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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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MAR 26 1996



ARKANSAS BAPTIST

Volume 95, Number 6

March 21, 1996



front line *ministry*

Ray Branscum, 87, ministers to almost 400 firefighters and staff as chaplain of the Little Rock Fire Department, where he has served for seven years.

DISASTER RELIEF

Batesville disaster relief workers serve meals to tornado victims

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Members of the Arkansas Baptist Men's Disaster Relief Unit based in Batesville were called into action recently, providing up to 750 meals for victims of a tornado that hit the northern part of the state.

Rick Bunch, coordinator for the District 2 Disaster Relief Unit, said six members of the district's 20-man team were called out to the Sidney area March 6 to begin relief efforts for victims of a tornado and high winds that swept through Sharp and Izard counties the previous evening.

"Initially there were several objectives," Bunch explained. "We were called to provide electricity for a nursing home and mass feeding at a command center. When we arrived, the nursing home had been taken care of, so we began mass feeding, with our first real meal Thursday morning."

He said the crew prepared two hot meals and a cold lunch for emergency workers and victims daily, finishing at noon Friday after preparing a total of "roughly 700 to 750" meals at the Sidney Community Center. "The Red Cross also had an (emergency relief vehicle) on-scene and used it to distribute food at a center for Mt. Pleasant."

Bunch noted that although the crew members "were received as heroes" by victims and emergency workers, "we did nothing special. We just did our thing."

The destruction in the wake of the tornado was haphazard, he said, noting that the tornado "would tear up a barn and leave a house, tear down several trees and leave a house."

"It was a hit and miss situation," he said. "It was one of the longer tornadoes I've

seen — on the ground in excess of 20 miles. Fortunately, that 20 miles is mostly uninhabited."

The disaster relief unit used by the volunteers serves as both a feeding unit and dormitory. It is a 1956 Greyhound bus outfitted with 12 beds, cooking facilities and a 10,000-watt generator.

"We've been working on this thing for five years," Bunch explained, "ever since we received it from the Brotherhood department in 1990." He added that the unit is entirely funded by churches in District 2.

During the relief feeding effort, team members were most impressed with "the graciousness and sweetness of the folks there," Bunch pointed out. "They were so gracious and nice. They would come check on us. There they were with their houses spread all over 40 acres and they wanted to know if we were cold. There are no people anywhere with more class and sweet spirit than hill folks in Arkansas."

He also noted that victims and workers did not miss the message that Baptists were providing the food. "It's painted all over the bus and we wear uniforms. When they come into breakfast, we assemble a men's quartet who turn bacon while singing 'Amazing Grace.'"

"We talked about this being 'Baptist food,'" he added. "And we said the blessing before we ate."

Bunch said one of the group's best rewards was seeing the spiritual response of victims. "When you see men who have had their overalls on for three days and had (their homes) destroyed, take their hats off with shaking fingers and thank God for what they have left, that's touching."

Cover Story

ABN photo / Russ Dilday



Front line ministry 6-7

Ray Branscum, 87, ministers to nearly 400 firefighters as chaplain of the Little Rock Fire Department, a position he has held seven years.

Also inside

Perspective

A Pastor's Heart.....	4
President's Perspective.....	4
Straight from the Editor.....	5

Arkansas Baptists

Training opportunities.....	8
Arkansas All Over.....	12-13
Missionary notes.....	16
College Digest.....	20

Nation/World

Heflin elected EBC leader.....	7
SBC leaders hire consultant.....	9
World Missions Digest.....	10
Communicators assess changes.....	11
CLC hosts annual seminar.....	14-15

Lessons.....	22-23
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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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A center of love

Hermitage migrant center director offers new direction for ministry

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Alejandro is asking Ed Mansilla for a ride. A legal migrant who came to Hermitage to work in an area chicken production facility, Alejandro broke his shoulder three months ago and has been without work since. Out of money and supporting a wife and two children in Mexico, he needs a ride to the bus station in nearby Monticello to travel to another state to find work.

Mansilla, the new director of the Migrant Missions Center at Hermitage, is familiar with Alejandro. Mansilla has developed a relationship with the 21-year-old worker since coming there as director in January. Mansilla has helped him with his English as a Second Language classes at the center, translated for him at the doctor and helped Alejandro develop what Mansilla calls "socialization."

"He's living in a house with other migrants and they live in bad conditions," Mansilla explained. His goal is to help Alejandro and other migrants living there discover that "they can be men without alcohol and that you can be Hispanic without the stereotypes."

Establishing a one-on-one relationship with migrants like Alejandro lets Mansilla show them "that what I am doing is not because of me as a person," he said. "What I am doing is because Jesus is my Savior."

Mansilla's basic concept of ministry is personal involvement. He is seeking to "be involved shoulder-to-shoulder with the people," he explained. "All of us have to have some kind of personal relation and this means social involvement," he added.

Mansilla, a native of Argentina, said ministry "is a privilege and honor that we are losing. If we don't draw this line, we will be a mark in the history of the church."

According to Mansilla, that philosophy is leading to a change in the center's direction and groups it will service. "We will be the place to show people what Christian service means. The center is open for everyone who needs service and we can do the service in the name of Jesus. If the people accept Jesus, that is wonderful. But if they reject Jesus...we will (still) be doing what we are supposed to do. The center is a place where love is shown."



Emphasizing the need for volunteer help at the Migrant Mission Center at Hermitage, director Ed Mansilla noted that the center has plenty of materials and facilities. "We need people with commitment to Jesus and to serve other people," he said.

He said the center will still service migrants who come to work in area tomato farms and lumber industry, but also will reach out to families in an adjoining low-income housing facility as well as residents in the town of Hermitage. "This center was never a Christian social place," he acknowledged. "It was more of a church."

The center is supported by Bartholomew Association, Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering funds, state Cooperative Program funds and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Pete Petty, missions ministries director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department, said the center also will undergo a name change to Friendship House.

"We're moving it from a church-like setting and changing it to a church and community ministries facility," Petty explained. "We have the concept that the center ought to be for all people."

That view connects well with Mansilla's perspective. "My vision for the future of the center is that this will be a place where everyone who has needs can come here, to have Christians with commitment to serve others — doctors, dentists, women taking care of clothes and youth leaders working with young people."

Mansilla is well-versed in community ministries. Louisville, Ky., honored him in 1993 as the distinguished citizen of the city for his work in community ministries. While in Louisville, he simultaneously

hosted a weekly television show for Hispanics, managed a 622-unit housing center and served as a pastor.

He said residents at the low-income housing center, represented "15 different languages. We were able, with churches in the area," to provide classes in ESL and computer training, counseling, tutoring, a support group for Vietnamese in the war, living skills classes for preparing budgets, resumes and job interviews, he said. He added that he intends to do the same types of programs at the Hermitage center.

Just as Mansilla is frank about his vision for the future of the center, he is frank about its main weakness: "We don't have volunteers."

"We don't have people working," he repeated. "We have people coming and asking for translation, rides and places to work and 15 to 20 youth are coming to play and talk every day, but we don't have people to answer the phone or to come operate the clinic. If you talk about materials, we have everything. We don't need anything at this point."

He pointed out that the center has dental and medical equipment, laundry facilities, showers, clothes, a nursery, classrooms, chairs, tables, cooking facilities and a playground with two basketball courts and a soccer field.

"We need people with commitment to Jesus and to serve other people," he said. "They can come once a week or once every two weeks, whatever. But when they say, 'I am coming,' we know that this person is coming."

He said the center's special needs are for professionals — doctors, dentists and nurses. "We need people who can relate to youth. We need people to go the extra mile always. Language is no problem. As long as you are willing to show Jesus' love, it is no problem."

Mansilla said his main needs for volunteers are for those who can minister to "everyone — whatever their color of skin" — and those who want to reestablish a sense of community in Arkansas.

"We are losing, from my point of view, the point of why Jesus came — to bring love to our community," Mansilla reflected. "Jesus was always working in the community."

A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER
ABS-C Executive Director

The Korean shopkeeper acted as if I had offended him. My mistake was unintentional. I offered him a coin from Hong Kong in payment for my purchase. Because I had not changed my Hong Kong money to Korean, my payment was unacceptable.

"Change" is a buzzword today. We act as if changes in society, our lives, the government and our churches had never occurred before. God must change you — like my Hong Kong coins — or you are unacceptable to Him. The believer's experience begins with change and culminates with change — "we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed." Somewhere along the way our wineskins become brittle and we learn to resist change.

My ministry to Arkansas Baptists marks a change. Not just from one executive director to another, but also from one generation to another. The real concern, however, is not the newness nor difference from one to another, but whether or not we continue to reach lost people for Christ.

Will our churches baptize more new converts, enroll more in Sunday School, and start more new works? If we do these things, then change has helped us fulfill our commission from Christ. If we do not do these things, then change is irrelevant and useless. The desire of my heart is not to see change come to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The desire of my heart is to do whatever is required to reach a lost world for Christ.

In each of my articles, I hope to recommend a helpful book to you. Have you read *Giant Awakenings* by Thom Rainer? (Broadman & Holman, 1995) What an encouraging book! Rainer gives a good balance to some of the "extreme" concepts of church growth experts. You'll enjoy it.

REX HORNE

President's Perspective



'Baptist' is a good name

One of my members gave me an article from a newspaper in a neighboring state. The report was about a pastor who was leaving a well-known Baptist church to start a new work in another part of the city.

The report concluded by saying that the church would not have "Baptist" in its name. The implication was that the word "Baptist" is a barrier to many people.

I have watched this story being repeated in other places. I am all for reaching people. I have respect for ministers and ministries that reach people for Christ. Certainly, believers should and must follow the Lord's leadership in their church affiliation whether it is Baptist or not.

"Baptist," however, is a word I am pleased to have upon my church and life. The distinctives and benefits of being Baptist far outweigh any barriers, real or perceived. It is not the name of a church that attracts and keeps people, but the nature of the people and the power of God that makes the church. Baptist churches are on the forefront of reaching, ministering and changing communities for Christ.

"Baptist" is a marker for many biblical truths. Baptists stress salvation by faith. A person must be born again. Baptists teach that individuals not only have

access to God, but will give account of their life to Him. Baptists stand firmly on the authority of Scripture and full inspiration of the entire Bible. Southern Baptists believe in a strong program of missions and evangelism. Cooperation to carry out the Lord's commission is a hallmark among Baptists.

I confess I am proud to see the word Baptist as an integral part of our colleges, child care work, student unions, Foundation, Newsmagazine and many other institutions, agencies and ministries here in Arkansas. Being a Baptist is something to embrace, not exclude. Yes, being Baptist does carry certain characteristics and attendant thoughts...thank God!

The fact that Baptists are viewed as stockpiles in our communities is undeniable. Some want to be like Baptists, others say they are not like the Baptists. In both contexts, Baptists are making an impact.

A curious thread has been observed in many of these places where the word "Baptist" is avoided. Baptist people are invited to be a part of starting the work and Baptist money is always welcome and accepted. I thank God for the ministry of Baptists worldwide and in our state.

Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Personal perspectives

"When the church of Jesus Christ is balanced, it is healthy, and when it is healthy, it grows."

—Rick Warren, pastor, Saddleback Valley Community Church

"We should not blame the politicians for the moral collapse of America....America's biggest problem is an apathetic church who has lost her first love."

—O.S. Hawkins, pastor, First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

Ministry matters

Ministry matters. Whether it is in your own neighborhood or in a remote village in some poverty-stricken Third World country, faithful service in Christ's name can and does make a world of difference.

Southern Baptists have been blessed with countless ministry opportunities both at home and around the world. Despite the occasional focus on conflict and controversy in convention life, Southern Baptists continue to face unprecedented potential to impact the unsaved world with the life-changing message of the gospel.

A few examples: During the past year, Southern Baptist foreign missionaries and their ministry partners overseas helped establish more than 2,600 new churches and baptized almost 290,000 converts to Christianity. Closer to home, nearly 5,000 home missionaries served in a variety of capacities, including helping establish many of the 1,200-plus new Southern Baptist congregations throughout the nation.

And there's more. Among the hundreds of churches started overseas in recent months, 367 of those new congregations are in "World A," a region covering much of north Africa, the Mideast and Asia where free access to the gospel is often limited or denied by cultures hostile to Christianity. Those hard-to-reach areas of the world also accounted for more than 6,500 new

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON



Christian believers during the past year.

Here in the States, during the recent Season of Prayer for Home Missions, local Southern Baptists had the opportunity to learn about the more than 2,400 fellow Southern Baptists who serve as chaplains in settings ranging from military assignments to hospitals and industry.

This week's Newsmagazine cover story about Ray Branscum highlights the significance of Baptist chaplaincy efforts here in Arkansas. Branscum, who serves as chaplain for the Little Rock Fire Department, has led 15 people to faith in Christ through that ministry effort.

The Migrant Missions Center in Hermitage, which also is featured in this issue of the Newsmagazine, provides another significant ministry outlet for interested Arkansas Baptists. Missions

center director Ed Mansilla is anxious to expand the center's ministry to assist low-income families and other residents in the surrounding area. His greatest need to accomplish that goal? Volunteers.

Ministry options abound not only in Little Rock and Hermitage, but throughout the state, nation and world. The Batesville tornado relief efforts featured this week on page 2 offer an additional example of vital ministry needs and Baptist response.

Why bother with disaster relief, migrant ministry and church-planting around the globe? In the timeless words of Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Sure there's lots of bad news in the world that can easily occupy our attention. But Southern Baptists have the wonderful privilege of proclaiming the eternal Good News to people in desperate need of hope.

During a recent conference on communications technology, Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in southern California, reminded Baptist communicators that "no method was meant to last forever....Methods are not sacred, the message is."

Regardless of the various methods used to reach people for Christ, the message must be faithfully proclaimed to make a difference at home and around the world. Will you do your part? Ministry matters.

Villager's question tests missionary's courage

By Tony Lynn

SBC foreign missionary to the Niger Republic

MALI HAUSA, NIGER REPUBLIC (BP)—The venerable village chief posed some unexpected questions: "Why speak only to Yaye's family about this Jesus? Why not explain Jesus to everyone?"

The villagers gathered around us in response to their leader's command. The women sat and whispered to our left. The children were in front of us some distance away. The men lounged upon mats to our right. An enormous tree in the center of the village provided our midday shade. Jamie, my wife, prayed silently. The Islamic mosque that represented what we were up against was just behind the anxious crowd.

Earlier that morning, Yaye had received Christ after two of our missionary colleagues witnessed to him. Someone traveled through their village from time to time with a Bible. Yaye and the people enjoyed the stories but had a difficult time understanding. We were in his village at his invitation.

I preached from Acts 8. All of us seemed to be reliving the story of Philip and the Ethiopian. To me, the message appeared to be a jumble of English, French and Zarma, but amazingly everyone was listening with rapt attention. Jamie's prayers were having effect. Even the smallest of the babies was quiet. The animals of the village were still.

When I closed the message by inviting them to follow Jesus

Christ like the Ethiopian, my expectations were too small. The men chattered among themselves for 10 minutes. Suddenly the discussion stopped, and they quickly rearranged their mats directly in front of us. They sat shoulder to shoulder as if they were about to say their Muslim prayers.

One of the oldest in the group drew two parallel lines in the sand. Then he said, "There are two ways to God. One is the Muslim way and the other the Christian way, correct?"

Immediately I was afraid. I saw the seriousness that I was in this remote village with Jamie and another missionary woman, but our exact location was unknown to anyone. What should I say to this definitive question?

There was really no doubt about what to say. I only feared the possible consequences. I firmly stated, "There is only one way to God!" Then I cited John 14:6 in Zarma, where Jesus said, "Ay ga ti fonda nda cimo nda jundi" ("I am the way, the truth, and the life....").

The elder surveyed the faces of his friends. Afterward his stare fell upon me. He responded, "I knew there could only be one way and Jesus must be that way!" He smiled.

That day 14 men in that small village, Mali Hausa, decided to follow Jesus. As they prayed, they lifted their open palms toward the sky. It was as if God were pouring living water into their cupped hands. Then at the end of their prayers, they gently rubbed their faces as if applying a fragrant ointment.

Fired up for ministry

Chaplain Ray Branscum, 87, serves Little Rock Fire Department needs

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Ten minutes into Ray Branscum's Bible study on tithing, all six of his pupils rushed out of his class. Undaunted, he patiently closed his Bible and waited for them to return. It happens often when you serve as chaplain for the Little Rock Fire Department.

It was not the subject of tithing that drove the firefighters from their weekly study at the Little Rock National Airport Fire Station, but a report of smoke and power loss in the airport's baggage area. Within seconds, three massive green fire trucks raced to answer the call.

Thirty minutes later, after discovering no danger at the terminal, each firefighter returned to his seat and Branscum, dressed in the navy uniform of the department, resumed the lesson. "This is typical and you have to be flexible," he explained.

Branscum, 87, has served since 1989 as the LRFD's first chaplain. The position started after fire chief Rubin Webb saw "something missing" in the department.

"I looked at the operational structure and benefits given to the men. I think it is incumbent on the...chief to provide members of this department with good salaries, working environment and benefits," Webb recalled. "But I sensed something missing. It dawned on me that some of the other departments that I knew about had a chaplain."

Webb said his view of a chaplain's duties included leading "an annual prayer breakfast and someone to visit with the men occasionally."

With that idea, he began searching for a chaplain. "One day I'm sitting here and Brother Ray walks through the door and says, 'I understand you're interested in a chaplain's program.'"

Branscum had heard of the need and responded. Serving in a position that the chief originally envisioned as "occasional," Branscum transformed it to pastoral, setting up regular Bible studies, making hospital and fire station visits and providing counseling.

"He's gone a lot further and has put in a lot more time than I had originally perceived," Webb acknowledged. "He moved on in and set up the Bible studies every Sunday. How he can go out and recruit volunteers to go to 20 fire stations every Sunday is an accomplishment in itself."

One of Webb's concerns, though, was establishing a chaplaincy in a multi-denominational agency. "We have just



Ray Branscum, chaplain for the Little Rock Fire Department, leads the weekly Bible study at Airport Station at Little Rock National Airport. In his seven years as chaplain, Branscum has organized weekly Bible studies in all of Little Rock's 20 fire stations.

about every type of religious denomination I know of. I didn't know how we could make a chaplaincy program work and encompass all of the different religions without causing dissension."

He noted, however, that most of the firefighters attend the Bible studies, regardless of denomination, adding that the chaplaincy emphasis has "gone over real well."

A January summary of the LRFD's chaplaincy program revealed that since its inception, the ministry has recorded 110 consultations with family members, 240 counseling sessions, 317 hospital visitations, 1,725 station visitations, more than 5,000 worship services, five weddings, 28 funerals, 15 professions of faith and 90 personal rededications.

Coping with stress

Yet the need for a chaplain is reflected in more than statistics. Firefighters face many job-related stresses. The typical shift is 24 hours on and 48 hours off. The LRFD has 389 employees in 20 stations.

Branscum said that in his circuit of visiting the stations, "I drive 198 miles. I try to make every station twice a month. Often I get a call from some man saying, 'If you're out this way, come by.' So I go more than that."

"It's a joy to have him come in," said Airport Station driver Mike Spann. "A lot of times you come in and there's a lot of stuff going on and at times you kinda get down and somehow or another he picks out exactly what you need that day. He takes your attitude from way down here

and it'll swing way up here. I appreciate him coming down and sharing the Word."

Much of the "stuff going on" at fire stations involves job-related stress. Branscum counsels with firefighters who deal with a range of stresses that include job performance, injuries, time away from family and the continual risk of death.

"The stress is high," agreed LRFD training chief Marcus White. He said one major stress "is dealing with the injuries and deaths of small children. I can handle the rescue work fairly well, but when it comes to kids..."

Even more challenging, White added, "When it comes down to having to face the injuries of your own people, that's the most stressful thing I have been through."

Marion Reynolds, director of the chaplaincy program for the Arkansas Baptist missions department, said that job stress for firefighters often translates into family problems. "The divorce rate is high for firemen. I don't know of any profession or occupation that has a higher rate."

Branscum noted that 72 percent of the Little Rock firefighters "have been married two to four times."

"He's counseled with all of my people," Webb noted. "If I need him at two o'clock in the morning, I call him and by the time I can drive from my house to his, he's ready to go."

The LRFD chaplaincy program is financially supported by Pulaski Association, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "If it hadn't been for the HMB, the association and convention, we might have

the program but it wouldn't be what it is today," Branscum remarked.

Webb agreed. "We couldn't expect him to do what he's doing without their help. We could have a chaplaincy program, but it would just be a formality — a dedication once a year or something like that."

The result of the chaplaincy ministry, the chief emphasized, is that "I can see an attitude change in some of our people. I think our chaplaincy program is probably superior to any of the fire departments in the country, at least the ones I know anything about."

Branscum is in his 66th year of ministry. A Stone County native, he had to take what he called "an intelligence test" to enter college after his high school was forced to close during the Depression.

"I passed that and they gave me a certificate," he recalled. He attended a J. Frank Norris Seminary extension in Jonesboro before enrolling as a religion student at Ouachita Baptist University, while he "preached every Sunday."

After graduating from OBU, he served as pastor of Second Church in Arkadelphia and South Highland Church in Little Rock.

Burdened with a heart for new works, he was instrumental in starting missions that became Geyer Springs First Church and Markham Street Church, both in Little Rock. He also served as pastor of the then-fledgling First Southern Church in Bryant, noting that "I went there to stay three weeks as an interim and stayed four years." Branscum also gave a boost to Indian Springs Church in Bryant, which had eight members when he became pastor.

His long-term ministry and reputation as a minister serves him well. White affirmed that Branscum "ties good knots. He married my wife and me a little over 45 years ago (one of 1,138 marriages Branscum has performed) and it's still there."

Acknowledging that his ministry as a chaplain "is different," Branscum added, "It took me a long time to adjust to it. I'd been used to preparing sermons and I miss that and preaching on Sunday. I still preach, though."

Referring to his age, he said, "I'll be 88 in May and I don't think it's a hindrance. The men might think it, though," he added thoughtfully.

"I thought maybe a younger man would do better," he said. "But I have a good relationship with the men and God's been good."

Firefighter Harry Noble, who attends Branscum's Airport Station Bible study, emphasized that Branscum's age "is a help."

"He has wisdom. The experiences he's seen are probably four times what I have seen in my life," Noble said. "He shares a bunch of his experiences with us and gives us a new perspective."

Arkansas native Jim Heflin accepts EBC executive post

Affirming that he recognized "both the challenge and the tremendous opportunity in international ministry," Arkansas native James Heflin accepted the call March 1 to become general secretary of the European Baptist Convention.

Heflin, professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, will become the EBC's third full-time general secretary, succeeding James Merritt, who retires Oct. 31.

The EBC's General Council voted 65-1 to extend the call to Heflin, who is serving as interim pastor of International Baptist Church of Berlin while on sabbatic leave from Southwestern.

A native of Monticello, Heflin will become the first general secretary who is not financially supported as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary.

'Praying for big things'

Announcing his decision to both the EBC and Southwestern, Heflin said that "after much prayer, thought and discussion, Wilma and I decided that God was calling us to accept the invitation to serve...the European Baptist Convention."

"The decision was a very difficult one for us. We wanted to be certain that God was indeed calling us to this ministry," he noted. "The spirit of the European Baptist Convention excites us. At the annual meeting last October we thanked God for the unity and harmony of this convention. Now that we have agreed to become a part of the convention leadership, we are praying for big things."

"Our dream is that more EBC churches

will become strong enough to begin other churches," Heflin said. "As we work with the convention staff to provide assistance for the churches throughout our convention, it is our desire to encourage pastors and church leaders and to help them find creative ways to minister effectively."

Heflin said his vision for the future of the EBC is threefold. He wants to include more internationals, develop stronger bonds with European unions and begin a theological education program.

Doyle Plummer, statewide partnership coordinator for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said Heflin's election means that "there is a strong Arkansas influence" in the European Baptist Convention.

Plummer said Heflin's strength "is his enthusiasm and vision for what the EBC could be in Europe. Jim has a good background as a pastor, professor and teacher of preachers and has been well received by pastors in Europe."

Heflin, who was born and raised in Monticello, was active in the Royal Ambassador program at Second Church there. He recalled praying as a youngster, "Lord, I'd like to see that world out there," but added, "that just didn't happen to boys from Monticello."

At age 16, Heflin answered the call to the ministry. While attending the University of Arkansas in Monticello, he served as a split-time pastor of Pleasant Grove Church in Farmville and Florence Church near Monticello before serving as pastor of Westside Mission in Warren, which constituted as a church under his leadership in 1965.



Arkansas Baptist directors of missions and their wives elected officers for the coming year during their annual retreat held recently at DeGray Lodge near Arkadelphia. DOM officers are (left to right) Marvin Peters of North Pulaski Association, president; Tommy Robertson of Liberty Association, president-elect; and Lonnie Latham of Bartholomew Association, secretary/treasurer. Wives officers for the coming year are (left to right) Sandy Hinkson of Pulaski Association, president-elect, and Mary Ann Jones of Little River Association, president.

'Answering the Call' is focus of Golden Age Evangelism Conference

"Seniors Answering the Call" will be the focus of Arkansas Baptists' 1996 Golden Age Evangelism Conference April 11-12 at First Church in Springdale. The program will feature well-known humorist and Grand Ole Opry star Jerry Clower.

Paul McClung, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department, said that he hopes the conference "enables us to mobilize, encourage and challenge senior adults to reach an important part of our society."

"With over 400,000 senior adults in Arkansas and the prospect that one-half of those have no church relationship of any kind, the fields are truly white unto harvest," McClung noted.

In addition to Clower, the program will feature author and conference speaker Marge Caldwell of Houston, Texas; Dick Baker, composer and minister of music at large for Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas; and Darrell Robinson, vice president for the Home Mission Board's evangelism section.

Also featured will be a 300-voice senior adult choir under the direction of Baker as well as evangelism and church growth training and testimonies.

A Senior Partners Baptist Fellowship breakfast will be held at 7:30 a.m. Friday at the First Church banquet room. Cost is \$3 at the door. Senior Partners encourages senior adults in volunteerism.

The cost for the conference is \$10 per person. Participants must secure their own lodging and meals. McClung urged participants to secure housing before registering for the conference.

To register for the conference or to receive a list of Springdale-area hotels, contact McClung at the ABCS evangelism department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally at 376-4791, ext. 5132.

Pastors, deacons, wives to build relationships during May retreat

Ministry and relationships will be among the topics highlighted at Arkansas Baptists' 1996 Pastors, Deacons and Wives Retreat May 3-4 at DeGray State Park Lodge near Arkadelphia.

Retreat planner Bruce Swihart, director of the Arkansas Baptist church leadership support department, said the program is based on needs expressed to him by pastors and deacons.

"I asked pastors and deacons around the state what they would like to have in a retreat and they wanted 'how-tos' — how

to have a deacon ministry, how to touch lives of people who have hurting issues in their lives and relationships and how deacons and pastors can relate with confidence and trust."

Swihart said deacons and pastors will attend the same sessions while their spouses will attend separate ones. Leading the deacons and pastors sessions will be Bob Sheffield, growth consultant for deacon ministry at the Baptist Sunday School Board and author of *The Ministry of Baptist Deacons*. His wife, Barbara, a conference leader and author of *Help, I'm a Deacon's Wife*, will lead the wives' sessions.

Emphasizing the importance of the ministry of the wife of a pastor or deacon, Swihart said, "They have special ministries and it's important for deacons and pastors to realize the impact of their wives."

The cost for the retreat is \$105 per couple and includes meals, lodging and materials. Participants must make their own reservations by April 22 with DeGray Lodge by calling 1-800-737-8355.

To register for the retreat, send a check or money order for \$105 to the ABCS Church Leadership Support department, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. For more information, contact Swihart toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally at 376-4791, ext. 5148.

Ministers of education, youth to sharpen skills during annual retreats

Ministers of education and youth ministers will have the opportunity to "get away from it all" during simultaneous retreats in April. The Ministers of Education Retreat and the Youth Ministers Retreat will both be held April 18-19 at DeGray State Park Lodge west of Arkadelphia.

Bob Holley, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship and family ministry department, said the retreats will offer participants an opportunity "to sharpen their ministry skills at one of Arkansas' most beautiful locations."

The Ministers of Education Retreat will be led by Ron Pratt, consultant to ministers of education for the Baptist Sunday School Board. The program will focus on "The Minister of Education Reclaiming Christian Education."

The ministers of education retreat "will focus on the key elements of an effective Christian education program," Holley explained, "and explore some of the factors that fight for the energies and resources of the minister of education."

The Youth Ministers Retreat will be led by Richard Ross, BSSB youth ministry coordinator. The youth ministers' retreat, Holley noted, "will address such issues as sexual misbehavior, substance abuse and

other addictions, youth in troubled homes, adolescent suicide and adolescent eating disorders."

The cost for each of the retreats is \$25 per person and includes a "just for fun" Thursday night banquet, Holley said. The cost for spouses is \$15 per person. Participants are responsible for securing their own lodging.

For more information or to register for either retreat, contact the ABCS discipleship and family ministry department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally at 376-4791, ext. 5160. To reserve lodging, contact DeGray Lodge at 1-800-737-8355.

'Home Improvement' conference to train BSU student leaders

Student leaders from Baptist Student Unions across Arkansas will gather at Camp Paron April 12-14 for their annual Leadership Training Conference.

David James, director of the Arkansas Baptist student ministry department, said the conference will focus on the "training and induction of student leaders" as well as the "orientation and induction of student missionaries for 1996 summer missions."

James said this year's theme, "Home Improvement," will focus on strengthening Christian homes because "students today desperately need Christian models for homes."

"With all the alternative options," he commented, "we want to portray the biblical option as a positive model."

He said participants will be trained in "the six key areas we develop our programs around in Arkansas — administration/leadership, discipleship, evangelism, worship, fellowship and missions."

The training is for "new leaders in all of our BSU programs in the state," he said, adding that "this year we had 269 leaders in 34 BSUs. I see those 269 as a key to the success of our program. If we are doing our job and developing our leadership, then we will be successful because we are a student-led organization."

Participants will hear Mike Thompson, a professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, interpreting the conference theme. Also featured will be contemporary Christian musician Mike Blagg.

The cost for the retreat is \$25 per person and includes meals and lodging. Participants must bring their own bedding, casual clothes, toiletry items, Bible "and a heart to learn," James said.

The program will begin at 7:30 p.m. Friday and conclude Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

For more information or to register, contact the ABCS student ministry department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally at 376-4791, ext. 5160.

Executive Committee signs pact with consultant

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee has signed a contract with an Atlanta management consultant firm and released the first estimate of savings associated with the denomination's anticipated restructuring. SBC Executive Committee members voted last month to hire a consulting firm at a cost of up to \$495,000.

Representatives of the implementation task force, a 10-member group created by the SBC Executive Committee last September to oversee the implementation of the restructuring, held an initial meeting March 7 with Coopers and Lybrand, LLP, a professional services firm. Coopers was selected from among several national agencies which submitted bids because "Coopers provides significant expertise in assisting organizations with change," according to ITF member spokesman Ted Warren, chief operating officer of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Warren said the Atlanta firm has assisted hundreds of businesses of various sizes, including other Baptist entities, and received good recommendations. Warren said the firm will have Southern Baptists on its team and plans to give the SBC

high priority by making "national-level consultants" available.

"We are not employing Coopers and Lybrand for them to tell us what to do, but to assist us in achieving all the effectiveness we envision," Warren said.

The "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring plan, which was approved by messengers at the 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta, calls for the merging, consolidation and/or dissolution of several entities and ultimately reducing the number from 19 to 12. A second vote on SBC bylaw 15, which lists the various agencies individually, is scheduled during the 1996 annual meeting this June.

Initial savings projected

The cost savings, Warren said, will be substantial, although he emphasized the dollar amounts are early estimates. During the 1996-97 SBC fiscal year, Warren said the ITF believes a savings of \$289,000 will be achieved from entities being dissolved or modified. Under the restructuring plan, the Education Commission would be dissolved and functions of the Historical Commission, Stewardship Commission and Southern Baptist Foundation would be assigned to other agencies, effective June 1997.

During fiscal 1997-98, Warren said, the

ITF expects a savings of up to \$1.1 million. He said the first full SBC fiscal year should see savings exceeding the full cost of the management consultant, the expenses of the ITF and the legal costs involved. The task force has not released any specific projection of costs associated with the restructuring process.

"While significant savings are expected, that is not our primary objective," Warren added. "It is to increase effectiveness in how we assist churches accomplish their mission here and abroad."

Interaction with SBC agencies is scheduled to begin this month. The Coopers and Lybrand team will be gathering data, doing an analysis and consolidation and producing a high-level financial analysis for the ITF's report to the New Orleans meeting in June. In the change management process, Warren said, the team envisions multiple interviews with personnel associated with the new North American Mission Board, including focus groups, leading to a period of analysis and consolidation.

The ITF, in its June report, will identify key issues and provide a transition plan, Warren said. He added, however, that only so much can be done prior to the final approval of bylaw 15 at the New Orleans meeting.

Chapman affirms future of Southern Baptist Foundation

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foundation, which is to become a corporation of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee under the denomination's "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring, "will remain a high-trust operation," according to Executive Committee president Morris Chapman.

Chapman's statement came in response to inquiries about the future of the foundation, in light of the Executive Committee's recent vote for a new charter, under which the foundation's trustees would be elected by the Executive Committee rather than the SBC.

"It was the intent of the Program and Structure Study Committee that the foundation's work continue at a quality level," Chapman noted. "The highest fiduciary integrity will continue under the new arrangement."

The seven-member structure study committee framed that the restructuring, which was approved by messengers to the 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta.

Hollis Johnson has served as president of the Southern Baptist Foundation for more than 19 years. Chapman said he will recommend that Johnson continue to lead the foundation after the changeover in June 1997, if convention messengers vote in June to approve the proposed charter amendment for the foundation and changes to SBC bylaw 15.

Johnson said there is no reason for donors to be anxious about the funds invested with the foundation.

The trust funds will receive the same careful management in the future as they have in the past, Johnson emphasized, noting that "fiduciary laws and our own sense of integrity will

insure that the intent of every donor is honored."

The new board of the foundation would be reduced from 34 members to seven in the charter amendment. "The Executive Committee will seek experienced business and financial minds in SBC life in considering board members for the SBF," Chapman said. "Prospective trustees can be selected from Executive Committee members, current and former foundation trustees and other qualified Southern Baptists."

Johnson said he plans to utilize the new board as he has the foundation's current investment committee in getting advice on investment strategies.

SBC attorney James P. Guenther, in answer to questions during the February Executive Committee meeting, addressed liability implications for the SBC and the Executive Committee created by the new corporation.

"The Tennessee nonprofit corporation act says specifically that a member of a corporation is not liable for the torts and debts of the corporation," Guenther said, "and we're satisfied we're not creating any ascending (lawsuit) liability either for the Executive Committee or for the Southern Baptist Convention."

Also during the meeting, Chapman noted that the Executive Committee would not be managing donor funds.

"The SBC Foundation, although it is (to be) a subsidiary corporation of the Executive Committee, will nonetheless operate as a corporation," Chapman said. "It will have a board of trustees... (and) a president in place who is equipped, who is professional and who will continue in the leadership of the management of funds."

'Experiencing God' to air in Russian

MOSCOW (BP)—The first-ever broadcast version of the discipleshyp program "Experiencing God" is scheduled to air over radio waves in Russia starting in April. Broadcast versions currently are being developed in 10 languages.

The program will air for six months on Trans World Radio's short-wave transmitters from Albania in late evening Moscow time to cover western Russia and from Guam in mid-afternoon Moscow time to cover eastern Russia. It also will air over Radio Teos, a local FM radio station in St. Petersburg. Southern Baptist foreign missionary Joe DeLeon, who lives in St. Petersburg, will coordinate follow-up for the broadcasts.

"Experiencing God," written by Henry Blackaby and Claude King, is a publication of the Baptist Sunday School Board's LifeWay Press. The broadcast version was adapted for radio in a project coordinated by the Foreign Mission Board.

The FMB's development office is raising funds for developing "Experiencing God" broadcasts in five top priority languages: Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Special English and Spanish.

Record Lottie Moon receipts projected

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Projections indicate Southern Baptists gave a record \$89.1 million to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions last year, marking a three-year upward trend.

Calculations from early indicators predict an increase for the 1995 offering of \$3.17 million, or 3.69 percent, from last year's \$85.9 million. Those increases would be the largest in percentage and dollar amount since 1988. Increases in 1993 and 1994 were 2.37 percent and 3.66 percent, respectively.

"We are elated and praise God for the faithful support of Southern Baptists in giving almost \$90 million to the offering," said Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin. "The increase over a record offering last year reflects they are committed to fulfilling the Great Commission cooperatively through the Foreign Mission Board."

The projected figure would provide \$3.73 million for capital spending needs such as new construction and vehicles. About \$85.4 million would go to the board's 1996 overseas operating budget, which primarily provides missionary support.

Southern Baptists had set a challenge goal of \$100 million for 1995. "Although we were disappointed that we did not get closer to the \$100 million goal, the anticipated receipts will enable us to meet basic budget projections for a growing number of missionaries who reported unprecedented church growth last year," Rankin said.

Cape Girardeau to host FMB service

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO (FMB)—Cape Girardeau, Mo., will be the setting for a Foreign Mission Board commissioning service for approximately 40 new Southern Baptist missionaries. The April 20 service, highlighting the theme, "Show Me, Send Me," will be held at 2 p.m. in the Show Me Center on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University.

The commissioning service will follow the Missouri Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting at First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau, April 19-20. FMB trustees also will meet in Cape Girardeau prior to the commissioning service.

The FMB has held missionary appointment services in various cities throughout the United States since 1969 in an effort to involve Southern Baptists across the nation. Arkansas Baptists hosted a commissioning service in Little Rock in 1989 and are scheduled to host another one in April 1997.

The service in Cape Girardeau will feature a parade of flags representing many of the 131 countries where more than 4,100 Southern Baptist missionaries live and work. Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin is scheduled to bring an address

during the service and several missionary appointees will share testimonies. A full hour of pre-service inspirational music will be presented and a global walkaround at the Show Me Center will feature an estimated 20 to 40 exhibits.

Churches within a two-hour drive of Cape Girardeau may invite FMB staff members or missionaries to serve as guest speakers April 21. Churches interested in scheduling a speaker may contact Jim Bryant, director of missions for Cane Creek Stoddard Association, phone 573-686-1115 or fax 573-686-1116.

New generation changes face of missions

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—A new generation of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries is taking the field — and the faces are changing as much as the places of service.

Among new appointees of the Foreign Mission Board, singles and ethnics are more numerous. More have worked in overseas ministry before. And the steady stream of new missionaries flowing toward traditional "harvest fields" is being joined by a growing group headed where the need for a witness is critical.

These people are redefining what it means to be a missionary. They're at home in a world shrunk dramatically by passenger jets and television news. Many are hearing God call them to places where life is hard and the name of Jesus unknown. Most are planning to join hands with other Christian groups to make the greatest possible impact with limited resources.

"They feel drawn to the cutting edge," said Lloyd Atkinson, director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's personnel selection department. "They want to go places where there are no other missionaries and life is hard. They want to go where the need is the greatest — even into dangerous, uncharted waters."

One of the most significant changes is the number of workers coming forward to serve in areas where the need for gospel witness is urgent, Atkinson said. Of 246 long-term workers appointed by the FMB in 1995, 50 went to countries closed to traditional missionary activity and 43 went to countries where the collapse of communism has opened a window of opportunity.

"This is a significant, encouraging trend," said Atkinson, who has closely watched personnel trends during his 17 years as a missionary and administrator. "God is calling people to these new opportunities, and we can look at their lives and see how God has prepared them."

FMB's Robert O'Brien plans retirement

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Robert O'Brien, senior overseas correspondent for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has announced plans for early retirement effective Aug. 31.

O'Brien, 56, was managing editor of the board's news office and the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press from 1989 until September 1995, when he accepted a senior correspondent position created during a communications office reorganization. He will do contract work for the FMB as a writer, editor and communications consultant; take similar assignments from other organizations; and seek other opportunities in communications.

"Early retirement" is a technical term, he noted. "I'll continue in Christian service, and I'm glad that includes continuing involvement in Southern Baptist foreign missions."

The new senior overseas correspondent role would have benefited the O'Brien family in Cyprus with a worldwide assignment. "Because of important family considerations, we have come to realize the timing isn't right to set a definite date for moving overseas," he explained.

A native of South Carolina, O'Brien joined the FMB staff in 1980 after seven years as news editor for Baptist Press. He previously has served on the editorial and communications staffs of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

'Bigger is not better'

Church's message, not methods, is sacred, Warren tells communicators

By Mark A. Wyatt

California Southern Baptist

GLORIETA, NM (BP)—Rick Warren has a simple message for churches wanting to grow—proclaim the gospel using methods that work and keep up with rapidly changing technology. Warren told a gathering of Baptist communicators, however, that church growth is not the most important issue facing churches.

"The issue of the 21st century is going to be church health," said Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church located in Orange County, Calif. Unfortunately, he said, many churches and their leaders have confused growth with health.

"Bigger is not better," Warren insisted. "Better is better." Warren delivered the keynote address at the Baptist Public Relations Association's 1996 workshop, March 7-10 at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Church health results when the five purposes of the church—worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship and discipleship—are kept in balance, Warren said. When that happens, he added, growth occurs.

"When the church of Jesus Christ is balanced, it is healthy, and when it is healthy, it grows," he emphasized. "If a church is healthy, growth is automatic."

Church health includes keeping "a balance between methods and message," Warren pointed out. He encouraged Baptist communicators and churches alike to "use technology but don't worship it."

However, Warren acknowledged, "That's not the problem in most churches. Most are 10 years behind. They're just discovering fax machines."

Since its beginning with seven members, Saddleback has grown to an average weekly worship attendance of 12,000, making it the fastest-growing Southern Baptist church in history. Warren recalled that when he started the church in 1980, "we didn't have any VCR recorders or fax machines or cellular telephones or Windows personal computers. Now I depend on all these things daily."

Warren described a number of ways Saddleback uses technology in its ministries today, such as providing silent pagers to summon parents of preschoolers without disrupting worship services and issuing bar-coded identification cards to make sure children are returned to their proper guardians.

Staying current with technology helps churches and individuals by increasing communication efforts, saving time and

Baptist communicators focus on technology

GLORIETA, NM (BP)—Baptist communication professionals focused on the technical aspects of their work during an annual workshop March 7-10 at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. Members also approved several structural changes, including a new name.

The Baptist Public Relations Association will become Baptist Communicators Association effective July 1 following a near-unanimous vote by the 100 members attending the meeting. References to "public relations" were removed from the group's bylaws to reflect a broader emphasis on "communications." The 310-member association is composed of communication professionals in various Baptist groups including many Baptist colleges and universities and Southern Baptist Convention agencies.

Elected president for 1996-97 was Sarah Zimmerman, associate director of news and information for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. She will succeed Trennis Henderson, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist News* magazine,

who is the current president of BPRA.

Honored with a lifetime membership was John Roberts, a former association president and recently retired editor of the *South Carolina Baptist Courier*. Roberts has been a member of the association since 1958.

BPRA members also redesigned the association's structure to allow for its members to participate in specific "professional development groups," including editorial, electronic media, graphic design, institutional public relations, management and photography.

Also approved was implementation of a new scholarship program for minorities and internationals. The Alan Compton and Bob Stanley Minority and International Scholarships received funding approval for awards beginning in 1997. Awards of up to \$1,000 annually will go to a minority individual pursuing a career in communications and one professional scholarship of up to \$500 to a current or prospective association member working in a communications-related capacity for a Baptist institution or agency.

effectively shortening distances between people, Warren said. "With e-mail I am often as close with people who are great distances away as I am with someone in the next office," he explained.

But he warned against using technology without a purpose. And he said most people make two mistakes concerning technology which "can be fatal to industry, to denominations" and to individuals.

"We either worship it or fear it—one or the other," Warren said. The root of both errors about technology is confusing the message with the method, he said.

"Some people worship technology, but technology's never going to save anybody," Warren emphasized. "Technology must always be the servant of the church and always be the servant of ministry, not vice versa." The church must "be very aware of not letting the tail wag the dog," he added.

"That's why (at Saddleback) we're not going on TV and radio," Warren stated. Besides, he said, he just wants to be a pastor—not a fund-raiser or a celebrity.

"Always being in the spotlight blinds you," Warren cautioned. "It's bad for your character."

He also spoke about the danger of fearing or resenting technology. "Many of our churches, really in our heart of hearts, believe the 1950s was the 'golden age of church growth' and they're going to do everything they can to preserve it."

"No method was meant to last forever. No method has lasted forever. Methods are not sacred, the message is," Warren stressed. Consequently, he said, while the gospel message must never change, methods of sharing it have to change with every generation.

"When we do not change methods, we in essence cut off the message, and that's called being unfaithful," Warren said. "Most people define faithfulness in terms of orthodox belief. Jesus always measured faithfulness in terms of behavior."

Warren encouraged church leaders to try new things and be willing to risk failure while striving for success. "If you're not taking any risks in your ministry, you don't need any faith," he said.

"Don't be afraid to go out on a limb—that's where the fruit is," Warren affirmed. "Don't be afraid to rock the boat if Jesus is your captain."

Staff changes

Samuel Roberts began serving March 10 as pastor of First Church of Walnut Ridge, coming there from Baptist Tabernacle in Louisville, Ky. A native of Marked Tree, Roberts also has served as assistant director of placement for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he is a graduate. He also is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University. Roberts is married to the former Martha Turner of Pine Bluff. They are parents of two sons, Dustin and Turner.

Lynn Robertson began serving March 17 as pastor of Grand Avenue Church in Hot Springs, coming there from Hillside Church of Camden. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Robertson and his wife, Debbie, are parents of two adult children.

Randy L. Hyde will begin his ministry March 24 as pastor of Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock, coming there from First Church of Trumann. He previously was pastor and associate pastor of churches in Florida, Maryland, Tennessee and Virginia. Hyde is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Nashville, Tenn. He and his wife, Janet, have two children, Emily Rebecca and Timothy Andrew.

C. Lynn Robertson is pastor of Grand Avenue Church in Hot Springs, going there from Hillside Church in Camden where he was pastor for five years. He previously served First Church of Stamps and First Church of Pattonville, Texas. Robertson is a graduate of Central Baptist College in Conway, Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition, he has completed work in counseling at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia. He and his wife, Debbie, have two adult children, Sundi and Robbie, and two grandchildren.

Ben J. Jones began his ministry Feb. 25 as pastor of Woodlawn Church in Little Rock. A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, he previously was associate pastor and minister of youth for Archview Church in Pulaski Association. Jones and his wife, Kathy, are residing in Little Rock.

Gerald M. Taylor retired Feb. 25 as pastor of Hebron Church in Little Rock. Taylor, who has served for 44 years as an ordained Southern Baptist minister, previously was pastor of Life Line Church in Little Rock, First Church of Sherwood, First Church of Stamps and First Church of Monticello. In addition, he and his wife, Catherine, served five years as Southern Baptist foreign



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

missionaries in Dakar, Senegal. Taylor is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Taylors are parents of four children, Susan Ladd of Sherwood, Max Taylor of Little Rock, Sharon Taylor of Fort Smith and Karen Reynolds of Malvern. They have five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Taylor will be available to serve as a supply or interim pastor or to lead revivals. He may be contacted at #12 Pear Tree, Little Rock, AR 72209; phone 501-455-0961.

Bobby George has accepted the call to become bivocational pastor of First Church of Social Hill which will be his first ministry as a pastor. He is a welder in Arkadelphia. George and his wife, Tracy, have two children, Ashley and Brandon.

Willis Moore has joined the staff of Spradling Church in Fort Smith as minister

of youth. He previously served on the staff of First Church of El Dorado. He also has served churches in Texas. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Moore and his wife, LeeAnn, have a daughter, Caroline.

David Uth resigned Feb. 25 as pastor of Immanuel Church of El Dorado to become pastor of First Church of Monroe, La. He previously served First Church of Camden. Uth is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Rachel, have three children, Joshua, Andrew and Hannah.

Tim Hight resigned March 3 as pastor of First Church of Newport to become pastor of Main Street Church in Christianburg, Va. Hight, who previously was pastor of First Church in Lepanto, was a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board. He and his wife, Dawn, have four children, Brittany, Lindsey, Timothy and Valory.

Bruce Raley resigned March 10 as minister of education for Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro to assume the same position on the staff of First Baptist Church of Panama



Breaking ground March 10 for a \$3.5 million building project for First Church of Blytheville are (left to right) building committee chairman Pat Sullivan, pastor Bill Fuller, architect Muriel Lewis, building contractor Doug Henson, trustee Jim Gardner, chairman of deacons Bill Sullivan, church training director Gary Hollis, Woman's Missionary Union director Marvel Dickerson, Baptist Men's president Edwin Holstead, building finance committee chairman Dick Trout and youth council representative Abigail Hubbard. Fuller said the congregation is "traveling new roads of opportunity for reaching new people for Jesus Christ and for discipling people" as they begin the 54-week building program which will feature a chapel, office complex and family life center. Church members pledged \$1.61 million for the project during a recent "Together We Build" fund-raising campaign. The building project also includes remodeling the present fellowship hall into educational space.

ARKANSAS BAPTISTS

City, Fla. Raley has served as president of the Arkansas Baptist Religious Educators Association and as a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board. He and his wife, Donna, and their children, Patrick and Sarah, were honored with a reception by Walnut Street Church.

Obituaries

Earl Hays, 75, of Hatfield died Feb. 8. He was a lifelong member of First Church of Hatfield where he had recently been honored for 45 years of ministry as a deacon. He also served as a song leader for many area revivals and was active in the work of Ouachita Association. Survivors are his wife, Ruth; two daughters, Linda Whisenhunt of Mena and Sandy Weis of Magnolia; one sister; and four grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the building fund of First Church of Hatfield.

J. Guy Roberts of Harrison died Feb. 24 at age 76. A retired Southern Baptist minister, he was a member of Northvale Church in Harrison and had served as pastor of several churches in the Harrison area, including Trinity Church in Harrison. Survivors are his wife, Ruby Harris Roberts; one son, Garry Roberts of Springdale; two daughters, Vera Wagner and Renetta Wacaster, both of Harrison; one brother; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Bertha Valeria Hardin, 83, died March 2 in Dallas, Texas, following a lengthy illness. Her funeral services were held March 5 at Dell Baptist Church where she had been a member since 1924. In addition, she had served the church as a Sunday School teacher, youth worker and Woman's Missionary Union leader. She also had been active in the work of Mississippi County Association. Survivors are a son, Ben Gill of Dallas; one sister; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Mississippi County Union Mission.

Dorothy Eleanor Newcomb of Blytheville died March 3 at age 85. Her funeral services were held March 6 at First Church of Blytheville where she was a member and had served as church hostess, as president of Woman's Missionary Union and for 15 years as the superintendent of the babyland department. Survivors are her husband, Charles Ray Newcomb; two daughters, Nancy Norton of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., and Betty Caldwell of Blytheville; two sisters; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Evelyn Gall Eller of Little Rock died March 5 at age 92. Her funeral services

were held March 7 at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock where she was a member and had served 60 years as a children's teacher. Survivors include one daughter, Jean Flanders of North Little Rock; one sister; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Baring Cross Church.

Ernest "E.G." George Ward of Little Rock died March 9 at age 98. His funeral services were held March 11 at Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock where he had served as a deacon. Ward was the founder of Deister, Ward, Witcher Oil Abstract Co. Survivors are his wife, Evelyn Gate Ward of Little Rock; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Pulaski Heights Church.

People

Joe W. Statton was recently recognized by Central Church of Magnolia for 20 years of ministry. Statton, who first served the congregation as minister of education, currently is minister of administration. His ministry efforts have included organizing a ministry to mentally handicapped adults. He currently is a trustee of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries and a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention special study committee. He and his wife, Patti, have three children, Laura, Nathan and Timothy.

Doug Moore was honored Jan. 28 during a Sunday evening worship service and reception by First Church of Newport for 10 years of service as minister of music. He previously served First Church of Trumann as minister of music. Special guests for the occasion were Don Moore of Little Rock, the recently retired executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention who was Moore's pastor when he made his profession of faith at Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro, and Rob Hewell, ABSC director of church music ministries. Moore and his wife, Kaye, have two daughters, Cynthia and Kimberly.

Tom and Kay Cox recently returned from their 15th year of annual crusades to India. They were assisted by a 41-member medical and evangelistic team from Southern Baptist churches representing 14 states. The group, which was organized into eight teams, ministered to more than 7,000 individuals in medical clinics as well as providing shoes for a leper colony. Their efforts resulted in 4,000 professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

Trennis Henderson, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, has

earned a first-place award from Baptist Public Relations Association, the professional organization of Baptist communicators. The national award for interpretive writing was presented for Henderson's Feb. 9, 1995, editorial, "Heard any good rumors lately?" The editorial focused on false rumors which persist concerning activities by Madalyn Murray O'Hair, Procter & Gamble and related issues. The award marks the third time in recent years that Henderson has been honored by BPRA for interpretive writing.

Ordinations

East Side Church of Mountain Home ordained associate pastor Paul Lancaster to the gospel ministry and Eric Webb to the deacon ministry March 10.

White Hall First Church ordained Mark Estes, Dale Saffold and Gene Weitzel to the deacon ministry Feb. 25.

Church news

Dell First Southern Church held a spring revival March 3-8 led by Bill Fuller, pastor, and David Ross, minister of music, of First Church in Blytheville. Roland Chappell is pastor.

Genoa First Church held revival services March 3-6 that resulted in 43 decisions, including 27 professions of faith in Christ. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was the evangelist. Guest vocalists were Orvis and Kathlene McRae of Texarkana.

Mountain Home First Church will host Point of Grace in concert April 20 at 7:30 p.m. They will be joined in concert by Scott Kryppayne and Carolyn Arends.

North Side Church of Monticello will be in revival March 24-29 with Lonnie Latham, director of missions for Bartholomew Association, as evangelist. Clarence Hill of Hot Springs will direct music. Steve Harrelson is pastor.

Calvary Church of Little Rock, assisted by Group Publishing, is hosting a children's ministry workshop for Christian educators March 23. Additional information is available by calling 1-800-774-3833 or 501-663-8303.

Hot Springs Second Church will present "Alive!" as an Easter pageant April 4-7 with 7:30 p.m. performances each evening and a 4 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Productions will include the adult choir, orchestra and a drama team under the direction of minister of music Rob Young. Additional information is available by calling 501-624-4455.

Fuller offers 'Ten Commandments' of Christian political involvement

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Virginia Baptist pastor Charles Fuller offered "Ten Commandments for Christian Citizens" at a March 4 seminar on faith in public life.

By its nature, the gospel message "is on a collision course with sin and evil," whether in the church or the public world, Fuller noted during the opening session of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's annual national seminar.

Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church in Roanoke, Va., said he is "baffled" by Christians who preach a gospel that emphasizes personal conversion and selected social issues, while avoiding more volatile and controversial issues. "It is neither wise nor necessary to die on every hill of every pet peeve our fellow Christians may have, but if it is a subject of biblical morality and justice, how dare we muzzle God's voice on the issue," he remarked.

Fuller's "Ten Commandments" for political involvement include:

1. Honor your citizenship. "To love America is to honor all that is good about her while seeking to protect her from all that would destroy her goodness," Fuller said.
2. Know your heritage. Fuller warned against "those who will methodically make a totally secular country out of us despite the great Judeo-Christian foundation underlying the birth of this nation."
3. Live your values. He urged Christians not only to talk about morality, but to live moral lives.
4. Maintain your prayer life. "We are to pray for government officials," Fuller said. "I believe we are to pray for their salvation," he noted, but that is not all. "We are to pray for their wisdom, teachability and

sense of accountability."

5. Voice your convictions. Christians should make themselves heard "through every legitimate channel given to us, with a courteous forthrightness," Fuller said.

6. Discipline your criticisms. Not everything in public life is wrong, Fuller said. "Public officials and wholesome legislation...need to be commended and encouraged by Christian citizens."

7. Analyze your zeal. While time prevents Christians from speaking out for

every worthwhile cause, Fuller said, they should be motivated by a sense of morality, not prejudice or politics.

8. Protect your family. Fuller noted that "the bull's eye of Satan's strategy to take America is our home and family life."

9. Extend your compassion. "If we expect to be heard when we say our Lord hates the sin but loves the sinner, we will have to be living proof texts with hands-on ministries to those victimized by their own sins."

10. Declare your hope. "The hope of America lies squarely in the hands of a sovereign God," he said. "We must be a nation who says, 'In God we must trust.'"

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Beware of political allegiance, CLC speakers warn

WASHINGTON (BP)—The church needs to influence American public life in a righteous manner, but Christians need to beware of offering unwavering support to any political or political party in the process, speakers warned during the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's national seminar March 4-6.

The theme of the CLC's 29th annual seminar was "Christians in the Public Square: Faith in Practice?" The 1996 seminar attracted 101 paid registrants.

"We must never sell the birthright of our second birth to any political leader, any human movement, to any political party," said CLC president Richard Land. "Our loyalty and allegiance belongs to Jesus Christ."

Southern Baptist pastors should base their positions on moral issues on God's Word and not "hitch (their) pulpit to a political candidate's star" or take a position because of its popularity among members of a group with which they want to be identified, said Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.

The failure of most Christians in pre-World War II Germany to practice their faith properly should be a lesson to believers today, said David Gushee, professor of ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Noting that the church's inadequate theology led to Adolf Hitler's rise to power and eventually the Holocaust, he added, "They failed to embrace important biblical, moral norms."

"Too frequently we pick a cluster of

values and baptize them as Christian," Gushee remarked. "We are especially enthusiastic about those who skillfully baptize these values in a Christian vocabulary. Then we offer these politicians our uncritical and unquestioning support."

Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, applied such a warning to the 1996 presidential race. "We ought to stand and call (a candidate) to task, even if inadvertently it will help a president that many of us don't like," Bauer said.

"I don't think we should get into the business of picking the lesser of two evils. We need to hold out a standard to say what it is we believe and what America needs, and if the candidates are not willing to rally to that standard, then I don't think we need to worry about what will happen to them on election day."

The church needs to experience change before it is able to exert the proper influence, several speakers noted.

"We should not blame the politicians for the moral collapse of America," said O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas. "We need to put it where it belongs, at the feet of the church. Biblical, moral standards are forgotten in an attempt to appease an immoral culture."

"America's biggest problem is an apathetic church who has lost her first love," he added. "And in losing that first love, we have lost our influence."

Among major issues which the church needs to be more faithful to address, speakers said, are abortion, homosexuality,

pornography, drugs and poverty.

The church is the institution which can stop the killing of unborn children, and pastors are the key to mobilizing the church, said Michael Cloer, a Southern Baptist pastor who directs Pastors for Life. "The church must respond to abortion both by working to establish justice and by showing mercy," he said.

A potential ruling in a Hawaiian state court will further cripple the culture and "significantly undercut" the witness of the church, said Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice. The court may allow recognition of same-sex marriages, making Hawaii the first state to take such action.

With the expansion of cyberporn, Christians, more than ever, need to take action, said Dee Jepsen, president of the Enough Is Enough anti-pornography campaign.

"The church of Jesus Christ can do no less than stand against and root out the moral cancer of pornography," she said. "If it does not, I believe it will stand in judgment for that inaction."

Churches also need to combine social ministry with spiritual outreach, said E.W. McCall, an African-American Southern Baptist pastor from California.

"Too often our churches are just there as a country club," McCall said. "No longer can the black community in particular and the whole of America in general depend upon government to take care of all our needs and wants. The black church must see the need to transform itself into a force to deal with holistic approaches to ministry."

Washington, D.C., pastor Mark Dever said the Bible clearly teaches that God "hates the arrogance of proud nations and is committed to bringing them to realize the foolishness of trusting in anything other than Him."

"When God decides to judge a proud nation, no economic expansion, no amount of job creation, no Stealth bomber or Patriot missiles can save it," he declared.

Three members of the U.S. House of Representatives spoke at a congressional breakfast during the seminar. They were Rep. Tony Hall, D.-Ohio; Rep. Chris Smith, R.-N.J.; and Rep. Charles Stenholm, D.-Texas.

Hall, who was presented with the CLC's 1995 Distinguished Service Award during the conference, said he was fortunate to be in a position where his faith could impact public policy. As a founding member of the Select Committee on Hunger, Hall is known as an advocate of hunger relief policy in the United States and around the world.

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MISSIONARY NOTES

John and Connie Anthony, Baptist representatives to Israel, are on the field (address: P.O. Box 154, Jerusalem 91001, Israel). He is a native of Hope. The former Connie Goble, she grew up in Mount Ida. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1973.

Keith and Jane Byrd, Baptist representatives to Western Republics, have completed language study in Moscow, Russia, and arrived on their field of service (address: Box 344, Minsk 220050, Belarus). He considers Norfolk his hometown. The former Jane Chastain, she also considers Norfolk her hometown. The Byrds were appointed in 1994.

Lewis and Nina Gentry, missionaries to the Dominican Republic, have completed language study in Costa Rica and arrived on their field of service in the Dominican Republic. They may be addressed at Lynx Air/Sd Dr., P.O. Box 5600, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33340. They are natives of Arkansas. He was born in Nashville and considers Stamps his hometown. The former Nina Coats, she

was born in Rison and considers Pine Bluff her hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1994.

Charles and Laura McKenzie, FMB missionaries to Spain, are on the field (Apartado 2125, 11702 Ceuta, Spain). He was born in Dermott. The former Laura Roper, she is a native of South Carolina. They were appointed in 1991.

Debbie Moore, missionary to Burkina Faso, is in language study in France (address: 68, rue des Martyrs, Appt. 37300 Joue-lès-Tours, France). A native of Hope, she was appointed in 1982.

Robert and Sharon Pinkston, missionaries to Mali, have arrived in France for language study (address: 39, rue Trotbriand, R.C. Droite, 37300 Joue-lès-Tours, France). Son of Southern Baptist missionaries, he considers Daloa, Ivory Coast, and Harrison his hometowns. She is the former Sharon Smith of Hot Springs. They were appointed in 1995.

Hugh and Brenda Provost, Baptist representatives to Middle East, are on the field (address: P.O. Box 835, 6307 Larnaca, Cyprus). He was born in Jonesboro and

grew up in Lepanto, Hughes, Hartsburg and West Memphis. She is the former Brenda Bryles of Pine Bluff. They were appointed in 1981.

Mark and Geneva Weiler, missionaries to Western Republics, are on the field (address: Posta Veche, 31 OF, Kishinev 277059, Moldova). He is a native of South Dakota. The former Geneva Carpenter, she considers Elkins her hometown. They were appointed in 1987.

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Another pastor wrote: "I have already grown mentally and spiritually as a result of what I learned." A staff member wrote after attending: "Our staff refers to Bi-Polar often. It has enriched our relationships."

Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director of the ABCS, will lead the seminar. He is a certified leader for this seminar.

The schedule is:

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8:30-8:00 p.m.

May 31 • 8:30-11:30 a.m.

The cost of the seminar is \$65 per person. This includes a computer analysis of your strengths, a seminar notebook, other materials and refreshment break. Registrations are due April 8.

If you need more information or you would like to register for the seminar, please call or write: Jimmie Sheffield, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 1-800-638-2272 or 501-376-4791, ext. 5103.

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids with birthdays in April attending college in Arkansas:

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■ April 23: Tim Day, OBU Box 4518, sophomore from south Brazil.

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

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Three Southern Baptist leaders join call for GOP to stay pro-life

WASHINGTON (BP)—Three Southern Baptist pastors, including Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry, have joined other religious leaders in calling on the major Republican presidential candidates to maintain the party's support of a constitutional amendment banning abortion.

In a recent letter, 16 evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders expressed concern about the campaign by some prominent Republicans to delete or modify the pro-life plank in the party's platform.

"As the Republican National Convention fast approaches, millions of Catholics and evangelicals will be anxiously waiting to see what route you will take on this issue," the leaders wrote. "We are praying that you will not abandon principle."

In addition to Henry, two former SBC presidents who signed the letter were Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn., and Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston. Henry is pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

Others signing the letter included James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family; Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ; Charles Colson, chairman of Prison Fellowship Ministries; James Kennedy, head of Coral Ridge Ministries; Charles Swindoll, radio Bible teacher and president of Dallas Theological Seminary; and Richard John Neuhaus, a Catholic priest and president of the Institute on Religion and Public Life.

The Feb. 29 letter was sent to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and to Republican National Committee chairman

Haley Barbour as well as to current Republican presidential candidates.

The religious leaders noted that while many of them do not endorse political candidates, they believed it was their "duty to speak on moral issues, and felt it only prudent to address this issue at this time to the party that has been most consistently pro-life," according to the letter.

While they agree the "battle to protect the unborn child will be won or lost in the hearts and minds of our countrymen," the religious leaders said the legal part of the struggle also must be waged. Because

the 1992 Casey v. Planned Parenthood decision shifted abortion from a constitutionally implied right of privacy, as found in the 1973 Roe v. Wade case, to a liberty which is protected under the 14th Amendment, a constitutional amendment "is the only way to reverse the most unjust Supreme Court

ruling since the Dred Scott decision," which permitted slavery, the letter said.

"The Republican Party will absolutely doom its own credibility if it chooses to abandon the pro-life amendment because it will become pro-choice as a matter of law, and pro-life only in its rhetoric," the letter declared. "This is not only moral schizophrenia but a classic example of political double-talk, and it will not go unnoticed by the American people."

They reminded the GOP leaders the party won all three presidential elections in the 1980s with a pro-life platform. They also pointed out no pro-life congressional candidate lost to a pro-choice candidate in the 1994 election, when Republicans regained control of the Senate and House.

"The Republican Party will absolutely doom its own credibility if it chooses to abandon the pro-life amendment..."

— Excerpt from letter to GOP candidates

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NATION

To meet demands, ministers urged to care for themselves

By Charles Willis

Baptist Sunday School Board

LAS VEGAS (BP)—AIDS, stress, burnout, hospital visits, death and grief, crisis intervention and a wide range of family counseling needs represent part of a burgeoning list of pastoral care demands that require ministers to have balanced lives in order to help others.

Participants in a recent "Pastoral Care in the '90s" conference at Spring Valley Baptist Church in Las Vegas heard the need for professional and personal preparation to deal with caregiving demands. The conference was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department.

"Your psychological, social, emotional and spiritual health are the most important resources you bring to a counseling situation," said BSSB pastor-staff leadership consultant Neil Knierim. "Because of the spiritual nature of your work and the personal health aspect of it, you need divine calling and self-esteem combined to be in a position to provide care."

A divine call to ministry, he said, includes the call to be witnesses for Christ, to use one's unique assets and talents to minister, to build the church and to meet one's own needs for fellowship with God.

Self-esteem results from personal competence, character, strength and a feeling of significance, Knierim noted.

Competence in listening, caring, sympathy, spiritual gifts and the ability to understand others can make ministers feel they are able to handle situations and to accomplish what is needed, he pointed out. Doubts about one's personal character and strength diminish self-esteem.

Knierim said being loved and loving and feeling useful are anchored in self-acceptance, "because of who Jesus is. If you can't accept yourself, you can't be helpful to others. When you don't feel loved, you don't feel fulfilled.

"You have to have that balance in your life in order to help others," Knierim continued. "Mingled with God's call in your life, that enables you to have fulfillment. When you have fulfillment, stress doesn't get to you so much. When these things get out of balance, that is when you notice your uncomfortableness."

Sleep, diet and exercise play important roles in preparing individuals to help others, he said, as well as knowing when to back away from involvement with persons in need.

"Jesus needed distance," Knierim pointed out. "He modeled that by pulling aside to rest."



Point of Grace, a popular contemporary Christian group that started at Ouachita Baptist University, recently was honored by Word Records for the group's tenth consecutive No. 1 single — "God Is With Us" — on Christian radio. The achievement marks the first time that any musical group's first ten singles have reached No. 1 status. Participating in the recognition were (left to right) Word president Roland Lundy, Heather Floyd, Denise Jones, Thomas Nelson president Sam Moore, Terry Jones, Shelley Phillips and Word Records general manager Lynn Keesecker.

COLLEGE DIGEST

Ouachita Baptist University

Benson to receive award—Former OBU head football coach Buddy Benson has been selected to receive the Distinguished American Award sponsored by the Arkansas Chapter of the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame. He will receive the award April 6 during the chapter's annual banquet in North Little Rock. Benson retired in November after 31 years as OBU's head football coach.

Arnn wins Miss OBU title—Merideth Arnn, a 20-year-old junior choral music education major, was crowned as Miss OBU 1996 during the 30th annual pageant held March 9. Arnn, a member of First Church, Benton, received a \$700 scholarship and other prizes as well as the opportunity to represent OBU at the Miss Arkansas Pageant June 19-22 in Hot Springs.

Music students honored—Thirty-four OBU music students participated in the annual Student Auditions of the Arkansas chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing held recently at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. Twenty-five of the OBU students received special recognition for their performances before the judges, including 12 who were recognized as finalists.

Williams Baptist College

Staley lecture series—Kevin Shrum, a minister and writer from Nashville, Tenn., led the recent Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Program at Williams Baptist College. Shrum, pastor of Inglewood Baptist Church in Nashville, spoke about "Being a Christian in the Real World."

Registration opens for SBC child care

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Registration is being accepted for on-site care of preschool children of out-of-town messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 11-13 in New Orleans. The convention meetings and child care will be in the Superdome in New Orleans.

Registration forms may be obtained by writing to Kim Craig, 3939 Gentry Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126. Included in the return mailing will be a list of sessions when child care will be available and a medical form.

Child-care fees will be \$12 per session. Each registration form must be accompanied by a nonrefundable deposit of 50 percent of the anticipated cost. Parents are advised to register promptly; registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

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SBU offers graduate and undergraduate degree programs to 4,000 students annually.

Application/nomination deadline: May 15, 1996. Must include letter of interest, current vitae, statement of Christian faith, statement of Christian higher education philosophy, names/addresses/telephone numbers of at least 5 professional references.

Direct inquiries, applications, nominations to Graham Williams, search committee chair, 4900 Woodhaven Dr., Jefferson City, MO 65109.

Long-term volunteer needed to manage office in Germany

The European Baptist Convention (EBC), currently in partnership with

the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, has a need for an office manager/assistant to the general secretary. The EBC, a convention of more than 60 English speaking churches located in 21 European countries, is seeking a single adult lady who will serve as a volunteer in the EBC office in Wiesbaden, Germany, for a period of two years. She must have office

management/secretarial experience and skills, including computer skills.

She must be a committed Christian, knowledgeable of Baptist life and work. The EBC will offer a comfortable apartment, which she will share with another single adult lady volunteer. She is asked to provide all of her other support.

If interested, please write or call Harry Black or Doynne Plummer in the

ABSC Brotherhood Dept. at 1-800-838-2272 or 501-376-4791, ext 5190.



TO THE ENDS
OF THE EARTH

CIA policy addressing overseas informants prompts concerns

WASHINGTON (ABP)—A government policy that prohibits the use of overseas religious workers as Central Intelligence Agency informants once again is drawing the attention of U.S. religious groups.

The CIA policy, which has been in place since 1976, also bars the U.S. spy agency from using journalists in its covert operations.

CIA director John Deutch's recent acknowledgement that the policy can be waived in rare circumstances has raised concerns among news and religious organizations.

Deutch told the Senate Intelligence Committee that journalists are not used in covert operations unless the agency's director or deputy director deems the situation of "tremendous importance" to the security of the United States.

Deutch was not asked during his Senate appearance about the use of religious workers, but a CIA spokesman told Associated Baptist Press that the same loophole — a waiver by the director or deputy director — exists in the case of clergy and missionaries.

The agency's "policy is that we do not use members of the clergy," the spokesman said. But, as with every federal agency, the agency head has the authority to waive the internal regulation, he added.

James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, urged Deutch in a recent letter to "take steps...to assure Americans concerned about the integrity and safety of their missionary enterprises that U.S. intelligence operations are not compromising the mission of overseas religious workers."

Religious organizations argue that even the suspicion that missionaries are involved in U.S. intelligence operations jeopardizes the safety and mission of overseas religious workers.

Baptist missionaries serve as agents of Jesus Christ, Dunn pointed out. For them to be viewed as agents of the United States government not only jeopardizes their work but has the potential of putting them in dangerous situations.

Bruce Corley, former dean at Southwestern Seminary, elected theology professor

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—Bruce Corley, dean of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of theology from 1990-95, was recently elected by the board of trustees as professor of New Testament effective June 1. Corley resigned as dean March 21, 1995, to accept a position as professor of Christian scriptures at George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas.

"My family and I believe this to be God's will for us in the best stewardship of

our lives in ministry," Corley said in a prepared statement. "I am supportive of the future direction of Southwestern under the leadership of president Ken Hemphill and am encouraged by the constructive steps taken by both the trustees and the faculty to move forward into the 21st century, and I express my regret for past misunderstandings with hopes to move forward together."

Corley said he reaffirmed his commitment "to conservative theology and practice in the Southern Baptist Convention, especially at Southwestern where the Bible is honored as the Word of God and the world mission task is focused upon the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unsaved."

Trustee chairman Ralph Pulley, a Dallas attorney, said Corley's return "strongly strengthens" Southwestern's faculty.

"Dr. Corley is a respected theologian who has the great respect of the seminary family — that includes the trustees, president, administration, the faculty, the students and the support people. We're delighted to have him."

Seminary president Ken Hemphill said Corley was invited to return to Southwestern because he was "the best qualified person for the particular faculty need we now have."

A graduate of Southwestern, Corley began teaching at the seminary in 1976.

Tommy Lee, current dean of the school of theology, said the seminary trustees "have shown great wisdom and openness to the future in electing him to serve again at Southwestern."

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Convention Uniform

A compelling invitation

By William H. Sutton, attorney;
member, Immanuel Church,
Little Rock

Basic passage: Luke 14:1-24

Focal passage: Luke 14:24

Central truth: Accepting Jesus is a compelling proposition.

"He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very cornerstone...there is salvation in no one else" (Acts 4:11-12). These words spoken by Peter burned the ears of unbelieving Jews who had known Jesus before the crucifixion.

Luke reported a remarkable Sabbath day visit that Jesus made to the home of a Pharisee (Luke 14). It was not a comfortable social event. There was tension as He healed a sick man under their critical eye (vv. 2-4). They scrambled for seats of honor and received a sharp rebuke from Him on the virtues of humility (vv. 7-11).

Finally, being fully aware of their determination to reject Him, Jesus directed a parable that focused on the tragedy of their rejection. In the story, invitations from the host of a great dinner were spurned by those on a choice list (v. 18).

In anger, the host of the great banquet proceeded without the original invitees. They were replaced by the humble and unloved, poor, lame, crippled and blind (v. 21). For those whose station in life was so far below that of the host, the invitation had to be compelling to provide the assurance that it was real.

To the rude rejectors of Jesus, the message was clear and awesome. They would reject Jesus and, thus, the Kingdom of God. In their places God would compel others to come in and enjoy food that the rejecters would never taste (v. 24).

An invitation to eternal life by accepting Jesus is not discretionary to the understanding mind. We, as Christians, also are called to be a part of the invitation process by serving those around us with the invitation. We have a mandate to let them know that whatever their station in life - humble, unloved, poor, crippled, blind or separated from God - they are invited to the feast that God has prepared for everyone who accepts the invitation.

It is a compelling proposition and the time for accepting is running out.

Life and Work

Upon this rock

By Ben J. Rowell, pastor,

First Church, Rogers

Basic passage: Matthew 7:24-29

Focal passage: Matthew 7:26-27

Central truth: Nothing will stand without Jesus Christ.

We cannot mistake the fact that Jesus is our rock. He is our only foundation. Every one of us is to build a house, entertaining a hope of heaven. We should have wisdom enough to know that we cannot always live in our present earthly house. It was on the rock of His Word, on His faithfulness, that the house of Israel was built.

In the New Testament, the new house of God is the Christian community, "The Church." Its foundation is Jesus Christ and His Word. Many people I know today are building on the sand of human goodness and effort. I read where one man said, "All our merits, if we have any, all of our goodness will not suffice." You need something better. You need Jesus Christ.

Years ago when I was a teenager, I was playing with a group of boys and got into some quicksand which quickly began pulling me down. My friends got me out just in time. So many people today are trying to build on something like quicksand. We should know better than to think we could build on the sand. It is impossible, for the house could not stand.

When the storms of life come - and they will come - your house needs to be built on the rock. This old house we are living in physically, mentally and spiritually, will have its storms of life. When these problems and difficulties come, your house needs to be built on the rock of Jesus Christ. Be prepared for all the storms of life as they come.

Matthew 7:28-29 shows us that as Jesus taught at Capernaum, on the hillsides around the Sea of Galilee, the crowds were struck by His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority. These people had been used to the Pharisees and scribes saying something like this: "Rabbi said, so and so..." But when Jesus said, "I say unto you," He spoke with authority and power and it truly amazed the people. He would speak, and the demons would obey Him. He would heal and teach with authority. They simply were amazed and the crowds flocked to hear Him. They will flock to Him today if we tell them of His greatness.

Bible Book

The role of grace

By Don Moseley, pastor, Sylvan Hills

First Church, Sherwood

Basic passage: Titus 2:13-15

Focal passage: Titus 2:11-15, 3:4-8

Central truth: God's grace redeems us from wickedness and purifies us as a people who seek to honor Him with righteous living.

In the first 10 verses of chapter 2, Paul charges Titus with the responsibility of teaching sound doctrine to older men and women who were to teach younger women, young men and slaves to live in such a way that their lives would not "malign" the gospel message and that they in turn would be "profitable for everyone." Paul did not want them to be like the false teachers he described in chapter 1 by saying, "They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him" (v. 16). The church continually needs this reminder.

Having given instruction on how to live, Paul then gave the basis of such response when he used the transitional word "for" in v. 11, connecting everything that follows to all that preceded. He pointed to the motivation of "the grace of God" and the "blessed hope" of the second coming of Christ. The grace of God "teaches us to say 'no' to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope: glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own..." (v. 12-14).

The grace of God is to be seen as active in the believer, allowing God to continually "redeem us from all wickedness" and to "purify" a people who will honor Him. This is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit who brings renewal (vv. 5-6).

Having been justified by grace, Paul pointed out that the believer becomes an "heir" which causes him to look to the future, "having the hope of eternal life" (v. 7). This future look should motivate the believer to more care in how he lives. Paul further added, "...stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone" (v. 8).

Stress what? The "grace of God" and that future "glorious appearing" of Christ.

Convention Uniform

The living Word

By William H. Sutton, attorney;
member, Immanuel Church,
Little Rock

Basic passage: Luke 24:1-26

Focal passage: Luke 24:6

Central truth: Christ is risen, the ultimate reality.

In the closing days of World War II, the liberation of millions of prisoners of war and concentration camp survivors was one of the most dramatic events in world history. However, eyewitness accounts were not as expected. Bands didn't play, proclamations weren't read. Instead, to the long-suffering victims, there came a strange and eerie day when the guards weren't there and a mysterious silence went at length unexplained. Slowly, ever so slowly, did the realization come that the ordeal was over and they were free.

The witnesses to the ultimate event of the ages, the resurrection of Jesus, were similar. Not one of them signaled instant recognition of what had taken place. What they perceived as hard reality had closed their minds to the possibility that the cause to which they had devoted their lives would emerge victorious.

The truth rose and fell like flickering light. There was a strong illumination of it for the women who visited the tomb and were told point blank, "He is not here, He has risen" (v. 6).

But this light was dimmed by the unbelief of Jesus's own disciples who rejected it outright (v. 11). Slowly, the rheostat turned up. Peter, at last, decided to have a look and moved from a dark corner of disbelief to a state of pondering confusion (v. 12). John 20 reports that John saw the empty tomb and "believed" but did not understand and did not testify.

Two disciples who actually met Jesus on the road to Emmaus, moved from non-recognition to belief and testimony (v. 35).

Just as the dawn of enlightenment was emerging, Jesus appeared to the regrouped disciples and removed the doubts of the most skeptical. "Look at my hands, my feet" (v. 39). There were no hands and no feet like this in all of the world.

When their minds were opened, Jesus delivered the meaning. "Preach repentance and forgiveness in my name. You are my witnesses" (vv. 47-48).

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Life and Work

Forgetting to remember

By Suzanne Dilday, member,
First Church, Benton

Basic passage: Luke 24:1-8, 44-48

Focal passage: Luke 24:6-8, 44

Central truth: Sometimes we "forget to remember" God's truths.

As a teacher of high school students, I have a hard time getting my students to remember my words. Many times they come into my literature class preoccupied with other things: Who is dating whom, the big game tonight or how much longer it is until lunch. For some, it doesn't matter how many times I remind them to study for a quiz, many will still forget. They seem to suffer from the "Oh, I forgot!" syndrome.

"Did we have homework last night?"

"Yes. I gave instructions for it two days ago and reminded you yesterday."

"Oh, I forgot!"

In the Bible, we also see people apparently experiencing the same forgetfulness. After Jesus' burial, the women came to anoint His body, but instead found two angels beside the open tomb. Because of the women's perplexed response, the angels reminded them of Jesus' words about His own resurrection. "And they remembered His words" (v. 8).

"Oh, we forgot!"

Similarly, Jesus appeared to His disciples who had spent years listening to His teaching. They had heard Him speak of His resurrection on many occasions but had failed to grasp its significance or its reality. Jesus reminded them that "These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you..." (v. 44). And then they understood.

Just like my students, these women and men were preoccupied with what seemed like more important matters and they missed instructions that could have helped.

I think we often fall prey to the "Oh, I forgot!" syndrome ourselves when it comes to God's words. We become wrapped up in immediate circumstances, failing to listen to God, failing to remember His words from days past. It's only after some reminding that we say to God, "Oh, I forgot! You told me that!"

This week, put aside distracting situations that hold no spiritual significance and remind yourself of the promises God has given us. Although there may not be a quiz, facing life's challenges is reason enough to remember not to forget.

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Bible Book

The all-sufficient Christ

By Bill Steeger, chairman,
department of religion,
Ouachita Baptist University

Basic passage: Matthew 27:45-28:20

Focal passage: Matthew 28:18-20

Central truth: Jesus delivers on His promises.

Jesus' last days on earth were filled with the maneuvering of deceitful men. His own disciples betrayed Him. One of His closest friends denied Him. A blundering court illegally tried Him. Trumped-up charges defamed Him. Bribery tried to silence the story of His resurrection. All attempts were in vain. He lives!

Such a story of triumph makes His final claim on authority bold and the commissioning of His people powerful. The focal passage emphasizes four important superlatives: "all."

■ **"All power" or "authority"** (v. 18). Jesus conquered life, demonstrating victory over sin. Jesus accomplished His Father's plan, crying, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Jesus defeated death, triumphing over the grave and demonstrating that "all power" was given unto Him. Such authority overwhelms our minds and pricks our hearts. The "great commission" must be heard in light of such power. We have an all-sufficient Christ!

■ **"All nations"** (v. 19). God's plan always involved all nations. He called Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) and said: "...in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Jesus is the climax of that great blessing. Now He commands us to teach (make disciples) of all nations. That superlative leaves no one out. We have an awesome mission on our hands!

■ **"All things"** (v. 20). Jesus impacts every area of life. He came to save us, to redeem us completely — body, mind and soul. He provides the only access to the Father and offers the only effective means of relating to our fellow man. By observing "all things," our lives have a firm foundation, our homes a sure pattern for growth, our society an effective guide for abundant living. We have an all-sufficient message!

■ **"Always"** — literally, "all the days" (v. 20). Just as the "promise of the presence" sustained the saints of the past, so these words of Jesus give courage to His people today. Moses heard the message "I am with you" (Ex. 3:12). Joshua knew that same promise (Josh. 1:9). David found courage in that same presence (Ps. 23:4). Jesus promises us: "I am with you always."

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Assisted suicide ruling troubles pro-life advocates

WASHINGTON (BP)—A federal appeals court ruling March 6 in San Francisco may open the door to making physician-assisted suicide a legal reality across the United States. The 8-3 ruling by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a Washington state law which had held doctor-aided suicides a felony.

"There is a constitutionally protected liberty interest in determining the time and manner of one's own death," wrote appellate Judge Stephen Reinhardt. The ruling overturns an earlier appellate court decision which held there was "no constitutional right to aid in killing oneself."

"This court has unearthed a previously undiscovered right to die," said Christian Life Commission president Richard Land. "This is a logical extension of the modern quality of life ethic which is subverting the sanctity of life ethic upon which this country and its culture was built." Washington state officials are expected to appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

1996 ACP software, forms scheduled for release in April

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The 1996 Annual Church Profile software and paper forms are scheduled to be released the first week in April by the Baptist Sunday School Board's strategic information unit.

"The 1996 software was rewritten from the ground up," said Tom Carringer, strategic information specialist. "We feel we have made great progress to correct the problems experienced in 1995."

The ACP is a statistical tool by which individual churches can measure their progress. Statistics are then compiled at associational, state and national levels.

Problems with the 1995 software caused delays in distribution and difficulties with use, Carringer acknowledged. He said the goal for 1996 has been to release materials on time, address problems experienced last year and increased ACP effectiveness.

CLC elects Dwayne Hastings director of communications

WASHINGTON (BP)—Dwayne Hastings, news and information coordinator at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been elected director of communications for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

The CLC board unanimously approved Hastings to fill a position left vacant Jan. 1 when Bill Merrell became vice president of convention relations for the SBC Executive Committee. Hastings is expected to begin work in the CLC's Nashville office April 1.

Hastings, a 1995 graduate of Southeastern, has served for two years as the seminary's news and information coordinator. Before attending seminary, he served as an interim minister to youth for 18 months. Previously, he worked for three different corporations for 14 years. While an undergraduate student at Vanderbilt University, he was station manager and news director of a campus radio station.

William Carey College trustees elect Lee president

HATTIESBURG, MS (BP)—Longtime Mississippi College administrator Rory Lee, 46, has been awarded a five-year contract as president and chief operating officer of William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss.

The action is part of a 10-year plan for "strengthening the top management team of the Mississippi Baptist institution" approved recently by WCC trustees. The plan was recommended by Jim Edwards, WCC's current president and chief executive officer, who has been awarded a seven-year contract as chancellor and CEO of the college.

Lee currently serves Mississippi College as vice president of institutional advancement. He will be responsible for managing WCC's internal operations, including academic programs, student development, planning and budgeting and facility needs at the college's three campuses in Hattiesburg, Gulfport and New Orleans.

Former Oregon-Washington executive Fred Moseley dies

EUGENE, OR (BP)—Fred B. Moseley, a former executive secretary of the Northwest Baptist Convention, died Feb. 27 following heart surgery. He was 78.

Moseley was executive secretary from 1962-64 of the Baptist General Convention of Oregon-Washington, which later became the Northwest Baptist Convention. He was living in Eugene, Ore., at the time of his death.

A native of Mississippi, Moseley was a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was associate executive secretary of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1956-59, and head of the department of city missions for the SBC Home Mission Board, 1959-61. He became assistant executive director/treasurer of the HMB in 1965 and became a professor at New Orleans Seminary in 1976.