

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1995-1999

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

5-16-1996

May 16, 1996

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/arbn_95-99



Part of the [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), [Mass Communication Commons](#), and the [Organizational Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Arkansas Baptist State Convention, "May 16, 1996" (1996). *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1995-1999*. 28.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/arbn_95-99/28

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1995-1999 by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 95, Number 10

May 16, 1996



'A lifetime of outreach'

Evangelist Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth, received the Congressional Gold Medal Award May 2. The award, the highest honor Congress can give individuals, is only the 114th Congressional Gold Medal presented in the nation's 220-year history.



ARKANSAS BAPTISTS

Arkansans appointed, nominated for denominational service

Several Arkansas Baptists are among those being appointed to 1996 Southern Baptist Convention committees and nominated for service as trustees. The nominations will be presented for consideration during the SBC annual meeting June 11-13 in New Orleans.

Among appointments made by SBC president Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., Stan Parris and Mike Pierce will serve on the 1996 SBC Committee on Committees.

Parris has served since 1989 as pastor of First Church, Hope. A former Southern Baptist missionary to Venezuela, Parris currently is a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board.

Pierce is a member of Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock, where he serves as chairman of deacons. He is a restaurant owner in Little Rock.

Henry appointed William H. "Buddy" Sutton and Jack Kwok as members of the SBC Resolutions Committee. Sutton, a Little Rock attorney, is a former state convention president. A member of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, he currently is a trustee of Ouachita Baptist University.

Kwok, director of the state convention's cooperative ministries department, is a representative to the North American Baptist Fellowship. A former pastor of churches in Arkansas and Tennessee, he is a member of Gravel Ridge Church.

George O'Neil, pastor of Bella Vista Church, was appointed to the SBC Credentials Committee. He has served on the Arkansas Baptist Executive Board and on the state Baptist Student Union advisory board.

Bobby Dusek, minister of education at First Church, Benton, has been appointed to serve on the SBC Tellers Committee. A former president of the Arkansas Baptist Religious Education Association, he

previously served several churches in Texas.

In addition to the presidential appointments, the SBC Committee on Nominations is recommending several Arkansans for positions of service. Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church, Hot Springs, is chairman of this year's Committee on Nominations. Wesley Kluck, a member of Second Church, Arkadelphia, also is on the committee.

Ron Sanders, pastor of Life Line Church in Little Rock, is being nominated as a trustee of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board. He previously served as vice president for development at Williams Baptist College.

Donald H. Jones, a retired engineer and member of Lakeside Church, Hot Springs, is being recommended as a trustee nominee for an Annuity Board business trust. Annuity Board trustees will select four individuals from among 14 names recommended by the Committee on Nominations.

Arkansas Baptists nominated for a second term of service are:

■ Home Mission Board: Ed Harrison Jr., pastor of Dollarway Church, Pine Bluff.

■ Southwestern Seminary: Ed Saucier, pastor of Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith. Saucier also is being nominated for a second term as Southwestern's representative to the Southern Baptist Foundation.

■ Historical Commission: Carl Norman, director of missions for Little Red River Association.

■ Stewardship Commission: Harvey McClellan, a member of Immanuel Church, Rogers.

The Committee on Nominations also is recommending Jim Richards, director of missions for Northwest Association, for a second year as chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

Cover Story

BP photo | Sarah Zimmerman



Grahams honored 3

Evangelist Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth, were honored May 2 with the Congressional Gold Medal Award. Graham is the first minister to receive the award in the nation's 220-year history.

Also inside

Perspective

A Pastor's Heart.....	4
Prayer and Fasting for Tibet.....	4
Straight from the Editor.....	5
Letters to the Editor.....	5

Arkansas Baptists

1995 statistical report.....	6
Disaster relief update.....	7
Chaplaincy ministry.....	8-9
Associational Missions Week.....	10
Arkansas All Over.....	12-13

Nation/World

Restructuring update.....	11
Eliff shares views.....	14
World Missions Digest.....	15
Japan mission force cut.....	16

Lessons.....	22-23
--------------	-------

Next issue: May 30



Available on
CompuServe through
the Publications
Library of SBCNet.

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

USPS 008021

Trennis Henderson.....Editor
Russell N. Dilday.....Associate Editor
Colleen Beckus.....Assistant Editor

Millie Gill.....Executive Assistant to the Editor
Becky Hardwick.....Accountant
Erwin L. McDonald, Litt. D.....Editor Emeritus

The Arkansas Baptist (ISSN 1040-6056) is published bi-weekly by the Arkansas Baptist NewsMagazine, Inc., 601-A W. Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201. Subscription rates are \$8.95 per year (individual) \$6.36 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$7.08 per year (Group Plan), Second Class Postage Paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Arkansas Baptist, P.O. 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 501-576-4791.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association

Volume 95 • Number 10

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Mark Baber, Marion, president; James Allcock, Hope; Robin Cook, Magnolia; Karl Cunningham, Mena; Lyndon Finney, Little Rock; Lucie Higgins, Fordyce; Curt Hodges, Jonesboro; Greg Kirksey, Benton; Eddie McCord, Mount Ida; David McCormick, Russellville; Glenda Miller, Heber Springs; Milze Petty, Hot Springs; Karen Ramsey, Fayetteville; Ken Staddox, Fordyce; Ouis Turner, Arkadelphia.

Grahams honored by Congress

Congressional Gold Medal affirms contributions to morality, religion

WASHINGTON (ABP/BP) — Hundreds of onlookers crammed the Capitol Rotunda May 2 to see Billy and Ruth Graham receive the Congressional Gold Medal for "outstanding and lasting contributions to morality, racial equity, family, philanthropy and religion."

During a banquet following the ceremony, President Bill Clinton described the Grahams as "two of America's finest citizens, two of the world's greatest human resources."

The Capitol ceremony marked the 114th time that Congress has enacted legislation to present the award, the highest honor Congress can bestow. Previous award recipients have included George Washington, Thomas Edison and Winston Churchill. Graham, who has been listed 37 times since 1955 in Gallup's Ten Most Admired Men in the World, is the first minister to receive the congressional honor.

Among those in the crowd were Vice President Al Gore, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole. Other guests ranged from actor Pat Boone to the daughters of former presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, as well as most of the Grahams' five children, 19 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Southern Baptist leaders attending the ceremony included SBC president Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.; Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president; Jerry Rankin, Foreign Mission Board president; and Morris Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president.

Speakers noted that Graham's messages have been heard by more than 100 million people in person and 2 billion people on television.

By honoring the Grahams, U.S. leaders "make a powerful statement about what is important in life," said Vice President Gore. Voicing appreciation for "the poetry and power" in Graham's messages, Gore affirmed "the force of convictions fueled by the gentleness of your soul."

"You have touched the hearts of the American family," Gore told the 77-year-old evangelist.

Dole told Graham, "I speak for millions around the world in saying that no one will ever preach the word of God better than you, and no one will ever preach it with a better partner than Ruth."

Gingrich and Senate President Pro Tem Strom Thurmond presented the award. Gingrich described Graham's life as a



President Bill Clinton presents evangelist Billy Graham a framed copy of the legislation honoring Graham and his wife, Ruth, with the Congressional Gold Medal.

"lifetime of outreach unparalleled in human history."

Responding with a trademark sermon on the need for spiritual repentance,

"America has gone a long way down the wrong road....If ever we need God's help, it is now."

— Billy Graham

Graham declared, "As we face a new millennium, I believe America has gone a long way down the wrong road. We must turn around and go back and change roads. If ever we need God's help, it is now."

Stressing the need for individuals to respond to Christ, Graham also called the

nation to repent and demonstrate faith in tangible ways.

"We are a society poised on the brink of self-destruction," he noted, citing racial tension, crime, broken families, children taking weapons to school, poverty, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and corruption. A sense of emptiness, guilt caused by sin and a fear of death drive people to such activities, Graham said.

"Why is the human heart this way?" he asked. "The reason is we are alienated from our Creator. I believe the fundamental crisis of our time is a crisis of the spirit. We have lost sight of the moral and spiritual principles on which this nation was established — the principles drawn largely from the Judeo-Christian tradition as found in the Bible."

The cure, Graham said, is for people to repent, turn their lives to God and translate their commitment into action in their homes, neighborhoods and society.

"I see more than a few good men and women here who have the ability to lead us into the next century," Graham told the crowd. "A lot more people are here today than were at Pentecost, and they changed their world. We can do the same with the help of God and His Holy Spirit."

A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER
ABS-C Executive Director

For two hours I answered questions ranging from opinions about particular sins to which translation of the Bible I used. The reason for my interrogation was that I was preaching "in view of a call." A two-hour interrogation is not the best approach, but church members have a right to know what their leaders believe.

Arkansas Baptists also have the right to know what I believe about key issues.

Abortion: I believe abortion ends a life that God has begun. To abort a child or to murder in any other way abrogates God's authority to give and take life.

Pornography: I believe that pornography distorts God's plan for real intimacy. Far from being victimless, its victims are those who use it, those who participate in it, and the families of both.

Gambling: I believe a gambler gambles with God's money. Covetousness is the "sin behind the sin" of gambling. The best things you can do for Arkansas are to sign and circulate the anti-gambling petitions, and then vote and encourage others to vote against gambling.

Homosexuality: I believe that homosexuality is a perversion of God's plan for family life. This sin destroys a person's perception of the will of God in the most basic of all relationships. Its impact on the family undermines our nation.

Alcohol and tobacco: I believe the consumption of these two drugs hurts not only those who indulge, but all of society as well. Those who never drink or smoke pay the bills for the societal impact.

There is another sin with an impact as destructive to Christians as any of these. **Spiritual pride** is that sin. I can be correct about all of the sins of others, but if I am proud of my righteousness and feel I am more spiritual than another person, my fellowship with God is wrecked.

■ Have you read... *The Promise* by Tony Evans (Moody, 1996). This excellent study of the ministry of the Holy Spirit presents a complex subject in a very practical way. Pastors will appreciate his description of Christ's liberation of us from meeting unrealistic expectations.

Day of Prayer and Fasting

Prayer, fasting for Tibet affirms the power of God

RICHMOND, VA (BF)—What will fasting do to free the Buddhists of Tibet from a dead religious rite and reveal to them the person of Jesus Christ? Nothing, unless Southern Baptists are doing more than just missing a meal or two.

"As Americans, our culture conditions us to obey our every desire, which results in powerless bondage," explained Randy Sprinkle, who directs prayer strategy for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "As Christians, God conditions us to obey His every desire, which leads to a powerful freedom."

Southern Baptists have set aside a 24-hour period beginning at 6 p.m. May 24 to pray for the people of Tibet. The 1996 Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization focuses on the nearly 5 million Tibetans worldwide.

"Tibetan Buddhism, behind its thin veneer of kindness and nonviolence, is a hopeless religion of works that only leads its adherents into an ever-deepening bondage to the powers of darkness," Sprinkle noted. "The saving love of the one, true God as ultimately expressed in His son, Jesus Christ, is almost completely unknown in Tibet."

There are no more than a handful of Christians in Tibet, and no known

Christian congregations.

"Tibetans are poor, desperate people who pour out everything they have to worship these idols, these demons," Sprinkle said. "Southern Baptists can have a powerful part in changing that by participating in the day of prayer and fasting for Tibet."

"Fasting is not a discipline of simply not eating that brings merit in itself," said Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin. "Its merit comes as a reflection of devotion to God that preempts eating and physical concerns."

"I trust Southern Baptists will join in this day of prayer and fasting because they have a heart for reaching those who have no opportunity to know Jesus," Rankin continued. "The kind of prayer that will bring down the strongholds of Satan—and open doors that are closed in such places as Tibet—arises from an intense devotion and sincere commitment."

Emphasizing that "the self-denial of fasting provides an open door for the Spirit of God to come in and advance the process of liberation," Sprinkle added, "Prayer that rises out of seasons of fasting is prayer of focus, passion and refined purity that cannot be realized any other way. It is prayer that touches God, moves heaven and changes earth."

Personal perspectives

"America has gone a long way down the wrong road. We must turn around and go back and change roads."

—Evangelist Billy Graham

"Somehow, as Southern Baptists we must see that the struggle to maintain biblical authority is to be a lifetime commitment, not a 10- or 20-year program."

—Tom Elliff, SBC presidential candidate

"The religious community has to be the moral locomotive, not the moral caboose, especially when it comes to our children."

—Marian Wright Edelman, president, Children's Defense Fund

"Even when we differ, we owe each other the benefit of the doubt that each is seeking to affirm the lordship of Christ... Jesus Christ longs for the wholeness of His body."

—Daniel Weiss, president, North American Baptist Fellowship

'Dream Something New'

Making a conscious decision to "Dream Something New" is seldom without its challenges. Dreamers are often misunderstood, ridiculed or ignored. It's much easier to simply keep doing the same old things in the same old ways.

Yet the countless needs in today's society emphasize the urgency of concerned Christians reaching out in new and creative ways to make a difference in the lives of hurting people. One way that can be accomplished is through local associations of Southern Baptist churches.

As Baptist congregations throughout our state and nation observe Associational Missions Week May 20-26, it is an ideal time to personalize the 1996 associational theme, "Dream Something New."

All across our state, associational leaders are actively involved in sharing the gospel through multihousing ministries, Mississippi River Ministry projects, migrant mission efforts, new church starts and numerous other innovative activities.

World hunger needs

I have read recent reports about the dramatic decrease in gifts to world hunger by Southern Baptists. This is a sad and unnecessary turn of events.

Almost any Southern Baptist would respond to a personal appeal of someone who is hungry. Then, why the decrease? Like any other worthwhile endeavor, the success of giving to good causes is dependent upon the concerns of the pastor.

Before I retired, I prepared some plain brown envelopes imprinted with two words: "World Hunger." I asked my members to pick up a handful in the vestibule, take them home and place them near their boxes of church envelopes. Each week they had the option of taking one of the envelopes and putting a dollar or more into it. Thus, we did not have a World Hunger Day per se, but had world hunger giving the year-round. It worked very effectively.

When we speak of World Hunger in broad terms it fails to do much to trigger our spiritual emotions. But when the pastor states from the pulpit that \$1 given for world hunger will feed a family a diet of rice for three days, it translates into doable action...The interest is there. It just needs to be kindled.

Andrew M. Hall
Fayetteville, AR

Thanks for inclusion

I am writing to thank you for the Newsmagazine's advertising policy.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON



While merely maintaining the status quo is a safer course of action, dreaming new dreams is a more effective way to make a lasting impact in the world around us.

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board leaders have challenged associational workers to dream something new in the areas of ministry, evangelism and new work. Specific suggestions range from opening a shelter for the homeless or

sponsoring after-school child care to planning evangelistic block parties or starting a new work for a people group whose primary language is not English.

Each of those suggestions requires extensive planning to accomplish. Commitment and cooperation from dedicated volunteers is essential. Those are the type of projects, however, which can produce eternal results in the lives of people touched by caring Christians.

On the local church level, individuals can help make such dreams come true through faithful prayer, generous financial support and personal participation. The success of each association begins with the involvement of local churches and individual members.

What new dreams are being pursued in your association? What are you willing to do to help transform those dreams into reality? Make a personal commitment to take the first step — take time today to dream something new.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Recently, you accepted an advertisement from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas and reported on the annual assembly.

CBF-related churches in Arkansas support the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and participate in the convention's life in many ways. We want to carry on the treasured values of our distinctive Baptist heritage as we seek to honor God and take Christ's love to our needy world.

Thank you for your policy of inclusion instead of exclusion toward the Baptist family and the body of Christ.

Ray Higgins
Little Rock, AR

The nature of CBF

Milton Wilson's April 18 letter in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* deserves a response in order that he may be less sad and better informed about the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas. This is also an opportunity for all Arkansas Baptists to understand the nature of this organization.

First, churches which give their members the freedom to give to the CBF do in fact support the work of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and most

continue to support the Cooperative Program. For example, the 1994 state convention annual reports that the churches represented by persons on our General Assembly program April 14-15 gave a total of \$1,066,194 to the Cooperative Program. This figure does not include many more dollars in designated gifts to the ABCS.

Second, Mr. Wilson charges the CBFA with being "separated from us." The fact is that each Baptist church, convention and association is separate and autonomous. However, those organizations often choose to support the mission of other Baptist bodies. Local churches are free to relate to some, all or none of these bodies beyond the church. CBF is one more option among many for free Baptists who wish to do cooperative missions.

Finally, it is suggested that CBF represents "the bottom of the barrel." If I showed Mr. Wilson the list of churches which forward money to the CBF each month, he might be surprised to see who is included — some of the largest and best-known churches in Little Rock and around the state. I should think we would all be glad to receive Newsmagazine advertising from churches which plow money back into our state convention.

I'm thankful to be part of a church in cooperation with both the CBF and the ABCS. I'm thankful anytime free and faithful Baptists join hands to reach others in the name of Jesus Christ.

J. Frederick Ball
Moderator, Cooperative Baptist
Fellowship of Arkansas

'95 statistics show mixture of gains, losses

Arkansas Baptist churches reported increases in five of 10 key statistical categories, while churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention reported gains in six of the 10 categories, according to the 1995 Annual Church Profile. Several Arkansas Baptist leaders, however, have described the ACP report as "unreliable."

Citing drastic statistical declines in key program areas, state convention associate executive director Jimmie Sheffield said the ACP has posed reporting problems for all program areas. He said one of the concerns "is a problem in reporting."

"This last year we had so much trouble with the ACP because many churches did not report accurately, did not fill it out right or at all," he explained. "It would not have affected all the declines, but it did account for drastic changes."

According to the ACP report, Arkansas Baptist churches recorded gains in number of churches, membership, music ministry participation, missions giving and total receipts. Declines were noted in baptisms as well as Sunday School, Discipleship Training, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood participation. Differences on the national level included gains in baptisms and Sunday School enrollment and a decline in total receipts.

The 1994-95 church year marked the second year of a new ACP reporting process completed by individual churches. The 1995 totals are statistically comparable to 1994, except in two categories, but not to earlier years, explained Cliff Sharp, supervisor of the Baptist Sunday School Board's strategic information unit. He said significant changes in collection processes for Discipleship Training and Brotherhood enrollment make the 1995 totals statistically noncomparable with 1994.

The number of Arkansas Baptist churches reportedly increased by 17 to 1,344, while Southern Baptist churches increased from 39,910 to 40,120, a gain of 210.

Church membership among Arkansas Baptists climbed 0.5 percent, from 508,535 to 511,090. Southern Baptist membership totals increased to 15,668,077 in 1995, a gain of 48,165 or 0.3 percent over 1994.

Baptisms for the year totaled 393,811 in the SBC, an increase of 15,348 or 4.1 percent over the previous year. Baptisms in Arkansas dropped by 31 to 12,701.

The ACP report showed Arkansas Discipleship Training enrollment figures plummeted more than 25,000 members from 74,162 to 48,714 (a 34 percent decrease). SBC Discipleship Training enrollment was 2,171,993, a drop of more



'95 Baptist stats at a glance

	ARKANSAS		SBC	
	1994	1995	1994	1995
Churches	1,327	1,344	39,910	40,120
Baptisms	12,732	12,701	378,463	393,811
Total members	508,535	511,090	15,619,912	15,668,077
Sunday School enrollment	260,344	256,448	8,263,558	8,207,860
Discipleship Training enrollment	74,162	48,714	2,223,955	2,171,993
Music ministry enrollment	55,308	55,400	1,841,583	1,881,754
WMU enrollment	25,446	23,571	1,104,706	1,061,279
Brotherhood enrollment	12,539	9,539	646,028	749,310
Total receipts	\$177,151,103	\$189,712,823	\$6,080,432,324	\$6,069,724,030
Missions expenditures	\$27,492,422	\$28,578,051	\$815,640,533	\$858,779,214

than 50,000 from the 1994 total of 2,223,955.

Brotherhood enrollment in Arkansas reportedly dropped by exactly 3,000 (almost 25 percent) in 1995, from 12,539 to 9,539. Nationally, SBC Brotherhood enrollment figures increased by more than 100,000 from 646,028 in 1994 to 749,310, a 15.9 percent increase.

Faulty reporting "would not have affected all the declines, but it did account for drastic changes."

—Jimmie Sheffield
ABSC associate executive director

Bob Holley, director of the ABSC discipleship and family ministries department, said the statistical drop shows that the ACP is "unreliable."

"We've done an analysis of the ACP in our state comparing figures by association," he said, "and came up with a decline of only 3,829." He compared that decline with 1993 church reports showing Discipleship Training ministries with a gain of 3,273 over 1992 figures.

Among the problems cited by Holley are that "record keeping and reporting are not as important to churches as they once were."

Other Arkansas Baptist program areas showing decreases included Sunday School and WMU. Sunday School enrollment reportedly dropped by 3,896 members to 256,448 and WMU numbers showed a 1,875 decrease in Arkansas, from 25,446 in 1994 to 23,571 in 1995.

Small decreases also were reported in WMU and Sunday School enrollments in the SBC. WMU enrollment dropped 3.9 percent to 1,061,279 while Sunday School enrollment fell 0.7 percent to 8,207,860.

ABSC Sunday School department director Milton Redeker attributed the Sunday School decreases to "bad reporting, lack of reporting and incorrect reporting."

"I am doing my own study of each church and association and refuting the totals," he said. "I suspect the actual number (for Sunday School enrollment in the state) is about 275,000."

Arkansas Baptist music ministry enrollment showed the only increase among program areas, climbing 92 members (0.1 percent) to 55,400. Nationally, music ministries rose 2.2 percent to a total enrollment of 1,881,754.

Financially, Arkansas Baptists' total receipts looked positive, increasing almost 7.1 percent in 1995 to \$189,712,823, with mission expenditures of \$28,578,051.

Sheffield said that the ABSC financial figures were probably more accurate than other ACP categories "because churches are required to be more accurate in their reporting of finances."

SBC records show total receipts of \$6,069,724,030, a decrease of \$10,708,294 or 0.2 percent from the previous year. Total SBC mission expenditures registered a gain of 5.3 percent or \$43,138,681 to a 1995 total of \$858,779,214.

The BSSB received approximately 95 percent of 1995 ACP data electronically. Distribution of the 1996 software began last month.

'Every cup...in Jesus' name'

Baptists provide aid to Fort Smith, Van Buren tornado victims

In the wake of the tornado that killed four people and caused an estimated \$500 million dollars in damage in the Fort Smith and Van Buren areas last month, Baptist relief efforts from across the state and across the street were visible to victims.

"This was a tragedy," said Nelson Wilhelm, director of missions for Concord Association, "but the good thing that came out of it is that people have united and churches have united to help."

Many congregations saw their church buildings damaged in the storm. Various reports cited Westside, North Side, Calvary and Trinity churches in Fort Smith with damage in the thousands of dollars.

Wilhelm noted that churches in Fort Smith and Van Buren and Concord, Clear Creek and other Baptist associations "took up offerings, resulting in thousands of dollars being raised for victims," adding that several Arkansas associations have funneled money through Concord.

Churches in Concord Association "have raised more than \$8,000 that we will spend on the poor people on the north side of Fort Smith," Wilhelm reported. "There was more damage in Van Buren, but the kind of people hurt down here on the north side are poor people, ethnic people."

In addition to the associational fund, he said individual churches have raised large sums for victim relief. "First Baptist Church in Fort Smith has already spent more than \$10,000 down there. Grand Avenue set aside \$15,000 and set up a tent and took clothes down there and gave away clothes (including 1,400 pairs of shoes donated by Wal-Mart) and food by the hundreds of dollars worth.

"First, Grand Avenue and East Side have given several thousand dollars to help people and Paris Baptist Church gave \$5,000 to Clear Creek Association for use in relief and Charleston Church has given quite a bit.

"There's probably been, through Concord Association churches alone, about \$50,000 in cash raised," Wilhelm said. "I don't know what they've done individually - there's no way to know all who have done things."

Bill Ashford, associate pastor of First Church, Van Buren, said the congregation had raised or been given a total of about \$15,000 for disaster relief.

"Right now we have spent about \$1,500-2,000 on relief," he said. "We have received in the neighborhood of \$15,000 from members and other churches and in excess of \$5,000 from our (Clear Creek) association. The money will go to victims to purchase things."

He added that members did not stop their relief aid at giving, with more than 200 members and others providing work. "We did a great deal during the emergency phase. We...began to coordinate cleanup efforts for members' yards and that spilled over to the neighbors' yards.

"We probably had 125 volunteers who went to work cleaning up, moving debris, cutting down trees and limbs," Ashford noted, adding that a local company donated 15 chainsaws and supplies "and we definitely put those to work."

Another 80 church members prepared food, feeding 4,000-5,000 meals, Ashford estimated. He said members were assisted by groups from First Church in Russellville, First Church in Alma and First Church in Hartford, as well as Oklahoma Baptist churches in Muldrow, Ponca City and Stillwell, and the University of Arkansas Baptist Student Union.

'Meet the need'

The reason for the effort, Ashford said, "is simple: Meet the need. You see the need and move to meet it.

"We prayed every morning, reminding ourselves that every cup of cold water we gave was in Jesus' name."

"The churches have done volunteer work that nobody even knows who all did what," Wilhelm emphasized. "They have helped individually and collectively.

"Raymond Laramore, pastor of Trinity Church that was in the area where the storm hit, was working from the very beginning, taking food down there before the Red Cross got it down there," he continued, adding that Laramore's wife,

Donna, "coordinated a lot of the volunteer efforts of making sandwiches."

Victims also saw Baptists from around the state come to their aid. In addition to the efforts of individual churches and associations, the Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief Unit One activated 65 Baptists through a mass feeding crew and child care and cleanup teams to provide relief for families affected by the storm.

Arkansas Baptist disaster relief director Ronnie O'Neal said Baptist volunteers fed an estimated 25,000 meals April 22-May 1 through the American Red Cross at Van Buren High School and Trinity Church. He also reported that the cleanup crew serviced 30 homes and that the child care unit cared for 111 children.

Virginia Lederer, a member of First Church in Malvern and assistant coordinator for the child care unit, said the unit worked out of Red Cross Service Centers in Fort Smith and Van Buren.

"The parents of the children came in to process for assistance from the Red Cross," she said. "Our duty was to take care of the children while the parents are processing.

"Preschool children get very tired," she said, "so we take care of them in a mobile day care unit," adding that 14 Baptists participated in child care duties.

O'Neal said many responses have come into the ABC Brotherhood offices from people wishing to financially assist Baptist disaster relief efforts.

One way, he said, is to donate to the relief unit. "That money will be used for restocking our feeding unit, for tools we used on chainsaw and cleanup and for the repair on our equipment."



Members of the Arkansas Baptist Men's Disaster Relief chainsaw crew section a tree downed by a tornado that swept through Crawford and Sebastian counties April 21. The men were part of relief efforts that involved hundreds of Southern Baptists.

'They are just like everybody else'

Chris Copeland has served as chaplain to the mentally disabled for 19 years

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist



MAY Chaplaincy Month

Fred moved slowly to the front of the chapel, concentrating on the words of the song he was to perform during the Wednesday evening service.

As he reached the pulpit, he turned to face the audience of about

30 people. All was quiet as he paused before singing. Then, straining to carefully form each word, he began.

"Do Lord, Oh do Lord, Do you remember me?" Fred sang slowly.

He paused again, carefully recalling each word and trying to vocalize the first syllable. Sensing Fred's need, chaplain Chris Copeland prompted him on the next line: As the first word left Copeland's mouth, Fred picked it up and began the song again.

"Do Lord, Oh do Lord, Do you remember me? Do Lord, Oh do Lord, Do you remember me—way beyond the blue?"

The audience clapped for Fred's performance, just as they had for the other singers that evening. Anyone in the service was invited to provide special music. Fred's broad grin as he returned to his pew showed his excitement at their approval.

Fred (not his real name) is one of more than 160 residents at the Booneville Human Development Center, where Copeland has served as chaplain for the past 19 years. The center provides housing, job training and teaches living skills to mentally disabled residents.

Copeland, one of five full-time chaplains supported by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, is there to provide tangible proof that God does indeed remember residents like Fred.

"I'm here to provide ministry to people who otherwise would not have it," Copeland explained. "The community does not provide it on a very large scale, so therefore, in a specialized setting, we can provide for those people."

May is observed each year as Chaplaincy Month among Southern Baptists. Copeland is among more than 2,400 Southern Baptists who serve as chaplains and pastoral counselors.

More than 1,000 chaplains serve in the military, while 823, including Copeland, serve in a variety of health care settings, but he is one of only 15 who currently serve in a ministry setting exclusively for those with mental disabilities.

Other chaplains, according to 1995

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board figures, serve in such institutions as prisons, jails and nursing homes as well as business and industrial settings, including law enforcement and fire protection.

During the past year, the HMB endorsed 179 new chaplains. Southern Baptist chaplains reported more than 27,000 professions of faith; made almost 2 million visits in work areas, homes and recreation sites; conducted more than 80,000 worship services or Bible studies; and provided approximately 270,000 individual counseling sessions.

Copeland said that as a chaplain to the mentally disabled, he sees few differences between the spiritual needs of his "clients" and the general population.

"I have very few clients who do not comprehend that there is a God," he explained. "I have very few clients who do not comprehend that there is a Christ who loves them. They are more accepting of that than most adults. It does not require a lot to understand who God is, who Jesus is and that He loved you enough to die for you. That's the bottom line of the gospel."

Copeland added, however, that the individuals he serves need acceptance more than most. "A lot of clients tend to think of themselves as the person that was beaten up on the highway and left. The expression of love and concern by society was not something many of them were used to when they were growing up. They were teased and taunted."

The special needs of his congregation, he said, require a special way to deliver the gospel message. "We make an assumption when we use our church language and many of our clients would not relate to those words," he explained. "If you were to use the word 'lost,' they would think in terms of, 'I have dropped something.'"

"When you talk to them," he added, "you ask them if they have a knowledge of who God is and that He wants to be a part of their lives. And if they do not know God, they are in a position of missing out on one of the things that He wants to provide for people—and that is to go to heaven and be with Him."

He said many of his clients often do not have a clear picture of even the most basic



Chaplain Chris Copeland makes the rounds daily at Booneville Human Development Center, developing relationships and counseling with residents and staff.

images in religion. "I asked a client one day to draw me a picture of the devil. I got a picture back of what looked like Casper the Friendly Ghost with a smile. If, as a preacher, you're standing in the pulpit and you mention that Satan is in the process of trying to disrupt your life in a certain way, but yet their mental image is of Casper the Friendly Ghost, with a smile, there's a direct confusion. You've lost them."

In addition to his pastoral role, Copeland functions as a counselor for residents. Their most frequent questions, he noted, "deal with boyfriend or girlfriend problems, family problems or authority problems. Sometimes they want to know whether or not God approves of them doing a certain thing."

"Most of it is not different than it would be talking to a youth or lower-aged child," he explained. "These are adults who may have childlike ways of achieving their goals, but they have the same ambitions as we do. They still want to own the boat, the truck, the house, the clothes. Their dreams and aspirations are the same as ours, but their handicap lessens their ability to move in that direction."

Copeland also serves as chaplain to the nearly 320 staff at the facility, called "the hill" by many workers. "It's a 60-40 situation," he said. "My first priority is the

client. To many of them I'm the only pastor they've ever known. I make myself available to both and I do visitation daily. I move around the hill.

"With staff my role is in the form of (conducting) marriages, marriage counseling at times and being able to visit them in their work areas. My main focus is the clients, but the two are so intertwined it really is hard to separate."

Copeland said that 1980 census statistics show that 3 percent of the population is considered mentally disabled. "Consequently, the state of Arkansas was broken down to have approximately 68,000 mentally retarded people. Of that number, there are less than 2 percent in the five major institutional systems in Arkansas — about 1,200 to 1,300."

He said that as adults, even the mentally disabled are accountable for their decisions. "I find nowhere in the Scriptures this watershed that we would like to hold onto...that certain people are among the holy innocents.

"There are clients and mentally retarded people in this world that do not have a knowledge of what is taking place around them," he said. "I feel that God will protect them. But you also have to go back to what Adam and Eve did, they ate a piece of fruit. It was a rebellious act against God.

"There was not a lot of deep theological thinking. They didn't understand the consequences," he said. "My clients are the same way. They may not understand all the deep theological statements or relate to Revelation in its fullest capacity, but they know enough that there is a God who loves them and there is a Christ who died for them. And they want Him to be a part of their lives."

Some of the knowledge of the basics of good and evil that Copeland has taught throughout his chaplaincy ministry is reflected in client interviews he has conducted.

Relationships with other residents is an important theme for Copeland's congregation. A 24-year-old male commented, "The good Lord wants ya'll to do right. No stealing, no cussing."

Another male, 25, noted that "God said to be good to another kid. If you read the Bible, it tells you how to act right and keep from being bad. You listen to God. God will help you."

A female, 27, said that everyone should "be nice to everybody. He (God) don't want nobody pushing and shoving and fighting and not cussing either."

And, from a 33-year-old male resident, "When I went to bed last night, I told God I was sorry about what I did. I told Him I would never do it again. Ever. He forgave me."

Many also have a good concept of salvation. A female resident, 36, noted that "Jesus wants us all to be saved. He don't want the people to do things wrong and He wants everybody to be saved. I want the Lord to help that person do right."

A 35-year-old female remarked, "Do you know what's going to happen to them when they die? Do you know what's going to happen to them when He comes back on earth? Think about all those people that do not believe in Jesus...I know that He's going to come any time soon and I'm ready for Him. Maybe ya'll not ready for Him, but I am."

And a male, 22, emphasized that "Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. He didn't die for nothing. He died (for) us to be saved."

Copeland said his own views on ministering to the mentally disabled have progressed significantly in 19 years. "When I first looked at the place, I went back and told my wife there was no way in heaven that I can do it."

Why? "It was the physical appearance (of residents)," he replied. "They were not ugly, just different. I was trained to be a hospital chaplain, had been to two colleges and then a seminary. Then I found myself in a world that went totally against what I was taught as to how to express it. The change came when I felt the Lord leading me here."

Copeland said he "sees them now as people. I used to see the abnormality rather than seeing the person.

"Our society has a way of devaluing people and distancing people," he acknowledged. "We create a group that is 'less than.' The membership of mental retardation is man-made. We pick a number and boom, you're there."

However, he insisted, "they can still understand, they can appreciate, they can laugh, they can joke, they can cry and they can hurt....They are just like everybody else."



Chris Copeland often relies on art to gauge his clients' understanding of religious concepts. This is a client's expression of the Holy Spirit.

Sunday School event features 70 conferences

From "Prayer and Spiritual Awakening" to "How to Organize a Sunday School," Arkansas Baptists' 1996 Sunday School Convention will feature 70 conferences to prepare participants to "Share Christ's Love." The event will be held Sept. 20-21 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

Milton Redeker, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, said that following the Friday evening general session, "consultants from seven states and Baptist Sunday School Board personnel will cover a variety of subjects that touch and meet the needs of churches."

Redeker said this year's diverse conference topics "came from conferring questions in the state and as a direct result of needs expressed in the associational Sunday School conventions last year."

A small sampling of Friday night workshops by group include:

■ Adults — "Sunday School: A New Paradigm for Reaching the Unchurched," "Helping Teachers Teach for Life-change" and "Building the Team Spirit."

■ Youth — "Off the Wall Sunday School Ideas," "Ministering to Youth from Different Cultures" and "Building Meaningful Person Relationships."

■ Children — "Teaching with Less Stress," "Why Kids Do What They Do" and "Children and Conversion."

■ General officers — "Growing Believers," "Help! I'm a Pastor" and "Seven Stages of Outreach."

Separate spiritual awakening conferences featuring retired ABCS executive director Don Moore and his wife, Nita, will be offered during the conference sessions.

Saturday participants may again choose any three sessions offered, Redeker noted. "They can make up their own schedule to meet their needs and the needs of their church's Sunday School," he explained.

There is no cost for the convention and no child care will be provided. For more information, contact the ABCS Sunday School department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5128 or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791.

Associations 'Dream Something New' in state

By Russell N. Dillard

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Associational leaders are "Dreaming Something New" to tell the old, old story to people in Arkansas. And, just as there are many associations, they are ministering in a variety of ways.

Churches and associations will observe their partnership during Associational Missions Week May 20-26. The theme for this year's emphasis is "Associations: Dream Something New."

A quick look around Arkansas reveals that many Baptists in the state have big dreams for ministry and missions through their associations.

Concord Association in the Fort Smith area had a dream to reach multihousing residents by adding a staff member to start multihousing works there.

Concord director of missions Nelson Wilhelm said the association enlisted Victoria Duncan as a part-time associational multihousing coordinator to help reach people in apartments and trailer parks.

"That is her burden," he explained. "The thrust of her ministry is working with pastors and the Woman's Missionary Union to start multihousing ministries."

Wilhelm noted that Duncan has "surveyed most of the apartment managers in the Fort Smith area and she already knows which will let us in and which won't." She also has helped churches with Backyard Bible Clubs, Bible studies and survey work in multihousing communities for churches in the association.

Wilhelm said Duncan was recruited because "there's nothing being done in this area," attributing the lack of involvement to its difficulty. "It's hard work. The reason multihousing seems to be so hard is that it does not bring more people into the church house. It's a ministry that has to be sustained by going to the place and working in the area."

On the other side of the state, two associational directors of missions are working together to accomplish their dream of conducting a Mississippi River Ministry missions project.

Harold Ray, DOM for Mt. Zion Association in the Jonesboro area, and John Hall, DOM for Delta Association near Dermott, have planned an innovative missions project scheduled for July 1-5 that will involve about 100 volunteers from Mt. Zion participating in a massive medical, construction and evangelism missions project in Delta Association.

"It's going to be a multi-faceted ministry," Hall explained. "We are planning everything from medical projects to home repairs and involve medical doctors, dentists, eye exams, nurses who will take care of physical needs like shots, survey teams with churches doing city surveys, Backyard Bible Clubs, resort evangelism, and Mt. Zion association members speaking in churches."

Hall said Ray initially enlisted 80 volunteers, "but now he said he has about 100. God had to put it together because Harold and I didn't do that."

its ministry opportunities to those passing through, Northwest Association in the booming Springdale/Fayetteville area is tailoring its strategies to the thousands of people moving to the area to stay by focusing on new church starts and theological education.

"Look at the need and the burden," invited DOM Jim Richards. "There are 200 persons per week that have moved here since 1990. The region of northwest Arkansas is eighth in the nation in growth."

"The need is that there are many unchurched people and relocated Baptists," he explained. "But primarily we want to target the unsaved community."

Richards said the association is aiding in two "traditional" new church starts in growing communities. The two targeted areas are the Little Flock community and the Elm Springs/Tontitown community. "In 1990 there were 368 residents of Little Flock," he said. "In December, they did a special census and found 3,960 living there."

He added that a survey of the Elm Springs/Tontitown region showed that the area "has mushroomed to 5,000 and they expect 5,000 more in the next five years."

Richards said the association is focusing on a "traditional method" of church starting in the communities by using a "core of believers and bivocational ministers" to start works there.

The association also is concentrating its efforts on starting a work "specifically designed to be a regional church by inception." He said the new work will be "along the I-71 corridor" which he described as "a corridor of people where a population explosion has been vast and diverse."

The association's strategy, he explained, will use the enlistment of a "Gideon's Army" of 300 laypersons in the area to commit to pray, serve as a mission consulting work group, give a one-time gift of \$1,000 per person and then to enlist others to participate."

The association already has raised \$20,000 for a church planter and is conducting a candidate search. The church will seek to use Bible study groups meeting in homes that will come together for worship at a regional location.

Richards said that the association also plans to begin masters-level theological education through the establishment of an off-campus center of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "We are looking for 20 students to begin the center, maybe as early as this fall," he explained.

Associations:
Dream Something New
 ❖
Associational Missions Week ❖ May 20-26, 1996

He added that the anticipated number of workers may make the joint effort "the biggest project of any for the Mississippi River Ministry."

While Mt. Zion Association plans to send out volunteers, Southwest Association in the Texarkana area is taking advantage of groups that are coming to their area to minister. DOM Jerry Creeks said two ongoing associational ministries involve reaching out to migrant farm workers and truckers passing through the state.

He said that in addition to financial support for the Hope Migrant Missions Center, "our people go up and work with it and churches in Hope work with it."

"The reason we do it is that it's a mission field coming to us," he explained. "The migrants are coming through here and we are able to win them to the Lord. We have hundreds and hundreds per year coming through and hearing about Christ and they may not hear it otherwise. We are fulfilling the Great Commission and the missions statements of Jesus, feeding the hungry and healing the brokenhearted."

He said those biblical mandates also are the basis for the association's Heavenly Highways ministry, "a chapel ministry built on the back of an 18-wheeler," which the association maintains in partnership with area churches and an adjoining Texas association.

"The ministry involves a chaplain spreading the gospel every Sunday at the 76 truck stop at Texarkana," Creeks said. "We're hoping to expand by adding counseling using laymen."

While Southwest Association is tailoring

Implementation group continues closed meetings

NORFOLK, VA (BP)—The meetings of the Implementation Task Force, the group that is coordinating the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, will remain closed to the public, according to ITF chairman Bob Reccord, pastor of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.

Reccord said legal counsel and other issues were the basis for the unanimous decision of the 10-member committee appointed last year by the SBC Executive Committee. An explanation of the committee's decision came in an April 24 letter to Bill Webb, president of the Association of State Baptist Papers. Webb is editor of *Word & Way*, newjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

The ASBP, in a resolution approved at its annual meeting in February, had urged the ITF to open its meetings to the press. Reccord spoke to the editors at that meeting and cited sensitive legal and personnel issues for the closure but said he would take the resolution to the task force for its consideration.

'Complex, sensitive issues'

"The ITF has decided that its meetings must remain closed to the public in order to successfully accomplish the charge given the task force by the Executive Committee," Reccord told Baptist Press. "The ITF is dealing with complex and sensitive legal and personnel issues. Its meetings are lengthy and intense and involve not only the task force members but legal counsel who have advised the ITF that legal counsel needs to be offered privately. In addition, chief executive officers, state executives and others are invited into these meetings from time to time and they must be conducted in an atmosphere in which those persons may speak candidly to the ITF without fear of harming anyone."

Webb, who expressed disappointment with the decision "that every meeting must be completely closed," encouraged the task force to "continue to revisit this request."

"Open meetings are almost always in the best interests of the Southern Baptist constituency, especially when such significant matters are under consideration," Webb added.

Brotherhood trustees discuss SBC restructuring procedures

By Connie Davis
Tennessee Baptist and Reflector

MEMPHIS, TN (BP)—Brotherhood Commission trustees expressed concerns about the Southern Baptist Convention restructuring plan at their recent meeting before approving the use of "incorporators" to establish a new missions agency.

Trustees shared their concerns with Mike Hamlet, a member of the Implementation Task Force appointed by the SBC Executive Committee to oversee denominational restructuring. Hamlet is pastor of First Baptist Church, North Spartanburg, S.C.

The incorporators, as proposed by the ITF, would help establish the proposed North American Mission Board, nominate the agency's first president and propose officers for the agency's board of directors. Several questions centered around the appointment of the 13 incorporators, which includes two incorporators from each of the three agencies forming the NAMB and seven appointed by the ITF.

Trustee Bill Prince of Georgia asked about the objectivity of the incorporators, since more than half will be appointed by the ITF. "There's an appearance the incorporators could lack objectivity because a majority of them are appointed by the ITF and arguably influenced by the Executive Committee and its CEO, so it might not actually reflect the will of the convention, but the Executive Committee," Prince said.

Hamlet responded that if more agency representatives were incorporators, they might form voting blocks. "We felt this was somewhere in the middle...because then you're getting people on that committee who understand a new entity that is for all Southern Baptists. We've not had any input from the Executive

Committee except what we've taken to them."

Insisting that "there is no hidden agenda," Hamlet predicted if the incorporators make decisions based on 7-6 votes representing a division between those appointed by the agencies and by the ITF, those decisions would not be accepted by Southern Baptists.

Several trustees expressed concern that the restructuring would cause current gains in Brotherhood work to falter. Brotherhood president James Williams said the staff will continue its work until June 19, 1997, when the transition would be completed, or until told otherwise.

Several trustees expressed their pain at not being asked for their input and asked if those with experience in Brotherhood work would be considered for the six at-large incorporator positions. Hamlet said it was possible, especially if they had not just rotated off a term as a trustee. The latter situation would give the person the appearance of bias toward the agency he had served, Hamlet suggested.

Following the dialogue, Williams told trustees he believes the concerns of the commission will be considered by the ITF. However, he added, the commission will remain "as positive and proactive as possible" in the transition period.

"Our work is much bigger than the structure of the Southern Baptist Convention," Williams noted. He said the work could be "enhanced and empowered within the North American Mission Board, and not diminished."

Trustees elected board chairman Donley Brown, a layman from Missouri and Keith Corrick, a minister from Maryland, as NAMB incorporators.

Trustees also approved a one-time incentive of 25 percent of an employee's annual salary for employees who stay until June 1, 1997.

SBC missions day camp available for children

NEW ORLEANS — The 1996 Southern Baptist Convention Missions Day Camp will allow children to be involved in a variety of activities while their parents are attending the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans.

Missions Day Camp is for boys and girls who will have completed grades 1-6 and whose parents are attending the SBC. The camp is sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

The annual camp provides a missions education program for children of

messengers during all daytime sessions of the convention, June 11-13. Package prices are available for one-day, two-day and three-day plans.

Children will visit the Aquarium of the Americas, the Audubon Zoo, and enjoy a ride on a riverboat. They will also tour the Louisiana Children's Museum and visit with home and foreign missionaries.

This year's pre-registration deadline is May 24. To pre-register, call SBC Missions Day Camp, Brotherhood Commission at 901-272-2461.

Staff changes

Christopher Brett Stocklin began serving May 5 as pastor of First Church of West Fork, coming there from Calvary Church of Timbo. He is a graduate of Central Missouri State University, Warrensburg, Mo., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Stocklin currently is pursuing a doctor of ministry degree from Midwestern. He and his wife, Martha, have one son, Jordan.

Varl L. Ball began serving April 7 as pastor of Rock Springs Church in North Arkansas Association. He previously has served churches in California, New Mexico and Missouri. Ball is a graduate of Southwest Baptist College, Baylor University and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Ilene, have four adult children, Tony Ball, Carol Harvick, Artie Pearson and Kyle Davis.

Michael Collier is pastor of Luxora Church. He previously served Old Bethel Church in Sikeston, Mo., and First Church in Ellsinore. Mr. Collier and his wife, Debbie, have seven children, Michael Jr., Justin, Freeman, Lindsay, LeAnne, Lydia and Phillip.

Jackie Lawrence is serving as music director for Naylor Church, Vilonia. He and his wife, Pam, have a son, Ferris.

Chris Nash is serving as part-time youth director of Remount Church in North Little Rock. He is a student at the University of Central Arkansas.

Charles Christie will retire June 30 as pastor of First Church of Pangburn, following more than 15 years of ministry there. In his 41 years of ministry, he has been pastor of churches in Camden and Hamburg, as well as in Louisiana. Christie and his wife, Mary, will continue to reside in Pangburn and may be contacted at P.O. Box 58, Pangburn, AR 72121; phone 501-728-4877.

Craig Friedl recently resigned as pastor of Union Valley Church in Conway-Perry Association to continue his studies with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Little Rock and also through the Seminary Extension Studies in Nashville, Tenn. Friedl and his wife, Melinda, reside at 8602 Oak Haven, Sherwood, AR 72120; phone 501-834-8841.

Keith Sandefur has resigned as pastor of Cord Church due to health reasons.

Prince E. "Ed" Claybrook is interim pastor of Hillside Church in Camden. He previously served for 27 years as pastor of



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

churches in Kentucky, Arkansas and Illinois and has served as a division director with the Illinois Baptist State Convention. He and his wife, Kathleen, are living in Hope.

Keldon Henley of Arkadelphia is serving as interim minister of music for Hillside Church in Camden. He serves as a counselor for Ouachita Baptist University. Henley and his wife, Celeste, are members of First Church in Arkadelphia.

People

Jim Hamilton, youth minister at Farmington Church, has been awarded the Velma Birdwhistle Amis Award, a scholarship for University of Arkansas students who will be attending a seminary to pursue a Christian vocation. This award, established in 1969 by Edward Amis in honor of his wife, Velma, has been given to 24 different individuals who are vocational ministers. The scholarship is based on Christian character, church involvement, academics and financial need. Hamilton was presented the award by Lynn Lloyd, Baptist Student Union director.

Jean Stracener was honored May 5 by First Church of Osceola in recognition of 20 years of service as church secretary. At the 8 p.m. reception, it was noted that pastors whom she had served with included Harry Jacobs, Bob Wilson, Earl Humble, Mark Taylor, Wilbur Herring and Jim Ingram. Ministers of music include Nancy Blair, John Dresbach and Billy Bowie. Stracener was presented with a gift of crystal.

Church news

Concord Association recently had eight missions volunteers join with 48 other volunteers to minister in the Mindanao Baptist Convention in Davao City, Philippines. The volunteers served as church planters in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Gene Williams Evangelistic Association. Their effort resulted in 23,000 professions of faith plus numerous rededications and commitments to full-time Christian vocations. The Concord Association volunteers, who led in 3,000

of the decisions, led Bible study groups in jails, homes, schools and businesses. The Arkansas group included Robert Preston, Mt. Zion Church, Greenwood; Leroy French, First Church, Hackett; Larry Lewis, Northside Church, Fort Smith; Jessie Casey, Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith; Orville and June Haley and James and Roma Zelner, all of Westside Church, Fort Smith.

Lowell First Church recorded a record high attendance of 617 during a recent Sunday morning worship service, according to pastor Gary Thomas.

Ordinations

Farmington First Church ordained pastor David Verble to the ministry April 21.

New Liberty Church of Marmaduke ordained pastor Jason Noel to the ministry April 21.

Newark Church ordained youth director James Walling to the ministry April 28.

Calvary Church of Dardanelle recently ordained Terry Bailey and Chester Carrier as deacons.

London Church recently licensed Dwayne Smith to the gospel ministry. Smith will serve as pastor of Flat Rock Mission which is sponsored by London Church.

Obituaries

Bonnie Williams of Little Rock died April 26 at age 67. She retired in 1992 as a secretary for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, following more than 31 years of service. Her funeral services were held April 29 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock where she was a member. Survivors are two sons, Troy Rhea of North Little Rock and Joseph E. Williams Jr. of Little Rock; a daughter, Bonnie Carol Torrence of Wooster, Ohio; three sisters, Martha Jo Cobb of Kingsland, Texas, Jerrie Sue Orr of Plano, Texas, and Helen McBride of McKinley, Texas; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

R. Warren Bailey of Fort Smith died April 22 at age 65. He was a member of Concord Church in Van Buren where he was a deacon and minister of music for 11 years. In addition, he had served as a minister of music for First Church in Paris and First Church in Spiro. He also was a U.S. Air Force veteran. Survivors include his wife, Barbara; two daughters, Sharon Martin of Sherwood and Rhonda Frazier of Webb City, Mo.; two sons, Steven Bailey of Sugar

'Volunteer of the Year' award affirms chaplaincy ministry

By Colleen Backus

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Loaf Lake and Greg Bailey of Barling; his mother, Helen Bailey of Fort Smith; one sister; eight grandsons; and one great-granddaughter.

W. Harold Hicks of Little Rock died May 2 at age 90. His funeral services were held May 6 at Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock where he was pastor emeritus, having served the congregation as pastor for 30 years until his retirement in 1971. A former member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board, he also had been a trustee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Arkansas Baptist Health and was president of the board of the former Central Baptist College in Conway. Prior to serving Pulaski Heights Church, he had been pastor of churches in Texas and Kansas. During the year after his retirement, he was pastor of International Baptist Church near Brussels, Belgium, under appointment of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Hicks was a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Maurine Beyer Hicks; four children, Catherine Hicks Lee of Baton Rouge, La., Joe Hicks of Boston, Mass., Bill Hicks of Victoria, Texas, and John Hicks of Amarillo, Texas; two sisters, Lucille Hicks Burnside of Santa Maria, Calif., and Gladys Hicks Newnam of Albuquerque, N.M.; 12 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

Sandy Wisdom-Martin views her role as a volunteer chaplain with the North Little Rock Police Department as an opportunity to touch people in the world; it is obvious that others have noticed the significance of that touch. Wisdom-Martin, Girls in Action director for the Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union, recently was named North Little Rock's 1996 Volunteer of the Year.

"She's an outstanding chaplain," affirmed Lt. Phil Mask, chaplain liaison for the police department. "She is a great person with innovative ideas - she keeps me busy and is a pleasure to work with."

"She is the senior chaplain," Mask pointed out. "If any of the other chaplains have a problem, they go to her and we work it out."

Wisdom-Martin assists the officers in a variety of ways - she rides with them, is available on call for death notifications or to aid families in crisis, and tracks down food for needy families.

"My role can be what I want it to be - the police department is so good about giving me opportunities," she explained. "I look at it as being salt and light in the world. I work in a Christian atmosphere and I go to church - this gives me an outlet that I wouldn't otherwise have."

A member of the Arkansas WMU staff since January 1991, Wisdom-Martin is

graduate of Southern Illinois University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. After beginning service as a chaplain four years ago, she saw a real need for the police officers to have someone to support and encourage them.

"They see the worst, even in the best of people," she noted. "They see homicides, car wrecks and abuse, and where the policing occupation once was highly honored in the community, they are now portrayed as almost a public enemy."

"Putting their lives on the line every day for the kind of money that they make and being treated with disrespect by people takes its toll," she pointed out. Wisdom-Martin has responded by developing a police officer support group, a spousal support group, and new this year is a

Police Kids Day.

Her role in the community extends beyond providing support for police officers and their families, however. Often called upon to aid in death notifications or for a visit to the home afterward, Wisdom-Martin has frequent opportunities to minister to families dealing with grief.

Describing her chaplaincy work as a "ministry of presence," she recalled, "I recently went to a family's home where the 16-year-old son had committed suicide. You can't explain why a teenage would take his own life - all you can do is be present for them, to offer your encouragement, support and prayers."



Wisdom-Martin

Revivals

Mount Ida First Church held revival services April 21-24 that resulted in nine professions of faith, 13 rededications, two baptisms and one addition by letter. Lysol Richmond was evangelist and Eddie Hardister directed music. Joe Bagwell is pastor.

Chapel Hill Church of DeQueen held a "Nothing Is Impossible" revival crusade April 21-24 that resulted in 11 decisions, according to pastor John D. Davey. Crusade leaders were Toby Irwin of Terrell, Texas, and Bobby Harrison. The church also recently held a "Deacon Body Rededication" in which the entire deacon fellowship and their wives participated. Pastor Davey was the speaker for the service which concluded with the entire congregation affirming the deacons in their ministry.

Oak Grove Church of Ashdown will be in revival June 2-5 led by Roy Parker, pastor, and Charles Vance, minister of music, at Beech Street First Church in Texarkana. Mike Hamilton is pastor.



North Central Association held an associational ministry fair April 15 at Fairfield Bay Church. There were 125 in attendance from 11 churches. Larry Loggins (center), associational Discipleship Training director, and his wife, Mary Lee, shared discipleship materials with James Vest of Formosa Church.

Elliff cites 'standards' for SBC appointments

DEL CITY, OK (BP)—Tom Elliff, the only announced candidate for Southern Baptist Convention president, has listed four "standards" he will use, if elected, for selecting members of key SBC committees.

The SBC president appoints the Committee on Committees which in turn is responsible for nominating the SBC Committee on Nominations, a group responsible for nominating directors and trustees of all SBC Agencies. The president also appoints a Committee on Resolutions, Tellers Committee and Credentials Committee.

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., said any individual he would appoint:

■ "Must clearly be an individual who knows Christ and has a daily walk with Him."

■ "Must be clearly committed to the Southern Baptist view that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God."

■ Must have a "Christian walk and commitment...acknowledged by his or her peers."

■ "Must see the appointment as a place of service rather than a place of positional glory."

Discussing his view of resolutions adopted during SBC Annual meetings, Elliff added, "I believe resolutions play a far more strategic role than the average Southern Baptist considers."

Southern Baptists "are keenly aware that votes taken at a convention are not binding in the most literal sense upon any local congregation," he acknowledged. "However, when the world at large

considers what we do in our convention meetings, the messages we send to them is by means of our resolutions. Resolutions must be seen as our message to the world regarding current issues. These are the concerns on our heart to which we are willing to commit ourselves."

Concerning the SBC's spiritual state, Elliff said the "conservative resurgence" within the denomination has emphasized "restoring what I would call a 'high view' of the Scripture as the inerrant, infallible Word of God. Working from the standard of the Scripture, we have sought to emphasize biblical mandates and principles in every area of our convention."

"Sometimes when I look around and see how far we have come, I shake my head in joyful disbelief," he added. "I am so grateful to God for how far He has brought us....Never in history has a religious group the size of the SBC ever reversed its steps as it was moving toward liberalism and returned to its conservative roots."

"The other side of the coin, however, is the frightening reality we still have a long, long way to go," Elliff said. "As a matter of

fact, if history teaches us anything, it is that there will always be within human nature the tendency to drift away from the Word of God and away from the God of the Word. Somehow, as Southern Baptists we must see that the struggle to maintain biblical authority is to be a lifetime commitment, not a 10- or 20-year program. As a result, we need to emphasize from one generation to the next that they must not drop the standard of God's Word."

In other convention-related developments, Fred Powell, president of Communicators Ministries in Richmond, Mo., will be nominated for SBC first vice president. No other nominees have been announced for SBC first vice president.

Powell, who also is director of development for Emmanuel Baptist Seminary in Oradea, Romania, has served for several months as special assistant for transition to new Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president Mark Coppenger. Powell was chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business from 1992-95 and senior associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, from 1984-90.

TEACHERS TO CHINA

The Teachers to China '96 project is an intensive language immersion program with a primary focus in conversational English. Be a part of this exciting missions opportunity to share Christ with the students of China.

Call (901) 272-2461
or 1-800-280-1891 for more
information today!

Teachers to China is a project of
the Foreign Mission Board, The
Brotherhood Commission, SBC, is
recruiting volunteers.

Making music with God's grace in our hearts...

Church
MINISTRIES
Music

ARKANSAS
MASTER'SINGERS
CONCERT

Thursday, May 16, 1996 • 7:00 p.m.

First Baptist Church of Sherwood
206 Fairway

Sponsored by Arkansas Baptist State Convention
CHURCH MUSIC MINISTRIES



SALES and
RENTALS
All Sizes

CHURCH BUSES
Competitive Prices
SOUTHEASTERN BUS CO.
Clinton, MS

1-800-423-9826 601-924-1982

Witnessing plan requires unified effort

ALEXANDRIA, VA (BP)—As the millennium draws near an end, Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis is asking Southern Baptists to work with other Christian groups to witness to every person in America.

"Our Bold Mission Thrust goal is to share Christ with every person in the nation by the end of the year 2000," he said. "Southern Baptists might be able to do that by ourselves in the South, but it's not possible in our largest cities or the West or North or Northeast" where Baptist work is not as strong.

Lewis and other HMB leaders met May 1 with 175 representatives of Christian denominations and para-church organizations at a national conference on evangelism. The meeting was sponsored by Mission America, a network of Christian organizations committed to evangelizing the United States.

Participants learned about Celebrate Jesus 2000, an HMB initiative that includes praying, sharing the gospel individually and in groups and helping new Christians become disciples. Sterling Huston, North American director for the Billy Graham evangelistic crusades, presented the strategy, which has been endorsed by two of Mission America's leadership committees.

One Mission America goal is for church leaders in 1,000 communities across the nation to meet in March next year to develop cooperative evangelism strategies. Huston encouraged leaders to use Celebrate Jesus 2000 as part of their strategy.

Old projectors needed for missions effort

DALLAS (BP)—Film projectors gathering dust in church closets could improve the quality of life in developing countries and provide an avenue for Christian witness, according to a Baptist layman in Waco, Texas.

As vice president of Amigos Internacionales, Bob Sloan is soliciting outdated audiovisual equipment to help build media libraries in Third World countries. And as vice president for Texas Baptist Men's educational fellowship, he hopes to enlist Baptist teachers as volunteer trainers in educational technology around the globe.

Amigos Internacionales is a nonprofit agency devoted to Third World development. Housed at First Baptist Church of Woodway in Waco, the group works with TBM in international ministries.

Video, CD-ROM and computer-generated graphics are making 16-mm film obsolete in the United States, Sloan said. But the old-fashioned projectors are cutting-edge technology in developing nations. Sloan began collecting discontinued films and outdated equipment about 18 months ago from public school service centers. Already, he has secured more than \$1.5 million worth of resources. Several companies also have donated training films.

"Through Texas Baptist Men, we would like to put together a cadre of teachers who could do in-service training in these countries as the libraries are set up," Sloan said.

Volunteers may contact Texas Baptist Men at 214-828-5357. Churches wishing to donate audiovisual equipment or films may call TBM or send them directly to Amigos Internacionales at 9001 Oakdale, Waco, TX 76712.

FMB's new web site offers varied options

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—The World Wide Web user who surfs into the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's new "home page" will soon see options to apply for career mission service or give money to specific mission needs—and accomplish a myriad of tasks in between.

The FMB launched its web site home page April 22. As it becomes more developed during the next several months, the site will offer users new and practical ways to interact with the FMB, said Bruce Van Horn, the board's marketing database administrator who developed it.

Users who call up the page will have an opportunity to sign into a guest book or fill out a mailing list profile. Van Horn will use that information to provide users on-line data such as news releases and prayer requests tailor-fit to their interests.

FMB president Jerry Rankin characterized the web site as another way the board will offer "communication and awareness that enable Southern Baptists to be on mission with God."

The page is accessible by addressing: "http://www.lmb.org." Van Horn has designed the site to allow users to access information as they choose, and to challenge them to personal involvement in foreign missions through praying, giving, going and learning.

New FMB unit created to tackle diversity

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—A former mission worker in Africa will lead a new public relations unit of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board designed to meet needs resulting from the denomination's growing diversity.

Wendy Norvelle, 42, became associate vice president of public relations in the office of public relations and development May 1. In her new role, she will oversee the functions of public affairs, customer service, the global desk and African American church relations.

From 1975-77, Norvelle worked as a journeyman in Zimbabwe. Since 1980 she has worked in several positions at the board, the last three years as director of the international service department for non-career overseas personnel.

"The international outreach efforts of Southern Baptists have grown dramatically in the past few years," said FMB president Jerry Rankin. "Telling the story of what God is doing through our missionaries has become a big challenge, given the changing complexion of our churches and the number of organizations that also seek support from Southern Baptists."

In a related development, Bill Morgan will join the public relations and development office as assistant vice president to vice president David Button. A missionary to Brazil for 18 years, Morgan will develop ways to make FMB work more personal to Southern Baptists.

Morgan, 60, came to work at the board's Richmond, Va., offices in 1985 and has most recently directed the Creative Access Network, charting new courses for churches to use in relating to FMB missionaries.

Larry Lewis: Clown around for the gospel

GATLINBURG, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Home Mission Board president Larry L. Lewis said he used to clown around when it came to evangelism. The former church planter said he wore a clown suit and performed magic to gain opportunities to witness to children during Vacation Bible School.

"We saw the way to reach people in the community—to go out," said Lewis, who called himself "Sardini," "the fishy magician."

Lewis endorsed innovative ministry styles while speaking to the April 20-24 national resort and leisure ministers conference in Gatlinburg, Tenn., sponsored by the Southern Baptist agency. He noted the Bible commands Christians to seek the lost and find ways of sharing the gospel.

"There's not a verse that says the lost are supposed to go to church, but there are lots of verses that say the church is supposed to go to the lost."

Going outside the church is one of Lewis' mandates of ministry based on Luke 14:16-24. In that Scripture, Jesus told a parable of a master sending a servant through the town and into the country to invite people to a banquet.

Following that example, churches must meet needs throughout their communities, he said. "You don't do that inside the walls of the church if you're talking about the lost and dying."

FMB to reduce missionary force in Japan 30 percent

By Louis Moore

SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, VA (BP)— Seeking to make additional resources available in areas of the world where Foreign Mission Board leaders feel God is focusing their attention, FMB leaders will reduce the number of missionaries in Japan over the next three years by about 30 percent.

Even with the cutbacks, the Japan mission will have about 120 missionaries and will be the FMB's second-largest mission in the world, behind south Brazil.

The high cost of living in Japan — along with the realization that Christian growth there has plateaued at low levels — led FMB officials to the conclusion that resources deployed there could produce significantly greater results in other countries.

The decision to "downsize" the Japan mission reflects the board's determination to accomplish strategic objectives by redeploying resources to both "harvest fields" and "The Last Frontier," according to FMB officials.

Harvest fields are defined as areas of the world where God is producing an abundance of new Christians and churches. The Last Frontier refers to areas of the world where people have little or no access to the gospel.

Japan fits into neither category. Southern Baptists began work in Japan in 1889 and re-entered the country in 1947 after an eight-year interruption due to World War II. Statistics for 1995 indicate the Japanese Baptist Convention includes 269 churches, 99 preaching points and three new churches, with a combined membership of 35,000. Although the convention is considered nearly static in terms of growth, it does have its own home missionary force and sends its own

foreign missionaries to three countries — Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore.

"These statistics show there is a growing Japanese Baptist Convention that will continue to reach Japan and send missionaries to other countries," said Faye Pearson, director of FMB work in east Asia. "Some of our most dedicated missionaries serve faithfully in Japan."

Despite the large number of SBC missionaries and the substantial outlay of money for work in Japan, the country ranks near the bottom in numerical growth indicators. Of 129 countries in which the FMB works, Japan ranks 114th in baptisms per church member and 48th in church starts. Japan's Christian population has remained constant at 1 percent for the past 25 years, Pearson said.

"This does not mean we do not have

concern for the lost of Japan," said Avery T. Willis, the FMB's senior vice president for overseas operations. "This does not mean we are going to withdraw from Japan. What it does mean is that we recognize that the dollars and missionaries we are putting into Japan would go so much further in other places."

"The fact that Southern Baptist giving has not kept pace with (foreign missionary) appointments is the basic cause for our having to make this strategic decision," Willis added. "We are trying to be good stewards of the resources Southern Baptists have given us."

Pearson said the Japan mission will be pared down through attrition. Except in special situations, no new missionaries will be appointed to the country. Current missionaries serving in Japan will be given the opportunity to transfer to other areas.

The reduction is the second for Japan in eight years. In 1988, the FMB announced plans to reduce the Japan mission from about 200 missionaries to about 160.



Arkansas Bus Sales
PINE BLUFF

4105 Hwy. 65 South / Pine Bluff, AR 71601

501-534-1234 • Fax 501-535-9780
1-800-822-5307

JERRY NEWTON
PRESIDENT

LOOKING FOR A GOOD USED BUS?
CALL US TODAY

South's Largest Inventory
Used Mini-Buses

With Over 20 Years Experience
Let Us Help You With Your Transportation Needs

GOSHEN COACH



GC-II 21 - 29 Passenger

Sentry ML 31 Passenger



CHURCH BUSES
(NEW and USED)
12 to 38 adult capacity

AUTHORIZED
Konica
COPIERS • FAX



Ralph Croy and Associates Inc.
701 W. Capitol, Little Rock • 378-0109
1540 E. Grand Ave., Hot Springs • 623-7392
1022 W. 6th, Pine Bluff • 534-8611

CROY

Albert George Mfg. Co.
Quality Custom Manufacturers of:
Pew Cushions
Upholstered Seats & Backs
717 N. Cypress • P.O. Box 5700 • NLR, AR 72119
501-375-2921

NOTICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

The **BAPTIST BOOK STORE**
of Little Rock
Will close early May 28th
at 3:00 p.m. for Annual Inventory

European Baptist leaders seek names of former members

The European Baptist Convention, in a joint effort with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, is seeking names and addresses of former members of EBC churches now living in the United States. The information-gathering campaign will provide a database for a fund-raising campaign designed to endow a capital improvements fund for EBC churches.

The "Million Dollar Vision" campaign seeks to raise \$1 million for an endowment fund that will enable EBC churches to fund property purchases and building construction. The fund is in honor of general secretary John Merritt and his wife, Elizabeth, who have served the EBC since 1964 and will retire from service this fall.

The EBC is a fellowship of more than 60 English-speaking churches in 20 countries that relate to the Southern Baptist Convention. Begun as a mission work primarily to minister to American military personnel, the EBC has grown into a self-supporting international convention.

Campaign chairman C.W. Bess, pastor of Immanuel Church in Wiesbaden, Germany, noted that "the Million Dollar Vision fund...seeks to further our stability by providing a financial base for churches to invest in building.

"This endowment fund seeks to provide a strong financial base for EBC congregations to plant churches, build permanent facilities and purchase real estate," Bess explained. "Rent money saved by churches will allow European congregations to focus on missions instead of money."

EBC churches have long struggled with high rent and property costs, Bess noted. "Early in their ministry at the European Baptist Convention, John and Elizabeth Merritt realized that European Baptist churches shifted locations too often. Only 10 percent of EBC congregations owned their own facilities and faced constant rent increases.

"The need for these vision-supported purchase grants is great," he added.

"Currently, only 19 EBC congregations own their own facilities."

The current balance for the fund is \$500,000. No grants can be made, however, until the fund reaches its primary goal of \$1 million.

Bess said that "before the Merritts leave Europe following their retirement, EBC leaders want them to see the fund value reach \$1 million and the first grant made to a church."

To do that, Bess said EBC leaders are searching for the names and locations of all current and former members of EBC churches, as well as "friends of the EBC." He estimated that there may be as many as 30,000 former members in the U.S. alone, many of them active or retired members of the armed forces.

Bess urged former EBC church members to contact the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and submit their addresses. The ABCS currently is in a four-year missions partnership with European Baptists.

Individuals may contact the ABCS by phone at 501-376-4791, ext. 5103, between 8 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., Monday-Friday, or by mail at: Arkansas Baptist State Convention, attn.: Million Dollar Vision Fund, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Charleston's First Baptist Church 150th Anniversary Celebration and Bible Conference

Friday, May 31 - Sunday, June 2

Hear

Rev. Larry Horne, Rev. C.E. Hansford, Rev. Eugene Ryan

(Former Pastors)

Rev. Nelson Wilhelm
(Concord Baptist Director of Missions)

Charleston, AR

Dr. Emil Turner
(BSCS Executive Director)

Phone 501-965-2533

MAKE A
DIFFERENCE
IN RURAL
ALBANIA

PROJECT AERO

Project AERO is a strategic evangelistic outreach by Southern Baptists Volunteers to folks in rural villages of Albania. Volunteers are URGENTLY needed for the operation and maintenance of a base camp to support over 300 BSU and Campus Crusade Volunteers.

SKILLS NEEDED:

Carpenters
Plumbers
Mechanics
Nurses
Cooks
Electricians

Call Carol Spurlin/Herschel Wells
1-800-280-1891

A.B. Culbertson and Company

invites your indication of interest to:
FIRST MORTGAGE CHURCH BONDS

EARN UP TO: **8.85%**

These bonds may be placed in a self-directed Culbertson IRA. Transfers and rollovers accepted, in most cases.

Interest Payable Semiannually

This announcement is neither an offer to sell nor a solicitation of an offer to buy. All offers are made by prospectus only.

A.B. Culbertson and Company

Financial Services Since 1964
1250 Continental Plaza
Fort Worth, Texas 76102
Member: Chicago Stock Exchange

For more complete information about bond issues, obtain a prospectus which describes all of the particulars of the underlying. Read it carefully before you invest or send money. All bonds are offered at face value plus accrued interest, subject to availability.

CALL OR RETURN THIS TO:

Martin Northern Call:
P.O. Box 1302 (800) 468-3007

Benton, AR 72018 (501) 778-5700

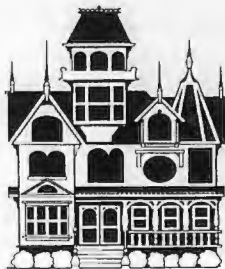
Please send me information on the First Mortgage Church Bonds currently being offered by A. B. Culbertson and Company.

Member NASD & SIPC



Quality
VAN Sales

Used 12 and 15 passenger vans, special prices to churches. 501-268-4490, 1500 E. Race, Searcy 72143. Larry Carson



'96 Vacation Destination

EUREKA

SPRINGS



The Best For Less

Traveler's Inn

- Family owned & operated
- Sixty clean comfortable rooms
- Remote control TV's & Telephone
- Large Pool & Picnic Area
- Perfect Location -

Walk to Pine Mountain Jamboree,
10-Restaurants & Gift Shops

- Golf available (private course)
- **Trolley Stop**
- Reservations made free to all attractions
- Group discounts available
- New Conference Room for 20-50



TOLL-FREE RESERVATIONS

1-800-643-5566

Rt. 1 Box 269, Eureka Springs, AR 72632

Church Groups of 12 to 160 People:
For the Best (\$13) Seats
at the Great Passion Play

Reserve now at
Keller's Clean Comfortable

Country Dorm Resort

Rt. 4, Box 554, Eureka Springs, AR
Super-Economical \$31 Package
now includes Best Tickets (first 23 rows!),
swimming, air-conditioned lodging & meals!
(EXTRA night's lodging just \$10 ea.)
Call 501/253-8418 for Reservations



Planning A Retreat?

Call 1-800-FUN-IN-BV

1-800-386-4628

Vacation Rentals

430 Town Center • Belle Vista, Arkansas 72714

LOCATION

LOCATION

LOCATION!

DOWNTOWN EUREKA SPRINGS

*Just minutes to
The Great Passion Play*

Groups Welcome



- \$50.00
Weekdays
- \$65.00
Weekends

Based on
Double Occupancy

1-800-643-4972



Highway 62 East
Eureka Springs, AR

For reservations, call:
(501)253-9156

Group rates available for groups of 20 or more.

**Arkansas' #1 Country Music and
Comedy Stage Show**

Carrying
on 29
years of a
family
tradition.



Bed and Breakfast for Church Groups

Located on Beaver Lake - 20 miles from Passion Play - 1/2 mile from federal park with beach & boat dock

Serving groups from across the country for 15 years

- * 8 large rooms & two dorms - accommodations 50
- * Plenty of showers & lavatory space - linens furnished
- * Large worship hall - fellowship hall
- * Outdoor worship area - basketball - picnic area

Bed and family-style breakfast \$15.00 per person/per night

Kairos Retreat Center · RR 2 Box 163 · Eureka Springs, AR 72632

501-253-7574 or 501-253-6256

Rev. John F. Kovalick, director

RA summer camp programs feature fun, evangelism

Boys in grades 1-12 will focus on being "Soldiers of the Cross" as they learn about Christ, campcraft and missions at Royal Ambassadors camps in June and July. "Soldiers of the Cross" is the theme for the events, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Brotherhood department.

A regional northeast Arkansas camp will be held June 10-14 at Mt. Zion Baptist Camp for boys who have completed grades 1-6 and the state-wide camp will be held July 8-12 at Camp Paron for boys who have completed grades 1-12.

Camp director Ozzie Berryhill said the camps "will be a mirror of last year's camps," focusing on favorite activities such as campcraft, a missions study, swimming, nature study and adventure recreation.

Berryhill said the goal of camp counselors and leadership is evangelism. "Our evangelistic approach is unique - all the things we do are to reach a boy for Christ.

"Last year in three camps we had 52 professions of faith, including seven in Iowa," he noted. "That should make pastors feel good about sending their boys to camp."

Highlighting the evangelistic message of the state camp at Camp Paron will be camp missionary O.K. Bozeman, a retired missionary to Korea, and camp pastor Jim Lagrone, pastor of First Southern Church in Bryant.

Berryhill noted that in addition to traditional events such as worship, missions study and team sports, boys also may choose to participate in electives such as hunter education certification (for boys in grades 5-12), basic canoeing (for grades 6-12) and tent camping (all grades).

Challengers (in grades 7-12) also may elect to participate in trail camping or advanced canoeing.

The cost for the camps is \$59 per person at Camp Paron and \$50 per person at the northeast camp. Counselors are provided by the camp staff.

For additional information about the camps, a list of rules and items to bring or to register, contact the ABSC Brotherhood department toll-free at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5158.



Experience The Greatest Story Ever Told



The Great Passion Play re-creates the great passion of Jesus Christ. A cast of over 200 brings to life the greatest story ever told. It's America's #1 attended outdoor drama, and it's located in beautiful Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

1996 Season: April 26 - October 26

Tickets: \$12.00 & 13.00 (plus tax).

Nightly except Mondays & Thursdays.

Curtain Time: 8:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. after Labor Day.

Stop by during the day and visit our other attractions:

New Holy Land/Tabernacle tours, Christ of the Ozarks statue, Bible Museum, Sacred Arts Center, Mission Buffet Restaurant.

The New Holy Land tour features over 30 reproductions of Biblical exhibits from the Holy Land, including the tabernacle.

The Great Passion Play in Eureka Springs, Arkansas

Information: (501) 253-9200 • Reservations: (800) 882-7529



Conference points church toward needs of children

BIRMINGHAM, AL (BP)—"Where is the religious community? Where are our voices?" asked Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, a Washington-based nonprofit organization devoted to advocacy efforts for the children of America.

Edelman and other featured speakers voiced messages explaining the needs of children to nearly 200 participants at the "Children and the Church II" conference April 24-26 at the Woman's Missionary Union national headquarters in Birmingham, Ala.

"The religious community has to be the moral locomotive, not the moral caboose, especially when it comes to our children," Edelman said, urging Christians to "stand up and keep our children safe."

"We have to stop separating our Sunday life from our professional and civic life," she said. "They all have to be put together."

Diana Garland, professor of church social work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told conference participants, "To show our love for children is to show our love for Jesus and the one who sent Jesus." Garland is founder of the Child Advocacy Network that developed the idea for such a conference "to seek justice for children."

"I am more concerned about the effects of the fear of violence on our children than the violence itself," Garland said. Noting that her generation was "afraid of what we didn't know," she added, "Children today are afraid of what they do know."

"We are called to be peacemakers," she stressed. "It's not enough to set ourselves apart. There's not a neighborhood safe enough or a fence high enough to protect us."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said children know so much about violence because of the media. If the impact is not changed, he said, "many of our children will not have a future."

"If we allow the increased violent activity we see on TV to continue, then we are going to continue to see this dramatic

increase in violence," he warned. "It must stop, and it's not going to stop unless we insist that it stop.... We must move beyond words to action."

Children and the Church II highlighted ways the church can respond to child advocacy needs and provided encouragement for individuals as the group came together and shared concerns, Garland explained. She served as coordinator of the first Children and the Church conference which was held on the campus of Southern Seminary in 1993.

You're invited to attend ...

MISSION MEETING '96

HAWAII

"NEVER FORSAKEN, NEVER ALONE"

July 26 - 31 1996

A uniquely historical gathering in the beautiful Hawaiian tropics for Missionaries, MK's & anyone devoted to sharing the triumphant story of Jesus' love to all the nations of the World.

TESTIMONIALS BY:

Daily Schedule Includes:

- Morning Inspirational Sessions
- General Assembly with Keynote Speaker
- Small Group Breakout Sessions
- Evening Service with Special Soloists, MK Choir, Orchestra and Special Message
- All night prayer service



Dr. Clayton Bell
Senior Pastor
Highland Park Presbyterian,
Dallas, TX & Missionary Aid



Dr. Dwight Baker
Missionary (Ret.) and Inland

Over 40 Inspirational Speakers Featuring:

- Winston Crawley • Robert Deneen
Guy Henderson • Carter Morgan
Alma Hunt • David Hughes
Bill Tisdale • Eunice Bland Smith
Grover Tyner • and MANY MORE!



Donna Rice Hughes

A message of Hope and Redemption from Her Journey of Pain and Suffering



Fern Harrington Miles
Advocate for B.F. Lewis
Philippines & Eastern
Australia, 1940's - 1970's
A Story about Her Years as a
Oppositional Interpreter of Camp

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR MK'S OF ALL AGES!

- CHILD CARE PROVIDED
- INTERPRETATION FOR HEARING IMPAIRED
- TRAINED CHRISTIAN COUNSELORS ON-SITE

FEATURED MUSICIANS

OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

- MUSICAL DIRECTOR • DICK BAKER
- SOLOISTS • DOUG OLDFHAM • WELLA DORSEY BARBARA TUCKER

Information & Registration

Registration Deadline: June 25, 1996

For convention registration call:
Woman's Missionary Union
1-800-419-0561

Correction

The Arkansas Southern Baptist Men & Women State Softball Championships ad published in the May 2 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* listed the incorrect phone number for Charles Keener. The correct number is 501-228-4422.



Are your Seniors tired of crawling over the HUMP? The solution is a 15-passenger van with an Aisle, Raised Roof & Electric Step. Call Tri-State Van & Bus Sales Today!



1-800-330-3622 • (617) 484-6145
BUSES! VANS! PEOPLE MOVERS!



Baptist leaders assess future of denominations

WASHINGTON—Daniel Weiss, general secretary of the American Baptist Churches in the USA, was elected president of the North American Baptist Fellowship during the group's April 26-27 meeting in Washington. The NABF, a regional fellowship affiliated with the Baptist World Alliance, includes 10 Baptist denominations based in the United States and Canada.

Assessing future ministry needs and challenges facing the member denominations, Weiss delivered the conference's closing address on "Baptists and the Future of Denominationalism."

Emphasizing Christ's commitment to the church, Weiss noted, "We do fall Christ by making weak and impotent what He intended to be strong and powerful; to trivialize and minimize what He envisioned to be tremendous and magnificent."

Jesus "initiated a radical upheaval, a spiritual and social revolution," Weiss said. "He generated something that would dramatically change lives and confront society when and where it falls short of God's vision for it."

Classifieds

For sale — Currier spinet piano. Excellent condition. Call 501-945-9738.

Wanted — Plano edition of the 1975 Baptist Hymnal. Please call 501-384-5354.

Accepting resumes — Calvary Baptist Church, Malvern, Ark., needs a bi-vocational pastor. Send resume to: Pastor Search Committee, Rt. 2, Box 632, Malvern, AR 72104.

New Orleans SBC Convention — Downtown hotel rooms, affordable hotel packages with shuttle, discount roundtrip airfares: Little Rock: \$130. Christian Travelers: 1-800-872-8952.

Accepting resumes — for full-time music and youth minister or part-time music minister and part-time youth minister. Send resumes to: Hardin Baptist Church, 300 Todd Lynn Drive, Pine Bluff, AR 71602.

Houseparents needed — For homes in Camden, Monticello and Harrison. Package includes salary, insurance, living quarters, meals, training and paid vacation. Call Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes, 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5167.

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

Today's church has become "so organized, categorized, systematized and homogenized that we often become paralyzed," he lamented. "The organization is often seen as an end in itself rather than a means to an end."

Declaring that "it doesn't have to be that way," Weiss offered six conditions which can assure "the best days in ministry for Baptists in North America are still ahead."

■ Affirm the polity we believe God teaches us. "The denomination exists for local churches; local churches do not exist for the denomination.... Baptist congregations are called by God, through Jesus Christ, to be communities of faith empowered by the Holy Spirit."

■ Be authentically open to the renewal God offers. Citing the need for renewal in worship, evangelism and service, Weiss said, "We must never forget that renewal is a gift of God mediated to us by the Holy Spirit.... It cannot be programmed."

■ Accept the diversity God gives us. "Baptists are probably the most diverse people in North America... particularly in our racial ethnic composition," Weiss said. "This reality presents us with a tremendous opportunity to witness to the world."

■ Actualize the community God offers us. Although "it is easy to focus almost exclusively on our differences," Weiss urged fellow Baptists to "pay increased attention to what we hold in common."

■ Carry out the new mission to which God calls us. "What does it mean to be a people worthy of and faithful to the gospel

of Jesus Christ in today's world?" Weiss asked. "We must be willing...to struggle for an answer to that question. There is much more to be learned about God's vision for us."

■ Exercise the kind of stewardship God expects of us. Weiss said personal commitment, generous giving and prudent management "are an absolute necessity" for Baptist denominations "to face creatively and aggressively the world into which God is calling us."

Urging humility, charity, fidelity and unity in denominational relationships, Weiss said, "There is no room for demonizing fellow Christians."

"Even when we differ," the new NABF president concluded, "we owe each other the benefit of the doubt that each is seeking to affirm the lordship of Christ.... Jesus Christ longs for the wholeness of His body."

The NABF is "at a crossroads," said Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Speaking before his election as one of three vice presidents for the organization, Chapman suggested that it is "time to reexamine, to determine if there is a real reason for us to be together. If we do find that reason, we will be able to grow together for the Lord Jesus Christ."

Although there are "differences in methodology (and) sometimes in intensity about things" between evangelicals and fundamentalists, Chapman said he sees "a bridge" between the two. "I think the bridge is faith and the convictions about the Word of God," he explained.

Tahiti Islands beyond the Ordinary

7 Night Package
Los Angeles Departure
Valid Through November 30, 1996

Cook's Bay Resort

\$699

Package Includes: • Roundtrip Air via Corsair • 6 Nights Accommodation, Moorea - Run of the House • 1 Night Hotel Tahiti - Standard Room • Roundtrip Transfer • Roundtrip Catsman • Baggage Handling • Hotel Taxes

Affordable Travel • 501-778-8257
202 East Cross St. • Benton, AR 72015

Wedding Specialist

Wayne Smith
Photography, Inc.

Let Us Capture the Moment!

Wayne Smith

11701 I-30, Otter Creek Park, Sta. 511
Little Rock, AR 72209

501/455-3929




Available in 20' to 33' Models
(12 to 38 passengers)

Church Buses • Rental Buses
(New and Used)

• We buy used buses • Guaranteed buy back program

Carpenter Bus Sales, Inc. • Brentwood, TN
Call Henry Headden
1 (800) 370-6180 • 1 (615) 371-6180

Convention Uniform

Lord, teach us to pray

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

Basic passage: Matthew 6:5-15; 7:14; Luke 11:1-13

Focal passage: Matthew 7:8

Central truth: The prayer of a pure heart will be answered.

Nothing more accurately measures Christian maturity than prayer. Private prayer is the place more than any other where God becomes personal.

Jesus' closest followers admitted that they did not know how to pray. In precious few words, He gave them the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4). Matthew's gospel emphasizes the model prayer in contrast to long, hypocritical prayers uttered in public to gain favor with men. As a private matter, the heart of the petitioner should:

- recognize the Father;
- desire His kingdom and will;
- ask for bread for today;
- ask for forgiveness of sin (after honest declaration that we have forgiven others);
- ask for deliverance from temptation and the evil one (Matt. 9:13).

Christ did not intend to limit prayer by His example, although He was critical of long, ceremonial prayers as useless since God already knows what we need before we ask (Matt. 6:8). To the contrary, Jesus urged His followers to ask with assurance that God would answer the asking with giving (Matt. 7:7-8). Even persistent asking is encouraged along with boldness (Luke 11:5-8).

The invitation to ask with assurance is not a simplistic game of wishes. Paul touched on the depth of the concept when he wrote, "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" (Rom. 8:26).

Jesus said, "Knock and the door will be opened" (Matt. 7:8). After the crucifixion, Paul realized the truth of this promise when he wrote, "He who did not spare his own son, but gave Him up for us all — how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

Life and Work

'Doing good' worth effort

By Suzanne Dilday, member, First Church, Benton

Basic passage: II Thessalonians 3:3-15
Focal passage: II Thessalonians 3:13
Central truth: Keep on keeping on.

I'm always sleepy. My husband accuses me of being the sleepest human on earth. It's true: There are few things I enjoy more than sleep. I can fall asleep instantly any time of day, any place. It's a gift.

Some people, though, seem to have an unlimited supply of energy. Like that pink bunny, they keep going and going. I don't know how they do it. I, on the other hand, think I have good reasons for being so tired. I teach six classes of teenagers. I clean the house. I am up during the night to change diapers and warm bottles. I go to Wal-Mart. Need I say more?

In the close of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, he gave them instructions on living. He told them how to relate to fellow Christians and how they should conduct their own business and to not be tired. "But as for you, brethren do not grow weary of doing good" (v. 13).

Ever notice how it's harder to be good? If you don't believe me, ask any five-year-old and they'll agree. Sometimes it takes a lot out of you to do the right thing, to behave with kindness, to be helpful because it doesn't necessarily come naturally. Sometimes what comes naturally is sarcasm, selfishness or spite. We may even feel we have good reason to not do good. Perhaps we think someone else doesn't deserve it.

Plainly put, being good is tiring. That's why Paul phrased his advice in terms of stamina. Paul was quick with a physical comparison to spiritual matters. We've heard him encourage Christians before to "run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). As he closed in Thessalonians, we can almost hear him say, "Keep on keeping on."

In the end, doing good is worth the effort. It comes back to you somehow. The "Preacher" in Ecclesiastes wrote, "Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed or whether both of them alike will be good" (Eccl. 11:6). Since there's no telling which crop will yield a good harvest, it pays not to tire of planting. Keep on keeping on, in God's strength, doing the good He expects of us. Who knows — it may be a bumper crop this year!

Bible Book

The King is coming

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

Basic passage: Zechariah 9:1-11:17
Focal passage: Zechariah 9:9
Central truth: The Messiah will conform to God's standards, not man's expectations!

The returning exiles found farms in shambles, cities in ruins, fields desolate, and squatters occupying ancestral lands. Their new leaders seemed but puppet kings. They needed a word of confidence, hope and encouragement.

■ *"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee."* Zechariah proclaimed God's promise of a coming King, the Messiah. This message of hope would make the faithful of Zion shout. The Messiah would be a personal King ("thy King") and answer their cries for salvation: "Hosanna!" (a term of celebration meaning "save us now") and used in anticipation to address the coming King.

■ *"He is just, and having salvation."* King Messiah is just. He lives out God's standard of righteousness in practical ways. Widows, orphans and the needy feel His justice. He gives sight to the blind, heals the lame, sets prisoners free and turns ashes to beauty. He delivers, saves and redeems His people.

■ *"Lowly, and riding upon an ass."* King Messiah will not be made in the image carved by man. He is a different kind of king, "lowly." Paul's hymn to Jesus said: "But made Himself of no reputation... He humbled Himself..." (Phil. 2:6-11). In the ancient Near East, kings rode horses in times of war and conquest. The Messiah comes as the "Prince of Peace," riding an ass, the symbol of peace.

■ *"Upon a colt, the foal of an ass."* The young animal was new and pure. Mark refers to this prophecy and says: "whereon never man sat" (Mark 11:2). Vessels used in the Lord's service must be pure. Sacrificial animals were without spot or blemish. This colt would be fit for the Master's use, a worthy vessel of service, suitable for the spotless Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, King Messiah.

Convention Uniform

Doers of the Word

By Gary L. Burney, assistant to the pastor, New Hope Fellowship, Springdale

Basic passage: James 1

Focal passage: James 1:19-25

Central truth: The key to happiness and fulfillment comes through obedience to God.

We can get so busy "doing church" that we forget all about ministry. It seems that we often get so busy doing the things we think we should, we forget what is really important. This is what James is emphasizing in these verses. For our faith to be real we must do more than go to the church and do "churchy" things. We must:

■ *Hear what God is saying to us through His word* (vv. 1:19, 20). We must be "swift to hear," anxious and ready to learn what God is saying and what we are to be doing. In order to be "swift to hear," we must take the place of a learner (slow to speak), and not get mad at God (slow to wrath) when He shows us something about ourselves that we don't like.

■ *Receive what God is saying to us through His word* (v. 1:21). We are to "receive with meekness the engrafted word..." In order to do this, we must first weed the flower bed by departing from anything the Word of God condemns. The word already is planted in our lives by the new birth that can only grow when the weeds are pulled. The witness of our lives hinges upon our dealing with our sin and living a Christ-like life.

■ *Do what God has told us to do through His word* (v. 1:21). When we fail to obey God, the only person being deceived by our life and words is us! We must let the Word of God be like a mirror that reflects a true picture of who we are and how we live. The real key is not forgetting what we have learned about ourselves when we put our Bibles down and go about the process of daily life.

For a man's faith to be real, there must be obedience to God. This is the path to blessing. As we look diligently into the "law of liberty," we find that real freedom and real happiness come from doing what God says. God tells us over and over that the most important thing in life is people. The conclusion that must be reached is that we are to be more concerned about people than about "church programs." The key to happiness and fulfillment isn't in more church activities, but in helping others find the Lord Jesus Christ!

This lesson treatment is based on the International Bible Lesson for Christian Teaching, Uniform Series. Copyright International Council of Education. Used by permission.

Life and Work

A different drummer

By Suzanne Dilday, member,

First Church, Benton

Basic passage: Romans 12:1-8

Focal passage: Romans 12:2, 6-8

Central truth: We're all gifted and talented.

In *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau penned the unofficial creed of individualism: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." He practiced what he preached. Thoreau refused to live the way everybody else lived - simply because society said it was the best way. By remaining true to his convictions, he is seen as a man who made significant contributions to literature and philosophy.

Although Thoreau wasn't a Christian, he did share some ideas with Paul who addresses this letter to his Roman brothers. Paul urged them to be individuals in a follow-the-crowd world. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is" (v. 2). Thoreau understood what Paul advocated. It's not until you seek out truth, sometimes by going against the stream, that you ultimately find it. Truth isn't necessarily found in popularly held opinions. God's will isn't necessarily followed by this world.

Paul says that we as Christians are all members of one body of believers, yet each has an individual gift to contribute. "And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly" (v. 6). Let each march to the beat of the drum given to each in service to God.

A widely known program in public education is the Gifted and Talented program. In it, students who are identified as having special abilities are encouraged to develop those talents. According to Paul, every Christian is gifted and talented! There are gifts you might expect - preaching, teaching, serving - but there are other gifts equally as God-given and important - giving, leading, forgiving (vv. 7-8). I have never thought of giving or showing mercy as being gifts, but it must be, since not all Christians possess them. Paul encouraged us to individually seek God's will and develop the gifts He's given each one. That way our different drum beats will take us all in the same direction.

This lesson treatment is based on the Life and Work Curriculum for Southern Baptist Churches, copyright by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Used by permission.

Bible Book

A promise of restoration

By Bill Steeger, chairman,

Department of Religion,

Ouachita Baptist University

Basic passage: Zechariah 12:1-14:21

Focal passage: Zechariah 12:8-10

Central truth: Restoration sometimes comes through suffering.

Sometimes I arrive home from work tired and hungry. The smells from the kitchen do not always reveal what we are having for supper. I sneak up to the stove and begin lifting lids just to take a peek at what is going to happen a little later.

This portion of Zechariah is "apocalyptic" literature, that is, the "unveiling" or "revealing" of things that will be hereafter. Zechariah is one of those books where God just "lifts the lid" and gives His people a peek at what lies ahead. They cannot taste all the flavors, or understand the ways that things will be spread out before them - apocalyptic literature is just a "peek."

The last portion of Zechariah focuses upon restoration. Ultimate restoration comes in Jesus. Thus, these chapters contain many prophecies of the coming Messiah. Chapter 12 begins, "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel." Our focal passage (vv. 12:8-10) promises strength, courage and protection for God's people. The feeble shall be strengthened like King David (v. 8) and Jerusalem sustained (v. 9).

God's people will receive the pouring out of His Spirit upon them (v. 10, see also Joel 2:28f.; Acts 2:16-38, etc.). The Spirit enables the people of God to fulfill their priestly roles. Thus the Spirit is the Spirit of "grace" (bringing salvation) and "supplication" (calling us into our purpose as a kingdom of priests).

The sin of man pierces God. Nine times in Scripture the word "pierce" is used of a sword or spear and only once of something else ("slain with hunger" in Lam. 4:9). Since the days of the early Church, the shift from "look upon me" (first person) to "mourning for him" (third person) has been understood as the mystery of the trinity. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:19).

This amazing prophecy found fulfillment in Christ (John 19:34-37). God's people stand in wonder and awe at God's love, mourning for their sin that "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

This lesson treatment is based on the Bible Book Study for Southern Baptist Churches, copyright by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Used by permission.

The *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* offers subscription plans at three rates:

■ **The Every Resident Family Plan** offers churches a premium rate when they send the *Newsmagazine* to all their resident households. Resident families are calculated to be at least one-fourth of the church's Sunday School enrollment. Churches who send only to members who request a subscription do not qualify for this lower rate of \$6.36 per year for each subscription.

■ **The Group Plan** allows church members to receive a discount when 10 or more individuals send their subscriptions together through their local church.

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc.
P.O. Box 552
Little Rock, AR 72203

GA-F-R-T SORT **C039.
01557 C0P#
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
901 CPMERCE ST STE 400
NASHVILLE TN 37203

Subscribers through the group plan pay \$7.08 per year.

■ **Individual subscriptions** may be purchased at the rate of \$8.85 per year. These subscriptions are more expensive because they require individual attention for address changes and renewal notices.

Changes of address by individuals may be made with the above form.

When inquiring about a subscription by mail, please include the address label. Individuals also may call the *Newsmagazine* at 501-376-4791, ext. 5156. Be prepared to provide code line information printed on the mailing label.

Midwestern trustees approve creation of revival center

KANSAS CITY, MO (BP)—Trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary have approved creation of the Midwestern Center for Biblical Revival, intended to extend president Mark Coppenger's advocacy of "prairie fire" revival. The center will organize seminars and conferences on the theme of biblical revival on the seminary campus.

James Elliff, an itinerant Bible teacher, writer and conference leader from North Little Rock, was appointed as the center's resident consultant. In this nonsalaried position, Elliff will continue his itinerant ministry, called Christian Communications Worldwide, moving its headquarters to Midwestern's Kansas City, Mo., campus.

Trustees also approved creation of a new academic extension center based in Chicago. The program will begin this fall with credit courses leading to a master of divinity degree and will be hosted by the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association.

In other action, former Arkansas Baptist State Convention president Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, was elected trustee chairman.

RTVC to premiere documentary during New Orleans SBC

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—Messengers to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans will have an opportunity to see the world premiere of a one-hour television documentary produced by the Radio and Television Commission that will later be broadcast by NBC affiliates. The documentary, "The American Dream/Nightmare," will be shown June 11 at 9 p.m. in quad rooms 7-11 of the Superdome.

"This documentary deals with societal problems and issues that are of great concern to all Christians in this country," explained RTVC president Jack Johnson. "Anyone seeing this documentary will walk away with a renewed commitment to Christian family values."

There are 1,000 free tickets available for the premiere on a first-come, first-serve basis. The tickets can be obtained at the RTVC's convention exhibit or by contacting Shawn Switzer at the RTVC prior to June 1 at 817-737-4011.

Texas Baptists to provide refuge for fired ministers

DALLAS (BP)—Texas Baptists are preparing a place of refuge for ministers fired by their churches. The state's first Refuge House for ministers and their families is being built at Big Country Encampment in Lueders, said Dick Maples, minister/church relations coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The BGCT has provided a grant to help fund the project, and volunteers are renovating a dormitory into a home for displaced pastors and their families. The project is the first of what Maples believes will be many Refuge Houses provided by churches and institutions across the state in response to a growing crisis.

Nationwide, about 125 ministers a month are fired by the churches they serve, according to Baptist Sunday School Board statistics.

Mark Wingfield elected editor of Kentucky Baptist paper

LOUISVILLE, KY (BP)—Mark Wingfield has been elected editor of the *Western Recorder*, the weekly newspaper affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. He has served as interim editor of the *Recorder* since December 1995, when former editor Marv Knox moved to the *Texas Baptist Standard* as associate editor.

Wingfield joined the *Recorder* staff in July 1991 as news director. He previously served as associate director of news and information with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, director of news and information for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and assistant editor of the *Baptist New Mexican*.

Methodists oppose homosexuality, alter baptism role

DENVER (ABP)—The United Methodist Church has turned back a strong effort to soften the church's opposition to homosexuality. Delegates to the denomination's general conference also decided that infants should become church members at baptism rather than when they make a profession of faith.

Delegates rejected a proposal to replace an assertion in church law declaring homosexuality "incompatible with Christian teaching" with a statement that United Methodists are "unable to arrive at a common mind" on the subject. Delegates voted 577-378 against the new language. Four years earlier, the church voted to retain the "incompatible" language by a margin of 710-238.

The general conference unanimously affirmed a document redefining the role of baptism. Under the new policy, people are considered full members of a Methodist church when they are baptized rather than when they have a "born again" experience and ask to join the church.