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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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March 22, 1990

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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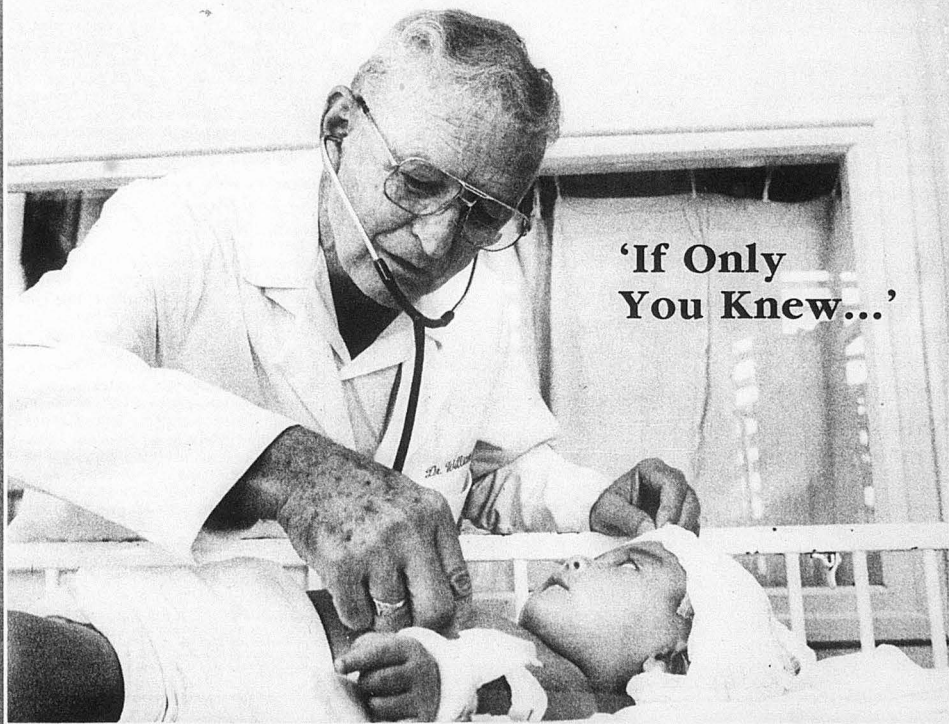


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Spirit of Oneness

Arkansas Baptist

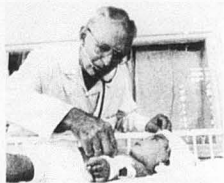
March 22, 1990



**'If Only
You Knew...'**

In This Issue

Cover Story



(BP) photo / Don Rutledge

'If Only You Knew...' 5

If only more Southern Baptists knew just how much their missions gifts accomplish, they would pour out their hearts in generosity, says a missions leader.

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IT'S UPLIFTING

Benefits Of Freedom

BUDAPEST, Hungary (BP)—Hungarian Baptists expect to recover 11 key buildings and plots of land seized by the government during the early 1950s, including several bought with Southern Baptist help.

In some cases Baptists will not get back the actual properties taken but may receive other buildings and properties as compensation, said Janos Viczian, president of the Baptist Union of Hungary.

The total value of the properties likely will be hundreds of thousands of dollars, Viczian said.

A recent Hungarian television news story on the government move showed a letter from the Baptist union listing the properties Baptists are asking to be returned.

The return of buildings and land to churches is resulting from a package of laws dealing with "freedom of conscience and religion and on the churches" introduced in the Hungarian Parliament in January by Kalman Kulcsar, the government's minister of justice.

Under the new laws, the government promises not to interfere in the affairs of churches but assures churches they can play a more significant role in national religious life as well as in educational, cultural, social and health affairs.

A greater role for Hungarian churches "will have a positive effect on society as

a whole and on its moral standards," Kulcsar told a Budapest newspaper.

The change in the Hungarian government's position on religion in society is one of many that has swept the country after the domination of the Communist Party ended last year. In January, Hungary became the second East European country to re-establish ties with the Vatican; Poland did so last July.

Baptists aren't the only religious group regaining property. A seminary in the city of Esztergom has been returned to the Roman Catholic Church. "It has 200 rooms and includes a church building," Viczian explained. "But it needs refurbishing and the church cannot afford to fix it up. Baptists will have a similar problem. How will we renovate them? . . . But establishing ownership is the most important thing."

Properties Baptists want returned include several in the heart of Budapest. One of the most valuable is a three-story building once used as a seminary, purchased with help from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1946. It is now used as the embassy of North Korea.

Another property was the first seminary built by the Foreign Mission Board in Hungary, in 1926. The land it stood on now is Bem Square, a public park located directly across the Danube River from the Hungarian Parliament building. "There is no way to estimate the value of this land," said Viczian.

GOOD NEWS!

Victory In Jesus

Romans 8:35-39

Paul experienced victory in Jesus Christ (Ro. 7:24-25a). He not only knew victory over his lower nature, but he also experienced victory in the midst of adversity.

The scene of victory: "In all these things" (v. 37, RSV)—World religions deal with adversity in a variety of ways. These range from indifference to trouble to the denial of adversity. Trouble is an unavoidable reality of life. The scene of Christian victory is not a trouble-free environment but right in the midst of difficulty.

The scope of victory:—Paul presented a list of realities over which the Christian must win victories. First he spoke of trouble (v. 35), and then he wrote of every possible difficulty one could experience (vv. 38-39). Some men may be able to win a

victory in one or two areas of life but have weak spots which eventually lead them to defeat. The scope of Christian victory is all encompassing. There is no area of life in which the believer cannot be a winner in Christ.

The source of victory: "Through him"—The secret of Christian victory is not human strength or a grin-and-bear-it determination. Rather it is in Jesus Christ. A parchment in my office reads, "Lord, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen today that you and I together cannot handle." Paul knew that he could handle anything with Christ's help (Ph. 4:13).

Evil wins in the lives of many people, but the Christian can experience the exhilaration of victory in Jesus.

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New Congregations

J. EVERETT SNEED

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of new congregations as far as reaching the lost and involving individuals in the work of the Lord. There are a number of factors which make newly organized congregations exceedingly effective. Among these: (1) a lack of past traditions; (2) the closeness of the fellowship of members; and (3) a servant attitude on the part of the membership.

Recently a convention employee had an experience which validates the effectiveness of new congregations. The convention employee was leading a Bible study on 2 Corinthians at Oak Ridge Chapel, Austin, where Rodney Westmoreland is pastor. The pastor requested that an invitation would be given at the close of each evening's Bible study. Decisions were made every evening with four professions of faith, three by transfer of letter, and two rededications. Obviously, many one-week revivals reap less results than did the four-day Bible study.

There are numerous factors which led to these results. Pastor Westmoreland has a good relationship with his community. He knows his prospects and had created an atmosphere in which they can respond to God's Word. The congregation has a spirit of openness. The members have not erected any barriers which would tend to deter the working of the Holy Spirit.

The key to an individual experiencing salvation is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit as he uses the Word of God. The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians, clearly and forcefully sets forth the gospel. God assures us, "So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in all things whereto I sent it" (Is. 55:11).

True New Testament fellowship will have a positive impact on church growth. The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*, which communicates the idea of partnership. In the act of salvation, individuals enter into a partnership with God and, because they are in union with God, they have a close bond of relationship with other Christians. Such a relationship encourages a desire to see others come to know Christ as Savior and Lord.

Sometimes church traditions or a lack of flexibility can prevent churches from experiencing growth. Someone has said,



"The seven most deadly words of the church are 'we never did it that way before.'" The biblical plan of salvation never changes, but methods of presenting the gospel may be done in a variety of ways.

In a new congregation, most of the members will have a servant attitude. The question they ask is what can I do to assist my church, rather than what can my church do to assist me? Repeatedly the New Testament writers spoke of themselves as "servants." The word most often used by Paul is the Greek word *doulos* which means "bond slave." A willingness to serve God in any manner will enhance a church's outreach.

The four major deterrents to outreach are: (1) a lack of concern for a lost soul; (2) failure to train lay people to witness; (3)

failure of pastors and leaders to model personal witnessing; and (4) failure to make evangelism the number one priority.

Perhaps the most important single factor in a lack of effective outreach is the failure to make evangelism the number one priority. Obviously, a congregation of any size can make evangelism its number one priority, but a new congregation more often will see the necessity of doing this than will an older and larger one. There are many good things that any church can do, but the New Testament requires our first concern to be for the reaching of people for Christ.

When an individual confesses Christ as Savior, he becomes a part of the people of God. He enters into a covenant relationship under the redemptive work of Christ. God has called out a special people, not for what they have done, but for what they can do through him for him.

One of the classic definitions of a church is given by J. Clyde Turner as he said, "... a company of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in covenant relations, organized according to the New Testament pattern, and living in obedience to Christ, the great head of the church" (*These Things We Believe*, p. 117). This definition which is in keeping with New Testament teachings, indicates the necessity of establishing congregations wherever there is a need.

We commend Executive Director Don Moore, the Missions Department and churches sponsoring new congregations for their emphases on establishing new work. All churches, new and old, need to do everything possible to reach and mature Christians. This is the priority given to us by Christ.

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Letters to the Editor

Often Overlooked

We're nearly all aware of world hunger needs but hunger here at home is often overlooked.

Have you ever heard someone make the statement, "I don't believe there is hunger in Arkansas?" Perhaps we can insert the words, "I don't want to believe," and it will better describe those uttering the statement.

How serious is the problem? How many people are experiencing poverty and hunger? What is being done to help? How can we provide assistance? (HMB Hunger Survey Guide). These are questions that can be answered. Tommy Goode, associate in the State Missions Department, is available to help any church or association do a hunger survey in their area to see just how critical the needs are. Your Missions Development Council can then suggest to the church or association specific services or ministries to meet those needs.

Do you believe there is hunger around about you or do you not want to believe? What will your response be to a hungry world? . . . The King will reply, "I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for me!" (Mt. 25:40).—Katsy McAlister, El Dorado

Strong Opposition

I write in strong opposition to that portion of the recent budget recommendation by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention proposing a draconian decrease in our financial support for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The proposed budget would reduce our contribution by 87.24 percent, from \$391,796 this year to a nominal \$50,000. It will be presented to the convention in June for consideration.

For over half a century, the Baptist Joint Committee has diligently promoted and protected our historic claims for religious liberty and separation of church and state. Its officers and staff have consistently demonstrated their appreciative understanding of traditional Baptist doctrine and their professional expertise in lobbying policymakers on behalf of these cherished causes. In turn, Southern Baptists in convention have repeatedly endorsed these efforts and willingly provided generous financial support for Baptist Joint Committee operations.

We have done so recognizing that

cooperation with other Baptists greatly enhances our potential to influence public policy and befitting our leadership status among Baptists. While considerable diversity exists among and within the various Baptist bodies, the Joint Committee's narrow religious liberty focus reminds us of our shared heritage and unites us in advancing it effectively. Nevertheless, those professed conservatives who now establish the agenda for our convention seek to move us away from our doctrinal roots and our organizational ties with the Baptist Joint Committee.

Southern Baptists, particularly messengers to the upcoming New Orleans convention, must not be misled by deceptive labels. The responsible conservative

stance on this issue is to uphold, not abandon, centuries of fundamental commitment to religious liberty and separation of church and state. It is to reaffirm, not renounce, over 50 years of proud identification with and unselfish support for the Baptist Joint Committee. I urge convention messengers to defeat the Executive Committee budget recommendation for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.—Hal Bass, Arkadelphia

Real Revival

Most Southern Baptist churches aren't setting any growth records. Why? An obvious answer is that God's people aren't

RANDALL O'BRIEN

A Pastor's Perspective

Sewers and Savior(s)

Seven year old Latricia Reese was rescued from raging flood waters that swept her into a Houston, Texas, storm drainage sewer, authorities said, after clinging to a crack in the wall 30 feet under the street for more than 12 hours.

"She spent the entire night in the sewer with all that floodwater coming in on her," said fire department spokesman Mike Warnke. "It's just a miracle she could be alive."

Latricia, who suffered from mild shock, exposure, and some abrasions, plunged several levels underground, twice falling more than 6 feet before reaching out and clutching a crack in the wall. "I just held onto the crack in the cement," Latricia recalled from her hospital bed hours after her rescue. She said she was bothered throughout by "mosquitoes, ants, and bugs."

"The fire department diving team was called out, and they refused to go in the hole because the water was just so swift that it was too dangerous," Warnke said.

"The police diving team was called out and they refused to go in the hole because the water was just so swift that it was too dangerous," he added.

Latricia was rescued by two construction workers at 8:00 a.m. the following morning. "We used a flashlight and saw

a little figure about 30 feet under the street," one of the workers said. "It was pitch dark and she couldn't see anything."

How many Latricias would you guess have been swept away by the storms of life? How many of God's precious children are holding on, desperately, to the cracks in the cement? Waters raging at floodstage, swirling overhead! Grip weakening. Time an enemy.

Did not our Savior come to go into sewers? For us! Now who will go in the sewers after Latricia? "Not I," said the fire department. "Not I," said the police department. "Not I," said the preacher. "Not I," said the distinguished churchman.

Then who?

Down in Texas a child of God holding on for life in pitch darkness looked and saw a saving light coming. Construction workers! God uses ordinary people to do his work. Always has. Always will.

Who in Arkansas will pierce the darkness with the light of Christ and find Latricia? Who will go and "give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death?" (Lk. 1:79)

Randall O'Brien is pastor of Calvary Church in Little Rock.



meeting the conditions set out for revival in 2 Chronicles 7:14. If that is the case, why aren't God's people meeting these conditions?

Adrian Rogers said, "My goal" is to minister to people and not use people to build a church but to use a church to build people. When a church is no longer able to meet its members needs is when it "maxes out." (*The Commercial Appeal*, Saturday, March 3, 1990, p. A10). I am afraid, in all too many instances, that church leadership is attempting to use people to build a church.

One church member, when asked why he drove 35 miles each way to church twice a week replied, "Because this is the first church I've ever been in where I've found the sermon is always directed at the concerns I carry in my heart. I've been coming here now for five months, and I believe I could give you a complete outline for every sermon I've heard without ever

looking at any notes." These comments probably zero in on two imperatives for church growth and real revival. The first is that the church must focus on the religious and personal needs of people. In the 1960s this was called "relevance." Only the church leadership can provide this focus. Second is memorable motivational preaching. Only the pastor, with the help of the Holy Spirit, can provide this catalyst. Unquestionably, there are other factors. But without the first two, the rest do not really matter.

I believe that real revival, when it comes, will not be scheduled. It will be spontaneous and continuing. I do not see this happening until churches begin to build God's people so they can come to meet the conditions of 2 Chronicles 7:14. If real revival doesn't come, the leadership in our churches will bear the greater responsibility.—**Max Tarpley, Blytheville**

WILLIAM J. REYNOLDS

Hymns Baptists Sing



Grace Greater

"Grace Greater Than Our Sin"

When Julia Harriette Johnston was

six years old, her family moved to Peoria, Ill., where her father became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. An outstanding student, Julia began teaching in her high school soon after her own graduation.

As a teenager, she began working with children in Sunday School, an activity that across the years became a major interest of her life. She became widely known for her leadership skills and was invited to speak at state and district meetings

She wrote a number of books—devotional, biographical, and missionary—and many poems and articles for religious periodicals. Her interest in poetic writing led her to write hymns and she eventually wrote more than 500.

"Grace Greater Than Our Sin," sometimes known by the first line "Marvelous grace of our loving Lord," was written in 1910, and is based on Romans 5:20.

Daniel B. Townner composed the music for her hymn. A native of Pennsylvania, Townner for 15 years served as music director for Methodist churches in New York, Ohio, and Kentucky.

Beginning in 1885, he assisted D. L. Moody in his revivals, and in 1893 became head of the music department at Moody Bible Institute. The composer of many gospel songs, he is best remembered for "At Calvary" and "Trust and Obey," and for this tune named "Moody."

William J. Reynolds is professor of church music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM SUNDAY APRIL 8

'If You Only Knew . . .'

God's Word places a heavy responsibility for sharing the good news about Jesus Christ with a lost world. The Bible's mandate for God's people to be involved in missions, evangelism, education, and benevolence is disturbingly clear, but detailed instructions on how to carry out that mandate are noticeably scarce.

We have realized that individual Christians alone cannot carry out God's missionary mandate. We have also realized that a single church, regardless of size, alone cannot adequately carry out God's marching orders. Only by being a part of a fellowship of churches cooperating together can a church fulfill its responsibilities.

While affirming the necessity of cooperation, Southern Baptists have struggled with the nature of that cooperation. For years each Baptist institution, agency, or cause made its own appeal to churches for support. This plan was ineffective and inefficient.

As we have tried to be faithful to God's Word, directing our efforts to missions, evangelism, education, and benevolence, we have been led to a method of support which enables us to serve effectively. Through prayer and dedication, growing out of a longing to do God's work better, Southern Baptists developed the Cooperative Program. I believe the Holy Spirit directed the development. The Cooperative Program protects the autonomy of the churches at the same time it provides a means of cooperation so that churches can be faithful to God's Word.

Along with many other persons, I have experienced firsthand the marvelous benefits of the Cooperative Program. My life has been molded by the ministries made possible through the Cooperative Program. I know that it works. On foreign, home, and state mission fields, in Baptist schools and benevolent institutions, in churches and through a multitude of programs to help Baptists effectively share the gospel, I have seen the blessings the Cooperative Program brings.

I long for every Baptist to know what the Cooperative Program does, how it works, what it means.

I pray that every church which is part of our cooperating Baptist family will give regularly through the Cooperative Program. The future is bright for Baptists because of God's guidance and power, because of his gift to us of cooperative missions, because of his leading us to embrace the Cooperative Program as a major means of carrying out his Word. I thank God to be a part of such a family of believers.—**William M. Pinson Jr., executive director, Baptist General Convention of Texas**

A SMILE OR TWO

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of Lot. "Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt," she said. One little girl tentatively raised her hand.

"I was wondering," the little girl said, "what happened to his flea?"

Photo / Herdon Barnes



Keith Knupp (left) and a local Guatemala man work on a church foundation.

Spirit of Oneness

by Tim Yarbrough
SBC Brotherhood Commission

A gentle shower began as the men joined hands for a devotional at the place where they were to build a new church.

Keith Knupp of Des Arc, Ark., looked up smiling, recalling that no rain was forecast this day or for the entire week the men gathered around him were to work in Guatemala. God would provide, he prayed, then continued to lead the men in a devotional from Genesis.

The brief shower helped settle the dust and made the concrete footings for the church set up much better.

"They told us when we went up there that this was the dry season, that we just wouldn't see any rain," Knupp said. "We were standing inside this block wall that we had laid and were having a prayer of thanksgiving for what we had gotten accomplished (when the shower began)."

"That was something that told me that God was there among us," said Allen Minton. "There was a closeness (to God) that can't be described."

Each day a different member of the group would lead a devotional at the work site.

"I think that's the one thing that kept us in one spirit, we studied together and we prayed together before we went to work," said Knupp.

The seven men participating in building the church near the Tajumulco Volcano were part of an overseas partnership project between Guatemala Baptists and the

Arkansas Baptist State Convention. In the five days the men labored in the country, they completed the first church structure built from the ground up resulting from the partnership.

The men stayed with missionaries Windell and Jane Parker and Keith and Penny Stamps while in Guatemala.

A special bond formed between the men, three of whom are members of First Baptist Church of Des Arc. Returning from their trip on Sunday, Feb. 18, Knupp, Minton and Herndon Barnes told the congregation during evening services of their experiences serving in volunteer missions. It was a special time of sharing and the people were moved to tears on more than one occasion.

Other Baptist Young Men and Baptist Men men from Arkansas participating in the project were: David Chaney of First Baptist Church, England; Ed Lauderdale Jr. of Pines Baptist Church, Quitman; John McAlister of First Baptist Church, El Dorado; and Fred Dollar of Keo Baptist Church, Keo. Glendon Grober, Arkansas Brotherhood director, is coordinating efforts in Guatemala.

The terrain was rough and the work was difficult, the men said, but it was rewarding as they felt a closeness to God that they had not felt before.

The air was thin at 8,500 feet and began to take its toll on the men by week's end. Building materials would sometimes run low, but about the time the men thought work would have to stop, along would

come a Guatemalan man or young boy carrying a load of supplies to keep them going. A local man and his children carried building supplies on their backs to get to the site where the church was being built.

The image of young boys making the track along the side of the volcano with a load of building materials was vivid in Knupp's mind.

"The kids were ringing with sweat from going up that mountain and they never complained one time. Those kids worked harder than we did," said Knupp.

On Thursday the men started putting the finishing touches on the 16-by-22-foot church. Pews were brought in and set up inside.

"We went inside and sat down on our pews for the first time to have our devotional," Knupp said. "(As we) started to pray, a 13-year-old boy that didn't understand a word that was being said laid his head on my shoulder and he reached over and squeezed my hand. I know he didn't understand the words... but at that time I knew that he understood why we were there. We went up there to share the love of God with those kids and those people and by the grace of God they felt that love."

In a local resident's testimony that was translated for the men later, a man said that the people couldn't understand why someone from so far away would care enough to come and help them.

"There was a spirit of oneness between the men who were up there working, it was just unreal," Minton said. "I think we benefited from the trip much, much more than what those people did where that building is. We received a blessing from being there by finding out just what God can do in our lives when we allow Him to."

Minton said his faith has been strengthened by his participation in the Guatemala missions project. He said the men saw their prayers answered time after time.

"I look at my salvation now in a whole different light," Minton said. "I know now that with God at my side there's nothing that can't be accomplished."

He said God showed him through the missions experience a way he can witness "without ever opening my mouth."

"Witnessing is something that I never have been able to do. I've seen witnessing through work, not witnessing through words. To me, that's the only kind of witnessing there is," Minton said. "You can tell somebody God loves you, but when you go and show them... that shows them a Christian fellowship and Brotherhood that mere words can't."

Vern Wickliffe, pastor of First Baptist Church of Des Arc, told the men their lives would never be the same after they returned from the missions trip.

"Praise God, I don't think they will," Knupp said.

Wickliffe said when the men relate to the church their spiritual experiences while on mission, it creates an excitement that results in other members wanting to go do missions.

"It is vitally important," he said. "So many times we are accustomed to the every day and the usual way of God working. When we send someone off and they are filled with the Spirit beyond their capacity to hold it, they bring it back to the church and it overflows. When the Spirit overflows it touches other lives in the church."

Barnes, who also participated in project to repair a church in Belize, said Baptist Men and Baptist Young Men can be used by God through their vocational skills.

"If the Lord calls you, he will provide something for you to do. I feel that very strongly," he said. "My experience is that he will use you in ways that you don't think that he will."

Photo / Herndon Barnes



Fred Dollar of Keo leads a construction site devotional.

"Here's Hope Revival"

with **Rick Stanley**
(Step-brother of Elvis Presley)

Sunday - Wednesday
April 1-4, 1990

Little Rock's
First Baptist Church
Rodney Parham and Pleasant Valley Drive

Sunday - 6 p.m.
Monday & Tuesday - 7 p.m.
Wednesday - 6 p.m.

Luncheon meetings for
parents of teenagers
Monday and Wednesday,
12 noon - 1 p.m.
in Fellowship Hall

Question and answer
session for parents in
sanctuary, 6:15-7:00 p.m.,
Monday, April 2



Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Cranford Graves has been called to serve as pastor of Mount Zion Church, Doddridge.

Paul Huskey has resigned as pastor of Lone Rock Church to enter full-time evangelism. Huskey, who has pastored churches in Arkansas for 28 years, may be contacted at 501-499-7707 or 501-499-7400.

Floyd Vineyard has resigned as pastor of Horn Church at Waldron.

Cecil Edward Archer of Phoenix, Ariz., died Feb. 25 at age 77. He had pastored and served on staffs of several Arkansas churches. Survivors include his wife, Celia B. Archer; three daughters, Le'Ora Burks of California, Joy Minifee of Texas and Ruth Ann Bryant of Alabama; two sisters; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Mason Bondurant has completed eight months of service as interim pastor of Sixteenth Street Church in North Little Rock. He may be contacted at 501-988-5476.

Dwayne Smith is serving as pastor of Memorial Church in Blytheville, going there from Etowah Church.

Bryan Pritchett is serving as pastor of Smithville Church, going there from Friendship Church in Osceola.

Ken Pruett is serving as pastor of New Providence Church at Leachville.

Larry Johnson has begun his first pastorate, serving as pastor of Sixteenth Street Church in North Little Rock. He was a member of First Church in Gravel Ridge.

Michael Patrick joined the staff of First Church in Dumas March 18 as associate pastor for youth and music, coming there from Oakview Church in Madill, Okla. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University. Patrick and his wife, Linda, have a daughter, Lauren.

Jeff Stotts joined the staff of First Church in Morrilton March 18 as minister of music and youth, going there from First Church in Mayflower.

David Wilcox will join the staff of West Helena Church April 1 as associate pastor of youth and music, coming there from First Church of Giddings, Texas. He is a

graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Wilcox is married to the former Karen Riner of Benton. They have a daughter, Elizabeth Elaine.

Ken Canitz is serving as youth director at First Church in Dardanelle.

Neil Edmonson is serving as pastor of Pottsville Church, having previously served the church as interim pastor.

Briefly

Harmony Grove Church ordained Pastor Mike Hughes to the ministry March 4.

Shiloh Memorial Church at Texarkana recognized Bobby McDowell, Albert Murphy, Don Tibbitt and Charles Brown as Volunteers of the Month for their service at Whispering Pines Retirement Center.

Tyler Street Church in Little Rock honored retiring Pastor Harold Hightower and his wife, Clarice, with a retirement reception Feb. 25. At this reception, the couple was presented with a Ford Taurus and other gifts of appreciation. The Hightowers will reside at Route 1, Box 118 E, Mayflower, AR 72106.

East Side Church in Osceola collected \$510 when World Hunger Day was observed Feb. 18.

New Hope Church of Yellville ordained Jell Dean Benton, Floyd Doshier and Howard Doshier to the deacon ministry March 18.

Pyatt Church ordained Pastor Eldon Hellums to the preaching ministry Feb. 18.

Elaine Church will host a one night rally March 31 for which Bailey Smith of Atlanta, Ga., will be speaker. The service will begin at 7 p.m. Harold Danley is pastor.

Life Line Church in Little Rock, as a part of Here's Hope, Jesus Cares for You revival emphasis will sponsor "Here's Hope, Southwestern Little Rock, Jesus Cares for You" March 24-25. The church will offer a free meal to the hungry of the area, beginning at 10 a.m. March 24.

Fair Park Church in Russellville ordained Jimmy Coleman, Jim Philpott and Jack Bardley to the deacon ministry Feb. 25.

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Friendship International, sponsored by 11 churches in Pulaski Association and observing its 15th year anniversary, held its annual Friendship Day March 8 at Little Rock First Church. Ann Rice, director, and Irene Murphy of Germany, co-director, coordinated the event that an attendance of 350. A quilt, designed and handmade by members, was of special interest to participants who also enjoyed tasting at a food fair. Both the anniversary quilt and food were representative of the members' native lands.

Excellent Prospects

Ashley County Baptists launched their first new mission in at least 40 years on Sunday, March 11.

Associational Director of Missions Billy Kite believes the new work has excellent prospects of success.

South Main Baptist Church, located on a seven-acre site south of Crossett on Highway 133, is sponsored by Mt. Olive Church in North Crossett. Crossett First Church and Second Church also are assisting with the effort.

Kite, who will pastor the new congregation without charge for the first four months, said the new work has been three years in the making, and that research conducted by himself and three outside consultants indicates a real need for new Southern Baptist churches in the area.

"New churches reach people who aren't being reached by existing churches," Kite explained. "We believe as much as 80 percent of the people in Crossett are not in church on Sunday morning. Many of those people can be reached with new congregations."

Kite said the association's executive board is planning to start as many as eight new congregations in the next six to eight years.

In addition to the number of unchurched families, Kite points to strong support from the three assisting congregations as another reason for believing South Main Church will be a successful new start. The supporting congregations have given financial and material assistance, as well as provided a strong base of experienced leaders for the new church. Forty-seven persons attended the morning worship service.

The congregation is meeting in a mobile chapel provided by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The parcel of land was purchased by the association with assistance from the state convention. The new work was virtually debt free at its inception, Kite said.



Ashley County Baptists launch a new church in Crossett.

Arkansans On Panel

A first-time teleconference on single adult ministry, "Building an Effective Single Adult Ministry" will be broadcast Sunday, April 1, at 4 p.m. on B.T.N. Two Arkansans are on the panel which will respond to call-in questions from pastors, staff, and single adult leaders.

The live teleconference will feature among its guests Ruth Ann Hill, widow of the late Guy Wade, pastor of First Church Booneville. She is currently single adult consultant for the Sunday School Board in Nashville. Hosting the program will be B.J. Sams, news anchor for Channel 11-KTHV in Little Rock.

Secretaries' Conference

A conference for church secretaries is scheduled for April 26 at Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock, starting at 8:30 a.m.

Gay White, former First Lady of Arkansas, will speak on the theme "Reflections in a Mirror Dimly."

The registration fee is \$25, which covers all conference and workshop materials, lunch, breaks, and entertainment by Mary Ann Salmon. For further information, contact Reflections Church Secretary Conference, 201 E. "C" Street, North Little Rock, AR 72116; telephone 771-1125.

Host Families Needed

Nacel Cultural Exchanges, Inc., is seeking Arkansas families willing to open their hearts and homes to French and Spanish teenage students for a four-week period this summer. These young people range in age from 13 to 18 and have requested to come to Arkansas and become a part of an American family. The students all speak English, bring their own spending money and insurance is

provided by Nacel.

The students will arrive on July 12 and depart on Aug. 9. For more information, please call Charles D. Stephens at 501-771-1768 or write him at Camp J.T. Robinson (SPMO), North Little Rock, AR 72118-2200.

Young Men Rally

Almost 200 High School Baptist Young Men and their advisors gathered in Hot Springs during the weekend of Feb. 23-25. The rally included young men from seven states.

The weekend commenced with a testimony by Charles Corey, a missionary in Guatemala City, Guatemala. George Fields, a Christian entertainer from Louisville, Ky., led the music; home missionary Randy Foster shared about his work in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

Saturday evening's banquet featured Dennis Swanberg, comedian and pastor of Second Church, Hot Springs.

THINK ABOUT IT

What great accomplishments we'd have in the world if everybody had done what they intended to do.

Argue for your limitations and sure enough, they are yours.

It's easy to spot the people who can't count to ten. They're usually in front of you in the supermarket express lane.

A Faithful Portrait?

A review of Arkansas Baptist statistics for the 1988-89 church year paints a less-than-fattering portrait of the state's 1,284 congregations.

A quick review of those numbers might lead one to believe Arkansas Baptists are becoming more affluent and less evangelistic and missions-minded. Congregational receipts for the year were up dramatically, while missions gifts were almost flat and baptisms were down by the largest margin in several years.

Baptisms Down

Arkansas' Baptist congregations baptized 11,299 converts during 1988-89, a drop of 377 from the previous year. That 3.1 percent decline is the largest since 1984-85, when baptisms declined 8.6 percent. As recently as 1983, Arkansas Baptists were immersing almost 14,000 people a year.

Nationally, Southern Baptists continued a two-year baptisms increase, posting a 4.787 (1.4 percent) rise over the previous year. The 37,567 Southern Baptist congregations baptized more than 351,000 converts.

In addition to the substantial decline in baptisms, Arkansas Baptist congregations also registered a decline of 1.13 percent in other additions. Total membership in Arkansas Baptist congregations now stands at 488,248.

The steady decline in baptisms has been a concern for Baptist leaders in Arkansas and across the nation in recent years. Arkansas Baptists may see their best hope for turning that negative trend around in the Here's Hope simultaneous revivals being conducted in March and April.

Approximately 800 Arkansas congregations reportedly are planning to hold those revivals, and early reports from those meetings have been encouraging.

ABSC Evangelism Director Clarence Shell says five congregations which held their revivals earlier than most have recorded exceptionally good meetings: 14 professions of faith at Brinkley First, 17 at Clarendon, 18 at Levy Church in North Little Rock, 28 at Mayflower First, and a remarkable 44 at Lexa. Results like those repeated across the state would mark a tremendous step forward for Arkansas Baptists, Shell noted.

Receipts Up

In sharp contrast to the baptisms decline, the state's congregations posted a healthy increase in receipts during the 1988-89 budget year.

Undesignated receipts rose by a substantial 4.65 percent during 1988-89, bringing

\$108.4 million into church coffers. That represented an increase of \$4.8 million over 1988-89. Total receipts amounted to \$139,717,360, up 3.99 percent from the previous year.

Inflation, however, ate up most of the increase in undesignated receipts. Arkansas Baptist leaders estimate the rate of inflation for 1989 was 4.5 percent.

Missions Giving Flat

While church members were strengthening support of their local churches, most of those new dollars remained on the local level. Missions giving through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified approach to their worldwide missions and education ministries, failed to keep pace with inflation last year.

Cooperative Program contributions from Arkansas Baptist churches rose only 0.32 percent in 1988-89, a dramatic reversal of the previous year's record, when the increase in Cooperative Program giving almost doubled a 3.5 percent increase in undesignated receipts. Total missions spending among Arkansas Baptist congregations rose a mere 2.2 percent in 1988-89.

Those figures indicate Arkansas Baptists will have to take steps to strengthen their missions giving if they are to meet the \$13.5 million 1990 Cooperative Program budget they adopted at last year's annual meeting. That budget assumes a 4 percent increase in receipts over the 1989 budget.

Arkansas Baptists have not fully subscribed a missions budget since 1981. The most recent budgeting efforts have been designed to reflect actual receipts from churches the previous year, rather than the magnitude of missions opportunities.

Nationally, Southern Baptists came closer to keeping pace with inflation and matching increased congregational receipts with larger missions gifts. Mission expenditures increased 3.4 percent, while national receipts were up 4.4 percent.

Ongoing Programs Mixed

The report is mixed on Arkansas Baptists' five ongoing ministry programs: Sunday School, Church Training (now Discipleship Training), Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood, and Church Music.

Sunday School enrollment in the state's congregations experienced a slight decline last year. The 1988-89 enrollment of 253,980 was down 2,110 (0.82 percent) from 1987-88.

The Church Training program in Arkansas posted a slight increase over 1987-88. Statewide, 75,845 persons were enrolled in discipleship training programs in 1988-89, an increase of 264 (0.35 percent). The increase reversed a 1987-88 loss of 3.1 percent in Church Training programs.

The largest loss recorded among Arkansas Baptist ministry programs was in Woman's Missionary Union. The 1988-89 enrollment of 27,823 was down 672 (2.36 percent) from the previous year. In 1987-88, Arkansas WMU registered a 1.9 percent increase.

The state's Brotherhood organization grew by 1.11 percent in 1988-89, gaining back some ground from the previous year's 6.6 percent loss. Brotherhood enrollment across the state was up 123 to 11,217.

Finally, Church Music posted an increase of 0.25 percent during 1988-89. The enrollment gain of 130 brought the statewide figure to 51,745. In 1987-88, Church Music programs lost 0.8 percent of their enrollment.

Arkansas Baptist Statistical Summary 1988-1989

	1988	1989	Change	%
Baptisms	11,676	11,299	-377	-3.23
Other additions	15,718	15,541	-177	-1.13
Resident membership	322,727	324,974	2,247	0.70
Total membership	483,483	488,248	4,765	0.99
Sunday School	256,090	253,980	-2,110	-0.82
Church Training	75,581	75,845	264	0.35
WMU	28,495	27,823	-672	-2.36
Brotherhood	11,094	11,217	123	1.11
Church Music	51,615	51,745	130	0.25
Undesignated receipts	103,608,935	108,428,329	4,819,394	4.65
Total receipts	134,350,685	139,717,360	5,366,675	3.99
Cooperative Program	12,784,661	12,825,833	41,172	0.32
Total missions	23,165,615	23,674,418	508,803	2.20

Smaller Church Forum

More than 50 pastors and lay leaders met March 9-10 at Little Rock's Markham Street Church to discuss the strengths and needs of the state's smaller congregations.

The "Smaller Membership Church Forum" was called to give pastors and members of the state's smaller congregations an opportunity to tell state convention leaders about their needs and problems and help clarify how the Arkansas Baptist State Convention can best respond.

ABSC Associate Executive Director Jimmie Sheffield cautioned participants about believing their congregations were unimportant because of their size.

Almost half of the state's nearly 1,300 congregations average 50 or fewer in Sunday School enrollment, Sheffield noted. Yet these churches often feel left out of denominational programming. The forum was a first effort in what Sheffield said would be an ongoing program of addressing the specific needs of these



ABN photo / Mark Kelly

Forum participants exchange ideas.

congregations.

A statistical profile of Arkansas Baptist congregations shows that churches with 50 or less enrolled in Sunday School demonstrate some particular strengths.

For example, smaller congregations baptize one new convert for each 29 resident members, compared to one for each 28.6 members in larger congregations. And smaller congregations average 56.3 percent of Sunday School enrollment in attendance, while larger congregations average 46.4 percent.

Perhaps most significantly, smaller con-

gregations contribute an average of \$15.77 for each resident member to missions through the Cooperative Program, while their average total receipts amount to \$20,867. By contrast the average larger congregation takes in \$201,805 and contributes \$35.16 per resident member through the Cooperative Program. While the larger church's missions gift per resident member is more than double that of the smaller church, the larger church's budget is more than 10 times that of the smaller church.

And yet the state's smaller churches struggle with certain facts of life, forum participants say.

Many smaller congregations are hampered by traditional ways and clannish relationships, according to a report delivered by the conference's seven small workgroups. When conflicts arise, smaller congregations suffer more seriously, and the absence of younger adults makes leadership recruitment difficult. Virtually all forum participants agreed that the primary need of smaller congregations is leadership training.

Forum participants also discussed ways the local association and the state convention can better meet the smaller congregation's needs and gave ABSC leaders input about reasons smaller congregations tend not to get involved in the fellowship and training opportunities offered by the state convention. A message from ABSC Executive Director Don Moore closed the workshop.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Concord Chapel

Concord Chapel Dedicates

The Concord Chapel, sponsored by Concord Church, Van Buren, held dedication services for its land and property March 11.

The new work has purchased four acres of land and a house with 2,500 square feet of space. The house, which was in bad need of repair, is being remodeled with donated labor by the congregation. The chapel also is using a portable chapel for worship which is being furnished by the ABSC Missions Department.

The work was started on Jan. 14 and has averaged to date 34 in Sunday School and 42 in worship attendance.

Associational Director of Missions George Domerese has served as pastor of the congregation since its beginning.

The Arkansas Baptist's

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Listings in the monthly Church Services Directory are available on one-year contracts for \$4.75 per line. Subentries are charged at \$3.25 per line. Listings must be submitted in writing to the ABN office, along with a check or money order in the proper amount for the first insertion. Subsequent insertions will be billed to the customer. Listings are accepted on a space-available basis, and the ABN reserves the right to reject any listing because of unsuitable subject matter. For more information, contact Nick Nichols at 376-4791.

Doing for Others

by Don Moore
ARBC Executive Director

Doing for others. Who can doubt it? Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than receive." (Acts 20:35) This is especially true when helping others. Do you know a great way to help an enormous number of people? I do! I want to offer it to you. It will result in helping baptize an average of one person every two minutes and starting three churches per day throughout the year. It will help 7,600 home and foreign missionaries who will be helping millions of others. It will help the hungry, the illiterate, the diseased, and the lost of all classifications. You can do that through the Cooperative Program.



Moore

Sunday, April 8, has been set aside as a day to emphasize this tool given to us in scripture that God has used to put together history's most effective missions program. It will not sustain itself. Each generation must be taught. I want to urge you to get materials to help you have an inspirational and educational observance of Cooperative Program Sunday. If you can't get ready by April 8, choose another Sunday.

Newcomers to Arkansas Baptist life? If you are a new pastor or staff person coming from another state or serving in your first church position, you need help. We can give it. An orientation for you and your spouse will be held April 16-17. This will speed you on your way to stronger relationships and help you to know the people and resources God has provided to help you be successful in your church. We will need a card or call from you to let us know you are coming. We make friends for life during these two days.

Associational Council Members—Listen up! You can know your job, do your work and help the Kingdom of God. To do that you have to be able to help his churches. The local church is God's plan for this age. But, you need to help more than your own church. Paul ministered to many churches on a circuit of teaching, preaching and writing. Associational workers seek to do the same.

We do our best to equip you for your task at the **Key Leader Meeting**. The date and place is April 23-24, at Park Hill Church, North Little Rock. Your director of missions can help you with information and plans for travel. We expect to provide train-

ing for over 300 people this year. I hope you will be one of them. Dr. Henry Blackaby, whom God is using to bring awakening, will be the featured speaker, along with a conference for your position.

Oh God, Save our families! This is the heart cry of people who know and care about what is taking place today. To be used of God in answering that prayer we have put together the **Family Growth Institute**—celebrating the glory of the Christian Family! A strong group of prominent teachers, authors, lectures and other professionals are being assembled to lead in this magnificent event. Arkansas Baptists have never before addressed this critical issue as we will in this institute. Couples, parents, single adults, senior adults, children and youth will be helped tremendously. We have reserved Immanuel Church in Little Rock for this event on April 27-28. Come as families! Come alone! Come and help us turn the families of our communities back to God's way of meaningful family life. Bring your friends from other denominations who may not have opportunities like this.

Music plays a more important part in meaningful worship than we may ever know. Our Music Department is sponsoring a **Church Music Excellence Conference**, April 30-May 2. First Church, Springdale, will host this meeting. Their pastor and minister of music will provide some of the leadership. This is the second year for this conference. Tremendous insights and encouragement will be given. Your own program will come to greater life and excitement as you refresh yourself in your calling.

Young Musicians Festivals will be held at Rogers, Wynne, Monticello, Hope and Little Rock on April 21. This provides an opportunity for grades 4-6 to sing together in a mass choir and also to be given a helpful critique of their own performance. Let me encourage the maximum participation in this. Whatever the adult music people reflect to be important by their actions will come to be important to the children. We need to build great singing churches. You begin with the children.

Ministers of Educations Retreat—Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock, April 19-20. Spouses are invited.

Youth and Ministers of Youth, what a busy month! Let me hit the highlights for you.

State Youth Convention—This annual event, April 13, at the Statehouse Convention Center always brings 3,000 to 4,000 of our Baptist youth together. Excellent

music, excellent speakers, and real encouragement in the DiscipleLife emphasis will be featured.

Area Summer Youth Ministry Conferences. You may not need this, but you know someone who does. Summer youth ministers are a tremendous help to many churches that do not have the resources for a full-time person. Usually college students fall in this group. They may have need of ideas and insights to make those three short months count for the most for Christ. These meetings, held at Ouachita Baptist University, Southern Baptist College and the Baptist Building, April 16,17,18, should be just what is needed.

Youth Ministers Conference. One of America's finest will lead our youth ministers in two days of personal and professional growth. Youth ministry gets more complex year by year. April 19-20, Richard Ross will give enriching leadership in exploring ways to improve our lives and our ministries. These meetings are to be held at the Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock.

"Ministering to Youth in Crisis"—Richard Ross will also be leading in these sessions being held at the Excelsior Hotel, April 20-21. Pastors, parents and volunteer youth workers should join the ministers of youth for this conference.

Acteens Encounter—Missionaries, student recognition and a commissioning service for Activators are key elements of this year's Encounter. Markham Street Church in Little Rock will be hosting the meeting on April 27-28. Girls in grades 7-12 make up the Acteens. Both Acteens and their leaders need the encouragement of this event.

RA/High School Baptist Young Men will gather at Ouachita Baptist University April 27-28 for their annual Congress. An excellent program of athletics, fellowship, missionary information and inspiration awaits those who will attend. I hope our pastors, staff and others will help the boys, whose leaders may be unable to attend, to get to this event.

THINK ABOUT IT

Faith wears everyday clothes and proves herself in life's ordinary situations.

If you don't want to pay much for your religion, you'll get a poor brand.

There is no panic in trust.

Faith sees a faithful God still at work on our problems.

The great moments of your life are those when, through all the confusion, God got a message through to you plain and certain.

Church Administration

Minister of Education Retreat

Dennis Parrott, minister of education and administration at Green Acres Church in Tyler, Texas, will be primary leader for the annual Minister of Education Retreat on April 19-20. The retreat will be held in the University Conference Center at the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock. The sessions are scheduled for Thursday afternoon, 1-5 p.m.; Thursday night, 7-8:30 p.m. and Friday morning, 8-30 a.m. until noon.



Parrott

Parrott has been on the staff at Green Acres Church for the past 18 years and has led conferences and written extensively in the field of education and administration. He will lead sessions at the retreat on such topics as "The Minister of Education as a Minister," "The Minister of Education as an Administrator," "Making the Most of My Life, My Time, My Task," and "Maintaining Healthy Staff Relationships."

Ministers of education and other educational staff members and their spouses are invited to attend all of the sessions. A

Minister of Youth Retreat will be held at the same time and location for youth ministers. The same registration fee and room rate applies to this event.

The registration fee for the retreat is \$20. The room rate at the Excelsior is \$56 per night for one to four persons, plus tax. Registrations and room reservations must be made through the Discipleship Training Department. Rooms should be reserved two weeks in advance.—**Bob Holley, director**

Church Music Excitement Infusion

Does your young musicians choir need an infusion of excitement? Something to look forward to in the summer? Help with music reading? Drama? A fun time in a big choir of other young musicians?

If your choir needs even one of these, bring as many as you can (notice I said bring rather than send!) to young musicians camp, held on the beautiful campus of OBU in Arkadel-



Pearson

phia, June 25-28. We'll have four large choirs of over 100 young musicians each, led by a dynamic team of directors: Tricia Wakefield, First Church, Stuttgart; Don McCall, State Music Department, Dallas, Texas; Mary Ann Marsden, First Church, Eldon, Mo.; and Dr. Susan Messer, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Worship services for the week will be led by Stephen Hatfield from Baring Cross Church, North Little Rock. Wanda Pearce from First Church, Malvern, will lead our sessions on this year's emphasis: drama. We'll take a look at what makes "drama" and experience some creative use of drama in our worship services each night.

We'll have practical application of musical knowledge to our musicals; compete in the Peanut Olympics; have opportunity to perform in a talent show; and present a musical entirely from memory at the end of the week. How can you afford to let your young musicians miss a week like this? Complete information is in the hands of your minister of music, in the form of the State Music Ministry Handbook. If needed, you could call me at 376-4791 and I will send the information to you.—**Peggy Pearson, associate/office manager**

Baptist Student Union Crossover

"They grow up so fast!" These are familiar words of parents whose children are seniors. Children burst into youth and mature their way into young adulthood. We cannot stop it. So, how do we help? The Discipleship Training Department, in conjunction with the Student Ministries Department, has produced an equipping module to fill the gap.

Art Herron, consultant for the Student Ministries Department says, "Crossover: Preparing for College is a new Equipping Center module designed specifically to help you minister to the high school senior during this time of transition. The module contains a leader's guide, a member's book, case studies, and promotional flyers to help you conduct a Crossover event."

Whether your church has one or 50 seniors, Crossover can meet your needs. It is designed to help high school seniors during this tough transition. In fact, it might help some parents who also face a tough transition.

This new module is available in the Baptist Book Store nearest you or by calling toll-free 1-800-458-BSSB.—**David James, director**

equipping center
equipping center



equipping center
equipping center



Crossover: Preparing for College

Contents

- 1. How to Use This Module
- 2. Member's Book/Individual Study Guide
- 3. Small Group Leader's Guide
- 4. Reading Plan
- 5. Case Study Sheets
- 6. Multiple Choice Quiz Master
- 7. Equipping Center Poster Panels
- 8. Church Music Colored Sheet/Small Group

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, the student should be able to:

- 1. Identify the challenges of young adulthood.
- 2. Identify the challenges of young adulthood.
- 3. Identify the challenges of young adulthood.

Church Administration Pastor-Deacon Conference

Olivet Church in Little Rock will be the site of the 1990 State Pastor-Deacon Conference on May 4-5. Deacon ministry is the focus of this event and it includes pastors, deacons and their wives. The conference will begin on Friday evening at 7 p.m. and adjourns at noon on Saturday.

Dr. Bob Sheffield, Deacon Ministry Consultant in the Church Administration Department in Nashville will lead the conference for pastors and deacons. The conference subject will be "Deacons and Pastors: Partners in Church Growth" and "Successful Deacon Ministry for the 90s." Sheffield is the author of *Equipping Deacons to Confront Conflict* and a new book, *The Ministry of the Baptist Deacon*.

The conference for wives will be led by Michael and Bo Barnes. Michael is pastor of the Owensville Church at Lonsdale. His wife, Bo, is a chaplain at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock.

The Pastor-Deacon Conference will help pastors, deacons and their wives to develop



Sheffield

and effective ministry team and to be supportive and encouraging to one another and to the church.

There is no pre-registration fee and no advanced reservation is required. Plan now to be a part of this event to strengthen the ministry of your church.—**Bob Holley, director**

Discipleship Training MasterLife Workshop

MasterLife is a group discipling program that leads Christians to experience a more consistent spiritual vitality in their lives and equips church leaders with the basic disciplines and skills of Christian discipleship. MasterLife continues to bless the lives of many people in the churches where it is taught.

You can become a certified MasterLife leader by attending one of the two MasterLife workshops to be conducted in our state this year. The first will be on the Ouachita Campus May 14-18. The leader



Holley

will be Val Prince of Fresno, Calif., retired state Church Training director and John Horton, pastor of Northside Church, Denham Springs, La.

The other workshop will be held on the campus of Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge on July 30-July 3. The registration fee for either workshop is \$82.50 (\$72.50 for accompanying spouse). In each workshop the sessions begin at 6:45 p.m. on Monday and continue until noon on Friday.

To register or request additional information, call or write The Discipleship Training Department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 376-4791, ext. 5160.—**Robert Holley, director**

Stewardship/Annuity Church Budget Seminars

Associational Church Budget Development Seminars are set for 13 associations beginning April 17.

The seminars are designed to encourage stewardship growth. Ideas and suggestions for improving the budgeting process are discussed in the seminars. Participants learn of mission needs and are encouraged to grow in mission support. Churches are also encouraged to provide for the

ABSC photo / Glen Ennes



A combined retreat inspired church leaders.

Church Music Music and Sunday School Retreat

Approximately 100 volunteer/part-time music leaders, accompanists, and their pastors attended the two-day Music Leader Retreat and Sunday School Workshop at Camp Paron.

Pastors and lay leaders were inspired to return to their churches with renewed spirits to accomplish the task of reaching people through music and Bible study and bringing them together to worship the Almighty.

Three other Music/Sunday School Workshops are planned for this year for the small membership church. Contact the Church Music Department for dates and locations.—**Glen Ennes, associate**

needs of pastors, staff members and other employees.

Seminars are scheduled for the following associations: Ashley County, Sept. 11; Caddo River, May 17; Carey, April 17; Centennial, May 7; Clear Creek, Aug. 28; Conway-Perry, May 1; Faulkner, Aug. 13; Greene County, June 7; Independence, July 24; Mississippi, Aug. 9; North Arkansas, Aug. 21; Rocky Bayou, May 10; Tri-County, June 5.

Over 1,500 people attended the seminars in 1988 and 1989.

The Stewardship/Annuity and the Cooperative Program departments sponsor the seminars.—**James A. Walker, director**

Brotherhood RA/HSBYM Congress

The 37th Arkansas Royal Ambassador Congress will be held on April 27-28, 1990 at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia.

The Congress is for HSBYM, Pioneers, Crusaders, Lads, Church Staff, and interested parents, friends and fans. It is a chance to meet with boys and men from all over the state, swap ideas, make new friends. We will learn, do, and have loads of fun.

Friday afternoon events are Campcraft; Lad, Crusader and Pioneer Racers; RA and HSBYM Speak Out; Free Swim; Pioneer Tug-A-War; HSBYM Basketball and open gym. We have two new events this year: Lad and Crusader Swim Meets.

On Saturday morning we will start the track meet off with the presentation of the flags. We will have track events for all ages. Presentation of awards will be made after all events are finished.

The cost for the entire Congress this year will be \$10. This amount includes three meals and a registration fee. Congress patches will be given to each boy.

We have mailed out Congress books and registration forms only to the RA leaders in churches that have participated in Congress for the past three years. If your church RA Leaders have not received a 1990 RA/HSBYM's Congress Book, please contact the Brotherhood office.—**Glendon Grober, director**

Looking Ahead

April

- 10 PACT Awareness Conference (Mn)
- 13 State Youth Convention, *Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock (DT)*
- 16 Area Summer Youth Ministry Conference, *Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia (DT)*
- 17 Area Summer Youth Ministry Conference, *Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge (DT)*
- 18 Area Summer Youth Ministry Conference, *Baptist Building, Little Rock (DT)*
- 17-20 Campers on Mission Spring Rally, *Petit Jean State Park (Mn)*
- 19-20 Youth Ministry Conference, *Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock (DT)*
- 19-20 Minister of Education Retreat, *Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock (DT)*
- 20-21 Ministering to Youth in Crisis Conference, *Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock (DT)*
- 20-21 BSU Volleyball Tournament, *Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia (BSU)*
- 21 Young Musicians Festivals, *Little Rock First Church, Hope First Church, Monticello Second Church, Wynne Church, Rogers First Church (M)*
- 22 Life Commitment Sunday (SBC)
- 23-24 Key Leader Meeting, *North Little Rock Park Hill Church (Ad)*
- 27-28 State Family Ministry Conference, *Little Rock Immanuel Church (DT)*
- 27-28 Acteens Encounter, *Little Rock Markham Street Church (WUMU)*
- 27-28 RA/HSBYM Congress, *Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia (Bbd)*
- 30-5/2 Church Music Excellence Conference, *Springdale First Church (M)*

May

- 1 Get in Touch, Keep in Touch Seminar, *Little Rock Immanuel Church (SS)*
- 4-5 Senior Adult "Sing 'N Share," *Eureka Springs First Church (Ev/M)*

- 4-5 Pastor/Deacon Conference, *Little Rock (DT)*
- 7-8 Chaplaincy Awareness Conference, *DeGray Lodge (Mn)*
- 12 State Youth Music Festival, *Little Rock Second Church (M)*
- 14-15 Church Planting Conference, *Camp Paron (Mn)*
- 14-18 MasterLife Workshop, *Ouachita Baptist University (DT)*
- 17-19 Regional Instrumental Workshop, *Mississippi College, Clinton, Miss. (M/BSSB)*
- 18-19 GA Mother/Daughter Camp, *Camp Paron (WUMU)*
- 18-19 DiscipleYouth Workshop, *Ouachita Baptist University (DT)*
- 21-23 Senior Adult Celebration, *Ouachita Baptist University (DT)*
- 29-6/1 Student Summer Missionary Orientation, *Mills Valley Retreat Center (Mn)*
- 31-6/1 Student Summer Missionary Supervisors Orientation, *Mills Valley Retreat Center (Mn)*
- 31-6/3 Baptist Men's University, *Rhodes College, Memphis, Tenn. (Bbd)*

June

- 1-2 GA Mother-Daughter Camp, *Camp Paron (WUMU)*
- 18-22 Arkansas Baptist Assemblies, *Siloam Springs (SS)*
- 18-22 RA Camp, *Camp Paron (Bbd)*
- 18-22 Super Summer Arkansas, *Ouachita Baptist University (Ev)*
- 25-26 "Parenting in the Minister's Home," *Baptist Medical Center, Little Rock (DT)*
- 25-28 Young Musicians Camp, *Ouachita Baptist University (M)*

Abbreviations:

Ad - Administration; Bbd - Brotherhood; CLC - Christian Life Council; DT - Discipleship Training; Ev - Evangelism; M - Music; Mn - Missions; SS - Sunday School; SA - Stewardship/Annuity; Stu - Student; WUMU - Woman's Missionary Union

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION

Abortion Benchmark

by Marv Knox
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Abortion will become the litmus test for speakers at meetings sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

The CLC voted 12-11 to "respectfully request our executive director to refrain in the future from inviting speakers who support the so-called 'pro choice' position on abortion."

The motion was approved during the CLC's spring meeting March 1-2 in Nashville. Commissioners took opposing sides on the policy.

"There are more important issues than abortion we ought to agree on," said Harry A. "Hal" Lane, pastor of West Side Baptist Church in Greenwood, S.C. "The issue of salvation is far more important, yet we work with people who have different theological views."

Liz Minnick, a homemaker from Austin, Texas, disagreed. "Abortion is the benchmark issue . . . because this is life. The way you look at abortion colors how you look at all issues," from creationism to pornography, she said.

James Paul Wood, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Atlanta, offered the motion, a substitute for a more binding proposal by Skeet Workman, a homemaker from Lubbock, Texas.

Workman's motion would have required the CLC to "not invite speakers who support abortion to participate in any . . . function of the (CLC), and if by accident it is later found that a confirmed speaker does support abortion, he/she be asked to step down; and as a witness to this person, we tell him our opposition to abortion as a reason to remove him."

The effect of the two motions would be

the same, Wood said, although his proposal does not completely eliminate the possibility of someone with a contrary position speaking at a CLC event. "Someone who's not real clear could be invited, but someone who's clearly opposed to us should not be invited," he explained.

As originally proposed, Workman's motion would have covered speakers at the CLC's national seminar March 12-14 in Birmingham, Ala. And that would have included Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Wood's motion, as well as a friendly amendment he attached to Workman's original motion, excludes speakers already confirmed for CLC events.

But Stassen remained the commissioners' illustration during their discussion.

Presenting her motion, Workman singled out Stassen, "who has signed a pro-abortion statement," a petition drafted in 1977 titled "A Call to Concern." The petition notes, "We support the Supreme Court decisions of 1973 which had the effect of removing abortion from the criminal law codes" and voices concern about "those who take the absolutist position that it is always wrong to terminate a pregnancy at any time after the moment of conception."

Stassen represents the kind of speaker who should not be on CLC platforms, Workman said. "We do not need to give them the floor of our conferences and seminars, even though they may be known in other areas," she added.

In a prepared statement released after the meeting, Stassen said: "I believe in the right to life for all persons. I believe we need to work together in practical ways to deal with the actual causes of abortions.

"My wife, Dot, is a nurse who has

chosen to work full time at a special school for teen-age mothers who have elected not to have an abortion. She helps them nurture and care for their babies, stay in school and plan their vocational futures. Our blind son, David, is extensively handicapped as a result of the German measles Dot got in the first three months of pregnancy. We did not get an abortion. Instead, we have tried to help David cope with the suffering of 14 operations, including heart surgery twice, and struggle against heavy odds to grow into a bright linguist who speaks German without an accent.

"I am especially surprised that speculation about my position on abortion became an issue even though I have been invited to speak on an entirely different subject—peacemaking in the family. My area of specialty is peacemaking and justice, not medical ethics.

"Despite these misguided attacks, I am grateful to (CLC Executive Director) Dr. (Richard D.) Land and the commission for inviting me to speak . . . I hope my presentation will be helpful to the commission and to families.

Land said Stassen had been invited to the Birmingham seminar for his "peculiar perspective on the theology of transforming initiatives." He also praised Stassen for his receptivity to Land and the CLC, noting Stassen had asked Land to lecture in his classes, had distributed CLC literature and was bringing 10 students to the seminar.

"I don't think any reasonable, rational person is going to come to any other conclusion than that this Christian Life Commission is pro-life," Land said.

"We have a Southern Baptist Convention which is diverse, and we need to affirm people when we can affirm them. If we are confident of our position, we want people to hear us. . . . If we take a policy which severely restricts us, we are going to lessen our ability to get a hearing for what we clearly believe is a superior view."

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Hunger Gifts Plunge

by Louis Moore
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptists' hunger gifts in 1989 plunged to the lowest point since 1984, according to figures released by the two Southern Baptist mission boards.

Southern Baptist contributions for domestic and foreign hunger in 1989 totaled \$7,905,322. This represents a decrease of 12 percent from similar giving in 1988. In 1984, Southern Baptists gave a record \$7,166,772 to hunger ministries.

That mark was shattered the next year with a record \$11,830,146. Giving dropped in 1986 to \$9,089,279. Hunger contributions totaled \$8,931,339 in 1987 and \$9,009,764 in 1988.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reported receipts of \$6,613,785 in 1989, a decrease of \$1,015,667 from 1988. Receipts for domestic hunger through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board were \$1,291,537 and represented the first drop in five years in domestic hunger gifts.

The total figures for 1989 do not reflect receipts for general relief at the Foreign Mission Board. General relief funds go for projects that are not necessarily hunger specific, such as church rebuilding. Total figures also do not include money given for hunger ministries that were utilized in local Baptist churches, associations and state conventions.

"The sharp drop in hunger gifts to one of the most comprehensive and effective hunger ministries in the world is extremely disappointing," said Robert Parham, associate director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, which coordinates education and action on hunger issues among Southern Baptists.

"The drop is bad news for hungry people everywhere, but especially for those at

the dawn of life. So much of a child's life is determined in the first several years of development," Parham said. "Malnutrition can mean that brains and bones fail to develop properly. It's a real tragedy."

"Southern Baptist agencies, Baptist state papers and other leaders need to tell the bad news about hunger and the good news about what our mission boards are doing to meet hunger needs."

Nathan Porter, domestic hunger consultant for the Home Mission Board, said: "I am extremely anxious about the giving to world hunger because we have associations, churches and missionaries who have established extremely effective hunger ministries which are dependent on these funds. They have no other place to turn.

John Cheyne, director of the human needs program at the Foreign Mission Board, cited "donor fatigue" as a major factor in the decrease in giving. Donor fatigue results from the "awesome number of appeals made by so many organizations interested in the issue of hunger," he said.

Decreased media attention on world hunger as well as the reporting of non-Baptist misuse of hunger funds have both contributed to the decline in giving, he said.

"There has been a rather significant backlash from the many stories that have gone out about the misuse or the alleged misuse of hunger funds," he said.

Richard D. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, said the commission "is committed to assisting any church, association or organization we can to promote hunger giving."

The Christian Life Commission in 1988 produced a video on world hunger. That video is available in the offices of each association in the convention as well as through the CLC office in Nashville.

Eighth-best CP Total

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist Cooperative Program receipts topped the \$12 million mark for the eighth time in its 65-year history in February, reported Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

The Southern Baptist unified ministry budget received \$12,150,296 at the national level last month, Bennett said. That is an increase of \$721,581, or 6.31 percent, over February 1989.

February receipts brought the Cooperative Program's year-to-date total to \$59,872,497 at the end of five months of its fiscal year, he said. That is a gain of \$1,201,641 over the total for the first five months of the 1988-89 fiscal year.

The 2.05 percent year-to-date increase is about half the current U.S. inflation rate.

The Cooperative Program's national basic operating goal this year is \$134,787,543. It also has a \$2.5 million capital needs priority item, designed to pay off the debt on the 5-year-old SBC Building in Nashville.

To meet that overall goal, Cooperative Program monthly receipts must average \$11,059,292 for the balance of the fiscal year.

"It is my hope that Southern Baptists will continue to give liberally to their churches and that churches will be found faithful in giving to world missions through the Cooperative Program," Bennett said.

The Cooperative Program is funded by contributions from individual Southern Baptists. Their gifts are processed through budgets of local churches and state Baptist conventions before reaching the Executive Committee for distribution to organizations that conduct evangelistic, missionary and educational ministries worldwide.

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'The Beat' Now Available

NASHVILLE—"The Beat," a new-music video series of contemporary Christian music, is now available on the Baptist Telecommunication Network for youth leaders to use in local churches.

Four programs have been produced featuring Christian musicians well-known to youth. Artists include Russ Raff, DeGarmo, and Key, Carmen, and Rene Garcia.

Each program begins with a personal Christian testimony by the artist, followed by a music video of a song. Then the artist leads a discussion session on a par-

ticular subject selected for the video.

Topics which have been addressed in the first four programs of "The Beat" include "Who is God and What has He to Do with Me?", "Who Am I? And What Do I have to Do with God?", "Where Do I Fit In?" and "What's New About the New Age?"

The biblically based programs can be used by youth leaders guiding Bible studies at church, retreats, camps or other youth fellowship situations, according to Tina Shearon, executive producer of "The Beat." Leaders are encouraged to use "The

Beat" as a catalyst for discussion on the topic of the particular program.

The music videos are designed to educate and entertain youth by capturing their attention through music, Shearon said. Content of programs is scripted and then read and approved by doctrinal readers before being telecast.

All four of the videos were telecast on BTN on March 5 and 14 and will be shown again on July 12. A different time may be requested for subscribers by calling the Baptist Sunday School Board at 615-251-2283. Also contact your local association office to see if it has the broadcast on videotape.



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--Dr. Ernest Mosley, Executive Vice President
Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention

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--Dr. John McClanahan, Pastor
First Baptist Church, Pine Bluff



Shown at right are 1947 Prince John McClanahan of LR & Princess Shervena Thompson of Russellville. (Photo submitted by Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor McCarver)

The "Siloam A Trusted Friend Needs You" campaign is your opportunity to make memories like these become reality for thousands of youth and adults. The statewide campaign structure is presently being developed. If you would be interested in participating please notify the campaign office, P. O. Box 14, Little Rock, AR 72203 or (501) 376-4791 ext. 5169.

INTERFAITH WITNESS

1990s 'Mega-Trend'

by Mark Wingfield
SBC Home Mission Board

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—The megatrend in American religion for the 1990s will be increasing pluralism, according to leaders of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department.

But the biggest challenge to Christians will come from the New Age movements and Islam, said Gary Leazer, one of the three interfaith witness leaders who conducted conferences on "Theological Trends and Chaplaincy" at the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

The three spoke at the annual chaplains' conferences sponsored by the board's chaplaincy division. A common curriculum for the conference was written by Leazer, director of the HMB interfaith witness department; Maurice Smith, associate interfaith witness director; and James Browning, a former interfaith

witness national missionary who now is a Kansas City, Mo., pastor.

Speaking at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., Leazer cited five trends related to the pluralism mega-trend.

First is the decline of denominationalism. "In the future we're going to see less loyalty to a particular denomination and more fuzziness between denominations," he said. "Individuals will increasingly feel free to construct their own worldview from many options present in society rather than being bound by the orthodoxy of their particular faith."

People will take the attitude of "religious consumers" who will shop around between denominations and religions, Leazer said, noting, "If one denomination does not offer a particular item, people will go to another faith to find it."

Mega-churches with "full-service" programming are a current indication of this trend, he said. In response, smaller churches will become more narrowly focused on specific people groups, he predicted.

The mega-trend of pluralism will create more membership transfers between denominations, Leazer said.

A second trend is increasing millennial fervor as A.D. 2000 approaches.

"Between 1995 and 2000, there will be an unbelievable number of dates set," he said. But to stay on the safe side, more self-

proclaimed prophets will connect their prophecies to major events as they happen rather than predicting dates in advance, he added.

The impact on ministers will be an increasing number of church members who seek counsel, saying, "This person appears to be accurate in his predictions."

A third trend will be Eastern and occult spirituality becoming mainstream. As these non-Christian religions gain acceptance in society, Christians will feel the influence in their churches, Leazer predicted.

"People will go to a study group on Hinduism on Friday night and then come to church on Sunday and try to interject those ideas into Bible study."

The fourth trend is that New Age movements will come of age. New Age ideas "will continue to influence the way Americans think and do religion," he said.

A fifth trend is that Islam will join Christianity and Judaism in the nation's religious establishment.

By A.D. 2000, more Muslims will live in America than Jews, Leazer said. Currently the country is home to 4.7 million Muslims and 5.9 million Jews. However, about 4,000 Americans embrace Islam every year. Eight of nine converts are black Americans.

"For many Southern Baptists, the challenge to cooperate with people of other religions is one of the most difficult responses to religious pluralism," Leazer said. But he noted, "Baptist chaplains have always been in the forefront of endeavors to work with and to minister alongside people of other religions."

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Convention Uniform

Christ Can Be Denied

by Tom M. Deere, First Church, Plainview

Basic passage: John 18:15-27

Focal passage: John 18:15-27

Central truth: Christians can deny Christ by what we do or say.

A Christian's life is like an open book. Others will read what a Christian does before they will listen to what a Christian says. Someone put this thought in perspective when they said: "Be careful how you live your life. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read." Our life and conduct may either affirm or deny the Christian gospel we profess to believe.

(1) Christians can deny Christ by the actions we take (v. 15-17). Jesus was undergoing his trial before the Jewish authorities (Mt. 26:59). At the same time, Peter was engaged in a relentless trial of his own. Peter had previously boasted he would lay down his life for Jesus (Jn. 13:37) and even demonstrated his zeal and courage by lopping off the right ear of the high priest's servant (v. 10). Peter was brave while in the presence of the Lord and his disciples; but when alone and in the presence of unbelievers, Peter acted differently. Peter's actions contradicted the faith he had previously professed when he denied that he knew Jesus (v. 17).

(2) Christians can deny Christ by the acknowledgment we make (v. 24-25). Peter's second denial was an outright promise under oath that he did not know Jesus (Mt. 26:72). As the intensity of the questioning increased, Peter's faith under fire began to wane, and his denial of Christ was even more resolute. He was like many other Christians. We all can be intimidated when non-Christians mock our faith in Christ, and we can deny Christ by the way we act or by what we say.

(3) Christians can deny Christ by the associates we forsake (v. 26-27). All of the other disciples forsook Jesus (Mt. 26:56) because they did not want to be known as one of his associates. Questioned the third time, Peter expressed his ultimate denial of Christ when he used profane language and even called down curses on himself (Mt. 26:74) if he had not told the truth. Once Christians deny Christ by our actions or by what we say, it is only a short step to the final denial. It is here that we may actually forsake the fellowship of believers for indulgence in the world.

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Life and Work

Why God?

by Frank C. Gantz, Nall's Memorial Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Mark 15:25-26,29-39

Focal passage: Mark 15:29-39

Central truth: God has a purpose for the things that he does.

The cry from the lips of Jesus, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" shatters our concept of someone spiritual never asking why. Mark 15:34 translates Jesus' cry as "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" How many times has a human being uttered similar words while walking through a deep dark valley? Is it alright to ask the question, "Why God?" Jesus did and so may we, if we do as Jesus did.

One of the reasons that the gospel writer has left the original language quote is that we might notice the way in which Jesus asked why. The word *lama* means to ask why for the sake of understanding the purpose. It is not why in the context of this being a senseless act with no reason for the pain. It is why in the context that there is a purpose for all of this. Understanding the purpose or the end result enabled Jesus to endure such pain. The cross was not the end. The end result was the joy and the seating at the right hand of the throne of God.

The right hand is the hand of access to the king. Because we know Jesus, we are granted access to the Father on his throne. That is why Jesus died. That is why he endured all of the hatred of the men who crucified him. The cross was no accident. Acts 2:23 speaks of the cross as occurring "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." God knew it would happen. In fact, he planned the whole thing.

Are we able to trust God enough to let him do with us as he has planned, even if it hurts? When we find ourselves in the midst of a difficult trial, we are told in James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." We may ask him why. James goes on to say that we do not ask God why so that we may evaluate whether this is acceptable to us or not. We accept it and ask why so that we may more easily endure. James 1:6 says, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." That means we trust him enough to let him do with us as he wills. James 1:12 promises that their is a crown of life for those who endure such trials. Ask why, but endure it.

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Bible Book

Self Destruction

by Tommy Cunningham, Life Line Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Judges 17:6; 20:2-8; 21:6-7,12-14

Focal passage: Judges 17:6; 20:13-48

Central truth: Lack of godly leadership precipitates an atmosphere for self-destruction among God's people.

We come to a verse that describes the lack of leadership among the Israelite people and the corresponding physical and spiritual collapse of the nation. Without godly leadership people tend to become confused and unable to discern between right and wrong. This is exactly the condition pictured in Judges 17-21. The account of the slain concubine in chapters 19-21 gives insight into Israel's moral and political condition during the period of the Judges.

Note the degenerate character pictured for the men of Gibeah (19:22-25). These descendants of Abraham had sunk to the level of animalistic behavior. The results of the crimes committed were devastating to the entire nation.

The tribe of Benjamin was exterminated because of its immoral condition. The other 11 tribes lost 40,000 men. Lack of godly leadership had produced an atmosphere conducive to self-destruction (20:13-48).

Note the complacency of the tribe of Benjamin (20:13-17). They protected those perverted men of Gibeah and prepared to do battle with the 11 tribes. The end result was that they lost 25,000 men and only 600 survived (20:26-48).

Also notice that the 11 tribes suffered temporary defeat and lost 40,000 men. How sad that the moral condition of God's people had sunk to such a low level that 65,000 men died. This is the devil's payday. A people unrestrained, living a lascivious lifestyle will eventually exterminate themselves. There was a desperate need for godly leadership. How similar those days are to the very times we live in.

The final passage is a picture of concern for one another to a degree not seen since the early days of conquest (21:1-23). Efforts were made to save the tribe of Benjamin from extinction.

After this short interlude of unity, the tribes went their separate ways and once again fell into the pattern of each one doing what was right in their own minds.

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LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

Defending the Truth

by Tom M. Deere, First Church, Plainview

Basic passage: John 18:28-40

Focal passage: John 18:28-38

Central truth: Defend the truth with the courage to tell the truth.

We have all heard it said that a man who does not stand for something will fall for anything. The words are old, but the meaning is still true. Persons without convictions, without standards or principles to live by have no measure for what is right or wrong. Christians do have a standard to live by, fixed parameters which God has set for us in his Word.

Our Christian faith and practice may be challenged by those who do not live by the same standards as we do. How do we stand up for what we know is right, yet not become defensive or say something that might ruin our Christian witness? Jesus provides the answer

(1) Jesus sought accurate information. Having been questioned by the high priest, Caiaphas, Jesus was taken to the Praetorium (v. 28), the official residence of the Roman governor. When Pontius Pilate asked Jesus if he was King of the Jews, Jesus answered with a question of his own (v. 34). Jesus wanted to know the real meaning behind Pilate's question to avoid having to deal with extraneous information. Defending the truth required the understanding of accurate information in order to make an appropriate response.

(2) Jesus avoided making hasty remarks. When subjected to intimidating interrogation (v. 35), Jesus calmly explained the facts (v. 36). He did not respond defensively and was not argumentative.

(3) Jesus answered questions honestly (v. 37). He agreed he was "a king." There was no reason for Jesus to deny the truth. Furthermore, he was interested in reaching those who were "of the truth" because they would hear his "voice" and respond to his message.

(4) Jesus affirmed the truth (v. 37). He was born into this world to "bear witness to the truth." Defending the truth required telling the truth. Knowing this Jesus had the courage to tell the truth without fear of the consequences. Because of the honest and pleasant manner in which Jesus defended the truth, Pilate could "find no fault in him at all" (v. 38).

Life and Work

A Time for Hope

by Emil Williams, First Church, Jonesboro

Basic passage: John 19:32-42

Focal passage: John 19:31-33, 38-42

Central truth: In hope we identify with the crucified Christ.

We serve a risen Christ, but the risen Christ is first the crucified Christ. I have included verses 32-33 from the basic passage which tell us when the soldiers came to Jesus he was already dead. It was a lifeless body that was taken down from the cross. At that point, we see two men identify with that crucified one in a way that calls forth our admiration, but raises some questions about our own identification with Christ—and our courage. It is one thing to take a stand for Christ who is already the risen Lord, among supportive friends, it is another thing to take your stand for a crucified one in a hostile environment!

The first to take such a stand, in hope, was Joseph of Arimathea. A respected member of the council (Mk. 15:43), he was "looking for the coming of the kingdom." Did this act of asking for the body of Jesus mean he had found in Jesus the fulfillment of his looking?

It is impossible to know what was in his heart, but this show of courage tells us something had happened. Asking for the body of Jesus marked him as the friend of a crucified criminal and put him in real danger. He could not know with certainty what God would do with this body he had asked for, but his courage shows a faith that took the risk in the hope that God would bring a victory out of this apparent defeat.

Nicodemus participated too. The one "who came to Jesus by night" had already taken something of a stand for Jesus (Jn. 7:50-51). This open identification, which would put him in danger as much as Joseph, may be evidence that the nighttime conversation with Jesus had issued in the birth from above he had heard about. And now, perhaps, he saw in the cross the power that created that birth. If that's the case, then he may have been saying by this act, "I have received life from him, and so I stand with him in his life-giving death."

Both men showed courage, in hope, by identifying with the crucified one in the presence of powerful enemies. Do we show as much courage by identifying with a risen Lord in a congenial society?

Bible Book

Ignoring the Revelation

by Verne Wickliffe, First Church, Des Arc

Basic passage: Hebrews 1:1—2:18

Focal passage: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-4, 14-18

Central truth: Do not neglect your salvation made possible by God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Parents grow weary of repeating instructions to their children. All parents seem to come up with a frequently used phrase such as "Didn't you hear me?" to punctuate their instructions. The child affirms the instructions were received and follows instructions if he feels like it.

God has spoken, according to Hebrews 1:1-4, "at various times and in different ways" through his prophets and finally through his Son. God has spoken clearly, and as we look back at the Old Testament stories we wonder how God's people could have failed to hear and follow God. God has spoken most clearly through Jesus who is the "express image of his person." Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God to man as Jesus pointed out in John 14:9. God has great things to say to us as we see in Hebrews 2:14-18. God has spoken to us through Jesus to free us from sin and death. Jesus is merciful and faithful because he understands us. Because Jesus understands us he can help us to new life.

What God has spoken sounds very good, however, Hebrews 2:1-4 leaves us with that punctuating question, "Didn't you hear me?" God has given us a great gift of salvation, "therefore," Hebrews 2:1 says we must pay attention to what we have heard or face the danger of drifting away.

Drifting away from God carries some stiff penalties in the Old Testament. Blessings didn't come, battles were lost, and God's people were conquered as a result of drifting from God to idols or to self-centeredness. The punctuating question of the prophets is heard many times, "Didn't you hear God?"

We have the greatest revelation of God in Jesus Christ. God has spoken clearly and yet we drift away to changed priorities, modern idols, and self-centeredness. "How shall we escape?" Hebrews 2:3 asks if God has spoken so clearly and we who claim to be God's people ignore the revelation? When we don't escape and cry out to God for mercy listen for the question, "Didn't you hear me?"

Baptist Businessman Expelled

TIANJIN, China (BP)—John Cragin, an American businessman who is Southern Baptist, was expelled from China March 5.

Chinese officials ordered Cragin to leave the country because he allegedly conducted "illegal missionary work," according to a report from the official New China News Agency.

Cragin, of Tahlequah, Okla., heads Management Technologies International, a management training institute formed as a private joint venture with the city of Tianjin.

Public Security Bureau agents in Tianjin seized material Feb. 17 they alleged Cragin was using for missionary work, the report said. Authorities accused Cragin of carrying out the illegal activity under the guise of holding English-language training courses for Chinese.

Missionaries have not worked in China since 1951, although foreign Christians now work there in a variety of educational and technical roles.

Cragin's expulsion is not expected to have negative impact on other American Christians working in China, observers said. He was not sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention but was directing a private joint venture.

Other personnel in China sponsored by Southern Baptist institutions, such as colleges and universities, have contract relationships with the Chinese institutions they serve and are aware of restrictions, if any, on religious activities in their areas.

Cragin could not be reached for comment.

Evangelize Romania

ORADEA, Romania (BP)—Western Romania's biggest needs are spiritual, not physical, according to Romanian Baptist pastors.

Poverty remains a problem throughout Romania, but evangelism is the biggest need in the western region, the pastors told a visiting Southern Baptist delegation evaluating human needs in Romania.

Many among 22 pastors at the meeting asked for help to launch an major thrust throughout Romania, especially in smaller towns and villages.

Iovan Valeriu, pastor of Talpos Baptist Church near Salonta, suggested evangelists should drive through villages announcing crusades over loudspeakers. "People would come," he said.

"Now is the strategic time to share the gospel through crusades across the coun-

try," said one pastor. Another added: "We need to build many new churches. Now that we have the freedom to do so, we do not have the money."

More than 200,000 Baptists worship in Romania, but many pastors are burdened with leading multiple congregations. Government restrictions on Baptists have hindered growth and outreach, and friction has developed in some areas with the Orthodox Church of Romania, pastors reported.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board representatives have been meeting with Baptist leaders from Eastern Europe to determine how Southern Baptists can best help respond to evangelism and church growth opportunities in the region.

Youths, Scholars Embrace Faith

NANJING, China(BP)—More young people and intellectuals are attending church and becoming Christians, said China Christian Council leader Ding Guangxun (K. H. Ting) in a recent interview.

One church in Beijing reports more than 50 percent of its worshipers are young people, Ding said. Other churches are beginning Sunday schools.

"A new attitude towards religion" is developing among scholars, he added. "In the past you could not see one article written on religion that didn't relate it to the opiate... the Marxist definition of religion. But today we have more and more social scientists who take a much kinder outlook towards religion."

"A growing number of intellectuals take a positive attitude toward Christian faith. I know of some who have not been baptized but who have committed themselves to the Christian faith."

New Rights

MADRID, Spain (BP)—Evangelical Christians and Jews gained new legal recognition and rights as the Spanish government signed a first-ever agreement with non-Roman Catholic religious groups Feb. 21, according to a report in the daily newspaper *El Pais*.

The agreement provides legal recognition of Jewish and evangelical marriages, offers religious instruction in different faiths in public schools when parents desire it and opens the way for non-Catholic clergy to enroll in the social security system. Catholicism has dominated Spain for centuries.

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Cambodia OKs Visas

by Michael Chute
 SBC Foreign Mission Board

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)—The Cambodian government agreed in February to grant visas allowing Southern Baptist representatives to live in that country for the first time.

The visa approval and decision to place Southern Baptist personnel in Cambodia came during a survey visit to that country by representatives of Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization. CSI has tried unsuccessfully for three years to obtain residence visas for workers directing aid projects in Cambodia.

"We're doing all we can from outside the country," said Jack Shelby, CSI's Hong Kong-based administrator. "If we're going to expand our program, we must have people living there to expedite the projects. Now is the time to do that."

CSI representatives Bruce and Gloria Carlton are scheduled to move in April from their base in Hong Kong to Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital. Carlton directs CSI's Cambodia program, which focuses primarily on health-care services. Carlton is from Georgetown, Ky.; Mrs. Carlton is from Elkins, Ark.

The survey team of Shelby, Carlton and development specialist Fred Kauffman found the situation in Cambodia "much more secure than we had anticipated," Shelby reported. "The country's stability has improved tremendously just in the last six months."

Fighting between Cambodian government forces and rebel factions centers along the border with Thailand and in Cambodia's north and northwest regions. Three rebel groups—the communist Khmer Rouge, the U.S.-supported Khmer People's National Liberation Front and the Sihanoukist National Army—are battling the Vietnamese-backed government of Hun Sen in those regions. But Shelby called the central region around Phnom Penh and the southeast "very peaceful."

United Nations' Security Council member nations are trying to persuade resistance factions to negotiate a peace settlement. Also, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen is conferring with Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk about possible solutions to the conflict. One such meeting took place Feb. 23, shortly before the CSI team left Phnom Penh.

Meanwhile, the government has made some moves toward more social freedom, according to observers. One evidence of more openness: in January Cambodian Pro-

testants and Catholics were told they could hold public worship services. Ten small Christian congregations now meet openly in Phnom Penh.

Nearly 30 non-government aid organizations working in Cambodia have offices in Phnom Penh, including religious groups such as the Mennonite Central Committee, Lutheran World Service, Church World Service, World Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Relief Services. Foreign doctors and nurses are now working in rural areas of the country. That was deemed too risky a few months ago because of rebel activity, Shelby noted.

"This government openness told us it was safe to go ahead" with placing personnel, said Shelby. The expatriate community in Cambodia now numbers 126, more than double the number six months ago, he added. "Essentially we're there to serve the needs of the people as effectively as we can in pursuit of CSI's mandate to minister to people in areas where missionaries can't go."

CSI projects in Cambodia concentrate on health care—one of the nation's greatest needs, especially among children. Cambodia had 665 doctors in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge took power. Just 12 doctors were found alive when Vietnam overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime less than five years later. Only four still practiced medicine.

Since Southern Baptists' first worker in Cambodia—Marvin Raley—was a pediatrician, CSI became a partner in the Hun Sen government's fight against malnourishment and inadequate health care for children.

CSI work in Cambodia now includes: — Work with the pediatric department of the government's January 7 Hospital in Phnom Penh.

— Meeting needs of children in rehydration, immunization, nutrition and education—RINE—the hospital serves factory workers and their families.

— CSI will provide \$50,000 to build a hospital in Kompung Cham province, a rural area.

— CSI just completed construction of the Prey Veng Nursing School, which accommodates 125 nurses and midwives in a one-year basic nursing course.

"The greatest thing that could happen to help Cambodia would be for peace to break out," Shelby concluded.

But peace, if it comes, will bring a tremendous need for health care, social and agricultural relief in Cambodia's northwest, scene of the most intense fighting in the long guerrilla war, Shelby added.