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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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5-24-1990

**May 24, 1990**

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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**Getting Involved**

# Arkansas Baptist

May 24, 1990

**After the Invasion**



## Cover Story



Photo / Mark Sandlin

## After the Invasion . . . . . 6

*May is Cbaplatncy Ministries Emphbas Month, when Southern Baptists focus on the ministry of their 2,132 cbaplatncs serving throuthout the United States and 17 foreign countries.*

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# IT'S UPLIFTING

## Finding Needs, Meeting Them

DALLAS (BP)—Through Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon support groups meeting in its facilities, health fairs, Saturday morning coffee klatches and family ministries, Rolling Hills Baptist Church near Weatherford, Texas, is meeting community needs and reaching out with the love of Christ.

About six months ago, when an AA group from Weatherford was seeking a meeting place, Pastor Ken Jacks approached his congregation and the AA leaders about the possibility of using the Rolling Hills Church facilities.

"I came here from an inner-city church in Birmingham, Ala. We had an NA (Narcotics Anonymous) group that met there, so I had seen the potential for outreach through something like this," Jacks said.

Several other churches and organizations had expressed an interest in serving as host to AA, but the other institutions wanted to prohibit support group members from smoking inside church facilities. Although some church members were a bit reluctant,

Rolling Hills agreed to accept AA with no restrictions on smoking at meetings.

"We want to accept these individuals as they are," Jacks said. "Almost all of them smoke, so that was an obstacle to overcome. But, it seemed that our spirit of acceptance really softened their hearts."

As a result of that "spirit of acceptance," the leader of the AA group made a profession of faith in Christ, was baptized and now is an active member of Rolling Hills Baptist Church. Several other members of AA and Al-Anon, both of which hold twice-weekly meetings at Rolling Hills, have made commitments to Christ.

Currently, Rolling Hills is planning "Covenant Marriage" and other family life courses to meet the needs not only of church members, but also people in AA and Al-Anon and others in the community.

"Finding needs and meeting them" is the ministry goal and outreach strategy of Rolling Hills, said Jacks, a child of missionaries who grew up in Indonesia. His parents currently are missionaries in Sri Lanka.

"We want to strengthen the church from within and equip the members for ministry," Jacks said.

# GOOD NEWS!

## Living In Excess

Matthew 5:21-24, 38-48

Jesus posed the question in verse 47, "What do you do more than other?" That suggests the theme, living in excess, doing more than the required.

Authority is like an atmosphere about a person. When Jesus taught in Capernaum, the crowds were astonished because he taught with authority. The conclusion is again recorded at the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

*Living in excess forbids brooding anger (vv. 21-26)*—The Greek language has two words for anger. One means a "flash of anger," but the word used here is "brooding anger." Jesus forbids anger that broods, will not forget, refuses to be pacified, and seeks revenge.

I know a man who had trouble with a former pastor; he would turn red with contempt. I warned him that he could not feel that way about another person without seriously damaging himself.

In the realm of personal relationships, what do you do more than others?

*Living in excess forbids retaliation (vv.*

*38-42)*—Few passages more clearly present the Christian way. There is no place in the Christian life for retaliation.

Jesus gave three examples of the spirit of the Christian: (1) If a person strikes you on one cheek, turn the other. (2) If a person takes your coat, give him your cloak also. (3) If compelled to go one mile, go two.

Christ was trying to teach us that revenge is never sweet. It is poison. How often do we say, "I'll get even with you if it's the last thing I ever do." We may not verbalize the words, but do we keep them in our hearts? Remember, Jesus was dealing with attitude and motivation as well as overt action. God does not give us the prerogative of "getting even." Paul wrote, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Ro. 12-19).

*Living in excess demands love (vv. 43-48)*—What did Jesus mean when he said, "Love your enemies"? Exactly that. The Bible declares that God is love. If we belong to him, we must reflect that love. Jesus said that we are to love that we may be children of the Father.

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# 'God-Sufficiency'

J. EVERETT SNEED

Several years ago a lady declared, "I will never go to church again. My husband died in a car wreck. My son, who was a law enforcement officer, died in carrying out his duties. Both were active in the church, holding significant places of responsibility. God has been unfair to me."

These sad events in the life of this wife and mother are not really unusual. Such events raise the important question, "Is God the author of suffering?"

In answering, one must consider man's original state of innocence. God gave him the free right of choice. But man transgressed God's law. Because of sin, God placed a curse on both man and earth (Ge. 3:17-19). Hence, sin and suffering came into existence as a result of man's disobedience.

As one studies the Genesis account of creation, man's fall and God's dealing with him, it becomes clear that an event may be either God's decreed will or his permissive will. An example of God's decreed will is the creation of the universe. God purposed it and all of nature responded. On the other hand, God did not coerce or compel Adam and Eve to sin. He simply permitted them to follow their own desires.

Is suffering is a result of sin? One may suffer as the result of one's own sin, or because of the sin of another. One may suffer due to the disorder of nature itself. Nature, too, was a recipient of the curse (Ge. 3:19).

It is vital for us to understand that suffering is not necessarily the result of individual sin. Jesus clearly stated this truth when his disciples asked, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (Jn. 9:2).

The first part of the disciples' statement raises a very interesting question, "How could the blindness of this man possibly be due to his own sin, when he had been blind from birth?" Some Jewish theologians in the time of Christ believed that a person actually could sin prior to birth while he was in the period of formation. Hence, a newborn baby might be guilty of numerous sins.

The second idea set forth by the disciples of Jesus was probably that the man's affliction was due to the sin of his parents. While it is clear from the Scripture and from experience, that certain sins committed by the parents can produce extreme difficulty for the children, this is not the case



in this particular event. It must never be forgotten by any of us, however, that no one lives his life to himself. Everyone's life impacts on the lives of others.

Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (Jn. 9:3). Jesus in his response shows how the natural events which occur as a part of God's permissive will can develop and strengthen us as Christians.

In the New Testament era, there was a group called "stoics" who maintained that the way to happiness was to eliminate all human desire. The way a stoic attempted to eliminate all human desire was by coming to a stage in which neither anyone or anything was essential to him.

Both the New Testament writers and the stoics believed that happiness was not bas-

ed upon human circumstance, but there was a complete difference in the approach. For the stoic, it was a way of self-sufficiency. For the New Testament writers, it was God's sufficiency. In the New Testament, happiness was based on a relationship with God through Christ. The stoic was self-sufficient; to the New Testament writers, God was sufficient. For Paul, circumstances did not make the difference because he had Jesus Christ.

Christ has given the Christian the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is available to minister to the Christian in every situation of life. Paul said, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Ro. 8:26).

In Romans 8:26, Paul gives us several important truths. Among these are: (1) the Holy Spirit intercedes for Christians with a language that is beyond human understanding; and (2) sometimes the Christian doesn't even know the right prayer agenda, but the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit "helps" us in all of our problems. The Greek word "help" graphically portrays the work of the Holy Spirit. The word is *sunantilambanomai*. The Greek prefix "sun" means "together." The prefix "anti" means "against or face to face." "Lambano" means to "lift." In other words, the Holy Spirit together with the Christian assists him in lifting his burden.

The object of each Christian should be to obtain maturity so that he knows victory regardless of outer circumstance. May God help each of us to find this joy and this God-sufficiency.

## Arkansas Baptist

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## Letters to the Editor

MIKE HUCKABEE

### The President's Corner



Ever looked at the ingredients on a bottle of insecticide? Most will list a few significant sounding chemicals in puny proportions and then indicate that "inert" ingredients account for 98 percent of the contents. For the uninformed, "inert" means "not having the power to move itself" or, simply put, "worthless."

The power of an insecticide is in the "active ingredients"—not the filler material that gives bulk to the bottle. Likewise the power of Arkansas Baptists is not in our "bragged about numbers"—it is only in those whose lives are dynamically charged with the reality of Jesus Christ.

As your president, one of my desires is to see us realize that the moral and spiritual impact we can have in our state is not so much our "head count" but our "heart count." Arkansas Baptists who don't pray, give, worship, or witness are equal to the elective force of registered voters who don't vote.

The membership of our churches is far too often packed with "inert ingredients." The official roster tragically contains more "filler" material than real faith material. Our missions enterprises are under-funded, our evangelistic efforts are often anemic, and our actual influence in this humanistic world is nominal.

In this year alone, we will be challenged to stand boldly for the lives of the unborn, work at defeating the idea of funding our state with lottery gambling, and confronting our culture with the claims of Christ.

Maybe we need to go back to the laboratory of God's Word and re-commit ourselves to being a people who are not only consecrated but concentrated to the task of the gospel. If we can become a "concentrated" people, we can be potent in our purpose. We can eliminate the need for "inert ingredients" when we become known as "people of the Book" rather than people of the "bulk." Arkansas Baptists are effective because of our Savior—not our size!

**Mike Huckabee**, pastor of Beech Street Church in Texarkana, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

### Thrilling Resurgence

Saturday, April 28th, I sat down to watch the pro-life rally in Washington, D.C. on C-Span. What I saw thrilled my heart and gave me another reason why I support the "conservative" resurgence of the last 11 years. To my great joy, Dr. Richard Land gave the invocation. While he prayed, a graphic with his name and position as executive director of the Christian Life Commission was flashed on the screen. It gave me great joy to know that millions of viewers would see this prominent Southern Baptist take a stand against abortion.

Why would that event reinforce my desire to see the "conservative" resurgence continue? Because 11 years ago the executive director would not have prayed at such an event, much less be invited to pray. Until "conservative" trustees gained a majority on the Christian Life Commission, that agency refused to take a firm stand against abortions. Thank God that because of the "conservative" resurgence, we now

have men like Richard Land who are not afraid to stand against America's number one moral crisis. Thank God for trustees who didn't consider their own popularity, but did what was right.

Sure we've made mistakes in the last 11 years. However, the road to peace does not lie in undoing the last 11 years. Peace will come as we weld new coalitions around a perfect Bible, as John Bisagno has called for. Then we can continue to confront the sin of this world effectively.—Mark Brooks, Springdale

### In God's Eyes

I would like to respond specifically, to the letter that appears in your publication dated April 25, 1990, entitled, "What Would Jesus Do?", if I knew exactly what he was talking about.

Mr. Timm begins by condemning folks who express opinions as to what Jesus would do or say in certain circumstances

RANDALL O'BRIEN

### A Pastor's Perspective

#### Bite the Wax Tadpole

Get this. Coca Cola has changed the name of its soft drink in China. After discovering the word means, in Chinese, "Bite the wax tadpole," the company thought a change might be in order. The new name translates better: "May the mouth rejoice."

Methinks it's a shame when words lose their meaning in translation. Remember when Christian meant Christian? And Baptist meant Baptist? Alas, now it seems the terms are, more often than not, angrily translated into "conservative" or "liberal" or "fundamentalist" or "moderate."

Jan is an ordained Southern Baptist minister. She is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and has served as campus minister at Yale. Jan has also served in pastoral roles in the local church. She is an open, honest, warm and caring person. Jan is a free thinker. Her theology by some Baptist notions might be called "liberal."

Keene, on the other hand, judged by some standards in religious life, is a

staunch conservative, a "fundamentalist," some might say. He attended Mid-America Seminary, a zealously conservative bastion of orthodoxy. Whereas Jan is more open to new interpretations of Scripture, Keene is a "defender of the faith." He is intelligent, honest, warm and caring.

Jan and Keene are the Rev. and Rev. Carruthers. Yes, they are married! What a model! For all of us—of love, patience, understanding, commitment. I asked them one evening, "How in the world is this possible?" They replied in unison, "We laugh a lot."

Don't you just love it! Who says unity must mean uniformity?

Seems to me Jan and Keene's kind of Christianity translates, "May the mouth rejoice!" Brand X Christianity, on the other hand, i.e., the vicious judgmental variety, is best translated, "Bite the wax tadpole."

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



and then continues in the second and fourth paragraphs to do exactly what he condemns in others.

In all my reading and studying, I have never heard of a pregnancy or the birth of a baby referred to as an irregularity. For those who hurt their unborn babies through drugs and alcohol, are we to join them in their crime by going ahead and killing that innocent life? Also, God forgive, is he suggesting that the young lady he mentions, who cannot find her birth-mother and is unhappy, would have been better off aborted?

Finally, I feel that if it is right to kill a life that may be unwanted, unloved, uncared for and unhappy, then why stop with the unborn? Why not eliminated the aged, the diseased and others who cannot care for themselves or who find themselves in unhappy circumstances?

We need to be reminded that in God's eyes we are all loved, cared for, and wanted.—Ray Edwards, Berryville

## Alcohol Expenditures

The following figures on honoraria and PAC contributions from the alcoholic beverage industry are given by the Center for Science in the Public Interest,

Washington D.C., in a 56-page report entitled "Legislating under the Influence: The Booze Merchants, Money and Congress." They include lobbying expenditures required to be reported, not personal and family gifts, and so may only scratch the surface of the problem. The figures cover the period from 1985-88. I suppose there will be new ones after the 1990 elections are over. Because of the new Arkansas Lobbyist Disclosure Law, similar figures should soon be available on members of the the Arkansas Legislature, and we will report these when we get them. Christian people ought to be aware of this money spent to influence legislation, and ask our elected representatives if they are representing us, or the beer, wine, and liquor industries.

|               |       |          |
|---------------|-------|----------|
| Alexander     | ..... | \$3,600  |
| Anthony       | ..... | \$23,750 |
| Bumpers       | ..... | \$8,000  |
| Hammerschmidt | ..... | \$4,050  |
| Pryor         | ..... | None     |
| Robinson      | ..... | \$2,300  |

These figures show why it is so hard to get any action on alcohol advertising in Congress. Let us pray that God will help us to clean up our government that our country might survive. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Pr. 13:34).—Clay Hale, El Dorado

WILLIAM J. REYNOLDS

## Hymns Baptists Sing



### I Am Thine, . . .

"I Am Thine, O Lord"

Fanny Crosby, the blind poet, composed many poems on the spur of the moment. A chance remark or an unexpected experience often provided the inspiration for her fluent poetic expressions.

In 1874, while in Cincinnati on a speaking tour, she spoke to crowds of people in churches and missions. She was a guest in the home of William Howard Doane, a wealthy manufacturer of woodworking equipment and an amateur composer.

During her stay with the Doane family, she and Doane had an interesting conversation one evening about the nearness of God in their lives. When she went to her room, her mind and heart were flooded with ideas from the conversation. Before she went to sleep, the poem was complete in her mind.

The next morning she recited the poem to Doane, who quickly composed a tune for it. The next year, in a Sunday school songbook, Doane included this hymn. It has been one of Fanny Crosby's most popular hymns and, after more than a century, its popularity has not waned.

The scriptural basis is "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (He. 10:22).

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

### SILOAM SPRINGS ASSEMBLY

## Walking and Talking with God

To walk and to talk and hold hands with my God in intimate, quiet, prolonged companionship is occasionally, but infrequently, accomplished in my daily life. Too often the stresses, worries and responsibilities of daily living intrude and interrupt.

Each summer I look forward to meeting with my God in quiet walks by a spring, in the beauty of a prayer garden, in the shade of towering walnut trees, in the cool of the mountain evening, in the rock-strewn paths started by my ancestors, in the presence of my siblings in Christ, in a valley full of discipline and concentrated prayers that ensure his presence and excludes the influence of

evil, in the dedicated and consecrated hideaway that is the Arkansas Baptist Assembly at Siloam Springs.

This is my personal "date" with my Lord. This meeting with my Savior restores my spiritual strength reserves, corrects my course in life for the next 12 months, gives me a new courage and incentive to support my pastor and fellow Christians, and makes it easier to handle life's everyday stresses, worries and responsibilities. For 67 years this personal, prolonged and intimate meeting with God has been a "secret" of Arkansas Baptists individually and collectively. May it ever be so.—Rel Gray, Ruston, La.

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CHAPLAINCY

## During the Invasion

By Bill Bangham  
Baptist Press

ALBROOK AIR FORCE BASE, Panama (BP)—It was dark, early on the morning of Dec. 20, when Susie Hagler shook her husband, Donald, awake. He lay still for a moment, listening to the dull thud of distant explosions, the spit and crackle of small-arms fire, the sounds of aircraft overhead.

The clock read 12:37 a.m., and the U.S. invasion of Panama had begun.

It was the closing scene in a drama that had been thrashing toward finale during Hagler's 32 months of service as a Southern Baptist chaplain at Albrook Air Force Base outside Panama City.

A half mile from Hagler's house is the chapel where he preaches on Sundays. On weekdays it simply is government building 805. That night it was the site of an Army mortar platoon lobbing shells toward targets in the city.

Down a small hill lies the flightline. A chain-link fence divides American on one side, Panamanian on the other. Hagler found it awash in tracer bullets as Panamanian and American soldiers fired at each other.

A Panamanian squad fired three volleys toward the chapel, but they landed 300 yards short. American retaliation knocked out the Panamanian guns before they could fire again.

A slight adjustment on the gunsight, an officer told Hagler, "four millimeters up and five right, chaplain, and we'd have lost the chapel."

Hagler's midnight awakening began four weeks of 17-hour days for him and the other chaplains assigned to Albrook. On one front, he took the night shift; Chaplain Richardo Hernandez, his commanding officer, the day. Most of the time they overlapped in a blur as they moved among the troops—encouraging, counseling, sharing a cookie or a Christmas card; being the presence of God in a godless time.

Within 48 hours after the invasion, Hagler had contacted all the families in his chapel congregation.

Photo / Mark Sandlin



Chaplain Donald Hagler, stationed at Albrook Air Force in Panama, baptizes the daughter of an Air Force pilot who accepted Christ through the ministry of the base chapel.

Children in the congregation made Christmas cards. The women of the church made cookies. On Christmas Day, Hagler passed them out among the troops.

Some of the soldiers hadn't eaten anything but MREs, or meals ready to eat, in three or four days, so the cookies were welcome. Troops who received cards invariably asked of the children who made them.

"They would ask me about Jenny," said Hagler. "And I would describe her, tell them about her. And they would tell me to tell Jenny who they were and where they were from and how much that card meant to them."

"Here's a guy, loaded to the teeth, face painted—a guy who could have killed God—standing there weeping over a card from a child."

Ninety-three attended Christmas Day worship services. The day before, Sunday, services were not held due to fighting and live fire on Albrook.

On Christmas, worshippers closed the curtains, broke out the candles and held a candlelight service at 11:40 a.m.

"Most of the people who came on Christmas Day had not been out of the house since the 19th," Hagler said. "For some of the wives and children, this was the first day daddy could come home. There was a feeling of gratitude and appreciation you could hardly believe."

On Dec. 26, Hagler began a three-day-a-week Bible study, primarily to give people something to do. But it also brought together a community of people to talk about their experiences and maybe work

through some frustration.

As U.S. troops began to go home, Hagler convened a small gathering of children in the basement of building 805. On the wall he placed a sign scrawled with the words "Invasion Kids II."

Asked to draw a picture of how they felt, the children busily scribbled out their messages in crayon on white paper. Brittain drew a big yellow sun because "there isn't much fighting going on today, and nobody's getting killed," she said.

Alicia drew trees because she went outside for the first time that day. Jessica drew a big smile because she took her dog for a walk.

They missed playing outside, their friends, their school. One saw a sniper killed; another saw one captured behind her house. One play-acted each time he heard gunfire, grabbing his chest and falling down. But mostly they were scared.

"It's all right to be scared," Hagler told them. "The feelings are not bad. We've felt that way before, and we'll feel that way again. It's smart to be scared when you're in a war."

Because Albrook is the only base where American dependents were under fire during the invasion, Hagler saw a need to work with several groups of children, divided by age. He fears long-term effects for some of the children. And they don't have time to process their experiences before they move on to other places and other things.

"Two of my families move to California next week," he explained. "Three are going to England, several to the Philippines, which is worse than it is here. How can I help them?"

"Those who will be here until summer ... maybe."

In summer, Hagler too will leave, his tour completed.

The invasion has given him a sense of closure. He has been in Panama through demonstrations, random violence, arrests and beatings. And war.

Nowhere could he have made the contribution he has made in Panama, he said: "I've witnessed to more people in three years than I would in 50 years of a rural Alabama pastorate. People I preached to last year are now in Turkey, Japan and Nevada. What better way to influence the world?"

"I have 12 to 18 professions of faith a year, and baptize half of them. That's as many as I ever had back home."

The impact of this ministry was surprisingly illustrated after the invasion while the Haglers sat watching television with their children—Peter, Paul and Philip. A game-show question asked, "What did your father do in the war? Peter turned and grinned at his dad. "He prayed."

BAPTIST STUDENT UNION

# Getting Involved

*Students find unique ways of ministering to others despite constraints of time and money*

by George Sims  
ABSC Student Department

Almost 200 students have been involved in missions this spring through the special mission projects sponsored by Arkansas Baptist Student Union. Many of these students will not be able to be involved in other mission programs because of time or financial restraints. In spite of this, these students found a way to give of themselves through a wide variety of mission projects.

The BSU at the University of Arkansas at Monticello did light construction work and painted a church building while leading in Vacation Bible School in Guatemala City. Students from Arkansas State's BSU lead a religious emphasis week and senior high school retreat for the Inter American School in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. These projects were a part of the partnership between Arkansas Baptist and Guatemalan Baptists. The University of



*UAM students conducted a vacation Bible school in Guatemala.*

Arkansas for Medical Sciences BSU sent a medical team to some of the mountain villages in another effort. Contacts were made with almost 1,500 persons resulting in more than 250 professions of faith.

Here in the United States, a team from Ouachita served in New Orleans, renovating the Rachel Sims Baptist Mission. Arkansas Tech BSU sent students to the Baptist Children's Home near Tulsa, Okla., and to the four Baptist centers in Houston, Texas, to minister. Students from the University of Arkansas worked with homeless people through Forest Avenue Baptist Shelter in Kansas City. In Oklahoma City, students from the university of Arkansas at Little Rock worked through the Bap-

tist Mission Center in food and clothing distribution, medical and dental clinics, preschool programs, Bible studies and recreation. Beach Reach '90 was an evangelistic effort in Clearwater, Fla., in which students from Henderson State's BSU chose to minister. These teams made contacts with more than 2,500 people with dozens of decisions for Jesus Christ.

Some projects focused on needs here in Arkansas. Students from Southern Arkansas University chose to make the short trip to El Dorado to assist in building low cost housing through the Habitat for Humanity program. Two BSU's, Arkansas State University at Beebe and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences combined to provide workers for a team that assisted in projects at Heifer Project International in Perryville.

Although the school year is ending, Garland County Community College and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock are making preparations to send teams to Uptown Baptist Church in Chicago. They will participate in the varied ministries and outreaches of this inner city church. Later in the summer, Ouachita's BSU is sponsoring a team of 40 students who will spend a month working with missionaries in South Africa. Six members of the BSU staff will travel to Guatemala to explore further involvement in the mission partnership program.

Christian students are challenged by opportunities to be involved in missions and ministry. These experiences help students find a place in God's service as well as presenting the gospel to thousands of individuals. When opportunities are presented, students find a way to get involved in missions.



*Students get advice from Guatemalan youngsters while doing light construction work on a church in Guatemala City.*



## Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

### People

**Carbon Sims** of Arkadelphia was awarded the Purple and Gold Heart Award by Ouachita Baptist University for "outstanding and meritorious service" to the institution during commencement May 12. Sims retired from OBU last fall after serving for seven years as associate director of development. Prior to retirement, he coordinated, through the OBU development office, the activities of the former students association office at the university.



Sims

**Ray Granade**, librarian at Ouachita Baptist University, has been named chairman of the SBC Historical Commission.

**Kristi Baker** has accepted a call to serve as a summer associate youth director at First Church in Henderson, Texas. She is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

**Melanie Whitehurst** will serve as summer youth director for Pleasant Valley Church at Heber Springs.

**Bill J. Holcomb** of Pine Bluff died May 12 at age 64. He was a member of Pleasant Valley Church near Pine Bluff. A retired Southern Baptist minister, Holcomb had pastored churches in Arkansas and Michigan. Survivors include his wife, Melba Greer Holcomb; five sons, Bill, Mike, Tommy, Terry, and Danny Holcomb, all of Pine Bluff; his mother, Olivia Holcomb of Jonesboro; four brothers; two sisters; and six grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Pleasant Valley Church.

**Tim Prock** began serving May 20 as pastor of Concord Church, Van Buren. He is a 1990 spring graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition, he is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist Univer-

sity. Prock is married to the former Lori Newman of Lavaca. They have one son, David Neal Prock.

**Joe Thompson** recently observed 20 years of service as pastor of Calvary Church in Blytheville. He was presented a gift of \$500 by members.

**Mark W. Strebeck** has joined the staff of First Church in Marianna as minister of music and youth, going there from Clinton First Church, where he had served for two years of music and youth pastor.

**Tommy Wallace** is serving as pastor of Turner Church. He is a student at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Bryan Webb** will begin serving May 24 as pastor of Broadmoor Church in Brinkley.

**Sidney Hunt** is serving as pastor of Peach Orchard Church.

**Shawn Bernard** has accepted the call to join the staff of First Church in Hatfield as minister of music and youth. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

**Herman Kapherr** has resigned as pastor of Salem Church at Nunley.

**Roy F. Lewis** is serving as pastor of Forest Tower Church at Hensley, going there from Pleasant Hill Church, Bauxite.

### Briefly

**Wynne Church** hosted a banquet May 7 honoring graduating seniors and their parents. Randy Brantley, associate in the ABCS Evangelism Department, was speaker.

**Blytheville First Church** held a Lay Evangelism School May 6-9. Paul McClung, associate in the ABCS Evangelism Department, was leader.

**Garfield First Church** men hosted a breakfast May 13, honoring mothers in the church and their families.

**Elmdale Church** in Springdale recently held a "Here's Hope. Jesus Cares for You" revival that resulted in 103 professions of faith, 25 rededications and three baptisms

ABN photo / Mark Kelly



*Horseshoe Bend First Church dedicated an educational annex with an open house and worship service May 5-6. The 11,200 square foot facility provides 15 classrooms, a kitchen, and fellowship hall. Although appraised at \$350,000, the building was constructed for \$190,000, primarily through the use of more than 125 volunteers from Oklahoma and Tennessee. ABCS Sunday School Department Director Freddie Pike preached the dedication message, and Music Department Director Lester McCullough and his wife Jo Ann provided special music. David Johnson is pastor.*

### Next Issue

The next issue of the ABN will be published on June 7. Sunday School lesson commentaries for May 24 and June 2 are contained in this issue.

Scott Camp was evangelist. Mark Brooks is pastor.

**Lake Ouachita Church** in Mount Ida ordained Lenny Fryar to the preaching ministry May 6.

**Ebenezer Church** in El Dorado has purchased a new 15-passenger van for use in outreach ministries. C. Phelan Boone is pastor.

**Sylvan Hills First Church** in North Little Rock dedicated new choir robes Easter Sunday, April 15, as the choir presented the musical "Then Came Sunday," under the direction of Bob Barnett.

**Cass Chapel** held a dedication of its new multi-purpose "Elisha's House" May 6. Those on program were Rex Easterling, pastor of Mulberry First Church, the sponsoring church, and Pastor Ron Clark. The house, begun in September 1989, by the Arkansas Nailbenders for Jesus and completed by the Cass Job Corpsmen on their off hours, will be used for visiting evangelists and the pastor to be on the field. It also will be used by corpsmembers or other youth of the community.

**Owensville Church** will celebrate the payment of a mortgage note with a

noteburning service at 11 a.m. May 27. Michael Barnes is pastor.

**Baring Cross Church** in North Little Rock youth choir will tour Jackson, and Meridian, Miss., Mobile, Ala., and Fort Walton Beach, Fla., June 8-13.

**Royal Church** recently participated in a "Here's Hope. Jesus Cares for You" revival that resulted in three professions of faith and three baptisms. Carter Tucker served as evangelist. Dick Cayce is pastor.

**Petit Jean First Church** will observe homecoming June 3 with traditional morning and evening services. Conway Sawyers, director of the ABSC Missions Department, and V.L. Harris will be speakers. Pastor B.L. Dorman reported continued church growth, with two baptisms and one addition by letter May 13.

**Fayetteville First Church** honored its Mission Friends, Girls in Action, Royal Ambassadors, and Acteens at a Mission Organizations Recognition Service May 6.

**Fayetteville Immanuel Church** Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women, in a joint mission action project, sent towels to the new Arkansas House in Guatemala.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



On May 11, C.A.L.L. (Citizens Against a Legalized Lottery) held a press conference in the rotunda of the State Capitol. A number of businessmen are involved in the effort to keep the lottery off of the November ballot. Among these are General Chairman W.H. "Buddy" Sutton, a prominent Little Rock attorney, and William H. Bowen, chairman of the board for First Commercial Bank. Several Baptist leaders also are active in the effort, among them ABSC President Mike Huckabee and ABSC Associate Executive Director Jimmie Sheffield. ABSC Executive Director Don Moore was chairman of the ad hoc committee which developed the anti-lottery organization. Pictured on the back row are religious leaders from most of the denominations in Arkansas. It is believed every religious group in the state has announced its opposition to the lottery.

## Classifieds

**For Sale**—Used church pews. Mahogany backs, white square ends, blue upholstered seats. Good condition. First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, Ark. 501-873-8952. 5/24

**Position Available**—Gosnell Baptist Church, Blytheville, Ark., is presently seeking an associate pastor who has experience in church education and has some musical background. Applications should be received before June 1, 1990, and should be mailed to: Fred Roberts, c/o Gosnell Baptist Church, 603 Highway 181, Blytheville, AR 72315. 5/24

**For Sale**—Solid white pine pews for sale. 10-16 ft. long; 28-12 ft. long. First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 116, Gentry, AR 72734. 501-736-2646. 5/24

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. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

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## Correction

The May 17, 1990, edition of the ABN should have listed Steve Peoples as a member of First Church, Greenwood.

## Leadership Profile for ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 1989 Arkansas Baptist State Convention want Arkansas Baptists to submit names of persons for that committee to consider when they bring the convention nominations for state committees and boards.

This recommendation will not insure nomination, but the committee will consider each recommendation. The commit-

tee will not contact any person recommended until they approve the nominations.

The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting July 17 and needs all recommendations no later than June 15.

Members of the committee: Ben Rowell, chairman; Jack Bledose; Bill Bowen; Carl Fawcett; G.B. Hambrick; Harry Smith; Johnny Ross; Bill Bledose; and Mark Tolbert.

### June 15 is the deadline for recommendations

Nominee \_\_\_\_\_ Layperson ( ) Minister ( ) Age \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Member of what church? \_\_\_\_\_ Association \_\_\_\_\_

#### Current leadership responsibilities

Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Civic \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

State or SBC Boards \_\_\_\_\_

#### Past leadership experience (within last five years)

State or SBC Boards \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

Local Church \_\_\_\_\_

#### Personal

This person's greatest contribution, based on his or her past record, knowledge, and experience, should be in the area of \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person currently active in a local church? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person able to be away from family and work for at least one or two days three times a year? \_\_\_\_\_

Give the name and phone number of at least one person who knows of the nominee's involvement in Baptist life beside his or her pastor or director of missions. \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank this person's understanding of and commitment to the way Southern Baptists work together? (Circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Check the board, committee or commission on which you believe this person could best serve.

#### Boards of trustees

- Executive Board
- Children's Homes & Family Ministries
- Foundation
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System Inc., Memphis
- Christian Civic Foundation
- Ouachita Baptist University
- Southern Baptist College
- Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

#### Committees and Commission

- History Commission
- BSU Advisory Committee
- Ministry of Crisis Support Advisory Committee
- Constitution and ByLaws Committee
- World Hunger Committee
- Convention Program Committee

Mail this sheet to:  
Ben J. Rowell, chairman  
626 West Olive  
Rogers, AR 72756

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of person making this recommendation)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Photo / Martha Henderson



Children's art activities were led by Gail Sbay and Angie Henderson.

## Conference for the Deaf

On May 4-6, about 90 persons gathered at Camp Paron for a retreat with Larry White, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of the Deaf in Del City, Okla., as camp pastor. With the theme, "Love Your Neighbor As Yourself," White challenged participants to reach out to others and share God's love. Through various visual illustrations he demonstrated that a person who does not reach out to others and share does not grow.

During the weekend conference, there were workshops for interpreters, youth, and deaf adults. Children under 12 were led in Bible study, nature and art activities around the theme of love. Fellowship activities included a talent show and a camp-

fire/marshmallow roast.

During the weekend, participants were reminded that there are 18,000 deaf persons in Arkansas and most of these do not attend any church. Deaf conferees renewed their commitment to reach other deaf persons by signing a Bold Mission Thrust poster. They were challenged to witness and invite other deaf persons to church.

The 1990-91 ABCD officers will be led by Sandy Mabry from Texarkana, president. Because of the response to Larry White, the board unanimously agreed to invite him for next year's conference on May 3-5. Anyone wishing to be on the ABCD mailing list may contact June Chandler at 376-4791 (V) or 376-7463 (TDD).

## Baptist Building Phones Automated

Arkansas Baptists who have found it difficult to reach the Baptist Building by telephone will be heartened to hear of an improvement to the state convention's telephone service.

An "automated operator" has been installed which will allow individuals calling from touchtone phones to dial direct to the desired office, rather than having to wait for an operator to route the call.

Callers reaching the Baptist Building switchboard will hear a concise message, after which they may dial the extension number they want to reach. Individuals who are not calling from a touchtone phone or who do not know the extension number of the office they are calling will be assisted by the operator.

ABSC Associate Executive Director Jimmie Sheffield believes Arkansas Baptists will like the new service.

"After using the automated operator a few times, people will find it convenient and simple to use," Sheffield said. "Our desire is to be of service to Arkansas Baptists, and this new feature will enable them to reach our offices more quickly."

Main extension numbers of Executive Board departments and ABSC agencies are:

|                                     |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Accounting .....                    | 5170 |
| Annuity .....                       | 5114 |
| Arkansas Baptist Assembly .....     | 5128 |
| Ch. Homes & Family Ministries ..... | 5167 |
| Arkansas Baptist Foundation .....   | 5180 |
| Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine ..... | 5153 |
| Associate Executive Director .....  | 5103 |
| Baptist Student Union .....         | 5142 |
| Brotherhood .....                   | 5158 |
| Business Services .....             | 5171 |
| Camp Paron .....                    | 5159 |
| Christian Life Council .....        | 5148 |
| Church Leadership Support .....     | 5148 |
| <i>(effective 7/15/90)</i>          |      |
| Church Music .....                  | 5121 |
| Cooperative Ministries .....        | 5159 |
| Cooperative Program Office .....    | 5103 |
| Discipleship Training .....         | 5160 |
| Evangelism .....                    | 5132 |
| Executive Director .....            | 5102 |
| Media Services/Vision .....         | 5178 |
| Missions .....                      | 5150 |
| Stewardship .....                   | 5114 |
| Sunday School .....                 | 5128 |
| Woman's Missionary Union .....      | 5137 |

### Nailbenders Needed

Nailbenders are needed to assist with the following Nailbenders for Jesus construction projects.

—June 4, Scotland Church and Clinton Friendship Church

—Sept. 10, Crossett South Main Church

—Oct. 8, Paragould Life Church

—Nov. 5, Trumann Eastside Church, Trumann

For more information, contact Frank Allen, Rt. 1, Box 25, Williford, AR 72482.

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

## Computer Software

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## Jump into June

by Don Moore  
 ABCS Executive Director

To mention the month of June will trigger immediate thoughts of church camps to most of our readers. There will be more camps in June than any other month during the summer. Some associations will be having camps. Our state camps, Paron and Siloam, will be getting into full swing. Ouachita and Southern Baptist College will be hosting various church groups in camp-like programs. Thank God for all of these! They serve to meet some tremendous needs in the lives of our children and youth.



Moore

Now, some concerns must be shared. First, concerned pastors, parents, children and youth workers must not be causal about getting their kids involved in the camps. They will not attend without your encouragement, and in some cases, your assistance.

Second, program planners must see to it that a great spiritual climate is created for God to speak to our kids. They have never had more needs than they do today. Proper spiritual preparation, proper planning, proper encouragement and support of counselors and leaders, these are a few of the things that make camps conducive to spiritual breakthroughs.

Third, hundreds of our church members must serve as volunteer drivers, counselors, cooks, teachers, doctors, nurses, groundskeepers, coaches, and who knows what else. Jump at the opportunity. It will be work. But it will also be one of the best investments of your life. Young people can sense when we are willing workers and when we are coerced workers. They sense when we love them and want to be there and when we just tolerate them and have to be there.

Fourth, every person who reads this needs to engage in regular, diligent prayer about our camps. The onslaught of demonic activity through cults; the escalating frequency of teenage suicide; the vast amount of drug and alcohol addiction among teenagers; the pressures and influence toward immorality; and the devastating emotional impact of unhealthy family life; these constitute the challenge faced during the next few weeks. In-

fluences and decisions made at camp will make the difference for many of these. What a challenge!

May God bless you all in these exciting and demanding days. Make the most of these precious contacts. They have been entrusted to you by God. He will enable you if you will let him.

### Here are some of the opportunities:

**Siloam Springs Dates**—June 18-22, youth/adult pastor, Dean Finley, Home Mission Board; children's pastor, Bob Harper, White Hall First Church. June 25-29, youth/adult pastor, Mike Huckabee, Beech Street First Church, Texarkana; children's pastor, Phil Drennan, Wooster First Church. July 2-6, youth/adult pastor, H. D. McCarty, Fayetteville University Church; children's pastor, Mike Petty, Pine Tree Church, Colt. July 9-13, youth/adult pastor, Rick Caldwell, Little Rock; children's pastor, Rick Hyde, Murfreesboro First Church. July 16-20, youth/adult pastor, Randy Rudsell, First Church, Nederland, Texas; children's pastor, Ron Ford, North Little Rock Central Church. July 23-27, youth/adult pastor, Russellville First Church; children's pastor, John Matthews, Walnut Street Church, Jonesboro. For reser-

vations write to Arkansas Baptist Assembly, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock 72203.

**Super Summer**—Ouachita Baptist University, June 18-22. Senior high and college age only. Leaders: Rick Caldwell, Little Rock; Jamie Page, Missouri. Limited space, pre-registration with the Evangelism Department is required.

**GA Mother-Daughter Camp**—Camp Paron, June 1-2. Girls grades 1-3 and their mothers. Leaders: Debbie Moore, missionary to Liberia; Diana Lewis, home missionary in Arkansas. Registration: 5 p.m. Friday. Concludes: 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

**RA Camp**—Camp Paron, June 18-22. Boys grades 1-9. Leaders: Glendon Grober, Ozzie Berryhill.

**Young Musicians Camp**—Ouachita Baptist University, June 25-28. Children who have completed grades 4-6. Leaders: Tricia Wakefield, Stuttgart; Don McCall, Texas; Mary Ann Marsden, Hot Springs; Susan Messer, Louisiana; Wanda Pearce, Malvern; Stephen Hatfield, North Little Rock.

Please take note of an August Event. **Junior High Juboree**—Southern Baptist College, Aug. 9-11. Junior high youth who have completed 6th through 9th grades. For more information contact Randy Brantley, Evangelism Department, 376-4791.

Photo / Peggy Pearson



*Young Musicians Choirs from across Arkansas met April 21 to sing for adjudication, and to learn two new anthems for a closing worship celebration. The central area festival was held at First Church, Little Rock (pictured). The other locations were Rogers First Church, Wynne Church, Monticello Second Church, and Hope First Church. The five festivals drew 672 singers and 224 adults from 38 church, for a grand total of 896 participants. Next year, the festivals will be combined into one large festival in Little Rock.*



## Brotherhood

### World Mission Conference

Missions and evangelism are inseparable. Both activities focus on fulfilling the commission of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples, beginning in Jerusalem to the end of the world. Missions never moves without evangelism.

Arkansas Baptists will have an opportunity to participate as effectively in evangelism overseas as they did in



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evangelism in Arkansas during the "Here's Hope, Jesus Cares for You" simultaneous revivals. During April and May of 1991, Arkansas Baptist churches can be involved in a Simultaneous World Mission Conference.

Recently, Marvin Reynolds spoke to the key leadership of the state of Arkansas. He expressed the feeling of my heart that every church that took part in the Here's Hope revivals was an expression of their desire to reach people in Arkansas ought to have that same amount of concern about the lost being saved overseas. A godlike way to indicate that would be for that church to participate in the Simultaneous World Mission Conferences.

Simultaneous World Mission Conferences will be an opportunity to get to know foreign missionaries personally. You'll receive firsthand information concerning the needs of missionaries in our world. Obviously, this kind of information can help you as a Baptist to be more involved in effectively praying, and will undoubtedly stimulate you to be more involved in effectively giving.

A primary missions challenge during 1991 for Arkansas Baptist churches is the Simultaneous World Mission Conferences.

If you are reading this column, I hope you will allow God to lead you to encourage your church to be involved in fulfilling the commission of Jesus Christ through evangelism overseas by participating in the Simultaneous World Mission Conferences. Please have your church contact your Associational Director of Missions and participate in this 1991 Simultaneous World Mission Conferences.—Glendon Grober, director

### Stewardship/Annuity Materials Aid Growth

Most churches will prepare next year's budget during the next six months. To encourage growth in Christian stewardship, churches should take an additional step. Members need motivation, and stewardship materials prepared from a biblical perspective help churches help their members.

Some stewardship materials have only one objective. If the materials produce dollars, the stewardship program is successful. Little emphasis is placed upon ministries.

Materials produced by the SBC Stewardship Commission focus on the development of Christian stewards through stewardship education, mission support, budget planning and promotion and proper accounting.

The SBC Stewardship Services Catalog offers almost 200 different items to assist churches of all sizes in their stewardship programs.

In addition to the materials offered by Stewardship Services, your state Stewardship Department has free tracts, guidebooks, videos for loan and other materials. Contact your stewardship office for free program guidebooks, catalogs or sample tracts.—James A. Walker, director

### Woman's Missionary Union GA Mini Camps

The purpose of GA Mini-Camps is to give girls in the fourth to sixth grades and their female adult chaperones an opportunity to experience missions education in an outdoor setting.

The girls will participate in a variety of activities such as quiet times, singing, crafts, swimming and recreation. A highlight of the camps will be hearing Debbie Moore, missionary to Liberia and Bonnie Margason, Mission Service Corps volunteer to Nevada, tell about their work.

Both camps are held at Camp Paron. The camp dates are June 9-11 or June 11-13. Camp begins with registration at 1 p.m. on Monday/Wednesday and concludes at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday/Friday. The cost is \$32 per person. This fee includes lodging, meals, crafts and insurance.

There will be special Bible studies for the adult chaperones. Karen Gross, home missionary to the Hope Migrant Mission Center, will lead the adult Bible study during the June 9-11 camp. Carolyn Porterfield, BW/BYW director for Arkansas WMU, will lead the adult Bible study during the June 11-13 camp.

One adult female chaperone is required for every five girls.

For information, contact your daughter's GA leader or the State WMU Office, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 376-4791.

Don't delay! The camps fill up quickly.—Frances Usery, GA director

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## Looking Ahead

### June

- 1-2 GA Mother-Daughter Camp, *Camp Paron (WMU)*
- 18-22 Arkansas Baptist Assemblies, *Siloam Springs (SS)*
- 18-22 RA Camp, *Camp Paron (Bbd)*
- 18-22 Super Summer Arkansas, *Ouachita Baptist University (Ev)*
- 25-28 Young Musicians Camp, *Ouachita Baptist University (M)*

### July

- 2-6 Arkansas Baptist Assemblies, *Siloam Springs (SS)*
- 9-10 Student Summer Missionary Mid-Summer Retreat, *Ouachita Baptist University (Mn)*
- 9-11 GA Mini-Camp, *Camp Paron (WMU)*
- 9-13 Arkansas Baptist Assemblies, *Siloam Springs (SS)*
- 11-13 GA Mini-Camp, *Camp Paron (WMU)*
- 16-20 Arkansas Baptist Assemblies, *Siloam Springs (SS)*
- 19 Fellowship of Retired Workers in Arkansas of Southern Baptist Churches, Institutions and Agencies, *North Little Rock Park Hill Church (Ad)*
- 23-24 Family Enrichment Workshop, *Parkway Place, Little Rock (DT)*
- 23-27 Arkansas Baptist Assemblies, *Siloam Springs (SS)*
- 23-27 SummerSing III, *Ouachita Baptist University (M)*
- 23-27 Music Arkansas, *Ouachita Baptist University (M)*
- 28 Associational Brotherhood Directors Meeting, *Little Rock (Bbd)*

### August

- 2-3 Weekday Early Education Workshop, *Little Rock First Church (SS/Ms)*
- 9-11 Junior High Jamboree, *Southern Baptist College (Ev)*
- 11 Children's Choir Leader Workshop, *Little Rock Life Line Church (M)*
- 13-15 BWR Seminar, *Camp Paron (Ev)*
- 17-18 Associational WMU Officers' Retreat, *Camp Paron (WMU)*
- 17-18 Volunteer/Part-time Music Leader Retreat, *Southern Baptist College (M/SS)*
- 18 Southeast Arkansas Sunday School Conference/Smaller Membership, *Monticello Second Church (SS)*
- 18 Southwest Arkansas Sunday School Conference/Smaller Membership, *Nashville Ridgeway Church (SS)*
- 20 State Growth Spiral Workshop, *North Little Rock Central Church (SS)*
- 23 Directors of Missions Update Meeting, *Little Rock First Church (Ad)*
- 27 Impact 90 Meeting, *Little Rock Immanuel Church (WMU)*
- 27 M&M and R&R Clinics, *Hope First Church (M)*
- 28 M&M and R&R Clinics, *Fort Smith Windsor Park Church (M)*
- 28-29 Impact 90 Meeting, *West Memphis Calvary Church (WMU)*
- 30 Impact 90 Meeting, *Paragould East Side Church (WMU)*
- 30 M&M and R&R Clinics, *Little Rock Olivet Church (M)*
- Abbreviations:**  
*Ad - Administration; Bbd - Brotherhood; CLC - Christian Life Council; DT - Discipleship Training; Ev - Evangelism; M - Music; Mn - Missions; SS - Sunday School; S/A - Stewardship/Annulity; Stu - Student; WMU - Woman's Missionary Union*

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## ANNUITY BOARD

## Insurance Changes July 1

by Thomas E. Miller Jr.  
SBC Annuity Board

DALLAS (BP)—All medical, life and disability insurance plans of the Annuity Board the Southern Baptist Convention will change from the Aetna Life Insurance Company to the Prudential Insurance Company of America July 1. No benefit changes will occur.

The carrier change won't keep premium rates for the church medical plan from rising on the same day, but Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell said he hopes this will be a step to bring costs under control. The average rate increase will be 15 percent, but will vary with geographic area and the participant's age.

For example, an average Arkansas participant age 35-39 with two or more dependents is expected to experience a maximum increase of 13.7 percent and a minimum increase of 9.7 percent. Older participants may experience a higher percentage increase. Personal letters providing an individual's specific rates should be received by participants soon.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention Annuity Representative James Walker encourages churches not to cut insurance benefits to staff members if at all possible. Walker said, "If a congregation reduces salary or other benefits, it will place significant pressure on many ministerial families."

An agreement to change carriers was reached May 1 when Annuity Board trustees met with Allen M. Haight, senior vice president, group department of Prudential.

"I am immensely pleased to establish a very promising relationship with one of the world's great insurance companies," Powell said. "The creativity with which they approached our problems gives us real hope for the future. Prudential is uniquely qualified to administer a program of our size and complexity."

Annual premium income for Annuity Board plans exceeds \$100 million for church and group insurance programs. While life and disability plans have flourished, the medical plans have struggled.

For three-and-a-half years the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan has suffered a drain on reserves as claims consistently exceeded premium dollars available. Caught in the same national phenomenon of rising medical costs, the Group Comprehensive Medical Plan had comparable experience until this year when it seems to have stabilized. There will be no mid-year rate increase in the group medical

plan, Powell said.

"We saw our voluntary reserves in the church plan shrink by more than \$31 million since 1984 to about \$5 million at the end of March," said Harold D. Richardson, Annuity Board treasurer. "That did not mean we were almost broke. It just meant we were running out of money to 'buy down' premium increases. We have never been in danger of being unable to pay claims."

The church medical plan, which has more than 23,000 participants and 80,000 insured people, has suffered large claims/premium imbalance since 1987. The plan showed a \$2 million loss in the first three months of 1990 despite an aggregate premium increase of 20 percent on Jan. 1, Richardson told trustees in a first-quarter report.

On March 14, the day before Powell formally was installed as president, the executive committee of the Board of trustees met with senior executives of the Annuity Board to hear a report that had been months in the making.

After gathering several independent consultant reports, the staff insurance committee concluded there were four basic options for dealing with the problems of the church plan:

— Turn the plan over to Aetna under provisions of the contract;

— Reunderwrite and segregate the unhealthy into a separate risk pool where their premiums would be much higher and their benefits less;

— Find a new approach to providing insurance benefits; or

— Close the plan.

Because of reserve levels, something had to be done at mid-year. All participants and churches were told in the fall of 1989 that a July 1, 1990, premium increase would be likely.

Knowing that closing the plan would leave some 80,000 people in 23,000 families searching for individual insurance, the trustees said, "Save the plan." That order narrowed the options to three.

Staff noted that turning the plan over to the carrier was unattractive because that would surrender too much control, including the right to set premiums.

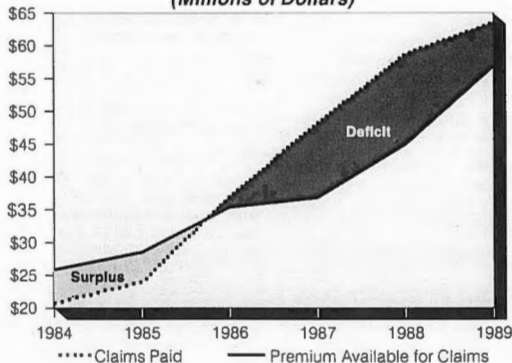
Several companies were invited to submit proposals.

"We began to hear what we wanted to hear from Prudential representatives," said John L. Dudley, director of the insurance services division. "They came to the table with a 'can do' optimism and praise of what we've been trying to do," he said.

Applications or claims in process will be handled whether on Aetna or Prudential forms, Dudley added. Claims under review on July 1 will be transferred to Prudential for completion.

There will be no change in procedures for the Mail Service Prescription Drug Program.

## Claims vs Premiums 1984-1989 (Millions of Dollars)



## Send Advance Resolutions

NASHVILLE (BP)—Mark Cortis, chairman of the 1990 Southern Baptist Convention Resolutions Committee, has asked messengers to send him advance copies of resolutions they plan to submit during the annual convention meeting June 12-14 in New Orleans.

Cortis, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., said the committee will meet Friday, June 9, in New Orleans, for a get-acquainted and orienta-

tion session and Saturday, June 10, to review advance copies of resolutions.

"Having copies of resolutions in advance will enable the committee to give them more careful consideration," said Cortis, who was appointed by SBC President Jerry Vines to chair the 10-member committee.

Cortis said resolutions should be mailed to his attention at Calvary Baptist Church, 5000 Country Club Rd., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27104.

He emphasized that messengers who send advance copies of resolutions to the committee also must submit them on the first day of the convention. Committee representatives will be at a table near the platform to receive resolutions during business sessions on Tuesday, June 14.

Cortis said: "I would rather see a few resolutions given thorough and careful consideration by the committee and the messengers. We're interested in giving proper and complete attention to issues that are the highest priority and, at the same time, to be prophetic."



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R. Keith Parks, President • P.O. Box 6767 • 3806 Monument Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23230-0767 • (804) 353-0151 • Fax No. (804) 358-0504

May 15, 1990

Dear Southern Baptists:

For the sake of three and a half billion lost people, I plead with Southern Baptists to rise above our controversy and recommit to sharing Christ with the whole world. God has opened doors and broken down walls. He has entrusted us with enough spiritual, human, technical and financial resources to have a significant part in reaching all people. The urgency of this "fullness of time" moment demands immediate response.

But many signs indicate we may forfeit our greatest challenge.

We are seeing the most results ever in our work overseas. But at home, our conflict is depriving us of the additional resources that are urgently needed to meet new openness and responsiveness. We were on God's timetable starting in 1976 when, through Bold Mission Thrust, our convention repeatedly committed to larger mission budgets, great increases in missionaries and strengthening of missions through every part of denominational life. As we enter what should be a climactic decade in global evangelization, God has opened many nations before us. Regrettably the controversy has not only taken the focus off missions, but has hindered the fulfilling of our biblical mandate.

The effort to control has excluded many major supporters of cooperative missions. We are losing the wholesome balance that has been our convention's strength. Historically, we have always been a mixture of two major groups. We need full participation of both if we are serious about reaching the world for Christ.

After this decade of controversy, we have not received the increased budgets necessary to fund Bold Mission Thrust. We have received a larger number of dollars, but this level of giving has hardly matched inflation, much less provided for growth. Buying power per missionary has steadily weakened. More and more churches and individuals are noting the controversy as a reason for withholding support.

At our time of extraordinary need for missionaries, we have seen a decline of appointments for four years. Many missionary candidates are increasingly concerned about the direction of our convention and turmoil on seminary campuses.

We were once known as a people of evangelism and missions. Now, even internationally, we are headlined as a people of controversy. Our witness of love and hope is less effective.

The only solution I see is spiritual. We must humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways. Hopefully, it is not too late for healing. I would urge all who are concerned about Southern Baptists doing our part in reaching this lost world to commit to a regular day of prayer and fasting until our convention is reconciled.

Let us rise above the controversy. Let us reemphasize our world mandate as described in Bold Mission Thrust which our convention has reaffirmed many times. We can still impact the world if we are willing to pay the price. May we come to the end of this century known again by the commitment of prayer, life and resources as a Bible believing, missions practicing people—for the sake of three and a half billion lost persons.

Prayerfully,

R. Keith Parks

# Faculty Calls for Resignation

Marv Knox  
Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Faculty Club has called for the resignation of trustee Jerry Johnson, who wrote a 16 page article critical of President Roy Honeycutt and five professors.

Meanwhile, Johnson, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Aurora, Colo., has refused to resign. He challenged the professors to take their cause before the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans this summer.

Johnson's article, "The Cover-Up at Southern Seminary," was distributed to seminary trustees and published in the April issue of the *Southern Baptist Advocate*, an independent newspaper affiliated with SBC "conservatives."

"The Faculty Club, consisting of members and associates of the faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, declares its moral outrage at the actions of trustee Jerry Johnson in attacking the integrity, fidelity to the Scriptures and character of the president and faculty of our seminary," said the statement which was unanimously adopted by the group and read by Bill J. Leonard, a church history professor and chair of the Faculty Club.

"The harm done by Mr. Johnson has in turn been magnified through publication of his article in the *Southern Baptist Ad-*

*vocate*. Neither Mr. Johnson nor the editor of the *Southern Baptist Advocate* contacted the president or other faculty members about the content of the article.

"The intentions of this article are clear: to drive President Honeycutt from office, to do harm to our community of faith, unjustly to accuse faculty of failure in their teaching responsibilities and to sow seeds of hate toward Southern Seminary throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

"His methods employ innuendo, misstatement of fact, personal attack and distortion of views. Most of the material he uses refers to writings and events of as long as 20 years ago. Every substantive charge in the material was dealt with by the board of trustees in official actions in 1986, clearing those accused of charges similar to Mr. Johnson's."

"Furthermore, we respectfully call upon Mr. Johnson to resign his position of trust as a trustee of the seminary, given his declared intention to force the retirement of our president and his demonstrated actions to accomplish such an objective.

"We also call upon every responsible Southern Baptist to attend the Southern Baptist Convention (June 12-14) to stand against the intimidation that is engulfing our denomination by voting for new leaders who will work for the improvement of . . . the denomination."

Faculty request for a trustee's resignation

is unprecedented in the 131-year-old school's history, Leonard told the crowd.

"Johnson, like all trustees, has every right to raise concerns," he noted.

"However, Johnson has made himself prosecutor, judge and jury for the entire board of trustees. Without benefit of proper hearing or trial, Johnson tells the board of trustees and all Southern Baptists that 'one would have to be blind as a mole not to see that Dr. Honeycutt just does not believe the Bible.' In his methods and his mission, he has defined doctrine for the board and abrogated his trust as a trustee of the seminary."

"I am not going to resign," Johnson told Baptist Press.

"If they want me to resign, I invite them to bring it to the Southern Baptist Convention, because they have no authority in this area," he said, adding that authority in the denomination passes down from the SBC to trustees, through the president and administration and to faculty.

Johnson, a graduate of Criswell College in Dallas and Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, took issue with several of the Faculty Club's statements.

"The first is that I did not contact the president or faculty," he said, noting that he talked with Honeycutt for more than an hour in September 1989.

"We did not talk about the idea of a paper, but we talked about the substance" and specifically talked about problems with Honeycutt and four professors, Johnson said. "He indicated he would not take the lead, and when he did that, I felt it was my duty to take his response back to my constituency, which is the Southern Baptist Convention. That is why the article and why it was published in the *Advocate*. I felt like the people needed to know."

Honeycutt confirmed that he and Johnson talked last September, when Johnson came to campus for his orientation as a trustee. But the two of them did not discuss the specific points of Johnson's 16-page article, Honeycutt insisted.

"I have no recollection of his discussing persons," Honeycutt said. "He only discussed problems. We discussed his problem with Article I of the Abstract of Principles (the seminary's governing document) on Scripture, and specifically his interpretation of 'inspiration' to mean inerrancy. He did discuss the necessity of adding only inerrantists to the faculty."

Of their initial meeting, Honeycutt added: "He also said if I would cooperate like another SBC official whom I will not name, I would receive a plaque and a car when I retired. Otherwise, he said, when they had a two-thirds majority, they would have to 'deal' with me."

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## Convention Uniform

### Loyalty and Discipleship

by Erwin L. McDonald, Editor Emeritus, Arkansas Baptist

Basic passage: 2 John, 3 John

Focal passage: 2 John 1-6; 3 John 1-8

**Central truth:** Discipleship to Christ is expressed in obeying Christ's commands, including persons engaged in his work.

Loyalty and a natural affinity for truth go hand in hand for the Christian. In the passages before us, the apostle John calls for followers of the Lord to abide in the truth, praying for and supporting faithful and true fellow disciples and withholding involvement from any engaged in evil or misleading practices.

The "dear lady and her children" addressed in John's second letter may have been a church and its members. Whatever the case, the message is the same. The thing that endeared John to the ones to whom he wrote was their loyalty to Christ and to his truth.

For John, the truth was far more than "a notion or a set of notions." It was no theory about God, but God himself, and God manifest in the flesh so that human beings can know him and partake of his life.

The main appeal is for all of us to love one another (v. 5). The fact that John mentioned specifically his happiness at discovering that "some" of the church or family members "live in truth" implies that others of the group may have been falling short.

John's third letter is addressed to a dear Christian friend by the name of Gaius. It begins with a loving and heavenly prayer that Gaius' health and material well-being may measure up to his spiritual prosperity.

Gaius was commended for being outgoing in his stewardship, helping fellow Christians in general, not just those who were his close friends.

He had helped some strangers on a mission trip who had refrained from taking assistance from non-Christians. "Please help them to continue their trip in a way that will please God," John advised.

But Christian hospitality and helpfulness are still greatly needed, even in the 20th century. For the mission of the church is still worldwide, and the call of the Lord still comes to each and every one of us to be totally committed to helping to spread the good news of the gospel.

## Life and Work

### Forgetting the True God

by Emil Williams, First Church, Jonesboro

Basic passage: Jeremiah 2:5-8, 11-13

Focal passage: Jeremiah 2:5-8, 11-13

**Central truth:** The act of neglecting God brings its own judgment.

The selected passage for this lesson, the first of five dealing with "Judgment and Hope," comes, apparently, from Jeremiah's early ministry. It is an oracle that recalls Israel's behavior after they came into the land of promise.

In the wilderness wandering, while Moses was alive, there had been a time of faithfulness to the Lord, when, in a period of stress, Israel gave the "devotion of . . . youth" and "love as a bride" (2:3). When Israel came into Canaan a change took place. They actually became disappointed with God and went after vain and worthless gods—apparently the gods of the Canaanites—who were actually no gods at all! The result was that they became "worthless" themselves, like the gods they had chosen (2:5). And this is the very essence of judgment: Men become like that which they love and worship. The people did not seek God in the new land and forgot his leading in the hard places of the wilderness. They failed to see God's hand in their successful occupation of the land and the blessings they enjoyed (2:6-7).

Jeremiah enumerates four groups who were involved in this faithless behavior: The priests, the expert interpreters of the law, the rulers of the people, and the prophets who "prophesied by Baal" (2:8). The faithlessness of the people was apparently complete, covering all elements of society.

Israel had done what the pagan nations had not done—exchange gods. Israel's sin was far more grievous, though; they exchanged the glory of the one true God for that which had no profit, the vain and empty "no-gods" (2:11). Such action shocks the very created order (2:12).

The concluding verse spells out Israel's two-fold sin: They had forsaken God who is the source of life and created their own gods who could not meet their needs. Like cracked cisterns that could not produce water, or even hold it, these gods did not create life and could not sustain life.

Rejection of God, then, brings inevitable judgment: men are left with what they have chosen as their gods, a vain and empty existence.

## Bible Book

### God Is Good

by Verne Wickliffe, First Church, Des Arc

Basic passage: James 1:1-27

Focal passage: James 1:1-7, 14-17, 21-22, 26-27

**Central truth:** God's goodness touches every part of life.

Who can count the number of times the first few verses of chapter 1 have been read by people trying to sort out their trials? Here the book of James gives a purpose for the trials that test our faith and cannot be explained. The testing of our faith produces patience, endurance, and perseverance.

The answer to a prayer for wisdom can sometimes be difficult to discern. We pray most often for wisdom when we fall into trials and usually have a more difficult time making decisions. If we pray for wisdom the promise is that God will give us wisdom. We must, however, ask in faith. Generally we question and doubt decisions with second guessing and going over the decision again and again. This doubting keeps us going back and forth between possibilities and back and forth emotionally. The illustration, in verse 6 of a wave driven by the wind is very appropriate. We must ask in faith, expecting an answer in faith pursue that answer as the wise choice. How can we have an answer from God if we are so uncertain we have received one?

The trials that test faith come in many forms. Some immediately recognizable, others are seen only later. Even temptation is a trial that tests faith. Testing to see if we will be faithful or give in to the desire of temptation.

God does allow events to occur and does make use of the testing trial. To attribute the trial and temptation to God is mistaken (Ja. 1:13-17). God does not tempt to sin, but only gives good gifts. Temptation comes when we are drawn away and enticed by our own desire (Ja. 1:14). Sin occurs when desire gives birth to action (Ja. 1:15), actual or in heart, see Matthew 5:21-28. The test is our own to face, the temptation is not from God, the sin is ours.

God is good to us. Through Jesus we have been saved from sin. God gives only good gifts and uses even trials for our benefit. We should practice pure and undefiled religion (Ja. 1:26-27), lay aside sin and be filled with the Word of God to be doers and not hearers only (Ja. 1:21-25).

## Convention Uniform

### *Happiness Is . . .*

by Harrison Johns, retired pastor, Harrisburg

Basic passage: Psalm 1:1-6

Focal passage: Psalm 1:1-2

Central truth: Significant contrasts confront each person.

Everyone is keenly interested in happiness. There are many notions as to what constitutes happiness. Life does not last long enough for a person to experiment with all the suggestions for significant happiness.

Unbridled indulgence does not lead to happiness. Like electricity, happiness includes both negative and positive. We must select carefully our source of counsel (v. 1). Counsel that leaves God out is ungodly and leads to a life without God. A life without God causes a person to associate principally with other people without God—sinners (v. 1). It causes a person to adopt an ungodly attitude—a scornful attitude (v. 1). The psalmist does not mince words about the results of ungodliness. The lifestyle of the ungodly leads him away from God (v. 4), assures his rejection in judgment (v. 5) and guarantees his uneasiness among the righteous, God-fearing society (v. 5). Happiness is not ungodliness.

"Who said so?" is an appropriate question for any recipe for happiness.

The reliable directions for happiness come from God. They are to be discovered in "the law of the Lord" (v. 2); the inspired Word of God; the Bible! Following the truth as found in the Bible will cause the follower to thrive, bear fruit and prosper in a lifestyle approved by God (v. 3).

The Lord knows and approves the way of those who are made righteous (v. 6) through faith in Jesus Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 Jn 5:12).

Happiness is life in God by faith in Christ!

It is the nature of the unregenerate human being to be self-centered. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Ga. 5:16,17). The "flesh" is the ungodly life and does not lead to happiness. The "Spirit" is the godly life and does lead to happiness.

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## Life and Work

### *Judgement Follows*

by Emil Williams, First Church, Jonesboro

Basic passage: Jeremiah 6:16-20; 36:27-28,30

Focal passage: Jeremiah 6:16-20; 36:27-28,30

Central truth: by the rejection of God's Word and way we bring God's judgement.

This lesson will focus on only the first suggested passage (6:16-20) which deals with the people's attitude during a time of danger from "the foe from the north." In the face of impending destruction, they are corrupt and unrepentant (see 6:1-15).

Jeremiah issues a plaintive call, a plea, with a note of desperation and pathos, as well as hope. The prophet knows the people have left the dependable path of life found in a true understanding of God's law, faithful living in response to their covenant relationship to God. So, he pleads for them to return to the old ways, the ancient paths.

He realizes they may have forgotten what those ways really are, so he admonishes them to "look . . . ask for the ancient paths." They have gone in a different direction so long they need help in returning (16a,b).

The people's answer is abrupt: "We will not. . ." (16c). Verse 17 is a reminder of God's continued warnings through his prophets, but the result is the same—obstinate rebellion, again, "We will not." So, judgment must come. Verses 18-20 describe it.

First, there is warning, so that when judgment comes the people cannot say they had not been warned (v. 18).

Second, the evil that is coming is indeed the judgment of God, but it is, in fact, the result of the people's own rebellion, "the fruit of their devices" (v. 19). Judgment is not God's ultimate intention, but the result of turning from God's way.

Third, religious practices, offering and sacrifices, are of not value in winning God's favor (v. 20). Expensive incense from far away lands, cannot compensate for the simple failure to follow God's way.

This is a recurrent theme in Jeremiah, a condemnation of ceremony, trusting in the temple, while ignoring God's real service. The belief that God's favor can be earned in such a way disregards God's purpose. This rejection has an inevitable result: God's judgement comes where he would have given life and blessing.

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## Bible Book

### *Faith and Works*

by Verne Wickliffe, First Church, Des Arc

Basic passage: James 2:1-26

Focal passage: James 2:1-4, 8-10, 14-18, 21-24

Central truth: Faith and works go hand in hand.

There are many things that separate groups of people in society. The most evident seem to be race and socioeconomic level. Social separation is a very public issue. The wealthy live in one part of town, middle class in another, the poor in yet another. Groups do not mix much in public, nor do they mix much in church.

The practicality of James 2:1-13 speaks directly to the socioeconomic separation. We can, however, apply these verses to any form of partiality, or prejudice, we may exhibit. James 2:9 makes it plain that partiality is sin. If, in fact, one is able to keep the whole law to love your neighbor as yourself (see Ga. 5:14) but shows partiality, one is guilty of all (Ja. 2:10). Partiality is sin working against faith.

Christians must question then what other sins work against our faith. Sins of the tongue, laziness (even spiritual), attitude, and others must be considered. Also, sins of inaction make us guilty and work against faith (see Ja. 4:17).

Faith without action, works, is dead (Ja. 2:17). What faith is shown if a Christian tells someone "naked and destitute of daily food" to "depart in peace, be warmed and filled." The Christian no longer has to face the need, but the hunger and nakedness remain. God has made it clear, our actions are to match our words. The destitute would walk away with nothing but another mark against faith in God. In the same manner, what kind of works tell people that Jesus loves them, but not in my church? What kind of works withhold the gospel from the lost for any reason? These are works against faith. The works of James 2:14-26 are works of faith, without works of faith, faith is lifeless.

Salvation is not by works. Entrance into God's abundant and eternal life cannot be earned. Salvation is by faith, accepting Jesus as savior is the first work of faith (Ja. 2:23). Faith and works of faith go hand in hand (Ja. 2:22). It is really not a question of which comes first, faith or works, they come together. Living faith shares its life by doing works.

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## A 'Mere Redundancy'

### Coalition Urges Court to Rehear Case

by C. Lacy Thompson

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (BP)—In its biggest church-state decision in 20 years, the U.S. Supreme Court has cut back on the First Amendment protection for the free exercise of religion.

In fact, the recent ruling transforms the free exercise clause of the U.S. Constitution into a "mere redundancy" that serves no practical purpose, asserted Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which is seeking a second hearing on the case.

"And that's not overstating it," Thomas insisted. "I'm not given to alarmist statements about cases, but this case essentially writes the free exercise clause right out of the Constitution."

The ruling opens the door for government regulation of religious practices and for the enforcement of laws even when they violate the religious views of individuals. The only protections left are in unemployment compensation cases, in the instance that a law specifically targets religious practice or when free exercise of religion is linked with another First Amendment freedom.

In essence, Justice Antonin Scalia's majority opinion says the state is free to enforce generally applicable laws, even when they violate a person or group's religious practice.

He differentiates between religious belief and practice and says cases regarding the accommodation of religion are better left to the political process, even though that will place minority religious practices at a disadvantage. Scalia called that an "unavoidable consequence of democratic government."

The court did not have to take that direction, Thomas noted. Its decision could have been based on the "compelling interest" argument. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor makes that point in her written opinion. O'Connor sides with the 6-3 majority action but disagrees with the rationale used to reach it.

In fact, she says the ruling "is incompatible with our nation's fundamental commitment to individual religious liberty."

Thomas also decried the court's separation of religious belief and practice. "If all free exercise gives us is the right to believe what we want, we could have done that in the Soviet Union or any other country. You can believe what you want behind bars. But as the Supreme Court pointed out in the 1940s, the freedom to believe

without the freedom to act on that belief is not worth a plug nickel. It's just a hollow freedom."

In addition, Thomas questioned the court's contention that free exercise of religion will be protected when linked with another First Amendment right. "What this has done in effect is place free exercise in an inferior position," he said. And moving the battle to the political process means churches and religious groups may have to lobby more to get exemptions from general laws, Thomas added: "The court is saying if you can convince the legislature that your constitutional rights should be protected, that's fine. We're not going to protect them for you here in the federal court."

The idea that a majority will control constitutional rights should trouble Baptists, who have been in the minority and still are in many states, Thomas said.

Baptists also should be troubled by the impact the ruling will have on a host of areas, such as income taxes, property taxes, hiring of church personnel and regulation of church schools and day-care centers. Thomas predicted an immediate impact on anti-discrimination laws for churches.

Currently, churches are free to discriminate on religious grounds in hiring, but the recent ruling could remove that protection. For instance, if a locale has a gay-rights ordinance, it could be applied to the church as it is to a secular business, he said. In other words, the ruling means government may choose to tell churches who to hire in non-ministerial positions.

Government also will be able to regulate church schools as they do public schools, as long as the law is generally applicable. "Church schools could become cookie-cutter counterparts of the secular schools if the state wants to regulate them," Thomas said. "This ruling means government can regulate them (their hiring, curriculum, etc.) to the same extent it regulates the public schools."

A diverse coalition of religious and civil liberties organizations, joined by 55 constitutional law scholars, has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider its recent decision.

Organizations supporting the petition for rehearing include American Jewish Congress, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Baptist Joint Committee, Christian Legal Society, American Friends Service Committee, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and the National Association of Evangelicals.