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11-28-1985

November 28, 1985

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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November 28, 1985

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Celebrating at Ouachita:
state convention 1985
page 2



On the cover



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Serving as officers for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention during the coming year will be Lawson Hatfield (center), pastor of First Church, Fordyce, president; Eddie McCord (right), director of missions for Independence Association, Batesville, first vice-president; and James Bryant (left), pastor of Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, second vice-president.

In this issue

8 a gift of life

A seminary professor with Arkansas ties undergoes a painful bone marrow transplant in an effort to save his brother from advancing leukemia.

11 cultures clash

Many Ozarks communities are in the throes of conflict between their traditional rural culture and the urban culture of the region's new wave of immigrants. Directors of missions try to sort out how churches can bring the two together to rebuild hurting communities.

Next week

Reports on auxiliary meetings at the convention, plus persons elected to boards and committees and more photos, will be part of next week's issue.

Attendance strong at 1985 state convention

by Betty J. Kennedy and Mark Kelly

ARKADELPHIA—Neither rain, nor tornadoes, nor threat of overcrowding kept messengers away from the 132nd annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. By the time President Jon M. Stubblefield gavelled the opening session to order at 7 p.m. Nov. 19, registration stood at 996.

While the state experienced unseasonably hot and even severe weather preceding and on the opening day of the annual meeting, weather was not the only unusual circumstance. The meeting was being held on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University at Arkadelphia to mark the school's centennial anniversary.

When Arkansas Baptists voted, at the 1984 annual meeting, to change the site to Ouachita, concern over hotel accommodations and parking was expressed. The fears apparently did not keep messengers away.

The opening session was a celebration of the OBU centennial punctuated by Ouachita saying "thanks" to Arkansas Baptists at every opportunity. OBU President Daniel R. Grant welcomed the messengers. The Ouachita Band brought the instrumental prelude, and the school lighted up the darkness with a huge birthday cake and 100 Ouachitians who chorused "Thank you, Arkansas Baptists" at the end.

Business in the opening session was largely routine. President Stubblefield announced the committees he was appointing to serve during the meeting, and the chairmen then instructed the body on procedures for registering, voting and submitting resolutions.

J.W.L. Adams of Texarkana, chairman of the convention credentials committee, informed the messengers that, besides minor difficulties with three churches apparently misunderstanding messenger registration procedures, there were no problems with credentials. Adams also explained the committee had been notified of challenges to the seating of messengers from one church, but the church had not sent any messengers, so the question was moot.

The order of business was adopted and messengers moved on to instructions on the use of ballots by the Tellers Committee. Homer Shirley, chairman of the Resolutions Committee listed by subject matter the resolutions already presented to his committee. He explained any resolutions to be considered must be given to the committee in that first session to allow time for printing them for the messengers. No other resolutions were introduced from the floor.

Other business included a welcome and introduction of church staff members who have moved to the state since the last annual meeting. Senior ministers were recognized,

as were former convention presidents and home and foreign missionaries.

The session also contained congregational singing and music by the Arkansas Music Men and Singing Women. Wayne Ward, Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., opened the session with Bible study, as he would the next two.

The message of the evening was preached by Calvin Miller, pastor of the Westside Church in Omaha, Nebraska, for nearly 20 years. He based the sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:19, presenting the ideas of the passage as "God's good news in a nutshell."

Miller called on his fellow Southern Baptists to go beyond telling the lost that God was in Christ and offers eternal life. He challenged them to teach also that Christ lives in people today and that Christians must be ambassadors for Christ to all the world.

He called on Southern Baptists to shift their vision to the whole world and bring the current denominational division into perspective.

Wednesday morning

When messengers convened again Wednesday morning, they elected a new president and expressed appreciation to the outgoing one. Lawson Hatfield, pastor of First Church at Fordyce, was voted state convention president, capturing 471 votes to 411 for C. A. Johnson, pastor at Walnut Street Church, Jonesboro. Jon Stubblefield was given a plaque recognizing his two terms as president.

In his president's address, Stubblefield laid out a formula for rebuilding and restoring the relationship between God and his people. He cited the story of Nehemiah leading the Israelites in rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. He listed as essentials for renewal: reconciliation, a return to God's Word, an attitude of brokenness over sin and radical obedience.

Stubblefield compared the rebuilders of Nehemiah's time to the people of the Southern Baptist Convention, noting that people can stand together as one even though there is diversity. "Diversity is a distinctive we possess," he said. "But it must be diversity and not division."

"Loving each other is as much a theological imperative as Scripture belief," Stubblefield noted. He recalled the meeting of state convention presidents that led to the formation of the SBC Peace Committee and

ABN photo / Millie Gill

asked for daily prayer for the committee.

Also honored in the session was Betty Tyler, who has retired as supervisor of accounting services for the state convention after 40 years. Executive Director Don Moore noted she had served under five executive secretaries.

Floyd Tidsworth, director of church extension, recognized two directors of missions for their leadership in starting new congregations in their associations. Robert Tucker's association, Tri-County, has led the state in new church starts in 1985, and Concord Association, where Ferrell Morgan is DOM, has led in the number of churches sponsoring new missions.

A major business item of the Wednesday morning session was the report of the convention's Executive Board. Adopted by the messengers were recommendations for a 1986 budget of \$12.25 million and a plan to encourage local churches to provide scholarships to help equalize the cost difference between state colleges and Arkansas Baptists' two schools.

Two recommendations which were adopted will allow persons under the retirement plan of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board more flexibility. The first allows staff persons to transfer their accumulations between the Annuity Board's four different funds on a monthly basis, rather than yearly.

A second change would allow staff persons, on termination of employment, to choose to withdraw their accumulations in a lump sum, as long as the amount does not exceed \$3,500. The ceiling amount used to be lower.

A fifth recommendation authorized setting aside Feb. 16, 1986, as a "Day of Prayer for Prison Chapels." An interdenominational group currently is working to build two chapels at Arkansas correctional facilities, messengers were told. This final recommendation also was adopted.

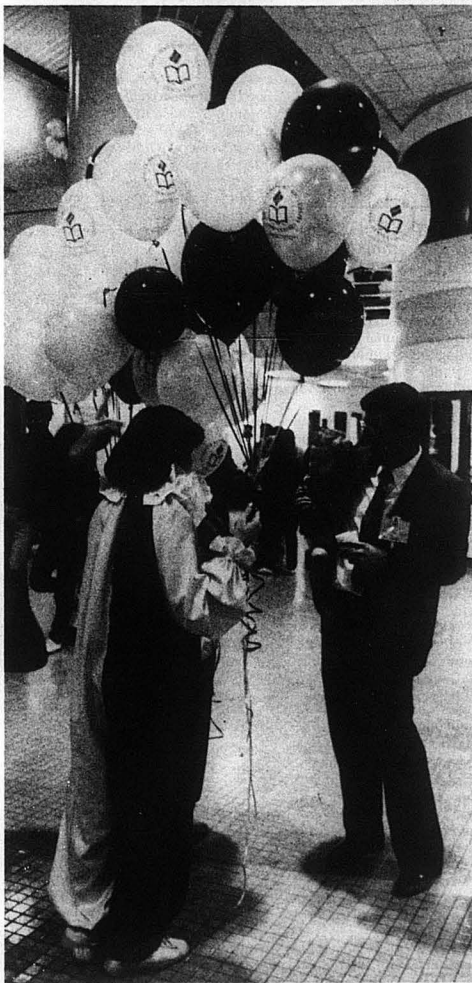
Reports from the state convention's three agencies—Family and Child Care Services, Foundation and the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*—were heard.

Wayne Ward brought the second of three Bible study times at the beginning of the session. The study was a part of all but the closing session of the meeting.

An inspirational time dubbed "AMAR Snapshot" called messengers' attention to the Amazon-Arkansas partnership project now underway.

Executive Director Don Moore shared an insight he had gained recently from Luke 11:44 in his message to the convention. Dr. Moore said the passage should serve to warn "religious leaders" their ministries could be busy but lack real influence on the world.

Comparing ministries lacking real influence to the scriptural word picture of graves people do not see and walk right



Participants in the 1985 Arkansas Baptist State Convention annual meeting helped Ouachita Baptist University celebrate its 100th anniversary. After the opening session Tuesday evening, messengers were greeted with cake and punch when they exited the meeting hall. Clowns with colorful bunches of purple and gold balloons spread their cheer to young and old alike.

1985 Arkansas Baptist State Convention

over, Moore said he had grown concerned after seeing the passage in a new light. "I am not content to live the rest of my life with no more happening because I have been here than has happened thus far," he admitted.

Moore then focused on ways to "release God to greater activity." He cited necessary elements as greater obedience and separation; effectual, persistent and believing prayer; actions from faith; and generosity and honesty in giving.

Wednesday afternoon

Messengers returned for the third session of the convention Wednesday afternoon and were led in congregational singing by Ted Stanton, furloughing Southern Baptist missionary to Argentina, who is serving as missionary-in-residence for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Southern Seminary professor Wayne Ward delivered the third of his convention Bible studies, focusing on the role of the Holy Spirit. Ward drew the messengers' attention to five passages in John 14-16, which he identified as stanzas in an ancient hymn to the Holy Spirit.

Messengers then received a report from John Finn, executive director of the Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas, before the floor was opened for nominations for ABSC first vice-president.

Convention President Jon Stubblefield received three nominations for first vice-president: Kerry Powell, pastor of First Church, Forrest City; John McClanahan, pastor of Pine Bluff First Church; and Eddie McCord, director of missions in Independence Association, Batesville.

After casting their ballots for first vice-president, messengers adopted several changes in the order of business, some of which were designed to allow more time for the election of officers.

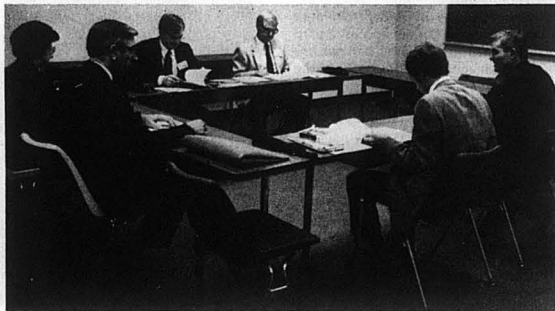
Following another hymn and special music, John Maddox, pastor of Wynne Church, delivered the convention sermon. Preaching from Acts 1:8-9 and Mark 16:15, Maddox confronted messengers with the challenge of bringing a lost world to Christ. He asserted Christians must keep their responsibilities to both their local communities and the whole world in mind. The responsibility for winning a community to Christ rests on the Christians in that community, he said.

At the same time, however, Christians also must remember "the world is the field," declared Maddox, whose parents were missionaries to Brazil for 43 years. Pointing out the "great need" in foreign missions is for

Computerized registration and enrollment of messengers proved very helpful as Credentials Committee Chairman J.W.L. Adams and ABSC Associate Executive Director L.L. Collins sought to help churches identify accidental over-registrations.



ABN photos / Millie Gill



Members of the Resolutions Committee worked hard to produce a set of resolutions they felt appropriate for the convention's consideration. Only one of the six resolutions reported produced significant debate.

preachers and evangelists, Maddox asked, "Is it possible God could be calling some of us here to serve in some needy area?" "There are people all over the world pleading for someone just like you to come and share the good news with them," he concluded.

At 3:30 p.m., Lyndell Worthen Jr., chairman of the Tellers Committee, announced a run-off election for first vice-president between John McClanahan and Eddie McCord would be required. Messengers cast their third ballot of the day and proceeded to hear a report from the ABSC Nominating Committee, which they received and passed unanimously.

In adopting that report, messengers slated the 1990 state convention for Oct. 29-31 at

Immanuel Church, Little Rock. They also approved R. H. Dorris of Little Rock as the 1986 convention preacher and Rex Holt of Jonesboro as his alternate.

The report also included revised dates for the 1986-1990 annual meetings. The new dates, which eliminate the scheduled Thursday morning sessions, are Nov. 18-19, 1986; Nov. 17-18, 1987; Nov. 1-2, 1988; Nov. 7-8, 1989; and Nov. 29-30, 1990.

The Tellers Committee brought back a report that Eddie McCord had been elected first vice-president with 58 percent of the ballots cast. Messengers then received a nomination of James Bryant, pastor of Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, for second vice-president. Bryant was elected by acclamation in the absence of other nominations.

Homer Shirley, pastor of First Church, Siloam Springs and chairman of the resolutions Committee, then brought his committee's report.

Messengers approved four resolutions without debate. The first resolution encouraged messengers to urge their churches to prepare for and participate in the "Good News America" revivals in 1986. A second resolution urged prayer for President Ronald Reagan's summit conference with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and for other world leaders "in a search for a solution to the arms race."

Resolution Three affirmed "the biblical truth of diversity without division" and agreed with the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention declaration that "peace cannot come by war." It resolved prayerful support and assistance for the work of the SBC Peace Committee.

The fourth resolution reaffirmed Arkansas Baptists' resolve to combat gambling, pornography, alcohol and other drug abuse and pledged support for the Christian Civic Foundation and the ABSC Christian Life Council.

A fifth resolution—on abortion—drew substantial debate before messengers approved a slightly amended version of the committee's resolution.

Committee Chairman Shirley informed messengers two resolutions had been received

on the subject of abortion and that the one contained in the report incorporated elements of both.

The language of the resolution toughened opposition to abortion, compared to resolutions from previous years. It mentioned the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision, which the resolution declared resulted "in millions of elective, convenience, casual abortions" and called on Arkansas Baptists to actively support "appropriate and responsible legislation" to decrease the number of abortions.

The resolution also called upon churches and members "to support and work toward that which will assure the highest regard for life, born or unborn" and provide alternatives to abortion. It also asked for state convention agencies to "provide aggressive leadership... by providing literature" which clarifies abortion issues and alternatives.

Johnny Jackson, pastor of Little Rock Forest Highlands Church and author of one of the original resolutions, rose to offer two amendments to the committee's version. The first amendment would have eliminated the resolution's allowances for abortion in cases of rape or incest.

Jackson's second amendment voiced support for the Unborn Child Amendment Committee and "encouraged them in their

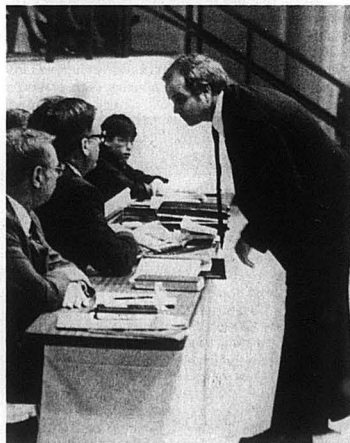
attempt to restore to the 1986 General Election ballot in Arkansas the so-called 'Unborn Child Amendment,' now called 'The Limitation on Abortion and Abortion Funding Amendment.'"

Both amendments failed after lengthy discussion, and a third amendment was offered which clarified the range of opposition to abortion by deleting the words "any and all" from the phrase "we clearly state our opposition to any and all abortions, except in the cases of rape, incest or the life of the mother."

In proposing the amendment, Robert Presson of Midland said honesty would compel messengers to admit they did not oppose "any and all" abortions, if they allowed exceptions. The amendment passed with only scattered opposition, and the entire resolution was adopted as amended.

Messengers concluded the resolutions process by expressing their appreciation for the convention officers and host campus.

In miscellaneous business, messengers adopted two motions: one to ask the ABSC Executive Board to provide assistance for any churches damaged in Monday night's tornadoes in northern Arkansas, another to dedicate the minutes to Bernes K. Selph of Benton and the late James A. Overton, longtime Arkansas pastor.



Convention President Jon Stubblefield, shown here talking with ABSC Executive Director Don Moore, presided over one of the smoothest, most harmonious annual meetings in memory. An abbreviated two-day schedule, focusing on inspiration, was adopted as a new standard for state conventions through 1990.

ABN photos / Millie Gill



Members of the Tellers Committee counted three sets of ballots for convention officers on Wednesday, one of them for a first vice-presidential run-off between Eddie McCord of Batesville and John McClanahan of Pine Bluff. No ballots proved necessary for the second vice-presidential election, in which James Bryant of Fort Smith was elected by acclamation, or for the resolutions process. Six resolutions were adopted by messengers during the two-day meeting, with only a minor amendment to a resolution on abortion.

Wednesday evening

Daniel R. Grant, president of Ouachita Baptist University, led off the closing session of the annual meeting with the university's report to the convention.

Grant noted two major projects underway as OBU moves into its second century. He outlined for messengers a planned \$2 million renovation and addition to Riley Library, which Grant said would upgrade the facility with modern electronic information storage and retrieval systems.

The second project, OBU's new Center for Christian Ministries directed by Bud Fray, W. O. Vaught Professor of Religion at Ouachita, will integrate the university's religion department with field education and practical ministry experience for ministerial students, Grant said.

Grant also encouraged messengers to plan their participation in OBU's annual Christian Focus Week March 3-7, 1986. This year's program will focus on global missions and will culminate with a Foreign Mission Board commissioning service on the OBU campus, Grant explained.

Southern Baptist College then took the spotlight as the Southern College Singers, under the direction of music professor Bob Magee, performed for the assembly.



Southern Baptist College President D. Jack Nicholas saluted Ouachita Baptist University on its centennial anniversary by presenting a special card of congratulations to OBU President Daniel R. Grant.

College President D. Jack Nicholas presented his annual report, saluting Ouachita on the "remarkable and momentous occasion" of their centennial year and telling messengers Southern College also had a "good and exciting year" as they made the transition to their first four-year degree program.

Nicholas called messengers' attention to Southern's full-page ad in the Nov. 21 *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, which congratulated OBU for their centennial. He then presented OBU President Grant with a specially-prepared card of congratulations and a plaque commemorating the occasion.

Following a testimony on behalf of the AMAR Partnership Mission Project by Raymond Robinson, a layman from Little Rock Immanuel Church, Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union brought its report to the messengers.

W.M.U. director Julia Ketner announced Arkansas Baptists had set two records in their 1984-85 missions giving: exceeding \$2.16 million with the Lottie Moon foreign missions offering and giving \$3.2 million to the three annual missions offerings combined.

A presentation of the flags of the nations served by Southern Baptist missionaries preceded two testimonies: Gerald Schleiff, missionary to Zimbabwe, and Ed Smith, missionary to Botswana.

Just prior to a presentation by the OBU Choir, President Stubblefield announced total registration had reached 1,189.

The 1985 annual meeting closed with a message from Nilson Fanini, pastor of the 5,000-member First Church of Niteroi, Brazil. Fanini, a widely-known evangelist

ABN photos / Millie Gill



When Brazilian pastor Nilson Fanini extended an invitation for messengers and guests to demonstrate their openness to God's call to missions, a substantial number responded. They were met at the front by AMAR Project Coordinator Glendon Grober, Executive Director Don Moore and Southern College President D. Jack Nicholas.

with a massive South American radio and television ministry, challenged messengers on the subject "Working Together."

"Together" and "togetherness" are two words needed badly by the world today, Fanini said, pointing to divisions in families, churches, denominations and between nations. Recalling 1 Corinthians 3:9, "We are laborers together with God," Fanini called for Baptists to work together to win the world.

"We must work together because God has just one family," Fanini declared. "We have just one God, just one Bible, one Savior, one church, one faith and one baptism."

Baptists around the world must ask God to bring them together because of "the challenge of our time" and because "the Devil is closing so many doors," Fanini asserted. "Arkansas Baptist Convention, get up!" he called. "Let's work together. The door is still open. I don't know how long it will be."

Fanini closed his message with an invitation for messengers to publicly demonstrate their commitment to missions. A steady stream of individuals and couples filed forward to express their openness to God's call to missions.

As the service ended, ABSC Executive Director Don Moore told messengers he had been part of many great conventions, but that this was the first he had ever seen turn into a revival meeting.

Jon Stubblefield then presented the new officers of the convention and their wives, and President-elect Lawson Hatfield closed the 1985 annual meeting with prayer.

Our best convention ever

The editor's page

J. Everett Sneed



The 1985 annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University may have been the most harmonious and tranquil convention we have ever attended. Not one harsh word was spoken during the entire convention. Only one resolution produced differing opinions. The harmony of our state convention enjoyed is a direct result of the leadership of out-going Convention President Jon Stubblefield, the excellent preparation made by Ouachita, the excellent leadership being provided by Executive Director Don Moore and the good work of the Executive Board.

Ouachita deserves the applause of Arkansas Baptists. Some had questioned the advisability of a state convention being held on the campus of a university. All had agreed that it would be an excellent way to honor the university on its 100th anniversary. We thank you, President Dan Grant, the Baptist churches of Arkadelphia, the students at Ouachita and the people of Arkadelphia for a job well done.

A second element which made this year's convention truly outstanding was the grace and courtesy with which Jon Stubblefield and other convention officers presided. Although the convention had been shortened, we believe all of the messengers appreciated the excellence with which the convention Program Committee had planned the convention and the fact there were no burning issues on the agenda this year.

Southern Baptists like good preaching. This year's convention provided ample opportunity for messengers to hear some of the best. The Bible teaching of Wayne Ward, professor of Christian Theology, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., was truly outstanding. The message of Calvin Miller, pastor of Westside Church, Omaha, Nebr., was clever, entertaining and challenging.

Special commendation should go to Jon Stubblefield for his great statesman-like message, to Don Moore for one of the best sermons we have ever heard him preach and to Nilson do Amaral Fanini, pastor of First Church, Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the magnificent challenge to involvement in the AMAR partnership with Brazil. The annual sermon by John Maddox, pastor of the Wynne Church, put the finishing touch on the challenge of mission involvement.

Ervin Keathley, director of music for Arkansas Baptists and Ouachita Baptist University, are to be commended for outstanding musical presentations. The music was inspiring, thrilling and gave support to the rest of the convention program.

This year's convening of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention should serve to give impetus for the future. First, the election of Lawson Hatfield, director of Sunday School for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for 23 years, guarantees commitment to evangelism, missions and all that Arkansas Baptists do together. Dr. Hatfield is a statesman of the highest order, and his election will assure a continuation of the kind of leadership that has been provided for Arkansas Baptists in the past. Supporting Hatfield will be Director of Missions Eddie McCord as first vice president and Jim Bryant, pastor of Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith, as second vice president. This team will give top quality leadership to Arkansas Baptists in the year ahead.

Dr. Fanini's presence and the vignettes on the AMAR partnership project with Brazil assured that continuing emphasis will be given to this partnership and to world missions in general.

Finally, the messengers are to be commended for the courtesy with which they dealt with each other. The only area of apparent disagreement centered on a resolution on abortion. It was evident there were a variety of opinions on the subject. But the messengers handled even this emotional issue in a most proper manner. We commend the messengers on their maturity and Christian love for each other.

The adoption of the \$12.25 million budget for 1986 is of great significance, since it guarantees the continuation of all the things Arkansas Baptists are doing together for the Lord. Based on current projections, next year's budget should be attainable. Currently, the state convention is running almost 10 percent ahead of the 1984 budget and less than four percent under receipts for the 1985 budget. It is essential, however, that our income increase at a more rapid pace in the years ahead than in the past. Four factors are involved: (1) the annual increase of three-fourths of one percent to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program; (2) the need for our convention to provide an additional \$200,000 for ministerial retirement in 1988; (3) the normal growth of inflation which will impact on every area of work funded by the Cooperative Program; and (4) the necessity of increasing Southern Baptist College's base by \$102,000 by 1989.

This year's convention should serve as a springboard for Arkansas Baptists as we move forward to serve our Lord during the coming year. It is our prayer each Baptist will more fully commit himself to evangelism, missions and to growing in the grace and knowledge of our Savior as a result of this year's excellent convention.

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Arkansas' third largest publication,
meeting the information needs of Arkansas Baptists

VOLUME 84 NUMBER 46

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Copies by mail 50 cents each.

Deaths of members of Arkansas churches will be reported in brief form when information is received not later than 14 days after the date of death.

Advertising accepted in writing only. Rates on request.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine (USPS 031-290) is published weekly, except the third week in April, at July 4 and Dec. 25, by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc., Little Rock, AR. Subscription rates are \$6.36 per year (individual), \$5.40 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$6.00 per year (Group Plan). Foreign address rates on request. Second class postage paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, P. O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Seminary professor gives life to brother with leukemia

by Mark Wingfield

FORT WORTH, Texas—A Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor has gone to Los Angeles to give life to his brother.

Boo Heflin, associate professor of Old Testament, will donate a quart of his bone marrow in an effort to save his only brother, Johnny, whose leukemia was diagnosed this summer. Without the transplant, Johnny might live another five years. He has a 50-50 chance of surviving the transplant and eventually returning to a "normal" life.

The medical procedure was scheduled to begin Nov. 9 at the University of California at Los Angeles. First, Johnny will be given chemotherapy and radiation in a procedure Boo called "killing the whole blood system."

Boo has to be nearby throughout the procedure because, once started, the process is irreversible. If something had happened to Boo, such as a plane crash, his brother would have been left without his own blood and marrow or any acceptable substitute.

Boo will literally give life to his brother. He will be jabbed in the hip 75 to 100 times during the four-hour extraction. Afterward, he has been told, he will feel for a while like he has arthritis in the hip.

For the next four to five weeks, Boo will

donate blood platelets, which will help Johnny's body accept the new bone marrow until he can produce his own.

Fortunately, Boo, 43, and Johnny, 40, are highly compatible for the operation. "Johnny and I are almost a perfect match," Boo said. Generally, such a close match is found only in identical twins, he explained.

"If I had not been a match for him, the chances of finding another donor would have been slim," Boo said.

Boo sees the match as just one of God's preparations for this operation. Until last year, he had been 60 pounds overweight. He lost the weight, not realizing he might be a donor for his brother. Now as he faces the grueling transplant procedure, he is "in the best health I've been in as an adult."

That minimizes his own risk, although such a procedure poses many risks anyway.

But Boo volunteered his marrow and blood without hesitation. "This is my brother," he said. "My prayer has been that I would match."

He commended his brother's strong witness through the illness. "He has used this as an opportunity to testify for his Lord," he said. Johnny, president of Terminus termite

and pest control in Little Rock, Ark., sent a letter to his employees just before his departure for Los Angeles. In it, he wrote, "I know where my strength lies. That strength is all powerful and never runs out."

Johnny and his wife have two boys, ages 12 and 15. The Heflin brothers' father, Jay, is a former Southwestern trustee and serves on the seminary's Advisory Council.

Boo at first hesitated to talk too much about his donation. But a student changed his mind by pointing out the parallel between Boo's experience and the gospel.

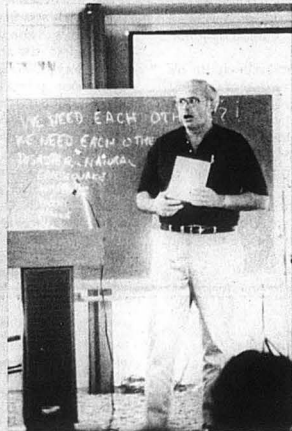
"There is a sense," the student said, "in which you really are giving your life to your brother." Boo recalled the passage from John 15: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

His donation of bone marrow and blood platelets to save a dying man is a simple illustration of Christ's complete sacrifice for man's sins, Boo said.

"It's one thing to talk in the classroom about theology, but quite another when you're faced with really doing it," he said.

Mark Wingfield is a writer for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

International Student Conference draws students from 28 nations



Photos by George Sims

More than 100 students from 28 nations registered for the annual International Student Conference, jointly sponsored by Arkansas' Baptist Student Union, Woman's Missionary Union and the State Missions Department. Speakers and seminars focused on personal and national concerns as students considered the theme, "We Need Each Other." Students introduced their home countries through their

native costumes, an international talent show, presentation of flags and frank discussions of politics, social conditions and religion. Speakers for the weekend were Ebbie Smith, professor of ethics and missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Dick Bumpass (center photo), BSU director at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

... "We have a lot to be thankful for, don't we!" These are the oft-repeated words of a man who many times a day recalls the goodness of God to him and his family. These are not trite words for filler in a dull conversation. They are genuine expressions of gratitude. They may be injected into the dialogue at anytime. These are not the words of a man who has never had struggles. They are not the words of a pastor or staff person. They are the words of a Christian husband, father, faithful steward and Sunday School teacher—a layman who has learned that God is the source of all that he is and has.

This layman has been good for me. Long years of bearing the pain and problems of the church family have a tendency to dull the bright spirit of gratitude. A million blessings fade in their significance when you are ministering to a half-dozen folks dying with cancer. Such is the path of influence we tend to take that leads to a negative attitude, a gloomy disposition and an ungrateful spirit. It isn't easy to bear the burdens of the flock and keep a sweet, positive spirit, too. Add the disappointments, disloyalty and criticism to the burden bearing, and you have a good candidate for disillusionment, bitterness and burn-out.

Most of us need to catch the spirit of the man who under all circumstances is reminded, "We have a lot to be thankful for, don't we!" This will balance us with truth and make us far more enjoyable as believers.

When Neal Guthrie returned with our disaster unit from Houma, La., following Hurricane Juan, I was made to be thankful. He said, "It was a pitiful sight to see families moving their only possessions onto the street or just throwing them in the bayou. Televisions, refrigerators, cars, etc., all were ruined. Many had boat damage, which was their livelihood living on the Gulf, shrimping and fishing." They served the homeless 8,307 meals.

We do have a lot to be thankful for, don't we!

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



Moore

Letters to the editor

Apology owed

I would like to express my views on an action taken at our annual associational meeting in refusing to seat the messengers of a local church because a woman was ordained to serve that church as a deaconess. My personal position is that men should fill the office of deacon. However, I feel obligated to respect the interpretations of other conservative Baptists.

I quote A.T. Robertson (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Broadman Press), on I Timothy 3:11, "Apparently women as deacons and not women in general, or just wives of deacons." Another conservative publisher states (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Eerdmans Publishing Co.), "These are the deaconesses... (who) performed for women of the early church the same sort of ministrations that the deacons did for men... 'Women' is used in introducing a second or third member of a series... of church officials."

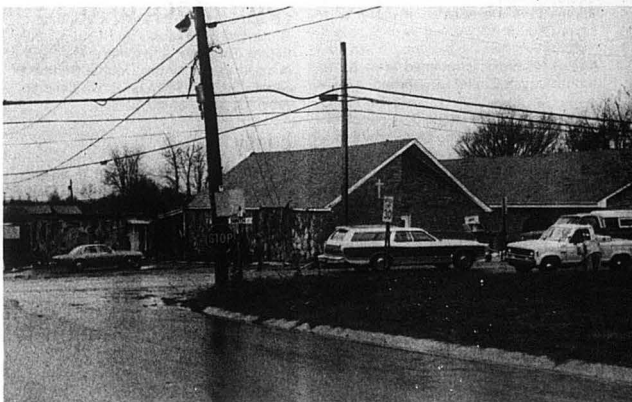
I quoted the above to point out that ordination of a woman as deaconess is a matter of differing personal interpretation for each individual or local church. This does not preclude an association or convention from expressing a corporate view. However,

neither does it give either the right to impose this view on a local church by refusing to seat messengers, especially when it is not an issue of departing from Baptist faith and practice.

I feel this association owes this local church an apology and complete restoration of fellowship for infringing on the scriptural authority of the local church.

I would also like to quote a statement describing an early association of Baptist churches. "Thus the association became the medium of propagating the gospel in new and dark places. They were instrumental in another way in advancing truth. When assembled their chief employment was preaching, exhortation, singing and conversing about their various exertions in the Redeemer's service and the attendant success. These things so inflamed the hearts of the ministers that they would leave the association with a zeal and courage which no obstacles could impede" (*History of the Baptists in Virginia*, Robert Baylor Semple, originally published, 1810, reprinted 1972 by Church History Research and Archives Affiliation, Corp., Lafayette, Tenn.). My prayer is that our associations and conventions would restrict themselves to these things. — Walter Jesser, Fayetteville

Photo by Everett Wheeler



Eastside Church in Mountain Home lost the roof on one of their education wings and sustained heavy damage to the roof of their sanctuary when a tornado touched down several places in the area about 9:30 p.m. Nov. 18. Pastor Byron Allen, who was in Arkadelphia to attend the Arkansas Baptist State Convention at the time, said the church did not have damage estimates as of Nov. 22. Allen said the church might decide to replace rather than repair the education building, since replacement was in their long-range plan anyway. Youth classrooms, the preschool area, fellowship hall and church offices were located in the damaged building, according to the pastor. He said adult classes would be consolidated and the children would move into the adult wing for now. The church was preparing to have services Nov. 24, he said. Another result of the damage was that choir robes had gotten wet and may be permanently stained, the pastor reported. Allen said his wife was in the pastor's home next door to the church when the storm came through, but the tornado skipped over the house. No one was injured, Allen reported.

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people



Reed

assigned. A native of Texas, he is a graduate of Baylor University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He comes to Little Rock from First Church, Pensacola, Fla., where he serves as minister of singles and evangelism. He has served a number of churches as minister of education and outreach and is certified in both MasterLife and Continual Witness Training. Reed is married to the former Carolyn Cole. They have one son, Charles Bruce Reed III, who is 13 months old.

Ronnie Toon has resigned as pastor of Egypt Church.

Robert Rennie has resigned as pastor of Mount Pisgah Church at Jonesboro.

Eddie Meharg has resigned as pastor of Harrisburg Calvary Church to move to Judsonia.

Frank Jones is serving as interim pastor of Pleasant Valley Church at Heber Springs.

Dennis Cherry is serving as pastor of Old Union Church at Monticello. He has been serving as pastor of Sardis Church in Ashley County. Cherry and his wife, Karen, will reside in Wilmar. Both are students at the University of Arkansas Monticello.

Lavelle Johnston is serving as pastor of Selma Church at Monticello. He has served as pastor of other churches in Arkansas and Louisiana.

Wallace Ferguson is serving as pastor of Warren West Side Church. He has served as pastor and music director of other churches in Arkansas and Louisiana.

Duane White is serving as pastor of Wilmar Church, moving there from Percy Church in Central Association. He has served as pastor of other churches in

Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. He and his wife, Lois, are parents of five children.

Bob Ivy is serving as pastor of Delaplaine Church.

Rev. and Mrs. Clyde Spurgin have returned from Kitzingen, West Germany, where he conducted revival services for the Kitzingen/Wortzburg Church. The West German church is an English-speaking congregation whose membership is made up almost entirely of military families. The Spurgins were sent to West Germany by members of Piggott First Church in response to a request from James Staples, pastor of the West German church. Spurgin serves as pastor of the Piggott church. Spurgin's friend "Archie" also assisted with the mission effort as he spoke in assemblies at two schools in Kitzingen, one at Bibergou, two at Sulzfeld and a military chapel in Kitzingen. The revival resulted in five professions of faith and two other additions.

Eddie Hardister is serving as minister of music at Windsor Park Church in Fort Smith, moving there from Eagle Heights Church in Harrison. He is a graduate of University of Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Hardister is married to the former Debbie Nichols of Siloam Springs. They have two children, Amy, 13, and Aaron, six.

briefly

Beech Street First Church in Texarkana ordained Ralph Thomas and John Daoust to the deacon ministry Nov. 17.

Bono Church ordained H. T. Nutt to the deacon ministry in October.

Lake City Church licensed Bart Barber to the preaching ministry Nov. 3.

Hot Springs First Church ordained Bob Deist as a deacon Nov. 24.

Philadelphia Church at Jonesboro observed its 125th anniversary Nov. 10. The church, founded by 10 people who had settled around a deer crossing north of Jonesboro, first met in a log building just downhill from the church's present location. Building programs in the 125 years occurred in 1864, 1887, 1939, 1953, 1961, 1976, 1981 and 1983. The church has had 48 pastors, with only 11 serving on a full-time basis. Roy Hargraves is now serving as pastor of the congregation, which is one of the older ones in Craighead County.

Bartholomew Association sponsored a single adult retreat Nov. 22-23 at Wolf Creek Camp. Larry Henderson of Little Rock was conference leader.

Lee Chapel Church near Hot Springs recently ordained Carter McCaslin, Jim Vanderburg, Danny Ashley and Michael Buttrum to the deacon ministry. Pastor Larry Loggins was moderator.

Harrisburg Calvary Church observed payment of its indebtedness with a noteburning service Nov. 24. Guest speakers were Jimmie Garner, director of missions for Trinity Association, and Frank Lady of Jonesboro.

East Side Church in Fort Smith ordained Jack Brown to the deacon ministry on Nov. 17.

Two pastors begin lesson commentaries

Two pastors begin this week writing Sunday School lesson commentaries for "Lessons for living."

Bradley Rogge, pastor of Little Rock's Brookwood First Church, begins his commentaries on the "Life and Work" series Sunday School lessons.

Rogge, a Florida native, assumed the Brookwood pastorate Nov. 3. He is the former pastor of Memorial Church, Hot Springs. He and his wife, Marilyn, have two children, Stephanie and Steve.

Jim Byrum, pastor of Toltec Church, Scott, begins writing commentaries on the Bible Book series lessons.

Byrum is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and the University of Central Arkansas. He has served as pastor of churches in Texarkana, Keo and Carlisle, as well as Oklahoma and Texas. He also has worked in the public schools of Arkansas for 24 years.

Byrum and his wife, Carolyn, have five children, ages 17 to 26.

Church offers stability, missions directors told

by Mark Kelly

HOLLISTER, Mo. (BP)—Rural and urban cultures have come into conflict in the Ozarks, and the church may be the last institution offering stability, a professor of rural sociology from the University of Missouri told Southern Baptist leaders from the Ozarks.

Recent developments in technologies have made urban lifestyles possible in remote rural areas in the Ozarks, explained Rex Campbell of Columbia, Mo.

Campbell spoke to about 75 Baptist directors of missions and key leaders from the Ozarks region gathered near Branson, Mo., for a conference sponsored by the rural-urban missions department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Living in their "hardscrabble environment" by hunting, fishing, trapping and subsistence farming, inhabitants of the "Ozarks-Ouachita" region always have been forced to adapt to changes in order to survive, Campbell explained. As a result, "change is native to the Ozarks," he said.

Their lifestyle is now being threatened by a system encouraging earlier retirements with more adequate incomes, and by tens of thousands of "migrants" from Chicago, Springfield, St. Louis, California and Texas, flooding into the Ozarks in search of "amenities," Campbell said.

Those new residents bring with them beliefs, value systems and behavior patterns not typical of the area. As a result, "We have the national culture mixing with the Ozarks culture, and the Ozarks culture is going down for the third time," Campbell said.

With retail services being pulled from smaller communities into larger commercial

centers and the value of farmland suffering a 45 percent decline, the tax bases of many Ozarks counties are in serious trouble, Campbell noted.

Coupled with the reduction or elimination of federal block grants and revenue sharing programs, many once self-sufficient rural communities are having to face unsavory choices between tax increases, consolidation or reduction of services, he said.

Increasingly, the church may be the last viable institution in some towns, and thus congregations must take the initiative to rebuild a spirit of cooperation in the community as the Ozarks are reborn, Campbell observed.

Jesse Taylor, director of missions in Arkansas' Rocky Bayou Association, said his 28-church association typifies the dilemma described by Campbell. "Are we country?" he asked. "Well, there's not one stoplight in our three counties."

Yet, two new recreation and retirement communities in the area have resulted in "a substantial influx of 'outsiders' who have brought their city ways with them," Taylor said. The two cultures "have no real common meeting ground, except possibly in church," he observed.

"The Ozarks are changing, whether we want them to or not," he said. "Rather than fight it, we need to face it and decide how to live with it. We need to decide how to preserve what's most important."

Responding to Campbell's challenge, conference participants looked closely at regional trends in religion, land use, industrial development and population changes. Placing those against a background

of restrictions on the history and culture of the Ozarks-Ouachita region, participants sought to develop strategies for reaching their communities in the face of their particular challenges.

They learned, for example, the Ozarks are the fastest-growing, non-metropolitan area in the nation, and 80 percent of the region's incorporated townships actually are stable or growing in population, rather than declining. They also were told farm size in the Ozarks has grown while the number of farms has declined.

Gary Farley, associate director of the Home Mission Board's rural-urban missions department, urged conferees to "maintain a dynamic relationship between continuity and change" in their communities. "Some things need to change," he said. "But some things also need to be held on to. We must get involved with the people and listen to their stories. We need to help them see a vision for mission and what can be done."

Because the association is closer to people's needs and can respond more readily than a state or national convention, it has tremendous potential to "reach further and do more," concluded James Lewis of the Home Mission Board's associational missions division.

"No one else can dream the dream that's appropriate for your association," Lewis explained. "We've got to keep before us the vision that... will build bridges to the people, cross frontiers to their needs and carry the gospel where it hasn't been before."

Mark Kelly is a staff writer for the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Crowders to proceed with protest of bylaws interpretation

by Dan Martin

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—A group headed by Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Crowder of Birmingham, Ala., will proceed with the filing of a lawsuit against the Southern Baptist Convention.

Crowder told Baptist Press the group—"Baptists Committed to Fairness"—was to meet with attorney Emmet J. Bondurant in Atlanta Nov. 22 to discuss the suit, including the specific complaint, who will be named as defendants and in which court—state or federal—the suit will be filed. Crowder declined to name others involved in the group.

The focus of Crowder's complaint is Bylaw 16 of the Southern Baptist Convention, which says members of the SBC Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees "shall be nominated" by the convention's Committee on Committees.

During the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC, June 11-13, in Dallas, SBC President Charles F. Stanley of Atlanta ruled nomina-

tions may come only from the Committee on Committees and ruled efforts to amend the report out of order. Amid near pandemonium, the Committee on Boards slate of nominees was elected 13,123 to 9,581.

Crowder has claimed the interpretation and rulings on Bylaw 16 violated his rights as a messenger. The Crowders and Bondurant appeared at the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee, seeking to have the body overturn the action of the convention. The Executive Committee, after an executive session, voted to "affirm" the actions of the convention.

In late October and early November, the Executive Committee's Bylaws Workgroup announced they will present an amendment to Bylaw 16 when the Executive Committee meets Feb. 17-19, 1986, in Nashville.

The amendment will allow further nominations from the floor, but limits nominations to one per messenger, thus eliminating the proposal of alternate slates.

"The... amendment imposes even greater restrictions on the messengers than did Dr. Stanley's ruling in Dallas," Crowder said. "As a practical matter, this proposal effectively blocks all power of the SBC messengers to amend the report...."

Bondurant said there currently are 54 members of the Committee on Boards and to amend "would require 54 people making 54 separate nominations. As a practical matter, it could never be successfully amended unless the convention is prepared to stay convened for several weeks and to devote sufficient time to this matter."

He claimed the actions of the Executive Committee and the Bylaws Workgroup "have made it abundantly clear that the time for quiet efforts to effect change has passed. These efforts toward compromise and the spirit of compromise are not being reciprocated."

Dan Martin is news editor for Baptist Press.

Your state convention at work

Missions If we love

Baptist churches tend to have certain ministries dear to them. Some take a special interest in children's homes; for others it is BSU; and still others give special support to a Baptist college. Foreign missions may claim special attention of a particular church because one of its members became a foreign missionary.



Tidsworth

It is good to love all these (and other) ministries. But a common factor with all these worthy causes is their support comes from churches. Some individuals may give directly or through a will. But even then most of them have been influenced, taught and motivated by a church.

Therefore... if we love people who need ministries... we must give support to starting and developing churches. That is the basis of support for all the ministries we hold dear! — **Floyd Tidsworth Jr., church extension director**

Evangelism GNA prayer

The one thing that always precedes great revivals or spiritual awakenings is prayer. Prayer is the power line between God's spiritual dynamo in heaven and God's spiritual transformers on earth. God has unlimited spiritual energy, and we share in that energy as we go to him in prayer.



Shell

The greatest single need we have in GNA preparation is for our people to be praying people. Revivals are conceived in the heart and mind of God but are given birth and life in the hearts and lives of God's people. Revivals are born in prayer.

This is strongly illustrated in the great revival on Mt. Carmel. Elijah moved to God in prayer, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that thou art God." God moved to the people in power. "The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the water." The people then moved to God in praise and repentance, "They fell on their faces and cried out, the Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

Every church should be very serious

about prayer preparation preceding the Good News Revivals. Many of our churches still will be involved in cottage prayer meetings. Some churches will want to have Sunday School department prayer meetings.

We are praying God will give us a great, Heaven-sent, Holy Spirit-empowered, soul-saving revival. — **Clarence Shell, director**

Christian Life Council Committees needed II

Having Christian Life Committees in every Southern Baptist association and church in our state will help immensely to deal with issues of our time as they relate to the good news of Jesus Christ.



Parker

Merely having these committees is not enough. They need to be active, always seeking to determine what social issues need to be dealt with in carrying out the ministry of love, grace and compassion set forth by our Lord. For instance, Jesus was greatly concerned about the poor, the widow and orphan and the oppressed. He was concerned about prisoners. His concern reached out to the sick and disabled. He was concerned about obligations to both civil and religious needs be met.

Jesus, if on the earth physically today, would be greatly disturbed about the drug and smut peddlers. He particularly would be heart-broken about the abused in our society. He would be more than concerned about these and other issues. He would speak out, calling for them to be dealt with. This we must do and Christian Life Committees can do much in facilitating action rather than mere words!

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet... O Jerusalem I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent" (Is. 61:1a, 6b NASB). — **Bob Parker, director**

Family and Child Care They count on us

Can we count on you? The Thanksgiving Offering is all about caring. Our theme, "They Count On Us," has been before all of the Baptist churches in Arkansas who participate in the Thanksgiving love offering. Listen to the children:

"The smile on my face will be multiplied many times over with a successful Thanksgiving Offering."

"Come on, open wide to the Thanksgiving Offering."

"Don't horse around; the Thanksgiving Offering needs you."

"Share your smile and abundance with another, share in the Thanksgiving Offering."

"Join the celebrity parade of givers to the Thanksgiving Offering."

"Be a winner with the Thanksgiving Offering."

We believe God wants us to reach out in Christian care to provide for the children who count on us for help. What an appropriate time to receive an offering to provide Christian care for abused, neglected and homeless children. Thanksgiving is a special time to thank God for his blessings and a time to help those who are less fortunate. These young people who are hurting, unwanted and dependent need us now. We know Arkansas Baptists will continue to reach out to those who count on us.

It will be helpful for us if we can receive this love offering from the churches by Dec. 31, 1985. Thank you, Arkansas Baptists, for your continuing concern for your child care ministry. — **Johnny G. Biggs, executive director**

Annuity/Stewardship Special offerings

How often should members hear of special opportunities to give over and above their regular gifts for the church's budgeted ministries?

It's possible for faithful members to hear appeals from 50 to 75 percent of the Sundays they attend. Appeals for the four major special offerings may extend through six or eight months. When goals aren't met, the appeals are extended.

Conventions have established guidelines to govern direct appeals to churches from convention boards and agencies. Even with established guidelines, multiple appeals by direct mail go to selected church members. Our institutions struggle for survival and growth.

Most churches participate in the three mission offerings. These are established in Baptist life. The Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services promotes a Thanksgiving offering. An offering for world hunger was presented in many of our churches during October.

Special appeals may increase if our people do not grow in Christian stewardship. Planned Growth in Giving will enable Baptists to fund their ministries through churches. Without growth in percentage giving, we will continue to subject ourselves to those who dodge the restraining hand with appealing hands. The established special offerings should continue and every Baptist has an opportunity to give over and above gifts during November and December. — **James A. Walker, director**

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Next month in Arkansas

December 1-8, Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Annual focus on foreign missions in local churches. Arkansas' goal for the offering is \$2,200,000, part of an SBC-wide goal of \$70 million.

December 2-4, Southern Baptist College Bible Conference, Walnut Ridge.
December 9-10, Evangelism Workshop, Camp Paron. Directors of missions, associational directors of evangelism and other workers will finalize plans for Good News America and emphasize prayer. This annual invitational

event is sponsored by the State Evangelism Department.

December 29, Student Day at Christmas. Suggested date for the local church to have special programs for college students to share their experiences with the church. National Student Ministries sponsors the annual event throughout the SBC.

December 30-31, Youth Evangelism Conference, Park Hill Church, North Little Rock. An annual conference for junior and senior high students, sponsored by the State Evangelism Department.

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- * July 29 - Arrive Juneau - Tour Juneau
- * July 30 - Arrive Fairbanks - Tour Fairbanks
- * July 31 - Alaska Railroad to Denali
- * Aug. 2 - Flight to Nome/Kotzebue
- * Aug. 5 - ALASKA BAPTIST CONVENTION FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

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To make it as easy as possible for you and your family to sign up for this excellent protection plan, we're having a special enrollment period from October 1-November 30.

You'll find that life rates have been reduced up to 30% for some age groups. Also, if you're enrolled in the plan from January to November next year, you won't be billed for your December medical premium—which means you get 1 month's medical insurance absolutely free!

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International

The announcement

by James McDaniel, First Church, Brinkley

Basic passage: Isaiah 9:1-7; Luke 1:26-56

Focal passage: Luke 1:26-38

Central truth: Jesus is both divine and human in nature.

Why did God select Mary to give birth to and raise the Lord? She had grown up in Nazareth, a small community many held in contempt. Nathaniel's question of Philip when he learned Jesus came from Nazareth was "Can anything good come from there?"

Nazareth was on the path of caravans headed for seaports, and many of the young girls became involved with the travelers. Mary remained pure. She had a pure heart which was reflected in a pure life. It is significant that Luke, a physician, stressed the point Mary was a virgin (1:27, 34, 35-37). He adds Mary found favor, full approval, with God.


Mary was overwhelmed with the announcement she was to be the mother of the Messiah. Her question was "How can this be?" God often puts us in impossible situations where we can't even figure out the problem, let alone the solution! Mary's answer, as our answers to life, lie in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mary's response then was to say to the Lord, "Be it unto me according to your word." This is the spirit of submission rising from a humble heart that God looks for in each of us. She was saying, "I'm your servant Lord, whatever you want."

Mary literally laid her reputation on the line. The inevitable questions of "What will people think?" "What will Joseph do?" undoubtedly ran through her mind. They were overcome by her commitment to the will of God. Though she was young, she was devout. She knew the Word of God. In the Magnificat (1:46-50), she quotes 1 Samuel, Psalms, Isaiah, Micah and Exodus. She found favor with God because his Word was engrained in her heart.

She was pure, humble and saturated in the Word of God. Yet, she, too, was in need of a Savior. She is in heaven, not because Jesus was her son, but because he was her Savior.

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Life and Work

Dealing with prosperity

by Bradley A. Rogge, Brookwood First Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Hosea 10:1-15; 12:1-14

Focal passage: Hosea 10:1,2,12-14; 12:1,6-9

Central truth: Material prosperity must be dealt with in light of God's requirements of righteousness, love and worship.

Having material prosperity is not wrong. What we need to guard against is how we use that material prosperity and what attitude we hold toward those things we possess.

His attitude was a part of her spiritual problems. Israel gave the credit for her prosperity to the pagan gods that had been incorporated into her worship. This was in opposition to the one who had really granted Israel's prosperity. The "luxuriant vine" should have produced fruit for the Lord of the harvest, but this was not the case.

Is this not like you and I today? We spend 40, 50 or more hours a week in the getting of possessions; then we spend the rest of the week enjoying those things. In reality, these "things" become our pagan gods, and we give God only a token of thanks for what he has given us.

God gives us the strength to work. God provides the work. God had his hand on our birth, thus bringing us into a prosperous nation, instead of some other country where prosperity is limited.

Not only is our attitude important, but how we use all we have for God is also vital. All we have is, in reality, God's. Our basic responsibility is to tithe, but tithing is only our beginning. We should allow God to control all our material prosperity.

To do less than to give him control of all is a sin. We know this because God says he has mercy extended toward an unrepentant sinner (10:12). God is ready to bless his people if they will seek him out. God wants to give us happiness, security and protection. All we need to do is ask.

One final question must be asked. Can material prosperity bring us real happiness? Elvis Presley had a great deal of material prosperity. Yet, more prosperity brought him more confinement. At the age of 44 he died, a prisoner of his own success.

Real freedom and happiness come from using the things God has given to us in his work. We must always remember who really gives us all we have now or will ever have. Above all, we must remember to always give God the credit and the thanks.

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Bible Book

Faithful to God

by Jim Byrum, Toltec Church, Scott

Basic passage: Daniel 1:1 to 3:30

Focal passage: Daniel 1:8,14-17; 3:17-18,26-28

Central truth: God always blesses faithfulness.

Daniel grew up during the days of spiritual revival led by good King Josiah; and nourished by the preaching of Jeremiah. Early in his life, Daniel trusted the Lord. He made life's greatest decision: to follow Jehovah God. The decision to follow the Lord was the beginning of a remarkable adventure marked by tragedy, testing and triumph.

Tragedy came quickly. In 605 B.C. when Daniel was about 20, God gave Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, victory over Jerusalem. God's prophets had warned of the coming judgment, but the people did not heed.

Among the captives taken to Babylon were Daniel and his three friends, who became known as Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego. Gloom filled their hearts. Had God forsaken them? They had been defeated in battle, taken from their beloved Jerusalem to a foreign country and made to be eunuchs to serve in the court of a pagan king. To these young men of royal blood, their situation must have seemed like the end of the world.

Testing soon followed. Because they were handsome, able and intelligent, Daniel and his three friends were selected for a special three-year training project after which they were to serve in the presence of the king. The problem was two-fold: first, their diet included eating meat that was unclean to a Hebrew and the unwise drinking of wine; and second, the meat and the wine had been offered to idols. God's law strictly forbade practicing idolatry and eating unclean meat. Temptation was strong. To refuse would almost certainly get them killed.

Daniel knew Jehovah was the only true God and that obedience to him was more important than life itself. He would rather die in fellowship with God than live in sin. Because Daniel believed God loved him and would keep his promises, he decided not to defile himself and disappoint God.

Triumph came soon. God blessed Daniel for his obedience, bringing him into loving favor with the person in charge. He gave him knowledge and wisdom, advancing him to the greatest position among the magicians and astrologers. God did this. These were not the results of natural endowment. God did it!

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Bennett unveils proposed voucher plan

WASHINGTON (BP)—After holding it in the wings for a number of months, the Reagan administration finally ushered its proposed educational voucher program into the spotlight during a news conference Nov. 13.

The program, dubbed The Equity and Choice Act of 1985 (TEACH), would allow parents of educationally disadvantaged children to obtain vouchers that in turn could be "spent" at the school—public or private—of the parents' choosing.

Since last summer, U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett repeatedly has vowed to find a way around a Supreme Court decision which held unconstitutional New York City's program of sending public school employees into private schools to provide specialized services under Chapter 1 (formerly Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. During the news conference, Bennett stated the high court did "not say private and parochial students could not receive Chapter 1 services, but just not in the way they had been."

A written explanation provided by the Department of Education explained the proposed voucher program "would be clearly distinguishable, for it minimizes the 'entanglement' of church and state that concerned the court" in its earlier decision.

In introducing the proposed bill, Bennett said the voucher program will give parents "a ticket to find the best possible schools for their children." These schools, Bennett expanded, could include private, church-related elementary and secondary schools.

Currently, federal funds provided through Chapter 1 go to public schools that provide education services for children who are economically and educationally disadvantaged. These services typically are provided during the regular school day by trained specialists in separate classrooms. In some cases, instruction is offered after school.

Under the administration's proposal, the parent of a student eligible for Chapter 1 services could choose to allow his child to remain in the school the child currently attends, where the child would continue to receive compensatory services. The parent, however, could opt to obtain a voucher for use in: (1) another public school in the same district, if the district permits such intradistrict transfers; (2) a public school outside the local school district, if the other district accepts interdistrict transfers; or (3) an eligible private school.

The voucher could be used for compensatory services provided by the school, for tuition or for a combination of compensatory services and tuition, at the parent's option.

Bennett claimed the proposed legislation, which calls for the voucher program to take effect July 1, 1986, would accomplish three major goals: increase educational opportunity for disadvantaged children by expanding the range of choices available to them under

Chapter 1; increase parents' involvement by providing choices as to the educational program that best meets the needs of their children; and promote a healthy rivalry among schools to meet the needs of disadvantaged children.

Some 4.8 million disadvantaged children now qualify for Chapter 1 participation, according to Department of Education figures.

Eligibility for participation is determined by the local school district under criteria of the federal statute.

Although the average voucher would be worth \$600, the actual value would vary. A voucher would be worth a local district's total Chapter 1 allocation—minus administrative expenses—divided by the number of Chapter 1 students participating in the district.

Bennett stated the voucher program would be "revenue neutral," that is, no funds other than those already budgeted for Chapter 1 services would be required. Bennett's undersecretary, Gary Bauer, contended budget costs have been a major obstacle in obtaining passage of the Reagan tuition tax credit proposals, but should not be a factor in Congress' decision.

Rep. Augustus F. Hawkins (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, however, expressed strong opposition to the bill.

"Vouchers are a backdoor attempt to dismantle federal aid to education and will cause irreparable harm to Chapter 1, by far one of the nation's most successful education programs," said Hawkins. "Bennett's plan to offer vouchers—worth about \$540—in the expectation that children will be able to gain admission to any school of their choice plays a cruel hoax on the nation's very poorest families.

"This legislation is loosely drawn and most likely unconstitutional. It is fatally flawed and will fall on its own weight."

Robert L. Maddox, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, echoed Hawkins' concern over the constitutionality of the proposal. "It is a clear violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment," Maddox declared. "It also would be bad for schools, for wherever government money goes, government control will soon follow."

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, called the legislation "unfair, unconstitutional, undemocratic and unhealthy for public education."

"This is yet another attempt to divert dollars dedicated for public education into private and parochial schools," Dunn continued. "Virtually all Baptist conventions that represent the 27 million Baptists in this country have repeatedly reaffirmed their opposition to parochial schemes, and they will surely see through this slick subterfuge."

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