase. The total number of members reported by Southern Baptists churches has grown 34 percent since 1970 — a time when most major Protestant denominations have experienced serious declines.

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## missionary notes

**Don and Diana Barr**, missionary associates to Italy, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: Via della Pila 10, 01100 Viterbo, Italy). He considers Salt Lake City, Utah, his hometown. The former Diana Barr, she was born in DeQueen and considers North Little Rock her hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1996.

**Steve and Sharon Ford**, missionaries to Portugal, are on the field (address: Rua Manuel Teixeira Gomes, No. 7, 4-E, Carnaxide, 2795 Linda-a-Velha, Portugal). He is a native of Magnolia and she is the former Sharon Curtis of Memphis, Tenn. They were appointed in 1983.

**Ted and Sue Lindwall**, missionaries to Guatemala, are in the States (address: 5512 Whitman Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76133). He was born in Missouri and also lived in southern California while growing up. The former Sue Francis, she was born in Morrilton. They were appointed in 1960.

**Sara and Bonnie Turner**, missionaries to Kenya, are in the States (address: 12 Edgemont Dr., Little Rock, AR 72209). He is a native of Van Buren. The former Bonnie Sherman, she was born in Ohio, and also lived in Pennsylvania. They were appointed in 1970, resigned in 1978 and reappointed in 1980.



Dr. Rex M. Horne Jr., pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, announces *10 Days in the Holy Land*, May 26-June 4, 1997. All inclusive price \$2,198 from Dallas (optional 3-day stopover in London). Assisted by Becky Horne, Alla B. and Bob Gladden. Call 376-3071 or 225-4285 for brochure.

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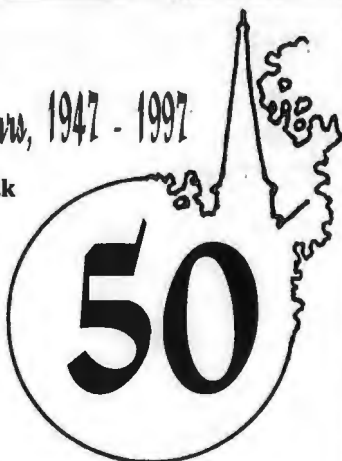
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## TRANSITIONS

**Mark Allen Ray** began serving Jan. 12 as pastor of South Highland Church in Little Rock. He and his wife, Terry, moved to Little Rock from Houston, Texas, where he had been pastor of Long Point Church. He previously was a staff member of churches in Texas and Michigan. Ray is a graduate of Baptist Bible College of Springfield, Mo., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**J. Roland Spears** began serving Jan. 29 as pastor of Immanuel Church in Carlisle, coming there from Colony Church of Orange, Texas. He previously was pastor of First Church of Gravette and has served other churches in Texas and Tennessee. Spears is a graduate of Houston Baptist University, Luther Rice Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Bettye, have two adult sons, Jay and Jeff.

**Matt Dunavant** will begin serving Feb. 9 as pastor of First Church in Hughes, coming there from Colt Church. He previously was pastor of Chidester Church and has served as a staff member of other churches in Arkansas and Mississippi. Dunavant and his wife, Stacey Susanne, are both graduates of Ouachita Baptist University. He currently is pursuing a master's degree at Mid-America Seminary. The Dunavants have one daughter, Meredith Susanne.

**Steven Pickett Hogard** is pastor of Village Church, Magnolia. He previously was interim pastor of Shiro Church in Shiro, Texas, and a staff member of other Texas churches. He is a 1996 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Robin, are both graduates of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. They have one daughter, Kaylee Elizabeth.

**Erover Blankenship** is serving as pastor of Nimmons Church rather than having retired as pastor of the church as reported in the Jan. 23 issue of the Newsmagazine.

**D. Marquis Black** has joined the staff of Trinity Church of Searcy as associate pastor of music and youth. Black, who has been a staff member of other Arkansas churches, has also served as a faculty member of the Stuttgart Public Schools and Draw Central High School in Monticello. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Monticello and has completed additional studies at Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe. He and his wife, Terri, have three children, Cassie Leigh, Mollie Erin and Hannah Rae.

**Shane Robertson** is serving First Church of Jacksonville as part-time minister of youth. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

**Gerald Morgan** of West Memphis, a layman and self-employed jeweler, is serving as interim pastor of Gilmore Church.

**Ralph B. Raines** recently resigned as pastor of Tulp Memorial Church, following more than 40 years of ministry as a pastor of churches in Faulkner Association, Little Rock, Leslie, Springdale, London, Camden and Carey Association. He is available to serve as a supply preacher and can be contacted at 13 Fox Hill Court, Jacksonville, AR 72076; phone 501-982-3889.

**Sean Gashling** has resigned as minister of music and youth at First Church of Ashdown. He has accepted a position as minister of music and outreach at First Church of Lebanon, Mo.

**W.J. "Dub" Black**, a retired bivocational pastor, is serving the third time as interim pastor of Bethany Church of Georgetown where he began his first ministry as a pastor in 1955. He also has been pastor and interim pastor of other Arkansas churches.

## ORDINATIONS

**South Side Church** of Fort Smith honored Perry Henson Jan. 26, naming him deacon emeritus for his years of Christian service and leadership to the church.

**Tuckerman First Church** ordained associate pastor Tim Walker to the gospel ministry Jan. 5.

**Helena First Church** recently ordained Bill Boozer as a deacon.

**Eudora Church** recently ordained Ralph Foster, Marvin Tackett and Gilmer Whittington to the deacon ministry.

**Alexander First Church** recently ordained John Paul Roberts, David W. Burnett Jr. and John E. Terry Jr. as deacons.

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## WMU to trademark offerings

TALLADEGA, AL (BP)—Plans to trademark Southern Baptists' two national missions offerings was announced during the recent meeting of Woman's Missionary Union's executive board.

WMU's plans to trademark the names, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, will be done in conjunction with the Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board, WMU executive director Dellanna O'Brien said.

O'Brien noted that the WMU executive board's original decision to apply for the trademarks came in June 1995, when the board instructed her to approach the presidents of the two mission boards about applying for joint trademarks.

The WMU board's 1995 action came in response to a flurry of activity earlier that year related to the FMB's application to trademark the name, Lottie Moon

Christmas Offering. The initial trademark application prompted extensive negative reaction in some Southern Baptist circles.

O'Brien said that since June 1995, she and other national WMU staff have worked to fulfill the board's directive. The process that has evolved since then calls for WMU to hold the trademarks on the two missions offerings, while providing exclusive license agreements with the two boards.

O'Brien said WMU and the FMB have finalized their agreement, but negotiations with the HMB are still under way. She said the agreements will insure "WMU will do what we have always done" in promoting the offerings.

According to FMB president Jerry Rankin, "WMU is registering it, but the agreement assures that it will be used exclusively by the Foreign Mission Board... so it is a win-win situation."

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## MISSIONS

# Celebrate annual 'Volunteers in Missions Day' Feb. 25

Ed Greathouse knows what it takes to volunteer for missions service. "If you can do anything at all, you can be a missions volunteer." Greathouse, state volunteer coordinator for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said there are "hundreds of ways" to serve in short- and long-term volunteer mission outlets.

"Locally, you can serve in ministries such as rescue missions and crisis closets," he explained. "You also can volunteer statewide by helping with ministries such as the Hispanic Migrant Mission at Hope or at the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children in Monticello."

Opportunities, he emphasized, are not limited to in-state ministries. "We need help with church construction and church enrichers to go to small churches and help build fellowship. Overseas, people are needed who have the gift of witnessing or pastoral supporters."

Southern Baptists will celebrate Volunteers in Missions Day Feb. 25. The theme urges Baptists to "Touch a Life...Be a Missions Volunteer."

Pointing to the Volunteers in Missions Day theme, Greathouse urged Arkansas Baptists to respond. "If you feel the call to minister through volunteer missions, you can contact me," he said. He is available to help volunteers "assess your interests and talents and where the Lord has called you to go. I can place you in a local mission activity, an interstate missions activity or send you to a foreign missions project."

Noting that missions volunteerism is "the fastest-growing mission effort in the Southern Baptist Convention," Greathouse said it is beneficial not only to missionaries and mission churches, "but is great for your own church."

"When you participate in your local community, you build your church from within," he emphasized. "The church

grows from within because of the activities of individuals called to go out.

"The church benefits from the experiences that the volunteers have had," Greathouse commented. "That's what churches need and they have a common cause to serve."

Greathouse said the ABSC missions

department has additional information about how Arkansans can participate in missions volunteerism and has free posters promoting Volunteers in Missions Day. To request materials or additional information, contact Greathouse toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5150.

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Dr. Ron Gaynor, consultant to Dr. Henry Blackaby

Sponsored by Arkansas River Valley Baptist Association

February  
24-25

### SESSIONS

12 noon - 1:00 p.m. Registration  
1:00 p.m. Dr. Calvin Miller, speaker  
2:30 p.m. Rev. Ron Gaynor, speaker  
6:30 p.m. Dr. Calvin Miller, speaker  
8:30 a.m. Rev. Ron Gaynor, speaker

## 1997 Arkansas Challengers Tournament of Sports March 21-22, 1997



### Events for Boys in 7th - 9th grade

Basketball Tournament  
Hot Shot Tournament  
Speak Out Competition  
Fun Fair (Volleyball and Basketball Shoot-out)

### Events for Boys in 10th - 12th grade

Basketball Tournament  
All Star Selection for Mission Trip  
Hot Shot Tournament  
Speak Out Competition

Locations: Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock • Park Hill Baptist Church,  
North Little Rock • Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock

For more information, call the Brotherhood Department  
1-800-838-2272 or 501-376-4791, ext. 5158

Oklahoma Baptist Homes  
for Children will be taking  
resumés for the position of  
**Director of Development**  
through the month of February.

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For sale — Wurlitzer piano, \$400. Call 501-753-5108.

**Fayetteville area director needed** — Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries is seeking an individual with professional counseling or social work license to fill the above position. Job includes Christian counseling, supervision of a small emergency shelter for children, and residential intake evaluation. Salary, excellent benefits, auto. Call Charles Flynn at 1-800-838-2272 or in Little Rock 376-4791, ext. 5187.

**Houseparents** — The Arkansas Baptist Home for Children in Monticello is seeking houseparent couples. Salary, life and health insurance, and paid annual leave. Call Royce Aston at 1-501-367-5358.

**Seeking** — The Washington-Madison Baptist Association is looking for a new director of missions. Those interested need to send letters of recommendations and resumes postmarked no later than March 31 to: Chairman of Search Committee, David Rouse, P.O. Box 200, Winslow, AR 72959.

**Worship leader** — with keyboard skill. New fast-growing innovative church located in Fayetteville, Arkansas, *Money Magazine* best ten cities in U.S. Non-traditional, creative environment. Worship band. Drama team. Lake Hills Church, 3065 N. College #187, Fayetteville, AR 72703; phone 501-634-3434, fax 501-443-9222 LAKEHC@JUNO.COM.

**Growing church seeks** — full-time youth/education minister. Send resume to Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 1791 Lake Lowndes Road, Columbus, MS 39702.

**Christian couple** — needed to manage association camp. Send resume to Search Committee, Canfield Baptist Assembly, P.O. Box 1566, Texarkana, AR 71854.

**Searching** — Small LINY congregation searching for full-time/bivocational pastor. College and seminary required. Age 35 and older with strong Bible-based preaching, outreach background and administrative skills. Send resume to: Trinity Baptist Church, Attn: Pastoral Search Committee, 1368 William Floyd Plwy, Shirley, NY 11967.

**Youth groups needed** — for summer missions. For information, cities, dates, costs, call 800-299-0385, Youth on Mission, Box 2095, Rocky Mount, NC 27802.

**Accepting resumes** — Central Baptist Church of Eureka, Missouri, is prayerfully accepting resumes until March 15, 1997, for a dynamic, full-time youth/music minister to serve in a rapidly growing community. Send resumes to Central Baptist Church, P.O. Box 66, Eureka, MO 63025, Attn: Search Committee.

**Needed** — Full-time secretary. Send resume to: Second Baptist Church, Attn: Tim Moore, 1117 N. James, Jacksonville, AR 72076.

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. Classified ads shall be restricted to church-related subject matter.

## VBS leaders train for 'stampede'

Yahool! Associational Vacation Bible School leaders will hit the trail to North Little Rock March 4, riding to Baring Cross Church for training. Trail boss Janet Williams of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department said the State VBS Clinic "will give associational VBS leaders the conference model to take back to their associations."

The 1997 VBS materials are riding under a new brand, "The Wild and Wonderful Good News Stampede: Telling Others About Jesus." Williams said the theme "is based on a rip-roaring, Wild West rodeo" that "kids, youth and adults can get excited about right out of the chute."

She said the clinic will feature a general round-up, then participants will be let out of the pen to attend age-group conferences.

Williams stressed the importance of training for the 1997 curriculum because

of changes from previous years. "This year the curriculum uses a schedule that allows older preschoolers and children to stay with the same teachers throughout VBS while meeting and learning from a variety of other teachers. Children will rotate in a circuit to the corrals of Bible study, crafts, music, recreation and missions."

The small-group sessions will include training for general officers, pastors and evangelism directors as well as associational VBS leaders of adults, youth, special education, children and preschoolers.

The clinic begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m. and will feature a Baptist Book Store display. There is no cost, but cowhands may eat from the church chukwagon for a \$ 5 per person fee.

For more information, contact Williams toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5128.

### INSPIRATIONAL TRAVEL 1997

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# LESSONS FOR LIVING

Family Bible

## Tutors for Christ

By Bruce A. Swihart, director  
Church Leadership Support  
Department, ABSC

**Basic passage:**

Acts 18:1-4, 18-19, 24-26;  
Romans 16:3-5a

**Focal passage:**

Acts 18:1-4, 18-19, 24-26;  
Romans 16:3-5a

**Central truth:**

Tutoring others multiplies the effectiveness of the gospel.

**A**quila and Priscilla were residents of Corinth when Paul arrived there on his first visit. They had been expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius because they were Jews (v. 18:2). It is not clear if they were also Christians at the time.

Jewish parents made sure their children learned a trade, so Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers. Paul met and joined them. Their association was not only as craftsmen, but also as partners with Paul in evangelism and teaching.

When Paul left Corinth after his hearing before Gallio (vv. 18:12-17), he took Aquila and Priscilla with him to Ephesus (vv. 18:18-19). They were left in Ephesus when Paul returned to Jerusalem and Antioch. There they met a misinformed disciple, Apollos (vv. 18:24-26). They served as tutors for him even though he had "a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures." They disciplined him about Jesus because he knew only John's baptism.

They could have shown their superior knowledge. They could have been critical. They could have been suspicious. They chose not to treat him

like a heretic. They took the initiative "and explained to him the way of God more adequately." As a result Apollos was effective in refuting "the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scripture that Jesus was the Christ" (v. 18:28).

Apollos was the logical choice to help the new church at Corinth. His understanding of the Old Testament made him a competent apologist with the Jews and his oratorical ability gave him a hearing among the Greeks. Apollos spoke with great success at Corinth. Aquila and Priscilla multiplied themselves through Apollos' ministry.

We must renew our efforts to serve with others and to tutor people who will give themselves to the gospel of Christ. We increase our usefulness and God is glorified as we give of ourselves.

After the death of Claudius, Priscilla and Aquila returned to Rome. Paul wrote a letter to the church at Corinth toward the end of his third journey. In his letter he sent greetings to the pair, stating that they had risked their lives for him (Rom. 16:3-5a). What a testimony of faithfulness.

Life and Work

## Penitent obedience

By Tim Reddin,  
director of missions,  
Central Association

**Basic passage:**

Matthew 21:23-32

**Focal passage:**

Matthew 21:23, 28-32

**Central truth:**

God is pleased when sinners repent and obey.

**T**wo sons were given the same command — "Go work today in my vineyard." In their responses we discover a graphic portrayal of what it takes for sinful creatures to please a holy God.

■ **Repentance** is the sinner's first step toward God. The first son said, "No" — but repented and went. To repent is to change the mind, but it is more than that. Biblical repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of direction. It forever alters the course of one's life.

Repentance is one's first response to the love and grace of God. Apart from it, one continues on his way toward self-indulgence and destruction. Repentance is both a forsaking of sin and a turning toward God. It is a prerequisite to faith, by which we are saved and made fit for service in God's vineyard.

■ **Obedience** is proof of the genuineness of one's change. Repentance leads to faith and faith leads to obedience. Faith which fails to obey is dead and empty (James 2:14-26). The first son's obedience to his father's word was proof that

genuine repentance had taken place in his heart.

■ **Sincerity** and good intentions are not enough to please God. The second son in the parable said, "I will" — but he didn't. Perhaps he was merely posturing to gain his father's favor, but his motives may have been absolutely pure. He may have intended to obey, but other circumstances arose to distract him. He may have meant well, but he failed to follow through.

Some seem to think that a sincere motive is all one needs to please God. Obviously, sincerity is preferable to hypocrisy, but having good intentions alone are not enough. Felix may have meant it when he promised to hear more of Paul's testimony — but as far as we know, that "more convenient season" never came (Acts 24:24-25). One can be sincere, yet sincerely wrong!

Why do some have so much trouble accepting Jesus' authority over their lives (v. 23)? Because they have neither repented, believed nor obeyed. They may "talk the talk," but they do not "walk the walk." Do you?

Explore the Bible

## Watch for His coming

By Bill Bowen, pastor,  
First Church, Mena

**Basic passage:**

Matthew 24

**Focal passage:**

Matthew 24:1-4

**Central truth:**

The second coming should produce unity, not division.

**M**atthew 24-25 begins the most lengthy statement Jesus made about His second coming. Jesus had just left the temple area and made His way to the Mount of Olives. His statement in verse 2 shocked the disciples and prompted the important discourse on the second coming of Christ.

Christians debate the words of Jesus in chapters 24-25 more than almost any other of His words. The meaning of that message has caused divisions of churches and strife among believers. Never did our Lord mean for His words to do that. They were meant to awaken believers to His imminent return.

It might be noted that the disciples did not have a theological background. To them splitting eschatological hairs was not the important issue relating to His words. They did not debate the Lord on their meaning. It might be wise to look at this passage in the simplicity in which it was delivered.

Jesus discussed the stones of Herod's temple in verse 2 as a follow-up to a disciple's statement. The stones were the foundation of a building built with grandeur. Some weighed up to 100 tons.

Jesus shocked the disciples by telling them that not one of the stones would be left on another. They couldn't imagine what could move such massive stones, yet it happened a few years later in 70 A.D. when the Romans pillaged the temple.

When Jesus took the disciples to the Mount of Olives, they reflected upon His words. They could not fathom the events that would bring the temple's destruction. For some of the disciples, the reign of Christ was a continuous event. In their eyes, Jesus soon would establish Himself as ruler over all. They could not imagine that there would be a time when He would leave the earth, the churches would be established, a long period of time would intervene, then Jesus would come again. They just thought it would happen. Confusion reigned.

Jesus warned them that deception would lead many away from understanding His second coming. No matter what form the deception might take, Jesus warned us to be vigilant. His second coming should bring us together in hope of that glorious day that lies ahead for all who love Him.

# LESSONS FOR LIVING

What an unlikely combination: the ancient odd couple. Paul was about 50 years old. Timothy may have still been a teenager. Paul had a cast iron constitution to endure his rugged travels, beatings, imprisonments and deprivations. Timothy seemed frail, the recipient of a medical prescription to help him overcome spells of illness (I Tim. 5:23).

Paul was a born leader; Timothy a willing follower. Paul burned with zeal; Timothy needed reminders to take courage. Regardless of their differences, they developed a deep friendship. Timothy became Paul's dearest associate and traveling companion. Invited to join Paul's traveling team, Timothy left his mother and grandmother to share in missionary labors and sufferings (Acts 16:1-5). This began a devoted fellowship with Timothy serving Paul like a son with the father (Phil. 2:22).

Paul regarded Timothy as his understudy. He trained his "son" to take his place when he was unable to minister. Paul aimed at reproducing himself in Timothy. He modeled sound doctrine, godly living, purpose, faith, love and patience in suffering (II Tim. 3:10-11) so that Timothy could properly represent him (I Cor. 4:17).

Timothy came to Paul with an excellent reputa-

tion among Christians in his hometown of Lystra and in Iconium (Acts 18:2). Paul recognized his character and gifts. In order to serve effectively, Timothy underwent circumcision (v. 18:3) and an ordination service was held to dedicate him to the ministry. After Timothy's ordination, Paul set about to develop him as a worker, servant and apostle. While considered a minor apostle, Timothy performed an important apostolic ministry.

Timothy was with Paul in Philippi to observe the start of a new church in a Gentile city and was likely in Thessalonica to see the start of a church in a Jewish-populated city. He observed Paul working in the synagogue with Jewish leaders. He observed Paul's jailing and beating. He must have wondered when his time was coming.

Because of trouble in Thessalonica, the team moved to Berea. When the Thessalonian Jews heard Paul was preaching the gospel, they stirred up trouble there also. Paul had to leave while Silas and Timothy stayed behind (Acts 17:14). Timothy ministered with Paul in Corinth (Rom. 16:21) as well as Ephesus (I Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11). He was the perfect understudy. We too must be available to serve in any and all situations.

Jesus is coming again! His second advent is the "blessed hope" of the Christian (Titus 2:13). Just as Jesus left this earth personally and visibly, so He shall return (Acts 1:9-11). And the watchword for the believer is, "Be ready!" (v. 44).

What does it mean to be ready for Christ's coming? Does it mean that we must know everything about it? Must we be sure of the events, their order, the interpretation of signs and symbols of Revelation and other prophetic passages?

Not really. Throughout the New Testament, the emphasis is on the "what" so much as the "so what" — the impact of the doctrine upon one's lifestyle of faith and obedience.

I knew a man years ago who was recognized as something of an "expert" on the doctrine of the second coming. His charts and time lines looked magnificent. He could quote the relevant Scripture

with accuracy and passion, but his life was a mess! Ready for Christ's return? Hardly! The Lord is not coming to inspect your charts, but your life.

Today's text assures us of three things: Christ is coming, we don't know when; and we must live as if He might come today — because He might!

According to v. 45, the life of one who is ready for Christ's return will be marked by two things — faithfulness and wisdom. Faithfulness refers to our obedience to the Lord's teachings. Wisdom refers to our application of the principles of His Word to our lives. "Blessed is that servant, who his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

Of course, readiness for the His coming begins with one's faith in Christ as Savior and Lord. But ultimately, preparedness goes far beyond that initial step of faith and encompasses a life of faithfulness. Christ is coming! Are you ready?

There are two kinds of Christmas shoppers. One plans for Christmas and shops early. The second person looks forward to Christmas, but waits till the last minute to shop. Scurrying around to find last-minute gifts, this shopper is often disappointed to find all the good things have been purchased. Immediately the shopper makes a resolution to start earlier the next year.

As Jesus taught His disciples about His second coming, He used the illustration of a wedding to urge preparation for His appearance.

The Jewish wedding was divided into three parts: the engagement, the betrothal and the celebration. A part of the celebration was the wedding feast, which occurred immediately prior to the ceremony. The feast could last as long as a week. During the feast the groom and groomsmen would come to the bride's house. They would take the bride and bridesmaids in a procession through the city. The culmination would be a feast when the party would be locked in a house to celebrate.

This parable of Jesus shows the groom arriving late at night. Five of the bridesmaids were prepared

for his arrival at any time. Five were lazy and did not bother to prepare for his late arrival. They figured they could borrow oil from the others and enjoy the feast on someone else's preparedness.

When the groom arrived, the unprepared bridesmaids scurried to get ready for the wedding procession. It was midnight. It was too late to purchase oil anywhere. As a result, they could not participate in the wedding procession or feast.

In this parable, Jesus is the bridegroom. The arrival of the groom at midnight pictures the uncertain timing of His second coming. The 10 virgins represent humanity. Five were prepared for the coming because they had committed their lives to Christ. The foolish five represent lost humanity unprepared for the return of Christ.

In verse 13, Jesus warned that we do not know the hour of His return. Therefore, everyone should prepare to meet Christ by giving their lives to Him now. It is not a decision to delay.

When Jesus comes, many may try to be saved, but it will be too late. At that moment, the door will be shut to eternity.

## Family Bible

### The understudy

By Bruce A. Swihart, director, Church Leadership Support Department, ABSC

#### Basic passage:

Acts 16:1-5; I Corinthians 4:14-17; Philippians 2:19-24; II Timothy 1:3-7; 3:14-15

#### Focal passage:

Acts 16:1-5; I Corinthians 4:14-17

#### Central truth:

Those who serve God effectively must be available to serve with a godly leader in all situations.

## Life and Work

### Be ready!

By Tim Reddin, director of missions, Central Association

#### Basic passage:

Matthew 24:36-51

#### Focal passage:

Matthew 24:36-46

#### Central truth:

One's belief in the Lord's return should affect his behavior now.

## Explore the Bible

### 'Wedding' preparation

By Bill Bowen, pastor, First Church, Mena

#### Basic passage:

Matthew 25

#### Focal passage:

Matthew 25:1-13

#### Central truth:

When Jesus comes again, the door to eternity will be shut to the lost.



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## Church attack in Uganda kills six Christian worshippers

KAMPALA, UGANDA (ABP)—A terrorist attack killed six people attending an open-air Christian worship service Jan. 12 in Kampala, Uganda.

An unidentified assailant threw a hand grenade into a congregation of 500 Christians at a prayer meeting in a suburb of Uganda's capital city, according to Ecumenical News International. Three people died immediately, according to news reports, and 40 were injured.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack immediately, but police suspected Islamic militants. Several preachers at the prayer meeting had reportedly criticized the Koran, angering Muslims. About 15 percent of Uganda's 20 million population is Muslim. Catholic and Protestant Christianity each comprise about one-third.

Traditional Christian and Muslim followers have a history of good relations, but in recent years Uganda has seen a growth in Islamic fundamentalism, possibly influenced by hard-line Muslims in neighboring Sudan, according to ENI.

## Campus Crusade, SBC leaders discuss cooperative efforts

ATLANTA (BP)—Twenty-five leaders of Campus Crusade for Christ and the Southern Baptist Convention met Jan. 17 in Atlanta to discuss working together in potential evangelistic projects focusing on America's youth.

The meeting, called at the invitation of Campus Crusade president Bill Bright, concluded with plans for creating a task force to study and recommend a process to reach the MTV generation of America, defined as those in the first semester of middle school through college.

Members of the task force will be named from various Southern Baptist and Campus Crusade leaders and workers, suggested during the meeting. The group will report its progress to SBC Executive Committee president Morris Chapman; Baptist Sunday School Board president Jimmy Draper and Bright.

Bright said the only agenda for the meeting was to discuss the possibility of "joining hands to complete the task of helping to fulfill the Great Commission, especially in this country. I believe this meeting will be used of God to lay the groundwork for a united evangelistic effort involving Southern Baptists and Campus Crusade which can help change our country."

## State Baptist Men's group adopts purpose statement

DALLAS (BP)—The Association of State Brotherhood Leadership has met to define the new organization's purpose and values. More than two dozen state convention Baptist Men's leaders met for the association's organizational meeting. The men had voted to create the association to help make sure existing men's ministries continue when the Brotherhood Commission is merged into the new North American Mission Board.

The organization's purpose statement declares: "We exist to encourage mission action and education among Southern Baptist churches through an autonomous and cooperative environment for the sharing of ideas, concepts, projects and concerns. We seek to accomplish this task through networking with state and national bodies."

The group defined four core values: the discernment and pursuit of God's activity, every Christian a missionary, personal ministry involvement and the primacy of the local congregation.

## Articles of Incorporation filed for new Kentucky seminary

LOUISVILLE, KY (ABP)—Articles of incorporation have been filed for a new Baptist seminary in Kentucky, but details of the new venture apparently have not been finalized. The Kentucky school would join a number of alternative theological schools springing up in recent years for moderates disenfranchised by a conservative swing in seminaries owned by the Southern Baptist Convention.

A January newsletter from the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, a moderate group, features a column by Paul Simmons, chairman of the group's theological education committee. Simmons is a former professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

"The Baptist Seminary of Kentucky is now a reality," Simmons wrote in the newsletter. "Articles of incorporation have been filed toward full recognition as a non-profit organization."

**NEWS  
DIGEST**