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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



Arkansans respond to killer tornadoes

Baptist volunteers responded quickly to the needs of fellow Arkansans after killer tornadoes tore through the state March 1. In addition to feeding units providing hundreds of meals a day, Baptist Men's clean-up crews began working Sunday to remove debris from damaged homes (left). Arkadelphia's downtown district (below) was especially hard-hit by the storms.



ABSC study committee postpones trustee plan

Making a commitment to proceed "prudently and slowly," members of the Arkansas Baptist Structure Study Committee have agreed to postpone one recommendation concerning the trustee nominating process for convention entities.

Arkansas Baptist messengers already are expected to address bylaw changes in November related to the trustee selection process for Ouachita Baptist University. The bylaw proposal, which will require a two-thirds majority vote at two consecutive conventions, follows last fall's 801-456 vote in favor of a reconciliation process between the state convention and Ouachita. That plan calls for a group of Ouachita trustees and members of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention nominating committee to work together to propose an annual slate of trustee nominees.

Although the plan gained a majority vote in 1996, a group of Arkansas Baptists opposed to the reconciliation compromise met recently and are working to block passage of bylaw implementation this fall.

Assessing the mixed reactions across the state, Structure Study Committee members have declined to adopt a subcommittee recommendation calling for all state convention agencies and institutions to follow a similar trustee nominating process. The committee remains on schedule to present proposals related to Executive Board staff restructuring as well as other entity-related recommendations this year but will seek Executive Board approval to postpone trustee-related proposals until 1998.

Prior to last fall's actions involving the ABSC nominating committee, Ouachita and the convention reconciliation process, the Structure Study Committee "had a tentative recommendation in mind which focused on the trustee selection process," explained committee chairman Tim Reddin, director of missions for Central Association.

"The goals we were seeking to achieve included assuring that final selection of trustees would be made by the convention itself but also assuring that convention agencies and institutions would have appropriate input into the process," he added.

Commitment to harmony

"After we arrived at our tentative recommendation, the situation developed involving Ouachita and the reconciliation process approved by the convention in November." Following the convention, "our agencies and institutions subcommittees met and recommended, in essence, that we treat all agencies and institutions in the same manner by following the selection process that was approved in November.

"When the steering committee met to consider that recommendation, we felt that the decision concerning Ouachita is still ongoing," Reddin explained. "In the interest of harmony and to prevent confusion, we determined it would be best to delay a final recommendation until we determined the will of the convention as expressed in the '97 convention by messenger vote.

"I believe the intent of the committee is still to be fair and equitable in our treatment of all agencies and institutions," he added. "After November, we will be in a better position to know what the majority of our people want in the nominating process and we will be able to make our recommendations accordingly.... The ultimate and final authority is still going to rest with the messengers of the convention and we feel that is how it should be."

Acknowledging that "the events of recent months have complicated our work," Reddin said, "We feel it is appropriate to respond prudently and slowly and allow a process of healing to take place without our committee interjecting recommendations which would confuse or jeopardize a peaceful solution."

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



Cover Story

Disaster relief.....3

Arkansas Baptist disaster relief crews mobilized in the wake of the killer tornadoes that hit Arkansas March 1. From clean-up to feeding, the Baptist workers are assisting hundreds of Arkansans affected by the disaster.

Perspective

A Pastor's Heart.....4

Woman's Viewpoint.....4

Letters to the Editor.....5

Guest Editorial.....5

Arkansas Baptists

Contemporary worship: part 4.....8-7

Arkansans protest partial-birth abortion.....10

People & Places.....12-13

Turner challenges seminary students.....14

Nation/World

Brotherhood trustees hold final meeting.....8

Reccord possible nominee to head NAMB.....9

SBC leaders propose transition budget.....11

Albright affirms religious freedom.....20

Cloning generates ethical debate.....21

Lessons for Living22-23



Available on CompuServe through the Publications Library of SBCNet.

Next issue: March 20

Ministry amid devastation

Baptist volunteers aid victims in the wake of state's killer tornadoes

Trennis Henderson & Russ Dilday

Arkansas Baptist

Hours after killer tornadoes ripped through several counties in Arkansas, Baptist disaster relief efforts were in full operation in Arkadelphia and Little Rock. The March 1 storms killed at least 24 people, injured more than 300 and damaged or destroyed more than 800 houses and businesses.

"This was 31 years of our life just blown up before us," Karen Kirkpatrick said early Sunday morning as she sifted through debris from the previous afternoon's tornado devastated much of downtown Arkadelphia.

Standing amid the rubble of what had been her family's business, she added, "We're not the only ones suffering. At least we've got our lives and our health. We have so much to be thankful for... Everyone has just prayed together and we're united — just pray for us."

Two blocks away at First Church of Arkadelphia, the Arkansas Baptist Men's feeding unit was busy preparing meals for storm victims and relief workers. More than 20 disaster relief volunteers manned the unit, preparing more than 1,000 meals for distribution Sunday afternoon. Disaster relief coordinator Ronnie O'Neal said he expected the number of meals being served to double during for the next several days.

While First Church and nearby Ouachita Baptist University escaped any serious damage during the storm, the offices of Red River Association suffered extensive damage.

"We don't know what we're going to do with our offices but the ministry goes on," remarked Maurice Hitt, Red River Association director of missions. "The indications are the building has shifted on its foundation. It may be structurally beyond repair."

Refusing to let the property damage sidetrack ministry efforts, Hitt emphasized, "That building is nothing but a tool. It is not our ministry. I can see interruptions but I do not see the ministry being damaged." He added that he already has received an offer of an office building for the association to use.

As church members, Boy Scouts and other volunteers joined disaster relief workers at First Church, pastor Kevin Lee noted that the church had hosted a disaster relief training conference only three weeks before — never imagining that the same facility would be transformed into a disaster relief site.



Emergency workers in downtown Arkadelphia take a coffee break Sunday morning. Food for victims and workers is being prepared by Arkansas Baptist disaster relief teams.

Affirming that disaster relief efforts "make all the difference in the world," Lee added, "The visible reminder that there are people who care helps reach these folks who are in absolute despair."

In addition to feeding efforts, First Church has offered its facilities for use by the state convention's disaster relief child care unit. Across town at Park Hill Church, Red Cross volunteers set up a shelter that housed 14 people the night of the storm.

"It's great that the churches open their facilities to the Red Cross for shelters," pointed out Red Cross worker Fred Fox of Hot Springs. "People are devastated when their homes are destroyed. They are physically drained and need some place to rest and sleep."

'We thought we were immune'

"We always thought we were immune," noted First Church member Otis Turner, an Arkadelphia attorney whose title office was destroyed. Despite the widespread devastation, "it could have been so much more terrible," he added. "Just clean up and start over — that's all you can do."

While feeding efforts were under way in Arkadelphia, three clean-up teams of Arkansas Baptist Men were mobilized early Sunday morning in areas of south Pulaski County and north Saline County. The work crews helped families remove debris from their yards and roofs — or what was left of their homes.

Sixteen men from Jacksonville, Little Rock and Sherwood helped with the efforts with chain saws, a front-end loader and bare hands. An additional 10 men were expected to join the teams Monday.

They concentrated their work in an

area where a tornado injured 20, destroyed approximately 60 homes and damaged scores of other residences. When they arrived at the affected area, many team members were left speechless by the sight of homes that were leveled and forested areas flattened by the storm.

The storm hit close to home for many of the crew members. Hunter Douglas, a member of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, saw the twister as it cut a path less than a mile from his home. Later that evening, he helped a local woman break through debris to reach her mother in a destroyed home — to find her safe in her bedroom.

The team was aided in their clean-up efforts by a new weapon — a computer map system used by Douglas as his home-turned-command center that allowed coordinators to make assignments street by street.

Crew member Ken Scott, a member of First Church in Gravel Ridge and a veteran of clean-up efforts last year in Van Buren, said the Baptist Men's crews "are going to stay as long as it takes" to clean up.

"Disaster relief is the best-kept secret in the whole convention," remarked team coordinator Warren Burleson, a member of Highland Heights Church in Benton. "In fact, we cleaned up a yard for a couple (members of a Southern Baptist church) and they had no idea we had anything like this. The next thing they asked is, 'How do we sign up?'"

"Our greatest resources is our volunteers," O'Neal emphasized. "We're reaching out with the love of God to hurting people and showing them that, through our Baptist Men, that God loves them."

A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABS-C Executive Director

She had tears in her eyes. "Every year we hang on until we can get here. God always meets us. Thank you for letting Him use you." She was a soldier's wife in Europe. A member of a Baptist church in Germany.

Each year English-speaking European Baptists gather in Interlaken, Switzerland, for a week of Bible study and ministry. Arkansas Baptists help with teaching ministries, hospitality, child care and youth work.

Soldiers, missionaries, business and government employees — this conference is a tremendous ministry to them. Can you

help change their lives? Food service workers and child care workers are particularly needed. It will cost you a trip to Switzerland — it will change lives — it will be used by God. The dates are July 5-10. Call Doyn Plummer at 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5190.

Have you read *The Power of Encouragement* by David Jeremiah? (Mulanomah Press, 1997). This book reminds us that encouraging each other is a powerful ministry. Lots of relevant quotations and anecdotes help make it interesting. It is easy to bring conviction. Sometimes, it is necessary. But, it is always Christ-like to encourage. This book can help.

Executive director's schedule:

March 8 Mandeville Baptist Church
March 9 (a.m.) Trinity, Texarkana
March 10-11 Pastors' Retreat, Camp Paron
March 14-16 First Baptist Church, Corning
March 20 (p.m.) Buckner Association meeting
March 21-22 State WMU Meeting, Park Hill, NLR

in unconditional love. "Unconditional love that is not based on "if you..." or "because you..." but is based on their worth to God and their great value to us. Unconditional love is patient and kind. It has been necessary to accept the truth that if I am not patient or kind, or if I don't put others first, then my problem is a love problem.

Roots mean belonging, knowing someone has a permanent place in God's heart and in ours. Paul said to the Corinthians, "You are in our hearts to die together and to live together" (II Cor. 7:3).

Roots mean recognizing that problems are a part of any relationship. Jesus said we'll always have pressures and tribulations. Problems don't mean an end to relationships, they are simply an opportunity to practice Christianity.

Every relationship must have wings. Release them. You can never hold anyone as property to own or to control. Our children, friends and spouses are gifts to cherish but never to control. Love always releases. God so loved, He gave.

We must release everyone to follow God's plan for their lives. My mother, who was 80 when we left for Korea, never uttered one word of complaint. Her only response was, "I've always prayed that God would call one of my children to be a missionary. I never dreamed He would wait until I was 80 and you nearly 60."

I'm so thankful God gave me roots and wings. I want to give to all those I love the same precious gift.

Jeanne Wright is director of Friendship International, a ministry to internationals sponsored by area Baptist churches.

Woman's Viewpoint



Jeanne Wright

First Church, Little Rock

On Nov. 5, 1991, at the age of 58, I stood in a city of 18 million people knowing no one except Jesus and my husband. We were appointed as missionary associates to serve in South Korea, where my husband, John, pastored Seoul International Baptist Church. We left behind three grown children, their spouses and five wonderful grandchildren.

Commissioned by friends at Little Rock's First Church, where relationships were built through nearly 20 years, I had been the "preacher's wife." Now we would have an opportunity to test the validity of those relationships and to build new ones across the world. What a challenge!

The truth is that genuine relationships stand the test of time and new ones can be formed. Now, all around the world, we have new friends and those relationships, I'm convinced, will last. How do we build lasting relationships?

We tried to give roots and wings to everyone. Roots came as we gave unconditional love. Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:17 "that we may be rooted and grounded

quotes

"I can't have my name on a piece of legislation that's purpose is not to save babies but to save senators."

—Rep. Jim Hendren
 Opponent of partial-birth abortion

"Pride keeps lost people lost, and it keeps saved people sterile."

—Emil Turner
 ABS-C executive director

"Worship is a state of the heart and state of the art."

—Carl Lorey
 minister of music and media
 East Side Church, Fort Smith

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE

Worship battle rages

I read with mixed emotions Russell Dilday's article, "A New Style of Worship," in the January 23 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. As a Christian writer, I feel I would undercut my calling if I did not reply. Dilday's article is an informative article as opposed to being an opinionated article. It is strange to me why Arkansas Baptist churches would lead the "pack" in all these new styles in worship services. When is a church not a church?

Now that we have all these new Bibles, over 150 of them, it is only logical to assume that we would have new styles of worship to go along with them. Then, of course, new styled preachers will be the next order. The God-called preacher will be almost, if not, of the past.

They will order their sermons from denominational headquarters, preaching from a page of paper. What they are told to preach or they may even throw it on a screen for the congregation to look at. Hopefully there will be no blind persons in the congregation. Instead of hearing aids for the elderly, the church will furnish silencers for the elderly so as not to burst their eardrums when all the loud music starts blasting. When it comes to dress, you come as you are, or, as you want to be.

I remember going into a church to see Big Bird traipsing back and forth in front of the pulpit. I asked if we were in the church house or a chicken house. As it turned out the pastor had on a Big Bird suit as a promotional stunt to gain attendance. I never knew what that church gained, if any. I only know they lost two.

While some of our churches certainly could stand a few changes, and some need the starch knocked out of their collars, it appears to me that all this new styled worship is just another part of the battle

between heartfelt religion and head religion that is raging today.

Mable Housa
Mena, AR

Don't abandon tradition

Am I the only one in the Southern Baptist Convention who is dismayed by the direction many churches are taking by abandoning tradition and substituting the world's standards for entertainment and calling it worship?

Are there others who, like me, are appalled at the new Vacation Bible School curriculum (Good News Stampede) with music that would be equally at home at a honky-tonk or rock concert? Our children

hop down the aisle and are greeted by the worship leader shouting, "Yahoo!", "Yippee!", "Yee-ha!", and my favorite, "Giddy-up and tell the world!" (Pledges to the flags and Bible and mission stories optional.)

I am glad that I am nearing retirement age and will not long have to deal with such departures from the tried and

true — the traditions and culture that have made Southern Baptists great. I sincerely hope that I'm not the only one who feels like a dinosaur in this chrome-plated new world of ultra casual Christianity.

I am well aware of the fact that many, perhaps a majority of present-day Southern Baptists are in agreement with the philosophy of reaching the masses by abandoning hymn singing, dignity and reverence. The end always seems to justify the means. Bring people into the church by whatever gim-crackery that appeals — but are they really being converted and challenged to take up their cross and follow Jesus?

William R. Canary
Mount Vernon, AR

Proposal prompts progress

We commend *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* board member Mike Petty, pastor of Park Place Church, Hot Springs, for his stalwart stance with reference to his opposition to a proposal from a subcommittee of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's Structure Study Committee.

The subcommittee has proposed a process by which the state convention nominating committee meet with "a group" from the *Newsmagazine's* board, "to jointly nominate those who will be presented to the state convention."

As much as we commend Petty for his expressed conviction, we must offer support to the committee's recommendation, at least in this issue.

Apparently some of us have harbored a misconception concerning the nominating process. Personally I believed the state committee was an independent entity, making its nominations, based on the leadership of the Holy Spirit and on what its members considered in the best interests of the entire convention.

Obviously there needs to be some considered input from any particular agency. There is an inherent danger that boards and agencies could perpetuate their inefficiencies by offering names of persons known to accommodate pet projects and biases of a particular agency.

This danger and temptation certainly can be lessened by the involvement of the state convention committee.

Why have such a committee? Why not turn the process of nomination over to a certain agency and let them simply engage in a process by which they select whom they feel will be complementary to their points of view? After all we don't need any adversarial positions being promulgated!

Or maybe... just maybe such proposals might enhance our progress!

John D. Davey
DeQueen, AR

Letters to the Editor

'Abstain from sinful desires'

C. Ben Mitchell

SBC Christian Life Commission

The apostle Peter holds Christians to a higher ethical standard than the world around them. He is writing to a church under wrenching persecution. When the reputation of the church is on the line, it is especially imperative that Christians maintain the highest standards of moral purity.

So Peter reminds the early Christians that they are "strangers" and "pilgrims" in the world. This world is not our ultimate home, and a lifestyle of satisfying sinful passions is not to be our ambition.

Sinful passions war against the soul. They steal our passion for God. They reach deep into human lives and destroy everything but a desire for the temporary pleasure they promise. There is no question about the power of alcohol and other drugs to do so.

Alcohol problems affect more than 76 million Americans and cause more than 100,000 deaths per year. Addiction to tobacco results in the deaths of nearly half a million Americans annually. Drugs vie for mastery over the soul.

The use of alcohol and other drugs marks a world addicted to selfish pleasure. Believers, however, are to be marked by a passion for God, love for Christ and service to others. Not only does the use of alcohol and other drugs threaten our relationship to Christ, but using these drugs can irreparably damage our witness for Christ in the world.

The most effective way of personally battling alcohol and other drugs is to abstain from them. As Southern Baptists observe Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday March 16, we must say no to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Abstain from sinful desires which war against the soul.



Worship renewal

Many churches finding growth, change through tried and true traditional means

Worship renewal is not about changing worship to make it more appealing to the world. Rather its substance is found in cultivating a worship that so engages believers with the person and purposes of holy God that He, in turn, can change the world through us.

ROB HEWELL
director,
ABSC Church Music
Ministries Department



Many Arkansas congregations are seeking change in their worship styles to attract the unchurched, invigorate members and set the tone for effective worship. Others are focusing on a change of attitude and preparation to encourage the renewal of their corporate worship.

Rob Hewell, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, said that attention tends to be focused on the newest trends, "and they can, indeed, be instructive. Many churches, however, cherish what they've done in worship over the years and have little interest in trading it in for something which to them seems foreign.

"Others desire a middle ground—a blending—of that which they've known and that which they're willing to discover," he added.

"Healthy congregations place a preeminent value on the worship relationship and take steps to make it as meaningful as possible," Hewell explained. "Some churches in particular are seeking and discovering a renewed sense of worship in the corporate setting."

Hewell described that renewed interest, priority and the resulting worship experiences of congregations as "worship renewal."

"Worship renewal is not necessarily about the discovery of a new style, or the recovery of an old," Hewell said. "It is about finding again what A.W. Tozer calls 'the missing jewel of the evangelical church.' It's understanding Jesus' attention to the greatest commandment: to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and strength.

"It's realizing that health for any church comes naturally when they learn the appropriate balance between spirit and form," he said. "Worship renewal occurs when biblical teaching encourages believers to comprehend and regard the priority of worship.

◀ Parkway Place Church in Little Rock is among churches that sing a blend of choruses and traditional hymns during worship services.

"Renewal in worship will be a key element of church health for all evangelicals, particularly as a new millennium approaches," he added. "Yet, the essence of worship renewal is not about changing worship to make it more appealing to the world. Rather its substance is found in cultivating a worship that so engages believers with the person and purposes of holy God that He, in turn, can change the world through us."

'Riding the dinosaur'

"A lot of pastors may feel like they're riding the dinosaur—strapped with a traditionally-styled church—but our worship is not a style, it is a reflection of us," said Mike Seabaugh, pastor of Crosspoint Church in North Little Rock. "If that is the style of your worship, don't kill the dinosaur, just train it."

Seabaugh noted that his congregation's worship "accurately relates who we are" as a church. "If you participated with us, I think you would see a multi-generational family in which each generation has its respect and its own ways. There is a great spirit that is there, like in II Corinthians 3:17, where it says, 'The Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.'"

Many worship planners agree that setting the tone for that kind of worship spirit comes through preparation by members as well as church leaders.

Hewell emphasized that churches "of any size or worship practice can experience vibrant, life-changing, God-honoring worship" depending on the priority they place on corporate worship.

"We're finding out that worship is a state of the heart and state of the art," said Carl Lorey, minister of music and media at East Side Church in Fort Smith. "In other words, we're finding out that it's how we come into worship, with that spirit of looking to really worship instead of coming to go through the motions. We also are trying to make worship as good as we can—or state of the art."

Pastor Rodney Reeves said he has seen members' preparation for worship at Central Church in Jonesboro in two ways. "First, these people come prepared for an encounter with God. We need to recognize that worship begins with the individual, but quickly becomes a corporate experience.

"Second, they are ready to hear the Word of the Lord," Reeves emphasized. "How do I know? Conviction is all over their faces. People come to me or they write notes or they express...that God continues to speak to them."

Regardless of worship style, congregations and worship planners must always insist on three worship priorities given by Jesus in John 4:24, said Seabaugh. "Worship must recognize who God is, and He is spirit; He must be worshipped in spirit; and He must be worshipped in truth. To me, that is worship not about us, but about God. We must be careful not to overrate fun over worship. Worship is about repentance, burdens, illustration and a call to action. There is a seriousness in order to worship in spirit and truth."

Worship priority must start with the pastor, according to many Baptist worship planners.

James Allcock, minister of music for First Church in Clarksville, said, "I'm working alongside a pastor who thoroughly enjoys the privilege and pleasure of working to plan worship. Our spirits witness together. We work hard on the transitions from one worship element to another so that worship is a true composed event rather than a series of stop and go exercises."

When Rick Morrow, pastor of East End Church in Hensley, told his staff he wanted to build "a powerful, loving atmosphere where the Spirit is working and the church is growing" during worship, he first led his staff to pray.

"We've seen things turn around since we started that," noted Billy Kilmer, minister of music and children for East End. Then the East End staff added a mix of worship elements that include "drama, videos, skits and illusions, clowns and all types of music. We're not having a party, but we wanted to make worship fun. People ought to enjoy coming to worship, not dread coming to worship."

Lorey emphasized that at East Side in Fort Smith, pastor Bob Ford "has begun to call us into loving God with all our hearts."

"He's called us to action, to do something, and our people are finding that it's not a spectator sport," Lorey said. "Worship is action-oriented. They come in as participants."

Worship impact

How does worship affect churches that are doing it well? Some have seen the effects in renewed harmony.

"There seems to be a joy and excitement about coming to worship. Our people seem to enjoy

being together," Allcock noted. "It's a joy of worship and celebration that God is doing some good things in our midst. This is nothing real dramatic, but it feels good. It feels warm and it feels like it has integrity to it also."

He also emphasized that worship has led to salvation experiences and church growth. "We're running about 20 percent higher in attendance than we were about a year ago. We baptized three this past Sunday morning and three weeks ago we baptized a couple."

"An effect we're seeing is people being saved in our worship services," Lorey said. "Worship is for the saved. You can't be a worshiper if you're not a person who's been born again into the Kingdom of God, but worship can be a witness. People are being saved because people are sensing a spirit of 'something's going on here' and our saved people are being called into action and ministry—witnessing to people and doing acts of ministry for people."

Kilmer also cited growth and fellowship as a result of healthy worship. "We've grown from running a little bit below 200 in Sunday School to 243 this past month. We're running two services right now. We are getting that feeling of family."

"I've seen division healed," Reeves said. "When people worship together, they begin to say, 'We are of one heart.' There is a unifying presence. There is a personal affect. When they go out from worship, they are not so easily disheartened by the discouraging world we live in."

Worship must result in reaching beyond the church walls, Hewell added. "Worship that is indisputably God-honoring cannot remain inside the church walls. True worship will propel believers into the mission fields where they live every day to proclaim His glory to all the nations."

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CONTEMPORARY
WORSHIP IN
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Effective worship renewal

What do churches have in common?

Churches experiencing worship renewal have similarities, noted ABCS church music ministries director Rob Hewell. He said the following list, collected from his own research, surveys and personal experience, reflects "some characteristics of churches that are, or can be, experiencing worship renewal."

■ *They're intentional about worship.* They've realized that worship begins with God and has more to do with Who He is than it does with who we are. The pastor and others work together to plan authentic worship. Every element of the worship time is united with purpose.

■ *They're "in tune."* Worship leaders expend the effort to prepare properly and do it with excellence. Musical

elements, the message, prayers, Scripture readings, drama, giving, greetings and opportunities for response all exhibit deliberate interaction.

■ *They're infused with power.* Prayer plays a vital role during worship. The worship encounter is supernatural in nature and believers come in anticipation of a powerful movement of God's Spirit. Worship is joyful, energetic and contagious.

■ *Their worship inspires right living.* These churches view worship as a daily, even moment-by-moment experience that brings glory to God. Genuine worship fuels passionate devotion.

■ *Their worship promotes intimacy with God.* Humility and a sense of awe are natural for believers in the presence

of God. Confession and repentance are spontaneous responses. Transparency in the lives of all worshippers, especially leaders, is essential.

■ *Their leaders invest in people.* Worship is a significant occasion for all of God's people. These churches make every effort to foster worship that is participatory for everyone, not just presentational for a few. Leaders actively encourage development of new worship leaders among members.

■ *They investigate their heritage and innovate regularly.* These churches have discovered the rich traditions of the past as a precious resource for deepening their worship. They appreciate creativity and diversity and understand that renewed or new forms of worship can

bring vitality to worship and capture attention.

■ *They imitate sparingly and wisely.* These churches know that successful models are helpful but discern that what's working for another group may not work for them. They study other churches, but develop worship that is uniquely their own.

■ *They inspect their worship faithfully.* Leaders evaluate their worship. They examine every element, moving to strengthen ineffective ingredients and refine those which work well.

■ *They include nonbelievers boldly.* These churches believe worship can be a witness. As the gospel is retold through God's people, nonbelievers will be drawn by His Spirit to the Savior. Worshipping churches are glad for anyone to witness their joy before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

'I have a hope...'

Brotherhood trustees approve Williams as NAMB consultant

Russell N. Olday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

During their final regularly-scheduled meeting, trustees of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission voted to extend the ministry of Brotherhood president James D. Williams as a consultant of the North American Mission Board through 1999, honored staff and focused on issues related to transition.

The meeting, held Feb. 28-March 1 at the Brotherhood Commission's Memphis headquarters, signaled the final meeting of the full board of trustees for the 90-year-old agency. The commission will be dissolved in June when its ministries will be joined with those of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Radio and Television Commission to form the North American Mission Board.

Following an executive session of the trustee board, Williams read a statement by the commission's executive committee that trustee chairman Donley Brown of Missouri said was unanimously approved "with tears of joy."

It contained the terms of a "contract of agreement" between Williams and the Brotherhood Commission "and/or its successor agency, the NAMB."

The agreement empowers Williams to continue employment as both a consultant with NAMB and to assume the duties of executive director of the Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship "until his planned normal retirement date, Nov. 1, 1999," following the merger of the commission into NAMB June 19. The salaried position also will include benefits through his retirement date.

Williams will succeed current medical-dental fellowship executive Henry Love, who has served 18 years as the leader of the 1,700-member, Memphis-based group that provides volunteer services for Southern Baptist missions-sending agencies.

The board also noted in the agreement that "Williams anticipates opportunity to use his broad knowledge and experience of Southern Baptist life in supporting the NAMB mission, giving special attention to the assignment given to NAMB in missions education and involvement."

Following the announcement, Williams acknowledged that the agreement will be

contingent on the approval of NAMB trustees. "As the agreement points out, I would be serving at the wishes of the NAMB," he said.

Williams' announcement capped a positive meeting by trustees. Brown noted at the beginning of business that "we will certainly focus on history, but I want our focus to be on our future with the NAMB."

Brown, during a later interview, emphasized that "while the commission's history is important, our focus needs to be on the future and the opportunities that we have through the NAMB to continue ministries that have been a part of the Brotherhood history."

Following Brown's emphasis on transition, trustees and Brotherhood staff focused on their future roles in the new missions entity.



"We move into the NAMB not from a position of weakness but from a position of strength, not as a dying organization, but one that is alive and dynamic."

JAMES D. WILLIAMS
President, Brotherhood Commission

Williams, in his presidential address, shared three "hopes" he has for the NAMB. "I have a hope for the North American Mission Board because of the legacy which the Brotherhood Commission leaves behind," he told trustees. He added that he also has a hope for the NAMB "because of the promise of God's future" and "because there is tangible evidence of a new interest in missions education among our Southern Baptist people."

Reflecting on growing Brotherhood ministry areas, he added that "we move into the NAMB not from a position of weakness but from a position of strength, not as a dying organization, but one that is alive and dynamic."

During his financial report, Jack Childs, vice president for business services, showed trustees financial losses for two reporting periods, adding that "it looks like the Brotherhood Commission will take an indebtedness of \$200,000 to \$250,000 into the NAMB."

Childs explained in a later interview that the commission owes money to both a printing company and local bank.

"With our normal cash flow, we had

projected...that we would just about take care of all that indebtedness before we went through the fiscal year," he said, "but, due to the fact that we've had some early severance, we're having to take that money out of our cash flow and we have some expenses related to transition."

Childs said another financial obstacle faced by the commission is a "retention bonus" trustees approved in 1995 "to pay the staff that would stay through the end an amount of 25 percent of their annual salary. We're not budgeted for that and frankly, we don't have the money to take care of that. It has got to come from the sale of this building."

The commission's entire indebtedness, he noted, can be offset by the sale of the commission's 40,000-square-foot physical plant, with an asking price of \$1.4 million.

"If we sell this building, we should be able to pay our debts and the retention bonus."

The move into the NAMB also was the focus of a Logistical Transition Team panel, who discussed their roles in the transition to the new agency and answered questions from trustees.

"Will Brotherhood Commission personnel have an opportunity to serve in the NAMB and when might they know?" asked Williams.

"Most certainly," answered panel member and executive vice president Mike Day. "But there will be some employees... who will not have that opportunity. We're hoping within the next two to three weeks we will know something."

He added that employees will not officially be offered a job with the NAMB until the board has taken its hiring action on June 19.

"I have a concern about the staff -- the uncertainty of a job and where will it be," added Brown. "Many of them have families and own-homes here. So, if they are offered jobs at the NAMB, its going to be upsetting their family routine."

Trustees also honored staff with a banquet at First Baptist Church in Memphis and approved a resolution stating their "heartfelt appreciation for the staff and volunteers" and "commit to continuing prayerful support of the Brotherhood Commission staff and those individuals who continue the legacy of the ideals of the Brotherhood Commission."

Brotherhood looks to future, reflects on agency's past

Brotherhood Commission trustees, who met for the final time Feb. 28-March 1 in Memphis in what promised to be a spirit of sadness, focused instead on the future of its ministries being carried forward through the new North American Mission Board.

Trustee chairman Donley Brown of Missouri called for a "positive" attitude "focused on the future" at the start of the two-day meeting.

The meeting did offer opportunities for reflection and farewell as 14 trustees who will not be recommended to the NAMB board were honored for their service. Although grief was evident among most of the retiring trustees, many saw hope in the future.

Trustee Dave Partin of Florida said he thought the transition, "at first, was a bad, bad situation. But I think now that the Southern Baptist Convention is going to open up into things that we don't yet know about or understand and I sincerely hope that's the way it works out. It will depend on our attitude and the way we go about handling it will determine if that's the way it works out."

David Raddin, a trustee from Mississippi, said, "Even in the midst of these times of transition and days of closure, how my heart has been blessed to see the spirit of Christ lived out by this group and this staff. The most powerful witness we have comes in times like these."

Both trustees and staff consistently urged that when the Brotherhood officially closes June 19 that ministry for men be kept prominent in Southern Baptist life.

"We don't want to lose momentum in a movement that has been significant for men," Brotherhood executive vice president Mike Day emphasized. "The assignment for men's ministry has been given to the Sunday School Board and the assignment of involving church members in missions through missions education and volunteerism has been given to NAMB."

"I hope they can achieve balance and not try to choose one dimension over the other," he said. "Spiritual development is necessary...but if spiritual development becomes solely an introspective exercise that doesn't lead to real involvement in the world, then it can be an empty exercise."

ITF's Bob Reccord probable nominee for NAMB president

Norb Hollinger

Baptist Press

Robert E. "Bob" Reccord has resigned as chairman of the task force guiding the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, making the Norfolk, Va., pastor the probable nominee for president of the new North American Mission Board.

Reccord, 45, announced his resignation as chairman of the Implementation Task Force to members of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, during services March 2.

As chairman of the task force, Reccord led in assisting the restructuring of the denomination which reduces the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12 and creates the new mission agency NAMB.

Reccord is the probable nominee but SBC officials stress the final decision has not been made. In a prepared statement given to Baptist Press, Reccord said he was one of several men interviewed for president last year. He said he did not feel compelled to remove himself at that time from the chairmanship of ITF as the "discussions were merely introductory."

"I now feel, however, that it is appropriate for me to do so since the (search committee members) have asked me to move forward to another stage of the selection process. Though no prior requirement or agreement exists regarding such a step, I believe it to be the high road of integrity to ensure procedural propriety," he noted. "I would hasten to add that this step in no way presumes upon the process or my involvement in it."

Three-step process

C. B. "Bill" Hogue, chairman of the 13-member search committee, confirmed the process is still under way and the group has yet to make its final determination, based in part on how a candidate does in a three-step process: psychological testing, management capability and skills assessment, and physical testing. Hogue would not comment on where Reccord is in the process although other sources said he has finished two of the three segments.

In a meeting with California associ-

ational directors of missions last month, Hogue, retired executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention, said the incorporators received 39 nominations, have had exploratory conversations with six, agreed the group must reach a unanimous consensus on a nominee, and said the new president would choose the NAMB's vice presidents.

Rick Warren, pastor of a large southern California congregation, told news media late last year that he turned down an offer of the nomination. However, Hogue said Warren had been invited to begin the process but never did so before releasing his comments to the media.

Reccord, appointed as chairman of the 10-member ITF in September 1995, is a member of the SBC Executive Committee which established the ITF.

Ordained to the ministry in 1973, Reccord's first full-time service was as minister of outreach and spiritual development at First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas. From there he went to the Home Mission Board's evangelism section as director of witness training.

Reccord served as director of leadership training for Evangelism Explosion International. In the 1980s he became a vice president of sales and marketing for a Michigan company to support his bivocational ministry. From there he went to Carmel Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., as co-pastor and then to Bell Shoals Baptist Church, Brandon, Fla., as senior pastor. He has been senior pastor at the Norfolk church since October 1992.

He holds master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelor of arts degree from Indiana University. He has done post-graduate work at Regent College in Oxford, England.

Reccord and his wife, Cheryl Ann, have three children: Christy Joy, 20; Bryan Christopher, 17; and Ashley Nicole, 13.

The SBC's restructuring framework is to be completed at the annual meeting in June in Dallas. Following that meeting, the North American Mission Board begins operation with the election of a president, one of the first items for new trustees to decide.



ITF chairman Bob Reccord (right) and search committee chairman Bill Hogue answer questions during a news conference at last summer's SBC annual meeting.



'Rally for Life'

Partial-birth abortion opponents gather at state capitol rally to voice protest

Russell N. Dickey

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

More than 2,000 supporters of a ban on partial-birth abortions gathered for a noon rally Feb. 26 at the state capitol. They voiced their opposition to efforts by the Senate to weaken a bill that calls for outlawing the controversial abortion process.

The "Rally for Life" was originally scheduled as a protest of a Feb. 7 decision by the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee to return House Bill 1351 to the full Senate with a "do not pass" recommendation. The focus of the rally changed when, on the eve of the rally, the committee amended HB1351 with wording that supporters of the original bill say "weakened" its intent.

The amendment seeks to redefine partial-birth abortions, takes away the criminal penalty from the physician performing the procedure and adds an exception for the life or health of the mother.

Partial-birth abortion is a late-term procedure which involves the abortion of infants after all but their heads are delivered.

The Rally for Life featured comments from Gov. Mike Huckabee, lawmakers and Arkansas Baptist State Convention president Rex Horne.

Huckabee cited "the Senate attempt to greatly weaken the amendment to the bill that went through the House of Representatives." He called it an effort "not to really pass a ban on partial-birth abortions, but really to strip that bill of any significance."

"The one thing that we all have to agree upon is that no matter how many times we are beaten back, whether it is at the ballot box or the halls of the legislature, we won't go away and we won't quit," he said. "This is not about winning or losing, it's about life or death."

Comparing abortion to slavery, Gov.

Huckabee said, "It must be clear that the very idea that one person could own another person to the point of taking that person's life, is something that is still and forever will be unacceptable to those of us that believe that our civilization has to treat the lives of innocent people better than that and we're committed to that."

Rep. Jim Hendren, who sponsored the bill in the House, remarked, "We went to the Senate public health committee...and gave an emotional testimony, trying to convince these senators that this is even more than an abortion question...but we didn't have a chance walking in the door. People are going to tell you to the contrary, but we had senators sit back in the room and drink coffee for two hours, then come out and make a motion not just to vote against it but put a 'do not pass' on it."

Hendren credited a calling and writing campaign initiated by a coalition of pro-life groups, aimed at state senators, with "pressuring" Senate action.

"The pressure began to build," he emphasized, "and it began to build...to a tremendous point, to a point where they were trying to do anything to get this off of their backs."

Hendren also accused detractors of cutting his wording on the bill. "They did leave the title and they left two sentences out of 17 intact," he said.

"They are going to tell you when it comes time to be re-elected, 'I voted for the ban on partial-birth abortion.' That's wrong," he said. "What they did was they gutted the bill and now they

◀ Approximately 2,000 supporters of House Bill 1351, which called for a ban of all partial-birth abortions, gathered at the state capitol Feb. 26. Rep. Jim Hendren, author of the bill, addressed the crowd, as did Arkansas Baptist State Convention president Rex Horne and Gov. Mike Huckabee.

are trying to play a cruel hoax on the people of Arkansas and convince them that they did something they didn't do. I can't have my name on a piece of legislation that's purpose is not to save babies but to save senators."

Rex Horne urged participants to pray to achieve their goals. "First, we must come as a people who have been on our knees asking God to intervene in this that is taking place in our state today. We must focus on the truth, not what is rumor or innuendo. Truth is, God's law is constant.

"We know that today abortion rights are used as a matter of convenience," Horne said. "It is, in fact, a means of birth control to so many people. We recognize that is wrong. The last thing we need in our state and our nation is suddenly to support the legality of abortion by endorsing such acts...as partial-birth abortion."

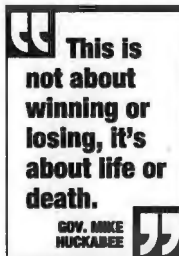
Following the rally, Horne affirmed the good spirit of the event. "The spirit is critical when we realize that a number of our legislators...caricature us just like we caricature them. To come in with our veins popping out of our necks and spewing venom, they expect that of us. But if we come out of a heart of compassion, concern and deep conviction, I think that speaks well for today and for matters to come."

Baptists were prominent not only in the rally leadership, but in attendance. Ed Perser, a member of Park Place Church in Hot Springs, said he made the drive to Little Rock "because I feel it's the right thing to do. This is something that God has said from the beginning: Life is

important. He is the creator of life and no man should be able to destroy it."

Geraldine Cross, a member of the Church of God of Prophecy in North Little Rock, said she attended to support the bill. "I can't imagine anyone really believing that this is not murder," she said. "I would hope this would open the eyes of senators."

Following the rally, participants gathered in the capitol for prayer in support of the bill. Later that day, the House rejected the Senate-amended version and resubmitted its original bill to the Senate.



SBC leaders propose CP budget

CLC, seminaries gain budget funds in plan for restructured SBC

The first proposed budget for a restructured Southern Baptist Convention features increased spending for seminaries and the Christian Life Commission while leaving funding levels for foreign missions unchanged.

A new North American Mission Board (NAMB) will receive less than combined allocations of the three current agencies it replaces, but planners say cost savings from the merger will result in more dollars being freed up for missions. Funding for foreign missions will remain at the same percentage level, with the Foreign Mission Board receiving 50 percent of Cooperative Program receipts.

A primary source of savings in the restructuring is the creation of the new North American Mission Board, to be formed by merging the existing Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission. Under the budget plan being proposed by the SBC Executive Committee, NAMB will receive 22.79 percent of CP receipts, which is 1.36 points less than the 24.15 percent the three agencies to be merged currently receive.

Officials administering the restructuring plan said major cost savings should be experienced by eliminating duplication of support services such as accounting, personnel and management functions.

The NAMB merger and elimination of four other small entities freed up about 2.5 percent of annual CP receipts for reallocation. That amounts to about \$3.7 million in the 1997-98 budget of \$148 million, which is 3 percent larger than this year's spending plan.

Although the proposed budget was approved by the Executive Committee without dissent, its development prior to approval had drawn considerable attention from SBC officials. The budget had been worked out in a closed-door meeting in Dallas on Jan. 21 hosted by the Executive Committee officers with the Inter-Agency Council and some members of the Implementation Task Force.

Members of the program and budget subcommittee came to their meeting unaware that the earlier meeting in Dallas had taken place. While affirming the work, they discussed at length their lack of involvement in the process, saying they did not want to be perceived as simply "rubber stamping" the proposal.

Gaining the most in the budget realignment is the Christian Life Commission, which will be renamed the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. The CLC

will receive 50 percent more in the 1997-98 budget than in the current year's budget — 1.49 percent of all CP receipts rather than 0.99 percent. That means a \$770,503 funding increase for the moral concerns agency — from \$1.44 million this year to \$2.21 million next year.

The six seminaries will receive a 1 percent increase over their 20.4 percent of the past two years, to 21.4 percent. That total, \$31,711,606, will be divided according to a detailed seminary funding formula driven by seminary enrollments.

All the seminaries, except Midwestern in Kansas City, Mo., will see significant increases because of the added 1 percent of the total budget but also because the 1997-98 budget proposal is more than \$3 million above this year's budget. Because the seminary funding formula is based on a three-year average of full-time equivalent enrollments, Midwestern will receive \$1,800 less than in this year's budget.

Budget evaluation planned

In other action, a seven-member committee was appointed to study the SBC's budget process. The motion brought by Executive Committee chairman Ronnie Floyd, with unanimous approval of the Executive Committee's officers, received unanimous approval in a voice vote.

Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, named Patrick Pajak, chairman of the Executive Committee's program and budget subcommittee, as committee chairman. The budget study committee will

make its report at the Executive Committee's September meeting.

Executive Committee members also voted to name an "SBC annual meeting study committee" at its September meeting. The action came in response to a Feb. 5 letter from Committee on Order of Business chairman Jim Richards, director of missions for Northwest Arkansas Association, stating his committee's suggestion for a special group to study "reducing the SBC to a two-day setting."

In another matter related to the SBC annual meeting, Executive Committee members received a report that SBC president Tom Elliff had selected Barry McCarty, SBC chief parliamentarian from 1986-94, as chief parliamentarian for this year's SBC annual meeting. Terms of the contract with McCarty include \$8,000 plus expenses, compared to fees previously paid McCarty ranging from \$10,000 to \$16,700.

Executive Committee member Blaine Barber of Michigan asked whether there had been "a problem" with the decision by the SBC's immediate past president, Jim Henry, to appoint another chief parliamentarian the past two years, Lester L. Cooper Jr., a Southern Baptist pastor from Riverdale, Ga.

Barber also asked whether a Southern Baptist could have been chosen over McCarty, who is pastor of Lakota Christian Church in Cincinnati and an adjunct professor at Northern Kentucky University.

NASHVILLE, TN (ABP/BP)

Elliff issues appeal for urgency

Declaring that "we live in one of the most critical times in the history of the world," Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff reminded Executive Committee members that "we don't have all the time we think we have."

"These are days when the Southern Baptist Convention must be ruminating," he added. "We need to clear away encumbrances."

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., suggested that "every member of the Southern Baptist Convention needs to certify his or her experience with Christ.... We need to get this business of what true conversion really is into the process of Southern Baptist churches."

Elliff also voiced concern that "Southern Baptists are in a stranglehold of debt." Noting that the debt of Southern Baptist churches has more than doubled in the past 20 years to more than \$2.3 billion, he said churches paid more on debt in 1995 than they gave through the Cooperative Program.

"Debt is hurting us as a denomination," he emphasized. "Churches ought to be an example for families in the churches. Being free to do what God has called us to do is a big issue."

Elliff also stressed the need for church and denominational leaders to "crucify our egos."

Spiritual awakening "will not happen as long as any of us think we have to be the captains of it," he warned. "We've got to recapture the true gospel. Let's get before God and do it."

people & places

COMPILED BY MILLIE GILL

TRANSITIONS

Rebecca Osnell Malone is pastor of First Church of Hazen, coming there from Meadowbrook Church of Fort Worth, Texas. He previously was pastor of Turner Church, as well as Fairview Church in Valley Mills, Texas. Malone is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Judy, have two children, Heather Erin Malone and Lei Dawn Dale.

Kevin Carter began serving Jan. 12 as pastor of Cadron Ridge Church of Conway, coming there from First Church of Wardell, Mo. He is a graduate of Mid-America Seminary. Carter and his wife, Judy, have three children, Joshua, Caleb and Judith.

Randy E. Collins is serving as pastor of First Church of Atkins. He previously was a staff member of Cass Chapel of Ozark and Highfill First Church of Siloam Springs as well as interim pastor of First Church of Altus. Collins currently is enrolled in the Seminary Extension Pastoral Ministries Diploma program. He and his wife, Angel, have two daughters, Randi Brionna and Brittan Alexis.

Lawrence Wayne Harrison began serving Feb. 3 as bivocational pastor of Maple Avenue Church in Smackover where he had been interim pastor. He also has been pastor of churches in Norphlet, Huttig, El Dorado and Tillar and a staff member of churches in Texas. Harrison, who is a public school teacher, is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Donna, have three children.

Donnie E. Smith began serving Feb. 2 as pastor of First Church of Higginson where he had been interim pastor. Smith is a graduate of Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, Peggy, have five children, Tami, Mitchell, Kelli, Drew and Timothy.

Lynsol B. Richmond recently accepted the call to serve as pastor of First Church in Waldron, coming from Magee, Miss., where he served as pastor of Corinth Church. He previously has served as pastor of First Church, Luxora; First Church, Altheimer; Emmanuel Church, Blytheville; and Sedgwick Church. He is a graduate of Arkansas State University and Bethany Theological Seminary in Dothan, Ala. He and his wife, Cindy, have three daughters, Elisabeth, Sarah and Rebecca Grace.

David Poe is pastor of Life Church. He previously served First Church of Bono. Poe and his wife, Nancy, have two children, Brad and Shaniece.

Berry Bonnes began service Feb. 21 as pastor of Fianna Hills Church in Fort Smith, coming there from First Church of Jefferson, Texas. He is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Carla, are parents of three sons, Joshua, Caleb and Jonathan.

Johnny Ferrell is pastor of Dixsonville Baptist Center. Ferrell is a freshman at Ouachita Baptist University.

Charles Dudley has accepted a call to become associate pastor of Thorn Oaks Church, a new congregation that has been organized by Hebron Church of Little Rock. Dudley, who has been a member of Bingham Road Church in Little Rock, is completing correspondence studies with Boyce Bible School. He and his wife, Ruthie, have two daughters, Teresa and Cindy.

Sam Huskey has joined the staff of First Church of Wooster as minister of music. A graduate of Williams Baptist College, he currently is a graduate music student at the University of Central Arkansas.

J.R. Hull is pastor of Sylamore Church in Rocky Bayou Association. He previously served Foothills Church of Mountain View.

Robert Watson is bivocational pastor of Harmony Hill Church of Arkadelphia. An employee of the Arkansas Highway Department, Watson has served other Red River Association churches, including East Whelen Church. He and his wife, Annette, live in Arkadelphia.

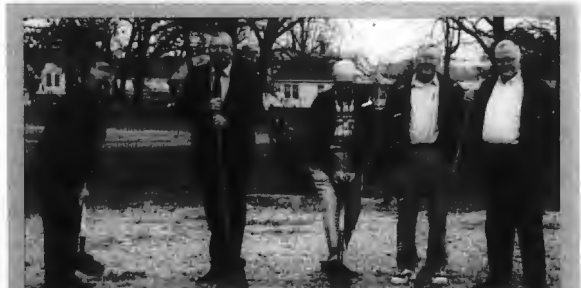
Robert D. Osborn is pastor of Clark's Chapel Church of Paragould. He previously was pastor of First Church of Newcastle, Texas, and has served on the staff of Mount Zion Church of Walcott. Osborn is a graduate of Williams Baptist College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Judy, have two children, Robert Devin and Sharayah.

Bobby B. Ivy is pastor of New Liberty Church of Marmaduke. He has served other Arkansas congregations, including churches at Needham, Paragould, Lafa, Delaplaine and Beech Grove. He and his wife, Pat, have two daughters, Teresa Dowdy and LaDonna Bass; and three grandchildren.

Glen Smith has retired as pastor of Douglasville Church in Little Rock, following 15 years of service. A Southern Baptist minister for 43 years, Smith has served other Arkansas churches. He and his wife, Jimmie, will continue to reside in Little Rock. Smith, who will be available to serve as a supply preacher, may be contacted at 308 S. Woodrow, Little Rock, AR 72205; phone 501-664-0319.

Earl Goatcher has retired as pastor of Formosa Church in North Central Association. He and his wife, Joann, also are retired foreign missionaries, having served in Thailand and Southeast Asia, and on the staff of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va. Goatcher may be contacted at P.O. Box 1091, Clinton, AR 72031.

Steve Young joined the staff of Haven Heights Church in Fort Smith Feb. 9 as associate pastor and family ministries director. He previously was pastor of churches in McAlester, Okla., and Fort Smith. Young is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and Mid-America Seminary.



First Church of Mountain Pine broke ground Jan. 26 for a 40-by-60-foot building that will be used for a fellowship hall and offices. Speakers for the special event were Tom Elliott, pastor of Antioch Church of Wynne, former pastor Bernard Ford, pastor Ellis Jones and Gene Ellis, director of missions for Garland Association.

James Burleson is serving as part-time minister of music for Indian Springs Church of Bryant. He recently served Central Church of Pine Bluff in the same capacity.

Heath Clower has joined the staff of East End Church of Hensley as minister of youth and outreach. A former youth director at Ironton Church of Little Rock, he has been studying at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Clower and his wife, Dawn, have a daughter, Leighton.

Patricia Farmer has joined the staff of First Church of Russellville as director of preschool ministries. She is a graduate of Mississippi State University in Starkville, and has been a teacher for 23 years. Her husband, Carroll, is minister of education for First Church of Russellville. They have served churches in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Mississippi. They have two children, Lacey and Justin.

Glynn Stewart is serving as minister of music for Haven Heights Church in Fort Smith where he had been interim music director. Stewart is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, the University of Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Janney Brown has joined the staff of Parkers Chapel First Church in El Dorado as minister of music and youth, coming there from Northwest Church in Miami, Okla. He previously served at First Church of Haynesville, La. Brown is a graduate of Louisiana Tech University in Ruston and Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. He and his wife, Misty, have a son, Avery.

Johnny Spicer began serving Feb. 16 as minister of youth for Spradling Church in Fort Smith. He previously served as youth minister for Temple Church of Fort Smith and intern at First Church of Greenwood. Spicer and his wife, Candace, live in Fort Smith where he is a student at the University Center of Westark Community College.

Gary Powell has resigned as minister of music at First Church of Forrest City. He has accepted a call to join the staff of Cherokee Church in Memphis as minister of music and education.

MILESTONES

Mary Allen, office manager and clerk for Harmony Association, was honored by the association's executive board Feb. 11 for 10 years of service. Allen was presented with a monetary gift and anniversary cake by moderator J.R. DeBusk, pastor of South Side Church of Pine Bluff.

Don Ward, minister of music and senior adults at Mount Olive Church in Crossett, was honored Feb. 7 in recognition of 10 years of service. Ward was presented a gift of money and other gifts during a "This Is Your Life" program. Randy Maxwell is pastor.



(right), Advisory committee chairman Bill Laceywell (center left) and David James, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention student ministries department, made the presentations.

G.B. and Kellene Hambrick of Pocahontas will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary March 16 at First Church of Pocahontas with a 1 p.m. worship service, followed by a reception. Hosting the 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. reception will be the couple's children, Jan Allison and Kay Ladd, their seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Hambrick has served for 25 years as a Lay Renewal coordinator in Arkansas and other states.

Charles Colquitt was honored with a surprise fellowship meal Feb. 16 in recognition of 30 years of service as minister of music at Lewisville First Church. Pastor Scott Hobbs presented Colquitt with a gift from the congregation.

CHURCH LIFE

Brinkley First Church recently sponsored a mission trip to Belize where volunteers assisted with completion of a church building at Maya Mopan, located in the jungle area of South Belize, and a retreat center at Camalotte in central Belize.

Gosnell Church held a service Jan. 19 to commission pastor Eddie Clemons for a three-week evangelism trip to India.

Little Rock First Church will host the Martins in a 7 p.m. concert March 13. Additional information is available by calling the church at 501-227-0010.

OBITUARIES

Bianche Marie Samuel of Fort Smith died Jan. 23 at age 87. She was a member of First Church of Fort Smith where she taught a first grade Sunday School class for 40 years. She was the widow of W.R. "Bill" Samuel, a former deacon. Survivors are three children, Willa D. Grimes of Little Rock; Norma J. Johnson and Gloria S. Law of Fort Smith; a sister, Hila Mae Walker of Fayetteville; five grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

A church and an association were recently honored for their support of local student ministries in the state during a meeting of the state Baptist student ministries advisory committee. Recognized were First Church in Fayetteville, represented by pastor Jim Mitchell (left), and Concord Association, represented by director of missions Nelson Wilhelm.

W.O. Qualls of Lake City died Jan. 12. He was a member of Bowman Church of Lake City where he was a deacon and Sunday School teacher and had served as music director. Qualls also was chairman of the missions committee for Mount Zion Association. He is survived by his wife, Edna; three children; and two grandchildren.

W. Payton Kolb of Little Rock died recently. He was a longtime member and deacon of Pulaski Heights Church of Little Rock. Kolb, a psychiatrist, served as chief of psychiatry in 1966-67 and chief of staff in 1980-81 at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock. In addition, he was president of the Arkansas Medical Society, the Arkansas Psychiatric Society and the Mid-Continent Psychiatric Association. He also was on the assembly of the American Medical Association and served three years on the national council for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. He is survived by his wife, Margaret; one daughter, Sally Defoor of Little Rock; and a granddaughter.

ORDINATIONS

Blanchard Road Church of Little Rock ordained Charles Dudley to the gospel ministry Jan. 12. Dudley, a member of the congregation, has accepted a call to become associate pastor of Thorn Oaks Church in Little Rock.

Perryville First Church ordained John Embrey and Bill Jordan as deacons Jan. 12. **Meadowview Church** of Sheridan ordained Paul Howard as a deacon and William Cone as minister of music Jan. 26.

Nimrod Church of Perryville held a service Jan. 26 in which pastor Stan Payne was ordained to the ministry and Steve Dobbins and Melvin Blaylock were ordained as deacons.

Stamps First Church ordained Bill Sprinkle, Bo Stevens and Robert Stone as deacons Feb. 9.

MINISTRY

Turner challenges seminary students to seek God's touch

Kelley Keith Dunn

Midwestern Seminary

Urging students at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to seek the touch of God, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Emil Turner quoted the account of the leper in Mark 1:40-41.

Speaking during a Feb. 18 seminary chapel service, Turner said he had read that passage many times without noticing that Jesus actually touched the leprosy man. As he considered that situation, Turner thought, "Why in the world did you do that when in the Old Testament you say don't do it?"

Noting that the Lord answered his question in a "near audible voice," Turner said God's response was, "Don't worry whether or not Jesus touched the leper. Worry about whether I touched you!"

Turner suggested that there are several things that are true for those who seek to experience the touch of God in their lives:

■ **Proximity:** "Like the leper, we must get close to Jesus with spiritual disciplines such as a daily personal quiet time."

■ **Availability:** "Like the leper, we need to be available to do whatever He asks of us."

■ **Humility:** "Like the leper, we need to come to Jesus with a sense of humility." Warning that "God will not touch those who are arrogant and proud," Turner added, "Pride keeps lost people lost, and it keeps saved people sterile."

■ **Purity:** The leper understood that his leprosy was equated with the filthiness of sin. Comparing many Christians to camouflaged hunters who want to "blend in," Turner said some Christians do not want to stand out from the rest of the world or be thought of as too religious.

■ **Intensity:** Turner said the grammar of the verse indicates that the leper continually asked Jesus to make him clean. With similar intensity, Christians should sincerely desire the touch of God.

Emphasizing that "Jesus wanted to touch the leper," Turner concluded that Christ's compassion reached not only to the leper, but to all who seek Him.

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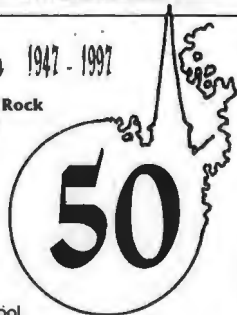
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Sunday, April 6

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'Partners in Ministry' program welcomes new pastors, staff

Pastors, church staff and spouses who are new to Arkansas or new to the ministry are invited to attend Partners in Ministry - Welcoming New Pastors and Staff April 21-22 at the Baptist Building in Little Rock.

"We are inviting new pastors, staff members and their spouses to Little Rock to come get acquainted with the Executive Board staff and the staffs of our agencies," explained Jimmie Sheffield, state convention associate executive director.

The program, which begins at 1 p.m. Monday and concludes at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, will feature building tours, program orientation sessions, meetings with representatives of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries and the state convention's two colleges as well as a Monday evening banquet with Executive Board staff. A program for spouses also will be provided.

There is no cost for the orientation. Sheffield said participants will be reimbursed for mileage, and lodging and all meals will be provided.

For more information, contact Audrey Thomas at the ABSC toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5102.

'97 children's music worship celebration to include parents

Arkansas Baptists' 1997 Children's Music and Family Worship Celebration will help grow "Families Strong in the Lord" April 19 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock. The celebration, which will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 1 p.m., is designed for children's choirs (grades 1-6), participants' parents and choir leaders.

Coordinator Peggy Pearson, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, noted that the celebration will "provide an event for Arkansas Baptist children's choirs, parents and choir leaders that supports the 1997 convention theme, 'Strengthen Families' and encourages, teaches and models excellence in choral singing and family and corporate worship."

She said the family emphasis will include a closing session that "will be a celebration of families worshipping together. The children will offer to God the product of their work, learning to offer only their best to God in worship," using anthems, the festival hymn and other worship media.

She also noted that two special training sessions on conducting family worship will be led by Randall and Brenda Bradley of Oklahoma Baptist University and a third

training session "will model, in a seminar setting, effective family worship."

The conference program also will include a special musical feature by Lloyd Larson, a composer from Maple Grove, Minn., and a musical session with Stephen Roddy, director of the Houston Children's Chorus.

Participating choirs "are responsible for acquiring and memorizing music" in preparation for the celebration, Pearson emphasized.

All choirs must learn "Goliath," "I am His Lamb" and the festival hymn, "Be Strong in the Lord." Older children's choirs (grades 4-6) additionally must learn "When I Turn My Heart Toward Heaven."

For the first time, choirs will not be adjudicated this year, Pearson said, but will spend their session time preparing for the worship session.

The cost for the festival is \$3 per choir member prior to March 24 and \$4 per member after that date.

For more information, contact Pearson at the ABSC church music ministries department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC, locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5121 or through e-mail at ppearson@absc.org.



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At age 100, Dessa Moore still makes ministry impact

Colleen Backus

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

At age 100, she still lives by herself, cooks, walks on a treadmill three times a day and wishes she could once again play ball with the kids. Dessa Moore, perhaps best known to Arkansas Baptists as the mother of recently retired state convention executive director Don Moore, turned 100 on January 13, but only because the calendar said she did. She remains a vivacious, strong-willed woman filled with a sense of joy. "I just love being with people," she remarked.

A lifetime resident of Sebastian County, Mrs. Moore was married to her late husband, Herschel, for more than 60 years. Together they raised six children. Their children's ministry impact has included home missions, foreign missions, two pastors, two pastor's wives and lay leadership as well as Don's service as Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director.

Mrs. Moore's greatest achievement may be the strong sense of dedication to the Lord that she and her husband instilled in all their children. While four of her six children are involved in professional ministry and missions, all six feel called of God, Don explained. "She always honored people in the ministry, and that had a profound influence on us," he noted. "She had the evangelist in not just for meals, but to stay the week. She and Dad had respect for those in ministry - even summer field workers were sent from heaven."

"We never missed church," Mrs. Moore emphasized. "We always took the preacher home with us. We kept everybody we possibly could!"

"She and Dad lived everything they believed," agreed son Trueman, a former foreign missionary to Bangladesh who also served 18 years as pastor of East Side Church in Fort Smith. "They were consistent - what they said on Sunday, they did during the week. There was no hypocrisy, no fake Christianity, only total commitment.

"They expected the best out of us," he continued. "They didn't harp on it, but my parents just expected us to do what was right and best.

"We were constantly surrounded by preachers and missionaries," Trueman noted. "First at Union Grove Church in the Fort Chaffey area and later at Dayton, she also took leadership roles in the church."

Mrs. Moore played the piano and was involved in youth ministry for many years as well as teaching Sunday School classes for 70 years. She still occasionally plays for Sunday School class at her home church, Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith. She also was a school teacher for 23 years.

"She made us leaders by example," Don affirmed, "and our older brothers and sisters had influence on the younger ones." "We had none of the finer things,"

Trueman pointed out. "But in addition to being faithful, Mom was happy and playful. If we were playing, she played with us, and if we were working she worked with us. She was the instigator of fun.

"She loved youth," he added. "You never had to worry about where your kids were; they were all at our house!"

"Her real joy was having people at the house," Don agreed. "She still is full of life."



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missionary notes

Barry and Sonia Burnett, missionaries to the Dominican Republic, are on the field. (They receive mail at: Lynx Air/Sigo DR, P.O. 5600, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33340.) They both consider Arkadelphia their hometown. She is the former Sonia Lindstrom. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1992.

Buddy and Sue Hince, representatives to Thailand, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: P.O. Box 832, Bangkok 10501, Thailand). He is a native of Texas. The former Sue Cox, she was born in Imboden. They were appointed in 1996.

Kenneth and Shelly Izzard, missionaries to Togo, are on the field (address: B. P. 1353, Lome, Togo). He is a native of Florida. The former Shelly Ellenburg, she was born in Helena and considers Marvell her hometown. They were appointed in 1992.

Debbie Moore, a missionary to Burkina Faso, is on the field (address: Mission Baptiste, 01 B.P. 580, Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso). A native of Hope, she was appointed in 1982.

Ernest and Norma Whitten, missionaries to Argentina, are on the field (address: Bolanos 141, 1407 Buenos Aires, Argentina). He was born in McCaskill, and considers Hope his hometown. The former Norma Willis, she considers Tulsa, Okla., her hometown. They were appointed in 1990.

Phyllis Thomas named BSU director for GCCC

Hot Springs native Phyllis Thomas has been named part-time director of the Garland County Community College Baptist Student Union,

effective Feb. 18. Her duties will include leading students in evangelism training, Bible studies, discipleship and missions education.

Thomas, a member of Second Church in Hot Springs, said her goals are "to be available to the students... available to meet their needs, to lead them to the Lord and to minister to them not only through biblical studies but in other aspects of student life."

A recent college graduate, Thomas attended Ouachita Baptist University and is a graduate of Henderson State University in Arkadelphia. She served as a national park service ranger as a college student.

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Youth to turn 'storm' into 'calm' at convention

Youth will be encouraged to "Survive the Storm...Experience the Calm" at the 1997 State Youth Convention on Good Friday, March 28, at the State Church Convention Center in Little Rock.

Event coordinator Robert Holley, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship and family ministries department, said the convention, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, will be "issues-related."

"In keeping with this year's emphasis on strengthening the family, the program... will focus on some of the issues that impact youth and their families," Holley said. "The messages and other program features will seek to address some of these issues. They will offer guidance and encouragement to youth who are experiencing some of the storms of life and challenge them to a deeper commitment to Christ."

The program will feature keynote speaker Curt Bradford, contemporary Christian artist Jami Smith and dramatic presentations from Matt and Darlene Tullus.

Bradford, pastor of Midland Park Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., will speak during the morning and evening sessions. He is a frequent speaker at youth events across the nation and has written extensively for youth publications. He is a former youth specialist for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Each session also will feature presentations by Matt and Darlene Tullus of Nashville, Tenn. "This husband and wife team has shared Christ through drama for over 10 years and they have written and published several books of religious drama," Holley said. "Their dramatic presentation will focus on real-life issues

that confront youth today."

Smith, a contemporary Christian singer, songwriter and recording artist from Nashville, will perform and lead in worship during each of the three sessions.

Other music presentations will include Pure Faith, "an upbeat, contemporary music group from Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge and New Creation, a BSU singing group from Arkansas State University at Jonesboro," Holley added.

The three sessions of the convention will include: 9:50 a.m. to noon; 1:50 to 4:10 p.m. and 5:50 to 7:50 p.m. Registration for the convention is not required and there is no registration fee.

For more information, contact Holley at the ABCS discipleship and family ministries department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5160.

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Religious freedom should play role in U.S. foreign policy, Albright says

WASHINGTON (ABP)—At the first meeting of the State Department's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said the issue of religious freedom belongs in any comprehensive discussions about U.S. foreign policy.

Noting that "the right to profess and practice one's religion is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," Albright added, "To ignore or dismiss violations of that right would degrade respect for human rights generally."

Albright also affirmed that the freedom of religion is central to America's history. She noted that of the three achievements Thomas Jefferson asked to be inscribed on his tombstone, one identified him as the originator of a law ensuring religious freedom in Virginia.

"Jefferson understood...that the struggle for religious liberty could not end when one's own freedom was assured," Albright said. The "issue of religious freedom belongs squarely in any comprehensive discussions that we should be having and are having about American foreign policy."

The advisory committee includes 20 religious leaders and will have two subgroups. One group will deal with religious persecution abroad and another will look into conflict resolution in areas where religious enmity is a threat to peace.

A statement adopted by the committee at the Feb. 13 meeting said, "While the committee recognizes that U.S. foreign policy reflects a process of balancing numerous and sometimes competing interests, it strongly encourages the U.S. government to ensure that support for religious freedom worldwide is a paramount factor in this policy-making process."

Former Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry said he was encouraged that Christian persecution will be a major focus.

"From what my understanding is, and from what the Secretary said, the religious persecution of Christians will be a major focus but it will also encompass other groups which are being persecuted," he said.

"I think that the Christians are the most widely persecuted," he added. "It would just be natural, it seems to me, to look at that first and then, with that, hopefully raise the level of concern for others."

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Seeking minister to students — McCarthy Baptist Church, a growing, conservative SBC church in St. Joseph, Missouri, is seeking candidates for consideration as full-time associate pastor/minister to students. Responsibilities will primarily include youth and collegiates. Send resumes to: Search Committee, McCarthy Baptist Church, 2710 South Belt Hwy., St. Joseph, MO 64503.

Accepting resumes — Ashley County Baptist Association, Crossett, is accepting resumes for the position of director of missions. Resumes with letters of recommendation will be received through March 21, 1997. Please submit to: DOM Search Committee, Ashley County Baptist Association, PO Box 1184, Crossett, AR 71635.

Fayetteville area director needed — Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries is seeking an individual with professional counseling or social work license to fill the above position. Job includes Christian counseling, supervision of a small emergency shelter for children, and residential intake evaluation. Salary, excellent benefits, auto. Call Charles Flynn at 1-800-838-2272 or in Little Rock 378-4791, ext. 5167.

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Seeking — Full-time pastor. Send resumes to Charlie Cleaver, Bethany Baptist Church, 209 Main St., Georgetown, AR 72143.

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

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Society unprepared for problems of human cloning, scholars note

WASHINGTON (BP/ABP)—The report of the successful cloning of adult sheep in Scotland brings with it a host of ethical problems related to the potential cloning of human beings — issues that the United States is not prepared for, Southern Baptist and evangelical scholars insist.

The cloning of human beings jumped from science fiction to what some forecast as inevitable reality when Scottish researchers announced Feb. 22 they had successfully cloned a 6-year-old sheep. The genetic replica, named Dolly, was born in July in Edinburgh, Scotland. Eight other cloned lambs have been born since Dolly, all genetic copies of the adult from which they were cloned.

President Bill Clinton instructed the National Bioethics Advisory Commission Feb. 24 to study the ethical and legal issues of cloning and to present a report within 90 days.

Ian Wilmut, 52, an embryologist, and his fellow researchers at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh said they were interested only in cloning farm animals, not human beings. Cloning people "would be ethically irresponsible," Wilmut said.

It may be inevitable, however. While English law prohibits such research, there is no law in the United States preventing it as long as it is done with private funds. Even if such a law is enacted, there may be no way to prevent the cloning of human

beings. Even if it is legal, that certainly doesn't make it ethical, evangelical scholars agree.

"While cloning animals probably doesn't violate any scriptural principles per se, it does open the Pandora's possibility of cloning human beings," said Ben Mitchell, assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Since the U.S. has no laws against cloning a human being, it is imperative that lawmakers quickly pass a moratorium on human cloning," said Mitchell, also a biomedical ethics consultant for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

John Kilner, director of The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity in suburban Chicago, said the news from Scotland "really comes as a wake-up call. Cloning human beings is not some futuristic issue that we don't have to take seriously."

In a poll taken for ABC News' "Nightline," 53 percent of Americans accepted the cloning of animals for medical research. Eighty-seven percent, however, said cloning of humans should not be allowed.

Daniel Heimbach, associate professor of ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, said he has "no concern" about cloning animals. "The real serious moral problem is the specter of what happens if you do this with human life."

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LESSONS FOR LIVING

Family Bible

Who can you trust?

By Grant Ethridge, pastor,
First Church, Lavaca

Basic passage:
II Thessalonians 1

Focal passage:
II Thessalonians 1:3-4, 5-10,
11-12

Central truth:

At the second coming, faith will be rewarded and sin will be judged.

Life and Work

Peter's denial

By Tim Reddin,
director of missions,
Central Association

Basic passage:
Matthew 26:31-75

Focal passage:
Matthew 26:31-46; 69-75

Central truth:

Confidence in the flesh leads to failure, but trust in God leads to spiritual victory.

Explore the Bible

Love in a kangaroo court

By Bill Bowen, pastor,
First Church, Mena

Basic passage:
Matthew 26:57-27:31

Focal passage:
Matthew 26:57-68

Central truth:

God's love shines even through the unfairness of humanity.

Who can you trust these days? Christians have faith in the promises of God. Paul wrote the Thessalonians a second letter to encourage them.

They were confused about the Lord's return and discouraged by persecution. When we face difficult times, it is our faith in God that will see us through. Paul commended them for their faith, love and testimony. Is your testimony one of growing in faith and love?

Hard times will either make a person better or bitter. There is no need for the Christian to become cynical. God honored Jesus' suffering on our behalf and He will reward our suffering if we have the right attitude. The statement, "no pain, no gain," is true spiritually. God uses suffering to work "for" us, not "against" us.

When we have been wronged, the temptation is to get back or get even. Judgment is God's job. We must ever keep in mind that Jesus is coming again and He will make every wrong right. For believers, the thought of His coming brings peace. But for unbelievers it will bring punishment. The

next time you are suffering, just remember the commercial, "How do you spell relief?" For the Christian, relief is in the return of Jesus Christ. In a skeptical society where few people keep their word, Christians can have faith in the promises of our Heavenly Father. Living faith is growing faith.

In verses 11-12, Paul gives us what every Christian needs: prayer, profession, pleasure, power and praise. The greatest thing we can do for each other is pray. Prayer is communicating with God. When a family does not pray, they are saying to God, "We do not need you." God wants us to put feet to our prayers. Profession is when you are in God's will doing His work. Being found "worthy" of His calling brings pleasure and satisfaction. The Christian life cannot be lived in our own strength. We need God's power.

Finally, we must be sure that God is glorified in our daily lives. Is Jesus glorified in your conduct, relationships, music, dress, speech? Our life either brings praise to God or it is a reproach to the name of Jesus.

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (I Cor. 10:12). Paul's word are a haunting reminder of our human frailty, and they frame the setting as we follow Simon Peter through the evening of Christ's betrayal and arrest.

Peter is an interesting Bible character, in part because he reminds us so much of ourselves. He is proud, stubborn and impulsive. He speak first and thinks later. One commentator describes him as "the disciple with the foot-shaped mouth!"

■ **Note Peter's bold assertion** (vv. 31-35). Such overconfidence is nothing less than pride in arrogant display. Peter no doubt was sincere in his boast and secure in his own adequacy. "It can't happen to me" are words which set us up for failure. One is wise who demonstrates the humility to say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I!"

■ **Note Peter's human weakness** (vv. 36-46). His heart was right, but the weakness of his flesh overcame his good intentions (v. 41). This is the inevitable result of self-trust. The "arm of flesh"

will always fail us! It is precisely when we are most secure in our own strength that we are most prone to succumb to the tempter's power. Also, it is when we fail to be alert to the dangers of the darkness around us that we discover through bitter experience the wisdom of watchfulness and prayer.

■ **Note Peter's dismal failure** (vv. 69-74). Self-trust and lack of spiritual preparation lead to sin of unimaginable proportions. The more we depend upon our own strength and fail to appropriate God's spiritual power, the more dramatic is the failure of which we are capable.

■ **Note Peter's bitter remorse** (v. 75). Surely this is the "low point" of his life. Fortunately, his tears of regret led to a genuine spirit of repentance (Luke 22:31-32), and repentance led to restoration and renewed power in God's service (Acts 2:14ff). May God give us all the grace to learn to put no confidence in the flesh, but to watch and pray and trust in Him!

Because the Jewish legal code was based upon the direct commandments of God, it was considered by many to be one of the most fair and equitable legal systems of its day. Many times the system probably worked as it was designed, but there was one time when it failed miserably.

When Jesus was put on trial, the Sanhedrin violated almost every principle of the Jewish legal system. All of the actions of the Sanhedrin can be broken down into five categories: 1.

■ **Convening of the Sanhedrin.** An unofficial Sanhedrin was convened before Jesus was brought before Caiaphas. He first appeared before Annas, the former high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas. Apparently this meeting allowed time for the Sanhedrin to be rounded up. According to verses 57-58, the Sanhedrin assembled to hear the case of Jesus, though no formal charges had been filed.

■ **Conspiracy to convict Jesus.** In verses 59-61, Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin in an illegal assembly. The council could only act as judge and jury. Never was the council to serve as prosecutor. They were determined to find false evidence.

They tried false witnesses, but none could produce evidence that would convict. Finally, two witnesses were found with the same story.

■ **Attempt to self-incriminate.** In verses 62-64, the high priest used the strongest language, without committing blasphemy, to get Jesus to admit that the accusations were true. The high priest's role was to defend, not to seek condemnation.

■ **Condemnation by false charges.** In verses 65-66, Caiaphas did not seek the counsel of the other members of the Sanhedrin. He was looking for an opportunity to condemn Jesus. He cried for Jesus' guilt. Then he asked the other members of the Sanhedrin to agree with his condemnation.

■ **The abuse of Jesus.** In verses 67-68 members of the court physically abused Jesus. Shedding the garments of the fairest high court of its day, they became a mindless mob set on seeking revenge for their hatred of Jesus.

Even though this kangaroo court defied its own law, the loving nature of our Lord came through. Never did He lift His voice or act ungodly. His showed love, even in the shadow of the cross.

LESSONS FOR LIVING

Paul begins by requesting prayer. No one is beyond the need for prayer. What a difference it would make if we devoted as much time praying for each other as we do criticizing and complaining about each other. The devil will see to it that there will be "wicked men" who oppose God's servants. What should we do? Keep on praying! Read verse 4 carefully. Could Paul have said that about you and your church?

The fellowship of the church must be guarded. We are commanded not to keep company with those who are lazy, but to follow good examples.

Work was part of God's plan before sin entered the world. Work is good and honorable. If you have a job, you should thank God you are able to work. Paul says if a man will not work he should not eat. He is not talking about those who "can" not work but those who "will" not work.

People never get tired of doing good, do they? Sure, we get tired "in" doing good, but we must never get tired "of" doing good. Weariness can be caused by physical, emotional or spiritual reasons.

The week had started out with high drama and soaring hopes. The children and the palm branches. The shouts of "hosanna!" The parade, which the crowd wanted to turn into a coronation. How, in less than five days, had it come to this?

Two distinctive truths make the difference between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. One is a truth about man, the other a truth about God. And these truths are not simply an explanation of a single week in time; they are descriptive of the whole sweep of human history.

■ **The first truth** concerns the fickleness of the crowds. No doubt some of the same voices who shouted "Hosanna!" on Sunday were crying "Crucify Him!" by Friday. Why?

Because their faith was so fleeting and fickle! There was not a commitment to God's divine plans and purposes, but a faith of personal convenience. They wanted to use Jesus to achieve their own ends. As long as Jesus would be their tool to defeat the hated Romans and restore the

Throughout the gospel of Matthew, the writer intensifies the wickedness of humanity more than any other gospel writer. Matthew tells about the attempt to kill Jesus shortly after His birth, about the attempts to discredit Jesus and the abuse Jesus took before His crucifixion. Four groups of people gathered at the cross to witness the execution of Jesus. Each bore hatred for God.

■ **The Roman soldiers.** In verses 32-37, the Roman soldiers fulfilled the command of Pilate to crucify Jesus. Their command was to carry out the act. However, their wickedness caused them to abuse Jesus more than was called for. In verses 27-31, the soldiers publicly humiliated Jesus, beat and abused Him and spat upon Him. In verse 37, the soldiers made a sign to mock Jesus. The Sanhedrin had requested a sign which stated, "He said I am King of the Jews." Instead the soldiers fashioned a sign which read, "I am King of the Jews."

■ **The thief on the cross.** Two thieves hung on the cross. They joined with many others who vilified Christ, in spite of the fact that they were condemned for known crimes.

Recognize the cause and understand that it can be overcome. Remember you are working for God. What you are doing is worthwhile. Never let those who will not work keep you from doing good.

Paul concludes the letter with instructions on how to deal with those in the church whose conduct is out of order. Discipline is a difficult thing to do, but rebellion cannot be ignored at home or church. We cannot be passive, but are commanded to "note" them and deal with it.

"No company" means to not spend time with such individuals. People catch a bad attitude the same way you catch a bad cold, by getting too close to a sick person. Negative Christians should be ashamed. However, when we have disagreements or someone acts disorderly, it does not make them our enemy. Too often we forget just who is the real enemy. Correction must be mixed with compassion. No matter what happens, the Lord is able "Himself" to bring peace to any situation. Christians should strive to live every day remembering that Jesus is coming soon!

longed-for kingdom, then they would follow Him.

The crowds wanted a Messiah who would be their political ruler and their military deliverer. But the Son of God who came to save them from sin and be Lord of their lives? This was not part of their agenda. They had no room in their lives and no desire in their hearts for a Christ like that!

■ **The second truth** concerns the eternal purpose of God. We can never fully comprehend the magnitude and wisdom of the Father. The cross was not a mistake brought about by sinful humans but the centerpiece of God's eternal plan. Mankind cannot thwart, alter or divert the sovereign Lord of Heaven. We can do our best or our worst to oppose Him, but still He will accomplish His divine purpose.

Again today, it is Palm Sunday. Again this week (as in all weeks), Jesus is on trial in our hearts. Will we accept Him for the sovereign God He truly is, or will we seek to use Him for purposes of our own? What will you do with Jesus?

■ **The jeering crowds.** In verses 39-40, Matthew pictured crowds near the cross. Each had insults to hurl at Jesus. Passover was a busy time in Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified on a main thoroughfare leading into Jerusalem. Many of these people who passed by Jesus had just celebrated the Passover, a symbol of the sacrifice of Jesus, but they still refused to see God's greatest sacrifice of Jesus.

■ **The religious unbelievers.** In verses 41-44, the chief priests, scribes and elders represent the religious establishment of Jesus' day. These leaders handled God's Word daily. They had interviewed Jesus and witnessed His teachings and miracles. Later they mocked the holiness of Jesus' nature.

Of the crowds at the cross, some repented. One of the thieves, witnessing the scene around him and the attitude of the Lord, came to realize that Jesus was his only hope. Many others might have come to Christ later on the day of Pentecost.

Easter is a certain reminder that the love of God must be accepted and that this love can only be accepted through a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Family Bible

Go to work!

By Grant Ehrhidge, pastor,
First Church, Lavaca

Basic passage:

II Thessalonians 3

Focal passage:

II Thessalonians 3:1-4, 6-9,
10-12, 13-16

Central truth:

Believers have work to do and must not be distracted.

Life and Work

Condemned to the cross

By Tim Reddin,
director of missions,
Central Association

Basic passage:

Matthew 27:1-31

Focal passage:

Matthew 27:11-31

Central truth:

We must accept Jesus as He is and not use Him to achieve our own purposes and desires.

Explore the Bible

An unchanging love

By Bill Bowen, pastor,
First Church, Mena

Basic passage:

Matthew 27:32-66

Focal passage:

Matthew 27:32-44

Central truth:

The wickedness of man does not change the love of God.

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Mixture of motives found behind rash of church arson

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Blatant racism, religious hatred, financial profit, revenge and vandalism were identified as motives for the 126 attacks on churches across the country since 1995, according to a recent report.

In June 1996, President Clinton declared the investigation and prevention of church arson a national priority, establishing the National Church Arson Task Force. In an interim report to the president, the task force noted striking results in its first seven months.

The task force has opened investigations of 528 arsons, bombings or attempted bombings that have occurred at houses of worship since Jan. 1, 1995. Of that number, at least 138 have been fires at African-American churches, with three-quarters of those fires occurring in the South.

Since January 1995, 143 suspects have been arrested in connection with 107 fires—a 33 percent arrest rate, which is double the general arrest rate for arson. Three-quarters of the defendants were arrested during the seven months since the formation of the task force.

Of the 143 persons arrested, 116 are white, 24 are African-American and three are Hispanic. Sixty-two are juveniles. Among the 54 suspects arrested for arson at African-American churches, 36 are white, 17 are African-American and one is Hispanic.

The task force has established a toll-free tip line for citizens to report information about church arson by calling 1-888-ATF-FIRE. The task force has received more than 1,200 calls.

ITF meets with potential NAMB trustees

DALLAS (BP)—The Implementation Task Force brought together several potential trustees of the new North American Mission Board for a time of prayer and fellowship at a meeting in Dallas Feb. 6.

The ITF invited second-term trustees of the Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission to the meeting, according to a Feb. 17 *NAMB Transition News* bulletin. Those trustees are likely to be nominated to become the first trustees of the NAMB—a merger of the three agencies—which officially begins operating following the June SBC annual meeting in Dallas. Arkansas Baptists expected to serve as NAMB trustees are Brotherhood trustee Ozzie Berryhill and RTVC trustee Gary Underwood.

ITF officials said the meeting was the first time the 70 participants "met each other for the first time." The meeting included reports from the ITF, incorporators of NAMB and a question-and-answer time as well as fellowship and prayer.

SBC recording secretary to resign after Dallas convention

FRANKLIN, TN (BP)—David W. Atchison, recording secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention the past seven years, will resign that post following the June SBC annual meeting in Dallas.

In a letter of resignation to the SBC Executive Committee, Atchison said he senses the "Lord's leadership to focus more of my energies on the primary ministry to which He has called me."

Atchison, a layman, is beginning a new ministry, Disciple's Call, which will assist churches in equipping men and women "to discover their unique calling and develop a disciplinemaking lifestyle."

Atchison was first elected in 1990, defeating Martin Bradley of Nashville, Tenn., who had held the post 12 years. The position of recording secretary is one of six elected offices of the SBC.

Fruitland president Kilby dies of heart attack at age 42

HENDERSONVILLE, NC (BP)—Randy K. Kilby, president of Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute since 1994, died Feb. 11 of an apparent heart attack at age 42.

Kilby had spoken earlier in the evening during a Bible conference at West Lenoir (N.C.) Baptist Church. He had preached the first sermon in the conference on Monday evening and the last message on Tuesday evening.

Kilby was unanimously elected president of the Bible Institute in Hendersonville, N.C., by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina general board in May 1994. He had previously been a vice president at Georgetown College in Kentucky.

A graduate of Gardner-Webb University in Bowling Springs, N.C., Kilby is survived by his wife, Dana, and a son, Joshua, a first-grader.

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