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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



news magazine

Father's Day '97



Fatherhood

The qualities of good fathers, pg. 9

60 years of ministry

Cobine's service at FBC, Little Rock, marked by six decades of dedication

By **WILLIE GILL**

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

Prayer and a willingness to "stick with it" were the keys which Audrey Nell Cobine attributed to her successful 60-year tenure of service as financial associate for First Church of Little Rock. "There are no perfect job situations," she said. "However, as you seek God's help through prayer, He will be with you in the good, as well as the difficult times."

Cobine shared her secrets for success during a June 1 reception given by the church in recognition of her years of ministry. The reception was attended by church and staff members who praised her for the ongoing ministry she provides. She also was honored in the morning worship service as the church observed Audrey Nell Cobine Day.

"I would be astonished if there were another individual who had served in a Southern Baptist church for 60 years," remarked pastor Bill Elliff. "Such a record is a testimony which not only shows the grace of God, but also shows the graciousness and faithfulness of the individual."

"When I came as pastor, Audrey Nell wrote me a note that began, 'Dear Number Eight!'" he added. "She has survived eight pastors and 11 United States presidents during her years here! What endurance! This church has been incredibly blessed with her presence, her expertise, her wit and her godliness through 60 years. We are now making plans for her 70th anniversary in the year 2007."

Teresa Anderson, Elliff's secretary, said Cobine has been both a personal friend and mentor to her as another single adult. "She has been an inspiration to me through her wonderful sense of humor and her commitment to the Lord."

'The Lord opened the door'

The 90-year-old single adult recalls coming to Little Rock from Arkansas County during the days of the Depression, going door-to-door to look for jobs, finally going to work for an insurance agency. "But soon the Lord opened the door for me to begin my years of service for First Church, then located in downtown Little Rock."

Cobine said she was amazed at improvements which have come to the business world through computers and other technological advances.

"I began with a crank adding machine, a manual typewriter and a really old mimeograph machine which I believe Noah used to get out weather bulletins," she added. "It first shot out solid black ink copies, but following each cleaning session I could get at least six financial reports."

"Even though I only work three days a week now, I well remember those early days being a full-time job," she said. "I would work all day and as quitting time approached I would get up, walk around my desk to rest and then begin the evening shift."

Recalling the pastors with whom she has served, she said the seven pastors prior to Elliff included John Wright, Paul Roberts, Nolan P. Howington, K. Owen White, R.C. Campbell, Charles E. Lawrence and John H. Hankins.

In addition to serving as financial associate, Cobine has been a Sunday School teacher to both business women and young people. "I still today continue to receive letters from these young people even though they are scattered throughout the country."

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



Cover Story

Fatherhood.....9

As Americans prepare to celebrate Father's Day June 15, Arkansas Baptists discuss qualities that help make a man a good father in today's fast-paced world.

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Aiming at 21st century

Committee affirms structure plan for ABSC entities

Trenn Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Citing the goal to "position our agencies and institutions to be ready for the 21st century," the Arkansas Baptist structure study committee recently presented its recommendations to the state convention's Executive Board Program Committee.

The five-page report, approved by the Program Committee without opposition, will be considered by the full board in August for recommendation to state convention messengers in November. Executive Board members already have approved recommendations related to the organization and work of the Executive Board staff which also will be presented for messenger action in November.

The agencies and institutions recommendations focus specifically on the ministry of Ouachita Baptist University, Williams Baptist College, Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, Arkansas Baptist Foundation and *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. The report also addresses the fraternal relationship with the Arkansas Christian Civic Foundation.

The introduction to the study committee's report expresses hope that "changes suggested will position us to reach more lost people and start more churches in Arkansas and around the world." The report also specifies that none of the recommendations will require any changes to the charter and bylaws of the state convention or any of its related entities.

Trustee relationships

Among general recommendations related to each of the state convention entities being studied, the committee recommended that the state convention nominating committee "nominate trustees who will support the agencies and institutions with their time, talent and resources."

According to committee chairman Tim Reddin, director of missions for Central Association, "Since we were charged with studying relationships...one of the key points relating to that is trusteeship."

Noting that the state convention nominating process "has operated for years on a set of practices and assumptions which have never been set into policy," he added, "That need became very apparent last year" following a conflict between the nominating committee and Ouachita Baptist University. The differences eventually led to a reconciliation proposal between convention leaders and OBU

officials which was approved last fall by messengers. Bylaw changes to implement the reconciliation process will require a two-thirds vote of messengers during the 1997 and 1998 state conventions.

With the completion of that process still unresolved, Reddin said the study committee "did not feel it would be appropriate to complete our study when there are still questions for the convention to answer" about the trustee selection process.

"We felt it would be best to slow down the process related to trusteeship until the convention votes in November," he explained. "We feel that we need to look at the whole picture again after the Ouachita situation is clarified."

Beyond the call for trustees who will support Arkansas Baptist entities, the report recommends that trustees maintain an "evangelistic heartbeat in their stewardship." It also proposes that Cooperative Program funding for convention-related entities "continue to be determined by the convention budget process."

Citing the "tremendous financial needs" of Ouachita and Williams "for operating expenses as well as the need for continued growth in endowment funds," the report affirms that the two schools "are making every effort to provide a quality Christian education with limitations of funding sources available to them."

Expressing "deep appreciation to both institutions for managing their financial resources to accomplish their mission," the proposal urges that no further changes be made in the current budget formula related to the two schools, that Arkansas Baptist churches "be encouraged to consider increased giving through the Cooperative Program in order to make more funds available to the institutions" and that individuals "consider these institutions in their estate planning."

The report also expresses "deep appreciation to the faculty, staff and administration of our institutions for providing excellent spiritual and academic leadership."

Among the ABSC's statewide agencies, the report commends the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* "for its commitment to reporting news of the Arkansas Baptist and Southern Baptist conventions" as well as "its management of limited resources and its creative approach for increasing operating funds."

Affirming convention messengers' 1992 action to maintain the *Newsmagazine* as a separate agency, the committee called for

the *Newsmagazine* to develop a mission statement as well as a marketing study "to determine ways to increase subscriptions with special emphasis given to attracting young readers and new pastors in Arkansas Baptist churches."

Concerning the ministry of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, the study committee affirmed the agency's "care for needy children and their families" for more than 100 years. The report commended the agency "for the innovative ways it has used to meet the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional needs of those placed in its care."

Committee recommendations include making qualified employees "available to the churches as a resource for marital and family counseling," "research the feasibility of operating a model day care center as a teaching and training resource" and "study the feasibility of using the Promise House facility to care for teenage girls with substance abuse."

The Arkansas Baptist Foundation is commended in the report "for providing assistance to Arkansas Baptists in the areas of estates, wills, trusts and other related matters" as well as "for its efforts to inform Arkansas Baptists of new avenues for money management."

The committee report encourages the Foundation "to explore and use new and modern technology to communicate more effectively its work to Arkansas Baptist churches."

Relocation feasibility study

The report also recommends that the three agencies "continue to explore the feasibility of joint relocation," a process already under consideration by vote of the three agencies' boards.

Study committee members affirmed the Christian Civic Foundation "for its continuous application of biblical principles against the social evils which currently threaten the moral and spiritual foundation of society" and for "awakening us to the dangers of legalized gambling in our state."

Noting that the state convention has no authority over the CCF because the organization's trustees are not elected by the state convention, the report recommends that "the present fraternal relationship... remain unchanged."

The report recommends that state convention financial contributions to CCF continue to be determined by the ABSC budgeting process, that the CCF "be encouraged to recognize the importance of the local church and association for its moral and financial support" and that CCF leaders "make a concerted effort to explore new avenues of fund-raising and relationships with churches and religious groups of other denominations."

A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABCs Executive Director

We've been praying it would happen. Most of us desperately want to see it. Revival. A heart-changing, life-altering experience of the Spirit that heats cold hearts and revives dead churches. A sweeping movement of God that restores backsliders and regenerates the lost. This is what we desire God to give us.

Is He giving us revival? I am convinced that there are "pockets" of revival—places where God is doing supernatural things. Now, for the first time there is measurable

Woman's Viewpoint



Kaye Miller

Immanuel Church, Little Rock

When you think of the word "missions," what do you think about? Do you think about Africa, of going to live in jungles, of giving up all that you have and going to live somewhere else?

When I think of missions, I think of Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

As a missionary kid, growing up in one of those jungles in Thailand, I had the privilege of experiencing firsthand what missions was all about. I watched as my father helped the sick to get better, as my mother taught and ministered to the women and children in our village and as the other missionaries preached the good news of Jesus Christ. These missionaries are what I call "risk servants." This is a term I had not put together before, but especially in this day and time our missionaries are certainly risking all for Jesus Christ.

I believe that the verse, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations," demonstrates Jesus' desire that we help carry the good news to all the world. We have received our assignment to "go,"

evidence that America may be in the early stages of an awakening. According to studies by the Barna Research Group, church attendance is growing again for the first time in this decade. Sunday School attendance and participation in personal evangelism are both up. Are these indications that revival may be coming to America? Let's continue to pray and work and wait. It is our only hope.

■ Have you read *Grandparenting: It's Not What It Used to Be* by Irene Endicott? (Broadman and Holman, 1997). I am not a grandparent, but this book is great! Easy to read, biblical and practical—it also provides help with hard things like the death of a grandchild, forgiving your children, and drug abuse in families. I sent a copy to my children's grandparents.

Executive director's schedule:

June 16-19 SBC, Dallas, Texas

June 22 (a.m.) FBC, Searcy

June 23-27 Arkansas Baptist Assembly, Siloam Springs

now what are we going to do about it? How are we going to complete our task in order to bring honor, praise and glory to the Lord? The call is to "go," whether it be only a few miles or around the world. We are missionaries as we share news of Jesus Christ with the lost.

I recently was reminded again of how God can use us if only we are willing, and how He can use us in ways that we never thought possible. A small team of junior and senior high youth went to continue working on a project that the Lord gave them after the tornado struck Arkadelphia. They went to "help" a team of men as they constructed a day care that had been destroyed by the tornado. As it turned out, these kids actually did a large amount of work in "raising" the walls of this day care. It was obvious that the Lord was working through these kids and was guiding their hands. This was all possible because of willing hearts. These young people went as missionaries to be used of the Lord.

Ask God to give you a heart for missions as you study His Word and seek what it is that He would have you to do. Ask that you would be bold in your witness, like Paul asked from prison in Ephesians 6:19-20. "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth for words, may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should." Pray that God would make you a risk servant. There is never a lack of need or opportunity for those who wish to be a part of His work, only the need to follow Jesus' instructions.

Kaye Miller is Girls in Action director and Youth on Mission director at Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

quotes

"I went with a hammer and a nail bag and ended up carrying tracts and a Bible."

—Mitch Tankisley
Romania mission volunteer

"You can teach people to win souls, but without a doctrinal basis, they fizzle out."

—Sam Dunham, pastor
Hopewell Church, Harrison

"A father is always a force...in his children's life for good or bad."

—J.D. Stake, director
ABCs ministry of crisis support

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

NEWS MAGAZINE

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE

The biggest news in the world — again

It is one of the most spiritually and emotionally overwhelming feelings a Christian parent can experience — to have every member of your immediate family become a personal part of God's eternal family.

Many of our readers will remember the editorial two years ago when our older daughter, Emily, accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior. As a proud father, I modestly titled the article, "The biggest news in the world." At the time, I couldn't imagine any greater thrill in life than to see my physical daughter become my spiritual sister.

Recently, however, my wife, Pam, and I had the privilege of praying together with our younger daughter, Audrey, as she also began her lifelong pilgrimage as a new creature in Christ. While the same spiritual celebration erupted as it had two years before, Audrey's profession of faith

Straight from the editor and daughter



By Audrey Henderson (and her dad)

brought an added bonus — we now have the priceless joy of knowing that every member of our family will spend eternity together in the presence of our precious Lord Jesus.

Audrey's commitment to Christ came following a recent evangelistic emphasis in our church. She publicly shared her spiritual decision on a Sunday morning as

the congregation sang, "Take my life, lead me, Lord, make my life useful to Thee."

Writing out her personal testimony in preparation for her baptism service, Audrey explained: "I decided that I was a sinner and God was sad about it. So I did something about it. At home with Mom and Dad, I asked Jesus into my heart. I feel very good about it.

"Now I know that Jesus loves me and I love Him. He has helped me and has been with me since that day! And, well, here I am today getting baptized." That's a powerful testimony whether you're 7 or 70.

Audrey's conversion, testimony and baptism are fresh reminders of Christ's words in Matthew 18:3, "Unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." For the Henderson family, it was the biggest news in the world — again.



letters to the editor

Let OBU fulfill mission

I recently obtained a copy of *Arkansas Baptist Life* and read the articles, opinion columns and editorial about Ouachita's trustee selection process with intense interest. As an alumnus of Ouachita, I am very much concerned with the outcome of this dispute.

Ouachita provided me with some of the best years of my life and holds a special place in my heart. During those four years, I grew academically and, more importantly, spiritually. While at Ouachita, my Christian walk improved and laid a foundation for me to be at this point in my Christian life today. This is why I want to see Ouachita preserved. This is why I support the action taken to establish a self-perpetuating board for Ouachita.

I am very familiar with the struggles in our denomination since 1979. I have witnessed what it has done to our denomination and its institutions. The "conservative resurgence" has torn us helplessly apart and caused us to lose focus on what should be our No. 1 purpose — doing Christ's work.

Ouachita's action does exactly that. It allows OBU to focus on fulfilling its Christian mission, which is to educate men and women in an environment where there can be Christianity and true academic freedom side by side.

I hear and read a lot about "restoring the historic relationship" between Ouachita and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. If the leadership of the

conservative resurgence is academically honest with themselves, then they must admit the action to revert back to the original charter, written and approved by the state convention in 1886, does restore the truly "historic" relationship.

It is time for the leaders of the conservative resurgence to return to being full-time pastors of their churches instead of being political operatives. Let Ouachita stay out of politics and fulfill its Christian mission — providing academic and Christian excellence.

Andrew Bagley
Arkadelphia, AR

CBF prompts concerns

The May 1 issue of the *Newsmagazine* reported on the annual Arkansas Cooperative Baptist Fellowship meeting. Keith Parks was the featured speaker and sessions were held on subjects such as "Giving to CBF through your local church." Parks once wrote, "A foreign missions minded church that is genuinely Southern Baptist gives its financial support through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, shapes its foreign mission program through the Foreign Mission Board, loves the missionaries sent out through the SBC Foreign Mission Board and faithfully prays for and identifies with them." That statement is as true today as it was when Parks made it. Parks once said he would not be trying to take money from the SBC missionaries. Now he says that the SBC

board has plenty of money and churches should feel free to give to CBF. Many current leaders of the SBC, including recent SBC presidents aligned with the pseudo-conservative resurgence, are known for giving poor support to SBC missionaries and urging their churches to support non-SBC missionaries. It is ironic that CBF leaders and churches are following in their footsteps.

When our missionaries are appointed in answer to God's call, they make a commitment to represent Southern Baptists in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ around the world. There is an understood commitment on the part of Southern Baptist churches that they will support them. When CBF churches take their money and prayer support away from our missionaries they are breaking that commitment in the same way leaders of the pseudo-conservative resurgence have for years. They are punishing our missionaries, not the political leaders or trustees. When William Carey answered a call to be the first Baptist missionary, he said, "I am willing to go down into the deep shaft, but you, my brethren, must hold the ropes." CBF churches are letting go of the ropes and leaving our missionaries in the hands of those with a loose grip.

I urge Arkansas Baptists to support neither political organization. We can change things by prayer and by electing leaders that put truth above politics.

Ron West

SBC foreign missionary
Taichung, Taiwan



◀ Medical team member Jerry Muse, a Piggott physician, examines a Romanian woman too ill to come into a mission clinic run by Arkansas volunteers. Her son had driven her there in a horse-drawn cart.

He noted that the accident "did not dampen" the group's spirits "or cause them to falter. Rather, it showed them they were joining the battle and were involved in spiritual warfare."

Gildewell strengthened that view, later telling Black at a hospital to "tell the people they are involved in spiritual warfare. We need to do battle.... We need to be involved in attacking Satan."

Neal's spirits also were not dampened. "I look like the bride of Frankenstein," she laughed, noting she had stitches from her nose to her hairline." She said Southern Baptist foreign missionary Kathy Kemper "showed me my face in a mirror and I couldn't believe it."

The second blow came shortly after the rest of the team arrived in Romania. An emergency call for team member Virginia Lederer, a member of First Church in Malvern, informed her that her husband, Fred, had suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized in critical condition back in Arkansas. Lederer and fellow medical team member Patsy Hossler, both nurses, returned to Arkansas the following day.

With the on-site coordinator and members of the evangelism and medical teams now out of commission, the only team left intact was the construction team, scheduled to begin construction on a new mission work in Calugareni.

■ *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12).*

Then the group witnessed a "third blow" to its efforts: The Calugareni church was not granted a building permit by local authorities, disabling the construction team's mission there.

"The local mayor had been influenced by the Romanian Orthodox Church," explained Black. "He tore up the request when it came across his desk."

If the team worked on the church, he noted, "we would have been issued a ticket and could have been taken to jail. This is a group unsympathetic to evangelicals."

A local CSI representative took the matter to a higher-ranking "district mayor," who granted the permit on May 23 — almost a week after the team was supposed to begin.

The construction team, which had joined in evangelistic outreach efforts, poured a concrete slab in the two days it was able to work, "but they could have done a lot more with the extra time," Black emphasized.

Volunteers to Romania claim spiritual victory

Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Team leader Harry Black has received several comments about a recent mission trip to Romania that proved full of hardships for the team. One described it as "a mission trip gone sour," while another told him, "It was just a bad mission trip — unlucky."

"My response is 'No,'" to those who believe the trip was unfortunate, Black answered. "We've been on the front line of spiritual warfare."

The spiritual warfare the team experienced also turned physical. The 22-member group of Arkansas Baptist volunteers, consisting of medical, construction and evangelism teams, endured persecution, family illness and injury during the May 15-28 trip.

The trip was a follow-up ministry to a May 1996 effort made by Arkansas Baptists as part of their missions partnership with the European Baptist Convention. The Arkansas team coordinated their efforts with Church Starts International, an independent church-starting organization that works in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Black recounted spiritual and physical

"blows" against the team as it sought to minister to Romanians in the city of Giurgiu and six surrounding villages.

■ *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him, since you are going through the struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have (Phil. 1:29-30).*

The first blow, he said, was a car accident that left two Arkansans and a CSI missionary severely injured. Samantha Neal and Steve Gildewell, members of East Side Church in Paragould, were both hospitalized; Neal with a broken arm and head wound and Gildewell with two broken legs. Gildewell and Neal, members of the group's evangelism team, had arrived in Romania a day before the rest of the group was scheduled to arrive.

Hornsbey suffered two broken legs, a crushed foot and abdominal bleeding. He was to have coordinated the group's ministry efforts during the trip.

Black and other team members received news of the accident while on their way to Romania. He said that although "they were visibly shaken out of concern, they immediately went to prayer. For the rest of the trip, every breath was a prayer — constant prayer."

"Not having the building permit or doing the physical building we went for was a disappointment," admitted construction team member Mitch Tanksley, a member of Brush Creek Church in Springdale. "Everyone was praying for that permit. That was part of our going: To get them that permit through prayer. Without the prayers, I don't know if they would have gotten it."

■ *We do not want you to be unformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered...We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life (II Cor. 1:8).*

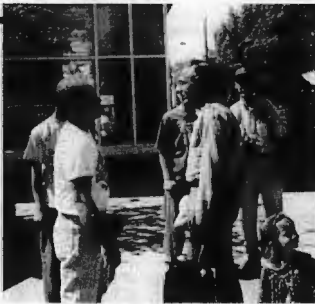
Evangelism team member Nelle O'Bryan, a member of Life Line Church in Little Rock, noted that the group soon encountered other problems.

The team performed street evangelism and launched the National Bible-Reading Crusade, an evangelism and discipleship study designed to be started by mission groups and completed by nationals.

In addition to recognizing that there had not been "a lot of progress in the church-building project from last year," she said, the group also was persecuted by Romanian Orthodox Church clergy.

"In one village, the priests rang the bells of the church at an unscheduled time" to disrupt their witnessing efforts, she said. A priest also "tried to keep the people out of the Romanian Baptist church by placing a stick with tar on it into the lock on the front door," preventing the opening of the church door.

Black also fell while playing with a group of Romanian children and injured his knee. Days later, medical team member Jerry Muse, a doctor from First Church in Piggott, examined Black's injury. "He told me, 'You are physically and emotionally exhausted and to get off the evangelism team and stay off my leg,'" Black said.



Volunteer Mitch Tanksley of Springdale witnesses on a Romanian street as part of the team's evangelism efforts that resulted in 304 decisions.

"I was unhappy and I cried and got mad," he recalled, "not at God, not at Jerry, but because I couldn't share."

■ *For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows (II Cor. 1:5).*

While the team endured sufferings, they also saw victories. The group recorded 304 spiritual decisions, held more than 1,000 medical consultations and laid the foundation for a new church.

O'Bryan said the decision cards may represent only a small portion of decisions made because of illiteracy and crowded, confused conditions. She also explained that although the Giurgiu church was not completed, attendance had doubled in a year and that "the church has sent out several...to start new churches."

Tanksley found victory even though he and other construction team members were hampered by the blocked building permit. "In my particular situation, God was using that to guide me into doing some other things on the trip and opening my heart for other things.

"In past mission trips, I always put construction in front of evangelism," he noted. "Harry got hurt and I took his place on the evangelism team. I went with a hammer and a nail bag and ended up carrying tracts and a Bible. God used me to lead 14 people to salvation."

Despite the priests' efforts, he added, "fifty children and many new adults attended church Sunday morning, causing the building to overflow."

Neal even found victory in her accident on her first day in Romania: It called attention to the need for prayer for her and others of the group. "I believe that God used a circumstance for good that Satan intended for bad. I can't tell you the number of people who prayed for me and were aware of not only our problems, but were aware there was a mission trip.

"If not for that incident, there would not have been people praying all over," she said. "He knew we had enough faith to handle it. I wouldn't hesitate to go again and, in fact, it was hard to leave."

She also found comfort in her suffering "even when they airlifted Steve and me to Germany. For two hours I lay on a metal table in a hallway. I was in pain. I think they had forgotten about me. At the end of the two hours, I said, 'Lord, I really need some help. I can't take this much longer.'" She finished that prayer "and in walked Larry Cox, who is with the EBC and was one of our contacts."

"He was an American and he knew my name," she said. "From that moment on, I had peace."

Reflecting on the trials and joys of the trip, Black concluded, "There is no way I could know why Satan attacked us so strongly. It makes me wonder why Satan is not doing this more at home. He attacks us when we are scaring him — but he just does not scare him much."

Following auto accident in Romania Injured mission volunteers continue to recover

Two Arkansans and a foreign missionary continue to recover from severe injuries sustained in a May 15 car accident in Giurgiu, Romania. The three were part of a two-week mission trip to the Giurgiu area as part of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's mission partnership with the European Baptist Convention.

Samantha Neal, a member of East Side Church in Paragould, was initially

hospitalized in Giurgiu with a broken arm and head wound. Steve Glidewell, also an East Side member, was admitted to the hospital with both of his legs broken.

Glidewell and Neal, members of the group's evangelism team, arrived in Romania a day before the rest of the group was scheduled to arrive. The two were riding in a van driven by Jim Hornsby, a missionary with Church Stars International,

when they were struck in a head-on collision with a truck. All three of the injured were eventually airlifted to Wiesbaden, Germany, to receive better quality medical attention.

Neal is recovering at home following her return to Paragould May 28, while Glidewell is expected to be transferred to a Memphis hospital June 12. He has begun physical therapy and updates from EBC personnel indicate

that he has been able to put weight on one of his injured legs.

Hornsby, who suffered two broken legs, a crushed foot and abdominal bleeding, was moved out of intensive care June 2 following surgery to remove a part of one leg below the knee. A serious bacterial infection hindered his healing, but doctors in Germany have located an antibiotic to which he is now responding.



ETERNAL LIFE

AND THEN YOU WILL GO TO
HEAVEN WITH US

'You can use this tract'

Rural Hopewell Church near Harrison uses 'Eternal Life' tract to win the lost

Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

The story of Hopewell Church's incredible growth through evangelism is simple: It began with a sermon and a tract. Hopewell, a rural congregation six miles north of Harrison, has recorded 35 baptisms since last June and another 35 have joined the church by letter.

The 25 baptized in 1996 put the church near the top of the list of baptisms by ratio among churches with resident memberships of 100 to 199. Last year, it took only 4.6 members at Hopewell to lead a person to Christ and to baptism.

Hopewell's love for evangelism is newly found. Pastor Sam Dunham said it began "about a year ago with a sermon on personal evangelism. I held up the blue 'Eternal Life' tract and told them, 'If you have the love of Jesus in your heart, you can use this tract to win people to Him.'"

Dunham had come to respect the tract, produced by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, when he served as a pastor in Arizona. He recalled that his friend Nathan Pillow, evangelism director for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, had used the piece with success.

"Nathan led an old Hispanic man to the Lord and gave the man the tract," Dunham said during the sermon. "A few days later, he saw Nathan again and asked him for another copy. He had worn it out. He had led several people to the Lord and 11 followed him in baptism."

Following that sermon, he said, several of the 30 church members in attendance asked him for copies of Eternal Life. He gave them all the church had in stock. They asked for more. The church had to re-order. In the past year, members have handed out more than 1,600 tracts.

"It was our newest Christians" who got most involved, he explained, "still walking in their first love."

Dunham, encouraged by the eagerness of witnessing members, started a Lay Evangelism School with 10 members. "I wanted to give them a doctrinal basis. We started with *The Baptist Faith and Message*. You can teach people to win souls, but without a doctrinal base, they fizzle out."

A second and third school were started. Eighteen members have now been through the training and received certification.

Member Kent Decker was among the first to receive the training and begin witnessing. "Me and my wife rededicated our lives a year ago. We got active in working with the youth. We had a real burden for them."

He said the Lay Evangelism classes "got me more familiar with giving my testimony and praying with my prayer partner. I was brought up in a dead Baptist church. I decided there was going to be more to church."

Children's Sunday School teacher Tina Edwards said the evangelism training means that "God's Word is our focus." She emphasized the importance of leading children "to hide that Word in their hearts."

Even amid the spiritual victories, Edwards pointed out that members are "normal" people. While the training gave her the tools to witness, she said, "It doesn't mean we're not scared."

Pastor Dunham is anxious to involve others in the church's growth. Greeting people at the front door of the church prior to a recent Sunday service, he told a visitor, "We need you and we've got a job for you in there."

He had told Andy Grinder the same thing when Grinder accepted Christ last



Members of Hopewell Church near Harrison have centered their evangelism efforts on lay evangelism, youth ministry and the use of tracts.

June. Grinder immediately began to work with youth.

Grinder said that while helping other members lead a youth rally at another church, "the Spirit moved and we had 50 kids come forward and there were only three of us.

"I had never seen anything like that," he recalled. "You become a new Christian and you look up a month or so later and see that many kids coming forward."

The increased outreach has resulted in increased numbers and an increased need for space. The congregation has begun preparing an area for a multipurpose center for classes and youth ministry.

Much of the church's outreach efforts focus on youth. Wednesday night activities regularly draw as many as 100 "Bridge Crossers," as youth are called. The adults provide "Bridge Builders" leadership.

Youth director Richard Brisco explained that Bridge Builders major on "sincerity and dependability — and trying to get the kids to Jesus Christ."

"There have been a lot of defeats" during witnessing efforts, acknowledged Decker, who also works with youth. "But there have been a lot of victories, too."

He told of witnessing to a boy who had come to the church one Wednesday night to pick up his sister. "He was sitting on the back pew and we witnessed to him. I asked him what would happen if he drove off from the church and was killed in a car wreck.

"He said, 'I'd go straight to hell,'" Decker noted. "The next Sunday he gave it all up to the Lord. It was one of the greatest things I've ever seen."



Fatherhood in the '90s

What qualities help make a man a good father?

Jared Pruitt has never seen his father. But, later this month, Pruitt, a 22-year-old ballroom dance instructor in Little Rock, will meet his father — who separated from his mother before his birth — for the first time.

"I'm not looking for an explanation, or to have him explain things," Pruitt said of the upcoming meeting. "I really just want to sit down and chat with him and get to know him and see what we can do for the next 22 years."

Regardless of how well or how poorly a father has related to a child, said J.D. Stake, a counselor and director of the Ministry of Crisis Support for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, "a father is always a force or a factor in his children's life for good or bad."

"I have some 40-year-old clients with 60-year-old fathers who were poor models and the child is still struggling with those issues," he said. "On the other hand, some of the healthiest, most productive people I know had a good relationship with their father growing up and the impact he made on them as children is still in effect today."

Stake, the father of three, said he has seen "a renewed interest" in fatherhood "in the last few years, primarily through the work of men's groups such as Promise Keepers. The backdrop of that is the '70s and '80s, where there was an increase of kids growing up in single-parent families without much contact with their fathers."

He noted that "problems" men encounter as fathers in the '90s "lead to instability and insecurity" in children. "Instability has more to do with behavior patterns and insecurity has more to do with emotional patterns or relationships. The role of the father may be the critical issue in healthy development." Those factors include:

■ **Working mothers.** "With the mother in the work world, she has less time to stay at home and be the principal parent," he said. "It places a demand on fathers to be more involved in parenting."

■ **The husband-wife relationship.** "A lot of the problems have to do with the relationship with the father and his wife," he added. "Where there are two parents, the relationship of the parents is critical to the healthy development of the child. Not only does a father have to be committed to fatherhood, he has to commit himself to his wife. Children need to see authentic love demonstrated between parents."

■ **Parental unity and consistency.** "Unity would be demonstrated in two parents being in agreement on discipline, activities and support in the school. Parents should be consistent — either consistently lenient or tight on their rules."

■ **Lack of parenting skills.** "One that comes to mind is understanding the developmental process of children," Stake said. "You need to know what characteristics occur at different ages, so your expectations can be realistic."

The greatest problem Stake noted, is the need

for "quality time, not just quantity time" between a father and child. "Quality time has to be defined by what takes place in the relationship when the parent and child are together."

According to Reg Hamman, a Little Rock businessman, the top priority is quantity time. "Nothing replaces time," he said. "Not quality time, because you don't know when the child is going to have that. You can't put that (quality time) in the calendar."

Hamman, the father of two sons, said that while his sons were younger, "I was at every ball game, every play and every event that was important to them — I sacrificed to be there."

Hamman believes in fatherhood. His love for the institution even led him and his family to care for seven foster children, but he said fatherhood is a challenge.

"The biggest struggle is realizing that you can do everything right and still have regrets and still be challenged.... You just fight guilt all the time — 'I wish I'd done more.' But look at the positive things you did instead of the negative."

Stake noted that a man who is in a step-fathering relationship also can make good fathering decisions by "first concentrating on his relationship with the mother and second, developing a quality relationship with the child."

"Being a stepfather is more difficult because of the breakup of the family of origin," he acknowledged, "so be flexible, be knowledgeable of the dynamics of blending families and try to be consistent and persistent in assuming the role of the father."

Pruitt underscored the need for fathers' active participation in the lives of their children. He said that while growing up, "I don't remember having a male figure for any length of time. I had my grandad and an uncle who was more of a father to me and that wasn't bad, but they didn't take the place of a dad."

The biggest struggle is realizing that you can do everything right and still have regrets and still be challenged.... You just fight guilt all the time.

REG HAMMAN
Father of two,
foster parent of seven

'Quality time' for fathers

"Quality time" is necessary for a good parent-child relationship, said Christian counselor J.D. Stake. Below are some of his ingredients for "what takes place" during quality time:

■ **Affirmation.** "You affirm the worth and value of the child verbally by what you say, such as, 'You're a neat person,' or 'I'm glad I'm your dad,' or in a humorous tone, 'You're going to have a great future. It takes a minute to affirm a child, but the feeling lasts a lifetime.'"

■ **Touch.** "Physical touch, appropriate touch," he said, including "hugs. That says two things: 'I love you and I care about you' and 'You have value and worth.'"

■ **Transferring the values of service.** "Some call it voluntary work, community service or church service. It's a form of discipling, teaching by example. It affords teachable moments when you have projects and are serving together. Taking your children on a mission trip is more valuable than teaching them about missions."

■ **Teaching family traditions and values.** "If they do not learn those things early at home, the chance of learning them on their own is not great," he noted, urging "gathering as an extended family. It helps the kids in a whole area of responsibility for older and younger members of family."

■ **Modeling role definition.** "This is controversial because of (secular) views in differentiation in male and female roles," Stake said. "When I look back at my fathering, I saw myself as a discipler. My focus was to demonstrate how you treat others appropriately. My goal was that they be kind, caring and courteous. I treated (my wife) Jean with respect."

WEE Workshops to offer preschool ministry training

A two-day series of Weekday Early Education (WEE) Workshops will offer participants training for day care, preschools and Mother's Day Out programs during its 25th anniversary year. The WEE Workshops, to be held July 31-Aug. 1 on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University, will offer participants choices of 26 session topics.

Workshop coordinator Janet Williams, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, said the training will help "directors and staff of weekday early education childhood programs" such as day care, Mother's Day Out and preschools "in churches, private centers or institutions."

Williams said the small-group workshops will include such topics as licensing, room set-up, child development, medical issues, parenting skills, legal issues, playgrounds, childhood play, WEE Learn curriculum, "Rhyme, Rhythm and Creative Movement," resources, computers, art and literature.

The program, which will begin each day at 8 a.m. and conclude at 5:10 p.m., also will include general sessions featuring speakers Snookie Dixon, minister of education for First Church in Arkadelphia, speaking about "Surviving the Storms!" and Bill Viser, OBU professor of religion, discussing "The Development of Values in Young Children."

Also featured will be Barbara Massey of national Woman's Missionary Union, who Williams said "will deal with helping parents develop their parenting skills and helping develop their ministry to children."

A special Thursday evening celebration will begin at 6 p.m. in the fellowship hall of First Church in Arkadelphia near the OBU campus. The celebration will include a buffet dinner, a 25th anniversary cake, recognition of past WEE Workshop presenters and "Creative Nylon Hose" by Brenda Wood.

WEE Workshop training will apply toward training hours required by the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

The cost for the workshops is \$25 per person and includes both days of programming and the Thursday evening buffet. Limited housing is available in OBU dormitories for an additional \$12 per night.

For more information or to register by the July 15 deadline, contact Williams at the ABSC Sunday School department toll-free at 1-800-838-ABSC, or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5128.

The State Children's Choir Leader Workshops "will bring training closer to everyone" through five regional locations in August, said workshop planner Peggy Pearson. The workshops will be held on the following dates and at these locations: Aug. 4 at First Church in Fayetteville; Aug. 5 at East Side Church in Paragould; Aug. 7 at Second Church in Monticello; Aug. 8 at First Church in Hope; and Aug. 9 at First Church in Conway. The weekday workshops will begin at 6 p.m. and the Saturday workshop (Aug. 9) will begin at 9 a.m. Pearson, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, said the workshops will offer "the most up-to-date information and resources for children's choir leading today." She noted that the program's special emphasis, "Families at Worship," will lead both parents and choir leaders to discover practical ways and resources for worship with their families at home." Conference leaders will include John Paul Moccia, Carrie Taylor, Cyndy Hewell, Mary Winters, Kathy Bettis, Rusty Hart and Pearson. The cost is \$10 per person prior to July 21 and \$15 per person after that date. Call ext. 5121 for more information.

Developing Money Management Skills will be the subject of three free conferences sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention stewardship department. The conferences will be held: Aug. 11 at North Park Church in Van Buren; Aug. 12 at First Church in Nashville; and Aug. 14 at Second Church in Monticello. Department director James Walker said money often is the source of problems in marriages and in churches. "Money is the No. 1 cause of divorce and a lot of families can't give what they want to their churches because they are stressed financially. The answer may not be more money, but better money management." He added that the conference will appeal to "church leaders and members who want to become better money managers." He explained that the programs, each of which will begin at 7 p.m., "will be tailored to personal finances" and will use *Five Steps to Successful Money Management* as the basis for the conference. There is no cost and no advance registration is needed. Call Walker at ext. 5114 for more information.

Little Rock judge John Ward will be the featured speaker at a special prayer breakfast July 12 at the Statehouse Convention Center at 8 a.m., sponsored by Central Arkansas Men of Integrity. Planner Ken Palmquist said the breakfast, with the theme, "Marriage: Not Just an Adventure," is "for all the men of central Arkansas and their wives and will be a special time of prayer, praise and worship." Ward, a circuit judge and chairman of the Supreme Court Committee on Civil Practice, is a member of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock and Gideons International. Tickets are \$10 per couple in advance and \$12 per couple at the door. For more information or to register, call 501-888-6864.

The Common Ground Worship Conference, jointly sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Baptist state conventions of Arkansas, Kansas-Nebraska, Missouri and Oklahoma, will be held Aug. 21-23 at First Baptist Church in Branson, Mo. Rob Hewell, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, said the program "is aimed at worship leaders—pastors, ministers of music, accompanists and dramatists" in local churches. The program will include keynote speakers Harold Best, retired dean of the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music in Wheaton, Ill., and author of *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, and Calvin Miller, well-known author and professor of communication and ministry studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The cost for the conference is \$50 per person. Participants are responsible for their own lodging and meals. For a list of hotels or conference information, contact Hewell at ext. 5121.

For more information about ABSC-related training events and activities, call toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791

**TRAINING
UPDATE**



▲ Arkansas Baptists sent 27 volunteers to flood-ravaged East Grand Forks, Minn., in May and June as part of a Southern Baptist relief effort in the North Dakota and Minnesota region.

Arkansas disaster relief director Harry Black said three groups of child care volunteers worked May 9-23 and "mud-out" cleaning crews served May 19-23 and June 2-6. He said Arkansas clean-up teams helped residents tear out sheetrock and carpet, move trash to streets (above) and disinfect homes.

Mud-out crews are still needed. Volunteers — who need to be able to pay their own expenses — may call Black at 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5158, for more information.



◀ Remount Church in North Little Rock broke ground May 28 for a \$399,000 sanctuary that will be built to replace the one destroyed by fire on March 30, 1996. Marvin Peters (left), director of missions for North Pulaski Association, was guest speaker and he and church deacons broke ground. Matt Mosler of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock provided music. Former pastors were special guests.



▲ The May 25 dedication of a new worship center by First Church of Lockesburg capped a five-year building program. The 13,828-square-foot facility was constructed through volunteer labor efforts of church members. The new facility includes a 500-seat sanctuary, pastor's study, Sunday school office, nursery, preschool department, seven class rooms, choir room and restrooms. Ray McDonald is pastor.

arkansas album



◀ More than 340 members of Northwest Association gathered at First Church in Centerton May 20 to hear a missions message and raise funds for a church-starting endowment fund. The event was held to benefit Church Planters, an associational mission awareness auxiliary, and to raise money to fund a church planter. Participants pledged or gave \$30,000 and 100 pledged their participation in associational missions.

The program featured Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff (left), who issued a challenge to missions.

The master of ceremonies was Ben Rowell, pastor of First Church in Rogers. Robert Hull of First Church in Gentry and Ben Jackson of Open Door Church in Rogers are co-chairmen.

Boyce graduates six



Six Arkansans received the diploma in Christian ministry during a June 4 graduation ceremony at the Baptist Building in Little Rock. The class was honored at Boyce Bible School's "first formally recognized" graduation ceremony, according to Burton Perry, assistant director for theological education for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Boyce is a division of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The graduates include (left to right): Joe Bratton, Gary Fletcher and Kevin Gupton, all from Jacksonville; Michael Hansberry and Dale Scott of North Little Rock; and Frank Shepherd of Sherwood. Other recent Arkansas graduates include George Vorhease of Crossett, who earned the diploma in theology from Southwestern Seminary, and Bradley Jurkovich of Springdale, who earned the bachelor of arts in biblical studies from Southeastern Seminary.

people & places

COMPILED BY MILLIE GILL

CHURCH LIFE

Park Hill Church of North Little Rock music ministry will present a "Patriotic Spectacular in the Park" June 29 at 8 p.m. Featuring the sanctuary choir, youth choir and a 30-piece orchestra, the program will be led by minister of music Joe Fitzpatrick. It will be held at Lakewood Village Pavilion and will include an armed forces color guard and a military aircraft fly-by.

Hughes First Church will observe its 75th anniversary June 29 with Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., a worship service at 10:55 a.m. and a noon potluck meal which will be followed by an afternoon musical program.

Mount Pisgah Church of Jonesboro observed homecoming May 18 with a program that featured Harold Ray, director of missions for Mount Zion Association, as speaker and the Gibson Family as musicians. Leland Worlow is pastor.

Carlisle First Church ordained Larry Buffalo and Steve Reed as deacons May 4.

TRANSITIONS

Danny L. Johnson was named director of missions for Ashley County Association at the May 20 meeting of the association's executive board. Johnson, who will assume his duties July 1, has been serving since 1988 as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary to the Philippines. He also has been pastor of Arkansas churches, including First Church of Strong, Cedar Grove of Arkadelphia, First Church of Yorktown and Ladelle Church of Monticello. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Monticello and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Cheryl, are both natives of Monticello. They have two children, Dustin and Britney.

Michael Kent Harmon is pastor of Mount Zion Church of Greenwood. He previously served churches in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Harmon attended Westark Community College, Edison State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Linda, have three children, Shawn Patrick, Heather Amber and Heidi Michelle.

Jim Flora began serving June 1 as pastor of Black Rock Church, coming there from Bucyrus, Mo. He and his wife, Teresa, have three children, Jim Jr., Jacob and Jason.

Michael R. Hart began serving June 9 as pastor of Calvary Church in Fort Smith, coming there from Rye Hill Church in Fort Smith where he was associate pastor. He

previously was pastor of churches in Mississippi, Missouri and Oklahoma. Hart is a graduate of Southeastern Baptist College and has attended Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Cindy, have two children, Amber and Joshua.

Edward Gibbie McMillan began serving June 1 as pastor of Lakeside Church of Rogers. He came there from Baton Rouge, La., where he was interim pastor of South Oaks Church and a chaplain for the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections. He also has served churches in Louisiana and Mississippi. McMillan is a graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary. He and his wife, Katera, have two children, Rachel Elizabeth and Rebekah O'Zell.

Rick Hassel began serving June 1 as pastor of Witts Chapel of Maynard. He previously was pastor of Old Spanish Trail Church of Houston. Hassel and his wife, Melinda, have three children, Travis, Brandon and Ashley.

Anton "Buddy" Uth of Searcy is pastor of First Church in Cotton Plant. He previously served Crosby Church, Trinity Church of Searcy, Immanuel Church of Danville, Immanuel Church of Pine Bluff, First Church of Searcy, First Church of Dardanelle and Palestine Church as well as churches in Texas and Mississippi. Uth is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Joan, have three adult children.

W. Eric Smith III will begin his ministry June 15 as pastor of Forrest Park Church in Pine Bluff, coming there from Fort Worth, Texas, where he has been minister of youth and music at First Church of Forest Hill. He is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Smith is married to the former Denise Hewitt, also a graduate of Baylor University. They have two children, Beau Wesley and Hadley Ashlyn.

Byron Kennedy is bivocational pastor of Bethany Church of Georgetown. An employee of Central Arkansas Hospital Home Health, he also has served McJester Church of Pangburn. Kennedy and his wife, Rebekah, have a son, Brandon.

Chris Reade is bivocational pastor of Old Union Church of Benton. Reade, who will be ordained to the ministry by the church June 29, is owner and operator of Reade Automotive in Bryant. He and his wife, Dennisa, have three children, Terri, Michael and Bradley.

Charles Jones of North Little Rock is pastor of Victory Church of Conway. He previously served Emmanuel Church of Conway and was associate pastor of Gethsemane Church in North Little Rock. Jones is the mechanical electrical engineer at the Arkansas State Capitol in Little Rock. He attended Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Northwestern State College in Natchitoches, La., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Sue, have two adult children.

Jeremy Stockert joined the staff of Second Church of Little Rock June 1 as minister to young families and children, coming there from Tempe, Ariz., where he has been associate director of the Baptist Student Union at Arizona State University and minister to college students for First Southern Church on Mill. He previously served churches in Texas. Stockert is a graduate of Arkansas State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Andrea Pratt, also a graduate of Arkansas State University. They are parents of infant twins, Caleb and Caitlyn.

Bill Chaney retired June 1 as minister of music for Temple Church in Benton, following seven years of ministry there and concluding 32 years of service as a music minister. He previously served at Owensville Church and Gravel Hill Church of Benton. Retiring with him will be his wife, Myriah, who has been the pianist during his entire ministry.

Billy Davis has joined the staff of Wynne Church as minister of music, coming there from First Church of Ozark. He previously served as a staff member of churches in Trumann, Jonesboro, Brinkley and Batesville, as well as in Lebanon, Mo. Davis is a graduate of Williams Baptist College, Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Arkansas State University. He also attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Terry, have six children, Rachelle, Daniel, Valerie, Timothy, Will and Clayton.

Walt Noyman joined the staff of First Church in Harrison June 8 as youth pastor, coming there from First Church of Trumann. He previously served as associate youth director for First Church of Arkadelphia. A native of Jonesboro, he is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University.

Charles Kitts has joined the staff of First Church of Kensett as minister of music. He previously served on the staff of Temple, Valley and Trinity churches, all of Searcy. Kitts and his wife, Pearlene, have two sons, William and Robert.

Sidney Jackson of Searcy has joined the staff of First Church of McRae as minister to youth. He previously served First Church and West Race Church, both in Searcy. He also has served churches in Texas and

Georgia. Jackson is a graduate of Mercer University in Macon, Ga., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Mary, have two children, Sid and Katie.

James Harrison is serving as minister of music for First Church of Royal. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

Jay Brooks of Batesville is interim minister of youth for First Church of Camden. He is a recent graduate of Ouachita Baptist University.

Mark Pilkington of Sheridan is summer youth intern for West Church in Batesville. He is a sophomore at Williams Baptist College.

Joy Ploszay and Stacy Stuart, students at Ouachita Baptist University, are serving as summer interns at First Church of Carlisle. Their ministry responsibilities will include working with children, youth and singles.

Janey Taylor of Little Rock is serving as summer youth intern at First Church of Hamburg. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

Kimberly Anne Bounds of Benton is summer intern for Trinity Church of Fort Smith. She is a student at Williams Baptist College.

Denise Horwood of Ashdown is serving as summer children's and youth intern at First Church of Warren. She is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University.

Heather McNutt and Bobby Fairles began serving June 8 as youth and children's summer interns at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock. McNutt is a junior at Ouachita Baptist University. Fairles, a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been a youth minister in Oklahoma and an intern at the New York City Mission.

Phillip Greer is summer youth intern for First Church of Sherwood. He will be a senior at Ouachita Baptist University this fall. His home church is Second Church of Hot Springs.

Timothy Wayne Whodbee of Mansfield is summer intern for music and children at New Hope Church of Greenwood. He is a sophomore at Ouachita Baptist University.

Jimmy Holness has resigned as minister of youth at First Church of Cedarville to join the staff of First Church of Danville.

Scott Cox recently resigned as pastor of Freeman Heights Church in Berryville, following more than four years of ministry. He and his wife, Loree, and daughter, Kylee, have moved to Hartford, Ala., where he will be pastor of Hartford Church.

Dean Smith, associate pastor of Freeman Heights Church in Berryville, is serving the church as interim pastor. He is the retired pastor of Alpena Church.

Tony Preston is interim pastor of First Church of Avoca. Preston is a visiting

professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with the responsibility of developing a diploma program throughout the midwest. He has been pastor of First Church of Bentonville, as well as other churches in Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas.

Billy Bowles has resigned as minister of music at First Church of Osceola, effective June 15. He and his wife, Betty, and their son, Rodney, will move to Gulfport, Miss., where he will serve on the staff of a Southern Baptist church.

OBITUARIES

Robert K. Hettinga, 65, of Dardanelle died May 19 at University Medical Center in Little Rock. He was a retired administrator of First Church of Russellville where he also served as a deacon and Sunday School teacher. In addition, Hettinga was a trustee of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries. A U.S. Army veteran, he also was a member of the Arkansas Valley Woodcarvers Association. Survivors are his wife, JoAnn Hettinga; a son, Randall W. Hettinga of Danville; one daughter, Melanie Posey of Russellville; three grandchildren; three brothers; and one sister. Memorials may be made to the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Myron L. Smith of Little Rock died May 19 at age 52. He was a member of Pine Grove Church of Little Rock where he was serving as chairman of deacons. A retired Southern Baptist minister, he had served as pastor of Shady Grove Church of Little Rock and East End Church of Hensley. He also had been associate pastor of Sunset Lane Church of Little Rock and minister of education for 47th Street Church of North Little Rock. He was a Vietnam veteran. Survivors are his wife, Jo Ann Smith; two daughters, Angie Smith of North Little Rock and Samantha Brown of Bryant; two step-sons, Tony and Terry Trantham of Little Rock and North Little Rock; his mother, Roberta Mae Smith of Springfield, Ill; five step-grandchildren; and three sisters. Memorials may be made to the Pine Grove Church or the American Cancer Society.

Robert Dean Cox of Harrison died May 20 at age 71. A retired Baptist minister, he had served Parthenon and Hopewell churches, both in North Arkansas Association. Survivors are his wife, Dorothy Cox; two sons, Steve and Doug Cox of Harrison; two sisters and three grandchildren.

Margaret Marie Fowler Hardin, 87, a lifetime resident of the Malvern area, died June 2 at her Malvern home as a result of cancer. A memorial service was held June 5 at First Church of Malvern where she had

been an active member for 76 years, including 60 years as a Sunday School teacher and 50 years in Woman's Missionary Union leadership positions. Survivors are two sons, Jack Hardin of Hot Springs and Lon Hardin of Prattville; two daughters, Suzanne Mathews of North Little Rock and Rebecca Schomburg of Dittmer, Mo.; 14 grandchildren; and 18 great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to First Church of Malvern.

Harlan M. Hogg of North Little Rock died June 2 at age 72. A North Little Rock businessman and a Baptist minister for 30 years, he had been pastor of Holly Springs Church of Little Rock, Holland Church of Vilonia, Zion Hill Church of Cabot and Old Austin Church of Austin. Survivors are his wife, Mildred Bruce Hogg; a son, Mike Hogg; a daughter, Diane Hogg Medlock; one grandson; and one brother.

MILESTONES

Bill Eliff observed his fifth anniversary as pastor of First Church in Little Rock June 8. The church recognized him in the morning worship service and honored him and his family with an evening reception.

Tom Lowry was honored May 25 by Little Rock Second Church. He retired May 31 as minister to senior adults, following five years of service. Lowry, who was presented with a love offering, was also honored at the May 28 evening meal where he was presented with a retirement cake.

Bonetta Maxwell was honored with a reception June 1 by First Church of Benton in recognition of 30 years of ministry as director and teacher in the church's Weekday Preschool. Maxwell, who has announced her retirement, was presented with flowers by children of the preschool as they sang, "Thank You." She was presented with a weekend trip, a monetary gift and a memory book by the church.

J. Cyrus Moore and **Doyle Simmons** were named as deacons emeritus June 8 by Central Church of North Little Rock. Moore, who joined the church in 1926, served as a deacon for 50 years years, 1947-97. Simmons, who joined in 1959, served 27 years, 1966-93.

Jeff Paxton, pastor of First Church of Dover, recently received his doctor of ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta, Ga. He is a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board.

W. Coy Sample, pastor of Central Church in Hot Springs, will lead a series of studies on 1 Corinthians during June's Explore the Bible program on Hot Springs Resort Cable Channel 5. The studies will be presented on Tuesday evenings at 9:30 and repeated at the same hour on Sunday evenings.

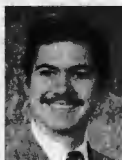
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Five candidates for SBC offices announced

Candidates for the Southern Baptist Convention's top three elected offices have been announced in preparation for next week's SBC annual meeting in Dallas.

SBC president Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., is expected to be unopposed for a second one-year term as convention president. He will be nominated by Ralph M. Smith, pastor emeritus of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas.

Miles Seaborn and Dennis Hansen will be nominated as SBC first vice president.

Seaborn, pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, will be nominated by Stan Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Baptist Church in Amarillo, Texas.

Seaborn, a former missionary to the Philippines, is a trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also is president of Southern Baptists of Texas, a statewide conservative organization. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Seminary.

Hansen is director of missions for Bay Lakes Baptist Association in northeastern Wisconsin. He will be nominated for first vice president by Tim Shrader, pastor of Celebration Fellowship Baptist Church, a mission congregation in Oshkosh, Wis.

Hansen, a native of Kansas, has led Bay Lakes Association for four years. He previously was director of evangelism for the Iowa Southern Baptist Convention and served 15 years as pastor of churches in Missouri and Kansas. He is a graduate of Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, Mo., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

J.C. Mitchell and Bill Wagner will be nominated for second vice president.

Mitchell, a former president of the Florida Baptist Convention, is the retired pastor of First Baptist Church, Winter Park, Fla., where he served 20 years. He currently is president of Senior Partners for Planting New Churches, an organization enlisting volunteers in planting new churches.

Mitchell, a former member of the SBC Executive Committee, will be nominated by Steve Cloud of Columbia, S.C.

Wagner, professor of evangelism and missions at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, is an emeritus foreign missionary who spent more than 30 years on the mission field.

He will be nominated by Cal Guy, professor emeritus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.



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FMB trustees name new regional team leaders

Arkansas native David Garrison has been named associate vice president for strategy coordination and mobilization for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Garrison, 40, currently a field associate area director for Cooperative Services International, previously led the FMB's nonresidential missionary program.

Garrison, a native of Camden, will work with missions leaders around the world to develop evangelism and church-planting strategies to bring a lost world to Christ.

"God is drawing all the peoples of the earth to Himself," Garrison emphasized, "and our strategic role is to do whatever it takes to hasten that event."

FMB trustees also approved a new team of regional leaders. The appointments become effective July 1.

Recommended by the board's senior executive team during the FMB trustee meeting June 2-4, the new positions grew out of the reconfiguration of the board's overseas division from nine geographical areas and one non-geographical area to 14 new "regions." The regions encompass every nation on earth.

Although no FMB personnel were terminated during the reorganization, six area directors were not named as new regional leaders. Each is being given a year's furlough and is being asked to return to missionary status with a new field assignment. Among the six, three were offered positions as regional leaders but declined for various reasons.

The six are Joe Bruce of Middle America and Canada, John Faulkner of Eastern and Southern Africa, Bill Goff of Spanish South America, Faye Pearson of East Asia, Mike Stroope of Cooperative Services International and Dale Thorne of the Middle East and North Africa.

Those named by FMB trustees as new regional leaders are:

■ Bill Fudge, Eastern Asia region. He is now a missionary with CSI in East Asia.

■ Mark Morris, Central and Southern Asia region. Before joining CSI in 1989, he was a general evangelist in South Africa.

■ Tom Williams, Western Pacific region. He currently is field associate to the area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific.

■ Clyde Meador, Southeast Asia and Oceania region. He is now area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific.

■ John D. Floyd, Central and Eastern Europe region. He is now area director for all of Europe.

■ Eddie W. Cox, Western Europe region. Since 1994, he has served as field associate to the area director for Europe from a base in Wiesbaden, Germany.

■ J. Larry Cox, Middle East and North Africa region. He now works as associate

to the area director in Europe.

■ R. Gordon Fort, Southern Africa region. He now serves as an associate to the area director for Eastern and Southern Africa.

■ Bill E. Phillips, Western Africa region. He now serves as area director of West Africa, which is similar to his new region.

■ Jon Sapp, Eastern Africa region. He

now serves as a strategy associate to the area director for Eastern and Southern Africa.

■ Robin Hadaway, Eastern South America region. He now serves with CSI in North Africa.

■ Ronald B. Wilson, Caribbean Basin region. He is area director for Brazil and the Caribbean. RICHMOND, VA (BP)

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Killer storm

Texas Baptists respond quickly to storm victims

Baptist volunteers responded quickly to victims of killer storms which obliterated a subdivision near Jarrell, Texas, killing at least 27 people. The storms also damaged the Austin suburb of Cedar Park, causing at least two deaths, and spread violence across central Texas May 28.

The most destructive tornado — said to be one of the most powerful ever in Texas — cut a path about three-quarters of a mile wide and five miles long, wiping out Double Creek Estates near Jarrell.

Max Johnson, bivocational pastor of First Baptist Church, Jarrell, said 10 church members were among the 27 known dead, including the church's minister of music, Larry Igo, and his family.

Igo, who operated a business restoring classic Chevrolets in Jarrell, lived with his family near the center of the subdivision. His wife, Joan, their daughter, Audrey, 17, and twin sons, John and Paul, 15, are among the confirmed dead.

Texas Baptists moved immediately to Jarrell where a headquarters was set up at First Baptist to provide food and counseling for victims, families, townspeople and relief workers.

The storm was so strong it picked up asphalt from the subdivision's roads and even pulled grass from the ground. National Weather Service observers at the scene said the storm probably contained winds in excess of 260 miles per hour.

One rescue worker said it was like "a giant broom swept the whole area...like someone just came and wiped it clean."

Texas Baptist resources began to arrive during the night, as Tommy Dulin, a member of River Hills Baptist Church, Corpus

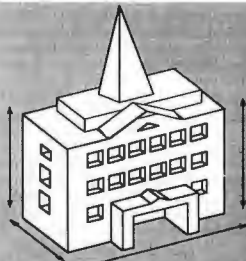
Christi, arrived to be on-site coordinator for the Texas Baptist Men Disaster Relief.

In the early morning hours, food preparation units from Tyler and Fort Worth came with their trailers and full teams to begin feeding operations. Shortly after midnight, Milfred Minatre, director of the church services department at the Baptist General Convention of Texas, arrived to begin counseling and family assistance services to area residents.

Baptists were among ministers present when family members were told of their loss, and who accompanied the families to the swept-bare site at the subdivision where their loved ones had died.

They also sought to minister to rescue workers, often a forgotten group, but one which bears the brunt of much tragedy.

"I was overwhelmed by the large number of them who wanted us to pray with them," Minatre remarked. "They were very open and appreciative of prayer."



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Missionaries evacuate amid Sierra Leone coup

Southern Baptist foreign missionaries Ron and Sharon Hill and Felix and Dene Greer have safely evacuated Freetown, Sierra Leone, as Nigerian troops loyal to deposed President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and troops backing coup leader Maj. Johnny Paul Koroma prepared to square off against each other.

The Hills are permanently assigned to work in Sierra Leone, while the Greers were most recently assigned to Liberia,

working outside Freetown until they could get back into Liberia. It was the Greers' fourth such evacuation during their missionary career. The four were scheduled to fly to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where Foreign Mission Board administrative offices for West Africa are located. They will remain there for an undetermined period of time.

"God's hand was on us step by step," said Ron Hill of the evacuation. "There was never a sense of panic. Things came together as if it were a puzzle."

Prior to their evacuation, two rockets exploded just feet from the walls of their compound. A stray bullet pierced a lamp shade and lodged in a bedroom wall. But the missionaries said they felt the peace and presence of God throughout military coup.

"While there has been fighting all around us, we have not felt any specific danger," Hill reported prior to last week's evacuation.

The Hills had been jolted awake about 6 a.m. May 25 by the chatter of machine guns and blasts from heavy artillery as

conspirators launched the coup in the capital city.

Nigerian troops loyal to Kabbah, Sierra Leone's first democratically elected president, withdrew to about 12 miles outside the city after military leaders staging the coup drove Kabbah out May 25.

Although it was unclear whether the Nigerian gunboats arriving May 28 intended to retaliate against the coup, it appeared a showdown was imminent as non-uniformed men streamed into Freetown from the countryside asking for directions to military barracks. Three other African nations reportedly have joined Nigeria's effort to oust Sierra Leone's coup leaders.

Sierra Leone's most recent coup — the nation's third in five years — began May 25 when soldiers raided a Freetown prison and released former conspirators and others. Looting, arson and fierce fighting followed. Soldiers seized the legislature, torched the national treasury building and drove Kabbah and other government leaders out of the country.

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Bible society leaders drop plans to revise NIV

Publishers of the New International Version have dropped plans to develop a "gender-accurate" Bible translation, which critics charged was motivated by a feminist agenda.

Citing "significant response" about potential updates to the NIV, International Bible Society officials announced May 27 they were abandoning plans for gender-related changes in future editions of the NIV.

"The NIV doesn't belong to IBS or our licensed publishers. It belongs to the people," said Victor Oliver, who chairs the Bible society board.

Controversy over proposed changes to the NIV convinced officials that many readers don't want their Bibles to change, Oliver said, even though many scholars believe updating gender-specific language

would make the translation truer to the spirit of ancient texts.

IBS officials said the controversy had prompted them to "forego all plans to develop a revised edition of the NIV."

In addition to dropping all plans for gender-related changes in future editions of the NIV, officials said they will stick with the present NIV text, last revised in 1984. They will "begin immediately" to undo gender-neutral references in its current New International Readers Version and will approach the NIV's British publisher about ceasing publication of an "inclusive language" edition available in the United Kingdom.

James T. Draper Jr., president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, commended the IBS for its "sensitivity to the desires of Christian people who have a translation that

adheres to the original languages of the Word of God."

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said the IBS action "indicates that the believing church stood up and said, 'This agenda we will not accept. We want the translation to be word for word insofar as possible and not serving an inclusive-language agenda.' Faithful translations should be as inclusive as the original text and no more inclusive than the original text."

In a related development, IBS and Zondervan Publishing House have filed complaints with the ethics committee of the Evangelical Press Association, alleging that *World* magazine's series of articles on the issue were distorted and violated the association's code of ethics.

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Miller encourages Christians to follow Christ's example

Calvin Miller has a unique gift. The Christian author and seminary professor is a master storyteller. His creative, descriptive and often humorous style of communication has captivated thousands of readers and audiences around the country.

In his latest project for the Baptist Sunday School Board, Miller combines biblical scholarship with his imagination to communicate something very real — how to follow the example Christ set for His believers.

In "Follow Christ's Example," a new Sunday School leadership series produced by the BSSB's Bible teaching-reaching division, Miller brings to life five episodes from Christ's life and ministry as the apostle Peter might have experienced them. His writings are paired with practical applications from other widely known writers to form resources for each age group — adult, youth, children and preschool. Among the themes emphasized in the materials are self-sacrifice, prayer, loving one another, unity and witnessing.

Miller, professor of communication and ministry studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, admitted that writing dialog for one of the 12 disciples was a humbling experience.

"I sure thought through it a lot more," he recalled. "I found myself reading the Bible passages, trying to make sure that in describing Peter's viewpoint I didn't violate what we know to be true from the gospels. It is imaginative more than actual, but I didn't want to write anything that would be antithetical to the life of Peter."

While writing the materials, Miller said much of the content "struck me as something I needed to work on in my own spiritual life. I don't like myself very much

when I get so busy writing and teaching and speaking that I forget to live out my faith. I want what I am writing or studying to interact with my life, to encourage me to take another step of faith, to go a little deeper with the Lord."

Miller said a focus on self-sacrifice is a timely topic for Christians in today's self-obsessed society. He said physical and mental fatigue are often his worst enemies in maintaining and developing his own spiritual life.

"Let's face it; life is a grind sometimes," he explained. "It's a feeling that you are absolutely worn out. And when I get tired, I'm less likely to think about lost people. I'm less likely to notice people who need my help. And I'm certainly less likely to get on my knees and really pray. I'm more likely to kick back and turn on the television."

Doug Merritt, manager of the Bible teaching and reaching ministry design and resource section, said the goal of the Follow Christ's Example materials is to help Bible study leaders and teachers "reconnect with the reason why we do what we do. And there is no better way to do that than by examining the example Christ set for us. He is the model for everything we do."

The Follow Christ's Example Sunday School resources are available by calling 1-800-458-2772. They also are available at Baptist Book Stores. NASHVILLE, TN (BP)

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Arkansas couple aids new SBC missionaries

Heather Lawrence

SBC foreign missionary

When they hear the van he drives rattling down the street, the missionary kids greet him with shouts of "Uncle Russell, Uncle Russell!" They know that he comes with a smile, ready to talk, tease or just listen.

"Uncle Russell" is Russell Fox, a retired Southern Baptist missionary from Searcy. Fox and his wife, Vicki, are concluding a six-month term as coordinators for Southern Baptist language students in San Jose, Costa Rica.

The Foxes were appointed as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries in 1981 and served in Honduras and Israel until their retirement last October. Several months before their anticipated retirement, FMB personnel asked them to consider the possibility of serving in an interim capacity for the furloughing coordinator.

Mrs. Fox admits that she was skeptical about accepting the position until she discovered that they would be working directly with the language students. Memories of their own language learning in Costa Rica prompted the Foxes to consider the opportunity.

"We really wanted to help new missionaries and make their first days on the field more comfortable and happy," Fox explained.

Responsibilities for the language student coordinator include much more than administrative work. A normal day may find them shuttling a sick child to a clinic, going to the local hardware store for parts, or taking a group of missionary kids on an outing.

The Foxes also go the institute almost every day and spend time just sitting and listening. They offer the new missionaries words of encouragement from their own days of language study and from their experiences on the field.

"The apostle Paul talked about being poured out as a drink offering in the service of Christ," noted Rick Kunz, a Southern Baptist foreign missionary preparing for service in Argentina. "Russell and Vicki have epitomized that selfless model of Christian service."

The Foxes admit that it has been hard to be away from their family in the States during the time they had anticipated beginning retirement. They look forward to returning to Searcy and spending time with their children and grandchildren.

Saying goodbye to the language students and their families will not be easy, however. The loving relationship the children have with Uncle Russell and Aunt Vicki is a two-way street. Reflecting on his time in Costa Rica, Fox pointed out, "I wouldn't have missed this time for anything in the world."

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Family Bible

Keeping the faith

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

Basic passage:

II Timothy 4:1-18

Focal passage:

II Timothy 4:1-8, 17-18

Central truth:

Keep the faith because God stands with you.

Paul was aware that his days were numbered as he wrote Timothy. Paul told Timothy those things which he considered to be most important: Preach the word! Be ready in reason and out. Convince, rebuke and exhort. Paul is telling us, too, to focus our purpose during these last days.

There are scholars who conclude that Paul thought Jesus was going to return immediately — as if Paul was disappointed that Jesus did not return before his own death in prison. I prefer to think Paul was merely convinced that the return of Christ was certain. Whether he believed that it would happen within his lifetime is not clear.

What is clear is that Paul did know that his time was short. The fact is our time is also short. Even though we may not be incarcerated in a Roman jail, we are only in this world for a few days. For this reason, we should be faithful to preach and teach the clear, focused gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul warns us in verses 3-4 that there will be many who will not receive sound doctrine. Even

so, in verse 5, Paul urges us to be watchful, endure afflictions, be evangelists and fulfill our ministry.

Verses 7-8 give us two reasons why we should prioritize our lives for ministry. Paul had evidently asked himself if he had fought a good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. Even though others had forsaken him, Paul was concerned with himself. One day, we will also answer to ourselves. Will you be able to say that you have fought a good fight? Paul also was aware that he would soon answer to the righteous Judge. One day soon we will also stand before Christ.

Ultimately, we answer to ourselves and to God. We should live our lives in such a way that we do not disappoint ourselves or God on that day.

Finally, the reason which should motivate us most to be faithful is found in verses 17-18. The Lord stands with us as He stood with Paul. The Lord stood with us at Calvary. The Lord stands with us today and tomorrow. We should preach and teach with confidence the truth of the gospel.

Life and Work

The sacrifice of praise

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

Basic passage:

Psalm 50:7-23; 66:8-15

Focal passage:

Psalm 50:23

Central truth:

The best offering we can give to the Lord is the gift of our very hearts and lives sacrificed to Him in a spirit of praise.

Jesus said the greatest commandment of all is for us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength. It is, therefore, easy for us to assess what the Lord wants from us is a heart full of worship and adoration, bringing to His altar a sacrifice of praise.

The Lord God Almighty, Master and Creator of the universe, is rebuking His people Israel in Psalm 50 for their audacity in believing He "needed" their sacrificial burnt offerings. He, in fact, lacks nothing and has at His disposal all the resources of the world (vv. 10-13). God does not need us, our burnt offerings, or even our praise, but we need Him and need to praise Him. It has been said in a similar fashion regarding tithing: Tithing is not God's way of raising money; tithing is God's way of raising His children. The need is not His, but rather ours. The sacrifice the Lord wants from us is our hearts full of praise and thanksgiving (v. 14) and communion with Him through prayer (v. 15).

Sometimes in our weakness and humanity we

are guilty of worshipping something or someone other than the Lord God who is the true object of our worship. We are at times so ritualistic in our approach to worship we focus on the form or content instead of the Father. It is important for us to realize true worship is not a matter of religious external ceremonial traditions, but rather a matter of the heart. We must strive to avoid any such adulterous means of spiritual exhilaration, for the Lord our God is a jealous God (Ex. 20:3-5) and will certainly reject such worship as demonstrated in Amos 5:21-23 and Malachi 1:10.

The Lord challenges us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. He commands us to worship Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Every part of our being is called to praise the name of Jesus; if we fail to do so, the very rocks themselves will cry out in praise to His matchless name (Luke 19:40). The Lord desires the best gifts we can joyously and sacrificially give. He tells us through His Word the best gift is the gift of our hearts and lives offered up as a dynamic sacrifice of praise.

Explore the Bible

Limit to Christian freedom

By James Swedenburg, pastor,
Trinity Church, Benton

Basic passage:

I Corinthians 8:1-13

Focal passage:

I Corinthians 8:1-13

Central truth:

"Is it right to participate?" and "Do I have the freedom to do so?" are important social questions for Christians.

Eating meat which has been offered to idols was the issue Paul used to discuss the freedom he and all believers possessed in Christ. The implication is that this and other ethical issues may or may not be open to Christian participation.

Eating meat offered to idols was widespread. At times, the whole sacrifice was consumed on the altar. Sometimes only modest portions were used. After the priest took portions, the rest of the meat was made available in the market. In private sacrifices, the individual received the portion that remained.

At weddings, banquets and other celebrations believers were faced with the decision to eat meat which had been a part of idol worship. The question was always, "Is it right to do so? Do I have the freedom to eat it? In how many of the pagan customs can the Christian still participate?" (8:5).

The solution to the problem regarding eating meat is found in two concepts about Christian relationships. (1) Since idols have no real existence and there is only one true God, the meat did not

affect the believer's relationship to God (8:4). Later Paul speaks again about the same problem in a different context (10:19-21). He notes that other gods do not exist, but he also notes that spirits and demons do exist with power to disturb the worship of the true God.

(2) The final argument is the one that ought always to have first consideration. If eating meat causes my brother to fall, I will not eat meat offered to idols (8:11-12). Our relationship should never be based on knowledge or maturity, but by consideration and compassion for fellow believers. In Christian relationships no one should contend for a right or to participate in a pleasure when another Christian will be adversely affected. An indulgence that may weaken another's faith is a sin (8:9, 12).

In application, there is some limit to our freedom. This single limit to our freedom is imposed by Christ's command to love one another. It means that, as much as possible, I must try to be all things to all people and not offend any.

LESSONS FOR LIVING

Family Bible

Heirs of mercy

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

Basic passage:

Titus 3:1-11

Focal passage:

Titus 3:1-7

Central truth:

Christians are justified because of mercy and should show mercy to others.

Mercy: the act of granting clemency to a guilty criminal. I get under conviction just thinking about it. God loves me so much that He justified me when I did not deserve even to be considered. We were guilty and Christ died for us. We offended Christ more than anyone will ever offend us. Yet, He loves us and shows us mercy. What more must be said? If God loves me and shows me mercy then I must likewise show mercy to others.

It does not matter if they offend me. It doesn't matter if they are foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving lusts, malicious, envious and hateful. It just doesn't matter. The fact is that I was once just like them. Honestly, I am sometimes still just like them. And even though I was just like them, Jesus Christ died for me. He was blameless yet He took my blame. We are not blameless, yet we so often refuse to show mercy to others.

Paul teaches us in this passage to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility

to all men. It is by these expression of mercy that we reflect the mercy which God has extended to us.

Verse 6 gives the method by which God has shown us mercy. It is through the pouring out of Jesus Christ on us abundantly that we experience God's mercy. We have been justified only by God's grace. It is not by works of righteousness that we have become heirs of the hope of eternal life. It is because of Jesus Christ having given His life away that we can experience eternal life. It is likewise by our giving away our mercy to others that we realize the fullness of God's grace.

We have inherited a great gift from God in our salvation. We should therefore strive to be vessels of mercy to those around us that they may also experience the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

A song of praise is joyously rendered in the final verses of Psalm 22 which represents a sharp contrast to the first 21 verses of suffering and anguish known as the Passion Psalm. The opening verses are in a way a foretelling of the sufferings of Jesus' last days. Jesus quoted verse one from the cross during His darkest hour: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The most heart-wrenching moment of Christ's suffering was the separation He experienced from His Father. We are acquainted with the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10) having ourselves been separated from God, but just as the psalm turns from lament to praise, we also can know the ecstasy of moving from separation to salvation.

The psalmist sings a song of praise and adoration for his deliverance from hell to heaven. He bears witness of his salvation in the midst of the congregation (v. 22) and exhorts his brothers to join him in expressing their thanksgivings for the LORD's powerful presence (vv. 23-24). He acknowledges God is the author of our praise (v. 25).

After a strong statement about eating meat offered to idols and his freedom to do so, Paul defends his right to receive support from the church. Some think this passage is a part of another letter. Paul seems to be concerned about his image, his authority (vv. 8-9). He is very concerned about two things: (1) How to win the Gentile Corinthians to the Christian faith. (2) How to keep the weaker Christians from falling back to pagan worship.

Paul extensively illustrates the justification of his own freedom (9:1-11). He adds another dynamic to his freedom which is foundational to his ministry. The fact that Paul receives no support means that he is in no way dependent on them. He can be a servant (slave) to all (vv. 20-22). His life is sharply focused by what he believes that God has done in Christ (9:23a).

There is no indication that sharing the gospel is easy, but it is fulfilling, "that the blessings may be shared" (9:23b). "That I may be a joint-partaker" means to be a partaker of the benefits (sharing the blessings of the gospel).

We move with the writer from his focus on self restoration to providing restoration for the poor and hungry. He affirms for the listening congregation that, as he himself had experienced, those who seek the LORD will truly find Him (1 Chron. 28:9, Prov. 8:17, Jer. 29:13, Matt. 7:7-8) and thus should offer praise to Him for their hearts shall live forever (v. 26).

The psalmist envisions with prophetic insight the Kingdom of God (vv. 27-29). He sees the people of every nation bowing down before the LORD, offering praise to Him who is Ruler over all.

The exciting conclusion of this psalm (vv. 30-31) challenges us to fulfill the Great Commission as we testify of all the LORD's miraculous deeds, so those yet unborn might also experience deliverance from separation, gaining eternal salvation.

The final statement is one of exhortation to self-denial, sacrifice and perseverance. Run as one who intends to win, practice self-discipline, know your goal, bring your body under control and make it a servant are Paul's instructions. The disciplines produced by Paul as a strategy of leadership in Corinthians has tremendous potential to bless and effect consistent growth in a church.

His ministry has been summed up in four statements: (1) He viewed it as a privilege. (2) He regarded it as duty. (3) Freely sharing the gospel is life's greatest fulfillment. (4) Being all things to all people was his consistent method.

Hebrews 2:1-3 is an excellent companion passage of encouragement to us as we commit ourselves to a more disciplined life. Serving Christ requires a sense of responsibility. It demands looking to Jesus to order and mature our faith. It is true that few have "yet resisted to the point of shedding blood" (Heb. 1:5). Taking our cross implies that we are willing to pay whatever price to please our Father.

Life and Work

From separation to salvation

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

Basic passage:

Psalm 22:22-31

Focal passage:

Psalm 22:22-24

Central truth:

We must offer praise and adoration to the LORD for His glorious and eternal salvation.

Explore the Bible

Winning requires discipline

By James Swedenburg, pastor,
Trinity Church, Benton

Basic passage:

1 Corinthians 9:1-18

Focal passage:

1 Corinthians 9:1-18

Central truth:

Winning the Christian race requires training and endurance.

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Lottie Moon offering receipts post fourth straight gain

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Southern Baptist giving to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions posted its fourth straight gain, surpassing the \$90 million mark for the first time in history when the books closed May 31. The offering total amounted to 93 percent of the goal of \$100 million.

At a record \$93,089,179.27, the 1996 offering reflected dollar and percentage increases greater than any year since 1988. Receipts increased about \$4.1 million (4.6 percent) over 1995.

According to FMB president Jerry Rankin, the offering will "allow us to continue our thrust toward reaching the Last Frontier, and continue the pattern of appointing missionaries at record levels."

This year, \$91 million of the offering will go into the FMB's overseas operating budget, which primarily provides support for mission workers. An additional \$2.1 million will underwrite overseas capital spending needs such as new construction and vehicles.

TV industry agrees to revise ratings system

WASHINGTON (BP)—The television industry, faced with increasing pressure from Congress and a reported rebellion by at least one network, has agreed to modify its five-month-old ratings system.

Television executives told congressional critics in a June 4 meeting in Washington that they would meet with child advocacy groups during the next two weeks and seek to work out a compromise. While industry representatives did not commit to adding the letters "S," "V" and "L" to the current ratings to indicate sexual content, violence and foul language, they appear prepared to do so if Congress is willing to withdraw related legislation under consideration.

The industry's action came only a day after *The Washington Post* reported that Fox and possibly other networks would add S-V-L to the current ratings sometime this month.

The criticism of the current ratings system has been its failure to provide parents with specific information in choosing programs suitable for viewing. The system is age-based instead of content-based.

Midwestern day care center ends service to community

KANSAS CITY, MO (BP)—Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary recently announced it will limit services of its Child Development Center to children of students, faculty and staff at the Kansas City, Mo., campus.

Non-seminary parents, whose children made up two-thirds of the CDC's 90-student enrollment, were given 30 days to find other options for child care. Mary Canham said she was told by Midwestern president Mark Coppenger, "If I really wanted Christian child care I should stay home."

Coppenger said he mentioned staying home as an option. "The context was, she was saying that we were showing insensitivity to the needs of the kids, and I was suggesting that perhaps kids needed a stay-at-home parent in some cases."

The main reason for the change, Coppenger said, is that offering the service does not fall under the seminary's mission. "I have no doubt that we did some good work with this, but we are asking in every case, what does this have to do with our founding purpose?"

Parents learned of the new policy in an April 29 letter from Gary Ledbetter, the seminary's vice president for student development.

Seminary president's daughter dies from drug overdose

MILL VALLEY, CA (BP)—Rhonda Bolei, 37, daughter of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary president William O. "Bill" Crews, died May 22 following an overdose of prescription drugs.

Bolei was rushed to Marin (County, Calif.) General Hospital late in the evening May 21, but died early the next morning.

"This is an extremely difficult time for our family and we appreciate and treasure so very much the relationship we have with our family here at Golden Gate Seminary," Crews said. "We will appreciate your continued prayers."

Bolei is survived by her husband, Chris.

