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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1985-1989

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

2-2-1989

February 2, 1989

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Renewed Commitment

Arkansas Baptist

February 2, 1989

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
AND ASSOCIATES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee



Preparing for
Partnership

Cover Story



ABN photo / Mark Kelly

Preparing for Partnership 8

In January Arkansas Baptists laid the foundation for a promising three-year overseas missions partnership with Guatemala.

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IT'S UPLIFTING

Soviets Permit More Bibles

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—The Soviet Union has granted a permit to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists to import an additional 100,000 Bibles, according to Alexei Bichkov, the council's general secretary.

The permit follows a campaign last year by the United Bible Societies and the Baptist World Alliance, which sent 100,000 Russian-language Bibles prior to the celebration of the 1,000th anniversary of Christianity in the Soviet Union. The project was endorsed and promoted by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission of Memphis, Tenn.

Soviet Baptists initiated the permit request and received it without much trouble, said BWA General Secretary-Treasurer Denton Lotz.

"For years, Baptists in the Soviet Union have been trying to get Bibles," said Lotz, who credits this opportunity to Mikhail Gorbachev's program of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. "The aim of Soviet Baptists is

for every Baptist to have a Bible."

"We don't have to smuggle these Bibles into the Soviet Union," said Brotherhood Commission President James H. Smith. "We went in the front door. This has been done legally and above the table."

In 1987, Smith issued a challenge at a BWA meeting in Amman, Jordan, to Baptist men of the world to raise \$250,000, or half of the money needed to purchase the Bibles, which cost \$5 each. More than \$100,000 came from Southern Baptists. No Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget funds were used in the effort.

Lotz and other BWA leaders credit the Brotherhood Commission's involvement with the first campaign's success.

"We have praised the Brotherhood Commission every place we have gone in the Soviet Union," said Lotz.

Because the Soviet Union is ethnically diverse, the next shipment will include Bibles in German, Estonian and other languages. Soviet Baptist leaders estimate that each Bible will be read by eight to 10 people.

GOOD NEWS!

Child Sacrifice

Judges 11

The gripping Old Testament tale of Jephthah sacrificing his daughter is symbolic of how parents can easily place their children behind other priorities. We can be delinquents in the parenting experience.

This is one of the horror stories of the Bible. Jephthah placed the keeping of a tragic vow above the life of his only daughter. He sacrificed his only daughter. Take a good look. Delinquent parents today sometimes unknowingly sacrifice their children.

Delinquent parents sacrifice their children to the god of affluence—The crowd beneath the altar of affluence grows ever larger. Many parents today are destroying their children with buying, grabbing, hoarding, and possessing compulsions just as surely as Jephthah destroyed his daughter in the flames.

Delinquent parents sacrifice their children to the god of security—Parents who came through the great depression of the thirties and World War II have sometimes been obsessed with making themselves secure.

Just as surely as Jephthah's sacrifice destroyed his daughter, modern parents plant the seeds for self-destruction in their children. Their search for security turns up

only the finite, impermanent treasures of life. All the property, money, insurance policies, and retirement programs in the world can not make a man secure.

Sacrificing children to the god of security will be expensive. It will cost them their freedom, their opportunities, and their ideals. Personal character, discipline, and integrity will be compromised. These children will one day realize that their most valued securities make them most insecure.

Delinquent parents sacrifice their children to the god of pleasure—Pleasure is often mistaken for happiness. Good times are substituted for good living.

Pleasure-bent people indulge in all their kicks without regard to the self-destructive nature of such a life-style. All around are people who have been bought, sold, and owned by the pursuit of pleasure. But life is much more than pleasure. What good is it if a man has all of life's pleasures and destroys himself in the process?

The tragedy is that parents sacrifice their children, all the while pretending that everything is working out OK. Jephthah remains a portrait of the parent who destroys his children for his own selfish ends.

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To Those In Need

J. EVERETT SNEED

Often those of us who live comfortably forget that there are many whose existence is characterized by hunger and poverty. Anyone who takes the Bible seriously is aware of God's great concern for the plight of the poor and needy. In both the Old and New Testaments compassion is expressed for those who are in need. Conversely, covetousness, greed, and injustice are denounced with the strongest of terms.

The Old Testament prophets repeatedly asserted the rights of the poor to receive humane treatment. Even the law (the Torah) contained definite provisions for caring for the needy and helpless (see Dt. 14:22-29).

Jesus exemplified all that the prophets had proclaimed about the poor. He fed the hungry, healed the sick and completely identified with those who had needs. As a result, the common people responded to him and heard him gladly.

In Jesus' notable description of the last judgment, he described the king as saying, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Mt. 25:40). Jesus was not indicating that individuals are saved through works. But he was clearly indicating that the kingdom type person will have compassion and concern for those who are in need.

Many believe that poverty is not an issue in our own country. Last year a group of volunteers visited the "helping agencies" in Garland County. The volunteers discovered that approximately 4,688 Garland County residents received food stamps in 1987. There are approximately 700 applications for food stamps in that area each month. The nutritional needs were further underscored by the fact that the Hot Springs School District has nine schools with an enrollment of 3,700 students. In these schools, 64 percent of the students participate in the school lunch program, where they receive either free lunches or lunches reduced in price.

The discovery made in Garland County is quite typical of what a group of volunteers would discover in most areas of Arkansas and other states. The plain truth is that there are many impoverished individuals in almost every community.

The question arises: Who are the poor in our society? They are often the very old or the very young. The old are often sick,



immobile, lonely and living their lives out in the neighborhoods underdoing drastic changes, or in rented rooms. The young often live in areas where they grow up too quickly and where juvenile gangs run wild. The young are often forced into an environment where life is cheap and where narcotics are sold for a risky fortune or used to escape reality.

Wherever poverty is rampant, there are certain well-established facts about its effects. Poverty always tends to perpetuate itself. The poor are easily caught up in a vicious cycle of poverty where generation after generation live in the same tragic conditions. Usually those trapped in poverty live with inadequate diet, inferior education, unacceptable housing and frequent illness. All of these factors make it difficult for these individuals to have steady and

profitable work.

God's concern for human suffering should be the attitude of every Christian. Genuine Christian concern for the poor will seek to express itself in two ways. First, the immediate problem of relieving suffering will be undertaken. It is Christian to feed the hungry, heal the sick and to provide shelter for the homeless. Almost all Christians are supportive of such efforts.

Second, Christians must be concerned about the root of poverty. Just as a Christian should be concerned about an individual's being hungry, they also should work to eliminate unemployment, improve working conditions, and eliminate racial injustice.

There are a number of positive steps that can be taken by Christians. First, it is imperative that Christians become informed about poverty in their own local community. If this information is not readily available in your area, it can be obtained by doing a survey.

Each church should consider the possibility of establishing some poverty-related ministry. Some churches have set up day care centers for children, employment services, migrant ministries, recreational programs, emergency relief programs, etc.

Finally, Christians should support legislation which will promote justice in hiring, wages, and housing, and providing for the aging and others who are particularly vulnerable.

The Bible states clearly that we have a responsibility to those who are in need. As Christians it is our responsibility to follow the example of Christ, who was always concerned about those who had needs, either spiritual or physical.

Arkansas Baptist

VOLUME 88

NUMBER 4

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Advertising accepted in writing only. Rates on request.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

The Arkansas Baptist (ISSN 1040-6506) is published weekly, except Easter, Independence Day, the first week of October, and Christmas, by the Arkansas Baptist News magazine, Inc., 601-A W. Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201. Subscription rates are \$6.99 per year (individuals), \$5.52 per year (every Resident Family Plan), \$6.12 per year (Group Plan). Foreign address rates on request. Second class postage paid at Little Rock, Ark.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arkansas Baptist, P. O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72205. (376-4791)

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

Parents, workers with youth, pastors, school officials, health officials and grandparents will be glad to know that their state convention is making a special effort to help teenagers cope with their dangerous world.

Exposed to constant pressure to drink alcoholic beverages and use drugs, they need all of the encouragement, inspiration and examples possible to help them resist. Recent government statistics indicate there are 3.3 million alcoholics who are 17 years of age and younger. For every alcoholic there are at least six people adversely affected by this. Remember, these are teenagers. They can never be anything but alcoholics, according to medical science and to social science. They may be sober for years, but Alcoholics Anonymous says they must always view themselves as alcoholics. What an awful price to pay to be "one of the bunch," to prove "your maturity" and to avoid being laughed at.

Crime, immorality, broken homes and insanity follow the path of those who follow the world's example of drug abuse and drinking of alcoholic beverages. Our church kids are not spared the same tragic consequences of the unsaved. We must help them!

Add to the above the fact that they are constantly exposed to suggestive humor, entertainment, conversation, and many powerful enticements to engage in immoral sexual activity. Help is too late for many. Forced marriages, abortions, disease, and guilt enough to destroy them is the burden they must bear for conformity to their world. We must help!

We are prepared to take a strong step in that direction. The Youth Issues Institute, April 8, is our attempt to equip those who work with young people in any capacity to be prepared to lead youth in a sensible discussion of drugs, alcohol, sexuality, pornography, and suicide.

Registration will be limited to the first 500 people who indicate in writing they will be in attendance. With over 1,000 churches without a youth minister, their volunteer workers are the ones who should most logically be first to register. Registration and materials will be free, because we want to help make a difference!

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



Woman's Viewpoint

A Father's Love

DEBBIE SMITH

I love kids! If you walked into my office at Geyer Springs First Baptist, you would see that most important sentence carved in wood sitting on the window sill. I suppose you would expect children to be very special to a children's minister. I'm writing this article not only from the viewpoint of a staff person who works with children and observes special needs, but also from the viewpoint of a woman who was once a little girl in need of a father's love and attention.

The most important love in a little girl's life is the love and attention from her father. This is not meant to lessen the importance of a godly mother. When I was growing up, I did not have the feeling of security that a stable, loving relationship with a father could bring. As a child I did not have the insight and understanding to look beyond my father's actions and lack of loving responses to me and see a dad that really loved me. When I did not receive this fatherly love, I natural-



ly concluded that it must be because I was unlovable. In my feelings, it was my problem, not my father's.

My thoughts and feelings toward my father and what I perceived as his feelings toward me then transferred to my relationship toward my heavenly Father. The God in my mind did not match up with the God in the Bible. I would read about God and how much he loved and accepted me, but my feelings did not agree with what I read.

As I grew to the dating years, I struggled with relationships with boys. These same insecurities affected the types of boys that I chose to date. I was involved in relationships that continued to make me feel insecure and left the void in my life.

I am thankful for a patient loving heavenly

Father who allowed circumstances in my life that forced me to lean hard on him. These circumstances served the purpose of retraining my mind and heart as to what a true father should be.

As a children's minister for over 11 years, I have seen many little girls in need of a Father's love and acceptance. I have seen little girls who sneak out to meet their boyfriends. I have seen little girls emotionally and physically abused by their fathers and stepfathers. I have seen several little girls ending up pregnant just to please that young boy in her life. From a woman's viewpoint to fathers, I say "Wake up Dad!" Spend that quality time with your little girl; Go out on that date; Listen to her! Your life, her life, and probably many other lives depend on your relationship to your little girl. You are the most important love in her life!"

Debbie Smith is the director of children's ministries at Geyer Springs First Church, Little Rock, Ark. She has been in full-time Christian work for 12 years.

Resident Couple

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Apartment Gospel

by Mark Wingfield
SBC Home Mission Board

HOUSTON (BP)—With two volunteer couples and \$100 per month, Barbara Oden says, she can start a church in any apartment complex.

She already has started 15 apartment congregations in Houston. Now she has her sights on 3,000 other complexes, where 47 percent of the city's population lives.

Oden is a Mission Service Corps volunteer appointed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. She coordinates multi-family housing ministries for Houston's Union Baptist Association.

Although nearly half of Houston's residents live in apartments, Oden has discovered, only 2 percent of apartment dwellers attend church anywhere.

"I'm so burdened about these people," she says. "We haven't even scratched the surface."

Oden has drawn on her eight years of experience as an apartment manager to develop a ministry plan that amazes even her. "If somebody had told me about what we're doing when I was an apartment manager, I wouldn't have believed it could be done," she says.

The secret of Oden's success is meeting the needs of both apartment owners and residents at the same time.

To begin an apartment church, Oden asks the owners for two free apartments and freedom to conduct Bible study and worship within the complex. In return, Oden offers to maintain a full program of family activities for residents.

Residents enjoy the safe, easily accessible activities. Owners see dollar signs because of increased occupancy and higher retention rates.

The Oaks of Wood Forest apartments had a 79 percent occupancy rate when Wood Forest Baptist Church began a ministry there. Seven months later, occupancy had jumped to 96 percent.

Manager Tony Luna says he's pleased to be doing so well in Houston's overbuilt apartment market. A portable sign at the complex entrance boasts, "Fun activities for all ages."

Volunteers Jerry and Ginger Hamilton live in one of the free apartments to coordinate the work. They use the other apart-

ment for activities and worship.

Already the apartment church averages more than 40 people in attendance. Twenty-one people have professed faith in Jesus Christ, and eight of them have been baptized.

Oden notes these are big results for a little expense. The Hamiltons are volunteers; he works as a purchasing agent for the Texas Eastern Co. The facilities are free, and the apartment owners usually pay for special events like cookouts and parties.

Churches that cannot afford to sponsor traditional missions can reach people that wouldn't attend traditional missions, Oden insists.

The major resource sponsoring churches must give is volunteers. "This gives laypeople who have no job in the church a sense of being needed," she says. "And they are needed. They're winning the lost to Christ."

Oden's hardest job is convincing pastors to give up two couples as volunteers, she says. However, pastors that help discover their own churches grow as a result.

David Adkins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Missouri City, Texas, sent his daughter and son-in-law to work in the Fonvilla apartments.

"The Lord replaced one family with two," Adkins reports. "It's a good investment."

Thus far, Oden has helped nine churches sponsor apartment ministries. First Baptist Church of Houston sponsors the most units, with five.

Oden is a member at First Baptist and got her start through the church's Westview Mission Center. She felt called to ministry but knew there were limitations for a 35-year-old single parent.

Harvey Kneisel, minister of missions at First Baptist, received a request for help from an apartment complex just hours before Oden came to volunteer for any available ministry.

She became the association's first resident apartment minister at the Springbrook apartments in 1986.

Other volunteers now continue the work she began there. The Springbrook church has produced 130 professions of faith in Christ and includes ministries such as Big A Club for children and English classes for adults.

Apartment pastor Stan Felder, who lives in the complex with his wife, says his ministry is far different from the average pastor. "We don't bring people in for Sunday, Sunday night and Wednesday night. We have them all the time."

Nearly all the children in Felder's low-income neighborhood come from broken homes. On Father's Day they ran out of construction paper when making greeting cards.

"If the gospel can't make it here, it's no good," Felder says.

But the gospel appears to make a difference throughout Springbrook, as illustrated by an anonymous theologian's paraphrase of Acts 5:42 on a chalkboard in the activity center:

"And daily in the complex and in every apartment, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

(BP) photo / Ken Touchton



Barbara Oden works with a Korean woman on English pronunciation.

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LOCAL & STATE

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Reed Bethel will begin serving Feb. 19 as pastor of Otter Creek First Church in Little Rock. He has been serving as pastor of Clifton Church in Franklinton, La., for more than four years, having also served the church as minister of youth and activities. Bethel is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served as a Baptist Student Union director at Casper College in Casper, Wyo. His wife, the former Janet Lynne Kitts, holds music degrees from both the University of North Carolina and the University of Notre Dame.

Gordon Topping is serving as pastor of Second Church in Pine Bluff. He moved to Pine Bluff from Cowdenbeath, Scotland, where he had served as a pastor for six years. Topping and his wife, Enn, served as missionaries to Senegal, West Africa for 11 years. They have four children.

Andrew M. Hall, a retired Southern Baptist minister from Fayetteville, is teaching *Aspects of the Pastoral Ministry* at Palm Beach Atlantic College, Florida, for the winter term. He also is serving as interim pastor of a church in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Stanley Daniel has resigned as pastor of First Church of Van Buren, effective April 2 following more than eight years of service.

Gene Herrington recently resigned as minister of education at Olivet Church in Little Rock, following two years of service.

David Steele resigned Jan. 30 as minister of music and youth at Central Church of North Little Rock.

Billy Davis has resigned as minister of music at First Church, Brinkley, to serve as minister of music and youth at Philadelphia Church in Jonesboro.

Lynsol Richmond, pastor of Emmanuel Church of Blytheville, recently was ordained to the preaching ministry.

Carl Rider has resigned as pastor of Joiner Church.

Kenneth McGee, pastor of Oak Church, was ordained to the ministry Jan. 19 at Shady Grove Church, Van Buren.



Bethel



Topping

Katsy McAlister of El Dorado, president of Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union, was honored Jan. 12 at the closing session of the Southern Baptist WMU executive board meeting in Birmingham, Ala. McAlister, whose term on the board ended this year, has served on the national board as a vice-president for five years.

Bobby Shows was honored Jan. 29 by Park Hill Church in North Little Rock in recognition of 10 years of service as minister of activities.

Mark Dose has resigned from the staff of Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock to

serve as minister of education and youth at First Church of Cordele, Ga.

Richard Stiltner observed 12 years of service as pastor of First Church in Hope when the church honored him and his wife with a reception Jan. 8.

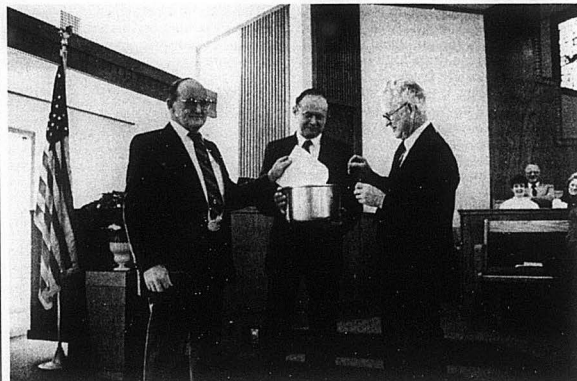
John Noland, pastor of Friendship Church in Marianna, has returned from a mission trip to Monterey, Mexico, which resulted in 155 professions of faith and the establishment of two churches.

Ken Jordan resigned Jan. 15 as pastor of First Church in Morrilton.

Ralph Allmon retired Feb. 1 as pastor of Northside Church in Horseshoe Bend.

Al Sparkman resigned Jan. 11 as pastor of First Church, Crossett, following 11 years of service.

Guy Whitney Sr., retired Jan. 31 as director of missions for Current-Gains Association. Whitney, who will be available for supply preaching, will reside in Manila with his wife, Willie, who will continue to teach at Clay County Central High School in Rector.



First Church, Huntsville, launched the New Year with a noteburning service Jan. 1, celebrating payment of a parsonage improvement program. The \$8,500 note, borrowed March 25, 1988, with a maturity date of March 25, 1990, was used to complete parsonage rewiring, the addition of 12 inch ceiling insulation, and installation of vinyl siding, thermopane insulated windows, and a storm door. Participants in the noteburning were (left to right) Raymond Nice, chairman of trustees, Bob Bramall, and Charles Spears.

Briefly

Park Hill Church in Arkadelphia received \$5,500 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, exceeding its goal of \$3,500.

Monticello First Church observed Baptist Men's Day Jan. 22 when John Hampton, a layman from First Church of Booneville, was speaker and the men of the church presented special music.

Altus First Church ordained Pastor Darryl Stevens to the ministry Jan. 22.

Conway First Church ordained Mike Dunaway, Curt Floyd, Tracy Moore, and Jeff Stuart to the deacon ministry Jan. 15.

Batesville First Church observed Baptist Men's Day Jan. 22 when Kenneth Richie, a layman from First Church of Madisonville, Texas, was speaker.

Piggott First Church observed Baptist Men's Day Jan. 22. Speakers were Pastor Clyde P. Spurgin, Larry Featherston, Bill Waterman, and Bill Veal.

Newport First Church ordained Greg Janski to the deacon ministry Jan. 8. Pastor Gene Crawley preached the ordination message.

Hughes First Church observed Baptist Men's Day Jan. 22 with activities that included a 7:30 a.m. breakfast in which Wayne Taylor was speaker. Rick Proctor, a layman from Wynne Church, was speaker at the morning worship hour which featured music by a Baptist Men's choir.

Smithville Church Woman's Missionary Union observed Cooperative Program Awareness Day Jan. 1 with a program which featured the ministries of WMU and the showing of the video "The Darkness Shall Turn." This program was held in conjunction with the church exceeding its \$1,000 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for two successive years.

Wynne Church observed Baptist Men's Day Jan. 29 when Gene Howard, a layman from Bellevue Church in Memphis, was speaker.

Olivet Church in Little Rock was host for a Baptist Women's Federation meeting Jan. 31. Martha Robertson, missionary to Peru, was speaker.

Classifieds

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For Sale—50 oak pews for sale. Call 676-5136 2/16

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ABN photo / Mark Kelly



Glendon Grober fellowships with Guatemala Baptist leader Daniel Moscoso.

Preparing for Partnership

Arkansas Baptists are gearing up for their second overseas missions partnership.

An 11-member planning team spent a week in Guatemala Jan. 7-13, laying the groundwork for three years of cooperation between the Guatemala and Arkansas Baptist conventions.

The team held two days of discussions with Southern Baptist missionaries and Guatemala Baptist leaders in order to identify needs in the country to which Arkansas Baptists can relate. The group also worshiped with Baptist congregations in the capital city and spent two days touring the country, visiting with missionaries and looking at church sites where partnership projects are likely to be attempted.

Guatemala is the northernmost country of Central America, located immediately south of Mexico. Its topography ranges from dense rain forests to towering volcanic mountains and fertile coastal plain. Guatemala's 8 million inhabitants primarily speak Spanish, but in outlying areas more than 20 autonomous languages derived from the ancient Mayan culture also are used.

Baptist work in Guatemala was launched in the 1930s, and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board established a relationship with Guatemala in 1948. Today 47 missionaries are attached to the Guatemala Baptist Mission.

The Convention of Baptist Churches of Guatemala consists of 320 congregations, 116 of which are organized churches. They recorded 849 baptisms in 1988, as well as a Sunday School enrollment of 16,581. All the churches are self-supporting.

While a few mission projects may be undertaken this year, 1989 will primarily be a planning phase, with the actual partnership projects taking place from 1990 through 1992.

This is the second overseas missions partnership for Arkansas Baptists. In 1987 the convention concluded a three-year partnership with two conventions in Equatorial Brazil. Currently, the state convention is involved in a push to start new congregations at home. The "Church Arkansas" emphasis calls for 370 new churches to be planted by the end of the century. The 1989 goal is 45 new congregations.

Participating in the January planning trip were Arkansas Baptist State Convention staff members Don Moore, Glendon Grober, and George Sims; Cary Heard, ABCS president; Randel Everett, ABCS Executive Board president; Ferrell Morgan, director of missions for Concord Association; Bobby Pennington, pastor of First Church in Hamburg; Russell and Ina Miller of Mountain Home; Marjorie Grober of Little Rock; and Mark Kelly, managing editor of the *Arkansas Baptist*.

A SMILE OR TWO

Promise—The departing babysitter said to the returning parents, "By the way, I promised Janie that if she went to bed, you'd buy her a pony in the morning."

An editor is one who separates the wheat from the chaff and prints the chaff.
—*Adlai Stevenson*

Acteens Encounter

April 28-29, 1989

Park Hill Church, North Little Rock



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A Ministry of the Cooperative Program

Officers Elected

Baptist Medical System Trustees Elect Officers

LITTLE ROCK—Calvin Hagan of Little Rock, president of The Hagan Agency and a member of First Church, Little Rock, was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees of Baptist Medical System at the annual meeting in December of the Baptist Medical System Corporation.

Ted Snider of Little Rock, president of the Snider Corporation and member of Pulaski Heights Church, Little Rock, was elected vice chairman, and Lyndell Lay of North Little Rock, chairman of Charter Mortgage and Investment, Inc. and a member of Second Church, Little Rock, was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

Dr. Ben Elrod of Arkadelphia, president of Ouachita Baptist University, was elected to a three-year term on the Board of Trustees. Mike Coulson of Little Rock, president of Coulson Oil Co., Inc.; Dr. John H. McClanahan, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Pine Bluff; Dr. Kenneth R. Meacham, a Searcy physician; Judge John Ward of North Little Rock, and Lay were all re-elected to three year terms on the board.

Also at the meeting, it was announced that John A. Gilbreath, who served as ex-

ecutive director of Baptist Medical System for 38 years until his retirement in 1983, had been elected president emeritus.

The new conference center at Baptist Medical Center, which is part of Baptist Medical System, has been named the J.A. Gilbreath Conference Center in recognition of his years of service to the organization.

In his address to the corporation, Russell D. Harrington Jr., president of Baptist Medical System, outlined challenges that threaten the survival of the nation's healthcare system. They included financial viability, which is threatened by the Medicare reimbursement system; adequate professional staffing, which is threatened by a shortage of registered nurses and rehabilitation therapists; hospital relationships with members of the medical staff; competition for market share and patient acquisition; the increasing demand for services and equipment by consumers, and the growing elderly population.

In addition to Baptist Medical Center, Baptist Medical System operates Arkansas Rehabilitation Institute in Little Rock, Memorial Hospital in North Little Rock and Twin Rivers Medical Center in Arkadelphia.



Walter Moore and Lavern Kelly

Mena First Presents Awards

First Church of Mena recently presented Walter Moore and Lavern Kelly with diplomas they had earned.

Kelly was presented with the Sunday School Leadership Diploma for Adult Leaders.

Moore, a retired medical missionary, was recognized for his special achievements in study. Through training conferences offered through the Mena church, Ouachita Association, and Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina, he has received 19 diplomas.

When Can a Child Believe?

Children and salvation will be the topic of a seminar at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock Feb. 19.

Entitled When Can a Child Believe?, the workshop will be led by Cos Davis, preschool program manager for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. Davis is the author of *Children and the Christian Faith*.

The workshop will begin at 3 p.m. and conclude at 6:45 p.m. A \$1 fee will be charged, which includes the cost of a meal. A nominal fee will be charged for child care for parents who are not members of Geyer Springs Church.

For more information, contact Debbie Smith at 565-3474.



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A New Agency?

Religious Liberty Commission to be Recommended

by Dan Martin
Baptist Press

DALLAS (BP)—Creation of a new Southern Baptist Convention agency to represent the convention in Washington, D.C., will be recommended to the SBC Executive Committee when it meets Feb. 20-22.

The decision to recommend formation of the Religious Liberty Commission was announced following a Jan. 5-6 meeting of a seven-member committee appointed to study "alternatives" to the relationship between the SBC and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a religious liberty coalition of nine Baptist denominations in the United States and Canada.

Since its formation in 1939, the BJCPA has been the SBC's spokesman on First Amendment issues, including church-state separation and religious liberty. The program statement governing SBC participation notes the SBC recognizes the BJCPA "as the sole office in the Washington area through which it maintains contact with the federal government."

In recommending creation of the new commission, the study committee also recommended steps to alter but not terminate the relationship between the BJCPA and the SBC, including reducing SBC funding and changing the way in which those funds are made available.

In recent years, the SBC has directly provided about \$400,000 per year to the BJCPA, representing about 90 percent of member contributions to the organization's budget.

The study committee recommended funding for 1989-90 "be reduced from the 1988-89 funding level" of \$400,000, but did not specify an amount.

Members of the study committee deter-

mined the exact allocation should be left to the program and budget subcommittee of the Executive Committee, which is charged with responsibility for planning the annual SBC budget.

Members, however, voted to communicate with the budget planning group, which meets in mid-January to plan the 1989-90 budget, that the "financial obligation of the SBC to maintain full representation on the BJCPA could be satisfied with a substantial reduction" in funding.

The study committee also voted to communicate to the budgeting group that funds are needed both by the SBC Christian Life Commission for an office in Washington and by the SBC Public Affairs Committee, the 18-member standing committee through which the SBC relates to the BJCPA.

A third "communication" explains funding can be reduced because "the expenses of the Washington bureau of Baptist Press will no longer fall under the purview of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs."

Baptist Press, the SBC's news service, has five bureaus, including the one at the BJCPA.

Although the recommendation to create the Religious Liberty Commission, if adopted, would provide an exclusive Southern Baptist First Amendment presence in Washington, the study committee specified it wishes to maintain a continuing relationship with the BJCPA, cooperating "on those issues on which we can agree."

The recommendation, however, would change the way the BJCPA receives Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget funds. Currently, the organization—although not officially an SBC entity—is funded directly, the same as

all boards, institutions and commissions.

The change would put funding in the SBC operating budget, which is administered by the Executive Committee and includes expenses for the Executive Committee, the annual meeting, the Baptist World Alliance contribution and all standing committees, which are not legal entities and cannot receive direct funding.

The recommendation will be presented to the Executive Committee's business and finance subcommittee during its February meeting. If it is approved there, it will be recommended to the entire Executive Committee.

If the Executive Committee agrees to the creation of the new agency, the action will be recommended to messengers at the 1989 annual meeting of the SBC in Las Vegas, Nev., and to the 1990 annual meeting in New Orleans. According to SBC Bylaw 15, creation of new agencies must be approved by simple majority vote in two consecutive annual meetings.

Other bylaw changes necessitated by the creation of a new agency must be approved only once, but by two-thirds majority votes. Such votes likely would come in the 1990 annual meeting.

If the recommendation to create the Religious Liberty Commission is approved in both annual meetings, it would be the first new agency created since 1960, when the Stewardship Commission was voted into being.

The SBC currently has 20 national entities, including the Executive Committee, four general boards, seven institutions, seven commissions and one auxiliary.

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'Renewed Commitment'

by Susan Todd

Woman's Missionary Union

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Sticking to a single purpose—missions—was the common thread during the week-long annual executive board meeting of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union Jan. 6-12.

At least three missions leaders spoke to the group about the importance of cooperation, but they also urged independent thinking and action.

"Threats to the concept of cooperation are rampant in our convention today," said WMU Executive Director Carolyn Weatherford. "Rampant" is an adjective that modifies 'rampage.' Rampage means 'a course of violent or riotous action or

behavior.' Rampant behavior is 'unchecked in growth or spread.'

"Southern Baptists are in their 11th year of unchecked controversy. We must do something about it, not simply because we don't like controversy, but because controversy has drawn our hearts, minds and resources away from our major concern—missions."

WMU "cannot be all things to all Baptist women, nor to all Baptist entities," Weatherford said. "We must remember what our task is, and perform to the limit of that task."

Wendell Belew, who recently retired from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as associate vice president for mis-

sions strategy, praised WMU for remaining true to its task while pushing the limits.

"You recognize that men have written most of the history and most of the laws, and you recognize that women forever have lived within the circumference of these impositions," he said. "But still you have managed to break through that."

Belew listed WMU leaders, past and present, and said: "They've all worked within the circumference, the boundaries, but still managed to push the parameters. And that's a part of who you are."

Even though WMU members might like even to say the convention controversy has not affected them, it has, said national WMU President Marjorie J. McCullough.

"The thing that hurts me personally is that I don't know who to trust anymore," she said. "But I'm not willing to give up on the Southern Baptist Convention."

McCullough encouraged the group to keep on having faith in what they are doing to support the convention through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and through the Cooperative Program unified budget, which funds the work of the convention.

"Our faith is not based on a (SBC) resolution. We have to keep on believing ... and know that no resolution can change our faith," she said.

McCullough also said she knows not everyone thinks WMU is wonderful, and other groups are competing for young women's time. WMU must do a better job of "selling" itself, she said: "Missions education is not a priority today in our convention. We want it to be. But it isn't."

Four factors will carry WMU successfully into the future, McCullough said:

- WMU leadership must be of substance and quality.
- WMU must offer a meaningful application of missions at home.
- WMU must be unified in purpose.
- And WMU must create an environment conducive to change.

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HOME MISSIONS EMPHASIS

The Lost of America

by Susan Todd

SBC Woman's Missionary Union

Southern Baptists aren't reaching the unsaved of America because they aren't looking for the right people in the right places, according to a leading missions researcher.

Instead, Southern Baptists seem to be looking for people just like themselves—white, middle-class, and living in the South and Southeast.

There are only 17 million unsaved people who are basically like the average middle-class, white Southern Baptist church member, said Orrin Morris, director of research for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

That means that 150 million of the lost people in America are different racially, economically, or geographically from the average Southern Baptist church member, he said.

"We want in our churches to reach 'stable' lost people," said Morris. "We don't want revolving doors on our churches. The difference between what we want and what we will have to accept in order to reach the lost is quite different."

And in a country which is perceived to be a "Christian" nation, it becomes even more difficult to identify the lost—whether alike or different from traditional Southern Baptists.

"They (the lost) are 'Christians' in their own view," Morris said. "If you push it, 10, maybe 15 percent consider themselves non-Christians. But the others are offended to be considered non-Christian."

Because the lost of America don't admit to being non-Christian, the Research Department of the Home Mission Board

has had difficulty identifying them all. However, this much of a general profile is known:

—They live in cities. City dwellers represent about three-fourths of the total U.S. population. And of the people who live in the cities with more than 1 million residents, an estimated 72 percent are lost.

—They attend church. Probably 25 percent of the lost are exposed regularly to church through weddings, funerals, and worship services at special holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Yom Kippur. Many attend church because of occupational prestige or social obligation.

—For the most part, they are poor. The poor population of 34 million is predominantly white, not black. More than three-fourths of the poor are under the age of 44. The elderly represent only 10.5 percent of the poor, while 39.2 percent are under age 18.

—They are unmarried couples sharing the same household. Figures from the 1980 census indicate that at that time 4.4 million people lived in these households, including 840,000 children.

—They are young adults. Only 5 percent of America's young adults fit the "yuppie" image. About half of the young adult population has only a high school degree. They are the least likely to vote or to be in the same location in two years.

—Many of the lost are single parents. More than 25 percent of all families with children have only one parent present, 90 percent of whom are women.

—They are black. The black population increased by 17.3 percent from 1970-80, with the South Atlantic states showing the



Reaching the lost, one by one.

largest black community. Black Northerners are migrating to these states in significant numbers.

—They are young, single working women. Since 1980, one-person female households have increased 12 percent.

—They are immigrants. Two groups contribute to steady growth in the immigrant population—Asian and Hispanic. In 1985, Hispanics numbered 16.9 million, representing 7.2 percent of the total U.S. population. It is predicted that the Asian population will grow to 8.1 million by 1990.

—Many are homosexuals. "I don't see how we're going to say we're concerned about the lost and ignore the homosexual and lesbian communities," Morris said. "There's no telling how many there are."

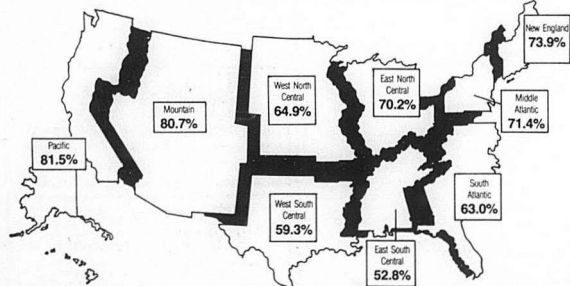
Not all 167 million lost people in America fit neatly into any single category, Morris said. "But there are significant numbers who fall into each of these categories. That means Southern Baptists need to find ways to reach the lost in each category."

Many churches will have to overcome being what Morris calls "maintenance churches with survival syndromes." These churches are afraid to accept lost people from any of these groups for their memberships for fear "they'll tear up the church," he said.

"In a sense, we expect people to get right morally and culturally before they become Christians. We are guilty of drawing rigid lines and being judgmental. The lost run from this," Morris said.

"We need to take the old, old story and approach the lost in new ways."

1988 Estimated Percentage of Lost Persons



Source: Home Mission Board



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Censors Needed, RTVC Says

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission trustees called on the three major television networks to reinstate to program practices offices, their in-house censors.

The trustees approved a resolution to be sent to the heads of the ABC, NBC and CBS television networks, the Federal Communications Commission and "appropriate committees of Congress."

The resolution was approved after commission President Jimmy R. Allen reported that the three networks had either closed or drastically reduced the size of their offices of program practices and standards. Program standards offices were responsible for screening programs for offensive content.

The resolution deplored "the increased violence, sadism, explicit sexual content and popularizing of behavior destructive to family life in America contained in network television programming."

Trustees also reviewed two programs produced for national network distribution. An NBC special, "The Hunger Next Door," is scheduled to run on NBC Sunday, Jan. 29, and "Musical Bridges" is to be carried on ABC Sunday, March 5.

"The Hunger Next Door" documents responses of churches and missionaries to the problem of hunger in America and in other parts of the world. "Musical Bridges" is a documentary produced during the visit of the Centurymen to China. It features interviews with Chinese Christians and church leaders.

Vegas Child Care Preregistration

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)—Child care will be provided for preschool children of messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 13-15 in Las Vegas, Nev., announced Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist.

The child-care facility will be located in the Las Vegas Convention Center, site of the annual meeting, Hedquist said. It will be open for each session of the meeting, beginning Tuesday, June 13.

A preregistration packet, which includes registration forms and information about costs and policies, is available by writing to Marie Moore, College Park Baptist Church, 2101 E. Owens, Las Vegas, Nev. 89030.

Preregistration is available on a first-come, first-served basis, Hedquist said.

Convention Uniform

First Things First

by Norene A. Reed, Warren

Basic passage: Luke 12:13-15, 22-34

Focal passage: Luke 12:13-15, 22-34

Central truth: God's kingdom should be first in a person's life.

The pace of living seems to move faster each year. Many people are rushing from one thing to another, working to make money to meet needs and buy more things. There is an abundance of mechanisms to catch one's fancy.

In Jesus' day it was slower. Yet there were the same anxieties we have today: food, shelter, clothes, laying aside something for the future. In a multitude of people, one man asked Jesus to make his brother divide the inheritance with him. Jesus' reply questioned as to who had made him a divider. The regular courts could make this decision. The problem of covetousness—a greedily longing for more—seemed evident.

Jesus took this opportunity to teach all of the people, using the parable of the man with the bountiful harvest. He built bigger barns to store excess only to find that he would not be the one using it. The quality of a person's life is not dependent on an abundance of possessions.

Man's life is more than the food he puts into his body. There is the love that can flow through the person to help others, develop a strong family, and witness to Christ. Food is necessary and enjoyable, but cannot compare to the joy and benefit of expressed love.

The body is far more important than the clothes that adorn it. It is the body that houses the inner being and is an instrument for expressing what is in the heart. With feet, one can go to another person; with hands, a service can be rendered; with the voice, ideas and love can be transmitted. Each person has the responsibility to care for this instrument physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Two examples of God's care are given in the feeding of the ravens, who are not able to plant and harvest food, and in the lilies, which clothe the grass in an unmatched beauty. Our lives are longer and of greater value than the grass or ravens—so important Christ died for our salvation.

By God's help we need to search within ourselves and discover if busy activities, pressures of life, and worldly possessions are taking precedence over God's kingdom and its expression of love.

Life and Work

Responsibility to Others

by Don Moseley, Sylvan Hills First Church, Sherwood

Basic passage: I Corinthians 8:1,4-13

Focal passage: I Corinthians 8:1,9,13

Central truth: We must use our liberty in the light of how it will affect others, especially Christians.

The Apostle Paul was there addressing another one of those questions previously written about (I Co. 7:1). He writes, "Now as touching things offered unto idols. . ." (v. 1). As Paul answers their question about eating food offered to idols, he gives a principle that can be applied to the gray areas in life. Some practices are well defined and are considered black and white issues. But some issues fall in the gray areas and are not clearly spelled out in Scripture. The principle is clearly stated in verse 9 when he says, "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak."

The Corinthians thought they should be able to eat meat because they had knowledge (v. 1), because an idol was nothing (v. 4), and because food was not an issue with God (v. 8). Now, Paul was not putting knowledge down but putting it in perspective when he said, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth" (v. 1b). Without love, knowledge becomes sheer arrogance. Paul is suggesting that mature believers should not focus on their liberty, but on the spiritual welfare of those less mature in their faith. We need to let love set our limits!

Although the foods we eat have no spiritual significance in our acceptance with God, we do, however, find that what would not otherwise be wrong for us becomes wrong if it is a "stumbling block to the weak." It is never right for us to cause a believer to violate his conscience (v. 12). The Holy Spirit works through our conscience to protect us from harmful experiences. As maturity takes place, our conscience allows us more freedom because we are more spiritual and have more strength and better judgment. As we grow, our consciences are expanded.

The Apostle concludes his thoughts with our need to consider others first when he says, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (v. 13). Love should temper our liberty.

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Bible Book

Commitment

by Timothy L. Deahl, Olivet Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Acts 5:12-42

Focal passage: Acts 5:17-20, 25-29, 34-35, 38-42

Central truth: Fear is overcome by true love for Christ.

I John 4:18 states, "Perfect love casts out fear." The meaning is clear: when love reaches a certain level of intensity, fear becomes secondary. For example, if a bystander sees a child drowning a few feet away, his desire to help the child surpasses his concern for his own welfare.

The principle also applies in the area of Christian testimony. Acts 5 details persecution against the apostles. The question is, "Are their love for Jesus and desire to share his message stronger than their fear of imprisonment and torture?" Notice the challenges to their commitment: imprisonment (v. 18), interrogation (vv. 27, 28), malicious intent (v. 33), physical abuse (v. 40), and "legal" restraint (v. 40).

Although only rarely does a Christian in the United States suffer to such an extent for his faith, persecution will come. One wonders how much the determination of Christians in today's society would have to grow in order to surpass the fears of intimidation, ridicule, and rejection, to say nothing of imprisonment, torture, or death.

The reasons for this persecution should not go unobserved. Verse 17 mentions jealousy. Verse 26 suggests a fear of public control by the established leadership or the loss of public favor. However, verse 33 uncovers the key issue: guilt, conviction of sin. Notice how this is brought in verse 28 where the interrogators charged them saying, "You intend to hold us responsible for this man's death."

Gamaliel is wise enough to know that persecution may create an effect opposite to the intended one if those being persecuted have a determination surpassing fear of threatened reprisal. The apostles were convinced that their message was worth sharing and that the reward was worth any risk.

For their part, the religious council failed to realize that trying to suffocate the convicting power of the gospel is useless and self-defeating. The proper action (see Ac. 2:37-38) brings forgiveness and life—and a love that surpasses all fear.

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BAPTIST YOUNG MEN

In a Heartbeat

by Tim Seanor

SBC Brotherhood Commission

PUERTO VARAS, Chile (BP)—“You’re being watched by 20,000 people,” said Southern Baptist missionary Caroline Jones. “Everybody in this town already knows you are here. They knew you were coming before you got here. And I can assure you that as we pulled into town the word spread that the ‘gringos’ had arrived.”

Aware of their witness responsibility, the seven members of the second Baptist Young Men’s overseas work team began their 16-day volunteer experience in Puerto Varas and Santiago, Chile. The team representing High School Baptist Young Men, and Baptist Young Men in the United States and Western Canada traveled more than 5,000 miles by plane, boat, bus, train and automobile to work in church construction and a missionary children’s day camp.

“This is the youngest group we’ve ever had,” said Southern Baptist missionary Archie Jones. “Everybody is under 40. This group, being younger, seems to have more energy than most work crews.”

Working long, hot days in the South American summer months of December and January, the crew constructed kitchen cabinets and a pantry, and secured ceiling panels on three rooms of a new Baptist church in Puerto Varas, a small city of German ancestry in southern Chile. Overcoming language and cultural differences, the crew enjoyed working with Chilean Baptists, speaking in their churches and learning more about a country filled with volcanoes, crystal-clear lakes, and miles of ocean coastline.

“We could feel the love of the people that we’ve met,” said team member Tim Garrison, 33, of Winston, Ga. “Even though we couldn’t speak to each other,

you could just feel a mutual bond there—that was Jesus Christ. It was wonderful.”

New Year’s Day marked new beginnings for the international Baptist Young Men’s work team. After attending the first worship service in the new church, the team boarded a train northbound for Santiago, the capital city of Chile. Transforming from

Brotherhood Commission photo / Tim Seanor



Constructing kitchen cabinets for a church in Puerto Varas, Chile.

construction crew to day-camp counselors, the group members led Bible studies, music and games for 34 children of Southern Baptist missionaries attending the biannual missions meeting. The feeling of being part of the missions “family” was evident in the hospitality of the Chile mission, they said.

“My most meaningful experience was when all the kids called me ‘uncle,’ said 15-year-old Scott Laughman of Douglasville, Ga. “When they all called me ‘uncle,’ I felt responsible for the kids. It was an enjoyable kind of responsibility.”

Many of the missionaries attending the meeting noticed a distinctive difference in the work team. “This is first time in 24 years that I’ve seen a group of men working with our MK’s,” said missionary Ken Park of Copiapo, Chile. “They have given us stability and orderliness to the work that I haven’t seen before. We’re grateful for all that they’ve done.”

Eddie Pettit, national director of Baptist Young Men, a program sponsored by the SBC Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., was leader of the overseas project. “We have two purposes for having this national Baptist Young Men’s overseas work project,” said Pettit. “We want to teach Baptist Young Men skills they can use in missions and realize that the skills they already have can be utilized overseas or in a home project. We also want to help Baptist men realize that Baptist young men have gifts and talents to offer in such a project.”

With changed attitudes and a renewed dedication, the crew members resolved to tell churches at home about the importance of missions. “I understand more about the whole concept of missions rather than just knowing that there’s a missionary here and missionary there,” said Richard Stone, 27, of Winston, Ga.

“I always looked at missions as just being back in no-man’s land,” confessed John Tarwater, 18, from Sevierville, Tenn. “I always thought of missionaries as being up on a stool and preaching, but missionaries are normal people who live normal lives. They’re just in another land doing God’s work.”

Asked if the work team would do this kind of project again, Tarwater replied, “In a heartbeat.”

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WORLD

Church Planting Voted As Goal

by Kathie Chute
SBC Foreign Mission Board

TAIPEI, Taiwan (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries in Taiwan took new steps in January toward evangelizing the island, endorsing a goal to concentrate 70 percent of the missionary force in full-time church planting.

The vote followed a similar move by missionaries in Japan last year. Taiwan missionaries hope the new strategy will help them become more effective in evangelistic outreach by focusing the majority of mission resources and personnel on church planting and evangelism. The other 30 percent of the missionaries will be assigned to support and institutional ministries.

About one-third of the 117 Southern Baptist missionaries in Taiwan currently are involved in church planting, with the rest performing a variety of ministries. Under the new strategy, numerous missionaries will change assignments between now and 1997.

The strategic redeployment of missionaries "is based on need" and is "not simply a philosophy of the (Southern Baptist) Foreign Mission Board," said Sam James, the board's director for East Asia.

"We are trying to move toward a more mobile missionary force that will move where urgent need is," James said. He called the Taiwan strategy "a rifle shot instead of a shotgun blast. Whereas before our shot was scattered in many directions, now we're focusing on a target. That is significant."

The new strategy parallels the Foreign Mission Board's 10-year goal of having 70 percent of its missionaries giving more than half of their time to direct evangelism that results in churches. Board officials have emphasized that the "70-30" ratio is a goal for its missionaries but not a mandate placed on them.

Fire Damages Zambian Press

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP)—A fire damaged the pressroom of Baptist Publications in Lusaka, Zambia, Jan. 17, causing workers to shut down printing operations for at least a month.

Officials estimated damage to be about \$10,000, said Zeb Moss, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's associate director for eastern and southern Africa. The fire destroyed a duplicating machine and burned through the ceiling. Officials were

uncertain whether the main press was damaged.

Workers' immediate efforts were aimed at repairing the roof to protect printing equipment from the weather.

Local fire officials said the blaze probably started from an overheated fan motor. Responding to a report from a worker, firefighters contained the fire before it spread to other parts of the Baptist office building.

The building also houses the offices of the Zambian Baptist convention, the Southern Baptist mission organization, a bookstore, offices for the Bible Way correspondence program and music and communications centers.

Baptist Publications produces material for Zambian churches in the Bemba, Nyanja and English languages, and some material for churches in other countries, Moss said.

FMB Considers Service Corps

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is working to develop clearer paths for Baptists who want to work overseas in roles other than career missions, board leaders said.

In February, board trustees will consider a plan that would combine all non-career workers who serve terms from four months to two years under a program called the International Service Corps.

Missionaries requesting help from non-career personnel also would benefit from the simplicity of the proposed International Service Corps, said Tom Prevost, director of the international lay missions department. The department will recruit and enlist personnel for the International Service Corps, should the program be adopted.

The International Service Corps would include what are now separate programs for Mission Service Corps, special assignment and journeyman personnel. Workers currently receive various levels of support depending on their program. In many instances, they work side-by-side overseas performing similar jobs but receive varying stipends and degrees of training because they applied under different programs, Prevost said.

In some cases, workers have been frustrated when they discovered they were receiving treatment unequal to someone else doing the same task, Prevost added. Under the International Service Corps proposal, the support structure would be equal for all workers, but the board would encourage participants to pay as much of their own support as possible.

017557 COMP 2230
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