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May 29, 1997

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



news magazine



**'CHRIST
HATH
MADE
US
FREE'**

(GALATIANS 5:1)

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OBU, WBC graduations

Arkansas Baptist schools award degrees to more than 300 grads

Arkansas Baptists' two institutions of higher education honored their top graduates and awarded more than 300 degrees during May commencement exercises.

Williams Baptist College awarded bachelor's degrees to 70 graduates during a May 10 commencement ceremony held at the Southernland-Mabee Center, making it the college's largest graduating class ever.

College founder H.E. Williams told participants at the Williams graduation ceremony that "change" will be the "key word" of the future. "Little that you have seen in your short life will be evident when you are as old as I am," he noted.

The 84-year-old Williams also disagreed with bleak predictions for the future and predicted that the 1997 graduates would enjoy longer lives and greater technological advances than previous generations.

The school recognized top graduate Kathy Smith of Pochahontas, who earned the bachelor of arts in organizational management.

Also honored at the ceremony were Kenneth and Doris Sulcer of Osceola as members of the WBC Hall of Distinction for their support of the college. Kenneth Sulcer is currently chairman of the WBC board of trustees.

In a related awards convocation, students recognized WBC staff members Tom Jones and Richard Cummins for special honors. Jones, vice president for institutional advancement, received Outstanding Williams Personnel honors and Cummins, an instructor in business administration, received the Special Service Award.

A baccalaureate service was held the evening before commencement in Williams Chapel, featuring an address by Bill Fuller, pastor of First Church in Blytheville. Fuller also was honored as WBC's 1997 Distinguished Baptist Minister.

Huckabee honored at Ouachita

Ouachita Baptist University awarded 248 undergraduate degrees during its commencement ceremony May 17 at the Harvey Jones Science Center and awarded commencement speaker Gov. Mike Huckabee an honorary doctor of laws degree. Huckabee graduated from OBU in 1976 magna cum laude.

In his address, Huckabee expressed gratitude for the education he received while attending OBU and challenged the graduates to a meaningful life of service to God and community.

The OBU Student Senate also honored more than 100 students for academic excellence and named its Senior Ouachitonian Woman and Man. The Senior Ouachitonians are selected annually by the OBU faculty as the man and woman who best signify exemplary traits in academics, character, involvement in extracurricular activities, leadership and Christian service.

Named as Senior Ouachitonian Woman was Ashley Arrington, a political science/speech major from Arkadelphia. Elten Briggs, a senior marketing major from Lake Village was chosen as Senior Ouachitonian Man. Arrington also was honored as Overall Academic Achiever of the Year.

Three faculty members were chosen to receive Outstanding Faculty Member Awards. Lavell Cole, professor of history, was selected by the student body as the Most Inspirational Teacher. Amy Sonheim, an instructor in English, and Tom Aufferberg, the R. Voyt Hill Professor of History, were named as the Most Innovative Teachers.

Prior to the commencement ceremony, Del Medlin, pastor of First Church in Cabot, spoke during a baccalaureate service at the Jones Performing Art Center.

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



Cover Story

Religious Liberty.....6-7

Highlighting the theme, "Christ hath made us free," Southern Baptist congregations will celebrate their freedom of religious expression during Religious Liberty Sunday June 1.

Perspective

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

Arkansas Baptists

Baptism statistics hit 12-year high.....	6-7
Discipleship Institute has family focus.....	8-9
Campers on Mission meet, plan ministries.....	9
Metro BSU changes name, reorganizes.....	10
Student summer missionaries to span globe... 12-13	
People & Places.....	14-15
Arkansans among flood relief workers.....	17

Nation/World

World Missions Digest.....	11
SBC leaders to Clinton: support abortion ban.....	19
Debate erupts over HIV translation.....	21

Lessons for Living 22-23



Available on CompuServe through the Publications Library of SBCNet.

Next issue: June 12

Turner announces team assignments

Convention restructuring plan faces messenger approval in November, implementation in '98

Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Who will serve where? That has been the biggest unanswered question as Arkansas Baptists' structure study proposal has taken shape in recent months.

While the structure study committee has created an overall structural plan, committee members have been careful to avoid making specific personnel decisions. The proposal unanimously approved in March by the Arkansas Baptist Executive Board gives the executive director and associate executive director the responsibility "for assigning personnel to teams and naming the team leader."

In response to that action, ABSC executive director Emil Turner has announced who will be serving on each of the seven ministry teams being proposed (see list at right). The new assignments will take effect in January provided that convention messengers approve the overall structure during the state convention annual meeting in November.

Turner said he and associate executive director Jimmie Sheffield sought to make team assignments "with a sensitivity to the gifts and abilities of the personnel and the needs of the churches."

Among the team leader assignments, "the difficulty was not in finding good people, but in deciding which good person," Turner added. "The decisions were based on the nature of each person's experience which would equip them to best represent the team's ministry to the churches."

Team leader assignments

As the structure moves from 12 departments to seven ministry teams, Turner will head a ministry planning team composed of the seven team leaders. The ministry planning team will provide general coordination of overall ministry efforts. Sheffield will lead the executive and administrative team.

Four of the current department directors will become team leaders. They include Jimmy Barrentine, missions ministries team; David James, student ministry team; Bruce Swihart, leadership and worship team; and Julia Ketter, missions support team.

Five other department directors will become members of various teams. They include Harry Black, executive and administrative team; Rob Hewell, J.D. Stake and James Walker, all members of the leadership and worship team; and Milton Redeker, evangelism and church growth team.

Among the other departments, two

director positions currently are vacant. Cooperative ministries director Jack Kwok resigned to become executive director of the Ohio Baptist Convention and evangelism director Clarence Shell retired last fall. Discipleship and family ministry director Bob Holley has announced he will retire at the end of August.

Two of the seven teams will be headed by new employees who have not yet been selected. Those team leaders, who must be elected by the Executive Board, will serve the evangelism and church growth team and family ministry team.

"There are some advantages to bringing people in who are not part of our system," Turner pointed out. "They have a fresh view of what works and how God is blessing the local church."

Turner emphasized that he "has been as open and aboveboard and transparent in keeping all of our staff informed of what is going on as much as humanly possible."

Noting that "all of the team members have affirmed their assignments," he added, "They have embraced this process in spite of the challenges involved."

"We are prayerfully anticipating convention approval and preparing for it," Turner remarked. "The teams have already begun to meet and refine the impact statements that will guide their work. They are beginning to make decisions as teams and prioritize the activities of different departments to determine the priorities for the teams."

"In the new structure, just like in the old structure, everyone who works for the state convention must have a commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible, support for the Cooperative Program and a commitment to soul-winning," he noted. "All new employees will be approved as they have in the past."

Although each of the Executive Board's professional staff has been assigned to a team, Turner acknowledged there may be fewer support staff members in the new structure.

"In our restructured organization, we do not begin with the assumption that the support staff will be the same as they've been in the past," he explained. "We are asking each new team to present a rationale for their support staff needs. We will examine their requests and make assignments. This is not a departure from current practice."

Evaluating the overall direction of convention restructuring, Turner said, "I feel that the staff as a whole is committed to making an impact on churches...I believe we are at the beginning of a new era for our state convention."

Proposed ABSC Teams:

Executive & Administrative Team

Jimmie Sheffield, Team Leader
Pat Batchelor
Harry Black
Dan Jordan
Jim Oliver

Missions Ministries Team

Jimmy Barrentine, Team Leader

Extension

Jim Hauser
Eddie Jones
Jack Ramsey
Paul Roatan

Church & Community Ministries

Tommy Goode
Lana Lewis

Sandy Wisdom-Martin

Chaplaincy

John Belken
Dan Clevenger
Chris Copeland
Benny McCracken
Marion Reynolds
Ruby Swanigan

Student Ministry Team

David James, Team Leader
Diane Parker
George Sims
All campus directors
and associate directors

Leadership & Worship Team

Bruce Swihart, Team Leader
Glen Ennes
Rob Hewell
Peggy Pearson
J.D. Stake
James Walker

Evangelism & Church Growth Team

Team Leader to be named
Randy Brantley
Benny Grant
Gerald Jackson
Paul McCluñg
Milton Redeker
Janet Williams

Missions Support Team

Julia Ketter, Team Leader
Monica Keathley
Angela Lowe

Family Ministry Team

Team Leader to be named
Team member to be named

A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABSC Executive Director

In Arkansas, it happens more than 10,000 times every week. Why is it suddenly getting so much attention? I'm writing about volunteers. Recently, politicians and reporters and other "opinion shapers" have trumpeted volunteerism. Personally, I'm a little frustrated with this sudden emphasis. You see, the greatest army of volunteers that the human race has ever seen meets each week to serve Jesus' churches.

Among Arkansas Baptists more than 10,000 volunteer in Sunday Schools alone. When you consider those who volunteer in all the other church-related responsibilities, the number is staggering. Nominating committees in Baptist churches

routinely recruit, train and place more volunteers than any government or social program will ever be able to match.

And you who "volunteer" in your churches — you are not only changing lives, you are changing eternity. You not only participate in cleaning neighborhoods, you participate in cleansing hearts. You don't just serve society, you serve the Savior. Thank you for being part of the most important group of volunteers in the world.

■ Have you read *Their Blood Cries Out* by Paul Marshall? (Word, 1997). Marshall documents the horrible persecution that many Christians around the world are experiencing. It is a sobering work. I believe it has helped me better understand Jesus' church.

Executive director's schedule:

May 31 FBC Dover Men's Retreat
June 1 (a.m.) Salem, Benton
June 5 (noon) Men's Luncheon, Immanuel, LR
June 8 (a.m.) Trinity, Searcy
June 10 (a.m.) Staff Chapel, FBC, LR
June 12 Convention Nominating Subcommittee

in a number of ways. The remarkable thing about his life was his attendance on Sundays and Wednesdays continued until only a few months before his home going.

Doyle Burkett loved Christ, the church, his family, the Razorbacks and golf. He had a ready smile and a kind word whenever you met him. Doyle was well-known in this region because of his business relationships. I'll not soon forget what Doyle said a few years ago on a men's golf outing. "It's a great day to be alive," it was. It is. Doyle is alive today.

The experience I am describing is not foreign to the hundreds of pastors in our state. Memorial services are a part of our ministry to the Lord's church and people. These services have caused me to remember a truth. Each of these friends who died recently are remembered for something, by someone. Our lives will be remembered by someone or something.

Even more probing is the consideration of what is important in the moment we face death and the first moment we are in the presence of the Lord. What matters then is what should matter now. Friends, what occupies your time, best energy and mind today? Will those considerations matter then? Should they really matter now?

May the Lord help us all to involve our short lives in what really matters...to Christ.

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

President's Perspective



Rex Horne

ABSC President

This spring I have conducted a number of memorial services. It seems like a lot. Part of it, I am sure, has to do with the fine people who have gone home to heaven. Another reason it feels like too many funerals is the time I have served alongside these men and women. After nearly seven years here, these people have become family.

The last three people in our church who have died had unique stories. Alla B. Gladden was well-known in Arkansas. She served in WMU for many years. Her relationship with Ouachita covered a lifetime. She and her husband, Bob, came to Immanuel some 45 years ago. They started in the Young Adult Department and stayed there! Alla B. coordinated the trip I'll be taking to the Holy Land in a few days.

Grover Hemphill Sr. was a legend around our place. Grover passed through death's door to heaven at the age of 104. Grover was a member of this church for more than 85 years. He served the church

quotes

"The way you treat your spouse is a reflection of your relationship with God."

—Gary Chapman, author, *The Five Love Languages*

"When you are serving under the authority of Christ, you will touch people in a positive way."

—Larry Garner, workshop leader, *Institute for Christian Discipleship*

"As Christians...the greatest thing we are called to do is love."

—Jimmy Barrentine, director, *ABSC missions department*

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE

Hope for 'Generation X-cellent'

May is traditionally a time of transition for countless young people throughout the nation.

Arkansas Baptists' two colleges recently awarded degrees to more than 300 graduates who will soon be making their professional mark on society. Thousands of other students are graduating from high schools and colleges throughout the state. Several hundred graduate students are completing their studies at Southern Baptists' six seminaries and other schools across the country.

What does the future hold for these young people as they move full-time into the world of adulthood? What impact will they make in life as we rush toward the 21st century? What is the secret to success?

In the words of the apostle Paul to Timothy, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example to those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:12). Those are worthy words to live by regardless of one's age or experience.

Yet today's generation of young people has been categorized by many adults as having no vision, direction or motivation. Talk about being "dissed" (that's "disrespected" for those of us over age 30). Today's youth have even been tagged with the troubling label of "Generation X" — a nondescript, undisciplined herd of kids headed who knows where.

While Generation X problems with drugs, materialism and low morals are widely documented, there are still thousands of young people who demonstrate self-respect and selfless service to others. Many of those youth can be found actively involved each week in Southern Baptist youth groups, Sunday School classes and

Straight from the Editor



Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Baptist Student Union Bible studies.

Rather than labeling such teens and young adults as "Generation X," I prefer to think of them as "Generation X-cellent" — a generation of youthful Americans with unbridled enthusiasm and unlimited potential. Where is the evidence for such optimism?

Reasons for optimism

■ An article on page 7 recounts the impact of a multid denominational, five-county "Youth Outreach Explosion" that grew out of an "Experiencing God" study conducted by members of First Church, Shirley. The evangelism emphasis led to 59 professions of faith in Christ and numerous other spiritual decisions.

■ A similar experience continues to take place at Cedar Heights Church in North Little Rock. Student "Breakaway" sessions that began last fall have grown to an average attendance of nearly 300 youth. The weekly event, which cranks up at 10 p.m. every Friday, features praise bands, worship and evangelism. More than 200 young people have become Christians there since October.

■ Pages 12 and 13 of this issue highlight the 75 Arkansas Baptist college students

who will spend their summer vacation as student missionaries in China, Brazil, Israel, Florida, Michigan, Louisiana and several other nations and states. Students serving in similar ministry settings last year led more than 200 people to personal faith in Christ. The annual effort also includes students who spend their spring break serving as missions volunteers.

■ Christian recording artists Clay Crosse and Jaci Velasquez will headline a national music tour this fall and next spring to help promote "True Love Waits," Southern Baptists' teen sexual abstinence campaign. The campaign, created in 1993 by the Baptist Sunday School Board, has grown into an international effort, with more than 200,000 youth pledging to remain sexually abstinent until marriage. True Love Waits coincides with a national study released last month that reported the percentage of sexually active teens has decreased for the first time in 25 years.

■ Students from Ouachita Baptist University and Williams Baptist College were among hundreds of volunteers who donated their time to help storm victims and clean-up crews after tornadoes ripped through the state March 1.

Even with this limited list, there certainly are signs of hope. Most church members probably can think of several youth in their congregation whose actions and attitudes qualify them as members of "Generation X-cellent," as well. Make a point this week to personally encourage a member of the younger generation.

How can today's young people move from "Generation X" to "Generation X-cellent"? According to Paul, the answer is clear: "In speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example..." That is the secret to true success.



letters to the editor

Missionaries express thanks

As newly appointed missionaries we want to express our appreciation to all who were involved in the planning and preparation for the Foreign Mission Board appointment service in Little Rock on April 8 and to those who demonstrated love and hospitality to all of the new appointees. We received numerous gifts and expressions of love and support, and we are grateful for everything.

As Arkansans, we were especially pleased to know that there was a great prayer effort for the appointment service.

It was very special — really overwhelming for us. Thank you for helping to make it special for all of the appointees.

We are grateful for the privilege of being appointed in our home state.

Wilby and Betty Capps
Hot Springs, AR

Concerns over downsizing

I want to commend you on your excellent editorial, "The Downside of Downsizing," in the May 1 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

You have expressed very well the

concerns that some of us have expressed regarding what seems to be the presumptive actions of those who are restructuring the Home Mission Board. Like you, I always thought that such actions and responsibilities belong to the respective board of trustees.

Many good servants of God are being hurt by these actions.

Thank you for reminding Southern Baptists of bylaw 20.

Donald V. Wideman
Executive Director
Missouri Baptist Convention

'96 baptisms reach 12-year high

Baptisms hit 13,137, but baptismless churches increase 20 percent

Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist



Arkansas Baptists' 1996 baptism report is a matter of news/bad news scenario. Figures from Arkansas Baptist churches reflect an increase in baptisms to a 12-year high, but the same reports show an alarming statistic—Southern Baptist churches in the state reporting no baptisms grew by nearly 20 percent in 1996.

Figures from the 1996 Annual Church Profile, the ABCS's standard reporting form, showed that Arkansas Baptist churches baptized 13,137 people last year, up 436 from 1995's total of 12,701 baptisms.

The 1996 total is the largest number reported since 1984, when churches reported 13,202 baptisms. Paul McClung, an associate in the ABCS evangelism department, noted that the 1996 numbers also represent the sharpest increase in baptisms since 1990.

"We had about 10 years of gradual decline from 1980 to 1990, when we went from 11,609 baptisms in 1989 to 13,023 in 1990," McClung explained. He said the highest baptism rate in the past 20 years was reached in 1980, when churches reported 15,507 baptisms.

ABC executive director Emil Turner said the baptism increase "reflects a sense of urgency about reaching lost people in our churches."

Emphasizing his commitment to evangelism, Turner remarked, "The thing missing in our churches that was evident 30 years ago is not church discipline or doctrine, but rescuing people from hell."

The Arkansas baptism rise runs counter to baptism figures reported by churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. While Arkansas baptisms rose 3 percent from 1995 to 1996, SBC baptisms fell 3.67 percent for the same reporting period, from 393,811 in 1995 to 379,344 in 1996.

Yet, even with the increase in baptisms came a troubling increase in the number of baptismless churches, which rose from 257 in 1995 to 308 in 1996, a 19.8 percent upturn. Over a five-year reporting period, the 1996 baptismless figure also represents a steady increase (35.68 percent) from 227 baptismless churches in 1992.

The increased number of baptismless

churches is a statistic McClung said he hasn't "pinpointed the reason for yet."

"It may be the church's lack of knowledge of lost people in their community, no prospect file, a lack of concern, poor pastoral leadership, or, for whatever reason, a lack of emphasis on evangelism," he commented.

However, he added, in many churches, the problem with few or no baptisms is a matter of the heart. "The tendency of a church or individual is away from evangelism, so they witness inconsistently or not at all," he said. "For evangelism to increase, it has to be intentional."

'Most people just don't care'

Quoting church pollster George Barna, McClung said, "The problem is not that we need new methods of evangelism, we need new hearts for evangelism. The truth is that in the modern church, most people just don't care."

"Between 3 and 5 percent witness on a consistent basis and less than 3 percent have ever led anyone to Jesus," McClung said. Besides the 308 churches that did not

baptize anyone last year, "we have another 300-plus that baptized three or less."

But how can churches gain "new hearts" for evangelism? "That's an easy answer," said pastor Michael Shy, who led Eastside Church in Mountain Home to increase their evangelistic efforts. Eastside led in baptisms (74 in 1996) among churches with resident memberships of 400-699.

"We had been blessed with good growth, but had not many saved," he said. "God convicted me of that. I felt guilty for not leading the church to do that."

"I shared my conviction with the church in 1995, talked with the church council and led the church to confess that as a sin," said Shy. "We recognized it and confessed it as a sin and tried to do something about it. God opened the doors last year—we had one of the best revivals we've ever had and a lot of people were saved."

While statistics indicate that almost half of Arkansas Baptist churches win three or fewer unsaved people to Christ and baptize them, many churches consistently and intentionally place a priority on evangelism.

Certainly, different congregations place

Arkansas baptism stats

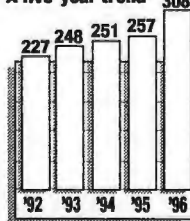
Top 10 churches in baptisms

TOP 10 BY NUMBER		TOP 10 BY RATIO*	
565	First, Springdale	0.92	Cass, Ozark
165	Second, Hot Springs	1.29	2nd Hispanic, Clarksville
160	Nettleton, Jonesboro	1.50	Sims
159	Trinity, Texarkana	2.00	Korean, Ft. Smith
151	Gloryland, NLR	2.11	Southern Hills, Ft. Smith
131	First, Ft. Smith	2.33	Searcy County, Marshall
104	First, Lavaca	2.40	Primera Iglesia, Arkadelphia
98	Immanuel, Rogers	2.53	Floyd First, Romance
96	Southside, Paragould	2.67	Southside, Paragould
88	Central, Jonesboro	2.70	Sparta, Clarksville

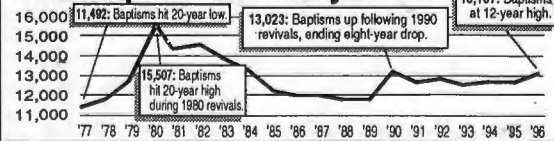
*ratio=number of members per baptism

Baptismless churches:

A five-year trend



State baptism rates: a 20-year look



different priorities on evangelism. First Church in Springdale has led the state in number of baptisms for years and topped the 1996 church baptism numbers with 565 baptisms — about 4.3 percent of the state's 1996 total.

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First, Springdale, agreed with Shy that a heart for evangelism starts with the pastor.

"I believe (First Church) has gained a heart for evangelism from the heart of their pastor and staff, who continually focus the church program, ministry and strategy on the priority of evangelism," he emphasized, adding that their efforts are to accomplish the church's mission, "to reach northwest Arkansas, America and the world for Jesus Christ."

Cass Chapel in Ozark, which led the state in baptisms per member, also has a commitment to reaching the lost: It took them an average of less than one member to win one person to Christ. If every Arkansas Baptist church had baptized the same ratio of converts to members as Cass Chapel, the ABSC would have baptized nearly 550,000 people in one year — roughly half of the unsaved people in the state.

Another church committed to evangelism is Southside in Paragould, a relatively new work that made the state's baptism list both in number of baptisms and the ratio of church members to baptisms. In 1996, Southside baptized 96 people and it took 2.67 church members to win a lost person to Christ. Statewide, it takes an average of about 39 Arkansas Baptists to win one person to Christ.

Southside pastor Troy Gramling said the congregation did not hold special events such as a revival to win lost people, but instead stressed ongoing community involvement by its members.

"When we first began, our desire was to reach Greene County. That is broad, so we began to implement Rick Warren's book and become a purpose-driven church," said Gramling. He also noted that, like Shy and Floyd, the drive to win lost people "must start with the pastor."

But, while it starts with the pastor, "our people see themselves as missionaries," Gramling added. "We're community involved and the people see that as their role. We've tried to judge our success not by numbers, but by involvement."

In addition to involvement, Southside equips members to witness, Gramling noted. "We have a couple of relational evangelism courses like Contagious Christian that we go through."

He said relational evangelism is a key to winning people to Christ. "What we've seen is that we have a good time and a relaxed atmosphere, so people feel good about bringing their friends to church and we don't just baptize them, we keep them."

Experiencing God study prompts youth 'Explosion' in Shirley area

An Experiencing God study and the burden of a local church for students in their community led to a multi-denominational, five-county Youth Outreach Explosion April 13-16 that resulted in 59 professions of faith and scores of commitments and ministry commitments by participants.

The idea for the outreach event was a result of an Experiencing God study conducted by members of First Church in Shirley.

Because of that study, explained associate pastor Paul Parker, "members who are employees and substitutes at Shirley High School began listening to God speak to them of the hopelessness and hurts of many students" in the area.

"They began to share what God was saying with the church family," Parker added. "Then came the vision to co-sponsor an areawide Youth Outreach Explosion involving people from all Christian faiths."

First Church members began to organize with area churches in early February, eventually securing the participation of 39 other churches ranging from Marshall to Damascus and from Mountain View to Scotland.

Their planning began to take shape with the theme, "Don't Cross Off Our Generation," referring to the popular designation among social observers for the current teen generation, "Generation X."

The Sunday through Wednesday event,

held at the Shirley High School auditorium and in other area schools, proved popular from the start.

"With an air of excitement and expectancy, hundreds of youth and their sponsors began filling the auditorium for the first service Sunday afternoon," noted Parker, who also served as co-coordinator of the event. "God's power was evident and decisions were made."

He added that the event's evangelism team, Mark Evans and Richard Wentz, pastor and minister of worship, respectively, for The Church at Rock Creek in Little Rock, also led assemblies during the day in schools.

"Monday and Tuesday proved to be very exciting," he said. "The team... was in six of the area schools for school assemblies. The theme shared with the young people was 'Life's Choices.'"

Parker noted that during the evening services held at the Shirley High auditorium, the "crowds continued to increase for each service with more than 700 in attendance for the final service Wednesday evening. The last service there were more professions of faith and a greater response to the work of the Spirit. The kids listened and... you could sense a real work of the Holy Spirit."

In addition to the 59 professions of faith in Christ made during the week, 54 youth made personal commitments and nine made commitments to enter into ministry service.



Gallup poll: 'Religious indicators' unchanged

A comparison of surveys from 1947 and 1997 indicates very little difference in America's "religious indicators," according to a new Gallup Poll. The Gallup organization's Princeton Religion Research Center reported its findings in the *Emerging Trends* newsletter.

In 1947, 95 percent of the American public said they believed in God, compared to 96 percent today, the study discovered. Similarly, 73 percent in 1947 said they believed in an afterlife. That measures up to 71 percent in 1997.

The 1947 and 1997 studies revealed an identical percentage — 41 percent — who said they attend church "at least once a week" or "almost every week." Additionally, 90 percent in the 1947 survey said they prayed, the same as today.

While the indicators reflect "a continuing high level of attachment to religion," both surveys pointed to the same question, pollsters noted: Religion is broad, but is it deep?

The newsletter cited a 1947 report from *Ladies Home Journal* that sounds as if it were written in 1997:

"A profound gulf lies between America's avowed ethical standards and the observable realities of national life. The extent of this national schizophrenia is made... clear by the paradox that eight out of 10 Americans think that most of America's problems would be solved by absolute adherence to the law of love; and eight out of 10 Americans think they themselves obey the law of love."

PRINCETON, NJ (ABP)

'97 Discipleship Institute highlights family issues

Trennis Henderson & Colleen Backus
Arkansas Baptist

Emphasizing the urgency of "Strengthening Families...Growing Disciples," Arkansas Baptists' 1997 Institute for Christian Discipleship was held May 12-13 at Parkway Place Church in Little Rock. The two-day conference, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist discipleship and family ministry department, featured national experts in the areas of marriage enrichment, communication and grandparenting.

Highlighting his well-known "Five Love Languages," Gary Chapman described "love" as "the most important word in the English language and the most confusing word in the English language."

Chapman, senior associate pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., is a popular marriage enrichment author who leads two dozen marriage enrichment retreats throughout the nation each year.

Emphasizing that "there are only five basic languages of love," Chapman listed words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, quality time and physical touch. Noting that a clear understanding of love languages "could literally save thousands of marriages," he explained, "We have to speak the right language if we want our spouse and our children to feel loved."

"Every one of us has a primary love language," he shared. "This is the one that really makes you feel loved."

"In a marriage, almost never does a



Gary Chapman details how couples can learn to apply "the five love languages."

husband and a wife have the same love language," he noted. "By nature we speak our own language. If it is not the spouse's primary love language, it will not mean to them what it means to us."

Pointing out that "couples can be

Workshops offer insights to strengthen families

Offering practical insights on ways to strengthen families, small-group workshops at Arkansas Baptists' Institute for Christian Discipleship ranged from "Ministering to Single Adults" to "Grandparenting by Grace."

Leading a workshop on "Preaching to Strengthen Families," Calvin Miller outlined what kind of preaching it takes to speak to today's families. Miller, professor of communication and ministry studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said the 10 commandments of preaching to the family center around a "story orientation."

1. Keep the cookies on the low shelf: "Use stories and children's poems," Miller advised. "If children can understand it, everybody can. If children listened, everybody would." Teach in a pyramid with the truth on the bottom, the interest in the middle and the inspiration on the top, he suggested.

2. Add clout: "Preach megabytes of informational statistics, like those in *USA Today*."

3. Preach image-driven sermons: "It's what people remember."

4. Cite popular authorities: "Names exert a strange authority," Miller noted. "Any time you quote James Dobson people will listen."

5. Use your spouse at sermon times: "It can be something pretty neat, if you and your wife do something together, like a family prayer time."

6. Paint realistic pictures: "Keep a collection — people need to hear what life is really like."

7. Note the differences in men and women: "Humor works well here, like Dave Barry or *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*."

8. Explore generation gaps: "Do honest analysis of why different age groups can't talk to each other — everybody is looking for insight."

9. Get real, get heavy: "Use things that are painful to look at and boldly address how they live their lives."

10. Be sure to use narratives: "When you start the 'once

upon a time' in the sermon, you pick up interest."

Gary Chapman, author of the marriage enrichment books, *The Five Love Languages* and *Covenant Marriage*, led a workshop on "Marriage Enrichment in Your Church."

Noting that "many people are struggling with their marriages," Chapman said, "We have to look to God for practical help. If we don't do something in our churches, there is no hope."

Emphasizing that "the way you treat your spouse is a reflection of your relationship with God," Chapman listed daily quiet time, group Bible study, Scripture memorization, confession of sin and an attitude of obedience as keys to a growing personal relationship with God.

He noted that essential elements in a healthy marital relationship include a daily sharing time with each other, learning how to deal openly with personal failure, an attitude of service and sincere expressions of love. He added that learning how to resolve conflicts, developing a positive response to emotions, praying together and unity in the areas of money and sex also are key ingredients.

Urging couples to ask themselves, "Is my marriage a priority?" Chapman declared, "If couples can develop in these eight areas, they are going to have a good marriage."

Leading a workshop about "Jesus on Leadership," Larry Garner emphasized, "If we're going to do God's work, we must get back to the New Testament."

Garner, director of church services for Metro Association in Jackson, Miss., said the discipleship course based on the book *Jesus on Leadership*, highlights key principles of servant leadership. He said the five-week study focuses on such topics as spiritual gifts, equipping leaders and team ministry.

Noting that "true leadership begins with a servant's heart," Garner pointed out, "We need to encourage everybody to have a place of service and ministry... When you are serving under the authority of Christ, you will touch people in a positive way."

sincere and still miss each other," Chapman said, "We're not talking comfort, we're talking love. Love is not something you do for yourself; it is something you do for someone else.

"God speaks to us in all five languages," Chapman affirmed. Noting that the principle of love languages "applies anywhere and everywhere in all relationships," he added, "Give your own marriage priority. Help it become mutually fulfilling as God intends it to be."

Modeling the effectiveness of creative communication, Calvin Miller shared the romantic parable of "Sleeping Ugly" from his latest book, *An Owner's Manual for the Unfinished Soul*, to illustrate the importance of a growing Christian marriage. Miller, a prolific writer, is professor of communication and ministry studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Noting that God created Eve as a "completer person" for Adam, Miller cited the importance of the inner person relating to the spouse's outer person through a relationship to God as the upper person.

Highlighting the importance of mutual submission, forgiveness and commitment, Miller emphasized, "The completer person can never complete on his or her own. They have to have the completion that God brings. If they don't, it never will work."

Urging Christian couples to allow their marriage to "become whole and beautiful again," Miller concluded, "The relationship of foreverness is one man, one woman, one God; inner person, outer person, upper person."

Irene Endicott, co-author of the book, *Grandparenting by Grace*, told conference participants, "I feel a fresh breeze blowing across this country for the American family. The breeze is coming from the mouth of God. He wants the family back."

Part of that plan is the changing role of grandparenting, Endicott added. "He wants us to be instrumental in reversing the tide of breaking and dysfunctional families — and the essential ingredient for that is love.

"Grandparenting isn't what it used to be," she said. "The grandparents have a central role in the family as never before — we're not just helping out. Often young grandparents are raising their grandchildren. The needs have changed, but there is never a change in our job. We need to love the children and model Jesus.

"I view the 1960s and '70s as a second civil war," Endicott declared. "We are still reaping the harvest of promiscuity and drug and alcohol abuse. This affects a lot of children... But we have the hope of Jesus. The answers to life's problems are in God's Word."

Campers on Mission make plans for summer ministry

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

Plans were finalized for the wheels of Arkansas Campers on Mission recreational vehicles to be "going round and round" in the coming weeks and months when the group held its annual spring rally at Majumelle Park in Little Rock May 15-18.

The wheels will first begin to go "round and round" when members leave Arkansas headed for Kansas the second week of June to lead Bible schools in that state prior to helping host the national Campers on Missions rally in Hutchinson, Kan., June 10-13.

The Arkansas group has been asked to assist Kansas and Nebraska in hosting the rally because of the small size of those states' COM organizations. In addition to providing financial assistance, Arkansas will help with the physical aspects of the rally and Lendol Jackson, Arkansas' COM volunteer coordinator, will lead the Bible studies and direct music. He will be assisted with musical sessions by his son, David Jackson, a staff member of Central Church in Jonesboro, who will play the keyboard. Jackson's wife, Dorothy, who is associate state coordinator, will lead mime conferences for the national rally.

At the close of the Hutchinson rally, 16 of the Arkansas vehicles will form a caravan June 14 and travel to the Dakotas to assist with a Dakota Blitz in response to a request from the Dakota Baptist Fellowship.

Jackson noted that when the recreational vehicles reach the southern border of South Dakota they will divide into groups to do light construction work and lead Vacation Bible Schools, Backyard Bible Clubs, revival and block parties. "Other state COM members will also assist with this effort with Capital Heights Church in Bismarck serving as blitz headquarters," he added.

Jackson will lead the caravan that will serve in the Bismarck area and Clayburn Bratton of Fort Smith will lead those who travel to the Belle Fourche area. "This group will also do a survey in Bowman, N.D., to determine the interest of the people there in starting a Southern Baptist church," Jackson said.

The 102 Arkansas COM members attending the spring rally also finalized plans for regional projects, assisting with

work at the Promise House in El Dorado, doing further clean-up and repair work in areas damaged by the March 1 tornadoes and working at the Sunshine House in Little Rock.

They also launched plans for a booth at the Arkansas State Fair in Little Rock Oct. 10-19. "This will be a first for Arkansas Baptists," explained Jackson, who asked COM members to support the effort both with prayers and as booth workers. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department is providing financial assistance for the booth that is expected to minister to several thousand people.

Another first for the campers came on Friday afternoon when 55 members were trained as disaster relief workers by the Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief Team. Disaster relief leader Ronnie O'Neal said this was the largest group to receive disaster relief training at one time.

State COM president Charles Stender moderated business and program sessions which featured Pete Petty, retired COM coordinator, and Tommy Goode, current COM coordinator, as speakers. Petty received a plaque of appreciation for his years of service with the group.

Commending the group for their volunteer efforts, Goode remarked, "Volunteers make a difference wherever they go and God is working through your organization to make a difference in today's world where more people are lost and without Christ than ever before.

"God is challenging all of us to be more creative and innovative to reach this world," he added. "As we share the love of God, we must make people aware that He will meet them just as they are, wherever they are."

He asked members to adopt the state mission theme of "Start Something New" as they travel, seeking out new places where they can interact with people for Christ. "It is not hard to intersect people's lives if we are willing to do it and do it at a point of need," Goode said.

"The fields are white unto harvest," he emphasized. "I request you not only to pray but to continue to keep your wheels 'going round and round' as part of those strategic things that God would have us do in His new vision for work which will make landmark progress in Arkansas."

Metro student ministry alters name, philosophy

Ministry changes focus from campuses to Little Rock-area community

Members of the Metro Baptist Student Union area advisory committee voted unanimously May 7 to change the name of the Metro BSU ministry to "Metro Student Ministry Sponsored by Baptist Student Union" and to change its focus from campus-based programming to a more community-based approach to evangelism, Bible study and discipleship in the Little Rock area.

Included in the approved changes were restructuring of duties of current BSU staff, adding two special worker positions to the ministry and relinquishing the lease of the current BSU facility at the University of Arkansas Medical School campus.

Affirmed as director for Metro Student Ministry was Tim Smith, who previously had directed both the Metro BSU efforts and the BSU ministry at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock campus. He will coordinate ministry to students of the area's four higher education institutions: UALR, UAMS, Baptist School of Nursing and Allied Health and Pulaski Technical College.

Smith said the ministry's new direction "is a change of philosophy of our ministry: We are going from a campus-focused ministry to a community-based ministry. We will still have a campus presence, but would like to broaden our scope to be Bible study-based."

Advisory committee chairman Fred Ball said the new structure "is going to allow our campus ministers to be more flexible in responding to students where they are rather than in a 'come and get it' ministry at a center."

The advisory committee consists of 21 representatives from the ministry's contributing churches and Pulaski and North Pulaski associations.

"I think it's a good change," noted Ball, pastor of Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock. "It's an attempt to take seriously the campuses in the metro area. Campus ministry here is unlike anywhere else in the state. We have commuter schools or graduate schools and that alters students' patterns and lifestyles. We have failed to be creative to meet that need in the past."

David James, director of the Arkansas Baptist student ministries department, said the change was enacted to increase effectiveness in the primarily urban ministry. "BSU has never been able to get a handle on a ministry that broad. We have a handle on a narrow ministry and are trained to do that, but for us to function within the parameters we have is limiting.

"What we are doing is creating an administrative role for Tim—in a narrow way—so that our ministers have more time to do ministry," James explained. "Tim was brought in (in July 1995) with a strong desire to develop a metro philosophy that would impact the whole city. We've been working on this model from the day he interviewed."

Smith emphasized that the implementation of the new structure will "work through a more team-oriented concept to carry out our vision: 'We exist to engage in a community-based ministry.'"



You have to have people where the lost people are... in a mobile society, our ministry has to become more mobile.

TIM SMITH
Director, Metro Student Ministry
Arkansas Baptist State Convention

"We have not always worked from that philosophical standpoint," Smith acknowledged. "Each campus always was allowed to interpret its own priorities. With this team concept, we will be highlighting one vision and our programs will better fit our vision statement."

In the new structure, Hope Coleman, director of the BSU at the Baptist School of Nursing and Allied Health, will become MSM's coordinator of mission activities. Doug Hunt, a special worker for the UALR campus ministry, will continue to focus on that work.

The MSM will add two special worker positions, Smith explained, with "one coordinating work with the medical world—UAMS and BSNH—and another person heading Crossover, a program moving high school seniors active in church ministries in Arkansas toward collegiate ministries."

James defined special workers as full-time employees employed more than a year with BSU ministries but not employed directly by the ABSCE Executive Board.

"Our staff will have more time in the

field," Smith said. "Our highest priority is that you have to have people where the lost people are. In a mobile society, our ministry has to become more mobile."

The student ministries department will maintain a facility on the UALR campus and continue to use meeting space provided free by BSNH, but it will relinquish its lease on its facility at UAMS. BSU has no facility on the Pulaski Tech campus.

"The decision to move out of the UAMS lease was a financial decision as well as a philosophical one," James said. "At this point, we do not have the funds to maintain two facilities. The UAMS facility required us to rent rooms and...the program dollars allotted were minimal. This gives us the freedom to consolidate our resources."

James noted that he had received concerns about the UAMS move following the resignation of Diane O'Connell, former director of the BSU at UAMS. O'Connell resigned last month after a dispute with ABSCE executive director Emil Turner over the issue of sharing her testimony.

James emphasized that O'Connell's resignation "did not affect" the ministry's restructuring or the decision to move from the UAMS campus facility. "In the new structure, we would have moved her position into the metro associate position. With the resignation, we will move from one full-time staff worker to two special workers."

He also said that while convention-wide restructuring does not affect the new metro structure, "the timing of it is significant. It gives us the freedom to adjust."

Smith acknowledged that the new structure's success will rely on metro-area church participation. "Our philosophy is to work closely with churches to coordinate Bible studies, missions activities, ministries to college students and the community."

James added that "in a campus-based ministry where there is a facility, the churches come to the campus to find students, but in the metro world, we have to go to the churches to find students."

Ball noted that the restructure also will change the work of the area committee. "We're going to move from an advisory committee—from a group that has received reports and encouraged our campus ministers—to a working committee. Tim needs help developing stronger partnerships with local churches."

James admitted that the new structure "is a difficult thing...Nobody in the nation is doing this, but nobody in the nation will say they have a handle on metro ministry, either. No place in the nation do we have a model to look at, but we do have people in the nation looking at this model."

World missions

Baptists in South Africa work to establish unity

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA (BP)—South African Baptists are trying to break free from deep racial wounds of the past and forge a new unity.

Baptist leaders are certain it's time to undo the havoc wreaked by one of the modern world's most racially charged social systems—the government-sponsored apartheid that until recent years preferred whites. But they're also convinced only God can make things right.

Relations between the white Baptist Union and the black Baptist Convention worsened in the mid-1980s when talks of consolidating resources broke down.

But now many seem ready to forgive and leaders of the two groups are talking to each other about working together again. A turning point came last fall when Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff led a prayer retreat with a dozen leaders from each group after talks had reached an impasse.

"There was a real moving of God's Spirit, a significant breakthrough as the Spirit of God moved toward a new openness between leaders of the convention and union," said Terry Rae, general secretary for the union. "We actually haven't solved too many problems, but what we have done is faced each other on a spiritual level as brothers in Christ. In that spirit, we have made progress."

A timetable of joint meetings and worship services scheduled over the next several months offers evidence things have changed. "We are committed to walk the road, regardless of what it's going to cost us," said convention general secretary Desmond Hoffmeister.

"We want to follow the direction of God's Spirit," Rae agreed. "Otherwise, I wouldn't be pursuing this, because it's too painful. But God is at work, and we must follow."

Baptists aid fire victims in St. Maarten shantytown

ST. MAARTEN, NETHERLANDS ANTILLES (BP)—Baptists rushed aid to more than 100 families left homeless by fire in early May that swept through a shantytown area inhabited by Haitian immigrants in St. Maarten.

The fire, which local news reports said was the island's worst ever, affected between 800 and 1,000 people, according to Tom Higginbotham, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary who was involved with local Baptists in relief work.

Baptists provided the only relief for fire victims, Higginbotham said. Faith Baptist and St. Maarten International Baptist churches collaborated in relief efforts, which included food and clothing distribution. The FMB provided money for food.

"It became apparent early the next day there would be no relief from the local government and we heard nothing to indicate any local businesses or individuals would be helping," Higginbotham reported. The victims were Haitians, despised in many Caribbean nations.

Faith Baptist Church housed 200 people left homeless by the fire. International Baptist Church provided travel, lodging and food costs so James Ziller, an FMB missionary stationed in Haiti, could come help with the relief. He brought Bibles, Scripture portions and tracts in the French Creole language spoken by Haitians.

Arkansas volunteers injured in automobile accident in Romania

GIURGIU, ROMANIA—Two Arkansas Baptist missions volunteers and a missionary to Romania were injured May 15 in an automobile accident in Giurgiu, Romania. The three were taken to Emergency Hospital in the capital city of Bucharest.

The volunteers are part of a 22-member Arkansas Baptist missions team scheduled to serve through May 28 in Giurgiu and surrounding villages as part of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's missions partnership with the Romanian Baptist Convention.

The two-week project is being coordinated by Church Starts International, an independent church-starting organization that works in cooperation with the FMB.

Jim Hornsby, a resident missionary with Church Starts International, had met team members Steve Glidewell and Samantha Neal at the Bucharest airport and was driving them to Giurgiu when the accident occurred. The accident reportedly involved a collision with a truck.

Hornsby suffered two broken legs, a crushed foot and abdominal bleeding. He underwent nine hours of surgery following the accident. Glidewell also suffered two broken legs; Neal received a broken arm and a gash on her head. They were airlifted to Wiesbaden, Germany, May 17, for medical treatment.

Glidewell and Neal, members of East Side Church in Paragould, were the first two volunteers to arrive in Romania. The other team members, including two physicians, arrived in Bucharest the following day. The volunteer group includes a medical team, evangelism team and construction team.

Albania evangelism project suspended for this summer

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Plans to recruit 300 Southern Baptist volunteers for Albania this summer have been canceled by the Foreign Mission Board, after the looting of equipment and materials in March that had been used for showing the "Jesus" film in Albanian villages.

The looting occurred in the midst of chaos and anarchy that engulfed Europe's poorest nation, sparked by the collapse of a widespread financial scheme in which many Albanians lost all their savings.

Equipment and materials used in the yearly Albania Evangelical Rural Outreach (AERO) effort in Albanian villages for showing the "Jesus" film were looted from a storage facility in Tirana, the nation's capital, according to a report by European Baptist Press Service.

More than 830 villages in Albania's rugged countryside have been the focus of Project AERO, a cooperative venture involving the Foreign Mission Board, Campus Crusade for Christ, Helimission, various other evangelical organizations and Albanian believers.

Project AERO has been one of many evangelistic thrusts in Albania, which have yielded up to 100 churches and 8,000 believers in the former atheistic, communist country.

Among Campus Crusade property stolen from Project AERO were 16 sets of projectors, screens and generators for showing the film, 300 beds, kitchen equipment and other items used to establish base camps in Albanian villages for teams of volunteers.

Rioters also burned Bibles and evangelistic materials that were in storage. Campus Crusade placed the total loss at \$120,000.



Students active in campus ministries across the state have volunteered to serve as close as Monticello and as far away as Australia as summer missionaries.

About 75 students will serve as church starters, evangelists and social ministers May 21 through Aug. 10 as a part of the summer missionary program, said Diane Parker, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention student ministries department.

The students will be serving in foreign fields including China, Indonesia, Kazikstan, Australia, Brazil and Israel. Other student missionaries will serve throughout the United States, with large groups performing a variety of ministries in Louisiana and Kentucky. Other students will serve closer to home in Arkansas, working with children, youth and in social ministries.

The Razorback Serve Team and Summer Impact Serve Team will tour several locations in ministries at associational camps, Super Summer, Arkansas Baptist Assembly and local churches.



International service

Front row (left to right): Cyndi Vilayvanh, UAMS, China; Sarah Hitt, ASU, China; Amy Hammond, UAM, China; Nancy Day, OBU, China; Kristi Steele, OBU, Kazikstan. Back row: Ashley Stallings, UAF, Indonesia; Monte Weaver, OBU, Israel; Holt Woodruff, HSU, China; Granville Winn, WBC, Brazil; Scott Stafford, ASU, Australia.



Razorback Serve Team/ Summer Impact Serve Team

Front row (left to right): Lisa Kay Greenwood, UAF; Ashley Damahoo, HSU; Kelly Boren, HSU; Lisa Ponder, HSU. Back row: Ian Hewitt, UAF; team leader Andy Winn, UAF; Joe Taylor, UAF; Jeremy Nunn, HSU.

ARKANSAS STUDENTS, WORLD MISSIONS

...AND NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

Louisiana

Front row (left to right):
Josh Hargrove, OBU;
Caleb Fitting, WCC;
Brett Latimer, UALR;
Andy Martin, ASU
Back row:
Shannon Lawrence, HSU;
Jill Parrack, OAM;
Nikki Simpson, ASU;
Janna Richard, WCC.



Arkansas

Front row (left to right):
Jennifer Burgess, ASU;
Marcie Abernathy, LC.
Back Row:
Aundra Jeffers, HSU;
Sara Beth Milam, OBU;
Kimberly Bounds, WBC.



Memphis

Front row (left to right):
Brooke Runyan, ASU;
Marcie Abernathy, LC;
Shannon Bettis, WBC;
Laura Wilson, UAM.
Back Row:
Ian Hewitt, UAF;
Douglas Hackelton, ATU;
Jeremy Wiginton, WCC.



Kentucky

(Left to right):
Barbi Fisher, U of O;
Jocelyn Campbell, UCA;
Tonya Vaughn, ASU;
Leah Ramsay, UAF;
Richard Loghry, UCA.



Rhonda Evans, UAMS, Florida
David Taylor, ASU, South Carolina
Melissa Marhanka, HSU, Pennsylvania



James Moore, WBC, U.S.
Penny Hale, HSU, Michigan
Holly Jackson, ASU, South Carolina

CHURCH LIFE

Nashville First Church held a noteburning ceremony May 4 to celebrate the payment of an \$850,000 indebtedness incurred in 1989 through a "Together We Build" program for an education building. On the day of the noteburning, the church entered a new "Together We Fix" program with members pledging \$205,000 to be paid over the next two years to repair and remodel current church properties. David Blase is pastor.

Calvary Church of Little Rock held revival services May 4-6 that resulted in 31 professions of faith and 10 rededications. The revival was led by evangelist Ken Freeman and music director Kelly Godsey, both of San Antonio, Texas.

Spreading Church of Fort Smith recently held revival services that resulted in 23 professions of faith, five additions by letter and 35 rededications. Clyde Chiles was evangelist. Ron Williamson is pastor.

Bingham Road Church in Little Rock will hold a "Reasons for Believing" crusade June 7-9 with Frank Harber as evangelist. Harber, once an agnostic, now speaks as a vocational evangelist about the validity of the Christian faith. Bill Hilburn is pastor.

OBITUARIES

Antonia Bonaida Tribble of Little Rock died May 6 at age 81. She was the widow of L.A. Tribble who had served as a director of missions in Central Association. Her funeral was held May 9 at South Highland Church in Little Rock where she was a member. Mrs. Tribble was active in the work of Woman's Missionary Union, having served as a member of the state WMU Executive Board. She is survived by three daughters, Deen Porter of Little Rock, Bonnie Howawowski and Dianne Hammer, both of Bellingham, Wash.; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and one brother, B.A. Gregory of Benton.

Bill Walker of Batesville died May 11 at age 80. His funeral services were held May 13 at First Church in Batesville where he was a member and had served as staff evangelist. Walker, who had served 10 years as a pastor of churches in Arkansas and Texas, had been in full-time evangelism for more than 40 years. Survivors are his wife of 56 years, Margaret Lucy Walker of Batesville; five sons, Bill Walker Jr. of Little Rock, Lance Walker of Chesterfield, Mo., Carey Walker of Washington, David Walker of Mountain Home and Rick Walker of Miami Beach, Fla.; six daughters, Margo Lassiter of Union City, Tenn., Ann Boehm of Kennewick, Wash., Lynn Walker of Memphis, Sharon Crumby of Arlington, Texas, Celeste Taylor of Hilton Head Island, S.C., and Lisa Morely of Beaverton, Ore;

TRANSITIONS.

Wayne Porter recently accepted a call to serve as pastor of First Church of Fouke. He previously was pastor of Daniel Chapel Church of Dumas, Community Chapel Church of Crossett and Locust Bayou Missionary Church in Hampton. Porter is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and the University of Arkansas at Monticello. He currently is enrolled in a doctorate program with the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. He and his wife, Shirley, and their son, Austin, reside in Bradley where he is superintendent of Bradley Public Schools.

Paul Shipman is pastor of Sims Mission. He previously served churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and California. Shipman is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College (now University) and attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Charles Ray, who has been interim pastor of Pine Grove Church near Pocahontas, has accepted a call to be pastor of Peach Orchard Church. He is a student at Williams Baptist College.

Bill H. Lewis has joined the staff of Central Church in Pine Bluff as staff evangelist. Lewis, retired director of missions for Harmony Association, has served as pastor of Arkansas churches.

Jean Fletcher is serving as interim minister of music for First Church of Sherwood. The director of Arkansas Baptists' Master Singers Women's Chorus, she previously served First Church and Parkway Place Church, both in Little Rock.

James Harrison is serving as part-time music director for First Church of Royal. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

Nick Worris will serve as summer youth intern for Newark Southern Church. He is a student at Williams Baptist College.

Steve Harrison has resigned as pastor of Northside Church in Monticello to become pastor of McDonald Memorial Church in Orange, Texas. He previously served Northpoint Church in Little Rock. Harrison and his wife, Cindy, have four children, Brooklyn, Hannah, Daniel and Victoria.

Former ABSC president Herring dies

Former Arkansas Baptist State Convention president R. Wilbur Herring, pastor emeritus of Central Church in Jonesboro, died May 17 at age 85 in Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, following a lengthy illness. His memorial service was held May 21 at Central Church.

In addition to serving two terms as president of the state convention in 1975-77, he was named in 1976 as general chairman of the statewide Life and Liberty Campaign sponsored by the ABSC and two national Baptist conventions in Arkansas.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by Arkansas State University, the Distinguished Minister Award by Williams Baptist College and the Arkansas Certificate of Merit by former Gov. Bill Clinton. The Arkansas House of Representatives presented a citation to Herring and his wife, Mary Elizabeth, for "public recognition and commendation" for their service to the citizens of the state.

As a pastor, he served Southern Baptist churches in Little Rock and Jonesboro, Jacksonville, Fla., and

Atlanta, Ga. He served on boards and commissions of the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. During the past decade, Herring has served as an interim pastor, supply pastor and evangelist in Arkansas churches, including those in Jonesboro, Blytheville, Marion, Wynne, Osceola, Tyroneza, Lepanto and Conway.

A native of Little Rock, he graduated from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and received his juris doctor degree from the U. of A. Law School. While serving as an officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Herring received further training in government and civil affairs at the University of Virginia and at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and received an honorary doctorate from John Brown University.

In addition to his wife, survivors include a daughter, Elizabeth Harrison of Jonesboro; a son, Bill Herring of Germantown, Tenn.; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Memorials may be sent to Central Church in Jonesboro.

and 12 grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

William F. Montgomery died May 11 at age 75 in his home in San Antonio, Texas. A native of Donaldson, he had been pastor of churches in Formosa, Pine Bluff and Heber Springs prior to serving as chaplain in the U.S. Air Force. During his tenure with the Air Force he served in Vietnam, as well as chaplain at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College (now University) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Survivors are his wife, Mary Ellen Harville Montgomery; a daughter, Carolyn Markle of Dallas, Texas; four grandchildren; two brothers; and a sister.

Floyd Gabe Davis, 75, of Little Rock died May 13. He was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College (now University) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. While attending Ouachita, he organized Grand Avenue Church in Hot Springs. He also had been pastor of First Church in Stamps and Markham Street Church in Little Rock. Davis was a member of First Church in Little Rock. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Dora Fay York Davis; one son, Gary Davis of Orlando, Fla.; two grandchildren; and one sister.

MILESTONES

Gary Akers was honored May 4 by Central Church of Pine Bluff in recognition of 10 years of service. The anniversary celebration included the reading of a letter from the church by deacon chairman John Gore, the presentation of cards and letters and a love offering. A churchwide dinner concluded activities.

Rob Howell, director of the Arkansas Baptist church music ministries department, was recently named president-elect of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, the professional organization of Southern Baptist church, denomination and educational musicians. Howell will serve as president-elect from June 1997 to June 1998 and as president for the group's 1998-1999 year. He currently serves on the organization's officers council as the denominational representative from the west district.

ORDINATIONS

South Side Church of Pine Bluff ordained Greg Ponder and Charlie Baker as deacons April 6.

Abilene Church ordained Stanley Corbett as a deacon April 20.

Kearney Church of Redfield ordained Eugene Sullivan and Bill White as deacons April 27.

Now Bethel Church of Floral ordained pastor Keith Boswell to the ministry May 18.



Participants display national costumes during the May 17 Women's Day.

International women's event crosses cultural boundaries

Women's Day, an international ethnic event held May 17 at First Church in Fort Smith, was the first gathering of its type to be sponsored by Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union.

The multi-cultural celebration was attended by 135 participants in national costume, representing four Hispanic churches, one Vietnamese church, one Korean church and two Laorian churches. Concord Association's WMU leadership team helped coordinate the event.

Monica Keathley, an associate in the state WMU department, said primary program features included seminars on third-culture parenting for the four language groups led by Angela Kim and Mary Valerio, both of Houston, Texas; Baoahh Ngyen of Clarkston, Ga.; and Montira Slengskun of Kansas City, Mo.

"These conferences were designed to assist parents in rearing children in a culture other than that of theirs and that of their parents, creating a third culture from the children's perspective," Keathley explained. "Through these conferences we were trying to assist these ethnic parents in dealing with what their children are learning and doing in our country."

Musical and Scripture segments of the day featured the reading of Psalm 117 and the singing of *Amazing Grace* and *What A Friend We Have in Jesus* in five languages. An international luncheon highlighted the noon hour.

Keynote speaker Jimmy Barrentine, director of the state convention missions department, spoke from 1 Corinthians

9:15-23 for his message entitled, "LACE: Love, Attitude, Communication and Encouragement."

"As Christians we are called upon to be many things, but the greatest thing we are called to do is love," he declared. "We are to love without losing one's self. However, this is contrary to popular North American culture which says be yourself, find your own group - look like it, talk like it, dress like it - your gang, your race, your church, your cultural group."

Barrentine pointed out that the apostle Paul taught that love accommodates, blends, crosses boundaries and stretches individuals beyond their own group, yet does not lose one's own identity before the Lord.

He also emphasized that Paul's attitude was cross-cultural and that his trans-cultural life and ministry were both a privilege and a duty. "This again smacks against North American culture which says, 'Do what you enjoy,'" Barrentine said.

Stressing that cultural lines can be crossed through the communication efforts of language, gestures, tools, institutions and values, he added, "These lines can be crossed by those who study and are sensitive."

Paul sought to share with, walk with and encourage others, Barrentine noted. "That's the kind of encouragement needed in this multi-cultural world," he concluded. "We need a 'walking partner' who encourages us onward and upward, to walk further and faster and more often, making the trip more enjoyable."

TRAINING

Music Arkansas camp highlights music, worship

Youth in grades 7-12 will focus on music and worship at Music Arkansas music camp July 28-Aug. 1 on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University. The program will be led by a choral director Rob Hewell called "probably the youth choir expert in the country."

Hewell, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, said the week will feature Randy Edwards, minister of music for First Baptist Church in Shreveport, La. "Randy will be directing older and younger youth choirs, meeting with directors and hosting leadership sessions for youth choir directors attending the camp."

He also emphasized that the focus of Music Arkansas "is music and worship. Quality relationships among young people, faculty and sponsors enhance the spirit of the week. All campers, sponsors and faculty participate in worship and growth in a variety of musical, learning and fellowship experiences."

Campers will have a variety of activities from which to choose, including participation in vocal choirs, handbell choirs, a band, a talent show and a worship choir.

Students also will have a choice of any two of 15 classes offered during the camp. Class options will include handbells, voice classes, sign language, worship planning, drama, children's choirs, personal faith, guitar, keyboard and ministry.

The program also will feature camp pastor Greg Kirksey, pastor of First Church in Benton, and worship leader David Pierce, minister of music at First, Benton.

The cost for the camp is \$95 per camper and \$90 per counselor prior to June 30. Add \$10 per person after June 30.

For more information or registration materials, contact Hewell at the ABSC church music ministries department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5121.

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in June:

■ June 7: Kristi Steel, OBU Box 3567, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; freshman from Panama.

■ June 14: John Smith, OBU Box 4125; freshman from the Philippines.

■ June 29: Marc Verlander, OBU Box 3024; senior from Senegal.

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Arkansas child care, clean-up teams aid flood victims

An Arkansas Baptist disaster relief child care unit and clean-up teams were activated May 12 to provide relief to beleaguered flood victims as part of Southern Baptist relief efforts in the North Dakota and Minnesota region.

Arkansas disaster relief co-coordinator Harry Black said that following a May 7 request, 10 volunteers worked May 12-16 in East Grand Forks, Minn. They were replaced May 19-23 with a group of five Arkansas child care volunteers and a clean-up crew of six, the first of four Arkansas teams to provide weekly clean-up work in the area.

The Marjorie Grober Child Care Unit from Arkansas joined two other mobile child care units from Illinois and Ohio — plus a child care team from Missouri which was already in the area as part of a larger disaster response.

As of May 15, nearly 300 children had been cared for and more than 383,000 meals had been provided. Meal counts had risen to about 20,000 per day.

Feeding units from Texas, Oklahoma and Ohio were operating at three area locations.

Black said the need for child care units in the affected area "was immediate. It

East Grand Forks there were 43 in-home child care providers, but, since the flood, only four were operational."

Unit member Marilyn Warford, who worked May 12-16 at an area Head Start center, noted that the group "got a lot of positive feedback" from the Head Start staff. Acknowledging that many people in the region "look at Baptists as a cult up there," she added, "We showed them who we were in our actions and how we took care of the children.

"Our training for disasters did make a difference," she said. "The children responded positively to us — there were a lot of children from displaced families who came in sleepy, tired and emotionally distressed."

Black noted that he was "having trouble finding volunteers" for the next few weeks, a situation echoed by Mickey Caison, national disaster relief director for the Brotherhood Commission.

Caison said he was being "begged" by government officials to expand the Southern Baptist effort. "We need to assign 40 volunteers to do mud-out work and another 40 to assist with child care every week for the next four to six weeks," he explained.

Black said Arkansas clean-up teams are slated to operate through at least early June and urged churches to send volunteers. "Crews will leave on Saturday, work Monday through Friday and return the following Saturday. They will be tearing out sheetrock and carpet and disinfecting."

Black noted that the headquarters for the Southern Baptist response is Cornerstone Baptist Church in Grand Falls, a building constructed by Rock Builders volunteers from Pulaski Association.

Cornerstone pastor Doug Lee highlighted the relief efforts during a May 11 service attended by the Arkansas team. "It is being said that we have seen the power of nature," Lee said. "Now we are seeing the love of Christ."

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ABSC first VP injured in fall

Del Medina, first vice president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was injured May 22 in a fall from a second-story roof when scaffolding supporting him collapsed.

Medina, pastor of First Church in Cabot, was placed in intensive care at Baptist Memorial Health Center in North Little Rock. He suffered a crushed pelvic bone and two cracked vertebrae but is not expected to need surgery.

Family Enrichment Workshop features in-depth training

Two leadership training programs will be offered during the Family Enrichment Workshop June 30-July 1 at Parkway Place Church in Little Rock.

The Marriage Mentors workshop, to be held from 1-5 p.m. on Monday, will equip participants to initiate a Marriage Mentor ministry in local churches, while The Blending Family workshop, to be held 8:30 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, will train leaders to conduct The Blending Family LifeSupport course in churches.

Gerald Jackson, associate in the Arkansas Baptist discipleship and family ministry department, explained that both conference issues are relevant to families and churches.

"Marriage Mentors is designed to help churches enlist and train couples to mentor newly-married couples," Jackson said. "The Blending Family is a very usable resource that will help churches in ministries to families of previously-married couples."

Both workshops will be led by Phil Waugh of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The cost for the Marriage Mentors workshop is \$7 per person and the cost for The Blending Family workshop is \$20 per person. The cost includes conference materials and leadership books.

For more information or to register, contact Jackson at the ABSC discipleship and family ministry department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5160.

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Chaplain Belken joins prison staff

Following 10 years of service as an Arkansas Baptist State Convention chaplain, John Belken will work on the staff of the prison he served as chaplain. Belken resigned effective May 4 to become assistant warden at the Arkansas Department of Corrections' North Central Unit at Calico Rock.

"I sensed that God was preparing me for a change, but I wasn't sure what it was," he said. "When the position opened, several employees asked me to apply for it. I'm not leaving the ministry, but considering being the assistant warden my new ministry."

Belken said of his chaplaincy tenure that he believes "with all my heart that God led me into this position. It has truly been the best 10 years of my life."

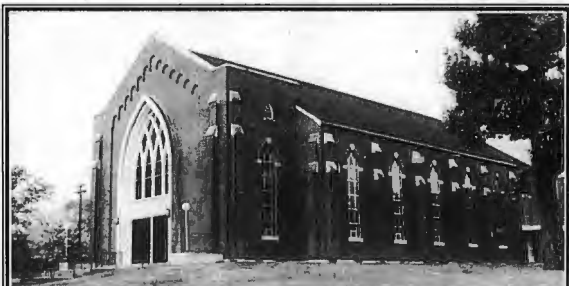
In his resignation letter, Belken noted thanks to present and former coworkers at the ABSC missions department, and

"all Arkansas Baptists. I am indebted to every pastor and church member who supported me through prayer, encouragement and donations to the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering."

Jimmy Barentine, director of the ABSC missions department, said he received Belken's resignation "with special regret. He set a high standard of excellence in every critical area of missions service, he proved himself is an able administrator, he modeled pastoral care and his commitment to personal evangelism without compromise was constant."

Belken was one of three full-time chaplains employed by the ABSC, the only state convention that employs chaplains in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Belken and his wife, Jean, a nurse, have two children: David and Jonathan.



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Partial-birth abortion ban

SBC leaders urge President Clinton to support legislation, abandon veto

Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff and several former SBC presidents have written to President Clinton for the second time in a year to urge him to support a legislative ban on partial-birth abortion.

Elliff and nine former presidents noted in a May 12 letter to Clinton that they were writing "to beg you to reconsider your continued defense of the killing of living premature babies by the brutal partial-birth abortion method."

The letter came as the U.S. Senate prepared again to debate and vote on the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act. The Senate voted May 20 to support the ban on a 64-36 vote, three votes short of the margin needed to overturn a presidential veto.

The bill prohibits what is called partial-birth abortion, a method normally used in the fifth or sixth month of pregnancy. The technique involves the almost total delivery of a baby feet first before a doctor pierces

the infant's skull with scissors and suctions out the brain. An exception to the ban is permitted to save the mother's life.

The House of Representatives passed the bill in March on a 295-136 vote. Both houses approved the measure in the previous Congress but Clinton vetoed it in April 1996.

In response to a letter last June from former SBC president Jim Henry and 11 other former SBC presidents, Clinton said he would support a ban "making crystal clear that the procedure may be used only in cases where a woman risks death or serious damage to her health, and in no other cases."

Challenging Clinton's stand, the latest letter from SBC leaders said it is "well established that there are no cases in which it is necessary to partly deliver a premature infant and then kill her, in order to prevent injury to the mother." It noted that more than 400 physicians, including former

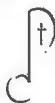
Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, have stated that "partial-birth abortion is never medically necessary to protect a mother's health or her future fertility. On the contrary, this procedure can pose a significant threat to both."

The former SBC presidents who signed the recent letter are W.A. Criswell, Adrian Rogers, Bailey Smith, James Draper, Charles Stanley, Jerry Vines, Morris Chapman, Ed Young and Henry. They also signed the 1996 letter. Messengers to the 1996 SBC annual meeting approved a resolution condemning partial-birth abortion and urging Clinton to reverse his veto.

The week before the Senate vote on the partial-birth abortion ban, an alternative offered by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle was defeated on a 64-36 vote. The Daschle bill would have prohibited abortion, by any method, of a "viable fetus unless the physician certifies that continuation of the pregnancy would threaten the mother's life or risk grievous injury to her physical health."

Most pro-life supporters opposed Daschle's proposal because it would have allowed the doctor to define viability and to certify without review that the pregnancy is a risk to the mother's health.

WASHINGTON (BP)



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Sports events attract nearly 1,000 RAs, Challengers

Two spring Brotherhood sports events for boys drew nearly 1,000 participants. About 200 teenagers participated in the Arkansas Challenger Tournament of Sports, held in the gymnasiums of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock and Calvary and Immanuel churches in Little Rock. The Royal Ambassador Congress, held April 25 at Ouachita Baptist University, involved more than 760 first-through sixth-graders from 47 churches.

In Challenger high school first-bracket basketball action, First Church, Cabot, took first place with First, Marmaduke, taking second and South McGehee winning sportsmanship honors. Ronnie Easley of Salem Church in Benton placed first in the Hot Shot individual competition.

In second-bracket high school action, First Church in Monticello earned first place honors and the sportsmanship award while First, Mansfield, took second place.

In junior high school play, First, Marmaduke, won the first place trophy and the sportsmanship award and Beck Spur Church in Forrest City took second. Reule Cruce of Calvary Church in Monticello took top Hot Shot honors.

Two members of First Church in Mansfield won the Challenger Speak Out competition held during the tournament. Andy Jerry was the top senior high school speaker and Michael Wayland won the junior high school category.

At the Congress competition, First Church of Amity and First Southern Church in Bryant tied as the top overall church

winners, with Geyer Springs First, Little Rock, earning second place and Second, Forrest City, placing third. First, Amity, also took top honors in the Crusader basketball tournament.

Chase Shaw of First Southern, Bryant, was the overall Lad division winner and third grade winner and Kevin Wardlow of Brookside Mission in Conway was the overall Crusader division winner and fifth grade winner. Other overall grade winners

included: Seth Parish of First, Clinton (first grade); Samuel Urton of Park Hill, North Little Rock (second grade); Travis Cockerham of First Southern, Bryant (fourth grade); and sixth graders Clay Leatherwood of Geyer Springs First and Mark Ligon of First, Glenwood.

Clay Hartness of First, Wooster, was the Lad Speak Out winner and Benjamin Standridge of Beck Spur, Forrest City, was the Crusader Speak Out winner.

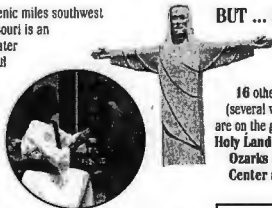


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Debate erupts over NIV translation

Reports that the New International Version translation of the Bible will be available in the United States only with "gender-neutral" language are "out-and-out lies," according to a spokesman for the International Bible Society.

The Bible society, based in Colorado Springs, owns the rights to the NIV translation and has a contractual relationship with the Committee on Bible Translation, the translators of the text. The NIV is the best-selling modern version of the Bible.

On March 29, *World* magazine published a story claiming the Committee on Bible Translation had voted to produce a "unisex" version of the NIV in the United States that would become the only version of the NIV text available in the U.S.

The *World* story was the basis for a front-page article by Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, in the May issue of *Jerry Falwell's National Liberty Journal*.

Patterson charged the NIV translators have been taken captive by a "feminist" agenda and are "monkeying with the Word of the Lord."

Steve Johnson, director of communications for the International Bible Society, said his agency has been swamped with calls ever since. "We have found ourselves in damage control," he explained.

What apparently sparked the *World* magazine article and other reports of a forthcoming "unisex" NIV translation is a 1992 decision by the Committee on Bible Translation and the International Bible Society to review the NIV text "with gender-accuracy in mind," Johnson said.

"Gender-accurate" is a more accurate term than "unisex," said Eugene Rubingh,

vice president for translations with the Bible society, noting that the intent is not to remove all male pronouns but rather to more accurately translate words that in the biblical languages apply to both males and females.

"The issue becomes particularly complex in English, as there is no singular term including men and women," Johnson said. "Hence English sometimes employs the terms 'man' and 'him' when both genders are meant....In most languages, this problem does not even arise, since there are inclusive terms for both men and women, as the Hebrew and Greek intend."

Concerns of a number of Southern Baptist leaders were unchanged by a May 14 announcement by Zondervan that it is "unequivocally committed to continue to publish" the current NIV text "without any changes or revisions." Officials added that they will "continue to move forward with plans for the possible publication of an updated edition of the present NIV."

"I am encouraged by the decision that has come from Zondervan to maintain the present NIV," Patterson remarked. "But I continue to be totally baffled by their determination to push the inclusive-language NIV in the next century."

Southern Baptists may address the issue in a resolution at next month's SBC.

"Nothing less than the integrity of the Word of God is at stake," insisted Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "The issue is whether we accept the revealed, inerrant and infallible Word of God on its own terms. Or whether we, claiming modern sensitivities, will seek to revise the language in order to avoid offending persons on a number of issues."

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Accepting resumes — Youth search committee now accepting resumes for the position of minister of youth. Send resumes to Ron Kurtz, First Baptist Church, 3015 Moares Lane, Texarkana, TX 75503.

Seeking — Part-time minister of music. Send resumes to: Bingham Road Baptist Church, 923 W. Bingham Rd., Little Rock, AR 72206; or call 501-888-2140 for information.

Seeking — Temple Baptist Church in Searcy, Ark., is looking for a full-time education/youth director. Send resumes to 703 W. Cherry Ave., Searcy, AR 72143, Attn.: Carroll Elmore.

Accepting — Full-time music/youth minister resumes. Send to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 373, Glenwood, AR 71943.

Church seeking — Full-time minister of childhood education. Growing church near metro-plex. Send resume to: Charles Treadway, FBC, POB 97, Fomey, TX 75126.

Seeking — Full-time pastor for Moro Baptist Church. Send resumes to Virgil Guynes, PO Box 28, Moro, AR 72368.

Seeking — First Baptist Church of Troy, MO, is seeking a full-time minister of music, with other ministry possibilities. Please send resume to First Baptist Church Troy, Music Search Committee, 800 Cap au Grals, Troy, MO 63379.

Seeking — Full-time minister of music and youth. Send resume to: Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, 201 W. 7th St., Smackover, AR 71762.

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Preschool teachers: Germany

The International Baptist Church of Dusseldorf, Germany (an SBC congregation with a missionary pastor), is in need of two teachers for its Preschool Program. Teachers must have a college degree and a teaching certificate. This is an English language position. Knowledge of German is helpful, but not required. The church will provide housing, local transportation and a small monthly stipend. If interested, the possibility to work with youth and children in the church is available. Must be willing to commit to one year of service.

For more information, call Darwin Bacon at 011 49 2102 873630 or send E-mail to: DarwinBacon@compuserve.com. You may also contact Doyne Plummer, Arkansas/European Baptist Convention Partnership Coordinator in Little Rock at 501-376-4791 or 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5190.

Family Bible

The fight of faith

By T. Clifford Toney, member,
Central Church, Jonesboro

Basic passage:

1 Timothy 6:3-12

Focal passage:

1 Timothy 6:4, 11-12

Central truth:

Christians should engage in the fight of faith and avoid disputes and arguments over words.

I doubt that anyone has ever been saved as a result of witnessing a theological argument. Petty arguments are divisive and counterproductive to the Kingdom of God. Paul teaches that the people of God should be occupied with fighting the fight of faith and not over words.

Many people think they are fighting a good fight when actually they are engaged in obsessive disputes. Paul gives us some pointers to know the difference. In verse 4, the fight to avoid is characterized as resulting in envy, strife, revilings and suspicions. In verse 11, the fight of faith is consistent with a pursuit of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness. If you want to know whether that for which you contend is profitable just compare its results to these characterizations. Does your stand cause envy, strife, revilings and suspicions? If so, reconsider where you stand.

According to Paul, we should withdraw from persons who continue in useless wranglings. If,

on the other hand, your contending for the faith displays love, patience and gentleness you are likely to be on the right track. This passage is not intended to discount the need for theological discussion.

Paul was never one to avoid theological discussion. However, he defined the difference in the fight of faith and a fight to be avoided. The pursuit of righteousness and godliness are good aspirations. However, Paul tells us that those who suppose that godliness is a means of gain are destitute of the truth. He compares this corrupted view of godliness to that of one whose greed causes them to be discontent. The point here is that our theological accuracy will never gain us acceptance with God. We are only accepted because of Jesus Christ's death on the cross. Furthermore, we currently only know in part (1 Cor. 13:9).

Wouldn't it be more reasonable to spend our energy revealing our faith than arguing issues which are at best secondary to the gospel?

Life and Work

Obedience brings happiness

By Joe A. Fitzpatrick,
minister of music,
Park Hill Church, North Little Rock

Basic passage:

Psalm 119

Focal passage:

Psalm 119:169-176

Central truth:

Obedience of God's law results in true happiness.

Psalm 119 is an extensive meditation on and celebration of the law of God presented with great order. It consists of 22 sections corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet arranged as an acrostic. Each section consists of eight lines which begin with the same letter of the alphabet.

This form and order perhaps made it more readily memorized and thus hidden in one's heart (v. 11). The teaching and retaining of God's Word is beneficial to all of us as we seek to find happiness through obedience. A closeness in fellowship with the Lord comes as we learn and adhere to His law devised to keep our lives in order with Him and with our fellow man.

The poet obviously had a deep love for the law of God. He meditated on it both day and night. He sang the praises of the Word of God while using many words as synonyms to describe it, including law, precepts, commandments, ordinances, testimonies, statutes, word, ways and promise. It seems there may be a preoccupation with the law

itself as you focus on this one psalm, but having an understanding of the law and then obeying what it is you understand will result in true happiness.

The law is given to us by God as a guidebook for daily living. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (v. 105). It is a source for resisting temptation and a revelation of God's will for our lives. We can, therefore, derive happiness through obedience, which ultimately culminates in a more intimate relationship with our Lord (John 14:21, 23).

The Psalmist concludes the psalm in section 22 (vv. 169-176) with an earnest plea for a deeper understanding of God's Word and a recommitment to obey the law. He confessed that he is as a lost sheep in need of the Shepherd's guidance and care to fulfill the commandments set forth in His word. He has found true the message conveyed in the hymn, "Trust and Obey": obedience brings happiness, for there really is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Explore the Bible

Instructions for God's people

By James Swedenburg, member,
Trinity Church, Benton

Basic passage:

1 Corinthians 5:1-6:20

Focal passage:

1 Corinthians 5:1-6:10

Central truth:

Christians should solve problems with biblical principles.

When the fellowship of a church is threatened, how does it deal with achieving resolution? Paul notes three problems in chapters 5 and 6: (1) Sexual immorality (5:1-8); (2) Lawsuits with another Christian (6:1-8); (3) Association with unbelievers (5:9-20).

The first problem was sexual immorality not even practiced among the Gentiles. A man was living with his father's wife. Roman law would not permit such a practice. Paul told the church not to be proud or puffed up and exclude the one offending from the church. Though Paul was disappointed in their proud attitude, he may have been more disappointed that the church had been so lax that nothing had been done to deal with the immorality.

Can the church encourage immorality by its silence? Is it possible to deal with immorality in a redemptive way? Jesus thought so (Matt. 18:15-17). Can there be a need to exercise discipline in the church for the good of the fellowship?

The second problem disturbing the fellowship

related to the members' involvement in civil courts. Paul's three statements were: (a) The members should not take a fellow member to a civil court. It is better to settle out of court (6:1-6); (b) He noted that it is better to renounce one's own civil rights in favor of a fellow member (6:7-8); (c) Because the church has received grace and mercy, members are responsible and capable to preserve unity. Even in the most severe case of disunity, the church should follow their prior instruction.

The introduction to problem three is a list of the sins of unbelievers. The list depicts a tragic lifestyle (6:9-10). The issue is how the church should relate to unbelievers. The question is: How do we relate to unbelievers? They will not inherit the kingdom of God. Our responsibility is to share our testimony and to present the gospel to them. It is possible to love them without accepting their lifestyle. We cannot share fellowship with them but we must share the gospel.

LESSONS FOR LIVING

Timothy is instructed to do three things in this passage. In these last days we should also: Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; commit the gospel to faithful people; and endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Notice the encouragements to be strong and to endure. Paul recognizes the need for Timothy to concern himself with his own spiritual endurance.

As Baptists, most of us affirm the security of the believer. However, many lose heart in the course of spiritual battle, sometimes because of human disappointments but always resulting in ineffectiveness for the Kingdom of God. We must be aware that we have a spiritual adversary who is always attempting to sidetrack Christians.

Paul gives us several illustrations to help us endure in faithfulness. We are to be like a soldier in battle. Focus on the task of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Don't let yourselves be sidetracked by anything (even disappointment with other people).

We are to be like an athlete in training. Be disciplined and compete according to the rules. Competing according to the rules means don't be a hypocrite. Do all you can to discipline yourself and walk the talk.

We are to be like a farmer. Before you get crops, you have to plant seeds. Paul is emphasizing two elements of seed distribution in this passage. A farmer plants seeds in his own ground. A farmer can also give seeds to his neighbors.

The third admonition has to do with giving seeds to your neighbors. Commit the gospel to faithful people who can in turn share it with others.

Our faith endures as we endure. The world needs salvation which is in Christ Jesus. For the world to experience salvation, Christians must be strong and endure. No matter what, we must remain faithful. Spread the Word. Plant seeds of faith wherever you go and teach others to do the same.

Psalms is known as the Hymnal of the Hebrews and was compiled as a book of songs designed to facilitate worship. The 145th psalm is the only psalm specifically designated in its translation as "A Psalm of Praise" even though the entire Psalter is translated from the Hebrew as "Praises." This psalm is written as an acrostic which suggests it was to be used repeatedly and through its organization could be easily committed to memory. It was rendered perhaps by David as a solo song (v. 1) in the midst of a congregation of worshippers (v. 10) as he sought to lead them in:

■ *Praising God for His Greatness* (vv. 1-3). David began this psalm extolling the LORD who is a great God. Our God is worthy of receiving the highest of all praises, for His greatness is beyond human discovery (v. 3). The poet daily praised God and promised to bless His name forever.

■ *Praising God for His Mighty Acts* (vv. 4-7). The psalm continues in the same spirit of praise. Generations shall declare God's majesty and miraculous deeds, moving the worshipper to stand

in awe, and sing aloud of His righteousness.

■ *Praising God for His Compassion* (vv. 8-9). The LORD is extolled for His compassionate nature. He is slow to anger, His mercy is great and He is good to all.

■ *Praising God for His Kingdom* (vv. 10-13). The congregation is urged to join the psalmist in praising the LORD for His works and His sovereignty over all mankind. His kingdom is everlasting and broadly incorporates all who place their faith and trust in Him.

■ *Praising God for His Faithfulness* (vv. 14-20). The LORD God is faithful to meet our needs. He lifts the fallen (v. 14), provides physical nourishment (v. 15), satisfies the longings of those who call upon Him (vv. 16, 18) and hears the cries of the just and saves them (v. 19). He preserves those who love Him, but destroys the ungodly (v. 20).

■ *Praising God Corporately* (v. 21). David concludes his solo with an invitation for all to join Him in offering the greatest of all praises to the One who is greatly to be praised.

Paul concludes his warning about moral laxity (vv. 6:9-20) and begins to emphasize the importance of a commitment to marriage or to celibacy. Paul is not writing a treatise on marriage. He is probably answering questions that came to him in previous correspondence. His preference is celibacy (vv. 7:1, 6, 8, 13, 27). He concedes that marriage is good and sometimes necessary (vv. 7:2, 3, 9).

As Paul grants validity to marriage, he seems to indicate at best, it is better than burning with passion. I can only wish he had highlighted the old fashioned idea of love also (Prov. 31, Ruth 3-4).

It is noted that God's plan in Gen. 2:21-25, Matt. 19:3-9, presupposes monogamy. The Mosaic law, concerning divorce, was a concession to the people, not a part of God's original purpose. Paul did not make concessions. He believed that if separation does occur, the believer should either remain unmarried permanently or be reconciled permanently (vv. 7:10-11).

Paul's most comprehensive statement about marriage and the home is in Ephesians (Eph. 5:22-

6:4). The analogy is that of Christ and the church. Like Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25). Also, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies (Eph. 5:28). Husbands as leaders should be examples, then love, obedience and respect may be born and may grow within the family.

By way of application, if one marries it should be as believers and according to God's will. However, the marriage experience can be the basis of exciting, enriching relationships. As with other interpersonal relations in the Christian family, marriage should be treated as something sacred and permanent.

Whether we marry or not, as believers, our first allegiance must be to Him and His will for our lives. Out of this kind of loyalty to Christ, we can respect the choices of others concerning marriage. There is a place in the church for everyone to work, to witness and to worship.

Family Bible Endurance of the faith

By T. Clifford Toney, member,
Central Church, Jonesboro

Basic passage:

1 Timothy 2:1-13

Focal passage:

1 Timothy 2:1-3

Central truth:

Be strong and endure in the Lord.

Life and Work

Great praise for a great God

By Joe A. Fitzpatrick,
minister of music,
Park Hill Church, North Little Rock

Basic passage:

Psalms 145

Focal passage:

Psalms 145:1-3

Central truth:

We are to offer our greatest praises to the One who is greatly to be praised.

Explore the Bible

Keep your commitment to Christ

By James Swidenborg, member,
Trinity Church, Benton

Basic passage:

1 Corinthians 7:1-40

Focal passage:

1 Corinthians 7:1-24

Central truth:

Guard your testimony whether you are married or single.

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Appeals court upholds Georgia's 'quiet reflection' law

WASHINGTON (ABP)—A Georgia law requiring public schools to open the day with a period of "quiet reflection" does not violate the constitutionally required separation of church and state, a federal appeals court has ruled.

Affirming a ruling by a lower court, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected a challenge to the 1994 statute by a Gwinnett County teacher who refused to obey the law. Brian Gillespie Bown was fired as a teacher at South Gwinnett High School after refusing to follow orders by school officials to comply with the law. Bown sued, charging that the law violates the First Amendment's ban on establishment of religion.

The law requires teachers to begin each school day with "a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than 60 seconds." It states that the moment of silence "is not intended to be and shall not be conducted as a religious service" but is an opportunity for "silent reflection on the anticipated events of the day."

The court concluded that the law has a secular purpose, that it neither advances nor inhibits religion and that it does not create an excessive governmental entanglement with religion.

Voucher plan rejected by Ohio appeals court

WASHINGTON (ABP)—An Ohio appeals court has struck down the nation's only active program that allows students to use tax-funded vouchers to attend religious schools.

Reversing a lower-court ruling, Ohio's 10th District appeals court said the voucher program enacted by state lawmakers in 1995 violates the First Amendment's requirement of church-state separation, as well as provisions of the Ohio Constitution.

The Ohio legislature enacted the pilot voucher program after a federal court ordered the state to take over administration of the troubled Cleveland City School District. The program provided "scholarships" of up to \$2,500 for students to attend "alternative" schools. During its first year of implementation, about 80 percent of the 53 private schools signed up to participate were sectarian.

Two groups of taxpayers filed suit charging that the program violates the federal constitution's requirement of separation of church and state, as well as several provisions of the Ohio Constitution. The appeals court concluded that the voucher program provides "direct and substantial, non-neutral government aid to private schools" and "has the primary effect of advancing religion."

Dove Award winners join True Love Waits national tour

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Dove Award-winning Christian musicians Clay Crosse and Jaci Velasquez will combine their musical talents during a national tour to promote True Love Waits, Southern Baptists' teen sexual abstinence campaign. The tour will be held this fall and next spring.

Velasquez, winner of the 1997 Dove Award for new artist of the year, and Crosse, winner of the same award in 1995, will take their "Stained Glass Tour" to 80 locations in 38 states.

"Both artists have strong testimonies related to sexual purity and are great models for today's teenagers," said Glen Whatley, a spokesman for the True Love Waits campaign and coordinator of the tour for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Whatley said new songs performed by the artists — Crosse's "Choices" and Velasquez' "The Promise" — spurred the BSSB to request a role in the tour, which is co-sponsored by World Vision, a nonprofit Christian humanitarian organization. More information about the tour is available by calling Whatley at 615-251-2971.

Magnoli's 13-year presidency ends at University of Mobile

MOBILE, AL (BP)—Michael Magnoli's 13-year presidency at the University of Mobile ended during a four-hour meeting with trustees May 13.

According to a university news release, Magnoli, 50, and the 46-member trustee board decided "it is time for the institution and the president to move in separate directions." The 2,700-student university is affiliated with the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Magnoli's termination reportedly was hastened by a cash flow crunch expected to exceed \$4 million over the next four months. The school also operates a branch campus in Nicaragua, which had sparked controversy within the Alabama convention over funding procedures.

