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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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November 20, 1986

Arkansas Baptist
Newsmagazine

Children in crisis
'They deserve our best'
pages 8-9



ABN photo / Millie Gill

When crisis strikes a family, often innocent children suffer the most. Arkansas Baptists offer one important ministry to children in crisis through the Home for Children at Monticello (pp. 8-9). Currently, churches are receiving the annual Thanksgiving Offering for the Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care ministry.

Owen Cooper dies of cancer at 78

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)—Owen Cooper, 78, the last layman to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, died Saturday, Nov. 8, after a three-week illness with cancer.

Cooper, who headed the SBC 1972-74, was buried, at his own request, in private graveside services in Jackson, Miss., on the day of his death. A memorial service was held Nov. 9 at First Church, Yazoo City, Miss.

A leader in religion, politics, economics and humanitarian causes, Cooper in 1985 was named Layman of the Century by the Mississippi Baptist Convention. At the 1986 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, Cooper was presented the Distinguished Service Award of the SBC Christian Life Commission in recognition of his contributions to moral and social concerns.

Cooper, born April 19, 1908, near Vicksburg, Miss., also had been a member and former chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, president of the Pan-American Union of Baptist Men, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, president and secretary of the Mississippi Pioneer Missions Committee, member and chairman of the board of trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a trustee of the Southern Baptist Foundation.

Cooper was chairman of the board of Agricultural Missions Foundation and president of Global Outreach, both groups interested in providing support for the efforts of

agricultural missionaries around the world.

He was graduated from Mississippi State University with a degree in agriculture; from the University of Mississippi, with a master's degree in economics in political science; and from the Jackson School of Law (now the College of Law of Mississippi College), with a law degree.

In 1939, he became executive director of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and was instrumental in providing life and health insurance to Mississippi farmers. In 1948, he established the Mississippi Chemical Corp., the first farmer-owned synthetic nitrogen plant in the world. He was president of the corporation until his retirement in 1973 and a member of the board until his death.

In governmental affairs, Cooper was a member of the Commission on Arms Control and Disarmament, a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, the Central Bank for Cooperatives in Washington, and the National Association of Manufacturers. He also had been Mississippi chairman of the March of Dimes.

In his church, Cooper had participated in missions activities and helped lead the church to become one of the top givers to the SBC Cooperative Program. He also had been a deacon, Sunday school superintendent and director of church training.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; four daughters, a son, a brother, a sister and nine grandchildren.

In this issue

4 more and better

Columnist Daniel R. Grant delivers a well-deserved "thank you" to a state convention committee which lived up to a difficult challenge and reminded everyone the secret to doing "more and better."

10-11 new work update

Arkansas Baptists made great strides in new work during 1985-86. A report from the state Missions Department reviews the progress of 17 new church efforts.

Next week

The Nov. 27 ABN will feature the report of the 1986 annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting Nov. 18-19 at Geyer Springs First Church, Little Rock.

Poor hurt the most by El Salvador quake

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (BP)—The poor of San Salvador, El Salvador, who could least afford it, were hurt most by the earthquake that struck the city in October.

Between 150,000 and 300,000 people remain homeless in a city of 1.1 million, according to varying government and private estimates. Authorities admit there is no reliable way to determine a precise number.

Southern Baptist missionary Lee Ann McAninch explains why. "I was taking down names and addresses for the people who were to receive the food we were giving out," she says, describing missionary relief efforts in the days after the quake. "And one after another I got a whole list of people who said they don't have an address anymore."

Two of the homeless people McAninch encountered were a grandmother and small child. The child "had sores all over his face, and his foot had been hit by something, and he had a big sore on his foot," she recalls. "He was sitting on the ground, picking at the sore with his filthy hands while his grandmother was waiting in line to get some food we were handing out. All she had put on him was a little piece of rag she had tied around his foot. They didn't have any water there, so she couldn't bathe him or clean him up."

Beyond the many identifiable neighborhoods ruined by the quake and its after-shocks, countless squatter shacks scattered

around the city disappeared. Their anonymous inhabitants now join the other homeless who are living, literally, on the streets. Traffic remains snarled in some areas while authorities struggle to prevent people from setting up makeshift shelters in the middle of intersections.

Tremors continue, and many people fear going back indoors. But the U.S. government has contributed \$50 million for reconstruction efforts, and numerous private groups, including Salvadoran and Southern Baptists, are working to provide shelters for the homeless.

"We think there's probably enough that has been sent into the country to take care of most of the people now," McAninch reports. "The problem is getting it to the people who really need it."

At the missionaries' request, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board sent aid money directly to the field rather than shipping in relief materials from outside El Salvador. A number of other private groups did the same. U.S. officials still are recommending that approach.

There is talk of moving the capital to another location, away from the large fault it sits on. But one Salvadoran newspaper reported the region has suffered 20 major earthquakes since 1575. Every time, the inhabitants rebuilt on the same spot.



"Shared Ministry," currently being promoted by the Southern Baptist Convention, is a concept that is both new and old. It is new in that the plan had not been promoted in a formal way by our denomination previously. It is old in that the concept is based completely on biblical principles. It is an extremely practical concept which can breathe new life into many of our churches.

Shared Ministry is the ministry to which the whole church is called. The Bible teaches that God calls us to salvation in Christ and, as a part of receiving God through Christ, all Christians are called to minister. God gives abilities and capacities for ministry within each local congregation.

Pastoral ministries are to be performed by those whom God has called and gifted to provide general ministry within each local congregation. Those individuals whom God has called as pastors-teachers are equippers, enablers, guides, or leaders. The Apostle Paul set forth this truth as he said, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12).

The purpose of Shared Ministry is to encourage local congregations to return to the biblical and historical understanding that in the act of salvation every member is called to minister. Baptism, in a sense, is every member's commissioning service to minister.

Basically there are two mistakes that inhibit churches from reaching their maximum potential for the Lord. First, many churches expect the pastor and staff to be the only ones involved in ministry. This false concept was developed in the Middle Ages as an outgrowth of the idea that only the clergy could dispense God's grace. Since only clergy was able to disseminate God's saving grace, all the work of ministry must be done by clergy.

In the New Testament, it is often difficult to distinguish between the preachers, the deacons and the lay people. All were involved in the work of ministry. For example, Luke said, "And they (all Christians), continued daily with one accord in the temple, and in the breaking of bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46).

A second mistake often made by contemporary congregations is the belief that all ministry must take place inside the church building. This reflects several misunderstandings. To begin with, the early Christians did not have church buildings as we know them today. They worshipped in homes, caves, catacombs, or wherever they could find a gathering place. A building simply is not a church. A church is composed of people. It is a living, breathing organism composed of individuals who have had an ex-

perience with Christ and have been banded together through baptism to serve in carrying out kingdom purposes.

The idea that all ministry must take place when the congregation is convened not only is foreign to the Scripture but will produce disaster for any congregation. Those who have need, spiritual or physical, are usually not present when the congregation of the redeemed is assembled. Luke said, "Therefore they (lay people) that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

A first step in involving a congregation in Shared Ministry is for the pastor to be convinced that Shared Ministry is theologically sound. Red Baptists have always believed and practiced the individual priesthood of all believers. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that all Christians are priests and have direct access to Christ, the high priest (See Heb. 8).

A second step in establishing Shared Ministry is for the pastor and staff to create a "teamship." The pastor must be willing to function as a coach, allowing each member of the church and each member of the staff to contribute his own uniqueness to the total ministry of the church.

While the most biblical approach is for a pastor to be a coach-plant, there may be times of crisis in which a pastor must take a more direct leadership role. In times of severe crisis, a pastor may have to be more the commander of the church than the coach.

There are a number of helps that churches can obtain in developing Shared Ministry. A book recently released entitled *Sharing Ministry with Volunteer Leaders* by Robert D. Dale is quite helpful. Another resource is *Leading the Congregation to be the People of God*. This book is designed for use in a church's preparation for "Covenant Sunday."

It is recommended that the last Sunday of the year be designated as Covenant Sunday. During the summer months, the pastor should emphasize that Christians are called to serve. On the designated Sunday, the members sign a covenant declaring their willingness to use their gifts in serving the Lord.

A Church Training module entitled "Discovering Spiritual Gifts" will assist individuals in finding where they should serve in accordance with the gifts God has given to them. When Christians use their God-given talents in service, the effectiveness of a congregation is multiplied manifold.

Finally, assistance can be obtained by contacting the Church Training Department, P. O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203, or by phoning (501) 376-4791.

Arkansas Baptist

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One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

The secret of doing more and better

The Budget Formula Study Committee deserves a strong vote of thanks and commendation for its work and its wisdom. The members of this committee—charged with studying the way we propose budgets for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention—had a difficult assignment. Their task was manifold: (1) to find more money for ministerial retirement and for adding four-year programs at Southern Baptist College; (2) to find a way to continue our progress toward the goal of giving 50 percent to out-of-state causes, and (3) at the same time, to maintain and strengthen the many other good programs within the state.

At first blush they seemed to be faced with moving the immovable object against the irresistible force. The temptation must have been strong to make "political" decisions

and gang up on a few targets for cutting and slashing. The committee demonstrated Christian statesmanship in resisting the conspiratorial temptations and in proposing a strong foundation for maximizing cooperation and minimizing competition for Cooperative Program funds.

More than that, the study committee had the courage to call a halt to our dangerous and self-defeating practice of increasing our percentage of state convention funds going out of state without increasing our percentage of local church funds going to the state convention. State programs, agencies, and institutions were beginning to suffer as we robbed Peter to pay Paul.

The simple truth, and it is biblical truth, is that the secret of doing more (and better) for God is for Christians to give more.

Ultimate Christian stewardship is not simply tithing or even giving 50-50. It is giving all that we have. When we give more, our local churches will have more funds for Christian ministry in our communities, in our state, and in our world.

The study committee has not given us a sugarcoated message, but it is the truth. We can continue to increase our percentage of dollars going outside the state only if local churches increase their percentage going to the Cooperative Program.

Three cheers and a strong prayer of thanksgiving for the members of the Budget Formula Study Committee.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.



Woman's viewpoint

Rita Spillyards

Let's have a parade!

"Does anyone know any good news or bad news?" The question was posed by Don Lum of Pine Bluff as he arrived home one evening last December.

"Oh yes, Daddy!"—replied nine-year-old Amanda, her dark eyes dancing. "The good news is: is only three more days, we'll be out of school for two whole weeks!"

Quickly, in the tone of voice all mothers of young children would recognize, Mrs. Lum added, "And the bad news is: in only three more days, the children will be out of school for two whole weeks!"

The Lums told this story in fun, but it is a terrific illustration of perspective.

Our perspective, or point of view, is our way of looking at an object or situation. Our points of view are shaped by many factors: age, life experiences, our degree of wisdom, our health, and even such fleeting conditions as fatigue, pain, and mood.

Obviously we can view the same situation at different times from entirely different perspectives. We also can cultivate a happy perspective on life in general. Abraham Lincoln is quoted as having said, "A man is generally just about as happy as he makes up his mind to be."

Just now I'm working on my perspective on the upcoming holidays. I love them but, as many of us do, I become overwhelmed trying to fit too many things into too little

time. I want my house clean, the food cooked, the children dressed, and the four of us present for as many of the worthwhile events as we can schedule. And yet, I want my children to have memories of precious times, not frantic races. Often we're too tired to truly enjoy the carefully orchestrated events; I want them to recall and savor some spontaneous celebrations.

I believe Christ would surely have us revel in the quiet times, the simple times, the times when miracles can happen in unexpected surroundings. Even Jesus' birth, the reason for our celebrations, happened in this way.

When our son was three, he and I were traveling on the Broadway Bridge in Little Rock when the cars slowly came to a complete standstill. It wasn't long until we were moving again, but ever so slowly. My patience was wearing thin with the traffic jam when Jeff peeked out the window and saw the world instead of a blur. He squealed, "Oh look, Mommy, it's a parade!"

Wouldn't it be great to have parades instead of traffic jams at this special time of year?

Rita Spillyards is married and the mother of two small children. She is a member of First Church, Pine Bluff, where she teaches 12th grade girls Sunday School and works in the graded choir program.

Stricklin assumes administrative duties

William M. Stricklin recently assumed duties as administrator of chaplain services for the Arkansas Department of Correction. His position entails supervising 10 other chaplains for the department.

Stricklin has degrees from Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Stricklin has 25 years of civilian and military pastoral experience. He pastored two Baptist churches in Missouri during the 1960s. He has been endorsed by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention as a chaplain.

He and his wife, Dorothy, have three grown sons.



Stricklin

OBU to host choral festival

ARKADELPHIA—Approximately 1,200 of Arkansas' senior high school choral students from 50 schools will be participating in the 17th annual Phi Mu Alpha Choral Festival at Ouachita Baptist University on Saturday, Dec. 6 in the Mabree Fine Arts Center.

For more information on the choral festival, persons should contact Greg Phillips, OBU School of Music, P.O. Box 3771, Arkadelphia, AR 71923 or call (501) 246-4531, ext. 129.

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

It was in Perry, Okla. The little lady in her upper seventies slipped quietly alongside me. The message on worship, based on Isaiah 6, had just been concluded. In tones so warm and deep, she said, "I've really needed help in the area of worship." She thanked me for the message and moved on. She didn't leave my thoughts.

On Monday night I had preached on "Grace in the Christian Life." She came again to indicate her appreciation for the help she had received. Following the day services, she would tell me how much she was learning.

The depth of feeling and earnestness of her remarks made me want to sit and let her teach me. It seemed that her walk and work had been so long and so real, I hungered to know her heart. I didn't ask her to disclose such intimate facts. But I did tell the preacher that there were few people with whom I had ever spoken whose very presence seemed to be so filled with God.

The pastor told me the story. Her husband had died as a young man. She was left as a widow with seven small boys to raise alone. She had finished that task many years ago. But she had not finished with the grace and power that had enabled her to do that. The residual effect of having walked in such dependence upon God continues as a blessed spiritual aura. It is recognized by all who know her. She hasn't paraded it. She really isn't aware of it. She just abides in his grace and reflects his glory. The pastor affirmed my feelings that she is indeed a saint of unusual distinction. What if she had been spared the trials? Would she have known the reality and victory of our living, loving God to the same extent? I am almost embarrassed that I've asked to be delivered from trials God could use to make me like him.

Aside from the responsibility which opened her up to God's gracious sufficiency, I noted another key to her life. At her age, she was still pressing on. She was taking notes, recognizing areas of need, and surrendering her hungry heart to the Lord. How different she is from many who seem to recognize no shortcomings and who never make a real effort to keep growing. Mrs. Ollie is busily cooking peanut brittle during these fall days. That is how she makes her money to give to Lottie Moon.

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



Moore

Third of four articles Tax Reform Act of 1986: An overview

by Larry Page

This third article continues the analysis of the Tax Reform Act of 1986. **Income averaging.** The option to "average" income over several years is prohibited by the new law.

Unemployment insurance benefits. The new act treats unemployment benefits just like wages and includes them in taxable income.

Earned income credit. This credit gives tax relief to low income taxpayers with children. It will be increased from \$550 to \$800, but will be phased out for individuals earning more than \$9,000.

Capital gains. The 60 percent exclusion for long term capital gains is repealed. Both long and short term capital gains will be taxed as ordinary income. A taxpayer may make full use of capital losses to offset capital gains and up to \$3,000 of other income. Even though the transitional tax rate is as high as 38.5 percent, depending on the level of income, tax on long term capital gain cannot exceed 28 percent for 1987.

Many high income taxpayers may be wise to accelerate some sales of appreciated property in 1986 rather than deferring the sales, as perhaps originally planned. In 1986, an individual in the 50 percent tax bracket who sells long term appreciated property having a fair market value of \$100,000 and an adjusted basis of \$10,000 will pay \$18,000 in taxes on that sale, whereas the same sale in 1987 or thereafter would generate a tax of \$25,200.

Individual retirement accounts. If a taxpayer and his spouse do not participate in an employer-maintained retirement plan, they may continue to make deductible contributions up to \$2,000 to their IRA's, or \$2,250 for a spousal IRA.

If the taxpayer or his spouse participate in an employer's retirement plan, they are still entitled to make fully deductible IRA contributions, if their adjusted gross income does not exceed \$40,000 and they file jointly. This ceiling is \$25,000 for a single taxpayer. Above the stated amounts, the deduction is phased out.

Income earned by an IRA, whether contributions to it are deductible or nondeductible, are not taxed until they are withdrawn.

Child's tax. For a child under age 14, any unearned income, such as dividends or interest, exceeding \$1,000 will be taxed at the parent's tax rate.

Income shifting trusts. Trusts, like the Clifford and spousal remainder trust, will not be permitted to shift income from a parent's, spouse's or other grantor's higher tax rate to a child's or spouse's lower tax bracket. The tax on the earnings from such a trust will be assessed at the top rate of the grantor.

Generation skipping transfer tax. The new act sets a flat rate tax on transfers in which benefits are shared by different generations and in which benefits skip generations. For each deemed transferor transfer, a \$1,000,000 exemption is permitted. Until Jan. 1, 1990, and unless extended, an additional \$2,000,000 exemption is available for each donee of a direct transfer to grandchildren.

The concluding article of this series will discuss some year-end tax strategies.

Larry Page is vice-president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.

Ouachita-Tones to travel to Europe

ARKADELPHIA—The Ouachita-Tones, an all-girl singing group from Ouachita Baptist University, will be travelling to Europe during Christmas break. The trip, which is planned for Dec. 26-Jan. 5, is a part-sightseeing, part-performing visit to both Germany and Austria.

Mary Shambarger, associate professor of music at OBU and director of the group, says that the trip will be both an educationally and culturally enriching one. The main purpose of the trip is to sing at several European Baptist churches and at a branch of the United Nations in Vienna.

Christmas programs scheduled at Ouachita

ARKADELPHIA—With the Christmas season just ahead, Ouachita Baptist University has scheduled several programs to which the general public is invited to attend, including a performance of "Messiah" by the University Choir on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. in Mitchell Hall Auditorium.

Other programs for the holiday season include: Arkadelphia Symphonette and Ouachita String Ensemble, Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. in the Recital Hall of Mabee Fine Arts Center;

the annual candlelight service at Berry Chapel at 9 p.m. on Dec. 1; and two performances of "Amahl and The Night Visitors" by the Opera Workshop on Dec. 4-5 at 7 p.m. each night in the Recital Hall of Mabee.

Also on the schedule is a performance by the Ouachita Chamber Singers and Handbell Ringers on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. in the Recital Hall of Mabee; and a Christmas concert by the OBU Jazz Band at 7 p.m. on Dec. 11 in Mitchell Hall Auditorium.

Arkansas all over

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

Kenny Nichols has been called to serve as associate pastor and minister of music by Third Street Church, Arkadelphia. He is a junior at Ouachita Baptist University.

Gary Arnold is serving as pastor of Briceys Church. He and his wife, Charlotte, have two daughters, Kerry, 12, and Teresa, nine.

Larry Loggins is serving as pastor of Corners Chapel, Trumann. He moved there from Lee Chapel at Percy. Loggins and his wife, Mary Lee, have a son, Tracy.

Dennis J. Davis has announced his resignation as pastor of Central Church in Pine Bluff, effective Jan. 16, 1987. He has served there since December, 1981.

William Clay has resigned as pastor of Indian Springs Church, Benton.

John McClanahan recently observed his 21st anniversary of service as pastor of Pine Bluff First Church.

Earl Croxton of Bradford is serving as interim pastor of Grace Church, Augusta.

briefly

New London Church of Strong celebrated its annual homecoming Oct. 26, concluding its fall revival with a fellowship dinner and afternoon musical program. Vivian Herring was honored for 45 years of service as church clerk, receiving an engraved plaque.

Newport First Church is setting record high Church Training attendance as a new church year begins, according to Pastor Gene Crawley. Crawley reported activities include traditional lesson study, Bible study, and a CT module on cults.

Dardanelle First Church ordained David McCormick and Ken Canitz to the deacon ministry Nov. 2. Jeff Cheatham, director of missions for Dardanelle-Russellville Association, preached the ordination message. Pastor Tony Berry served as moderator.

Batesville First Church has sent 1,800 pounds of clothing and food for the mission in Muncie, Ind., which they assisted this summer, leading Bible schools and worship services.

East Mount Zion Trinity Church near Clarksville broke ground Oct. 26 for a new auditorium that will seat 185 with

future expansion to 250. Participants in the service included Pastor Jonathan Payne; George Domeres, director of missions for Clear Creek Association; Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; Roy Shook, current building committee chairman; and Louie Leeds, past building committee chairman.

Beebe First Church has planned an old-fashioned revival for Nov. 23-25. D. W. Sewell, pastor of Highland Church in Laurel, Miss., will be evangelist and Philip D. Griffin, church minister of music, will lead revival music. Special music will be provided by the Celebration Choir, the Celebration Singers, and the PraiSingers. Special services will include Youth and Family Nights.

Warren First Church has launched a homebound ministry with Sunday School lessons and tapes of previous Sunday services to be taken weekly to each home. Members assisting will be Mr. and Mrs. K.W. Terry, Mr. and Mrs. Guy Shaha, Frances Forrester, Ruth Jacks, Retha Snider and Dorine Reaves.

South Side Church in Fort Smith ordained Charles Barnett and Curtis Sawyer to

the deacon ministry Nov. 2. Pastor Wade D. Tucker served as moderator.

Park Place Church in Hot Springs observed Lillian Rutherford Day Nov. 9, recognizing her years of service with childrens' choirs. Women of the church also visited Cummins Prison Nov. 13 as an outreach project, delivering needed items to the inmates there.

Siloam Springs First Church enlarged its handbell ministry with an adult group organized Nov. 2, according to minister of music Gregg Greenway.

Faith Church at Tulot has established a childrens puppet ministry, has started a building fund, and has improved entrance to the church with the addition of a back patio.

Marked Tree First Church has launched a puppet ministry with women of the church making the puppets.

White River Association youth held an organizational meeting at Gassville Church Nov. 1. Activities included a W.O.W. School taught by Jim Lagrone, associate in the Evangelism Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention;

ABN photo / Millie Gill



When Clarksville Second Church dedicated a sanctuary valued at \$173,000 Nov. 9 it was filled to its seating capacity of 270. Since the project began, there has been a renewed commitment by members and Pastor Marvin James to reach others, resulting in a Sunday School attendance of 100. Building committee chairman Cecil Bradley Sr. commended the congregation for its sacrificial giving which allowed the building to be dedicated with only a \$60,000 indebtedness. Other program personalities included Clarksville Mayor Marvin Vinson; George Domeres, director of missions for Clear Creek Association and a former pastor; James Crumrine; Paul Cogan; Nona Vaughn; and Susan Richards. Clarence Shell, director of evangelism for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, preached the dedication message.

Cooperative Program enjoys best first month

an afternoon witnessing session; and an evening youth rally. The day resulted in two professions of faith and three rededications. John Casey is associational youth director.

Pyatt Church celebrated its 25th anniversary Oct. 26 by launching a revival which concluded Oct. 31. Ed Powers, director of missions for White River Association, was evangelist and Jack Howell served as music director. Win Callison is pastor.

East Side Church in Mountain Home dedicated a family life center Nov. 2. Jesse Reed of Little Rock, retired director of evangelism for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was morning worship speaker, and O. I. Ford, the church's first pastor, preached the dedication message. Special music was brought by the Mountain Home Community Choir, directed by Roy Ragsdale. Byron Allen is pastor.

Mount Hebron Church at Searcy recently purchased a five acre site for future expansion.

Midway Church at Judsonia recently recognized Gertrude Rouse for 19 years of service as treasurer, presenting her with a plaque and gift. The church has experienced a period of renewal with six professions of faith, eight rededications and one commitment to a full-time Christian vocation.

Dumas First Church ordained Jim Wright to the preaching ministry Nov. 16.

Cotton Plant Church has purchased and installed a new organ in its sanctuary.

Paragould First Church has donated its old Kilgren organ to Southern Baptist College. The instrument has been installed, and will be dedicated Nov. 21.

Des Arc First Church distributes bags of rice and recipes each week to families in need. They have distributed 1,300 pounds of rice this year.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program got off to its best start ever, with October receipts totaling \$10,937,115, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

October Cooperative Program receipts were a record for that month and 21 percent higher than the \$9,039,034 posted in October of 1985.

"I was deeply grateful for the large percent-

age increase we enjoyed in October," Bennett said. However, he noted the 21 percent gain "is not indicative of the increases we will receive the remainder of the year."

In addition to the best October on record, the total represented the third-best monthly total in Cooperative Program history.

If Southern Baptists are going to reach their \$136 million Cooperative Program goal, receipts for the remaining 11 months of 1986-87 must average \$11.37 million.

SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

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State Evangelism Conference

January 26-27, 1987

Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock



Frank Pollard



B. J. Sams



Lloyd Elder

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Sessions: Monday, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.; 6:30 - 9:15 p.m.
Tuesday, 9 a.m. - 12 noon; 1:30 - 4:10 p.m.; 6:30 - 9:15 p.m.

bookshelf

Gold Nuggets From God's Word
Lance Massengill

This handy book, recently published by Lance Massengill, longtime pastor and church starter from Clarksville, offers 72 condensed sermons on a wide variety of subjects. Scripturally based, a fine resource for sermon starters.

Children's Home helps troubled families find bridge to stability

by Mark Kelly

When severe conflict puts a family in jeopardy, they need time to cool off and unravel the tangled web of hurt and anger.

But soured relationships, complicated by physical abuse or serious misbehavior, often mean the family has no time for cooling off. Simply being together worsens the crisis.

What can a family do? Where can they turn? How can they buy that precious time that will allow them to sort out their problems and reconcile their differences?

Arkansas Baptists offer a solution in the combined ministries of the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children in Monticello and the area offices of Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services.

When a family in crisis can't resolve its conflicts through counseling alone, the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children steps in and provides a refuge for the family's children. While the area office counselors seek to help the family resolve their differences, the Home ministers to the children by helping them clarify their proper role in the family.

The Monticello Home ministers to some 76 to 80 youngsters each year, estimates Superintendent Charlie Belknap. Of these, 70 percent return to some sort of family living arrangement within 18 months.

"We try to meet their needs while they are here and give them a healthy situation to go back to," Belknap explained. "Many times our success depends on the family's willingness to make things work."

Belknap observed that children come to the Home for a variety of reasons. The most



Charlie Belknap tends to the day to day business of helping troubled children.

common problem is severe family conflict, but many others come because of behavior problems.

For example, he said, a child may be deeply angered because of rejection at home, and that anger works itself out in trouble at school. By giving the youngster a place to come and cool off, the staff at the Home has an opportunity to help that child deal with his anger and change his behavior.

Belknap noted that children who come to the Home often are struggling in many areas

of their lives. "We try to extend as much warmth, love, and acceptance as they can accept. Many of them level off in eight to 12 months."

He identified four areas in which the Home tries to meet the needs of its young charges.

First, the difficulties at home often have caused the child to fall behind at school. Working closely with the Monticello schools, the Home tries to "help the kids be successful at school," according to Belknap. A teacher works part-time tutoring in areas of need; a summer basics program focuses on improving skills; and daily study halls keep the young people from falling behind.

Second, three caseworkers on staff at the Home work with the children individually,

Houseparents at Baptist

Charlie Belknap, superintendent of the Children's Home at Monticello, says it requires special people to be houseparents in the seven cottages at the Home which house children and young people according to age and sex.

Keith and Michelle Alford serve as house parents for children eight to 13 years of age. The cottage provides rooms for four boys and four girls. Family and Child Care Services attempts to keep siblings in the same cottage when they are young.

Keith and Michelle were both reared in White Hall, near Pine Bluff, but did not begin to date until they were in college. Keith is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, and Michelle is a graduate of Brian College in Chattanooga, Tenn.

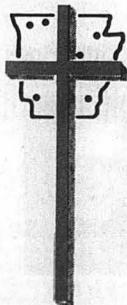
As Keith was completing his work at Ouachita, the newly-married couple was seeking God's guidance regarding a place of service. One day, they received a copy of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* which was intended for a family living in an adjacent apartment. Looking through the magazine, they discovered an advertisement of a job opportunity as houseparents at the Children's Home. As they prayed about the opening, they felt this was the place God wanted them to serve.

Michelle observes many of the children come from broken homes. Often a child will say, "Our parents can't afford to have us right now. We are here just for a little while, but we will be going home soon."

The Alfords feel it is easy to establish relationships with the children. Although they have not had them long enough to see a marked change in their attitude and behavior, the children basically are well behaved.

A typical day begins at 5:30 a.m. Breakfast begins at 6:00 a.m. and each child must clean his room immediately after the morn-

"They Deserve our Best"



"Whosoever receives one of these little children in my name receives me." (Mark 9:37)

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trying to help them reach the emotional goals necessary for them to return home and cope with life there. Belknap noted the caseworkers focus on concerns such as the youngster's role at home, accepting a new step-parent, and clarifying values. The caseworkers also help identify health needs.

A third area of concern are the spiritual needs of the children, Belknap explained. "Our houseparents are Christian people, and the role models they provide in the cottages are a primary influence on the children while they are with us," he said. "As problems crop up, we try to deal with it like we would in the normal course of daily living."

Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening vespers services deal with basics of the Christian faith and the church, Belknap con-

tinued. The youth, many of whom come from a "very limited religious background," also are involved in Monticello churches.

Finally, the recreational needs of the children are considered, Belknap said. A staff recreational director oversees both planned activities and free times. "We try to make it possible for a child to do whatever any other child in the community can do—band, football, basketball, and so on—as long as they meet the responsibilities," he explained.

"We try to normalize life for the children as much as possible," he added. "for example, letting them spend the night with a friend in Monticello. But it's not home."

Many church groups—Sunday School classes, WMUs, Brotherhoods—sponsor children at Monticello, providing clothing,

school and camp expenses, allowances, and seasonal gifts the youngsters might not have otherwise, Belknap said.

"We try to provide a disciplined, structured environment for the children. We try to normalize life for them as much as possible and work toward specific goals in each area with each child. We still have some who come and stay with us until they graduate from high school, but for the most part our ministry is intervention.

"I see us as a bridge. We try to help the child and the family while they are on the bridge to move from troubled times of crisis to better times of stability."

Mark Kelly is managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

cottages find work hard but rewarding

by J. Everett Sneed

ing meal. In addition, each child has his own chores, including such things as cleaning the bathroom or the kitchen. They must be ready to leave for school at 7:30 a.m.

The children return to the Children's Home at approximately 3:30 p.m. The Alford's have a snack ready for them when they come in from school, and the children have opportunity to go to the gym at 4. The gym closes at 5 and reopens again from 6:30 to 8:30. The Alford's also have a study hall for the children.

Keith Alford observes, "It's a full day which doesn't end until the children go to bed about 10:00 p.m."

Michelle says, "It's the hardest job I have ever had, especially in the summer, when our only time off is from 9 a.m. to noon. In the summer from noon until 10 at night, we are constantly involved with the children. But when we put the children in bed and kiss them good night and see their responses, we know God has led us here."

Keith observes, "It is a difficult job, but it is extremely rewarding. The main thing the children need is constant love. This includes not only hugging and kissing them but also providing consistent discipline. They need to know there is a pattern to everything done. Many of them haven't had consistency in their lives."

Michelle recalls a child who had no toys when he arrived at the Children's Home. He also wanted boots. On his birthday, he received a number of gifts, including boots. She said he was so excited, he almost wouldn't let go of his boots at bed time.

Another of the houseparents is Cora Thornton, who has served for nine years. She is currently working with teenage girls. In her cottage there are 10 girls ages 13 through 17. In the past, Mrs. Thornton has worked with younger children and senior boys.

Her husband, Robert Thornton, is an em-

physema patient and is now totally bedfast. When they originally became house parents he was able to assist with the daily activities.

Mrs. Thornton says children often feel their problems are the worst in the world, but all they have to do is to look at her husband to see this isn't true. By helping care for him, they are able to be involved in ministry and give of themselves.

Mrs. Thornton says, "The girls have been inspired by my husband. He never complains, and he always says to the girls who come to his room to bring meals or snack, 'I love you and have a good day.'"

Thornton became disabled while working in the oil fields. He became extremely miserably as he sat on his porch and watched other people go to work. Mrs. Thornton, who had a beauty shop in Smackover, asked her pastor, Ray Wells, how an individual would go about working with children. The next day, he gave the information to her, and soon the Thorntons became employees of the Children's Home.

Mrs. Thornton said, "There's nothing more rewarding than getting a phone call from one of your former children."

Recently she received three such calls, one from a teenage boy who talked for 45 minutes. He said, "When I was in the Children's Home, you were hard on me, and I knew it was for my own good. I just couldn't accept it then, but now I am grateful for your love and care for me. You've made a major contribution to my life."

Mrs. Thornton doesn't think it is possible for a person to receive a better reward than knowing he or she has been part of changing the life of an individual for the better.

She says, "Children are a very important commodity, and to see a child's life turned around is one of the most encouraging things an individual can do."

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Keith and Michelle Alford have full days caring for children eight to 13 years of age at the cottage where they serve as houseparents. They and other houseparents must have emotional toughness as well as caring Christian concern.

(Editor's note: Mr. Thornton has died since this interview was conducted.)

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

New chapels reach out to unchurched Arkansas communities

Congo Road Chapel was launched in May in a community that has grown 100 percent in the last 10 years. Trinity Church is sponsoring the mission in an effort to reach some of the 1,573 unchurched people on the field. Central Association and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention purchased four acres of land where the association has placed a mobile unit for the congregation's beginning.

Jim Holcomb was called as interim chapel pastor. The chapel had a recent attendance of 36 with 19 visitors. Jack Washington, Sunday School director, reports that the chapel must have more space to grow.

West Acres is sponsored by Second Church of West Helena. The new work was launched with a revival preached by Johnny Greene. Attendance reached 50 and nine professions were made.

Arkansas Valley Association has joined with the sponsor to start and develop the new group. Director of Missions Carl Fawcett has preached in the rented facilities to get the mission going.

The Church Missions Committee of Second Church had led in a house to house survey of the area. A new pastor, Mike Fowler, became pastor of the mission on August 17. Mike is also BSU director at Phillips County Community College. The mission hopes to purchase property and get the use of a mobile chapel in coming months.

Two churches have become Macedonian Mission Partners with Second Church. First Church, White Hall, is providing \$350 per month and Greenlee also will serve as associate sponsor.

Center Ridge in Conway County was launched in May by First Church, Morrilton. Director of Missions Refus Caldwell, led in revival services and has served as beginning pastor. First Church is now seeking a chapel pastor.

Cooperative Program funds helped purchase a four acre mission site. A mobile chapel serves as the congregation's meeting place. Center Ridge has a consolidated school with 600 students, but no Baptist church.

Cedarville First Church sponsored a mission revival at Natural Dam. Eight people made professions of faith. Evangelist Vance Wiley of Jenks, Okla., preached in the beautiful open air setting.

Foothills Chapel. Mr. and Mrs. William Cook spent 10 weeks as Praxis missionaries cultivating the Foothills field for a new mission. A revival was held during the third week of August. First Church, the sponsor of the new mission, has purchased four beautiful acres of property to serve the



Many of the new works started in the last year bought land and started construction. The groundbreaking for Sugarloaf Chapel, with the help of Heber Springs First Church, took place earlier this year.

church for the future. A mobile chapel is serving as a temporary meeting place on the property.

Pastor Richard Overman reports a great deal of enthusiasm in the church toward the mission project. The Praxis missionaries mentioned earlier made a complete house to house survey of all of the community. They had a Vacation Bible School enrollment of 57 and an attendance of 51 each day. They had six professions of faith in the Vacation Bible School. A mission pastor has been called and will move on the field Jan. 1.

Sugarloaf Chapel First Church of Heber Springs reports a very good feeling in their church toward sponsoring the Sugarloaf Chapel. This chapel was unique in that a group of people in a small rural Center Ridge Church decided to relocate in order to be able to reach more people for the Lord. In the process they also felt it would be best for them to become a mission. Center Ridge Church requested that First Church of Heber Springs take them on as a mission from their church. The Heber Springs Church discussed the matter and decided it was the Lord's will for them to sponsor this group.

The venture is proving to be very successful for both the sponsor and the mission. Land has been purchased with assistance from the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. A building using volunteer labor from two different places has been constructed. The congregation constituted as a church in September. Pastor Lloyd Blanton expresses a great deal of enthusiasm as he reflects the attitude and spirit of the people in the Sugarloaf congregation. Pastor Jerry Kirkpatrick of First Church also has a good

feeling about their church being involved with this mission.

Goshen Mission Elmdale Church of Springdale voted to become the sponsor of a new work in a small crossroads town by the name of Goshen. The Goshen area is one of those places that has grown mainly out on the country roads. There is no Baptist church in Goshen, but the population has grown to such an extent that one is needed.

Elmdale Church helped provide two Praxis missionaries during the summer of 1985 to cultivate the Goshen Community. Surveys were done, Backyard Bible Clubs and a Vacation Bible School held, and relationships were built.

Farrell Ard, one of the Praxis missionaries, came back after completing seminary to be the pastor of the mission. The mission has been meeting now for six weeks, has reached an attendance of 48 in morning worship service and 30 in Sunday school. Several professions of faith have been made in the mission.

The Washington-Madison Association is furnishing a mobile chapel in which the mission congregation can meet. The chapel is placed on land belonging to Director of Missions Harold Gateley. A prayer request for this mission would be for property that can be purchased for a permanent site for the church.

First Church of Osceola has started a satellite mission in Hodges Trailer Park in their city. The mobile home park is a mixed racial situation. However, most of the people in the mobile home park are not atten-

ding church anywhere.

The Brotherhood of the church invited Gene Ray and Neal Stevens to make a presentation to their Brotherhood from the Mobile Home Park Task Force that has been working during this year. After hearing their report and message the church decided to sponsor a mission in the mobile home park. Several of the Brotherhood men from the church are going to be involved in the mission effort.

Bismarck First Church of Malvern has launched a new congregation in Bismarck. Southern Baptists did not have a congregation in the Bismarck area. Population has grown rapidly within recent years around the lake and in the Bismarck vicinity.

A unique feature about the sponsorship of Bismarck is that two other churches have joined as associate sponsors in the Macedonian Mission Plan. First Church, Arkadelphia, and First Church, Prescott, are very much involved financially, with prayer support and with people in the sponsorship of the Bismarck mission.

Malvern had two families living in the Bismarck area who are interested in a congregation there. Mr. and Mrs. Ray Pearce and Mr. and Mrs. Dewayne Richards have been very active, along with other members of the church in initiating a mission.

A tent revival was held in August on the property that the church has bought for the mission. Attendance reached 150 at the tent revival. One family joined the mission. This family said that they had been living in Bismarck for more than 10 years and had had a real concern for a Southern Baptist church there during most of that time. The church has moved a mobile chapel on the

property. Services have already started on Sunday, along with Sunday School meeting under a tent owned by the State Evangelism Department.

The Red River Association has been very much involved in the development of the mission. They will continue to be supportive financially, and in other ways, of the work there.

Max Garrison has been called as the chapel pastor.

Fianna Hills Chapel, sponsored by East Side Church of Fort Smith, started meeting in a school for Sunday school and worship service last October. Before that, home Bible studies had been held in several families' homes. Other activities such as fellowship meetings and surveys have been done in the new suburb.

Land was purchased several years ago with help from the association and the state convention, as well as from the sponsoring church. A new building has been built on the property, and Bruce Tippit has been called as mission pastor. Fifteen people have already been baptized, and attendance has reached 96 on Sunday morning.

Truman Moore, pastor of the sponsoring church, reports that the 20 members who went out to the mission, have been replaced twice-over in numbers since the mission began. He says that the church is delighted to have a part in providing for a new mission, and he believes that God has richly blessed the church in people, finances and every way possible since the mission started.

Concord Association and other churches have also had helped support the mission.

Gamaliel Chapel north of Mountain

Home is sponsored by Eastside Church, Byron Allen, pastor. Al Thompson and Arthur Hudson, students from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary did a complete survey, a Bible school, and other ministries for 10 weeks this summer.

White River Association joined with Eastside to drill a well and make driveways on the six acres of land purchased with assistance from the State Missions Department.

The mission was launched and now meets in a mobile chapel. Allen preached at 9:30 and Sunday school was conducted at 11:00 for several weeks. A church of about 250-300 is projected in the Gamaliel area. J. R. Williams has been called as chapel pastor.

Boles Chapel constituted into Boles Southern Church on May 18. It had been sponsored by First Church, Waldron, Nelson Wilhelm, pastor. A volunteer group from Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock spent a week helping construct a new church building.

The 28x60 structure was built on three acres provided by the Mission Site Fund. Pastor Jack Guidry reports that local members have spent many hours working on the building.

Lakeshore Chapel, located in a large manufactured home community, has baptized 39 people and has 63 members in one year and four months. Eugene Ray, pastor of the sponsor (First Church of Marion), reports a great deal of fulfillment within the church.

The chapel also is providing several ministries such as emergency clothes for the community. Mission Pastor Neal Stevens works closely with the development manager in providing services to residents.

Victory, Conway On Aug. 3, Victory Mission became a constituted church. Land has been purchased north of the new shopping center. Now meeting in a mobile chapel, the church has called Paul Parker as pastor.

Antioch, Attica, is sponsored by Wits Chapel in Maynard. Pastor John Rains reports 21 members in the mission.

Macedonia Mission, is sponsored by First Church of Clinton. Mission pastor Bill Moran reports depressed economic conditions at Denard where the mission is located. The mission has land and one unit of a new building.

Dalark Mission Third Street Church, Arkadelphia, has extended an arm to the Dalark area. The mission meets in Dalark and is served by Pastor Nick O'Nale, who has just been called.



Mobile chapels are one of the best options for new congregations. The Goshen Mission, shown here, is sponsored by Elmdale Church of Springdale.

Young requests prayer for BJCPA study committee

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)—Prayer has been requested for the special fact-finding committee currently studying the relationship between the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The seven-member committee was named during the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee to study a motion made during the 1986 SBC annual meeting that called for severing the convention's relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee.

The Baptist Joint Committee is composed of nine Baptist groups in the United States and Canada. Its major task is to support Baptist positions regarding the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The SBC motion on the Baptist Joint Committee was referred to the Executive Committee, which is to deal with the issue and report back to the convention during its annual meeting next summer. The special committee will report during the next meeting of the Executive Committee in February.

The call to prayer was issued by Gary Young, pastor of First Southern Church of Phoenix, Ariz., and chairman of the fact-finding committee. "We will meet Nov. 20-21 in Washington with the Baptist Joint

Committee staff," he announced. "This will be the first meeting in which our full committee will meet with the Joint Committee staff. It will be our first opportunity to discuss with each other the issues involved.

"It will be a confrontational-type meeting. If the confrontation is healthy, it could lead to solutions. If it is unhealthy, it could complicate our task," he noted, explaining he has requested all Southern Baptists pray for the committee and the meeting, because "I want it to be a healthy meeting."

"This meeting is perhaps more crucial than our report to the Executive Committee, because this meeting probably will shape that report more than any other meeting," Young stressed.

In addition to Young, other members of the special committee are Vice Chairman James Yates, pastor of First Church of Yazoo City, Miss.; Secretary Carolyn Miller, a homemaker from Huntsville, Ala.; Frank Ingraham, an attorney from Nashville, Tenn.; Frank Lady, an attorney from Jonesboro,

Ark.; Paul Pressler, a judge from Houston; and Darrell Robinson, pastor of Dauphin Way Church in Mobile, Ala.

Ex officio members of the committee are David Maddox, a real estate developer from Fullerton, Calif., and chairman of the Executive Committee, and James Jones, pastor of Campbellsville (Ky.) Church, chairman of the Executive Committee's administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee.

The fact-finding committee's meeting with the Baptist Joint Committee staff will be from 1 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21, Eastern Standard Time. The meetings will be open to the public, Young said.



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Presidents 'repudiate' claims of victory, capitulation

by Dan Martin

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)— "We repudiate all 'victory' claims and 'capitulation' allegations as completely foreign to the spirit and intent of our initiative," the presidents of the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries said in a statement issued this week.

Milton Ferguson, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., and spokesman for the presidents, said the presidents made their statement in response to "apparent misinterpretations and distortions of the intent" of the Glorieta Statement issued in late October and aimed at bringing reconciliation to the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination.

The presidents, in addition, urged that the effort at reconciliation "move forward on both theological and political fronts," and pledged their support for "all good faith efforts to achieve fairness and balance in the election of our convention leadership, in appointments to convention committees and in nominations of trustees, board members and commissioners."

In the statement, Ferguson said the seminary presidents "are encouraged by the positive response to our Glorieta Statement. . . . We are glad our initiative has produced new hope for reconciliation and peace among Southern Baptists.

"We are eager to move ahead with the peace process in every way possible," the statement said. "There are two things we will do to undergird this desire.

"First, we will seek to correct apparent misinterpretations and distortions of the intent of our Glorieta Statement, reflected especially in some of the initial reports in the secular press. We repudiate all 'victory' claims and 'capitulation' allegations as completely foreign to the spirit and intent of our initiative. Our purpose is not 'victory' or 'defeat' for anyone, but a new level of mutual respect and cooperative endeavor for all.

"Second, we will encourage and support good faith efforts to make progress in the political aspects of the controversy which has plagued us.

"Many Southern Baptists have shared with us their frustration about the 'tug of war' going on in our midst. They say, 'You are dealing with the theological concerns; but what can be done about the political struggle?'

"Our response is, 'We have committed ourselves to fairness and balance in our classrooms. We also will support all good faith efforts to achieve fairness and balance in the election of our convention leadership, in appointments to convention committees and in nominations of trustees, board mem-

bers and commissioners.' "

The statement adds: "The peace process among Southern Baptists must move forward on both theological and political fronts. Bold initiatives by those who have the position and power to resolve the political conflict are needed if the progress made at Glorieta is to have a lasting impact for good.

"We are moving ahead in keeping faith with our 'Declaration of Commitments' made at Glorieta. We also are committed to work for peace in other aspects of our current conflict."

The statement urges Southern Baptists to join them by "praying for the Peace Committee, especially during its next meeting, Dec. 1-2," and by "encouraging and supporting those who must take the initiative in resolving the political struggle."

The statement was agreed to by the six presidents: Ferguson; Roy Lee Honeycutt, Southern; Russell Dilday, Southwestern; Randall Lolley, Southeastern; Landrum Leavell, New Orleans; and Harold Graves, Golden Gate. Ferguson said William Crews, newly elected president of Golden Gate, was told of the statement, "but was not asked to put his name on it."

Dan Martin is news editor for Baptist Press.

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A remnant rebuilds

by Erwin L. McDonald, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine editor emeritus

Basic passage: Ezra 1:1-4; 6:14-16; Nehemiah 4-6

Focal passage: Ezra 1:2-4; 6:14-16; Nehemiah 4:5; 6:15-16

Central truth: With God's help, God's people can accomplish the goals he sets before them, however impossible they may seem.

This bit of Hebrew history shows how God used pagan rulers to make possible the return to Jerusalem of a minority of Hebrew captives to rebuild the Temple and to restore the wall around the city. The books Ezra and Nehemiah reveal how, under the leadership of these two men and other leaders, the ruined city of Jerusalem was rebuilt and its people given a new beginning.

(1) Exiles repatriated (Ezra 1:1-5)

The truth revealed in these verses is that the Lord of history sometimes uses unlikely persons to bring his purposes to pass. As we see, it was a decree issued by Cyrus, king of Persia, that allowed a delegation of Jewish captives to return to their homeland.

(2) The Temple rebuilt (Ezra 6:1-16)

Soon after the Jews arrived back in Judah, they began to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 3:8-13). But opposition developed from neighboring Samaritans and they soon became more interested in building fine homes for themselves (Hag. 1:3-11). It was only after an interval of 16 years that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were able to get the project started again.

(3) New leader, new project (Neh. 2:1-8; 4:1-15)

It was while Artaxerxes was king of Persia that a Jew, Nehemiah, who served as the king's cupbearer, enlisted the king's help and went back to Jerusalem to complete the Temple project. The project required four years to complete, against much opposition.

(4) Jerusalem's walls restored (Neh. 6:1-16)

Four times the enemies of Nehemiah and of Jerusalem tried to get him to leave his work for "conferences" with them, but he would not be misled.

God's encouragement of Nehemiah and his workers as they continued to do what he had given them to do in spite of opposition should remind us that God's power is sufficient for any task.

From Nehemiah we can learn that we are to keep our eyes on God and act accordingly.

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Life and Work

Thanksgiving

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

Basic passage: Genesis 2:1-3; 4:1-4, 25-26; 8:1-22

Focal passage: Genesis 2:1-3; 4:25-26; 8:18-22

Central truth: Worship involves thanking God for his gracious acts.

As I prepare this lesson I am thinking about the smells of Thanksgiving. The pie, fresh bread, and best of all, the turkey. I am making plans for family to drop in and taking the day off to watch some football. Are you thinking like this too?

If you noticed I left out the most important thing I should do, which is to set aside time for my family and myself to truly give thanks for what God has given us this past year. Maybe it's because Thanksgiving is uniquely an American holiday and not a Christian holiday like Christmas, that we sometimes forget that this day can be a real worship experience for our family.

It might be a good idea to turn off the football game for a few minutes and gather the family around. Let each share the positive things that have happened in each life during the past year. Then spend time in prayer just thanking God for all he has done.

This might even be a good time for your family to set some goals for the next year to show God your gratefulness. Our passage points out in verse 20 that Noah sacrificed and that God took notice. Now might be the time to commit to a missions project, increased giving, to prepare yourself to teach, or some other sacrifice. God will notice our worship in giving and commitment.

God responds to our worship. Because of Noah's worship, a rainbow was created that to this day appears to affirm God's promise. Our worship of Thanksgiving can also have a permanent effect. We will recognize new challenges for the year to come and give our lives a more positive direction.

This year let us not be guilty of ingratitude. Let us thank God for all he has given to each of us. Let us also not forget that in our travels and enjoying relatives that God's church is open for worship this next Sunday.

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Bible Book

The miraculous feeding

by Woodrow W. Dishongh, Lancaster Road Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: John 6:1-17

Focal passage: John 6:11-12, 26-35, 66-69

Central truth: Jesus is the only one who truly can nourish and satisfy the deep spiritual need of man.

Jesus found the material for a miracle in what the lad brought. He can use what we have and many miracles may never happen because we refuse to bring what we have to him. Here we have a miracle of creative power. Think of the amount of food needed daily by a nation and think of the source from whence it comes and we are aware of God's provision. We are prone to forget from whence our supplies come. Here we realize the promise, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and the other things will be forth coming." We can go about the Father's business assured that needs will be met.

Are we only concerned with the physical needs? Jesus encourages his followers to work not for the food that perishes, but for the spiritual. The Jews failed to understand what "work for the food that endures" meant. The inquiry is a confession that they did not know how to work for God. They are asking "How do we work for that which lasts?" We who are sincere feel imperfect no matter how earnestly we strive. The basic thought is that we should believe in the Christ that God has sent.

Jesus is the true bread. What food and drink is to the body, Jesus is to the soul. Here he is referring to the giving of himself. He said, "my flesh is true bread and my blood is true drink." As bread is a universal means of substance, so is he to our souls. Nothing can take the place of the bread of life. Our tastes can change, but we never lose taste for bread. The pleasures of life may lose their power after a time, but with Christ we have unending sources of satisfaction.

Peter affirms faith in Jesus as the testing time comes. After Christ's discourse in the synagogue some left him feeling his demands were too great. They put their hands to the plough and turned back. They really had no one else to go to and they may not have fully understood all that Jesus was saying, but they knew him. All they had seen led them to believe he was the Christ. His miraculous teachings encourages us to make a wholehearted commitment to him.

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Church grows by giving away members

By Joe Westbury

ATLANTA (BP)—While many Southern Baptist churches are striving to swell their ranks with new members, Briarlake Church has discovered it grows best by giving members away.

The suburban Atlanta church has learned giving its members to help start new churches has a renewing effect and helps the church grow even stronger. Since it was constituted 27 years ago, the congregation has helped start 30 new Baptist churches across the nation; many have since begun missions of their own.

"I believe the New Testament pattern is that churches should begat churches just like Christians begat Christians," Pastor Hoffman Harris explains.

That kind of attitude led the 3,600-member congregation, which began as a mission itself, to combine its evangelistic ministry with launching new missions whenever possible. It's an adventure of constant renewal and rebirth that Briarlake hopes other churches can experience.

Nelson Tilton, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's church starting department, says research shows new churches grow at a faster rate than most established churches. New churches are the denomination's greatest hope for reaching its global evangelization goals by the end of the century, he adds.

Tilton acknowledges most Southern Baptist churches plateau in membership at 10 years of age and 80 percent are not growing at all. "A newly established mission requires nine people to reach another person for Christ, while the figure drops to between 24 and 35 members for our Southern Baptist churches nationwide. The facts are simple. New churches are more effective in reaching lost people," he says.

The denomination's Bold Mission Thrust goals call for having 50,000 churches by the year 2000. That means the convention's 37,000 congregations must start 13,000 new churches in the remaining 13 years of this century.

"We have our work cut out for us, and we need more key mission churches like Briarlake to serve as models for other congregations," Tilton says.

Harris, who has been Briarlake's only pastor, admits he is not threatened when a new church is formed in his community. To the contrary, he often has given the pastor a list of prospective members from Briarlake's files. He's even encouraged his members to consider the new mission as

an opportunity for their talents.

"I'm convinced it never hurt any congregation to give people or money to start a new church," Harris says. "There's no room for jealousy in the kingdom. The stronger these new works can become, the stronger we can be."

Giving his own members to help launch missions is a key ingredient in Harris' method of spreading the gospel. One of Briarlake's boldest ventures took 156 members to help constitute a church in the rapidly growing Stone Mountain area of Atlanta in 1969. That congregation, Smokerise Church, is now one of the fastest-growing churches in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Although Briarlake was only 10 years old at the time, its members had the vision for the need of a church in the Stone Mountain community and pledged their support to the ministry. Briarlake negotiated for 15 acres of land for the mission only six miles from its doorstep, paid the infant group's expenses for the first year and loaned its assistant pastor until it could get off its feet. Smokerise since has grown into a 2,500-member congregation with a \$1.2 million budget in one of Atlanta's fastest-growing influential neighborhoods.

Two years ago Briarlake again helped a mission purchase 17 acres of land, contributed \$23,000 toward the pastor's salary and gave 10 of its best families to help begin Atkinson Road Baptist Church in fast-growing Gwinnett County. That new congregation has since begun two Bible study groups that have matured into missions of their own, Harris says.

The church always is looking for new ways of becoming involved in church starting. Due to job-related transfers of many of its young members to areas of the nation where Southern Baptist work is still in its infancy, Briarlake has helped those members establish new missions in their communities.

Mission volunteers such as census takers, carpenters, youth choirs and Vacation Bible School and Backyard Bible Club leaders have been drafted to bring the gospel to pioneer areas.

"The pastor is the key to having a missions-minded church," Harris notes. "I teach and preach missions, encouraging our people to be personally involved. Once people get a taste of missions, they want to do more."

Joe Westbury associate news editor for the SBC Home Mission Board.

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