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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 95, Number 12

June 13, 1996



Romania: A field white unto harvest

A team of 28 mission volunteers from Arkansas and Oklahoma witnessed more than 600 public decisions during a recent 10-day trip to Romania. The effort was one of the largest projects in Arkansas Baptists' missions partnership with European Baptists.

GAMBLING

Final deadline approaching for anti-gambling petitions

The deadline is rapidly approaching for Arkansans seeking to collect enough signatures to qualify a proposed anti-gambling amendment for the Nov. 5 statewide ballot.

The petition drive, being headed by the Christian Civic Action Committee, must gather at least 71,684 qualified signatures by July 5, according to CCAC executive director Larry Page. In order to submit the petitions to the secretary of state by that date, CCAC officials have set their own deadline of June 28 for collecting signed petitions from across the state.

The proposed amendment stands in direct opposition to seven pro-gambling proposals which also are being circulated. Two of those campaigns already have submitted more than 100,000 signatures each to the secretary of state's office.

One of the two, a proposal by Oaklawn Park, calls for three casinos, including one at the Hot Springs race track, as well as a state lottery and charitable bingo. The second proposal would legalize a lottery and bingo as well as charitable raffles and video gambling.

When the CCAC's anti-gambling petition drive was announced earlier this year, campaign organizers set a goal of collecting 125,000 signatures since up to 30 percent of signatures often are declared ineligible for various reasons. As of early June, petitions delivered to the CCAC office included only 16,000 signatures.

Despite the low initial response, Page said he remains optimistic that thousands more petitions will flood into his office during the next two weeks. Citing a number of reasons for his optimism, Page explained, "We know that most of the petitions are still out there and have not been sent in yet. A lot of the churches are early in the process."

Barry King, the CCAC's gambling campaign coordinator, said the initial

campaign strategy was to recruit several thousand individuals to collect 25 signatures each. Noting that "3,200 persons have signed a commitment card to get 25 signatures each," he said those commitments should translate into a total of 80,000 signatures before the deadline hits.

Page and King have targeted Sunday, June 23, as "the big, final push" for churches throughout the state to collect signatures for the effort. Seeking to spark greater interest in the campaign, the two men have mailed out more than 4,000 letters to pastors and campaign volunteers during the past two weeks.

Mincing no words in his letter to pastors, King declared that "the vast majority of you have still done nothing to help qualify this measure for the ballot." Suggesting that "the most distressing thing in our campaign to date is the failure of most pastors to lead their church to be actively involved in this cause," King wrote, "The only way we can salvage this effort is for every pastor to commit to do his part to help this important amendment earn its place on the fall ballot."

In a certified letter mailed to 500 pastors, Page issued "an urgent appeal for help." Acknowledging that the proposed amendment "may be in jeopardy," Page added that "it's not too late" if pastors throughout the state will "help us finish strong."

"There's more at stake here than just the future of our amendment," Page wrote. Declaring that "the perception of the church in Arkansas will, to a large extent, be determined by how well or how poorly we work this project," he added, "Our character, reputation and the vitality of our witness are at stake. If we want to enhance our witness and magnify the gospel, we'll roll our sleeves up and get to work."

Cover Story

ABN photo / Trennis Henderson



Focus: Romania 6-9

A group of 28 Arkansas and Oklahoma Baptists found Romania to be "white unto harvest" during a recent mission trip to the former communist nation. The 10-day trip was a project of Arkansas Baptists' European missions partnership.

Also inside

Perspective

A Pastor's Heart.....	4
Woman's Viewpoint.....	4
Straight from the Editor.....	5

Arkansas Baptists

Clarence Shell retires.....	10
Jackie Edwards resigns.....	10
Arkansas All Over.....	12-13
Workshop to train family leaders.....	13
Coordinator calls for volunteers.....	14
Horne names ABSC nominators.....	15
Children's choir leaders to meet.....	20

Nation

SBC news preview.....	11
Task force examines racism.....	17
Panel opposes gay marriages.....	19

Lessons.....	22-23
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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



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Reconciliation, American style

Cherokee leader affirms Russellville Christians' racial repentance

Residents of Russellville met June 2 to commemorate the ministry of the state's first mission and observe racial reconciliation among whites, blacks and native Americans during the Old Dwight Mission Gospel Heritage Day. The event was sponsored by the Russellville Area Ministerial Association.

The two-part community activity took place at Lake Dardanelle State Park Sunday afternoon, then moved to First Baptist Church in Russellville that evening for a worship service.

During the afternoon session, participants were treated to hymns played on 19th-century instruments, a reenactment of the first worship service held at the Dwight Mission in 1821 and a message of reconciliation from John Dawson, international director of urban missions for Youth With a Mission and author of *Healing America's Wounds*.

Don Erwin, chairman of the Old Dwight Mission Gospel Heritage Day, emphasized the mission's historical significance in the state. "Dwight Mission features prominently in the early history of the Arkansas Territory.

"If you go down to the Arkansas Territorial Restoration (in Little Rock) you'll find an 1822 map of Arkansas," he explained. "There are three sites listed on that map: Old Arkansas Post, Little Rock and Dwight Mission.

"Dwight Mission was the first Protestant school in Arkansas and the first mission to the Western Cherokees, who were located in this river valley," he said. "There were about 2,000 Cherokees here around 1820 when (missionary) Cephas Washburn and six other missionaries came from New York and New England with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions."

Erwin, teaching elder for Fellowship (Evangelical) Church in Russellville, said the ministry history of the mission has been neglected too long. "Dwight Mission has been known through the years as a school and the gospel ministry aspect of Dwight Mission has been neglected or overlooked. But when you look at the historical record, you find that the missionaries considered the gospel to be the forefront of their efforts."

He said area Christians also wanted to highlight the racial diversity that the mission represented. "What we noted from the historical record of Dwight Mission is that on May 13, 1821, when they had the first Sabbath day service at the mission, there were Cherokees, blacks and Anglo



Members of a traditional music band (above) play hymns during Old Dwight Mission Gospel Heritage Day, which focused on racial reconciliation between Anglos, blacks and native Americans. Later in the ceremony, Garland Eagle (left), deputy chief of the Cherokee Nation, accepted an apology from Anglos for "sins against the Cherokee" and extended forgiveness on behalf of the Cherokee.

settlers at that service. It was a picture of racial reconciliation and the Dwight missionaries celebrated that."

Wayne Drain, senior pastor of Fellowship of Christians (Evangelical) Church in Russellville, reads a proclamation of apology to the Cherokee Nation for "sins against the Cherokee," including the breaking of treaties and the forced march of Cherokees to Oklahoma known as "The Trail of Tears," and asked for forgiveness from the Cherokee Nation.

His appeal was met favorably by Garland Eagle, deputy principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, who said in a response that "I believe the Almighty has gotten us together this day...for the purpose of reconciling His people. And when I say His people, that doesn't leave anybody out, regardless of your color or your heritage. When you say God's people, that includes everyone."

"The citizens of Russellville have asked the Cherokee to forgive them and their forefathers of the sins against the Cherokees during The Trail of Tears," noted Eagle, a deacon of Cherokee Nation Baptist Church in Tahlequah, Okla. "God has said in His Word that if we confess our sins, He's faithful to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

"With that, Brother Wayne, I believe

that when we confess, God forgives," Eagle continued. "God has also said that if we forgive those who have sinned against us, that God will also forgive us: Matthew 6:14. Based on God's Word, I, as second chief of the Cherokees...I forgive you and your forefathers and pray that God will continue to work with His people on reconciliation on all people from this day."

Following his acceptance, Eagle embraced Drain in front a standing ovation from the more than 500 participants.

Eagle said following the ceremony that the moment "was very, very moving for me. I'm a very emotional person. Sometimes I have to rely on the Lord to bring out the words in my heart."

Bob Hettinga, a member of First Church in Russellville, said the ceremony "was touching because of the very fact of years and years of inattention" to Anglo abuses of native Americans.

"I was particularly moved by the asking for and giving of forgiveness," Hettinga added. "It's a picture to me of what it must be when we approach God and He forgives us our sins."

Reflecting on the day's events, he added, "When the need for repentance is brought to our minds, we go to...God and He gives us the message of reconciliation."

A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER
ABCS Executive Director

The program had been prepared, announced and publicized months in advance. Everyone was excited as the meeting came to order — it was going to be a great celebration of what God was doing. Suddenly, however, a man — a totally unknown person to the organizers of the meeting — requested a change in the publicized agenda. The issue was debated and a vote was taken. The unknown brother's motion was sustained. I watched in absolute amazement. These were the opening moments of the first Southern Baptist Convention I ever attended.

That meeting convinced me that the Southern Baptist Convention is a movement of God's people — not an institution. Nothing has ever been more clear — authority in the Southern Baptist Convention lies in believers, not in institutions. On June 11-13, the Southern Baptist Convention will meet in New Orleans. Brothers and sisters will celebrate, debate, resolve and fellowship. Any decisions made will be made by believers who serve Christ in local churches.

But, this wonderful autonomy goes a step further. No decision made at the Southern Baptist Convention will bind any local church to a particular course of action. Each church that acts on the basis of convention decisions does so voluntarily.

This dependence upon cooperation has been described by some as a liability. Apparently, God has not seen it that way. He has seen fit to bless and strengthen and use us through the years. May it always be so.

■ Have you read *The Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren? (Zondervan, 1995). This book is the hottest thing since sliced bread. It provides both a theological base and practical help for people who want their churches to grow. Not everyone will like everything Warren says, but everyone can be blessed by this book. "What really attracts large numbers, of unchurched to a church is changed lives" (pg. 247).

BETTY WILLIAMSON

Woman's Viewpoint

Forgiveness is a choice



Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you (Eph. 4:32).

Forgiveness is "the act of setting someone free from an obligation to you that is a result of a wrong done against you." It should be out-of-character for a Christian to have an unforgiving spirit and allow the root of bitterness to take hold in our lives. Being kind and tenderhearted toward one another will eliminate a great deal of the emotions and actions that lead to unforgiveness.

I realize it's easy to forgive the slow driver in front of you when you are already late for an appointment or to forgive your teenage neighbor who has backed over your mailbox for the third time. It's quite a different story, though, and much more difficult to forgive the deeper hurts...your spouse who has been unfaithful, your rebellious child, your best friend who has turned against you, a fellow Christian who has told an untruth about you or the parent who abused you as a child. This takes more, a great deal more!

While we want God to zap us with "holiness" and automatically give us a forgiving spirit, it doesn't just happen that way. My Granny used to say, "Life is what you make it." She was right! Much of life is a choice. Choosing to

forgive a wrong done to us is a choice we must make. Yes, a difficult one, but it is a beginning and it is absolutely necessary for healing the hurt and preventing bitterness from taking root and paralyzing our lives.

Choosing to forgive releases the individual we are holding hostage. Holding hostage? Yes! Even though we don't outwardly hurt them we withhold our love and kindness from them, while at the same time expecting God to forgive and forget every sinful thing we do. Have we not hurt, embarrassed, been rebellious, even been untruthful with God? If our Heavenly Father has forgiven us, we should follow His example by releasing our hostage through the act of forgiveness. Forgiveness is important enough to God that He allowed His Son to suffer and die that we might experience it.

Forgiving a wrong done to us is not easy, but it is scriptural. It can be done. It starts by making a choice. Because I am forgiven, I choose to forgive!

Betty Williamson is the wife of Ron Williamson, pastor of Spradling Church in Fort Smith. They have two children and two grandchildren. She teaches a ladies Sunday School class and is part-time church secretary. She was the 1995 president of the Arkansas Baptist Ministers' Wives Fellowship.

Personal perspectives

"I cried as I saw how they longed for the love of Jesus and how readily they accepted the gospel."

— Erby Burgess, pastor of First Church, Glenwood describing a recent mission trip to Romania

"Racism is a sin problem. It is a functional denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

— Richard Land, president, Christian Life Commission

"If we want to enhance our witness and magnify the gospel, we'll roll our sleeves up and get to work."

— Larry Page, executive director, Christian Civic Action Committee describing an effort to qualify an anti-gambling amendment for the November ballot

Guilt by association is bad business

Should the members of the Southern Baptist Convention's Implementation Task Force have been pressured to resign after signing a consultant contract with a firm that also provides services for the Texas lottery? Probably not.

While it was an honest — yet embarrassing — mistake for Baptist leaders, SBC Executive Committee vice president David Hankins acknowledged, "We regret that there is the connection, however minimal, between Coopers & Lybrand (consulting firm) and the lottery, and we regret that we did not know about it when the contract was signed." That was it — the task force didn't seek to void its \$495,000 contract with Coopers & Lybrand and no one called for an in-depth investigation or for the dismissal of the task force.

Unfortunately, a few vocal opponents of Arkansas Baptist leader Buddy Sutton weren't quite so gracious after SBC president Jim Henry appointed Sutton to this year's SBC Resolutions Committee. Because an associate in Sutton's law firm provides legal services for Oaklawn race track, Sutton's detractors claimed that he was tainted too and should be removed from the Resolutions Committee.

The basic charge is guilt by association. Anyone who knows Sutton, knows that is an absurd accusation. Sutton is among the most respected lay leaders — and anti-gambling advocates — in Arkansas Baptist life. He is a former state convention president and current trustee chairman of Ouachita Baptist University. He was also chairman of the 1989 Billy Graham Crusade in Little Rock as well as chairman of the successful Citizens Against Legalized Lottery campaign in 1990.

Would it be preferable for Sutton's firm to have no association with a client involved in legalized gambling? Absolutely. As senior partner, could Sutton pressure co-workers to drop Oaklawn as a client? Perhaps.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

Instead, Sutton has chosen to deal with the issue with characteristic integrity. He has consistently taken a strong personal and public stand against gambling. He also has carefully avoided any personal involvement with the Oaklawn account, which predated his employment at the firm. At the same time, however, he has affirmed the right of fellow attorneys to make their own decisions about specific clients they will serve.

One troubling aspect of the call for Sutton's removal is that his most outspoken critic has never met nor spoken with Sutton. Larry Holly, a Texas physician, distributed his charges to the media without even attempting to contact Sutton or notify him of his concerns.

Holly, who is no stranger to controversy in Southern Baptist life, led the call to investigate Freemasonry. Following a 1993 Home Mission Board study and report on the matter, he was frequently critical of the HMB findings and the action by SBC messengers, often sending lengthy e-mail and fax messages espousing his views.

Less than a year ago, Holly announced that he was going to quit spending time composing and distributing electronic messages "out of a desire not to be distracted from hearing from the Lord." Within a few weeks, however, he was again transmitting his views on a regular

basis, including his recent letter to Jim Henry opposing Sutton's appointment.

Even more troubling is the fact that a few Arkansas Baptists who do know Sutton have joined in the criticism. Larry Page, executive director of the Christian Civic Action Committee, told the *Indiana Baptist* that Sutton's position "jeopardizes our efforts, confuses our constituency and places our people at risk." He added that the situation "hurts me and discourages me and makes me a little aggravated."

The CCAC currently is in the midst of a campaign to gather enough signatures to place a proposed anti-gambling amendment on the November ballot (see related article on page 2). While Page's stand against every aspect of legalized gambling is certainly commendable, it appears his time would be better spent seeking to cooperate with Sutton and any other concerned citizen who has demonstrated an unwavering personal commitment to oppose the spread of gambling in Arkansas.

How has Sutton responded to this needless controversy? With the same diplomacy that has earned the respect of fellow Arkansas Baptists for years. When told of the concerns being circulated, he immediately resigned from the Resolutions Committee. "I just didn't want any trouble for anybody," he explained. "It wasn't worth that."

Would it be best if Sutton's law firm opted to sever all ties with the state's gambling industry? Certainly. Should Sutton have lost his seat on the SBC Resolutions Committee due to his firm's involvement with Oaklawn? Certainly not.

What's acceptable for members of the Implementation Task Force should be equally acceptable for members of the Resolutions Committee. Guilt by association is no way to conduct Baptist business.

Huckabee and Tucker — triumph and tragedy

In a compelling display of triumph and tragedy being played out before the nation's media, former state convention president Mike Huckabee will become governor of Arkansas next month.

The triumphant aspect is that Huckabee will ascend to the state's highest office a mere four and a half years after resigning the pastorate and entering politics. The tragic half of the mix is that Huckabee's achievement comes on the heels of deep personal and public pain for Gov. Jim Guy Tucker.

Both men have responded graciously in the midst of challenging circumstances. Gov. Tucker was right to immediately announce his resignation as he seeks to appeal two guilty verdicts handed down by the Whitewater jury. Huckabee was right to emphasize that "while there is a time for justice, now is the time to extend mercy."

Looking toward his new responsibilities, Huckabee added, "The most important burden I feel is to reflect a sense of fairness and to model leadership that is

servant-based....It behooves me to be on my knees before I get on my feet every day."

In addition to his personal commitment to prayer, Huckabee said, "I welcome the prayers of the people of Arkansas. I don't know of anyone who has ever stood more in the need of prayer than I do right now." The same could be said of Gov. Tucker.

Regardless of one's political preferences, now is the time to pray diligently for Gov. Tucker, Lt. Gov. Huckabee, their families and the state of Arkansas.

Arkansans help impact Romania with the gospel

By Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

In a nation of 24 million people, Romania has fewer than half a million evangelical Christians. Among Baptists, the statistics are even more stark, with an estimated 90,000 members in 1,400 churches.

On the positive side, 500 new Baptist congregations have been established since the 1989 revolution that ousted Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. With decades of Communist suppression followed by recent years of rapid church growth, however, Romania now has a severe shortage of trained church leaders. There currently are only about 300 trained ministers serving the nation's 1,400 Baptist congregations.

"The great need is for preparing leaders," emphasized Aurel Gaceo, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Romania. "Under Ceausescu, one way was to train laymen underground to prepare leaders for our churches."

Explaining that the number of conversions to Christianity "were limited by fear" during Ceausescu's reign, Gaceo affirmed the "new opportunities to share the gospel openly" in recent years. "Maybe now is the time of harvest," he suggested.

But where do Christian workers begin in an effort to meet the overwhelming spiritual needs throughout Romania? One small part of the answer has come through Arkansas Baptists' four-year missions partnership with the European Baptist Convention.

While the bulk of the partnership projects relate directly to English-language congregations associated with the EBC, a recent mission trip to Romania focused primarily on sharing the gospel with Romanian nationals.

The 10-day trip, conducted in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Baptist Union of Romania, was coordinated by Church Starts International, an independent church-starting venture approved by the FMB.

CSI president Bill Davis, who established the organization two years ago, has helped start 35 churches in southeast Romania during that time. His basic strategy involves utilizing volunteer teams from the U.S. to help evangelize a targeted area and construct church facilities. CSI, in



Steve Gildewell (with guitar) and other Arkansas Baptist missions volunteers lead an outdoor evangelistic rally on a street corner in Giurgiu, Romania.

turn, establishes a training center in an area church and helps subsidize the expenses for other church leaders in the region to receive practical training in such areas as evangelism and church growth.

Arkansas Baptists' May 17-27 mission project to Romania was headed by state Brotherhood department director Harry Black. The 28-member team included volunteers from 19 Arkansas Baptist churches as well as two participants from Oklahoma. Black described the project as the largest volunteer effort to date in the European partnership.

"Be ready for people who want to talk about and hear about Jesus."

— Jim Hornsby
Church Starts International

The volunteers were organized into specialized teams, including groups focusing on church construction, evangelism, medical care and dental care. The primary assignment was to help begin constructing a church facility in Giurgiu, a southern city of 90,000 located near the capital of Bucharest. Team members also traveled to a number of surrounding villages to provide medical care, witness and lay the groundwork for future church starts.

"These people are waiting for you," Jim Hornsby, CSI's resident missionary, told team members. "God is preparing hearts and minds. Be ready for people who want to talk about and hear about Jesus."

Hornsby's words proved true as more

than 600 Romanians made public decisions during evening rallies at the construction site, on busy street corners, in rural villages and in medical and dental clinics conducted throughout the area. Many team members compared the enthusiastic spiritual response of the Romanian people to New Testament accounts of early church growth.

Catalin Covaci, a seminary student who will become pastor of the new congregation in Giurgiu, said the Arkansas team's involvement in his city "is the answer to our prayers."

"I often cried out, 'God, when will be the time for Giurgiu?'" he recalled. "And now the dream is coming true." He said team members made a lasting impact on the city because many Romanians who heard the gospel "were confronted with something that never was here before."

"It is so evident God is at work here," Black declared. "The direct impact on the area is that over 600 people have made some kind of decision related to a personal witness about Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord."

Black said team members also gained "a greater appreciation for how one person can make a global impact on people who are hungry for the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Viorel Pavel, a minority party deputy in the Romanian Parliament, is among the lay leaders of the Giurgiu congregation. "We were under communism for 50 years," he reflected. "Now we want to open our eyes and see Jesus Christ because He's alive."

"Please pray for my country," Pavel urged. "We want our people to choose Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord."

ROMANIAN JOURNAL

Arkansas volunteers share personal insights from 10-day mission venture

Mel Tindle

Construction Team
Union Valley Church, Beebe

"I have been overwhelmed at all that has happened this week, from the love that has been shown us from the Romanians to the tremendous outpouring of God's Spirit upon us. During one of the services two soldiers were walking by, stopped and heard the sermon and gave their lives to Christ.

"When we arrived in the village of Prundu, I saw a small gathering of very poor people who had probably never before heard the gospel. I realized that many of these people might never have the opportunity to have a Bible or to grow in the faith, yet they were saved by the grace of God."

Diana Lewis

Evangelism Team
First Church, Benton

"About a dozen people attended the outdoor worship service today at Caliguran. They have no church building yet because they are having to wait for government permits. The people prayed out loud and wept about how they wanted to have a church building. I have never felt anyone pray with more compassion and sincerity than the Romanian believers.

"I decided to give my scarf to the woman who provided her home for the worship service. When I presented it to her, you would have thought I'd given her a thousand dollars. Her face was so full of joy and she said over and over, 'Thank you.'

"I hope and pray that I will never be the same."

Mike Love

Evangelism Team
First Church, Charleston

"My interpreter's 67-year-old grandmother lived in the village of Prundu. Magdalena, who had not seen her grandmother in 11 years, was very excited about going to the village and seeing her. Her grandmother was Orthodox and Magdalena was concerned about her grandmother's salvation. When she saw her grandmother, Magdalena had to tell her who she was because of the many years and her grandmother's blindness. Both embraced and cried.

"After about an hour and a half of visiting, I asked Magdalena if I could share the gospel with her grandmother; she readily agreed. She and two of her relatives

each invited Christ into their lives. God is to be praised for giving a 19-year-old young lady an opportunity to see her prayers answered for a grandmother she may never see again."

Dennis Reynolds

Construction Team
Vine Prairie Church, Mulberry

"What was the emphasis of the construction team? Prayer. When we arrived at the construction site in Giurgiu, absolutely nothing was as it was supposed to be. We experienced just a bit of disorientation. It soon became evident that we needed divine intervention. Our answer was to gather together and pray. God began to immediately answer those prayers...God made believers of all of us about how He can answer prayer."

Ronnie O'Neal

Evangelism Team
First Church, Delaware

"The highlight of the trip was at Giurgiu, the day I led a 20-year-old young lady to Christ. She was very emotional about her decision. Her first response after she accepted Christ was 'I want to get my sister and brother, and you tell them about Jesus.' A few minutes later, she came back with her 16-year-old sister and 12-year-old brother and they both were saved."

Gail Williams

Dental Team
Balboa Church, Hot Springs Village

"The harvest is so ripe and ready, when we go into the fields, the sheaves just fall into our hands! You can hardly get through a testimony and God's plan for salvation before the people eagerly reply, 'Da, da' (yes, yes) when you ask if they would like to pray and receive God's gift of eternal life. Almost every time I witnessed, others would crowd around to hear what was being said."

Erby Burgess

Evangelism Team
First Church, Glenwood

"As I walked out of a home in the village of Prundu, I began to look at the people of Romania in a new light. I cried as I saw how they longed for the love of Jesus and how readily they accepted the gospel. I was convicted of how God has blessed Americans in so many ways and of how we do not appreciate even 'small luxuries.' I

know that I will never approach ministry in the same way again. I understand better what the Scriptures mean when Jesus had compassion for the multitudes."

"I also appreciate the many sacrifices missionaries make in order to share the gospel with the people of another country. I will pray for them with a new understanding and empathy."

Sharon Hicks

Medical Team
Trinity Church, Texarkana

"This was my first mission trip, so everything about it has been awesome. The commitment and love shown by the members of this team has touched my heart time and time again. I have watched them minister, each in their own way, to both the Romanian people and to each other. I thank God for the privilege of being a part of this mission trip. It is my prayer that I will go again on another one."

Mitch Tanksley

Construction Team
Brush Creek Church, Springdale

"Wow, what can I say in a sentence or two? God has been very present on this trip. It was like God came down from heaven and held our hands and led us around the town telling people about Jesus. I've never felt God's presence so fully and powerfully like I have this week. I have never had the boldness to share the gospel like I have this week.

"I pray for Romania and the Christians we are leaving behind. I pray for the church that God let me be a part of helping build the foundation. I pray that God will allow me to have the boldness in my life to be a proud witness for Him wherever I am."

Patsy Hossler

Medical Team
Immanuel Church, Little Rock

"The faces of the Romanian people will remain in my memory as long as I live - young and old, brown or white, smooth or wrinkled, their eyes brown or blue... laughing eyes, sad ones too. I was privileged to touch individuals as I took their blood pressure and more importantly speak *pache* (peace) to them in Jesus' name.

"I shall remember the faces of our Romanian Christian translators - vital, expressive young people with the joy of Jesus in their eyes, a song on their lips and love in their hearts - determined to reach their homeland for Christ."

Romania

A field white unto harvest

Arkansas Baptist volunteers witnessed more than 600 public decisions during a recent 10-day missions trip to Romania - part of the convention's European Baptist partnership.



Romanian teens listen intently to a Bible story shared by Arkansas volunteers.



Construction volunteers from Arkansas and Oklahoma help build the foundation for the first Baptist congregation to be located in Giurgiu, a city of 90,000 people.



Bill Davis (second from left), president of Church Starts International, witnesses to a group of women in a rural Romanian village.

MISSIONS IN ROMANIA



Drawing water from an outdoor well is still a daily practice in many poor, rural settings throughout Romania.



ABN photos / Trennis Henderson

J.N. Williams and his wife, Gail, provided dental care and a bold Christian witness for dozens of Romanian villagers.



Arkansas Baptist volunteer Diana Lewis and her interpreter enthusiastically share the gospel with a receptive crowd.

Shell to retire after 26 years with evangelism ministries

He loves to fish, so it's no surprise that on the eve of his retirement, his pointers about evangelism revolve around the theme of fishing.

"You can have good equipment, you can have the right bait, you can have time and patience," he reflected, "but you never catch a fish until you go to the water. You gotta go where they are."

In fact, he loves fishing so much that he feels "it's a spiritual truth that people in our churches need to learn."

Fishing has been used to reflect spiritual truth since Jesus called Simon and Andrew to be fishers of men. Clarence Shell also answered that timeless call when he surrendered to the ministry 43 years ago.

Shell will retire Oct. 31 after serving the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for 26 years in the state's evangelism ministries, the past 15 as department director.

And, although he does enjoy fishing as a sport, when Shell talks about fishing, it most often is about fishing for souls in the depths of sin.

Following his call to preach in 1953, Shell served as pastor of Owensville Church, Little Elm (Texas) Baptist Church and Piney Church in Hot Springs.

"I always had a very strong commitment to evangelism and winning people to Christ and did a lot of revivals when I was in the local church," he recalled. "It became apparent only after 15 years in the pastorate that the Lord wanted me in full-time evangelism."

In 1969, he received an invitation to fill the position of rural evangelist for the state convention. During the next 26 years, he served in that slot, as state evangelist, first associate and then as director.

He said his primary calling, however, has always been to serve the local church. "Earlier, it was the pastoral ministry," he noted. "I never really anticipated leaving the pastorate. This was a progressive revelation the Lord gave to me."

That "progressive revelation" has led Shell to serve not just a few churches as pastor, but to serve hundreds of Arkansas Baptist churches as a leader and teacher. "For the past 26 years, I've averaged working in one church a week—in revivals, conferences and training," he said.

During those 26 years, Shell has seen



Clarence Shell

Arkansas Baptist congregations "baptize 347,435 into the fellowship of the church."

Emil Turner, ABCS executive director, said Arkansas Baptists "will miss the ministry as well as the person of Clarence Shell" following Shell's retirement. "He has contributed not only to our state but to the Kingdom of God."

Affirming Shell's "purity of commitment" to evangelism, Turner added, "He's unmixed in his pure, heartfelt commitment."

Noting trend changes during his tenure, Shell said, "I have seen a moving toward a more personal evangelism and building witnessing relationships. The reason for that is that most lost people don't come to church on their own. Only 2 or 3 percent of the lost will come to a church on their own."

Shell added, however, that he is concerned about Southern Baptists' commitment to witnessing. "We may not have the concern, the commitment and the compassion that we once had to evangelism."

"I think one of my greatest concerns is that there have been so many things that Southern Baptists have gotten involved in that some have not continued to make the main thing the main thing," he said.

"I would long, more than anything else, that under the leadership of the Holy Spirit Southern Baptists come to a total commitment to evangelism and helping people come to know Christ as their Savior," he said. "The only hope is for laypeople to become involved in sharing Jesus Christ."

Looking toward his retirement, he said it will "only be a restructuring of the direction of my life. I will no longer be employed by the ABCS, but I will continue to do evangelism."

"My first priority will be to my wife and family...but a second priority will be related directly to doing revival meetings in local churches and working with them as they need me as an interim pastor."

Affirming the commitment of both his family and co-workers, Shell pointed out, "I really believe that a man succeeds or fails in relation to the people he surrounds himself with. God has blessed me with a committed, consecrated, concerned staff. I can trust them, they know their work and they do it without reservation. We have the finest staff...in the SBC."

Reflecting on his years of ministry, Shell said, "I give God the glory for the privilege of sharing Christ. It has been a very moving experience in my life....As I retire, I still feel the same enthusiasm that I ever did for evangelism."

Jackie Edwards resigns as ABCS children's associate

Jackie Edwards, children's consultant in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, has resigned, effective May 31. Edwards served as children's associate since January 1980. She previously served as a contract worker with the Sunday School department.

Edwards is the fourth Sunday School department associate to resign or retire in the past two years. Following her departure, her consultation duties have been assigned to other personnel in the department.

Former Sunday School department director Freddie Pike, who served as her supervisor for 10 years, said Edwards brought "a strong philosophy of children's education" to the consultant's position.

"She understands children and how they learn," noted Pike, now minister of education for Second Church, Conway. He described Edwards as "a good conference leader" who "communicates her philosophy and understanding of children extremely well."

During her convention ministry, Edwards said she experienced many "high points," citing the recent construction of the 300-seat Children's Worship Center at Arkansas Baptist Assembly at Siloam Springs as one of the most significant. She served as children's camp director at Siloam throughout her tenure.

Edwards noted that "the thing I'm most pleased about was setting up a network of children's workers in the state," explaining that "the people in the network have, cumulatively, about 300 to 400 years of church experience."

Encouraging Arkansas Baptists to "make children number one," Edwards said, "They have no one to speak up for them. We've got to take a stand."

"For some, that one hour of Sunday School may be the only time they hear about God, even those in Christian homes," she added. She said church leaders can respond to the diverse needs of children by "simply understanding the importance of children."

Although specific plans for the future are uncertain, Edwards said she plans to continue to be involved in children's consulting work. Meanwhile, she said, "I'm going to spend the next couple of months gardening, reading and spending time with my grandchildren."

Proposal adds 'God the Father' to covenant

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The mission statement of the Southern Baptist Convention's "Covenant for a New Century" currently affirms "the Lordship of Jesus Christ" and "the empowerment of the Holy Spirit." Should it also include a reference to God the Father to reflect Southern Baptists' belief in the Trinity?

SBC Executive Committee members voted against such an amendment last September but leaders of the Executive Committee and the Program and Structure Study Committee have recently opted to reconsider the issue. Executive Committee president Morris Chapman, committee chairman Ronnie Floyd and PSSC chairman Mark Brister announced May 30 that they will recommend including the phrase, "to the glory of God the Father," in the mission statement. If approved by the full Executive Committee, the amendment will be voted on during this week's SBC annual meeting.

The reversal came in response to concerns expressed by Oklahoma pastor Paul Brady who introduced a motion during the 1995 SBC calling for the change.

"Currently we have two-thirds of the Trinity in our mission statement, but 66

percent is not good enough," Brady insisted. "Remember, this mission statement may be a reflection of our theology for the next 100 years.

"Since this mission statement does not reflect our fundamental theological affirmations, we must correct this error," Brady said.

Brister initially responded that the mission statement in the Covenant for a New Century "contains no oversight." He said belief in the Trinity stems from belief "in the resurrection and the centrality of Jesus Christ in your life. That settles the issue."

"The Scripture is adequate enough to speak on this matter," Brister added. "To suggest that the SBC mission statement in any way neglects the role of God the Father is simply not true."

As this year's SBC annual meeting approached, however, convention leaders decided to revisit the issue. Brister said the change is being recommended "for the sake of theological clarification."

"I believe that it is the wise thing and the right thing to do for the Executive Committee to revisit the question,"

Chapman noted. "If the mission statement as it is written has the potential to cause concern or confusion among Southern Baptists, then it needs to be reconsidered. That Southern Baptists believe in the Trinity is not in question."

Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, explained that "the initial formulation of the mission statement was not intended to state everything that we believe doctrinally about the Lord, the churches, and the work we undertake together. But it was certainly our intention, and it still is, to give Southern Baptists a standard to rally round, and a reminder that this is God's work, and not our own; it is God's Word that is our authority, and not our own; and it is God's power on which we depend, and not our own."

If approved, the amended mission statement would read: "The Southern Baptist Convention exists to facilitate, extend, and enlarge the Great Commission ministries of Southern Baptist churches, to the glory of God the Father, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, upon the authority of Holy Scripture, and by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit."

Hogue to lead search for NAMB executive

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The final seven members of a 13-member incorporator group to search for a president of the North American Mission Board have been nominated, according to Bob Reccord, chairman of the Implementation Task Force which is coordinating denominational restructuring.

The 13-member group is one part of the articles of incorporation for the NAMB to be submitted to messengers at this week's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans.

C.B. Hogue, retired executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention, will chair the group called NAMB incorporators. Hogue was the messenger who made the motion in 1993 to study the denomination's structure, which led to a 1995 SBC vote approving the "Covenant for a New Century." That restructuring, to be finalized if a revision to SBC Bylaw 15 is approved this week by SBC messengers, will reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12 and merge three agencies — Brotherhood, Radio and Television and the Home Mission Board — into NAMB.

In addition to Hogue, nominees for incorporators are B. Carlisle Driggers, executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention; Fred Lowery, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bossier City, La.; Alice Sanders, a member of First Baptist

Church, Wales, Fla.; John O. Yarbrough, pastor of First Baptist Church, Perry, Ga., and Georgia Baptist Convention president; Michael Hamlet, pastor of First Baptist Church, North Spartanburg, S.C., and former chairman of the RTVC; and Robert Sorrell, associate pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn.

Reccord said the primary task of the NAMB incorporators is the search for a president of the new agency. Their nominee must be presented to the NAMB trustees for election.

According to the charter of NAMB, two trustees from each of the three affected agencies complete the 13-member group. Those six, announced earlier, are Donley Brown, Keith D. Corrick, John P. Avant, Jr., Charles G. Fuller, Omer Ray Finch Jr. and Gary Underwood.

The six incorporators from the three agencies will form a subcommittee of the incorporators group to nominate a chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer of the NAMB from its full slate of trustees elected at the 1997 SBC annual meeting in Dallas.

"This is a change from the ITF's original thinking because HMB trustees wanted only trustees of NAMB to have input into board officer nominees," Reccord explained. "All of the six incorporators from the three agencies are eligible to be nominated NAMB trustees in 1997."

SBC presidents urge Clinton to 'repent' of abortion ban veto

ORLANDO, FL (BP)—An appeal to President Bill Clinton "to repent of your veto" of the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act has been sent to the White House by Southern Baptist Convention president Jim Henry and 10 former SBC presidents.

In a two-page letter to Clinton June 5, the SBC presidents wrote: "It is with heavy hearts and profound disappointment that we express our united and unambiguous opposition to your veto of the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act. This grisly procedure cannot be morally justified."

The SBC leaders called on Clinton "to repent of your veto of the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act and to express publicly your personal regret at having made such a decision in the first place."

The letter follows an earlier statement by evangelist Billy Graham who said, "I think the president was wrong in vetoing" the legislation.

Joining Henry in sending the SBC presidents' letter were Franklin Paschall, W.A. Criswell, James Sullivan, Adrian Rogers, Bailey Smith, Jimmy Draper, Charles Stanley, Jerry Vines, Morris Chapman and Ed Young.

Staff changes

Charles L. Mays began serving as pastor of Runyan First Church in North Little Rock May 19, coming there from Leonard Street Church in Hot Springs. A former second vice president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, he has been pastor of First Church of Morton, Bellaire Church of Dermott and Calvary Church of Fort Smith. A native of Mississippi, Mays is a graduate of Mid-South Bible College in Memphis and Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, Rose Marie, have two adult children, Tammy Marie Pate and Kimberly Dawn Noles.

Bob Ford has accepted the call to serve as pastor of East Side Church in Fort Smith, effective Aug. 4. Currently serving as missions administrator for Southern Baptist work in central Europe, Ford is a former missionary to Scotland and Czechoslovakia. A graduate of Florida State University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he has served as a pastor in Louisiana and Tennessee. He and his wife, Marsha, have two sons, Jason and Andrew.

James Schmidt has accepted the call to become pastor of First Church of DeValls Bluff. He moved there from Sulphur Springs Church in Pine Bluff where he had served for six years. He previously served churches in New Mexico and Florida. Schmidt is a graduate of Tabernacle Baptist College in Greenville, S. C., and Inman Baptist College in Atlanta, Ga. He and his



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

wife, Karen Leigh, have four children, Kathleen, James, Phillip and Cheryl.

Darin M. Peterson is serving as pastor of Pleasant Hill Church of Harrisburg, going there from Lebanon Church of Harrisburg. In addition, he has served Unity Church of Arkadelphia and was youth pastor of Marlbrook Church of Blevins. Peterson, who currently is studying at Mid-America Seminary, is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University. He and his wife, Doris, have three children, Kayla, Holly and Lauren.

Aaron Thompson recently began serving as full-time pastor of River Road Church of Redfield where he had been serving as interim pastor and previously was pastor from 1985-89. Thompson, who served for more than 14 years as pastor of First Church of Alexander, is a graduate of Boyce Bible Institute, Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Mary Louise, have a daughter, Nila Sue Moore of Elm Springs, and two grandsons.

R. Dale Sykes has joined the staff of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock as children's minister, coming there from Second Church of Jacksonville. He previously served on the staff of Connell Church in Fort Worth, Texas. A native of Arizona, he is a graduate of Grand Canyon University in Phoenix and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Gigi, have two children, Jonathan Westin and Annie Kathleen.

A. Clay Doss recently joined the staff of First Church in Melbourne as youth and music director. He and his wife, Paula, moved there from Van Buren where he was on the staff of Oak Grove Church. He also has served churches in Sparkman, Arkadelphia and Horseshoe Bend. Doss is a graduate of Williams Baptist College and Ouachita Baptist University.

William T. "Bill" Baker will join the staff of First Church in Blytheville June 15 as minister of education. He previously served as a staff member of churches in Texas and Tennessee. Baker is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Mary Kay, are the parents of two adult children.

Michael R. Hart recently joined the staff of Rye Hill Church of Fort Smith as associate pastor/youth and education. He previously was pastor of churches in Oklahoma,

Mississippi and Missouri. Hart is a graduate of Southeastern Baptist College, Laurel, Miss., and attended Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Cindy, have two teenage children.

Paul Chrismon began serving May 28 as summer youth minister for South Side Church in Fort Smith. A native of Oklahoma, he is a May graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University.

Kim Baker and **Brandon Gill**, both seniors at Ouachita Baptist University, are serving as summer interns for Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock.

Clay Cunningham is summer youth intern for First Church of Benton. A sophomore at Ouachita Baptist University, Cunningham was licensed to the ministry by his home church, First Church of Yellville.

Roy Buckelew of Arkadelphia is interim pastor of Central Church of Magnolia. He previously served 16 months as interim pastor of First Church in Pine Bluff. Buckelew is professor and chairman of the department of speech at Ouachita Baptist University.

J.W. Whitley has completed 16 months of service as interim pastor of Green Meadows Church in Pine Bluff. He is available to serve as a supply or interim pastor. Whitley may be contacted at 9110 E. Sardin Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103; phone 501-557-2540.

Dave McKinney resigned May 26 as minister of education at Wynne Church. He has accepted the call of First Church in Portland, Texas, to coordinate the educational ministry that includes a full-time day care and a Christian elementary school. McKinney and his wife, Carla, have three children, Paul, Amy and Melody.

Eric Ertle resigned May 26 as pastor of South McGehee Church, following more than seven years of service. He has accepted the call to become pastor of a church in Bogalusa, La. Ertle and his wife, Cathy, have three sons, Jonathan, Joshua and Jason.

COM rally attracts 57 participants

The Arkansas chapter of Campers on Mission held its spring rally at Petit Jean State Park May 16-19, with 57 participants discussing missions and gathering for fellowship.

Participants heard keynote speakers Dennis Corder, director of missions for Conway-Perry Association, and Ed Greathouse, volunteer coordinator for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Ken Evans of University Church in Fayetteville led devotional services and Clayburn Bratton, pastor of New Hope Church in Fort Smith, and L.C. Hoff of Lake Village led Bible studies.

The campers also made plans for the COM Silver Anniversary Rally to be held in Greenwood, Miss., June 18-21. The next Arkansas COM rally is slated for Maumelle Park Sept. 5-8.

Church news

Little Rock First Church honored Jerry Johnson May 19 in recognition of 20 years of ministry. He also was ordained to the ministry during the morning worship service. Johnson, who joined the church staff in 1976 as Christian family life minister and youth minister, also has served as minister to senior adults and church administrator. In 1995, he became the

SEMINARY GRADUATES



PATRICK HUNTER
Doctor of Ministry
Jacksonville
New Orleans
Seminary



LARRY WILLIAMS
Doctor of Ministry
Hope
New Orleans
Seminary



**CHRISTOPHER
JAMES WHITE**
Master of Arts in
Christian Education
Springdale
New Orleans
Seminary

NO PHOTOS
AVAILABLE

CARL J. LOGAN
Master of Divinity
Blytheville
Golden Gate
Seminary

**MARK WAYNE
SHIPMAN**
Bachelor of Arts in
Biblical Studies
Fort Smith
Southeastern
Seminary

associate pastor with the primary assignment of pastoral care. He also gives leadership to the senior adult ministry and continues to supervise the Christian Family Life Center staff. He has been honored as Recreator of the Year in the Southern Baptist Convention and has served as a visiting professor at both Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. An evening reception honoring Johnson and his wife, Sally, concluded the anniversary activities.

Highland Hills Church of Texarkana will celebrate its 50th anniversary June 14 with activities that include a 10 a.m. service, an 11:30 luncheon and a 1 p.m. service. Former members and staff will be special guests. Mark Markle is pastor.

Barcelona Road Church of Hot Springs Village sent a nine-member mission team to Lisbon, Portugal, May 28-June 11. Pastor Tim Reddin was the Bible teacher for a meeting of missionaries serving in that country. Other team members provided activities for missionary kids. This mission effort was a project through the state convention's European Baptist partnership.

Malvern Third Church dedicated a baptistry glasswork May 26 that depicts the church's theme of faith, hope and love

through the symbols of the rainbow, the dove and the cross. The window was provided through memorial gifts for individuals and families.

Glenwood First Church held a revival April 21-24 that resulted in two professions of faith. Grant Ethridge of Lavaca was the evangelist and David Tate of Batesville directed music. Erby Burgess is pastor.

Obituaries

John Scarrow of Eureka Springs died April 28 at age 61. His funeral services were held May 2 at Rock Springs Church where he had served as a deacon for 31 years. He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Geneva; two daughters, Angela Scarrow and Susie Scarrow, both of the home; one son, Donald Scarrow of Berryville; two grandchildren, Jensen Scarrow of Springdale and Misha Scarrow of Berryville; two sisters; and three brothers.

Eunice Weidensaul died May 14 in Breckenridge, Texas, at age 86. A former Arkansas resident, she had been a member of Rock Springs Church where she served as church clerk, treasurer, Sunday School teacher and music director. She is survived by a sister, Anabel Stanford of Breckenridge; two nieces and three nephews.

Archle Young McMillan of Little Rock, age 75, died June 4 at Baptist Medical Center. He was a retired Southern Baptist minister of music, having served churches in Florida, Texas, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Arkansas from 1947 until 1984. His funeral services were held June 6 at Calvary Church in Little Rock where he was a member and deacon. McMillan, who was a past dean of Central Arkansas American Guild of Organists, was a graduate of Stetson University, Deland, Fla., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Survivors are his wife of 53 years, Olive Lord McMillan; a daughter, Dianne L. Smith of Tulsa, Okla.; two sons, Brian L. McMillan of Little Rock and David B. McMillan of Fort Smith; and two grandsons, Brett and Nicholas McMillan of Fort Smith. Memorials may be made to Calvary Church or Stetson University.

Ordinations

Wilmot Church licensed Kyle Bryan to the ministry May 12.

Portland Church ordained Jerry Selby and Mike Shell as deacons May 19.

Mount Ida First Church ordained Tommy Jones to the gospel ministry May 26. Jones is pastor of Refuge Church in Story.

Family enrichment workshops in July offer in-depth study

Two family enrichment leadership training workshops to be held in July will "provide participants an in-depth training experience in family enrichment leadership," said Gerald Jackson, associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship and family ministry department.

Featured workshops will be "Council for the Nearly- and Newly-Married" July 15 and "Strengthening Families, Growing Churches" July 16. Both will be held at Parkway Place Church in Little Rock.

Jackson said the workshops "will help participants improve their understanding and skills in leading couples and parenting groups in more effective learning."

The two workshops, he said, differ from others in their depth of training. "Often, conferences provide an overview of resources without adequate time for skill development. These workshops will help participants improve their understanding and skills in leading couples and parenting groups in more effective learning."

Workshop topics

"Council for the Nearly- and Newly-Married" will emphasize "commitment, family of origin issues, self-image, communication, conflict resolution and decision-making in a Christian marriage," Jackson explained.

He noted that "Strengthening Families, Growing Churches" will focus on how churches "can help families and reach them for membership. The workshop will help participants learn how to develop a comprehensive ministry to families, meeting the needs of couples and parents through the local church."

The workshops will be led by Arkansas native Ray Wells, former pastor of First Church, Smackover, and now director of the family development department for the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

The cost for each workshop is \$15. Each will begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 4:30 p.m.

For more information or to register, contact Gerald Jackson at the ABSC discipleship and family ministry department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 501-376-4791, ext. 5160.

VOLUNTEERS

State volunteer coordinator lists worldwide needs

If you have a desire to volunteer for state, home or foreign missions, then Ed Greathouse has the way to make it happen. Greathouse, volunteer coordinator for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, has a pile of worldwide missions opportunities needing to be filled by Arkansans.

"We have opportunities all over Arkansas and as far away as Samoa and the Virgin Islands," he noted, adding that "many of these projects do not require a specialized talent, just a desire to see God's work done."

Among the projects Greathouse noted are state missions projects in:

■ **Hope.** Construction of a 5,000-square-foot facility at the Hope Migrant Mission Center Oct. 18-19. Contact Harry Black at the ABSC Brotherhood department, 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5158.

■ **Bentonville/Rogers area.** Church planters, home Bible study leaders and church encouragers for Northwest Association. Contact Jim Richards, director of missions; phone 501-273-5442.

■ **Arkadelphia.** Construction of the Henderson College Baptist Student Union by Home Mission Board volunteers. Contact George Sims at 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5142.

■ **Statewide.** Church construction projects through Church in a Day builders and Nail Builders. Contact Harry Black.

Greathouse also highlighted volunteer foreign missions project needs.

"In the Virgin Islands, two Southern Baptist churches and a pastor's home need repairs from a hurricane that hit the area," he said. Three groups will work on the churches and home in July, August and September. Contact Charles Freeman at 912-435-3951 for more information.

Another need is for teachers at the Samoa Baptist Academy for the 1996-97 school year. Greathouse said the school needs a variety of teachers for kindergarten through the eighth grade, English as a second language teachers, a librarian, an office administrator and a principal. ESL teachers do not need to be certified. For more information, contact Doris Conner at the HMB Mission Service Corps department at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

Greathouse emphasized that in seeking God's will for volunteer service, "Pray and ask the Lord's guidance in selecting a place to serve."

For more information about Baptist volunteerism, contact Greathouse at the ABSC missions department, 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5249.

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July 22-26, 1996

Ouachita Baptist University

Music camp for youth who have completed grades 7-12

Camp Pastor - Don Moore, Retired Executive Director, ABSC
Worship Leader - Ric Hunt, Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, AR
Choir - Gerald Ware, First Baptist Church, Richardson, TX

Registration deadline is June 24

Forms and information in the state Music Ministry Handbook

For more information, call Church Music Ministries at 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5121
(in Little Rock, call 376-4791, ext. 5121)

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Geyer Springs First Baptist Church
5615 Geyer Springs Road, Little Rock
Sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School Department / A Cooperative Program Ministry

Among the conference topics will be: Infant-Toddler Enrichment; Cooking/Nutrition; Directors' Track; Science & Nature Activities; Creative Learning Games; Special Education; Music; Positive Guidance; Holiday Unit; Integrated Curriculum; Blocks; Licensing Issues; Creative Boxes; Resource Rooms; 3-Year WEE Learn Curriculum; Avoiding Teacher Burn-Out; Understanding 2-Year-Olds; Math Manipulatives; Reading Books; Photography; Dramatic Play.

Training will apply toward hours required by the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Attendance will be certified.

For more information, contact: Janet Williams, Preschool Associate, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 501-376-4791 or 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5128.

Horne names Hatfield Nominating Committee chairman

Arkansas Baptist State Convention president Rex Horne has appointed Bill Hatfield as chairman of the state convention's 1996 Nominating Committee. Hatfield, pastor of First Church, Dierks, is serving the second year of his three-year term as a member of the committee.

Horne also appointed three new members to the nine-member committee. They include Ed Hinkson, director of missions for Pulaski Association; Rodney Reeves,

pastor of Central Church, Jonesboro; and Don Walsh, a member of Third Church, Malvern.

Other second-year members on the committee are laymen Lew Sorrells of Brinkley and C.B. Thompson of North Little Rock. Third-year members are Delton Beall, pastor of Grace Church, Rogers; Van Harnes, pastor of West Side Church, Greers Ferry; and Barry King, pastor of Tumbling Shoals Church.

"As always, we hope to get input from Arkansas Baptists as they submit recommendations to the Nominating Committee," Horne noted. "I anticipate the chairman and the committee will work together to bring a good report to the convention in November."

Individuals interested in submitting names for consideration by the committee may fill out the leadership profile form on page 16. The completed form should be mailed prior to July 12 to Joy Faucett at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

**"Carry
The Light...
Share Christ's
Love"**

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Cliff Jenkins

Music by Choirs from:
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led by Jimmie Hefner
Levy, North Little Rock
led by Ron Selby
First, Sherwood
led by Johnpaul Moccia
Baring Cross, NLR
led by Sam Wakefield

Congregational
Music led by
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YOUTH CONSULTANTS:

Michael Woodriddle, Brad Sneed, Shawn Keith, Doug
Porter and Dwayne Ulmer

SINGLE ADULT CONSULTANT: (for all singles)

Darrel Smith

ADULT CONSULTANTS:

Ronnie Adams, David Apple, Bob Cavin, Mackie
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Tom McMinn, Don Moore, Nita Moore, Paul McClung,
Milton Redeker, Clarence Shell, Gearl Spicer, Bernie
Spooner, Randy Thompkins, Linda Thompson, Keith
Wilkinson and Raye Zacharias.



UPDATE

Arkansas/European
Baptist Partnership

We need volunteers to help with the following ministries in Europe:

- ★ The Executive Director of the EBC needs an office administrator/secretary to serve for two years.
- ★ Arkansas churches to partner with English-speaking church in Paris, Prague and Kitzingen, Germany.
- ★ An Arkansas church to help sponsor a new church start in Hannover, Germany.
- ★ A VBS team for Budapest, Hungary and Naples, Italy.
- ★ A couple to conduct a marriage seminar in Grafenwoehr, Germany.
- ★ Teams to conduct Experiencing God week-ends in various places.
- ★ Singles Director for Berlin, Germany
- ★ Pastors for Naples, Italy - Giessen, Germany - Hannover, Germany and other European locations in the future.
- ★ Construction teams for Dusseldorf, Germany
- ★ Revival teams for futura needs.
- ★ Volunteers to work with the W.H. Jackson Crusades in Norway (Oct. 9-21) and in Sweden (Oct. 15-29).

Please contact the ABSC Brotherhood Dept., Doyné Plummer or Harry Black, 1-800-838-2272 or 501-376-4791, ext. 5190, for more info.

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Leadership Profile for ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 1996 Arkansas Baptist State Convention want Arkansas Baptists to submit names of persons in that committee to consider when they bring the convention nominations for state committees and boards.

This recommendation will not insure nomination, but the committee will consider each recommendation. The committee will not contact any person recommended until they approve the nominations. The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting August 5 and needs all recommendations no later than July 12.

Members of the committee include: Delton Beall, Van Harness, Bill Hatfield, Ed Hinkson, Barry King, Rodney Reeves, Lew Sorrells, C.B. Thompson, Don Walsh.

July 12 is the deadline for recommendations.

Nominee _____ Layperson Minister Age _____ Occupation _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
Member of what church? _____ Association _____

Current leadership responsibilities

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Civic _____
Church _____
Association _____
State or SBC Boards _____

Past leadership experience (within last five years)

State or SBC Boards _____
Association _____
Local Church _____

Personal

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

Is this person currently active in a local church? Yes No _____

Is this person able to be away from family and work for at least one or two days, three times a year? Yes No

Give the name and phone number of at least one person, other than his or her pastor or Director of Missions, who knows of the nominee's involvement in Baptist life. _____

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

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

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NATION

**SBC task force
examines efforts
to halt racism**

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—A task force charged with exploring ways to eradicate racism within the Southern Baptist Convention held its first meeting May 26 in Nashville.

The racial reconciliation task force was formed earlier this year by the SBC Inter-Agency Council in response to a racial reconciliation resolution adopted at last year's convention in Atlanta. The group focused on examining ways that SBC entities can become more reflective of the ethnic and racial makeup of the convention's membership.

CLC president Richard Land, chairman of the task force, acknowledged that any transformation of the SBC will have to be worked out on a "person-to-person, family-to-family, church-to-church basis."

"Racism is a sin problem," Land said. "It is a functional denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are seeking reconciliation because we have been reconciled in Christ Jesus — that empowers us and impels us to seek reconciliation with others."

"We need reconciliation doctrine...so that those who are going to fight against what God is doing will have to fight from other bases than theological," said SBC second vice president Gary Frost. "We need to lay a very strong theological base."

Task force members called for the development of a "pool of resources" — black and ethnic Southern Baptists who are willing to serve within the convention's structure.

The task force suggested that the next president of the SBC meet with the Committee on Nominations immediately after his election at the convention in New Orleans "to personally appeal to them to increase the ethnic and racial representation on our boards of trust."



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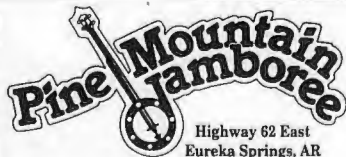
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NATION

House panel favors measure to combat gay marriages

WASHINGTON (BP)—A House of Representatives subcommittee voted May 30 to approve legislation designed to enable states to refuse recognition of homosexual marriages. The vote by the Constitution Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee marked the first action taken on the Defense of Marriage Act, H.R. 3396.

The bill specifies that no state shall be required to recognize a homosexual marriage from another state. It also amends federal law to define marriage as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife" and to define a spouse as "a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife."

The 8-4 vote to report the bill favorably to the Judiciary Committee was split along party lines, with Republican members voting for it. Four amendments, two which would have seriously altered the bill, were offered by Democrats but defeated.

The legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate in early May in response to an expected Hawaii court ruling which threatens to legalize homosexual marriage in a sweeping way.

If such a union is declared legal in Hawaii, it likely would be considered legal in all other states under the full faith and credit clause of the U.S. Constitution, unless a state is able to show it has a compelling policy opposing such unions. Eleven states reportedly have enacted legislation banning homosexual marriages.

President Bill Clinton supports the legislation and will sign the bill if it passes in its current form, said White House press secretary Mike McCurry.

In a related development, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled May 20 that Colorado cannot ban laws that protect homosexuals from discrimination. The 6-3 *Romer v. Evans* decision struck down Colorado's Amendment 2 as a violation of the U.S. Constitution's equal protection clause.

In a 6-1 decision in October 1994, the Colorado Supreme Court upheld a lower-court ruling against Amendment 2, the first state provision against homosexual rights. In its opinion, the state's highest court said Amendment 2 violated the rights of homosexuals and bisexuals to equal participation in the political process.

McCurry said President Clinton supported the Supreme Court decision. "The Colorado law denied a group of citizens the right to participate effectively in the political process in Colorado, and the president believes that's bad public policy," McCurry noted.



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MUSIC

Children's Choir Leader Workshop slated for August

A workshop for children's choir leaders will allow more flexibility because of new scheduling this year, according to Peggy Pearson, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's church music ministries department. The State Children's Choir Leader Workshop is scheduled for Aug. 9-10 at Central Church in North Little Rock, focusing on the theme, "The Word of God Is Alive."

"I'm excited about the possibilities of having topical sessions scheduled at a different time from the age-related sessions," Pearson explained. Previously, workshop sessions had all been geared to age-related topics.

The sessions range from "Building Healthy Self-Esteem in Children" to "Oldies but Goodies: Religious Fun Songs."

"This year, there are sessions that will interest everyone, no matter what age they teach," Pearson pointed out.

The leaders for this year's workshop include:

■ Carolyn Barrett, a children's choir specialist, general music and choral teacher from California.

■ Kerry Cardwell, children's music ministry coordinator and director of older children's choir at First Baptist Church, Bartlesville, Okla.

■ Randall Bradley, associate professor of music at Oklahoma Baptist University and minister of music at University Baptist Church in Shawnee, Okla.

■ Neva Hayley, music associate at First Baptist Church, Broken Arrow, Okla.

■ Jackie Edwards, former children's associate in the ABSC Sunday School department.

The cost of the workshop will be \$10 per person, if reservations are postmarked by July 15, and \$15 after that date. Child care will be an extra fee.

For additional information, contact Pearson toll-free at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally at 501-376-4791, ext. 5121.

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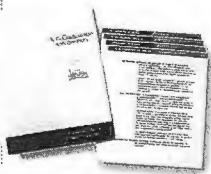
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Music/youth minister needed — Full-time position available in small community S.B.C. in NW Arkansas. Send resume to: Search Committee, 16575 Birch Lane, Rogers, AR 72756.

Houseparents — Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children is looking for a loving, Christian couple to be houseparents at the Oklahoma City campus. Call Rod Phillips at 405-691-7781.

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Student minister — for school age children and teens. Full or part time. Send resume to: Calvary Baptist Church, 2301 Midland Blvd., Fort Smith, AR 72904.

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Seeking resumes — for full-time minister of music and youth. Send resumes to: Music/Youth Search, c/o First Baptist Church, 201 E. Haywood, England, AR 72046.

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included.

CHILDREN'S HOME

Monticello volleyball tournament to help benefit Arkansas Baptist Children's Home

Monticello-area Baptist churches are teaming up with local businesses to raise funds for the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children through a volleyball tournament.

The "For the Kids" Volleyfest '96, set for June 29 at the Children's Home in Monticello, will benefit the Home's recreational programs.

"The idea is to raise funds for their recreational ministry," explained event planner Doug Sanders, minister of music and youth at First Church in Monticello. "In past tournaments they have used money to buy new basketball equipment and (gymnasium) wall padding."

Home director Royce Aston said that

the tournament "will do things for our recreation program that are not in our budget. The funds from this project will purchase things the kids can use that they would not otherwise have."

Sanders said the tournament will include a maximum of 24 teams competing for prizes on outdoor courts. Teams are not limited to churches and are not bracketed according to skill or gender.

The cost is \$60 per team. Competition will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 7 p.m.

Individuals interested in additional information or to register may contact David Atwell at 501-367-9721 during the day or evenings at 501-367-5316.

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Convention Uniform

King of the mountain

By Gary L. Burney,
assistant to the pastor,
New Hope Fellowship, Springdale
Basic passage: James 1:5-8; 3:1-5a;
13-18
Focal passage: James 3:13-18
Central truth: Godly wisdom
produces right living.

When I was a child, one of my favorite games was "King of the Mountain." The object was to be on top of the mound of a pile of dirt and keep your position by throwing everyone else off. This took physical strength as well as cunning to maintain your position. Our world today plays its own version of this childhood game. To play this game you must know the rules. James tells us how the world plays and the rules in James 3:14. Two important rules are given:

■ To be on top, you must have the right source of wisdom—The source of wisdom the world embraces doesn't come from God, it comes from the world, the flesh and the devil.

■ To be on top, you must have the right content—The world's wisdom has its base in jealousy (*envy*, v. 16) and self-seeking (*strife*, v. 16). The essence of the world's wisdom is, "Me first."

God tells us that we as Christians must play by a different set of rules, His rules. If we want to be first, we must be willing to be last. The source of godly wisdom is from above, from God. The content of godly wisdom is pure (not for selfish reasons), peaceable (seeks peace), gentle (reasonable), easy to be entreated (approachable), full of mercy and good fruits (compassionate and loving lifestyle), without partiality (doesn't judge based on external appearance), without hypocrisy (genuine and sincere, doesn't "put you on").

The results of playing by two sets of rules are:

■ Worldly wisdom results in confusion and evil deeds.

■ Godly wisdom results in peace through right living.

To be king of the mountain, James says, we must be willing to play by a different set of rules. And when we reach the top, no one will want to overthrow us.

Life and Work

I won't judge that

By Suzanne Dilday, member,
First Church, Benton
Basic passage: Romans 14:1-15:7
Focal passage: Romans 14:1-15:7
Central truth: Some things are
debatable.

There's nothing so combustible as a locker room full of girls. I discovered that my first year of teaching as a drill team director. A look could ignite a week of conflict. Christians can be the same. Each is convinced he is right and can quote Scripture as support. Who can argue with a person when God is on his side, right?

Christians find plenty to argue about. Paul knew it and addressed a problem in the Roman church. Some believers were eating meat sacrificed to idols. After all, idols were just chunks of rock and meat was meat. But some believers were taking exception to this cuisine. Paul attempted to settle the matter by saying, in essence, that debatable situations exist. Therefore, each believer must come to his own conviction from God (v. 14:20).

Today, needless conflict arises, sometimes over issues that are clearly settled in the Bible and sometimes over issues that have no clear answer. We must acknowledge that there are disputable situations in our culture today: Christian involvement in politics; public, private or home schooling; clapping or lifting hands in worship; women in the workplace. These are issues people write letters to editors about, issues that have two or more biblically defensible sides. We must accept that these situations exist and we must accept brothers who differ with us (vv. 14:4, 15:7)—not spread rumors, write letters or draft resolutions, but accept them as God accepts us.

We must also trust our brothers and sisters in God. The "priesthood of the believer" is crucial to preserving fellowship and ending conflict. To paraphrase Paul in verse 14:20, "Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of politics, worship style, etc." Our biggest concern is to "pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another" (v. 14:19). This is more pleasing to God than winning an argument (v. 14:18).

It is our responsibility to concern ourselves with our fellow believers' beliefs, not to judge them (v. 14:10) but to determine how our own actions can edify them (vv. 14:21, 15:2). We are no judges; we are not even part of the jury. Judgment belongs only to God.

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Bible Book

God's plan for marriages

By Bill Steeger, chairman,
department of religion,
Ouachita Baptist University
Basic passage: Malachi 1:1-2:16
Focal passage: Malachi 2:11-16
Central truth: God is the third
partner in a believer's marriage.

What is the nature of a believer's marriage? Malachi answered this question in our focal passage. While some insist that these verses used marriage as a metaphor to describe the relationship between Judah and God, Malachi focused on a real problem encountered among his people following the exile and restoration. Here are sound principles for building our homes:

■ "Married to the daughter of a strange god" (v. 11). Paul had such passages in mind when he warned believers about being unequally yoked with unbelievers (II Cor. 6:14). The foundation of any marriage is not love—it is Christ and His church (read Eph. 5:29-32). Love, friendship and companionship must be there, but human love is too fragile to sustain marriage. The foundation of our homes is Christ and the support of His church.

■ "Covering the altar of the Lord with tears" (vv. 12-13). The tears of men and women in falling marriages, where God is rejected by one partner, is described here. A torn marriage impacts our relationship with God and our effectiveness in service.

■ "The LORD hath been a witness" (v. 14). God is the third partner of a believer's marriage. A man, woman and God are the only basis for a Christian home. He must be an active partner in calling husband and wife to "covenant" obedience before Him. "She is thy companion," meaning "united," "knit together as one," "associate," "of like rank" and "of like calling."

■ "Wherefore one?" (v. 15). God created woman from the side of man (not his head, nor his foot, but his rib, his equal partner). Malachi asked if God didn't have enough "residue of the spirit" to make more wives for man. Why only one? This powerful statement about monogamy insists that the intimacy of husband and wife, in partnership with God, produces godly seed.

■ "He hateth putting away" (v. 16). Divorce is a complex issue and Scriptures are abundant. Jesus said God intended marriage to be permanent. Divorce decrees by Moses were given because of the hardness of hearts (Mark 10:2-12). Study this issue in light of Scripture (Deut. 24:1-4; Matt. 5:31-32; II Cor. 7:10-16).

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Convention Uniform

Do right

By Gary L. Burney, assistant to the pastor, New Hope Fellowship, Springdale
 Basic passage: James 4:1-10; 13-17
 Focal passage: James 4:17
 Central truth: Sin is more than just doing wrong things, sometimes sin is not doing the right thing.

Throughout our study of the book of James, we have been challenged to do the right thing:

In James 1, we found that the key to happiness and fulfillment comes through obedience to God.

In chapter 2, James emphasized that Christians are to accept others based on their relationship with Christ, not their social standing, and that faith requires action. Faith without action isn't true faith.

Chapter 3 helped us understand that godly wisdom produces right living.

Now, as we come to the close of chapter 4, James challenges us to act upon what we have learned. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." What will we do with what we have learned? A few things come to mind:

■ Get out of our little worlds into the lives of others. Witnessing is more than going out and knocking on doors during church visitation. Witnessing is taking the gospel to people where they are, as we are going. A lifestyle that glorifies Christ and words that agree with our lifestyle will do more to win our world to Jesus than anything else.

■ Don't exclude others from the Kingdom of God because they are different than we are. The gospel is for all people. Jesus died for all the world, not just our part.

■ The life of faith is a life filled with actions that have ministry as a goal. What ministry has God called you to perform? Do it faithfully.

Remember, not doing what we know we should is sin!

Life and Work

What is a missionary?

By Suzanne Dilday, member, First Church, Benton
 Basic passage: Romans 15:15-19, 23-24, 30-32
 Focal passage: Romans 15:15-16, 18, 24
 Central truth: You too can be a missionary.

Over the years I've witnessed some of my students who are Christians date students who aren't. I've jokingly referred to this tendency as "missionary dating" — dating those in need of salvation and bringing them to church, in hopes of winning them to Christ. It gives a whole new meaning to the term "mission field."

While I'm not so sure that all these students were motivated out of spiritual concern, there's no doubt that Paul's missions to the Gentiles grew from his concern for their souls. If not, I doubt he would have endured the hardships he faced. In Romans 15, he gives us thoughts to consider about our own missionary status.

Paul felt called to do what he was doing "because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles" (vv. 15-16). You may have heard it said that each one of us has a calling. I believe that. If each of us has a calling, then we each are missionaries.

Being a missionary is simply being in contact with other people, with the world outside us. Being a missionary is seeing a need and meeting it. Paul saw a need to tell the Gentiles of Christ so he went and did it. Yet, he was careful not to take any credit himself for success. "For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me...." (v. 18). Being a missionary is also knowing where the glory goes.

Paul saw that the church house is a means, not an end. On his way to another mission field, he planned to see the Romans so they could help him on his way (v. 24). It would be silly to plan a big road trip, drive to the first rest stop and pitch a tent there for the rest of the time. Paul saw the fellowship of believers as the rest stop on the way to the real destination, winning the lost. Being a missionary is letting Sunday prepare us for the week, rather than the other way around.

There are thousands of missions opportunities. Many times all it takes to uncover one is a call to your church office to find out what a benevolence ministry is doing. The mission field is right outside our doors.

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Bible Book

The New Covenant work

By Bill Steeger, chairman, department of religion, Ouachita Baptist University
 Basic passage: Malachi 2:17-4:6
 Focal passage: Malachi 2:17-3:3
 Central truth: God lovingly refines His people.

While Susan and I were missionaries in the tiny village of Tsai Tsina in Ethiopia, a silversmith there often captured my attention. I not only watched the way he formed the most delicate crosses of spun silver, but I was fascinated by his refining process. He heated the ore in a small crucible, pulled it from the oven and skimmed off the dross, sprinkled more lead in the mix to precipitate impurities, and heated again. The process was repeated over and over. He was not satisfied until the molten silver revealed his reflection. Our focal passage uses the image of a silversmith to describe the Messiah's refining of His people.

■ "Where is the God of judgment?" (v. 2:17). Malachi echoes the question of his people, equivalent to "Where is God when we need Him?" God's answer immediately follows in v. 3:1, "Behold" (literally "Behold me" or "look at me").

■ "Even the messenger of the covenant" (v. 3:1). There are two different messengers mentioned in this verse. The first, "my messenger" (a play on the prophet's name, literally "Malachi"), refers to the one preparing the way for the Lord to come. The second is the Lord. He is the messenger of the covenant, the coming Messiah. This was fulfilled in Jesus.

■ "But who may abide the day of His coming?" (v. 3:2). When the Messiah comes, people cannot stand before Him. "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." No one ever sees God and lives (Ex. 33:20). When anyone truly meets God in Jesus, they die — and most are born again (see Eph. 4:22-24, II Cor. 5:17).

■ "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (v. 3:3). Malachi used the beautiful picture noted above. The Messiah lovingly refines His people like that silversmith. Slowly believers are transformed into the very image of Jesus Christ, as the silversmith removes the dross and watches the molten metal until his own reflection is clearly discerned (II Cor. 3:18). The New Testament repeatedly calls us to grow: "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), "until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:27), and "follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

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'96 SBC Book of Reports available electronically

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The 1996 SBC Book of Reports is available to subscribers to SBCNet, the Southern Baptist Convention's data communications network.

The Book of Reports, prepared each year for the SBC annual meeting, includes reports from all the denomination's agencies, business recommendations, names of all SBC agency officers and the convention's constitution. The electronic version of this year's Book of Reports is posted in SBCNet's Library Section, General Ministry B Forum, SBC 96.

SBCNet may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed free by the Baptist Sunday School Board. To order an SBCNet kit or to obtain additional information, call 1-800-325-7749.

Experiencing God Study Bible released in NIV format

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The most popular study Bible published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman Publishers is now available in the contemporary translation most popular with Christian readers. The New International Version (NIV) of "The Experiencing God Study Bible" was released June 1.

The current New King James Version (NKJV) of the study Bible has sold approximately 115,000 copies since the fall of 1994, with a third printing under way. By comparison, the NIV version outsells the NKJV in the general Bible market by more than 2-1, according to B&H Bible marketing manager Wendell Overstreet.

The Experiencing God Study Bible is part of the response that has extended the influence of Experiencing God far beyond the customary cycle of most teaching materials. Sales of the course are nearing 1.6 million copies and a youth version has sold more than 200,000 copies. "God's Invitation," a related study for college students, will be released by the BSSB next month.

Other companion products that have been produced include Broadman & Holman's trade book version, *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God* that has sold more than 100,000 copies and a perpetual calendar with daily Scripture readings which sold 15,000 copies in just three months.

'Project 25' targets bivocational ministers of education

JACKSON, MS (BP)—The launching of "Project 25" to identify and train bivocational education directors in Mississippi marks the first such effort in the Southern Baptist Convention, according to the program's coordinator.

"The purpose of this project is to enlist 25 pastors/churches to adopt the concept of bivocational education directors," said Chester Vaughn, the Mississippi coordinator for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary programs. "Pastors are encouraged to seek a person in the church or community with commitment and skills who, with training, could lead the educational program on a part-time basis."

Project 25 is a joint effort of NOBTS, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and the Baptist Sunday School Board. The BSSB will provide scholarships to each of the first 25 churches that enroll a student. Each participating church will receive a one-time amount of \$100 to cover registration and course fees for the first course.

Baptist state paper group's 100-year history written

BRENTWOOD, TN (BP)—For more than a century, the Southern Baptist Press Association has helped chronicle the history of the Southern Baptist Convention. A new book, in turn, will share the history of the Southern Baptist Press Association (recently renamed the Association of State Baptist Papers).

The press association history, *Contenting for the Right to Know*, was written by Bill Junker, retired director of editorial services for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The 288-page book, published by Providence Publishing House, was released last week and was scheduled to be available this week at the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans.

Guy Henderson to retire June 30 as Mississippi editor

JACKSON, MS (BP)—Guy Henderson, editor of *The Baptist Record*, will retire June 30 after six years with the state paper of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Henderson, 68, has served with the Mississippi Baptist Convention 18 years. Prior to that he was a missionary with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for 20 years, serving in Korea and the Philippines. Although he and his wife, Lois, will remain in Mississippi, he said he would like to assist in some overseas pastorates in the future.

State convention executive director William W. Causey is expected to announce a nominee to succeed Henderson within the next few weeks.