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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 94, Number 8

April 20, 1995

Senior adults

focused on "Ministering to Win" during Arkansas Baptists' 1995 Golden Age Evangelism Conference, which attracted more than 1,000 senior adults to Eureka Springs April 6-7.



John Colhren, 95, a member of Trinity Church in Texarkana, shares a personal testimony during Arkansas Baptists' Golden Age Evangelism Conference.



Music director Bob Woolley leads conference participants at the Gem of the Ozarks Theater in Eureka Springs, backed by a 200-voice senior adult choir.

Spring break mission trips expand student ministries

By Colleen Backus

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"Spring break missions trips give students the opportunity to be involved in missions for a brief time, when possibly they couldn't give a whole summer for mission," noted Diane Parker, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention student ministry department. "Students have a lot of options of what to do on spring break - I'm glad that Baptist Student Unions gives them the opportunity to do something worthwhile and meet needs."

One of the teams that met needs during their recent spring break was from the BSU at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences, under the leadership of Diane O'Connell. Five students and 17 other medical personnel went to Ecuador March 11-18, focusing on medical mission evangelism to native Indians. The team was joined by five missionaries, two Ecuadorian evangelists and five translators.

"We loved the jungle people of northern Ecuador through the gift of medical practice and sharing the gospel," said O'Connell. An evangelist to children led daytime services and taught child evangelism to local religious leaders. A general evangelist led night services, during which students shared testimonies, led music and showed the "Jesus" film.

"We were blessed to see many changes of heart and salvations," O'Connell said. "This opened the door to three villages that were closed and very antagonistic to the missionaries....They became open to the gospel once they saw our expressions of love."

The BSU at the University of Fayetteville, under the leadership of Lynn Lloyd, sent six teams out into Arkansas and Oklahoma to Baptist children's homes and boys' facilities. They worked with the kids, helped with work projects and led recreation in addition to holding vespers for the youngsters and revival services for house parents. Thirty-five students were involved in the mission teams and other students participated in a choir tour.

Baptist Student Union members from two different campuses - the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Southern Arkansas University - found themselves at the beach. Both teams went to Panama City Beach, Fla., during March.

The UALR BSU, under the leadership of Alan Reed, took nine American and 10 international students who concentrated on friendship witnessing and leading Bible studies along with showing the "Jesus" film in the evenings. "The trip was a big success," noted Reed. "New friendships were made and we were able to witness to them through Bible study and our daily living."

Southern Arkansas University's BSU, under the leadership of Robert Pinkston, took 27 students to the beach. "Our BSU students led eight students to Christ," Pinkston reported.

Students from Henderson State University BSU and the Garland County Community College BSU went to Monterey, Mexico. Mary Kisor, BSU director at Garland County, reported that the students painted and refurbished a church and shared the gospel at a college campus and an English school.

Cover Story

ADN photo / Mike Gill



Golden Age Conference 6

Arkansas Baptist senior adults were challenged during the recent Golden Age Evangelism Conference to be faithful witnesses for Christ. More than 1,000 senior adults attended the two-day conference in Eureka Springs.

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Vision, growth mark Biggs' years of service

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

The retirement of Johnny Biggs as executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries will not only herald the end of an era of growth and change for the agency, but will signal the beginning of a new ministry emphasis for the agency head.

Biggs, 57, retires April 30 to begin a yet-to-be-determined ministry with senior adults. He has served the ABCHEM for 27 years, including 24 as executive director.

During his leadership, the ministry has grown from the Children's Home in Monticello and two area offices to a statewide ministry spanning 21 locations, ministering to more than 4,600 Arkansans annually and providing residence space for nearly 600 children and youth each year.

His term of service with the agency "was the culmination of a number of years searching for God's call," Biggs noted.

Prior to coming to the agency, Biggs, a graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton, served as a child welfare worker in Lafayette, La., and as a social worker for the Veterans Administration Hospital in Atlanta.

"When I received the invitation to come, I knew it was right," he recalled. "I had searched so intently on finding that place that God had for me."

He served as director of the agency's newly-created Little Rock office from 1968-70 before being offered the executive director position.

"I was overwhelmed at the offer," he remembered, "although at that time it was only the Children's Home, the Little Rock office and the Jonesboro office."

"I was scared," he admitted. "The opportunity came kind of suddenly."

He accepted the position. He was 33 years old.

During his tenure, ABCHEM ministries have grown to include six emergency receiving homes, a home for unwed mothers, four additional area offices, a group home for boys and a chemical-free ranch for boys who have completed drug treatment programs.

The variety of ministries established under Biggs' direction indicate the variety of changes in child care during his tenure, he remarked.

"One of the most dramatic changes,"

he said, "is the amount of child abuse....It's hard to talk about.

"When I first started in child welfare, protective services was for children who were not going to school or they were on the streets or they needed food or clothes," he said. "Now it is really to protect them from death.

"It has been that drastic of a swing," he declared. "Child abuse is such an everyday issue with us now."

Assessing the ministries that have been created under his leadership, Biggs said he is most proud of the creation of the agency's receiving homes in Sherwood, Little Rock,

"has been primarily money."

"We have gone from a \$250,000 budget in 1971 to a \$2.5 million budget in 1994. So it has been an ever-increasing need for funds," he noted. "God has always provided through the generosity of Arkansas Baptists. We've never needed to borrow any money. But there's always that struggle."

David Perry, newly elected ABCHEM executive director, said he believes Biggs' greatest contribution has been his "vision for the mission."

"He has led us to a most unprecedented growth in terms of ministry to a variety of critical needs that have arisen in our society," Perry said.

"I count my self blessed to have served under the leadership of Johnny Biggs," he added. "Personally, he has been and will be a great mentor and a dear personal friend. I can search the world and not find anyone better to work with."

ABCHFM board chairman Jeff Cheatham, director of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association, agreed that Biggs' vision has been one of the agency's assets.

"When Johnny came to the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home 27 years ago as a social worker, God knew what He had planned for this agency and had him chosen to do the job," Cheatham said. "With his leadership and spiritual vision he brought a dimension to child care that won the respect of Arkansas Baptists in the pulpit and the pew."

Biggs expressed gratitude to Arkansas Baptists "for encouragement and desire to be an arm of the church reaching out. They have been our dependable prayer base and support base. It's been a great partnership in missions for us."

Looking toward the future, Biggs said he plans to remain in the Little Rock area, working in senior care ministries. "I'm not sure where it will be, but I am planning to stay in the area," he said.

"As I look backward, the thing that I am most aware of and grateful for is the miraculous power of God," Biggs affirmed.

"It's just incredible that so many things have happened over the years to enable us to move from door to door, step to step and I didn't orchestrate it," he added. "Day after day, situation after situation, we've seen the power of God to work in the lives and situations of people to accomplish His will."



"As I look backward, the thing that I am most aware of and grateful for is the miraculous power of God."

— Johnny Biggs
Retiring director, ABCHEM

Westfork, Camden, Paragould and Judsonia. The homes offer immediate, temporary shelter for abused, abandoned and neglected children, as well as teens and battered women.

"I think that they give a good opportunity for kids to provide the care that they need in an emergency time in their lives," he explained. "But it also allows those who are working for the child or the family the time it allows to make a good placement."

"I used to see kids who had been through 12, 13 or 14 foster homes and saw what it did to them. It wrecked them; it ruined them. We felt like if the kids had the opportunity on the front end to be placed, any time of day or night, it would help."

Biggs said the emergency receiving homes also provide churches and associations an opportunity to join with the agency in providing care. "Some have built houses, some have bought houses and one helps to rent a house," he pointed out.

ABCHFM ministries also have grown to include Promise House in El Dorado, which provides a residence for unwed pregnant teenagers as an alternative to abortion.

Biggs said the greatest struggle that the ministry has faced during his leadership

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

Those who read the *Arkansas Baptist* *Newsmagazine* regularly learned from the last issue that I plan to retire not later than Feb. 29, 1996. In that announcement I tried to share with Arkansas Baptists how much I appreciate the love and support they have given throughout these 13 years. I can only praise God and thank both you and the Lord for these fruitful years.

But "the call" goes on. While the call to a different ministry is prominent in my spirit, the shape it will take is still unknown to me. It is not a call to less but to more. It is a call that will have more of a kingdom focus than a one-state focus. The call does not free me from commitment to the welfare of our churches. I hope to continue to be of help to our churches.

The call will not require less faith, less commitment nor less risk. There is little room for real spiritual growth when risk is removed. In fact, a part of the joy of this decision is found in pushing out from the safe bounds of regular employment to the uncertain waters of no assignment, no responsibility and no accountability. This would all be very frightening except for the assurance God has given that He has an assignment that He will reveal to me in His time. Whatever it may be, I now embrace it as an opportunity for God to manifest Himself. Until then I am committed to helping Arkansas Baptist churches be the greatest they can possibly be for His glory. My greatest concern is that we all be saved from frustration and futile religious activity by God sending a revival and awakening.

God has already "loaded my wagon." I urgently need your prayers as I represent you in three arenas in the near future: May 22-24 preaching at a regional Fresh Encounter in Jackson, Miss.; June 3-5 ministering to the missionaries in Senegal (West Africa) where spiritual oppression has dominated the area for years; July 9-14 preaching to 1,000 leaders from some 16 countries who serve churches in the European Baptist Convention. Each of these calls for divine enabling. Could I count on you to be a co-laborer with the Lord in these? Thank you! Pray right now!

RONNIE ROGERS

President's Corner

Covenant for a New Century: The new SBC



Everyone seems to agree that some restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention is needed in order to become more efficient and effective in evangelizing our present world which is quite different than the world when the SBC began in 1845. Maybe all will see some aspect that they would have recommended somewhat differently, and there is surely room for discussion. However, we must not let details and inconsequential preferences wrap us in red tape which could become the burial shroud for the SBC. I would like to commend the Program and Structure Study Committee for:

1. Their work and courage to offer a restructuring of the SBC which will allow us to charge into the 21st century rather than meandering into it.
2. Demonstrating the kind of courageous leadership they call for in the "Covenant for a New Century."
3. Not bringing a doom and gloom report that the day of denominations is over, but rather a strategy on how to be on the cutting edge of evangelism and ministry in the 21st century.
4. Not avoiding the rough issues and

decisions which would have produced merely a wordy and flowery report; this would have required equal work to implement, but would not have substantially altered the status quo, leaving us with only a refashioned but not more efficient and effective SBC.

5. Producing a work whose very essence evidences an enormous investment of research, time, dialogue and prayer.

6. Recommending a change from program assignments to ministry assignments.

The SBC would have gone the way of the other denominations if we had not had the courage and spiritual fortitude to address our theological aberrances. With that same courage and tenacity, we must face the organizational needs of our convention.

The proposed restructuring will enable us to be known in the next millennium as the denomination that *is* rather than the denomination that *was*.

Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Personal perspectives

"When I first started in child welfare, protective services was for children who were not going to school or they were on the streets or they needed food or clothes. Now it is really to protect them from death. It has been that drastic of a swing."

—Johnny Biggs, retiring executive director,
Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries

"There are enough of you here to shake the state of Arkansas for Christ and you must not let your age become a factor in your witnessing opportunities."

—Jack Stanton, keynote speaker,
Arkansas Baptist Golden Age Evangelism Conference

"Are you ready to say no to peer pressure, use the 'amazing grace' of God's love and say, 'Yes, Lord, send me?'"

—Debbie Moore, SBC foreign missionary to Liberia;
keynote speaker, Arkansas Baptist Acts Encounter

Troubling statement

It was very distressing to me to read of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Albert Mohler firing his dean of the Carver School of Social Work. Especially troubling was his statement that "the culture of social work and the culture of theological education are not congruent." Theology and spiritual values need to be in dialogue with counselors, social workers and other mental health providers.

It would certainly appear to me that president Mohler is out of step with the founding fathers of the seminary and the past presidents of the school who saw no apparent conflict between these two disciplines. The ministry of social work seems to be to be an embodiment of Jesus' words in Matthew 25:31-46 where He talks about giving food and drink to the hungry and thirsty, clothing the needy, visiting the sick and prisoners.

President Mohler's decision is another blatant attack on women in ministry and how women are devalued by our current denominational leadership. This is another sad day in the life of this Southern Baptist chaplain who has loved and served our denomination for over 46 years.

Alan Tyson
Corporate Chaplain, Hudson Foods
Rogers, AR

Restructuring is vital

It is my privilege to serve as a member of both the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, and its committee on program and structure. It was only after long hours of prayer and deliberation that our chairman, Mark Brister, presented our report to the Executive Committee in February. Since then, I have been surprised at the misinformation that has issued from various sources concerning our report.

Our goal throughout the process was to refocus our convention's efforts on the Great Commission mandate we have been given by Jesus Christ. Frankly, streamlining the bureaucracy is a necessary step in that process. If the convention adopts the plan, the number of our agencies will be reduced from 19 to 12. This will result in a significant savings to the Cooperative Program, which means that we will be able to place more of our resources in our missions enterprises, rather than in a denominational bureaucracy. Perhaps all of the programs we are seeking to eliminate or consolidate have value. However, many of them are, at best, peripheral to our primary mission.

The continued role of the Woman's Missionary Union appears to be a matter of great concern. Please be assured that our committee's report did not address that question in any way. The WMU is, and will



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continue to be, an auxiliary to the convention. In fact, we honored the WMU's request that it remain an auxiliary. It can continue to provide missions education and mission offering promotion, in cooperation with the mission boards.

Finally, it is unfortunate that there has been a suggestion made that because the committee was composed of "white, Anglo men from large churches" that it is somehow disqualified from adequately presenting a vision for the future to the SBC. That sounds more like the language of corporate and governmental America than that of the Church. Surely we can move beyond quotas and characterizations based on race and gender. This was not a problem in the first century Church (Galatians 3:28) and should not be for us.

Rex M. Terry
Fort Smith, AR

Keep the message pure

Southern Baptists must never surrender the purity of the gospel message. I believe that this is the charge that the Lord provides in Leviticus 19:19, which states, "Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed."

The 25-page document, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" (ECT), is a direct challenge to the purity of the gospel message. This document is flawed from its title. What is the Christian mission during the next 1,000 years? The Christian mission for the third millennium is that same Christian mission which has been held for the past two millennia. That mission is to share the gospel with every person. Should we be together on this mission with any group that preaches another gospel? We should not even infer it.

Whatever may be said on the inside of this document can never justify the title placed on the outside. The Catholic Church teaches that a person is born again when they are baptized as an infant. It teaches that we must keep the 10 commandments to obtain salvation. It teaches that we must perform good works to merit heaven. This is clearly a perverted gospel.

The ECT document is not just some insignificant piece of literature. It is a direct challenge to the good news of the gospel. Salvation is only by grace through faith in the precious shed blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins — not through our own works. His resurrection

is proof that the price was paid in full. May Southern Baptists never pervert that message. Be ready to give a clear presentation of the gospel should the confusion of the ECT document ever cross your path. The gospel is the greatest message in all the earth. Share it with someone today.

Wyndham Cook
SBC Home Mission Board trustee
Magnolia, AR

Power vs. purity

In the January 26 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist News Magazine*, state convention president Ronnie Rogers lists the ways God is blessing the work of our convention, especially mentioning the number of church starts and baptisms on our mission fields. He credits these results to the "battle for doctrinal purity" in our convention. He then states that his "brothers" have not supported our home and foreign missionaries through the Cooperative Program because of "liberal influence."

I am one of the missionaries who helped start some of those churches and baptized some of the people in that total. I can think of no positive influence the battle had on these results. On the contrary, I can only wonder what the totals might have been if Rogers' brothers had been supporting us during this time. The credit for these results should go to the churches and pastors that supported us, and to our home and foreign missionaries.

Rogers says the battle for doctrinal purity "eventuates in more people being saved." Unfortunately it has been a battle for power, not purity. The true results are seen in our own SBC, not on the mission fields. For the 10-year period ending in 1993, the SBC had the lowest total baptisms for any 10-year period since the 1940s. CP gifts during recent years have either increased slightly or decreased. The facts say the battle for power has resulted in fewer people being saved and less money being given to missions.

There has been no liberal influence to prevent Rogers' brothers from supporting us. If you base your judgment on methods, results and theology, there is no missions organization that deserves the support of Southern Baptists more than our own mission boards. This was as true 10 or 20 years ago as it is today.

I would say the same thing to the supporters of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship I say to Rogers' brothers. Our missionaries are doing the same things today with the same integrity we have done in the past. Do not be deceived by false accusations.

Ron West
Southern Baptist missionary
Taichung, Taiwan

Senior adults challenged to be faithful witnesses

By Millie Gill

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

The urgent need for Arkansas Baptist senior adults to strengthen their witnessing arena was highlighted during the 1995 Golden Age Evangelism Conference held April 6-7 in Eureka Springs.

The 1,002 participants were told that 465,000 senior adults live in Arkansas, representing 19 percent of the state's population. Paul McClung, Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department associate, added that Southern Baptist Home Mission Board statistics indicate 60 percent of those senior adults have no church relationship.

"It concerns me that 200,000 senior adults living in this state have not received the gospel of Jesus Christ," McClung declared. "In fact, it has so perturbed me that I want to share some convictions with you which I hope will become a challenge to you to seek out and find lost senior adults in your community."

McClung emphasized the need for participants to make God visible to everyone they come in contact with, to learn how to share the gospel and build significant relationships, to build strong prayer ministries, to hold mid-day senior adult revivals and to expand senior adult ministries.

"Those of you here have a strong faith, a testimony of faith and a love of Jesus," he noted. "Therefore, I challenge you to immediately begin to share this salvation message and reach our state's lost senior adult population for Christ."

"I want to partner with you, the most loyal and faithful Southern Baptists we have in the country, and assist you in any way that I can in your outreach methods," McClung concluded. "As you reach out, we will see God do wonderful and miraculous things."

State evangelism department director Clarence Shell noted that he had envisioned an evangelism ministry to senior adults a number of years ago. He voiced appreciation for the response to such a vision and encouraged participants to become involved in "sharing the good news of Jesus Christ."

Guest speaker Jack Stanton, director of the International Institute of Evangelism at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., emphasized that "there are enough of you here to shake the state of Arkansas for Christ and you must not let your age become a factor in your witnessing opportunities."



Keynote speaker Jack Stanton challenged Arkansas Baptist senior adults to "shake the state of Arkansas for Christ."

"As senior adults you have seen God's transforming and miraculous power," he continued. "Share this through phone calls, letters, words of encouragement, visits and special ministries such as serving as babysitters or away-from-home grandparents."

Stanton, sharing his transforming salvation from the streets of east St. Louis to service for God, stated that every born-again believer had been called to share the good news of Jesus Christ. "A three-day-old Christian, not a pastor or a Sunday School teacher, was the one who cared enough to explain God's love to a 'bad street kid,'" he said.

"God wants your availability for witnessing to all people without prejudice," he added. "Jesus paid it all for all people. He paid the price to make a somebody out of a nobody. You must go out and stir the conscience of others so they too can share this marvelous message."

Preaching from John 4:20, Stanton challenged the senior adults to make themselves available to share the gospel in a simple way and to stir the conscience of those with whom they share in order to help transform a whole town. "Jesus sought out the woman of Samaria. He made himself available to her, spoke to her in a simple way, stirred her conscience and used her as the key to transforming a whole town," he explained. "You also will do this as you let God use you."

Other conference features included a testimony from John Cothren, a 95-year-

old member of Trinity Church in Texarkana. Cothren shared that although he had failed the Lord many times, God has never failed him. "I am so grateful that God loves me despite my shortcomings and I praise Him for using me in a musical ministry," he said. "Let Him also use you."

Cothren expressed appreciation to Arkansas Baptists for reaching out and involving senior adults. "I think it is one of the most wonderful things that has happened in our state. I hope and pray that we continue to grow to the point it will be difficult to find a place large enough to accommodate us."

Bob Woolley, retired music department director for the Missouri Baptist Convention, directed musical sessions. In addition to traditional music, his "Lighten Your Heart" compositions provided an added dimension of fun through laughter.

Bill Canary, pastor of Mount Vernon Church in Faulkner Association, was the featured soloist. Bus drivers and senior adult leaders presented special music in the Thursday afternoon session and the Friday morning session featured a ukulele band from Park Place Church in Hot Springs. Ouachita Baptist University retired professors Paul Root, Raymond Coppenger, Herman Sandefur and Thurman Watson participated in both sessions. Others assisting were Peggy Pearson, accompanist, and Glen Ennes, music coordinator, both associates in the ABCS church music ministries department.

The Thursday evening event featured Donnie Sneed and Friends in a country musical performance.

Response to requests and challenges from speakers included plans by senior adult coordinator Dorothy Fuller from First Church in Blytheville to return home and plan a senior adult revival, launch a music ministry and encourage members to become more involved in personal witnessing.

Harold Diffie, pastor of New London Church, and his wife, Gloria, said they plan to begin a personal witnessing program. Several members of First Church in Paragould said they plan to do more personal witnessing as well as continuing their ministries to "geriatric church members" through trips to the doctors, assisting with daily routines and grocery shopping.

McClung said he also has received requests from Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith, First Church in Cotter and Trinity Church in Texarkana to assist in expanding their senior adult outreach efforts.

The 1996 conference has been planned for April 11-12 at First Church in Springdale. Program personalities will include Jerry Clower, Marge Caldwell and Dick Baker.



Acteens from throughout Arkansas were recognized during a special ceremony for completing Acteen StudAct requirements.

Acteens encouraged to 'B the 1' at Encounter

By Millie Gill

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

The annual Arkansas Baptist Acteens Encounter held recently at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock led to life-changing commitments for many of the young people attending.

Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union sponsored the two-day "UB the 1" Acteens event which attracted more than 890 participants. State Acteens director Angela Lowe coordinated the event.

Debbie Moore, who will return May 17 to the foreign mission field of Liberia after furloughing in Hope, asked participants if they were ready to leave the encounter and become the ones God wanted them to be in mission service, whether in their hometown, in the state, in the nation or in the world.

"I heard the Lord calling and saying, 'Who will go?' and I said, 'Here I am, Lord, send me,'" Moore declared. "Are you ready to say no to peer pressure, use the 'amazing grace' of God's love and say, 'Yes, Lord, send me?'"

Responses to the call included Acteens making professions of faith in Christ and commitments to mission service.

Retired home missionary Mildred McWhorter, in a dialogue session with state Acteen panelists, urged Acteens to "be the ones" to minister to a vast field of those dying because of drug and alcohol abuse, moral problems and broken homes. "I challenge you to look around you and find people who are lost and tell them about Jesus," she said.

Panelists were Rebecca Gates of Second Church in El Dorado, Emily Goode of First Church in Benton, Shanna Hunnicutt of Central First Southern Church in Lavaca

and Brandy Ussery of Calvary Church in Paragould.

Sarah Keller, a senior at Ouachita Baptist University and a former national and state Acteens panelist, reflected on the influence of Acteens in her life. She recalled her work as an Activator at Hope Migrant Mission Center and her travels as a panelist.

Keller also shared the joys of currently serving as an Acteens leader for Second Church in Arkadelphia. "It is so exciting to be in the role of equipping and training girls as others did for me," she exclaimed. "They are showing the same fears and excitement that I did, but now I can share with them the fact that I would not be what I am if it were not for missions education through Acteens."

Affirming her mother, Sandra Keller of Brinkley; her Acteens leader, Sandra Kemmer of Brinkley; state director Lowe; and Sandy Wisdom-Martin for the roles they have played in her 10-year Acteens career, Keller concluded by urging participants to open up their lives to God and allow Him to use them in His service.

Another highlight of the encounter was the recognition of Michelle Wright, a member of Geyer Springs First Church in North Little Rock, for her completion of work required to receive an Acteens Citation. State WMU executive director Julia Ketner said requirements for this honor include completion of all other StudAct levels, discovering and developing skills in communicating the gospel and leading the church to greater missions awareness.

Wright, a high school senior, completed 325 hours of service for this award with projects that included designing a leaflet encouraging high school seniors to join a Baptist Young Women organization after graduation, assisting her church's

children's minister with summer activities, and designing and completing a missions achievement project with four local high schools to meet specific community missions needs.

Also recognized were 150 who had completed various StudAct requirements. Acteens from Glendale Church in Booneville, Lonoke Church, First Church in Paris and Temple Church in Searcy received Friend-to-Friend recognition certificates for their efforts in establishing new Acteen organizations in Hackett Church, First Church of Augusta, First Church of Branch and First Church of Judsonia.

Other encounter activities included theme interpretations, conference sessions, missionary prayer calendars and music led by John Hicks from the host church.



Furloughing missionary Debbie Moore urged Acteens to follow God's call.

Children's Homes leader urges Baptists to "become involved"

Challenging Arkansas Baptists to become active in the ministries of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, David Perry said churches, organizations or individuals "can be involved in our ministries throughout the year in a variety of ways through several missions action opportunities."

The ABCHFM, an agency of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, is a statewide ministry encompassing 21 locations, ministering to more than 4,600 people annually and providing residence space for nearly 600 children and youth each year.

Its ministries include the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home in Monticello, the Boys Ranch (for boys who have completed substance abuse programs) in Harrison, Promise House (for unwed mothers) in El Dorado, six Emergency Receiving Homes and five area offices.

Perry, the ABCHFM's director of program and staff development and executive director-elect, said the large scope of the agency's ministries requires a large scope of involvement from concerned Baptists. He said a top priority of the ABCHFM is its sponsorship program.

"The sponsorship program involves individuals, churches, businesses and organizations such as Woman's Missionary Unions and Sunday School classes in contributing to the quality child care of an individual child or ABCHFM program."

Perry said gifts to the sponsorship program "can even be tailored to be used for specific reasons, such as clothing, allowances, summer camp or unbudgeted emergency needs."

He also suggested churches or groups can hold a pounding—with individuals donating a pound of a food item—for an ABCHFM residence ministry. "Our homes

and cottages need everything that the typical family needs, only multiply it by the 18 different locations we have through our nine programs," he said.

"One church connected a pounding with a talent show which had an entrance fee of a pound of a food item," he recalled. "Another church held a men's cake baking contest with an entry fee of food items and other needs."

Perry said other ways to become involved in ABCHFM ministries include:

- Work projects. "We've had groups do everything from build corrals to sod the Rainbow House lawn in Sherwood," he explained. "The biggest example of this is a church group from Tyler, Texas, which built an equestrian center. A church in a Day group took the roof off of the Sunshine House in Little Rock and replaced it with a new roof in one day.

- "One of the best projects we have is the Potato Patch Ministry with Woodland Heights Church in Harrison," Perry noted. The ministry has donated more than 40,000 pounds of potatoes to the agency.

- Educational opportunities. "Learning about an area of our ministry is a positive project," he said. "This could include one of our staff as a guest speaker, a visit to a facility or a report to a church."

- Establish a "missions corner" or collection box for items such as paper products, school supplies or canned goods.

- Plan your own project. "Become acquainted with a facility that is most convenient to you," Perry suggested. "Brainstorm with staff from that facility about needs and get some ideas about what other churches or groups have done. Finally, fit it to your own capabilities and interests. With facilities located all over the state, it is easy to do that."

Disaster relief training set for June 3

Members of Arkansas Baptist Men will gather June 3 for disaster feeding training at Immanuel Church in Little Rock. The training, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Brotherhood department, will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 3 p.m.

Department associate Ronnie O'Neal said the training is for American Red Cross mass feeding certification. "The training will allow participants to get their certification for the feeding unit," he explained. "To receive certification, you have to be under Red Cross orientation."

"The certification is important," O'Neal stressed. "You have to be certified and know how the unit works to be effective" in responding to disaster needs.

Participants will train on the ABCS Baptist Men's new 48-foot tractor trailer feeding unit. "We will give demonstrations on the new unit, which can turn out up to 20,000 meals per day," O'Neal said. "We also will have simulations in cooking and preparations of cambros (insulated food delivery containers)."

The program will feature Baptist Men leaders O'Neal and Ed Lauderdale and Red Cross mass care director Dave Townsend.

There is no cost for the training. Lunch, prepared at the feeding unit, will be provided.

For more information, contact O'Neal at the ABCS Brotherhood office; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5158.

Seminars to teach Christian money management

Urging Arkansas Baptists to "learn how to manage your resources wisely," James Walker invited participation in five area Live Wisely Seminars to be held May 15-19. Walker, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention stewardship/annuity department, said the seminars will help individuals learn the basics of money management.

"This is very basic information to help participants learn how to manage their resources," he explained. "It's basic, but many people do not know how to manage their resources adequately."

Walker said the curriculum for the seminars will be led by Lee Davis of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission and author of *Five Steps to Successful Money Management and In Charge: Managing Money for Christian Living*.

"Lee Davis has gone through the experience (of debt) himself," Walker noted. "He and his wife were in debt for 21 years and came to the conviction that he was not a good steward by continually abusing credit."

Walker said participants will explore elements of money management during the seminars, including setting goals, determining income, evaluating expenses, establishing a spending plan and keeping accurate financial records.

The seminars will be held May 15 at Rye Hill Church in Fort Smith at 7 p.m.; May 16 at First Church in Almyra at 7 p.m.; May 17 at Second Church in Conway at 9 a.m.; May 18 at Mount Carmel Church in Cabot at 4:30 p.m.; and May 19 at Nettleton Church in Jonesboro at 9 a.m.

Emphasizing that the seminars are for "anyone," Walker specifically urged "people in their 30s" to attend because "it is better to have this information on the front end than the back end."

There is no cost for the seminars. Participants will receive the *Five Steps to Successful Money Management* workbook for attending.

For more information, contact Walker at the ABCS stewardship/annuity department; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5114.

'An expression of love'

ABSC-funded chaplains minister to prison inmates, families, staff

By Russell N. Dillard
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Arkansas Baptists support missions in many unique ways, but one effort stands out among all Southern Baptist ministries: Arkansas is the only state Baptist convention to financially support their own prison chaplains.

Marion Reynolds, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department, said there are currently two full-time chaplains and two part-time chaplains supported by the convention.

Arkansas Baptists, he explained, "provide the funding, including salary and benefits, for these chaplains. They are employees of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, but they work under the control of the administration of the Arkansas Department of Corrections."

Explaining the philosophy of the chaplaincy program, Reynolds noted, "Chaplains are the expression of love and concern for inmates on the part of Arkansas Baptists. They are there for that reason."

"It's easy to say, 'They've messed up and they have wrecked their lives. Too bad,' but Arkansas Baptists have not done that. We have not stopped loving them and we have not stopped seeing them as potentials for the Lord's Kingdom. That's the heart of Southern Baptist chaplaincy, our love-gift to them."

'A special heart'

"To me, it says the ABSC has had people called to service who have had a special heart for the predicament of inmates and given them the opportunity to minister and evangelize the prison population in Arkansas."

"We haven't abandoned their families, either," he added, noting that chaplains "have a great ministry to the families of inmates and the staff of prisons."

Herb Holley directs the chaplaincy program for the Arkansas Department of Corrections. He said that by funding additional chaplains, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention is "meeting needs that otherwise couldn't be met because of financial and other considerations. It's giving to us a service that the state is not paying for."

Holley said the additional chaplains supported by Baptists allows ADC chaplains to multiply their ministry among Arkansas' 9,069 inmates in 15 units. "Right now the ABSC has a name with the ADC and they are well-recognized in the department."

Holly added that the state convention "is known for chaplaincy. The first chaplain in the state was Southern Baptist. Of 17 full-time chaplains in the state, nine are Southern Baptist."

PRISON



MINISTRIES

IN ARKANSAS

Third in a five-part series

"When I found out that we were the only state convention that sponsors state chaplains...I was very happy that Arkansas has that level of caring. We do a vital service."

—Marion Reynolds
Chaplaincy associate
Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Reynolds emphasized that the chaplaincy ministry is integral to the rehabilitation process of prisons. "Eighty percent of inmates are repeaters, so within a fairly short time they will be back in."

"It is a drab, chaotic, hellish environment that (inmates) live in," he explained. "You hear of the hotel-like environment, but I haven't seen that."

"I just see pent-up human beings that have been deprived of their freedom," Reynolds said. "It's for a just cause; they're criminals. But in the process, they are thrown in with people who know more tricks and games, who know more ways of being evil than they would have thought of on their own. It's a university for learning crime."

Reynolds said funds used to pay the ABSC chaplains are a combination of receipts from the Cooperative Program and Dixie Jackson Offering for State Missions.

ABSC missions department director Jimmy Barrentine said funds that the department earmarks for chaplaincy and church extension make up half of the department's budget.

'Vital service'

"It takes everything we can scrape together," Reynolds emphasized. "I'm proud of that. When I found out that we were the only state convention that sponsors state chaplains at a meeting sponsored by the Home Mission Board chaplaincy division last month, I was very happy that Arkansas has that level of caring. We do a vital service."

Reynolds noted that the state convention also supports prison chaplaincy through a chaplaincy internship program to train seminary graduates in the field.

"We have a good record that our interns go on into the chaplaincy," he explained. "The seminarian program recruits recent seminary graduates. It's part-time, but they work for many hours."

He said that the program "lost" its latest intern, Ross Woodbury, on April 11 when he began full-time service as an ADC chaplain. "He wrecked our seminarian intern program," Reynolds joked, "but at the same time he accomplished it."

Reynolds said the small stipend Arkansas Baptists provide the interns allows them "to cover what it takes, to find some place to hang your coat and put something on your plate. With people having larger families at that stage of their ministry, it's probably not enough, but at the same time, it is part of their education."

Emphasizing the need for additional chaplains in prisons, Reynolds said, "We have a social crisis that we are only beginning to be aware of like the tip of an iceberg."

"The only thing that is going to turn these people around is for them to have a valid, life-shaking, conversion experience with Jesus Christ in prison."

RTVC trustees express concern with SBC restructuring proposal

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—Trustees of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission considered asking that the commission be retained as a separate agency rather than being merged with the Home Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission as proposed in the "Covenant for a New Century."

They settled, instead, for a resolution to be sent to the SBC Executive Committee along with a list of "serious concerns" which they said need to be resolved before the matter is voted on by the Southern Baptist Convention in June.

Among the concerns, which they said have not been answered to date, are the cost of the move and how much it will save, why the need for relocation and why Atlanta, the number and division of trustees from each of the current three boards who will serve on the new board and whether there is a proper understanding of the differences and uniqueness of the ministry of the RTVC.

A motion asking for a study of the current effectiveness of the RTVC and the effect of the proposed merger with the results to be given to SBC messengers was referred to the RTVC executive committee.

The proposed "Covenant" to be considered by the SBC in Atlanta June 20-22, would merge the RTVC with the HMB and Brotherhood in a new North American Mission Board. The RTVC, which was moved from Atlanta to Fort Worth in 1955, would move back to Atlanta.

The RTVC trustees were to be briefed April 10 by a member of the Program and

Structure Study Committee, which drafted the proposed restructuring, and by two members of the SBC Executive Committee, which approved it and will recommend it to the SBC annual meeting.

The two Executive Committee members, Richard Cagle of Alabama and James Merritt of Georgia, were at the briefing, but Rex Terry, the PSSC member from Arkansas who is also an Executive Committee member, was unable to attend because of bad weather. Because of Terry's absence, one trustee said many of their questions went unanswered.

When the trustees convened in their first plenary session April 11, trustee Jerry Holbert presented a statement asking the trustees to go on record saying they could not currently accept the merger; that it would downsize the RTVC, whose ministry needs to be enhanced rather than jeopardized or minimized; and called on the SBC Executive Committee to amend the study to retain the RTVC as a "separate communications agency" of the SBC.

D.J. Benson of Mississippi said he felt it was premature and was "more of a September concern (after the SBC meeting) than an April concern"; Ernie Helton of Ohio questioned if any downsizing would actually occur and Garland Morrison of Indiana asked if a proposed resolution already drafted by the RTVC executive committee would address the question in better form.

Morrison tried unsuccessfully to call the trustees into executive session. Richard T. McCartney, retired former executive

vice president of the commission now serving as consultant to the president, spoke against going into executive session, saying Baptist business is done best in the open.

Toni Cleverger, a trustee from Florida; Jack Marcom of the Washington, D.C. convention; and Lori Davis of Texas all spoke in favor of Holbert's proposal.

Cleverger, urging a vote on the Holbert statement, said to do less than make a statement would be to "devalue" the history of the commission.

Johnson said he felt the resolution already drafted by the RTVC executive committee "pretty much says what you want to say."

"My opinion is that you want to make a statement that you are seriously concerned," Johnson said. "I just have to say I would choose the document of the (RTVC) executive committee."

Commission trustees followed with adoption of a substitute motion by Wyman Copps of Kentucky approving largely unchanged the statement of their executive committee. It commends the PSSC for its time and effort in drafting the restructuring proposal, affirms the trustees' responsibility to implement the actions of the SBC if the proposal is approved but states the RTVC trustees have "serious concerns," which are to be attached to the resolution and which need to be resolved prior to the Southern Baptist Convention's consideration of the restructuring proposal.

McCartney said the list of concerns will be synthesized from the Monday evening discussion and included in the resolution.

In other business, the trustees approved a resolution guaranteeing a \$950,000 loan by FamilyNet for the purchase of equipment to uplink and downlink satellite signals.

Prayer takes priority over restructuring plan at HMB

ATLANTA (BP)—Prayer took precedence over discussion of a proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention during a Home Mission Board directors meeting April 10-12.

Two sessions were planned to discuss the SBC Program and Structure Study Committee report which will be presented to the SBC in June. That report recommends combining the HMB with the Brotherhood and Radio and Television commissions. A question-and-answer session with three members of the SBC Executive Committee was held on Monday evening.

However, instead of discussing the proposal again the next evening as scheduled, directors spent the time listening to news of revival and in prayer for revival. "God's Spirit was moving in such a way that it would have been disruptive to bring up (reorganization)," said board chairman Bob Curtis of Ballwin, Mo.

HMB director John Avant, pastor of Coggin Avenue Baptist Church, Brownwood, Texas, told how revival has spread through his church, city and state of Texas since January. Discussion of the restructuring plan was scheduled to follow Avant's address, but never happened. Board members spent the remainder of the evening in prayer, testimony and hymn singing.

"It was a marvelous demonstration of God showing us where

our priorities need to be," said HMB president Larry Lewis.

The board's final session Wednesday was consumed by necessary business affairs, leaving little time for discussion of the proposed reorganization. Curtis polled members and announced a special called meeting of the board in May to discuss the proposal.

In other business, Jimmy Anderson, Indian church developer for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, was elected assistant director for Native American church growth in the language church extension division. Anderson will continue to live in Oklahoma while serving on the HMB field staff. He fills a position vacated by Russell Begay, who was elected director of the HMB's language church extension division.

Randy Wood was elected associate director of the missionary personnel department. The Ohio native has been director of missions for the Maumee Valley and Northwest Baptist associations in Ohio. He is a former church planter and pastor.

The board also voted to name the 500-seat auditorium in the new national office building in memory of Southern Baptist businessman Cecil B. Day whose estate established a \$12 million trust fund for home missions.

Land, Lewis remove names from Catholic accord

ATLANTA (ABP/BP) — Two Southern Baptist Convention agency heads announced April 6 they will remove their signatures from "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" because of "continuing misperception" about the controversial document they signed last year.

Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board, and Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, were among 40 original signers of the document pledging closer work on areas of common concern between evangelicals and conservative Roman Catholics.

In a statement issued on HMB letterhead, the two did not apologize for signing the accord, but said they decided to remove their signatures because of the "continuing misperception" that they spoke for the SBC when they endorsed the document.

"We continue to believe in efforts which consolidate the influence of evangelicals and Catholics in addressing critical moral issues," the statement said. "We believe the document 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' signifies a new era of cooperation on such concerns as freedom of religion, pornography, attacks on faith and family and abortion. We, therefore, continue to disagree vigorously with uninformed and distorted criticism of the document.

"However, we have concluded that a significant number of Southern Baptists have been offended by the misperception that our respective agencies have endorsed the document," the statement continued. "No matter how many times we explain that we signed ECT as individuals, not on behalf of our agencies or Southern Baptists, many do not understand. Confusion resulting from this continuing misperception has the potential to impact negatively the mission and ministry of our agencies.

"Consequently, after much prayer and mutual discussion, we have decided that as chief executive officers of Southern Baptist Convention agencies, we should remove our signatures from 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together.'

"In so doing, we are not personally rejecting the intent of the document, nor are we agreeing with unjust criticism of it. However, we believe it is in the best interest of our agencies that we eliminate the persistent perception that our agencies have endorsed ECT. It appears that the only way to do so is to remove our names from the document."

Both Land and Lewis were criticized widely for signing the document. Critics charged the document embraced Catholic theology deemed heretical by some Ba-

Hispanic leaders affirm decision

DALLAS (BP)—Texas Baptist Hispanic leaders have commended two Southern Baptist Convention agency heads who recently removed their signatures from the controversial "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" document.

On April 6, Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board, and Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, announced they were withdrawing their signatures from the document.

On April 12, officers of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas and presidents of the state's 30 Hispanic fellowships issued a statement commending Lewis and Land for withdrawing their names from the document.

The Hispanic leaders acknowledged that the original intent of the accord may have been "noble." However, the endorsement had created "an unnecessary disturbance" in Hispanic Baptist's

work and witness, "as evidenced by their withdrawal from the document," according to the officers.

"Perhaps we could say that it is a lesson well learned," the statement said. "We applaud their courage to make necessary changes and we look forward to working together to reach Hispanics and others for Christ."

MBCT president Roland Lopez said he received a letter from Lewis dated April 6 confirming the removal of the signatures and asking Lopez to communicate the action to Hispanic Baptists.

In mid-March, officers of MBCT and presidents of the regional Hispanic Texas Baptist fellowships had released a statement distancing themselves from the evangelical/Catholic document and urging Lewis to rescind his endorsement of it. They claimed the document had been used by Roman Catholic priests to hinder the Baptist witness to Hispanics.

tists and undermined evangelism efforts with its commitment against proselytizing.

Asked if pressure forced them to remove their names, both men said they have endured more pressure on other issues. "The difference is that ECT embroiled the Home Mission Board even though the board was not involved," Lewis said. "I would have stood my ground forever if it was simply a matter of someone pressuring me to do something I felt was wrong."

"It simply appeared to be impossible to dispel the confusion," Land added. "Dr. Lewis and I mutually concluded this week that we were not going to be able to clarify for many Southern Baptists the distinction between our personal opinions and those of our agencies."

Decision to withdraw affirmed

Much of the criticism of ECT came from Hispanic Southern Baptist leaders who said Catholic church officials would use it to thwart mission efforts among Catholics. Rudy Hernandez, president of the national Conference of Southern Baptist Hispanic Ministers, praised the decision to withdraw.

"This is very good news," Hernandez said. "I commend them for doing this, and am grateful for their wisdom in removing their names from that document and express the deepest gratitude on behalf of Hispanic Southern Baptists."

Among other critics is Bill Streich, an HMB director from Wichita Falls, Texas. In September, he and 10 other HMB directors

circulated and signed an unofficial "statement of dissent" from the board's vote to affirm Lewis' right to sign the accord.

In a statement he said he had discussed with all but one of the 11 dissenting HMB directors, Streich said the group was "glad" Lewis and Land agreed to disassociate themselves from the ECT document. However, he disputed the administrators' contention that criticism of the document was based on misunderstanding.

"While we believe that the criticism of the ECT document is justified and valid, we nevertheless are grateful for the removal of their signatures," Streich said.

Another critic, Texas physician Larry Holly, said Land and Lewis were right to withdraw their signatures from the document but "are wrong" to imply "that all disagreement with this document is 'uninformed and distorted.'"

"Unfortunately for Southern Baptists, Land and Lewis have yielded to pressure without understanding the real concerns their Southern Baptist brethren have raised," Holly said.

Despite the controversy, Land said he did not regret signing ECT, and he might even be open to working on a similar document in the future.

Without question, Land said, ECT "has furthered the cause of like-minded people working together on issues of common moral concern in society."

Lewis agreed, saying ECT was the "strongest affirmation of religious freedom in recent years."

Church news



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

East Side Church in Paragould held a reception April 2 to honor William R. Waller and his family in recognition of his fifth anniversary of service as minister of music. He was presented with a plaque and love offering.

El Dorado Second Church is beginning an apartment complex ministry in which they have the potential of ministering to approximately 200 children and their parents through TeamKID on the first and third Saturdays of each month. The ministry, led by young adult couples in the church, was launched with a hot dog supper.

Pea Ridge First Church revival, which was scheduled for March 5-8, extended through March 15 due to an outpouring of God's Spirit, according to pastor Al Fowler. The revival, led by evangelist Larry Beatty of Pine Bluff, resulted in 17 professions of faith, 36 rededications and three additions by letter. Fowler also reported that broken relationships were healed and members and pastors of many local churches participated in the services with a tremendous spirit of unity. Wesley Hilliard, pastor of Pea Ridge United Methodist Church, was the worship leader for several nights.

Rison Church held a revival April 2-6 that resulted in four rededications and two additions by letter. Phillips S. Smith, pastor of Cedar Crest Church in West Monroe, La., was the evangelist. Steve Lawson, minister of music at Immanuel Church in El Dorado, led music. Mike White is pastor.

People

Don Nall of Batesville is observing 40 years of service in the gospel ministry this month. Currently in his 20th year of service with First Church in Batesville, he also has been pastor of Douglas Church in Gould, White City Church in Camden and East Side Church in Pine Bluff. Nall also has served churches in Mississippi and Texas. In addition, he has been moderator of Independence Association, regional chairman of the Baptist Student Union Third Century Campaign, camp pastor and guest speaker for the Arkansas Baptist Assembly in Siloam Springs, a member of the Ouachita Baptist University board of trustees and president of Arkansas' Southwestern Seminary State Alumni Association. Nall also has held leadership positions with the Arkansas Baptist State

Convention, including serving as a member of the order of business and program committees and president of the BSU Advisory Board. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Nall is married to the former Judy Overton of Gould. They have two adult daughters, Ashley Elizabeth Nall and Felley Lawson.

Ernest McElroy, a retired Southern Baptist preacher, is available for revivals or to serve as an interim pastor. He may be reached at Rt. 2, Box 140, Monticello, AR 71655; phone 501-367-3105. McElroy and his wife, Barbara, are member of Calvary Church in Monticello.

Linda Ross recently completed 10 years of service as financial secretary for First Church in Sherwood. The congregation presented her with a monetary gift.

Noble R. and Virginia Wiles of Melbourne celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary April 15 with a reception at Ozarka Technical College in Melbourne. The couple was married April 11, 1945, near Bonetown in Izard County. Wiles has served on the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board, as state convention second vice president and as director of missions for Rocky Bayou Association. Currently pastor of First Church in Ash Flat, he has been pastor of other Arkansas Baptist churches in Mount Pleasant, Oxford, Belview, Melbourne, Concord, Webb City, Evening Shade, Keiser, Batesville and Pochontas. Mrs. Wiles has served as a Sunday School, discipleship training and youth group leader, as well as a pianist and organist. The reception was hosted by the couple's children and grandchildren.

Obituaries

E.O. McElroy of North Little Rock died April 2 at age 85. He was a retired Southern Baptist minister, retiring from 16th Street Church in North Little Rock after 17 years of ministry. He also served churches in Cabot, Ferndale and Roland. McElroy was a charter member of 47th Street Church in North Little Rock. Survivors include three daughters, Lois Maxine Scott of Stanfield,

Oregon, Patricia Ann Whitaker of Cabot and Joyce Lorraine Shaw of Fishers, Ind.; one sister; eight grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Mattie "Nanny" Spikes of North Little Rock died April 3 at age 86. She was the widow of Arkansas pastor Jesse Spikes and a member of Remount Church. Survivors are 11 children, Tom Spikes of Greers Ferry, Tim Spikes of Mayflower, Jesse Glen Spikes, Larry Spikes, Pat Fowell, Iva Hunt, Margie Murphy and Carrie Henderson, all of North Little Rock, Jim Spikes of Maumelle, Richard Spikes of Chirmo, Texas, and Elizabeth Winters of Fayetteville; a sister; 38 grandchildren; 54 great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Light House for the Blind, P.O. Box 192666, Little Rock, AR 72219.

David Campbell Doty of Brookhaven, Miss., age 19, died April 5 of injuries received in an automobile accident. He was a ministerial student at Mississippi College in Clinton. He was a member of First Church of Brookhaven where he was a leader in youth and music programs. Survivors are his parents, David and Cindy O'Hare Doty; and his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William O'Hare of Waco, Texas, and Mrs. Syd Doty of Forest, Miss. Doty's father served as minister of music for Park Hill Church in North Little Rock from 1977 through 1988.

Staff changes

Carroll D. Caldwell retired April 1 as director of missions for Southwest Association, following more than 13 years of ministry. He previously was pastor of First Church in Harrison, First Church in Clarksville and First Church in Nimrod. He also served churches in Florida and Kentucky as well as serving as Baptist Student Union director for Stetson University in DeLand, Fla. Caldwell is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been a member of the ABCS Executive Board, a trustee of Ouachita Baptist University and a member of the ABCS nominating and resolutions committees, as well as a member of the Southern Baptist Convention committee on boards. He is married to the former Joanne Sellers of Tampa, Fla. They have two children, Dana Claude and Christine Ann.

Refus Caldwell recently retired as director of missions for Conway-Perry Association, following 28 years of service. During his tenure he was instrumental in helping

ARKANSAS BAPTISTS

start new churches in Oppelo, Sweet Home, Center Ridge, Petit Jean Mountain, Wye Mountain and Cove Chapel. Caldwell also served as DOM for Van Buren Association (now North Central Association) where he was instrumental in organizing First Church of Fairfield Bay and Immanuel Church in Clinton. He also helped organize Lambrook Church and Melwood Mission in Arkansas Valley Association. Caldwell has served as pastor of Belleville Church, First Church of Bigelow, New Hopewell, Red Hill and Stanford, as well as serving as a chaplain for the Perry County Mounted Patrol for 22 years, a volunteer fireman and a board member of the West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District. He attended Southern Baptist College (now Williams Baptist College). Caldwell and his wife, Minnie Lea, have four children, Rufus Caldwell Jr., Marty Caldwell, Lynette Rose and Martha McClure. The Caldwell family were honored by the association with a farewell dinner where they were presented with a commemorative plaque, flowers and a cake. Caldwell is available to serve as a pulpit supply, interim pastor or to lead revivals. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 176, Perryville, AR 72126; phone 501-889-2393.

Tom Whitsett began serving April 2 as pastor of Second Church in West Memphis. He and his wife, Terri, formerly lived in Charleston, Miss., where he was pastor of Faith Church. Whitsett is a graduate of Mid-America Seminary.

Vanessa Dalton has joined the staff of Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock as part-time director of children's ministries, developing ministries for preschoolers, elementary-age children and their families. A graduate of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, she is the wife of pastor Ken Dalton. They have three children, Ben, Jennifer and Mikaela.

Zack Murtha has joined the staff of Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock as youth intern. He is a junior at Ouachita Baptist University and a member of Life Line Church in Little Rock.

Don Bradley has joined the staff of Second Church in Jacksonville as minister of missions with the responsibilities of traeting communities to start Bible studies and plant churches. He also will supervise the Lighthouse Community Fellowship and ongoing ministry projects in a trailer park and at Rebsamen Medical Center. Bradley is a graduate of Arkansas State University.

Clayburn Bratton has returned to the full-time ministry as pastor of New Hope Church in Greenwood where he had been serving as interim pastor. He previously retired following six years of ministry as pastor of Trinity Church in Alma. He also has served First Church in Stamps, First Church in Earle, Third Church in Arkadelphia and First Church in Charleston. Bratton is a graduate of Williams Baptist College, Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist

Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Jesse, have two daughters, Vicki Winkle and Luann Williams, both of Fort Smith and three granddaughters.

Terry Lee Thompson has joined the staff of Second Church in Hot Springs as minister of education and staff coordinator. A retired U.S. Air Force officer, he was vice commander of Little Rock Air Force Base and commander at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas. During his military career, he served numerous Baptist churches throughout the country and overseas as a deacon, youth worker, Sunday School teacher and director and choir member. Thompson is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and Oklahoma City University. He also has completed a summer residency at the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business. He and his wife, the former Connie Hedrick, have two sons, Mike, married and living in Fayetteville, and Chris, a student at the University of Arkansas.

Jeph Holloway is serving as interim pastor of Wits Chapel at Maynard. He is a professor at Williams Baptist College.

Tom Wideman has announced his resignation as minister of music for Second Church in Little Rock, effective April 23 following more than 10 years of service. He has accepted a call to join the staff of Carrboro Church near Chapel Hill, N. C. Second Church will honor Wideman and his wife, Sally, and their children, Jolee and Andrew, with a 3 p.m. reception April 23.

Mark Taylor has announced his resignation as pastor of First Church in Osceola, effective May 7. He and his wife, Ann, will move to Fort Worth, Texas, where he will begin doctoral studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ordinations

Ebenezer Church of Warren ordained Mark Harris to the gospel ministry Feb. 26. Harris is pastor of Columbia-Jarrett Church near Maynard.

Harrisburg First Church ordained Herbert Lynn Ray of Springdale to the gospel ministry March 19.

Crow Mountain Church of Russellville licensed Chuck Sanders to the ministry March 26.

Clinton First Church held a service March 26 to ordain Chuck Whittle to the gospel ministry and Ricky Burroughs, Steve Hinkson and Ron Irie to the deacon ministry.



First Church of Gillett held all-day services March 5 to dedicate a new \$125,000 church auditorium. The auditorium, with a seating capacity of 240, doubled the size of the church's physical plant. Pastor David Reddock (left) and Fred Gay, director of missions for Carey Association, were speakers for the celebration. Former pastors in attendance were (left to right) Allen Van Horn, pastor from 1965-67, and Wilfred Thompson, pastor from 1968-71. Vicki McCrary and her daughters, Becca and Cory of Dallas, Texas, represented her husband and their father, the late James McCrary, who was pastor from 1978-80.

FMB marks milestones in appointments

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board sent out a record number of 545 "ordinary people" in 1994 as missionaries assigned to the extraordinary task of reaching the world for Jesus Christ.

"It's so easy to put missionaries on pedestals," Mark Shook told worshippers attending the December appointment service where he and his wife, Laura, were named missionaries. "But I've discovered missionaries are ordinary people. I know because I'm going to be one."

The Shooks joined the ranks of other "ordinary people" who set the 1994 appointment record of 545 and helped push the board's total mission force beyond 4,000 for the first time.

The 545 total, which broke the 1993 mark of 498, includes 255 career and associate missionary appointments and a record 290 two-year International Service Corps (ISC) workers and journeymen. The 255 career appointment total was the highest in seven years; the record was set in 1985 with 304.

In April 1994 the overseas missionary force topped 4,000 for the first time in its 150-year history and stands at 4,108, according to the latest available figures. That includes 3,518 career and associate missionaries and 590 two-year workers.

Haiti relief effort needs more volunteers

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—There's a "movement of God" afoot in rural Haiti, but it could come to naught unless more Southern Baptist volunteers answer the call to serve there, and soon, according to Mickey Calson of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Calson, who has served as project coordinator of the Haitian relief effort since it began last November, said he has only about half of the volunteers he needs to help with water well repairs.

The work has proven to be a highly effective tool for evangelism, he added. "There's a movement of God going on down there to those mountains that no one is seeing or hearing about with all the bad things about Haiti coming out in the newspapers and television programs," Calson said. "There are going to be many more opportunities at those wells to win people to salvation, but we're not going to be there like we should if we don't have the team members."

Fourteen-day slots for volunteers are available through the month of June. Teams are set to depart on April 29, May 13, May 27, June 10 and June 24. Medical-dental support personnel also are being sought for teams in Haiti. Team members will depart for seven-day trips on May 6, May 13, May 20 and May 27.

Prospective volunteers should contact Beth Huneycutt, the Brotherhood Commission's volunteer recruiter, at 1-800-280-1891 for more information.

Baptists minister during Pan Am Games

MAR DEL PLATA, ARGENTINA (BP)—Baptists from Argentina and the United States joined forces to witness to the multitudes who visited the Argentine city of Mar del Plata last month for the 12th Pan American Games.

Baptists shared their faith in and around the sports complex built for the games and a tent erected across the street. They distributed 150,000 Bible portions and 30,000 booklets containing the plan of salvation.

Through their efforts, at least 60 people accepted Christ as Savior, including some affiliated with the delegation of Cuban athletes.

"This was the biggest Pan Am Games ever," said Foreign Mission Board sports missionary Steve Smith, who headed the task force of missionaries and Argentine Baptists that planned Baptist outreach at the games. Southern Baptist and Argentine Baptist volunteers assisted.

Jericho remains unique missions event

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—The annual calendars of the Southern Baptist Conference Centers at Ridgecrest, N.C., and Gloria, N.M., are packed from start to finish with "special weeks," just as they have been for decades.

And then there's Jericho. So say its organizers. They insist that, after seven years, it's still like nothing else, anywhere, ever.

"It's experiential. You can see, touch and taste missions firsthand," said Billy Kruschwitz of the Foreign Mission Board, who chairs this year's event. "It's also inter-generational. There are opportunities for the kids in day camp, for youth at Youth Jericho and for adults. Everyone gets a dose of missions—that's what makes it unique."

A typical day at Jericho offers worship, conferences, Bible study, prayer times, games, festivals and fairs, and all of it has one basic purpose: to bring Southern Baptist laypeople to a better understanding of, and to a greater involvement in, missions.

The theme for the seventh annual Jericho is "Experiencing God Through Missions," revealing a tie to the 1995 Bible study leader, Henry Blackaby. Leaders for the worship time are Cynthia Clawson, winner of a Grammy Award and several Dove Awards for her work as a Christian vocalist, and her husband Regan Courtney, an actor, playwright and conference leader.

Jericho at Gloria is scheduled July 29 through Aug. 4; its counterpart at Ridgecrest will run Aug. 12-18. For a packet of information and registration materials, call 1-800-866-3621.

Cambodians form national convention

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA (BP)—Cambodian Baptists capped recent years of extraordinary growth in this Buddhist nation by forming the country's first Baptist convention March 20.

Cambodian Baptists have grown from zero to 43 Baptist churches and more than 1,400 believers in less than three years.

This growth has occurred in a nation where Buddhism is the state religion and Christians account for less than 15,000 of the nation's 9.5 million citizens.

FMB withdraws from Albanian partnership

TIRANA, ALBANIA (ABP)—After three years of close cooperation among Baptist mission groups in Albania, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has withdrawn from a joint mission committee and will operate independently in the former communist country.

Dan Panter, FMB associate area director for East Europe, announced the change during the March 23-26 meeting of the Albanian Committee, a joint planning group sponsored by the European Baptist Federation. Panter told the committee the decision was part of an administrative restructuring of the FMB's work.

But Roger Briggs, the Foreign Mission Board's associate area director for Europe, told Associated Baptist Press the FMB wants to be "more aggressive in evangelism" than he felt other EBF team members want to be. For instance, FMB missionaries want to be involved in "direct witnessing" and hold invitations following worship services. The EBF is not eager to do that, he said.

However, Briggs downplayed any "rift in relationship" with the EBF team. "We're still friends," he said. He added the four Baptist churches in Albania would not be forced to choose between competing groups for ministry assistance. "We're all together on that," he said.

The Albania Committee is composed of representatives of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Baptist Missionary Society of England, Canadian Baptist Ministries, Italian Baptist Union and Swedish Baptist Missionary Society. The committee expressed appreciation for FMB missionaries Gale and Leslie Hartley, who remain in the country.

Mohler condemns protests by students, faculty

LOUISVILLE, KY (ABP) — Defending his decision to fire a dean, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Albert Mohler chastised students April 5 for protesting the action and seeking to go over his head to influence trustees and donors.

Mohler also reprimanded the faculty of the Carver School of Church Social Work for expressing opposition to his firing of Carver School dean Diana Garland.

The Carver faculty's resolution stated support for Garland's work as dean and for the public statements she made March 20 which prompted her firing. Garland was fired as dean after she told social work students the Carver School's future is in "serious jeopardy" due to Mohler's restrictions on faculty hiring.

The Carver faculty's resolution said that by instituting "arbitrarily determined absolutes" outside the seminary's governing documents, Mohler had "thwarted" the dean's ability to lead the school.

"Your resolution brings great grief to me as president of this institution, for by it you have set yourselves against this administration, the board of trustees and the legitimate concern of the Southern Baptist Convention and its churches," Mohler wrote.

The "outrage" expressed in the faculty resolution should be directed "at yourselves," Mohler wrote the faculty, "for you have sought to make this a public issue and to force the question of the Carver School's future upon this institution and the denomination."

"You cannot serve the cause of the Carver School by attempting to bring public pressure against the administration and the board of trustees," he continued. "You have served the cause of your school badly by your resolution, and I am deeply disappointed to have received this document by your action. More than this, I am grieved by the spirit and attitude of your resolution."

During an hour-long student forum, Mohler said students have no right to hold administrators responsible for how they lead the school. "You cannot hold us accountable. That is not your role," he declared.

"Your responsibility as a student is to study," Mohler added.

Mohler blames Garland, students

Throughout the forum — and in a five-page letter distributed to students the same day — Mohler placed total responsibility for the seminary's current crisis on Garland and the students. He told Carver School students they had strayed from their proper role by notifying trustees, donors and alumni of their concerns about the school's future and Mohler's leadership.

"It is entirely inappropriate for students to address the constituencies of the seminary in an effort to bring pressure against the administration and trustees," Mohler said in the letter. "It is beyond acceptable conduct for students to write to the donors of this institution suggesting their consternation and calling for action.

This is beyond the right and prerogative of students."

The president also chastised student protesters who have held a sit-in outside his office since Garland's firing.

Southern Baptists, not students, are the ultimate governing authorities for the seminary, Mohler said in the forum.

Several students replied that they are Southern Baptists and members of Southern Baptist churches as well as students. But Mohler said his ultimate mandate comes from the Southern Baptists who have elected a string of conservative SBC presidents over the past 15 years.

The seminary cannot represent the views of all Southern Baptist churches, he said, so it is his responsibility to represent the views of the "mainstream" Southern Baptists who have supported conservative reforms.

One student asked what it would take to have Garland reinstated as dean. Mohler responded that a "significant river has been crossed" that prevents Garland from returning as dean.

Another student said Mohler has not demonstrated the kind of peacemaking skills as an administrator that students are taught in seminary classes to use in churches. The student asked if the president would be willing to humble himself and forgive Garland for any mistakes she might have made.

"There is not enough common ground for the relationship that must exist between a president and a dean," Mohler replied.

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Henry, Saucier address ministerial burnout

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—"Nearly 2,000 Southern Baptist pastors and staff drop out of the ministry every year," Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry told students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., told a chapel audience, "Everything from sin in their lives to difficulties and confrontations in the church cost them their ministries. The reality is that in your ministry, more than likely, there will be days in which it will be very important for you to grip this word called 'endurance.'"

"Disappointments will come," Henry said. "Sometimes your colleagues are suddenly saying things about you that you've never heard. And you're saying, 'Why did they say that?' You'll ask yourself, 'Is it worth it all?' and 'Do I have to go through this?'"

Henry's counsel to help ministers endure the "strategic race of life" is to maintain a devotional life, exercise regularly, meditate on God, listen to God, be accountable to someone in ministry life and personal life, take vacations and don't preach through them, keep learning, stay

fresh, be willing to change, learn how to deal with people, learn how to say "no," discipline time and learn to accept criticism.

Discouragement and burnout will not be as widespread among church ministers when Christ is allowed to be who He wants to be, Southwestern trustee Ed Saucier emphasized in another chapel message.

Ministers don't have to have all of the answers to life's problems; their chief responsibility is to direct people to Christ for the answers, said Saucier, pastor of Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith.

By leading people to believe a person in the ministry does have all the answers, ministers are partly at fault for their church

members' unrealistic expectations, Saucier said.

"People bring me their messed up lives, and too often, I've had little more to give than those tired-sounding Christian clichés that have never worked for me, and they won't work for anybody else," Saucier said. "There is something fundamentally wrong with the way we're doing church and approaching Christianity. And it is so fundamentally wrong that it's not going to be fixed at the present level of doing things as we do them."

Many churches have frustrated pastors, burned out laypeople and superficial programs, Saucier noted. Admitting being "on the edge of burnout" at times, he added, "It doesn't have to be that way."

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Challenger Congress highlights speaking, sports

More than 300 junior high and senior high school boys competed in basketball, swimming and public speaking during the Challenger Congress and Basketball Tournament March 17-18 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock. The event was sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Brotherhood department.

Department director Harry Black said that in addition to the sports events, participants heard a message from keynote speaker Bobby Shows, a member of the missions education and ministry development team of the Missouri Baptist Convention and former minister of recreation for Park Hill Church.

"Winners of the annual 'Speak Out,' a speaking contest about Christian service, were Matthew Abbott of Beck Spurr Church in Forrest City in the junior high school category and Chad Brown of First Church, Mansfield.

"Worldly greatness doesn't make you feel happy and content and doesn't make you great in the Kingdom of God," Brown said during his speech, "What Makes a Person Great."

"I hope to be humble, a servant, have love and to lead young children and adults on the path of righteousness so that I can be great in the eyes of God," he said.

Black said Brown's speech was videotaped and sent to the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission for judging in the national Speak Out competition.

He said a record number of boys participated in the basketball tournament, also held at Immanuel Church and Calvary Church in Little Rock.

Winners of the first senior high school bracket were the team of Calvary Church in Monticello, with Southside Church in Paragould taking second place honors.

Winners in the first bracket for Hot Shot, a basketball shooting contest, included: Josh Dowler of Southside Church, Paragould, first place; Scott Keeling of Tomahawk Church, St. Joe, second place; and Jason Hall of Second Church in Little Rock, third place.

Winners of the second senior high school bracket were the first team of First Church, West Memphis, with First Church, Clinton, taking second place honors.

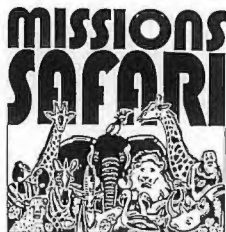
Second bracket Hot Shot winners included: Brad Purtle of Calvary Church in Hope, first place; Jason Pearson of Congo Road Church in Benton, second place; and Todd Smith of First Church in West Memphis, third place.

Winners of the junior high school finals were the team of Immanuel Church, with First Church, West Memphis, taking second place. Junior high Hot Shot winners included: Mark Burrow of Eastside Church in Paragould, first place; and Brian Spigner of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, second place.

Basketball sportsmanship honors were awarded to First Church in Smackover and Southside Church and Eastside Church, both in Paragould.

Black said 10 basketball tournament players will be selected for a sports evangelism mission trip to Venezuela July 8-15, based on sportsmanship, Christian character and athletic ability.

Swimming winners included senior high school overall winner Jimmy Collins of First Church, Lake Hamilton, in the free style, speed and back stroke categories and junior high overall winner Thomas Gage, also of First, Lake Hamilton, in the free style and speed categories.



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Violence in Burundi impacts Baptist work

By Craig Bird

SBC Foreign Mission Board

BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI (BP)—The tragedy waiting to happen in Burundi has Southern Baptist missionaries and the Foreign Mission Board's rapid response team wondering what to do and where.

"That wonder grows against the backdrop of a new wave of ethnic killings in Burundi that has the potential of escalating into the genocide which occurred last year in neighboring Rwanda between the same ethnic groups, the Hutus and Tutsis.

The violence in Rwanda sent thousands fleeing as refugees and resulted in a million-dollar-plus relief effort on behalf of Southern Baptists by the Foreign Mission Board.

The feeling in Burundi is that Baptist relief efforts should focus on refugee camps in Tanzania if the need arises, rather than try to operate in Burundi in the middle of what one observer calls "civil murder."

Meanwhile, career missionaries working to establish and strengthen churches in the central African nation are perplexed about their long- and short-term futures.

"We're supposed to leave for furlough in the United States in July but right now we don't know if we can leave our work in

Burundi or what," missionary Cathy Brandon said. "We'll just have to sit down and talk and pray about what to do."

The latest round of violence exploded in Bujumbura, Burundi, March 24. It left hundreds dead and sent tens of thousands of refugees surging across the Zaire border.

The Foreign Mission Board survey team, scheduled to go to Burundi before the latest outbreak of killing, arrived April 6 to see what Baptists should do if ethnic war escalates. The United Nations reported gunfire and explosions around the capital both nights the survey team was there.

"On the surface, if you didn't know how things normally are, you'd think Bujumbura was normal if you just drove through the city," said missionary Tad Tadlock, assigned to Uganda but involved in working with Rwandan refugees in Zaire.

Entire neighborhoods and markets are abandoned in pockets of the city and foreigners are advised not to travel out of the capital and not to walk anywhere—even a couple of blocks—and to drive in convoys, not in individual vehicles.

The team visited with United States embassy officials and UNICEF and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). All told the Baptists

they have reduced their presence to essential staff only and on any travel outside the city they do not take any Burundis with them, lest they provoke attacks.

The good news from the survey trip, according to Tadlock, is UNICEF expressed interest in working with Southern Baptists, possibly in delivering medicine to rural clinics and providing water in displaced person camps.

"The bad news," he added, "is that everybody is very tense and nervous and alert. The Burundis are very frightened."

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in May:

■ May 5 — Joel Gaddis, OBU Box 4188, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; sophomore from Zimbabwe.

■ May 19 — John Davidson, OBU Box 3098, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; sophomore from Nigeria.

■ May 23 — Stephanie Lane, OBU Box 4544, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; junior from Mississippi.

■ May 26 — Nathan Cartwright, OBU Box 4158, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; freshman from the Philippines.

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Summer missionaries to meet for orientation week

Student missionaries will meet for orientation at Mills Valley Retreat Center near Jacksonville May 30 through June 2 to prepare for resort, migrant and associational missions this summer.

The orientation is offered for student summer missionaries assigned to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department through state Baptist Student Unions, the Home Mission Board and other state conventions.

ABSC missions department associate Pete Petty said the orientation is held for summer missionaries "so we can talk to them about their skills. We will take them through training in such areas as evangelism, conducting Backyard Bible Clubs, Vacation Bible Schools and recreation."

Petty said the training is invaluable because "a summer missionary must do more than share the gospel. They must

help people where they are."

An additional benefit of the training, he said, is that "we feel like our orientation will help students when they go back to their college campuses."

He noted that the program will include training in recreation, drama, interfaith witnessing, migrant missions, special ministries, resort missions and interpersonal relationships.

Petty said participants will go directly from the orientation to their mission field. The college-level student summer missionaries will serve from June 2 through Aug. 10. The missionaries are paid a \$60 per week stipend and sponsoring ministries generally provide them with lodging and meals for the summer.

For more information or to volunteer to be a summer missionary, contact Petty at the ABSC missions department; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5249.

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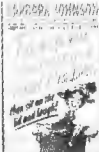
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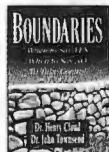
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China missionary veteran James Herring dies at age 90

By Mark Kelly
SBC Foreign Mission Board

TAYLORS, SC (BP)—An early Southern Baptist missionary to China, who narrowly escaped death during the communist takeover in 1948, died April 7 in Taylors, S.C.

James Alexander Herring, 90, was the son of David Wells and Alice Rea Herring. Southern Baptist missionaries to China, 1885 to 1929, and contemporaries of famed Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon. Born Feb. 1, 1905 in Taian, China, Herring lived there with his parents until age 10, when he returned to the United States for his education. He returned as a Southern Baptist missionary with his wife, Nan, in 1935.

Herring was leading a revival in the interior city of Tsining when the communist revolution in the country began in 1948. When communication lines to the city were severed, Herring and two other Southern Baptist missionaries broadcast an urgent radio message to a pilot friend in Shanghai. They fled to Yenchow, a nearby town with an airport, to meet their rescuer.

They arrived at Yenchow, however, only to come under heavy shelling from communist forces. The trio took shelter in the compound of the Roman Catholic mission, where they hid under beds for protection.

When the shelling let up, they crawled out and rested against the wall. But the whistle of another incoming round sent them diving for cover, just as the shell exploded outside their room.

They emerged from hiding to find the wall pocked by shrapnel where Herring had been sitting. The holes traced the outline of his body — he had escaped unharmed.

Three days later, a mule cart carried them into nationalist-controlled territory.

Herring returned to the United States, where he and his wife waited in vain until 1953 for the door to China to open again. They were reappointed by the FMB in 1957 as missionaries to Taiwan, where they served until retirement in 1970.

He served as pastor of the Kaohsiung Baptist Church until 1964, when he was transferred to Taitung. While serving there, Herring built a house and opened a chapel to work with refugees from mainland China.

A graduate of Baptist Bible Institute (now New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary), Herring also served as pastor of churches in Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

Survivors include Herring's wife, two daughters, two sons and a sister. Funeral services were held April 11 at Lee Road Baptist Church in Taylors.

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Convention Uniform

How God comforts

By Rich L. Kincl, pastor,
Central Church, Magnolia
Basic passage: 2 Corinthians 1:1-14
Focal passage: 2 Corinthians 1:3-11
Central truth: God encourages us so that we can be an encouragement to others.

Discouragement is no respecter of persons.

Charles Hadden Spurgeon, the great preacher in England, said, "I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I do."

The word comfort is repeated in various forms 10 times in verses 1-11.

I. God comforts us in all our afflictions (vv. 3-4a).

The present tense of the verb (v. 4) shows that God comforts us constantly and unfailingly in all our affliction, not just certain kinds. Paul had endured great trouble (vv. 8-11). When trouble came, he requested prayer from his Christian friends (v. 11). Deliverance will come from God (v. 10).

II. We are to comfort others (v. 4b).

The comfort we receive from God is to equip us for the God-like ministry of comforting others. If we have experienced God's comfort, then we can "comfort them which are in any trouble" (v. 4b). My father had quadruple by-pass heart surgery on Christmas Day. A member of my church about his age, who had the same surgery, visited my father several times in the hospital. What an encouragement and "comforter" he was!

III. God has to work in us before He can work through us (v. 5).

Learning God's truth is one thing, but living God's truth is another.

When we suffer in the will of God we are sharing the sufferings of the Savior. This is what Paul refers to as "the fellowship of the sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). These are the trials we endure because, like Christ, we are faithfully doing the Father's will.

As sufferings increase so does God's grace and comfort. The word "abound" suggests the picture of a river overflowing. "But He giveth more grace" (James 4:6). God has ample grace for every need but He does not bestow it in advance. As we experience the grace of God daily, it is invested in our lives as godly character.

Let God use you to be an encouragement to others.

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Life and Work

The gospel of grace

By R. Wilbur Herring, pastor emeritus,
Central Church, Jonesboro
Basic passage: Acts 15:1-35
Focal passage: Acts 15:1-29
Central truth: Defend the gospel.

I. Opposition to the gospel of grace (vv. 1-5).

Paul and Barnabas had just returned to Antioch with the wonderful news of the Gentiles having received the gospel in great numbers. But always, when there is an advance in the Lord's work, the forces of evil rise up in opposition. So it was with certain Pharisees from Judea who claimed that the converted Gentiles must be circumcised to be saved. Paul and Barnabas disputed this false teaching, but it was decided by the church at Antioch that these two should go to Jerusalem and present this problem to the apostles and elders there.

II. The defense of the gospel of grace (vv. 6-21).

Peter first spoke, then Paul and Barnabas. James, the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, spoke last using the Scripture to prove that salvation was to come to the Gentiles, and these would be saved without observing the law of Moses. His conclusion (vv. 19-20) "that we trouble not them which among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto them that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood (Also read v. 21).

III. Letter of recommendation (vv. 22-29).

The conclusion pleased the apostles and elders and the church sent chosen men to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to carry the letter of recommendation. Note the part the Holy Spirit played in this decision in v. 28, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things."

IV. Conclusion: It has always been a temptation to some, to add to the gospel of grace, some other stipulation than grace through faith. We must practice and defend the pure gospel of grace. It is not faith in Jesus plus something else. It is Jesus and Jesus only. See Romans 10:9.

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Bible Book

The kingdom of God is...

By Greg Stanley, pastor,
First Church, Warren
Basic passage: Mark 3:7-4:34
Central Truth: The Kingdom of God will grow gradually but steadily as we share the good news.

Mark's gospel usually majors more on Jesus' actions than His teachings. However, the fourth chapter does contain several of our Lord's better-known parables. The subject is the Kingdom of God. These teachings follow Jesus' commissioning of the twelve and His first major confrontations with the Jewish religious leaders.

The parable, simply defined as "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning," was one of Jesus' favorite teaching techniques. The Kingdom was very often His topic. He told His followers, "The secret of the Kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables" (vv. 4:11). Some are some of the Kingdom "secrets."

■ The sower and the seed (vv. 4:1-20) teaches that response to the gospel will vary from person to person. However, as disciples faithfully share the message, spiritual fruit will be produced. Not all will respond, but some always will.

■ The lamp on the stand (vv. 4:21-23) encourages each believer to continually and willingly share the gospel. There is no place for a silent disciple. We receive so we can give.

■ The silently growing seed (vv. 4:24-29) affirms the absolute necessity of God's power in the Kingdom's growth. We must sow the seed, but the Lord gives the growth and produces the harvest. "Success" in Kingdom growth depends on God, not us.

■ The mustard seed (vv. 4:30-32) pictures the irresistible and infinite power of the Kingdom of God. From its seemingly small beginnings (only 120 gathered followers in Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension in Acts 1:15), the Kingdom penetrated the known world by the end of the first century. Included were people of all races, economic and social levels, age groups, and backgrounds. All were, and are, welcome in the kingdom.

After nearly 20 centuries of gospel advance, these truths remain unchanged. Though we sometimes are discouraged and tempted to give up, the power of the Kingdom remains in force. The promise of its ultimate victory is still in effect.

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Convention Uniform

Hindering the gospel

By Rich L. Kinch, pastor,
Central Church, Magnolia
Basic passage: I Corinthians 9:1
Focal passage: I Corinthians 9:1-14,
19-23

Central truth: A generous Christian spirit toward our church employees will be blessed by God.

The story is told of the church committee that was considering a cost-of-living adjustment for their pastor. One committee member disagreed. Then, reminded there had not been one the previous year, he replied, "I know, but if the preacher receives this increase, he will be making as much as I do!" Was this the same stingy church member who prayed, "Lord, you keep our preacher humble and we'll keep him poor!"

Thankfully, most of our churches do not operate this way and such an unbiblical mind-set is in the vast minority.

I. Inadequate support is a sin which can hinder the gospel (vv. 1-14).

Paul set forth biblical principles for adequate support for ministries in our churches. He lists six reasons why a church should support its minister:

■ He was an apostle (vv. 1-6). God has sent your pastor to your church to labor there.

■ It is customary (v. 7). These three types of workers are paid for their work. It should be true for God's workers as well.

■ God's law teaches it (vv. 8-11). The Lord provides His own spiritual rewards but His people are to provide materially and generously (1 Tim. 5:17).

■ It is done for others (v. 12). The church had always supported the pastor.

■ It is their way of life (v. 13). Pastors need to be provided for as the pattern has been since the founding of the priesthood in Israel.

■ Jesus ordained it (v. 14). The New Testament teaching reiterates that of the Old Testament.

II. Set aside that which hinders the gospel (vv. 19-23).

A preacher of the gospel is under compulsion from God to preach the gospel (v. 16). He has been set apart by God. Failure to answer and fulfill God's call brings the severest judgments (Jos. 3:1).

Paul resembles your pastor when he said he would not compromise the gospel or change the least truth in the least way in order to satisfy someone.

Life and Work

When Christians disagree

By R. Wilbur Herring, pastor emeritus,
First Church, Jonesboro
Basic passage: Acts 15:36 - 16:15
Focal passage: Acts 15:36-41
Central truth: Christian workers will sometimes disagree.

I. The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas

Paul proposed that he and Barnabas revisit cities where they had preached in Asia Minor. Paul was correct in his desire to go back and strengthen the new Christians in the churches which they had established. We should remember to return to the ones we have led to the Lord in order to teach them more about growth in grace.

Barnabas agreed to Paul's suggestion, but was determined to take John Mark with them. Barnabas was one who always wanted to help those who were rejected or discouraged. Paul had his own reasons for not taking John Mark. Thus we have these two spiritual giants disagreeing and having strong and determined differences of opinion. The devil can have a hey-day in such a situation.

II. Analyzing the disagreement

It was not a disagreement over some doctrine, church policy or method of advancing the gospel to a dying world. It was a difference of opinion as to a person — John Mark. Persons or personalities are generally the cause for disagreements, divisions, church splits and new denominations. We will invariably find two sides polarized around two headstrong individuals. The number one job of the pastor, deacons and staff members is that of preserving the unity of the church. We must do all we can to discourage such disunity.

III. The great lesson we should learn

When these disagreements arise we should not overreact, take our Bibles and go home. Note: Two great missionary teams came out of this. Many times the work of the Lord is increased when such differences pop up. God's great plan of redemption will not be thwarted by the pettiness of men. He will make good out of what is seemingly bad. Cheer up! The battle rages! On to victory! God is in control!

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Bible Book

Power struggle

By Greg Stanley, pastor,
First Church, Warren
Basic passage: Mark 4:35-43
Focal passage: Mark 5:1-20
Central truth: Jesus is the power for overcoming sin and evil.

Of all Jesus' healing works recorded in Mark's gospel, perhaps the most frequent is that of casting out "evil spirits" or demons. Already Mark has mentioned it in vv. 1:21-28, 34, 39; and vv. 2:11-12, 14-15, 22. Not only did this dramatically impress the crowds, but perhaps it showed most clearly Jesus' supreme authority over evil.

Modern biblical commentators and medical/psychological authorities have tried to explain demon possession as a psychological/emotional disorder or as various medical/psychosomatic ailments. Some have even accused Jesus of accommodating Himself to the ignorance and superstitions of that pre-scientific age.

The fact is that Jesus always viewed those possessed as victims of a spiritual disorder and demon possession as a reality. When Jesus' viewpoint is accepted, we learn much about dealing with the problem of evil and sin in our world.

■ Sin is a destructive force in the lives of people (vv. 5:2-5). This poor human being was more at home in the cemetery than with family and friends. His misery drove him to scream like a wild beast and to try to do physical harm to himself.

■ Sin is a powerful reality which is beyond any human control (vv. 5:1-4). The demon(s) drove and controlled this man until he was powerless to help himself. Neither could others help him. In the face of sin and evil, we are absolutely helpless to change or control it in our own finite strength.

■ Sin is absolutely powerless when confronted with the authority of Jesus (vv. 5:6-13). Our only hope is the holiness, righteousness and infinite power of the Savior.

■ Sin, when allowed to run its course, results in death (vv. 5:11-13). The destruction of the herd of pigs by the demons is a graphic picture of the deadly consequence of sin.

■ A personal relationship with Jesus breaks the power of sin, revolutionizes the sinner and gives purpose and meaning to life (vv. 5:14-20). The healed man became an indisputable witness to the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus.

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Blackaby to host two spiritual awakening conferences

ATLANTA (BP)—Students of spiritual revival are more interested in ways to accomplish it today than learning about such incidents in the past, according to Henry Blackaby, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board director for prayer and spiritual awakening.

"There's an urgent cry for the practical outpouring of the presence of God in our day," said Blackaby, who will host two national conferences this spring on that topic for Southern Baptist pastors and lay leadership.

Both meetings, at the Ridgecrest, N.C., and Glorieta, N.M., conference centers, will include opportunities for several leadership groups, including state leaders, women and ethnic groups, to discuss ways to implement the ideas learned, he said.

Ray Fish, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, will lead sessions at the Ridgecrest conference. The Glorieta conference will feature Avery Willis, overseas vice president of the Foreign Mission Board, and Richard Owen Roberts, president of International Awakening Ministries.

The Ridgecrest conference will be April 24-28; the Glorieta conference will be May 1-5. The registration and program fee costs \$60 per person, excluding meals and housing. Additional information is available from the HMB's office of prayer and spiritual awakening at 404-899-7779.

Bible translations now available in 341 languages

NEW YORK (ABP)—The complete Bible is now available in 341 of the world's languages and the New Testament in 822, according to an annual report by a group committed to translating, publishing and distributing the Scriptures.

At least one book of the Bible is now available in 2,092 of the world's estimated 6,000 languages, said Eugene Habecker, president of the American Bible Society, while releasing the 1994 Scripture Language Report. The report was compiled by the New York-based Bible society and its global partner, the United Bible Societies.

At least a portion of Scripture appeared in 27 new languages, according to the report. Four new Bibles were reported and the New Testament was made available for the first time in 18 more languages.

Ethnic growth keeps SBC from hitting statistical decline

ATLANTA (ABP)—Without the increase in ethnic congregations over the last decade and a half, the Southern Baptist Convention would be a declining denomination.

"The SBC would show a negative 3 percent growth rate in number of congregations," said Bill Fulkerson, assistant director of language church extension at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

By the mid-1980s, the SBC's ethnic-minority membership was growing at the fastest rate of any American denomination, according to a United Methodist survey. Southern Baptists led U.S. denominations in establishing new ethnic-minority congregations during the 1975-1984 period, the survey also showed.

The trend has continued so that today Southern Baptists across the nation worship in 101 languages and dialects in more than 8,000 non-Anglo language and cultural churches with more than 500,000 members.

Hispanic congregations comprise the single largest SBC language-culture group with 3,487 churches and missions with more than 236,000 members. Asian, Caribbean, European and Middle Eastern congregations are among Southern Baptists' fastest-growing.

Polls indicate fewer non-Christians attending churches

(ABP)—Fewer non-Christians are attending church and only one in five baby busters regularly reads the Bible, according to two annual assessments of key indicators in American religious beliefs.

Both the Barna Research Group and the Gallup Poll have released annual reports of poll findings about religious beliefs and practices in America. Among their findings are:

- Fewer non-Christians are attending church services, according to Barna. Four years ago, 53 percent of the people attending church services on a given weekend were not born-again Christians. That proportion has dropped to 45 percent.
- Those least likely to read the Bible during the week are baby busters, Barna found. Only 21 percent of people under age 35 read the Bible during the week, about half the rate of people 65 or older.
- Nearly 80 percent of American adults believe in miracles, Gallup reported, while 12 percent do not believe and 9 percent aren't sure.
- 96 percent of American adults say they believe in God or a universal spirit, according to the Gallup Poll. Just 3 percent say they don't believe in God.

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