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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 93, Number 2 .

January 27, 1994



**“He
hath
broken
down the
wall
between
us.”**

Ephesians 2:14

**OBSERVE
RACE RELATIONS SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 13**

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee**

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Arkansas Baptist gifts exceed state convention's 1993 CP goal

Arkansas Baptists channeled more than \$15.3 million to state and national ministry causes in 1993, exceeding the state's Cooperative Program goal of \$15.2 million by \$117,838. The total contributions, which marked the third time in four years that gifts topped the state CP goal, included more than \$15.19 million in undesignated CP gifts and approximately \$126,000 in designated giving.

Affirming the growth in Cooperative Program support during the past year, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Don Moore said, "Arkansas has worked very hard to keep all of our people working together toward the overriding causes of missions, evangelism and ministry. There is a constant effort to educate our people about the strengths of the Cooperative Program.

Responsible stewardship

"We are humbled by the blessing of God on our Baptist churches and by the responsibility we have to be good stewards of what is given," Moore continued. "We are also very grateful for the level of trust that exists in the work of the convention. Because of Arkansas Baptists' faithful support, Arkansas can go on strengthening and expanding our ministries."

Special offering receipts included \$2,940,242 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, exceeding the \$2.8 million goal by 5 percent. The 1993 gifts topped the previous year's total by 3.9 percent.

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering gifts for home missions totaled \$1,009,635, more than \$15,000 short of the \$1,025,000 offering goal and 1 percent below the

previous year's home missions gifts.

Gifts to the Dixie Jackson Offering for state missions totaled \$629,893, more than \$20,000 short of the \$650,000 goal and 1 percent below 1992 gifts.

World hunger relief contributions totaled \$173,578, a drop of 10 percent from the previous year.

Julia Ketner, executive director of Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, voiced disappointment in the number of special offerings which experienced declines. "I'm always disappointed when our receipts do not measure up to the previous year," she noted.

Emphasizing the importance of combining the offerings with annual prayer emphases, Ketner added, "If we have the prayer part in priority, I believe the offerings will come. We need to earnestly challenge our church members to pray about what God would have us give. It would be exciting to see, out of His abundance, what He would direct us to give."

Jimmy Barrentine, director of the ABSC missions department, said the shortfall in state missions offering gifts is "a considerable concern." Noting that the 1993 offering goal represented 46 percent of missions department funding, he said the shortfall "handicaps the ability to respond to immediate needs of churches and associations."

"With all the needs in the state, we're looking at a diminished ability to meet those needs," Barrentine acknowledged. He said unmet ministry needs present "a challenge to more effectively put state missions before the churches and talk about the ministry needs in our state."

Cover Story

CLC photo



Race Relations Day

Southern Baptists' annual Race Relations Sunday, set for Feb. 23, will highlight the theme, "He hath broken down the wall between us" (Eph. 2:14).

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Greg Kirksey, Benton, president; Curt Hodges, Jonesboro; Lucie C. Hagins, Fordyce; Cliff Palmer, Rogers; Brenda Bruce, Newark; Mark Baber, Marion; David McCormick, Dardanelle; James Preston, Stamps; and Otis Turner, Arkadelphia.

North Pulaski leads state in study awards

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

An Arkansas Baptist association was among the top 25 associations in the Southern Baptist Convention conducting Church Study Courses in 1993. End-of-year Baptist Sunday School Board figures showed North Pulaski Association was 23rd in the board's top 25 list of Baptist associations for the 1992-93 reporting period with 1,581 awards.

The Church Study Course (CSC) is a Southern Baptist educational system designed to support the training efforts of local churches. The courses reached a record SBC enrollment of 1,674,671 in 1993. That total is a 5 percent increase over the previous year's 1,588,363, according to BSSB statistics.

North Pulaski director of missions Marvin Peters said he is "surprised and excited" about the association's ranking.

He said two training events helped place the association high in the convention in presenting CSC awards. "We have an associational academy every year that helps increase the awards," Peters explained.

He said the academy was an answer to conducting separate program training conferences. "We started doing it as a response to having one conference as opposed to having a lot of little ones. The (associational) program director also can have leadership training during the academy."

He said the popularity and attendance for the academy has grown in recent years. "We were doing all the program areas at one time but now have a separate associational school for Sunday School." He noted that attendance at the Sunday School academy has averaged 200 while the other usually has 60 to 100 participants.

Study course offerings among North Pulaski's latest academy included courses in such areas as Christian sex education, Hope for the Home, WMU and Brotherhood leadership training, The Ministry of the Baptist Deacon and The Roman Road (evangelism training).

"A lot of people who have attended the academy say it's the best thing we do in the association," commented Peters.

Other Arkansas Baptist associations presenting more than 1,000 CSC awards last year were Southwest Arkansas Association (1,219) and Caroline Association (1,002).

More than 13,000 Arkansas Baptists were among the approximately 710,000

Southern Baptists who earned study course awards during the year. The participants selected from about 600 courses in 24 subject areas.

Among top-ranking Arkansas Baptist churches were First Church, Hope, with 426 awards earned; First Church, Gentry, with 409 awards; and First Church, Little Rock, with 338.

TOP 10 Church study course awards Arkansas churches

First, Hope	426
First, Gentry	409
First, Little Rock	338
Calvary, Camden	276
Mt. Carmel, Cabot	270
Old Austin, Austin	263
First, Clarendon	263
Calvary, Hope	259
First, Warren	251
Second, Jacksonville	230

"I'm surprised at the number, but I'm not surprised we are at the top," said Stan Parris, pastor of First Church, Hope. "It's been important to our folks for a long time. They understand the importance of training."

"What shocks me is we don't have a minister of education and have been without one for six or seven years," Parris remarked. "But our people have continued to see the importance in growth and training opportunities."

"We have offered a cafeteria-type plan of having a lot of courses and rotating them in and out," Parris said. "Our people have responded well to 'Experiencing God' and 'PrayerLife.'"

He said utilizing study course material in Discipleship Training has made an impact in the church's life. "The main thing about it is there is some accountability. They are asked to do daily assignments and our people are responding to being together and praying together. More of our people are experiencing God, sitting down with their Bibles and seeing God work personally in their lives."

Parris reported that the church's deacons are going through the "Fresh Encounter" materials together while their

wives are studying "Experiencing God" or "PrayerLife." "They're excited. They found they couldn't get everything done they needed to in an hour, so they started coming early to complete the lessons. They'll even walk away from a Cowboys game to get there early."

Don Blackmore, minister of education for First Church, Gentry, said that congregation also uses CSC materials for Discipleship Training. "We emphasize Discipleship Training in our church," Blackmore explained. "I feel confident Discipleship Training is meeting a lot of needs." He reported the church enrolls "nearly half of our Sunday School attendance in Discipleship Training on a weekly basis."

"It's meeting personal needs," Blackmore continued. "We see people living in freedom instead of in bondage, we see people grow spiritually in discerning their role in ministry, in determining their gifts, being equipped and trained in ministry, and then building and strengthening families. And all of that helps the church family."

Jerry Chapman, supervisor of the CSC resources section of the BSSB, affirmed that the most popular courses for the year included "Experiencing God," with 138,319 awards, followed by the Adult Winter Bible study book for 1993, "Matthew 5:7: Design for Discipleship," with 67,526 awards. Other top subject areas in popularity were "MasterLife," "Survival Kit" and "PrayerLife."

Jimmie Sheffield, Arkansas Baptist State Convention associate executive director, said leadership training is at the heart of CSC awards.

"A lot of churches use it for leadership training," he emphasized, explaining that "many people, when they go into a position of leadership in the church, have no idea what to do, what to teach or how to work with an age group. These leaders can take the (CSC) material, learn all about the area, and suddenly find themselves involved and committed to reaching that age group."

Chapman said course offerings for 1994 include 79 new courses, 29 video courses and a wide selection of courses in Spanish. Catalogs for the Church Study Course may be obtained by calling the Sunday School Board at 1-800-458-2772. Questions regarding CSC may be directed to Chapman at the Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, TN 37234; phone 615-251-2325.

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

You talk about insight into witness... look at this! You know how Peter was supernaturally enlisted by the Lord and the servants of Cornelius to come to Caesarea to tell Cornelius' household about Jesus. Upon arrival Peter hurried to the main business at hand. You can understand his hurry. He was not that comfortable around Gentiles in the first place and the divine mandate was so dramatic and compelling that he could do no other. What will flood from his heart and out of his mouth? That should be interesting.

"Ye know... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:37, 38).

How revealing! People like Jesus go about doing good. People who have God with them go about doing good and helping the oppressed. He might have claimed to be anointed and claimed that God was with Him but the evidence that convinced people was how He helped people. You know, that might work today.

It is more than implied in Scripture that people who do not help the poor, oppressed and needy give evidence that the love of God may not abide in them. (see I John 3:17). This makes it shocking when people who believe most in the anointing of God fail to believe that "doing good" is essential.

This is why "Perform Ministry in Jesus' Name" is such an important emphasis in 1994. If thousands of us began doing good in the power of the Holy Spirit, our voice would begin to be heard as Jesus' was.

Many of our people want to perform ministry but are reluctant because of feeling poorly prepared. Our convention is providing 15 Perform Ministry Conferences all over the state so that everyone who wants to "do good" by various ministries may be equipped to do so.

You will find the times and places in *Vision* and in the *Newsmagazine*. I urge you to become involved and see if God does not give us more converts like Cornelius and his household.

RONNIE ROGERS

The President's Corner

Grateful and committed



I am deeply grateful to my Lord Jesus and Arkansas Baptists for allowing me to serve you this year. One of the things I look forward to, with great anticipation, is getting to know as many of you as possible.

Since you don't know me, I thought I would begin by telling you a few things about myself. I was born in 1952 in Little Rock, and I grew up in North Little Rock, graduating from North Little Rock High School in 1970. My childhood was far from sheltered. It was clouded with the divorce of my parents, bankruptcy and alcoholism.

I married Gina (Ray) Rogers, of Fort Smith, on Nov. 23, 1974. We have two wonderful daughters, Natalie, 14, and Nancy, 12, and we reside in Hot Springs.

Prior to entering the ministry I worked for Toland Construction, Winegarten's Grocery Store, and as a brakeman/conductor on the Rock Island Railroad for eight years. I owned and operated my own business, Rogers' Enterprises, in Little Rock and North Little Rock, for the five years prior to surrendering to the ministry.

I was led to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ by pastor Sam Whitlow on Jan. 9, 1979. My wife, Gina, was saved two months later. Subsequently, we joined Chicot Road

Baptist Church where we were nurtured in the faith by the pastor, Sam Whitlow, and the loving people of God there.

In 1980, I surrendered to the ministry; in June 1981, I was called to pastor Knowles Baptist Church in Strong; and in October 1982, I left and went to Criswell College in Dallas. After graduating in 1985 with a bachelor of arts degree in biblical studies, I was called to pastor Lakeside Baptist Church in Hot Springs. While here, I completed a master of science degree in counseling at Henderson University.

I enjoy spending time with my family and pastoring God's people at Lakeside. I pray that every pastor could have a church like Lakeside. They have loved, supported and prayed for me far beyond anything I could have imagined or deserved. I also enjoy exercising regularly, although I must admit, it's not *always* enjoyable. Now I have the wonderful privilege to serve you as convention president.

I commit to seek to be faithful with the responsibility you have entrusted to me and to do the will of my Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Personal perspectives

"We don't stress fancy things. We stress Christ and what is on the inside."

—Lygia Treat, member of Searcy County Baptist Church

"Spiritual innovation is mandated by the gospel, which says this gospel must go the ends of the earth and it must go in understandable terms."

—Tom Wolf, professor of missions,
Golden Gate Theological Baptist Seminary

"The important thing for churches to know is that the tax law has changed.... These new rules affect every church in America."

—Dan Jordan, director of business services,
Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Sharing the world with Arkansas Baptists

"Sharing the World with Arkansas Baptists" is the ongoing goal of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. Accomplishments in that area during the past year have included increased coverage of Arkansas Baptist news and feature stories, including extensive coverage of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, evangelism conference and Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting.

The Newsmagazine's 40,000 subscribers also have gained detailed information about state missions, Arkansas Baptist priority ministry projects and plans for the 1994-96 Arkansas-European Baptist partnership. At the same time, readers have received up-to-date news about Southern Baptist Convention life, home and foreign missions, church growth and numerous other topics.

State convention leaders have endorsed the Newsmagazine's vision and direction in a number of ways, including providing funds during the past year to ensure that all Arkansas Baptist pastors not previously receiving the Newsmagazine could receive a free one-year subscription. The purpose of that effort was to expose local Baptist pastors to the benefits of the state Baptist paper, allowing them to personally evaluate the content, quality and effectiveness of the convention's biweekly communications link.

In a recent letter to those pastors, state convention executive director Don Moore described the Newsmagazine as "a valuable source of information and inspiration." He encouraged Arkansas Baptist churches to purchase subscriptions to the state Baptist paper for every family in the church. Even

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON



in congregations where that option is not financially possible, Moore urged church leaders to provide the paper for each pastor and other members who request it.

"The Newsmagazine will help you keep up with your friends and what your larger Baptist family is doing across the world," Moore told the pastors. "It will help you be a better pastor-leader."

I deeply appreciate Dr. Moore's support and encouragement during the past year and I sincerely agree with his assessment. The Newsmagazine is a vital source of information for all Arkansas Baptists. It offers a window on the world unavailable elsewhere. Information about mission projects and training opportunities, Cooperative Program ministries and the accomplishments and needs of the worldwide Baptist family are essential for individual Christians interested in responding to those needs through prayers, financial gifts and personal involvement.

The simple fact is: Ministry needs that are unknown go unmet. The *Arkansas*

Baptist Newsmagazine helps eliminate that lack of information through timely, thought-provoking news and feature articles that help strengthen and equip our faithful readers.

The Newsmagazine's board of directors are committed to helping expand and enhance the Newsmagazine's ministry. Recent actions by the board include providing a free three-month subscription to the members of newly constituted churches in the state and offering churches not currently in the "Every Resident Family" subscription plan an opportunity to participate in that plan at a discounted introductory rate. The obvious reason for such offers is to introduce as many Arkansas Baptists as possible to the publication and its benefits.

The Newsmagazine's staff and board of directors are willing to make such offers because we are committed to utilizing and sharing the ministry of Christian journalism. We have made slight gains in total circulation in recent months and look forward to continued growth.

The Newsmagazine staff believes that helping inform and equip local church members is one way to ensure the continued growth of ministry vision and action among Arkansas Baptists. We invite you to help spread that vision by sharing the Newsmagazine with church members who are not currently receiving it.

Individuals and churches interested in additional information about subscribing through the "Every Resident Family Plan" or other subscription options may contact the Newsmagazine at 376-4791, ext. 5156. We look forward to hearing from you.

'He hath broken down the wall between us'

By Clarice Dixon

SBC Christian Life Commission

Anti-semitism, ethnic-cleansing, political and economic injustice, institutionalized injustice, racist gangs, hate crime, racial hostility, police brutality, insecurity, murder, torture, human sacrifices. The atrocities go on and on. We are reminded of the deep-seated racial tensions constantly on our televisions and radios, in our newspapers and magazines, in conversations and through personal experiences.

What progress will America and the world have made in race relations as we prepare to depart the 20th century? What must we do today to ensure and experience the peace that is spoken of in Philippians

4:7, the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding"?

Is it possible, so far as it depends upon each one of us, to live peacefully with all? (Rom. 12:18) We can, when we recognize the sacredness of all human life which was created in the image of God. We can, when we realize the hatred, discrimination and spiritual unrest in our own hearts and allow God's peace to change us from within. For it is in Him alone that we experience genuine peace in personal relations, with other ethnic groups and other nations. We can, when we recognize that God "is our peace" and that, through Jesus' death on the cross, God "hath broken down the wall" of hostility that separated man from Him (Eph. 2:14-15). Even today Christ enables each of us to reach up and over the

wall of hostility that divides us as humans. He enables us to turn the dividing wall of hostility into a connecting bridge of racial harmony, love, peace, understanding and respect.

We must begin with our children to unlearn the myths taught and passed down from generation to generation concerning people of different cultures and ethnic groups. We must begin to teach, understand and respect diversities among these groups. Can we change? Yes, we can.

Race relations observation should take place every day of the week, but Southern Baptists give special emphasis each February. On Feb. 13 begin praying about the peace of God in your own heart and continuously chip away at the wall of hostility that divides you and me.

Reaching the unchurched

Innovative Searcy County ministry features 'real kid emphasis'

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

A sky blue church van picks up Bobby, 12, in front of his house in Marshall early Sunday morning. "Searcy County Baptist Church" is airbrushed on the side of the van in bright colors. Bobby (not his real name) is wearing his Sunday best, jeans and a sports shirt under a denim jacket. His straight brown hair is neatly combed and he carries his Bible in his left hand.

He likes this new house better than the old one, a travel trailer under a hay barn awning. His parents slept in the trailer while he and his siblings slept on hay bales. County housing officials made them move into the new HUD house.

He is hungry. His mother cooks one hot meal a week, serving cereal or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches during other meals.

It's cold outside, and as he looks out the van window, he notices thin patches of snow still visible in areas shaded by trees or building overhangs. The van pulls up to the church building, a steel siding structure that was once a Ford dealership. The church's name is attached in bold white letters where the Ford logo once hung.

Entering the glass-encased former showroom, he is greeted by a bulletin

board reading, "To God Be the Glory" and a table lined with trays of biscuits, gravy, ham and bacon, eggs, pancakes, jellies and syrups. His eyes light up and he grabs a plate.

Bobby is just one of the dozens of children from lower-income families who members of Searcy County Church have targeted in their ministry. "We have a real kid emphasis," explained church member Lygia Treat. "The children need to be taught about Jesus. The parents may not come, but they will send them (the children)."

Searcy County Church is an Arkansas Baptist congregation listed as a Mississippi River Ministry (MRM) project. MRM is the Southern Baptist Convention's emphasis on the seven-state Mississippi River delta region. The project is designed to commit Southern Baptists to provide ministries to existing churches and starting new ones in the region.

Priority ministry project

Because of its status in the MRM list, the church is a priority project for Southern Baptist churches wishing to help with ministry efforts through MRM.

The church was started as a mission of First Church, Marshall, in 1987 and several members were provided by First Church

volunteers. It constituted a year later and membership grew rapidly. The church now has an average Sunday School attendance of about 85.

Member Rena Treat, also a member of the state convention's Mississippi River Ministry committee and Lygia's mother-in-law, said the idea for the church came out of an associational missions emphasis.

"We attended a missions meeting and learned there were 8,500 people in the county and statistics showed that 73 percent of them were unchurched or lost," she said. "As a result of that meeting, First Church members voted to begin a mission that would reach those unchurched people."

Explaining the need for a special ministry in the county, Rena noted, "They want something they're comfortable with. You need to have a service that people are comfortable attending."

Ronnie Warren agreed. "We're casual here," he explained. "We're real comfortable and have a warm atmosphere. I'd never come to church before, and now I can't keep from coming." Warren, like most of the members, is wearing jeans.

Sunday worship services are informal. Participants have a choice of sitting in pews or remaining around the breakfast tables. Members do not pass an offering plate, but keep one at the rear of the worship center.

Hymns are accompanied by guitars. "The type of people we reach are rednecks," said Rena. "I don't mean that ugly, but the folks like guitar music better than (piano or organ) music."

"We're poor people and this is a poor community," added Lygia. "We don't stress fancy things. We stress Christ and what is on the inside. There have been 200 people saved here."

"This is one of the best examples of a New Testament church I've known about," remarked Tommy Goode, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department. "They started the church from a ministry perspective through the Mississippi River Ministry and are reaching second and third generation unchurched people."

Social ministries are the hallmark of the church. The breakfast, said Rena, "started as a promotion, but it worked so well, we kept it. We can feed them breakfast, then feed them the Word."

In addition to breakfast, the congregation has reached out to the community with other social ministries. "Operation Warmth" provided winter clothes free to



Guitars, flannel shirts and informal worship are typical Sunday morning scenes at Searcy County Baptist Church, a former mission of First Church, Marshall.



A van ministry provided by Searcy County Baptist Church brings dozens of children from lower-income families to church each Sunday. Searcy County Church, which meets in a former automobile dealership, is among the Arkansas Baptist churches listed as part of Southern Baptists' Mississippi River Ministry emphasis.

the community and the church maintains an ongoing clothes and food closet. Church members, with the help of Texas Baptist volunteers, built a playground on church grounds for neighborhood children.

"When we see a need in the community, we try to reach out, because it's what the Lord wants," Lygia pointed out. She said although Searcy County Church was constituted, "This is a mission and in my heart I know we are a mission to do mission work."

Willis Hinkson of Small Church Support Ministries, has served the congregation as pastor for the last year. He and a team of SCSM staff consisting of a music leader, piano player and three Sunday School teachers have provided essential leadership to the church. He said the church is focused on its ministry objective.

'A real compassion for people'

"The church has a real compassion for people who tend to fall through the cracks," he said. "In the case of Searcy County, they're mainly the lower-income, not-as-educated people...who for one reason or another, don't feel comfortable in a normal church setting.

"Many," he continued, "are kids from families that are not particularly supportive or encouraging and the people of the church have a real heart for those kids. They do more than just bring them in. The

breakfast is not just something they do to be different. It's meeting those kids' needs for food. That's the strength of the church: they're focused on those kinds of people."

Not only do members believe the church is still a mission, but they believe in starting new missions. Goode said one of Searcy County Church's goals "is to be the mother church for six other congregations in the area." It already has revitalized a church in Morning Star and established a Bible study in Pindell.

Like many new churches, Searcy County Church is experiencing growing pains. Hinkson said a weakness of the church, "and I think they recognize this, is the need for leaders."

"Virtually all of the leaders are overloaded," Hinkson explained. "That's not unique to a church, but the kind of people they reach and bring in don't have a church background. That makes for a slow process for assimilating them into church life and teaching them to be leaders."

The goals, plans and problems of the church may not mean much to Bobby, but he has seen the love and felt the ministry of the congregation. "He was saved at camp last summer and wants to be baptized, but his parents won't let him. They have a Jehovah's Witnesses background," Rena noted. "But we'll keep trying. If it means having a circus to win them to the Lord, let's have one every Sunday."

Lewis resigns ABSC chaplaincy

John Lewis resigned Dec. 31 as chaplain of the Alexander Youth Services Center, following more than eight years of service with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's missions department.

Lewis, who had also been serving as a part-time chaplain at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Little Rock, is continuing in that position, as well as pursuing a career in oil painting.

"I see my painting as a potential in ministry," Lewis said. "I feel that by incorporating it with the written Word, I can continue to win the lost to Christ." While at the Youth Services Center, Lewis noted, the Lord used his abilities to lead "approximately 250 youth to genuine salvation experiences."

Lewis said the opportunity to focus on hospital chaplaincy allows him to return to what the Lord had called him to do while in seminary, adding that he is "excited about returning to that field of service."

"I am grateful to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for my almost nine years of service," he continued. "It was an enjoyable and very beneficial ministry."

Successful service

"Counseling is another talent he has used successfully in these years," explained Carter Tucker, ABSC director of counseling. "He has been of tremendous help to the Arkansas Department of Human Services by assisting their counselors who work with those who are grieving. In addition, he is a much sought after grief counselor, speaker and seminar leader. He also has developed outstanding counseling techniques for those ministering to AIDS patients."

Lewis came to Arkansas from Greenbrier, Tenn., where he was serving as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church. A graduate of Kansas State University in Manhattan and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he recently completed requirements for his doctor of ministry degree through Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lewis and his wife, Diana, have a son, Caleb. She has served for two years as a Southern Baptist home missionary in Arkansas. The Lewises are members of First Church, Benton.

Singerman finds mixed results in missionary recruiting effort

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Southern Baptist foreign missionary Jeff Singerman said he has had successes and disappointments working in Arkansas as an enlistment assistant for the Foreign Mission Board. Singerman has been recruiting in Arkansas since August while on furlough as a missionary to Benin.

Singerman and his wife, Barbara, have lived in a missionary residence provided by First Church, Brinkley, since completing their first term of missionary service. Singerman also is serving as family life minister at First Church during furlough. The couple and their three children will leave the state Feb. 7 to resume their missionary service.

"I haven't had too many disappointments," the Ohio native noted. "I have been well-received by everyone and it is encouraging to talk to people who are interested in missions. Sometimes in the field you feel all by yourself and it is encouraging to know people do pray and are concerned for missions."

"I am disappointed," he acknowledged, "that more people are not willing to go and leave their churches for foreign missions."

As an enlistment assistant, Singerman was assigned "to try to talk to pastors to really consider foreign missions as an

option. Hundreds of requests for pastors go unfiled each year," he reported. "That's not counting other workers such as student workers or agricultural workers."



Singerman

He counts among his successes the ability to talk to Arkansas directors of missions "who might recommend appointable candidates" and pastors and the opportunity to speak at churches and conferences.

Singerman said he is looking for "willing" pastors to be foreign missionaries. "I am looking for someone who is willing, flexible and willing to adapt to a different set of circumstances, but mainly the willingness is what God is looking for."

He said his recruiting style is low pressure. "I just go and just talk to people and provide a resource," he said. "It's not high pressure, but a sharing of our calling and that helps other people."

He gave tips for pastors and others who

might feel a calling to the foreign mission field. "The mistake many make is waiting for a call, rather than knocking on the door."

"They need to get in touch with the Foreign Mission Board and let them know their desire. A candidate consultant will then get in touch and begin the process." Randy Rains is the FMB's candidate consultant currently assigned to Arkansas. He can be reached by calling the FMB at 804-353-0151.

Singerman is a student minister and youth worker in Benin, a small country of five million people between Togo and Nigeria. He works with Baptist churches, providing leadership training in youth work and works in high schools at the government's invitation.

"The people are open to the gospel here," Singerman said. "It's an animistic nation: 80 percent of the population worships (natural things) like animals, stars, the moon and trees." He said one positive aspect of ministering in such an environment is that "they are open about other gods. When you tell them you know the one true God, they will listen."

He reported that the country also is the birthplace of the religious cult of voodoo. "Many face persecution by accepting Christ, going against traditional religion and not worshipping their ancestors."

Singerman said being a foreign missionary, leaving family and friends and adapting to a different culture "is not the easiest thing I've done, but it's real fulfilling. The thing that keeps us going is knowing it's God's will in our lives."

State WMU members are 'Summoned to Serve'

Arkansas Baptist women will explore the theme "Summoned to Serve" at the 105th Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting March 18-19 at First Church, Benton. The meeting will include a missions celebration, worship, WMU business sessions and a special fellowship and reception time Friday.

"Annual meeting challenges participants to be on mission," explained Julia Ketter, state WMU executive director. "It will give missions information to help those present know how to be more involved in missions."

Participants will hear foreign missionaries Ron and Alana Greenwich of Brazil; home missionaries Fred and Lavada Loper of Oklahoma; Gail Williams of Hot Springs; Andrea Mullins of the WMU national staff; and chaplain Clyde VanWorth, who participated in military efforts in Somalia.

Ketter said a special reception following the Friday evening session will

greet the new Arkansas WMU president, honor outgoing president Marjorie Grober, provide a fellowship time with program personnel and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries. Ketter invited all Arkansas Baptists to attend the reception.

Participants also will have the opportunity to help Girls in Action members collect items for their state Hope for Hurting Humanity mission support project. Ketter requested that participants bring school supplies, personal hygiene products in travel sizes and baby or children's clothing. GAs will put together

health kits and school kits for disadvantaged children and will sort the clothes for use in clothes closets.

In addition to special projects, participants will take a traditional offering to provide missionaries from Arkansas a magazine subscription of their choice.

There is no cost to attend the meeting. Ketter extended the invitation to Baptist women who are not members of WMU organizations and men interested in missions.

The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. Friday and conclude Saturday at noon.

Participants are responsible for their own lodging. Reservations may be made directly with the following Benton-area hotels: Best Western, phone 778-9695; Days Inn, phone 776-3200; and Ramada Inn, phone 776-1900. Best Western will serve as the meeting's headquarters hotel.

For more information, contact the state WMU department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5137.



Summoned to Serve

WMU leaders streamline missions education

By Robert O'Brien

SBC Foreign Mission Board

TALLADEGA, AL (BP)—The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union executive board continued a yearlong task of streamlining WMU programs for more simplicity, flexibility and relevance at its Jan. 8-13 meeting.

The board voted to move from two adult missions education organizations ("Baptist Women" and "Baptist Young Women") to one called "Women on Mission," effective October 1995.

It also voted to publish a new magazine — *Missions Mosaic* — to succeed its current *Royal Service* and *Contempo* magazines in October 1995. It will also publish *Missions Mosaic Executive* for adult leaders.

In merging "Baptist Women" and "Baptist Young Women" into "Women on Mission," WMU leaders emphasized that missions education for young women will continue.

Women of all ages may configure Women on Mission groups flexibly — retaining the "Baptist" designation if they wish — and customizing groups on the basis of such factors as age, task, common interest or needs, according to WMU executive director Deliaanna W. O'Brien.

The five-day meeting reflected an upbeat spirit of working together to streamline and retool programs to strengthen missions support, education and action. It was attended by state WMU presidents, who make up the board; state WMU executive directors and their staffs; national WMU staff and others.

But the meeting also reflected a desire to make an impact on issues which affect people's lives — such as hunger, AIDS and children's issues. WMU will confront those three issues, launching national projects on hunger in 1994-95; AIDS, 1995-96; and child advocacy, 1996-97.

"Project Help: Hunger," designed by WMU to share the gospel by meeting physical and spiritual needs, will feature a variety of approaches, including a drive to collect one million cans of food by Feb. 12, 1995, to distribute to hungry people.

WMU will also ask for a donation of 25 cents per can to buy additional staples such as beans, rice and flour.

The hunger project will be funded with \$67,600 from WMU's Vision Fund, created last June to accept contributions for missions projects and the ongoing work of the Woman's Missionary Union. The fund has received more than \$100,000 since it was announced.

WMU also approved Vision Fund

'Women on Mission' affirms action

Adult Woman's Missionary Union groups will feature a new name and new structure beginning in October 1995, based on decisions made during the recent WMU executive board meeting in Talladega, Ala. "Baptist Women" and "Baptist Young Women" will be replaced with one organization named "Women on Mission."

What impact will the changes make on the local church level?

"The new structure allows for a great deal of flexibility," explained Monica Keathley, director of Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women for the state WMU department. "One of the hopes is the change will serve to revitalize the organization—to help us become a movement again and not just an organization."

Noting that the name Women on Mission "implies action, not just studying but actually doing something," Keathley added, "It's a name that describes who we are and what we're about."

Emphasizing the need to provide "more flexibility and a simpler organization to meet the needs of today's women," Keathley said local groups may form around "relationships, tasks, interests, lifestyles or whatever brings women together. There are no age restrictions.

"The women will be asked to set goals to decide what they want to accomplish in a given year, within the parameters of our task," she explained. "We hope that will give them new incentive and new vision."

State WMU president Marjorie Grober said major emphases in the new organization "will be on action and spiritual development as well as studying missions which is still a vital part of who we are."

Affirming the "action" emphasis of Women on Mission, Grober added, "Once we adjust to the changes, I believe it is going to give us new life and better communicate who we are and what we're about."

support for several other projects, including \$30,000 to establish a missions museum at the WMU national office in Birmingham, Ala., in honor of Alma Hunt, WMU's fourth executive director.

The executive board also voted to raise the 1995 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions goal to \$50 million, and anticipate voting in June to raise the 1995 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions goal to \$100 million.

The goal changes, requested by the presidents of the Foreign and Home Mission Boards, would point toward Southern Baptists raising \$150 million for missions during the Southern Baptist Convention's 150th anniversary.

Both presidents, Jerry Rankin of the Foreign Mission Board and Larry Lewis of the Home Mission Board, addressed the WMU executive board.

Rankin cited breakthroughs which have opened formerly closed countries to missionaries and resulted in escalating evangelism and church growth overseas. He said, "God is on mission" in the world and that Southern Baptists may achieve their Bold Mission Thrust goals if they focus on what God is doing, rather than their own strategies, methods and plans.

Lewis, citing projected income shortfalls, challenged his audience to redouble their efforts in supporting the 1994 Annie Armstrong Offering, as well as the

denomination's Cooperative Program.

He challenged Southern Baptists to lead their churches to increase CP giving by at least 1 percent a year to at least 10 percent.

In other action, the executive board also launched a five-year membership campaign beginning in 1995 to enroll more members in WMU age-level organizations and begin new units in churches with WMU and without WMU.

Besides changes in the adult-level publications, WMU will introduce in 1995 a new magazine — *GA World* — for older Girls in Action members in grades 5-6. *Discovery*, the current publication for GAs in grades 1-6, will encompass grades 1-4.

The WMU executive board also:
 ■ Awarded \$69,300 in Second Century Fund grants to finance 27 women's foreign and home missions projects. The fund, which now has \$1 million invested, is a permanent endowment created by WMU during its centennial year in 1988 as a gift to future generations of women.

■ Named a committee to explore needs expressed by churches for age-level educational missions study and action.

■ Voted to adapt WMU programs on college campuses to merge with the new Women on Mission organization.

■ Approved an Acteens Base Design, which included creation of Acteens Advantage, an advanced program for high school juniors and seniors.

New tax rules impact record-keeping for charitable giving

With April 15 just a few months away, most people's concerns over taxes focus on filing their 1993 income tax returns. January also is a time to look ahead, however, as churches and individuals prepare now to meet Internal Revenue Service requirements for the coming year.

Specific IRS requirements that church treasurers and individual taxpayers should be aware of include new rules related to the tax deductibility of some charitable contributions.

"The important thing for churches to know is that the tax law has changed," noted Dan Jordan, director of business services for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. He explained that 1994 requirements concerning "documentation for gifts to churches may be different than many churches are currently providing," adding that "these new rules affect every church in America."

The IRS' new substantiation rules for charitable contributions specify that single, individual contributions of \$250 or more made after Dec. 31, 1993, cannot be substantiated with canceled checks. According to attorney Richard Hammar, editor of *Church Law & Tax Report*, donors will not be allowed a tax deduction for an individual contribution of cash or property of \$250 or more unless they receive a written acknowledgment from the church or charity that satisfies specific IRS requirements.

Those requirements include providing a receipt separately recording each contribution of \$250 or more and identifying the donor by name. Receipts also must state whether the church provided any goods or services in exchange for the contributions and include a good faith estimate of the value of those goods and services. If the church provides no goods or service or provides only "intangible religious benefits," the receipt must contain a statement to that effect. Additionally, the written receipts must be received by the donor on or before the date the donor files a tax return claiming a deduction for the contribution.

Receipt requirements

Summarizing the regulations, Hammar explained, "Most donations will not be affected by these new rules. However, if you give more than \$250 at one time, make sure you receive a written receipt that satisfies the rules listed above prior to filing your 1994 income tax return in the early part of 1995. Otherwise, your contribution will not be tax deductible."

"What's at risk is the deductibility of individual contributions to churches in increments of \$250 or above," Jordan emphasized. "For our churches, the key is having a receipting process that matches up to the tax law."

One additional regulation concerns "quid pro quo" contributions of more than

\$75. Quid pro quo gifts are payments that are partly a contribution and partly a payment for goods or services received. An example would be a fund-raising banquet where part of the ticket price is a donation and part of it is used to pay for the meal.

In order for a portion of such donations to be tax-deductible, churches receiving such contributions must provide a written statement to the donor which includes a good faith estimate of the value of the goods or services furnished and informs the donor that the tax-deductible portion of the contribution is limited to the amount in excess of that value.

James Walker, director of the ABSC's stewardship/annuity department, has mailed Arkansas Baptist pastors an overview of the new regulations. Encouraging churches to maintain a weekly record of contributions "regardless of your church's size," Walker added that providing members with offering envelopes to use is one simple step to help facilitate effective record-keeping.

"The basic thing is churches need to keep a weekly record of contributions and give the members an annual record of their contributions," Walker explained. "If churches do that, they will basically meet the IRS requirements."

Walker said resources available through Baptist Book Stores include record-keeping systems and forms. Anyone interested in additional information may contact Walker at 376-4791, ext. 5114. Information also is available from *Church Law & Tax Report*, P.O. Box 1098, Matthews, NC 28106; phone 1-800-222-1840.

Music leaders workshop scheduled for Feb. 25-26

Arkansas Baptist music directors, accompanists and children's choir leaders will receive training and fellowship at the Volunteer/Part-Time Music Leaders Workshop Feb. 25-26 at Camp Paron.

The retreat, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, also will offer smaller church music leaders materials and an emphasis on worship planning.

Session topics will include: "Creative Worship Planning," "Planning to Plan," "Improving Your Choir Rehearsal," "Selecting Anthems" and "Basic Song Leading."

"The retreat is geared toward small church leadership and their special needs," said department associate Peggy Pearson. She said accompanists "will learn how to change keys and add to hymns for congregational singing" while children's choir leaders will get a boost in developing their programs.

"This is the first time the retreat has run a track for children's choir leaders," she noted. "Many times small church children's leaders only sing with the children. We will show them the need for outreach and spiritual development through choir, and expose them to literature and how to use it."

Glenn Ennes, also a department associate, said directors will receive "a great deal of information. Directors will receive worship planning ideas and resources," he added, "as well as suggestions on how to improve choir rehearsals, enlisting and teaching choir members and developing song leading and choral conducting techniques."

The program will feature clinicians Mary DeLaine Allcock, state children's choir specialist and children's choir director for First Church, Hope; Jeff Bennett, minister of music for Calvary Church, Little Rock; and Donna Williams, organist for Calvary

Church, Little Rock; and ABSC staff. It also will feature special guest clinician Danny Jones, small church music consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The program also will feature a book store and a special "jam session" fellowship. Participants are encouraged to bring an instrument to participate in the session.

The retreat will begin with registration Friday at 3 p.m. and will conclude Saturday at 2:15 p.m.

The cost is \$10 per person for a church's music director, pianist, organist and children's choir leader. Cost for additional leaders from each church is \$25 per person. To pre-register, complete the registration form being mailed this month to Arkansas Baptist music leadership. The registration deadline is Feb. 14.

For more information, contact Ennes or Pearson at the ABSC church music ministries offices, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791, ext. 5121.

Baptists aid victims of California quake

By Mark A. Wyatt
California Southern Baptist

LOS ANGELES (BP)—Baptist disaster relief crews in several states responded Jan. 17 to assist victims of Southern California's worst earthquake in 20 years. Feeding units operated by the California Southern Baptist Convention were among the first relief crews on the scene, arriving on-site in the Los Angeles area less than 24 hours after the Monday morning temblor.

The 6.6 Richter scale earthquake that struck the San Fernando Valley in north-west Los Angeles caused more than 50 deaths and damage estimated in the billions of dollars.

More than 100 aftershocks, some as strong as 5.5 on the Richter scale, were reported during the first 24 hours after the main jolt.

Two California Baptist feeding units and one cleanup unit were activated Monday after the earthquake struck. A short time later, 12-man disaster relief crews from Texas and Oklahoma were mobilized and en route.

Meanwhile, the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission also placed Arkansas, Louisiana and Missouri disaster relief workers on alert for possible deployment.

The Home Mission Board contributed \$15,000 in hunger relief money and \$15,000 in disaster relief funds to the California Southern Baptist Convention.

Don Hargis, CSBC men's ministries department and Brotherhood director, coordinated the California convention's disaster relief efforts. American Red Cross officials who provided overall earthquake relief coordination in the stricken area requested the California Baptist convention's largest feeding rig, a specially equipped tractor trailer, to provide 10,000 meals a day. That unit was initially set up at San Fernando Valley Red Cross Center in Van Nuys.

The California convention's second relief unit, based in Orange County south of the area hardest hit by the temblor, was moved to Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch, near some of the heaviest damage from the quake. A shelter also has been set up there, according to J.D. Andrews, director of the Home Mission Board's Mission Service Corps volunteers in California.

In addition to feeding ministries, Andrews said he expects Southern Baptists to help the Red Cross and Salvation Army find housing for displaced families.

"It just about knocked us out of bed... We have felt and been through several earthquakes, but nothing that has felt this great and as close to us."

—Melinda Walker

Mission Service Corps volunteer

"As the authorities are going through the community, several buildings will be condemned, and those people will have to find other places to live," he noted. "We have a long job ahead of us."

Jess Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch, which is located just a few miles from the quake's epicenter, said damage to the church could cost between "one half million and a million dollars" to repair. But despite the damage, Moody said the church was ministering to others in the earthquake-ravaged community.

Youthful offenders from a nearby

juvenile center damaged by the earthquake were housed and fed at the church the night after the temblor struck, Moody said. He praised relief workers who had a feeding center operating at the church within hours after the quake.

"I'm really proud of the Baptists," Moody declared. "I'm so thankful for them."

Moody said church members have been going into area parks where displaced residents fearful of returning to their apartments and homes are camping out, inviting them to come to the church for a hot meal. The church also has opened up part of its 14 acres of land for use as temporary campsites. And Moody said 500 cots are ready to be set up in the church for use by those suddenly homeless after the earthquake. Church space also is being provided for insurance companies to help victims file claims.

About 30 miles from the epicenter, Mission Service Corps volunteers Neil and Melinda Walker felt the earthquake in Monterey Park.

"It just about knocked us out of our bed," said Mrs. Walker. The two are involved in student ministries in Los Angeles colleges. "We have felt and been through several earthquakes, but nothing that has felt this great and as close to us."

Andrews, who has lived in California 50 years, said this was the strongest quake he has experienced.

"We had a good, strong jolt here," said Andrews, who lives near Anaheim, about 40 miles southeast of the epicenter. Assessing the damage to highways, he added, "It'll be months and probably years before it gets back to normal."

Arkansas Baptists available to serve as volunteers can contact Glendon Grober at 376-4791, ext. 5158. He said an Arkansas Baptist disaster relief team may be mobilized early in February. Volunteers interested in long-term rebuilding and relief efforts can call the Home Mission Board at 1-800-4SBC-AID.

SBC president asks for input in committee appointments

HOUSTON (BP)—Recommendations for four Southern Baptist Convention committees are being sought by SBC president H. Edwin Young who makes the appointments.

Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church, appoints members of the SBC Committee on Committees, Credentials Committee, Resolutions Committee and Tellers Committee.

In a letter to Baptist Press, Young asked for input — no later than Feb. 15 — from Southern Baptists "in order for wise decisions to be reached."

Speaking to Southern Baptists, Young said, "You are a vital part of this process and your wise counsel and assistance will

be indispensable as we seek God's leadership in this pivotal task." The Committee on Committees has the task of nominating the Committee on Nominations while the credentials, resolutions and tellers committees will serve during the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June.

Young has asked that a "recommendation form" be used by those making recommendations. It is available by writing to Young, c/o the Southern Baptist Convention, 6400 Woodway, Houston, TX 77057.

The form also is available from the SBC Executive Committee office at 901 Commerce St., Suite 750, Nashville, TN 37203.

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

Staff changes

Bob Fielding began serving Jan. 10 as pastor of First Church of Cherokee Village, going there from Newport where he had served for more than four years as associate pastor of First Church. A graduate of Williams Baptist College, he formerly was pastor of Alicia Church. Fielding and his wife, Sharon, have two daughters, Laura and Linda.

Jeff Langley began serving Jan. 16 as pastor of Hilldale Church, Alexander, coming there from Creekwood Church in Muncie, Ind. He also has served at First Church of Centerville, Ind., and Antioch Church of Lubbock, Texas. Langley is a graduate of Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, and Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. He and his wife, Vicki Lynn, have two children, Adam, 13, and Sarah Ann, 6.

Doug Hixon joined the staff of First Church in Rogers Jan. 8 as associate minister to preschoolers and children. He is a recent graduate of Ouachita Baptist University.

Raymond C. Timmerman will join the staff of First Church of Sheridan Feb. 6 as minister of youth and education, coming there from Lakeside Church in North Myrtle Beach, S. C., where he has been minister to youth and children's director.

In addition, he has served as a staff member of Texas churches. Timmerman is a graduate of Chowan College in Murfreesboro, N. C.; Coker College in Hartsville, S. C.; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Teresa, have three children, Jon Afton, Tabitha Jean and Jessica Rae.

Jack McKinnon has announced his retirement as pastor of Kelley Heights Church in Russellville, effective Jan. 30, following more than four years of service. He also has been pastor of Fair Park Church, Russellville; Pottsville Church; Rover Church; and First Church of Scranton. He and his wife, Mary, will continue to live in Russellville.

David Coleman is serving as pastor of Pilgrims Rest Church, Batesville. He and his wife, Susan, moved there from Sulphur Rock.

Kim Bowen has joined the staff of First Church in Pine Bluff as minister of music, coming there from Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Kathy, have three children, Aaron, Niki and Jordan.

Kevin Henry has resigned as minister to youth at First Church of Star City to enroll in Southwestern Seminary.

Matt Stuart began serving Jan. 5 as interim pastor of Markham Street Church in Little Rock. He is a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Tony Morgan has resigned as minister to youth at First Church of Blytheville to continue his education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ordinations

Hermitage Church ordained **Charlie Rauls** and **James Ederington** to the deacon ministry, and **James Frisby** to the gospel ministry Jan. 2.

Malvern First Church ordained **Paul Bray**, **Leon Gray**, **George Green**, **John Hickman**, **Roger Lederer**, **Darryel Massey**, **Mark Roberts** and **Rob Wilson** to the deacon ministry Jan. 9.

Immanuel Church of Rogers ordained **Greg Ballard**, **Paul Hively**, **Chris Sultemeier** and **Jan Seth** to the deacon ministry Jan. 9.

Conway First Church ordained **Lonnie Williams** and **Lance Woodcock** to the deacon ministry Jan. 9.

Blytheville First Church ordained **Ed Ledden** and **Bruce Dickerson** to the deacon ministry Jan. 9.

Fordyce First Church ordained **Patrick Moseley** to the deacon ministry Jan. 9.

Little Rock First Church ordained **Mellin M. Hagan**, **Dwight Estes** and **Steve Jackson** to the deacon ministry Jan. 16.

Old Missouri Road Church of Springdale ordained **Art Florer** and **Greg Belue** to the deacon ministry Jan. 23.

Jacksonville First Church ordained **Joey Price**, **Kerry Brooks**, **John Sample**, **John Moore**, **Lanny Lehman** and **Tim Boozer** to the deacon ministry Jan. 23.

People

Jay Dennis, son of **Bill** and **Donna Dennis** of Greenwood, recently received his doctor of ministry degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. Dennis, pastor of Orchard Hills Church in Garland, Texas, also holds degrees from Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

O.H. and **Maxine Brooks** were honored Dec. 12 by Saint Francis Church with an appreciation dinner in recognition of 20 years of ministry to the church. The pastor



First Church of Heber Springs recently broke ground for a two-story education building, estimated to cost more than \$1 million. Participating in the groundbreaking service were pastor J.A. Kirkepatick, church staff members, building committee chairman Henry Tilburg, building committee members, architect John Ayers, construction superintendent Gary Xiques and chairman of deacons Ralph Hawkins.

and his wife were presented with a friendship quilt, quilted by women of the church.

Dennis Smith and his wife, Karen, were honored Jan. 16 with a fellowship by First Church of Sherwood in recognition of his five years of service as minister of education. They were presented with a love offering.

Lowell Glass was honored Jan. 16 by First Church of Van Buren in recognition of 12 years of ministry as full-time maintenance director. Glass, who will continue in a part-time position, was presented with a money tree and appreciation cards.

Obituaries

Ola Dale Cone James of Harrison died Jan. 3 at age 79. She was a charter member of Eagle Heights Church in Harrison where she had served in numerous teaching and leadership positions, working primarily with preschool children. She is survived by her husband of 63 years, Dennis James, who served for eight years as director of missions for North Arkansas Association, and as pastor of several Arkansas churches prior to retirement. Other survivors include a son, Dennis James Jr. of Texas; four daughters, Sue Marshall of Harrison, Betty Wilbanks of Arizona, Lois Hacker of Sage and Mary Bishop of Harrison; one sister; 16 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

True Love Waits rally planned in Rogers

Churches of Northwest Association will host a "True Love Waits" rally for area teens Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. in the Elmwood Junior High School in Rogers.

Randy Brantley, director of youth evangelism for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, will be the speaker for the event which also will feature multimedia presentations, drama, music and other elements.

Gale Kelsey, youth pastor for Immanuel Church of Rogers and rally organizer, said a "pizza blast" will follow the program. Admission is free. Kelsey noted the county-wide rally is part of a national campaign by the Baptist Sunday School Board to encourage sexual abstinence until marriage.

Additional information may be obtained by calling Kelsey at 636-1230.



Program participants during Lee Creek Church's Jan. 9 constituting service included (left to right) George Domerese, Tim Prock, James Rice and Bob Floyd.

Lee Creek Church constitutes as first new church of 1994

Lee Creek Church near Van Buren became the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's first newly constituted church of 1994 during a Jan. 9 constituting service.

Tim Prock, pastor of the sponsoring congregation, First Church of Concord, praised the Lee Creek congregation both for becoming self supporting and for its sacrificial missions giving. "These people already are contributing 7 percent to the Cooperative Program, 2 percent to Clear Creek Association and 1 percent to local missions," Prock noted.

The Concord church will complete its financial obligations to Lee Creek this year. The sponsoring church provided \$28,000 to purchase property on which a 4,800-square-foot facility, housing a sanctuary, educational space and a pastor's study, was constructed by Arkansas' Church in A Day team under the leadership of Ronnie O'Neal. First Church also provided \$10,000 to purchase both a mobile chapel and a house that are used for educational space.

James Rice, pastor of the new church, said ministry goals for the coming year include a Sunday School enrollment of 130 and 50 baptisms.

Rice also plans to broaden community outreach, especially to younger families. "We can grow if we make a commitment to," he said. "Van Buren is expanding north and therefore we are located right in its growth path. In addition to our organized visitation on Thursday evening, we have a People Search planned that will aid us in reaching these younger families.

Bob Floyd, missions committee chairman for the sponsoring church, said it had been a positive experience to see how God had used people to launch the

work of the new congregation.

"When we had a special need both in construction and organization, God sent along the skilled craftsman, the teacher, the musician or whatever our need was," Floyd said. "I am so thankful for this new congregation. It is one that was first envisioned some 20 years ago by me and George Domerese, who was then pastor of my church."

Domerese, who was director of missions for Clear Creek Association when the work was launched and formerly served the congregation as a supply pastor, said he is delighted that people in the Lee Creek area are being reached for the Lord. Domerese currently is pastor of Fair Park Church in Russellville.

Randall Hogan, pastor of First Church in Waldron and the first pastor of the mission congregation, challenged members "to become living sacrifices for God so that others might want to join in this united effort."

Mike Taylor, pastor of First Church in Booneville and pastor of the sponsoring congregation at the beginning of the new work, presented the charge to Lee Creek members, encouraging them to be more concerned about serving Christ than in being served. He also urged them to walk by faith, be filled with the Holy Spirit, reach the lost for salvation, grow genuine Christians and love the Word of God.

ABSC church extension director Jack Ramsey, who has assisted in all phases of the church's growth, noted that Lee Creek had been one of the fastest growing new works in the state. "As you continue your strong evangelistic outreach you will be building for eternity," Ramsey said.

Graham challenges Japanese to make gospel greatest export

TOKYO—Evangelist Billy Graham's "Mission 94" crusade held last week at Tokyo Dome and nearly 60 satellite centers across the country attracted record crowds. The more-than-capacity crowd of 45,000 on Saturday night was the largest gathering of Christians in the history of Japan and the most people at one time to hear the gospel preached there.

Crowds averaged 31,250 during the four-day crusade with an average of 3,025—nearly 10 percent—coming forward at Graham's invitation to make a commitment to Christ. Additional thousands attended at the satellite locations around the country with hundreds more responding each night. Nearly 40 percent of the respondents were men—which is unusual in Japanese culture.

The sight each night of thousands of Japanese men standing in front of the platform in Tokyo Dome following Graham's invitation to receive Christ brought tears to the eyes of veteran missionaries in Japan. "I never thought we would see such a response in my lifetime," said Don Hoke, founder of Japanese Christian University. "We're grateful that Mr. Graham's visit has brought about such an interest in the person of Jesus Christ."

"The fact that we have had such a tremendous response has been a great encouragement to those of us who work in this country and it has given us great confidence," said Tokyo pastor Tatsuhiko Mineno, executive committee chairman for the crusade.

The theme for this outreach was "Beginning with the Church and Ending with the Church." A majority of the more than 1,200 churches from throughout greater Tokyo participated in the crusade—Graham's third in Tokyo and sixth in Japan

following meetings in 1967 and 1980.

There currently are approximately 300 Japanese missionaries working in 36 countries abroad. On the final afternoon of the crusade, Graham expressed his hope that because of the many Japanese who made commitments to Christ during the meetings, the country's greatest export will not be electronic goods or cars, but will instead be missionaries to the Pacific Rim and the rest of the world.

Worldwide perspective

"Today I'm asking you to take the message of the gospel, which is the good news, to the whole world," Graham said. "I'm hoping this crusade we're closing today will help change the direction of the Japanese church. The church here has the authority, it has the message and it has the resources to touch all of the Asian Rim with the gospel.

"You have businessmen all over the world selling Japanese products," he continued. "You can do the same with the gospel. Japanese ability, Japanese 'know-how' can take this message to the world. There is no greater export than the gospel of Christ."

Japan is an island-nation the size of the state of California, with a population of 123 million people—nearly one-half that of the United States. Of these, more than 27 million live in greater Tokyo, which is

the largest city in the world. Although Christians represent less than 2 percent of the population, the Bible is still Japan's best-selling book.

The country is in quiet chaos both socially and economically. But the bad news for Japan is good news for the churches.

According to church leaders, societal pressures and personal problems have made the Japanese people more receptive to the gospel message now than ever before. Many are asking deep, penetrating questions about the "inner life," searching for an identity beyond materialism.

"I have not come with a new message or a new approach," Graham said. "We are here to make the Christian faith clearer and more understandable to the Japanese people. I am praying that God will give great simplicity and power to the old message of the gospel."

The clarity of the message was evident as many people responded from such places as Nigeria, Ghana, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore—many of whom are in Japan with international companies or doing graduate studies at the invitation and support of the Japanese government. Others of ethnic origin came in groups, and many Japanese families were seen coming to the counseling area together.

Graham's 1994 crusade schedule includes meetings in Cleveland, Ohio, June 8-12 and in Atlanta, Oct. 26-30. He will be hosting a conference for North American itinerant evangelists in Louisville, June 28-July 1.

VIEWING SITE COORDINATORS:

- James Allcock**, First Church,
Hope: 777-5757
- Ernest Cook**, Barcelona Rd. Church,
Hot Springs Village: 922-0692
- Harold Ray**, Mt. Zion Association,
Jonesboro: 934-5134
- Rosa Burton**, Calvary Church,
Little Rock: 663-8303
- Bill Bowen**, First Church,
Mena: 394-2541
- Kent Farris**, Park Hill Church,
North Little Rock: 753-3413
- Rick Smith**, Second Church,
Russellville: 967-4085
- Gary Underwood**, Beech St.
Church, Texarkana: 774-5165
- Allen Morrison**, First Church,
Van Buren: 474-1271

A live Fresh Encounter teleconference is scheduled for April 23. Call the BSSB at 815-281-2294 for more information.



TELECONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 12

Registration for the *Experiencing God* live teleconference is \$25 per person. Only mailed-in registrations with payment will be accepted and some viewing sites have limited seating. For more information or to register, contact the host church or director of missions listed at right.

Interested in a Ministry of Love?

The Arkansas Baptist Home for Children is looking for a dedicated Christian couple with not more than two children to live and work in a cottage setting with eight children. Salary and benefits.

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P.O. Box 180, Monticello, AR 71655

Phone: 367-5358

Iranian Christian released; execution canceled

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM (BP)—A man condemned to death by an Iranian court for converting to Christianity was abruptly released Jan. 16, just days before he was to have been executed.

Two days later the Iranian, Mehdi Dibaj, was reportedly in Tehran, Iran's capital, where Christians met him, "singing songs of jubilation and thanking God for his release," according to Iranian Christian leaders in Europe.

But joy was tempered by the fact that his release was conditional. He was released "with attachment and that the court is investigating his case," according to the Iranian state news agency. Iranian Christian leaders in Europe who have followed the case said Dibaj is still subject to recall by police at any time.

Dibaj, an Assemblies of God evangelist, had spent nine years in prison for becoming a Christian several decades ago. He spent the night of his release in Sari, the city in northeastern Iran where he had been imprisoned.

Iranian officials deny that Dibaj faced execution. Christians have followed Dibaj's case throughout the nine years he was in prison, including two years spent in solitary confinement without lights in a 3-foot by 3-foot cell.

The Iranian news agency quoted sources in Iran's Judicial Forces as stating, "The propaganda of the Western media claiming that a death sentence has been issued for Mehdi Dibaj is untrue.... His convictions are not so much that they should result in his execution."

Ayatollah Yazdi, chief of Iran's Judicial Forces, was quoted as saying: "Dibaj's guilt does not come to a point to justify capital punishment and...claims about an execution order are totally groundless."

Iranian Christians say that account does not tally with the facts. They earlier released Dibaj's case number, verdict number and court number in trying to rally support for him.

In response, the U.S. State Department called on Iran to abide by human rights agreements applicable to Dibaj. Human rights agencies also took up his case and called for Christians in many countries to pray for him and write appeals for his release.

After receiving the death sentence in early January Dibaj had written a will and asked the court to expedite his sentence. He said he was prepared to die.

A statement he gave as defense in his Dec. 3 trial for "apostasy," or abandoning the religion of Islam, was carried in full in the Jan. 18 issue of *The Times*, one of England's leading newspapers. That

Iran targets Christians with new decrees

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM (BP)—Iran has again lashed out at Christian churches by passing two new laws intended to inhibit their growth and ministry.

One decree forbids Muslims to enter church buildings while a second bans church services conducted in Farsi, Iran's official language.

"This affects all Protestant churches, which in Iran are composed of converts from Islam for whom it is natural to worship in Farsi," explained Patrick Sookhedeo, director of the International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity.

The London-based institute, which reported on the new rulings, monitors events in Iran as part of its work in helping churches in Muslim areas.

Sookhedeo said the new decrees are "moderate" compared to demands from fanatical elements in Iran that want to

execute all converts to Christianity who refuse to return to Islam. Islamic law in fact decrees that all male "apostates" should be killed, he said.

"There are estimated to be at least 10,000 Muslim converts in Iran," Sookhedeo said. "Given that the Iranian government has already executed approximately 95,000 political prisoners since the revolution of 1979, the Protestant churches take very seriously this threat of extermination."

In June all Christian churches were ordered to sign a statement declaring they would not evangelize Muslims. Pastors and church members have been arrested and beaten by police, services disrupted and churches closed during recent months, Christians report.

Publicly, Iranian government officials have denied religious persecution in Iran.

statement was a ringing affirmation of his Christian faith.

A statement by Iranian officials acknowledged the role of publicity in Dibaj's release. "During the past 48 hours the Western media and the Zionist radio have started an extensive propaganda campaign saying there has been an execution order on Mehdi Dibaj because of his conversion to Christianity and they claim there has been a violation of human rights and the dissatisfaction of the religious minorities in Iran," it said.

Iranian Christians declined to speculate on precise reasons why Dibaj was released. They expressed gratitude for the support they received in the case, but urged continued prayer that all religious persecution in Iran be stopped.

One statement by Iranian Christians urged Christians to send appeals to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran requesting that it:

- Quash Mehdi Dibaj's execution order and clear him of all charges.
- Discontinue the arrest, imprisonment, interrogation and torture of Muslim converts.
- Allow them to attend church and reopen all churches, including the ones in Mashad, Sari and Ahwaz (all closed in 1988), Kerman (closed in 1992), Urumieh and Gorgan (both closed in 1993).
- Reopen the Iranian Bible Society (closed in 1990) and the Garden of Evangelism (closed in 1989).

Hossain Soodmand, an Assemblies of

God pastor, was executed in Iran Dec. 3, 1990. He also was a convert from Islam. Soodmand was reportedly tortured during two months of imprisonment before his death; his body was never released to his family. Soodmand was accused of spying, while Dibaj had been accused only of apostasy, or turning from Islam.

"It is feared that, unless pressure is continued to be exerted by human rights organizations, government officials, the press and personal appeals, there will be a backlash on the Muslim converts in Iran in particular, and the church as a whole," one Iranian Christian group reported.

Dibaj was "overcome with joy," and "expressed his deepest gratitude to the Lord for his release and to all churches and Christians for their solid support and prayer which resulted in his release," one Christian leader said.

Reader Response

Letters opposing religious persecution in Iran may be sent to:

Ambassador Kamal Kharrazi of Iran
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
Fax 212-867-7086

Iran Interests Section
Islamic Republic of Iran
Embassy of Pakistan
2209 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington DC 20007
Fax 202-965-1073

North central states host HMB service

OAK BROOK, IL (BP)—More than 700 leaders from the seven north central states witnessed a Home Mission Board commissioning service and heard challenges to win their states to Christ in their triennial meeting Jan. 11-13.

Representing the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship and five state conventions — Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota-Wisconsin and Ohio — the leaders met as part of the 19-year-old North Central States Mission Thrust.

The laymen, church starters, pastors, directors of missions and state leaders also heard testimonies from their peers and participated in several how-to seminars, but the keynote service of the three-day rally was the commissioning service for 47 newly-appointed home missionaries.

Gihwang Shin, commissioned with his wife Hye Sun, to serve in Indianapolis, told of being stricken with polio as a baby and being healed of spiritual blindness.

"I accepted Christ and started a new journey," he told the crowd. "We go with great joy because we have the love of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Shin's parents traveled from Seoul,

Korea, to be present for their son's commissioning.

Don McMurray, another of the new missionaries, said, "We all have one thing in common; we've all been touched by the Lord." McMurray and his wife, Norma, serve in Dayton, Ohio.

Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis gave the charge to the candidates, citing the parable of the great banquet in Luke 16, and telling them if they wanted to fill the church, "Here's how you do it."

'Just do it'

That parable included an invitation — "come, all things are ready and the price has already been paid"; an exhortation — "go to the highways, that's where people gather in great numbers"; and an affirmation to go quickly — "Jesus was talking about the urgency of the day."

"Missionaries, I charge you, just do it," Lewis said.

The chairman of the North Central States Steering Committee, Wyndell Jones, executive director in Iowa, said the first commissioning service ever held in one

of the seven north central states was significant for Baptist work in the region.

"I thought it was significantly important to have the commissioning of missionaries in this area," he said, because it gave symbolic evidence that the Home Mission Board acknowledged the area had come of age in its Baptist witness.

"There are not many states that have joined together for events such as this," Jones told participants. The missions thrust had produced a "spirit of oneness in reaching people and starting churches" in the region, he said.

Several of the missionaries commissioned in the service either come from the area or have been assigned to missionary positions in one of the seven states, which together account for 25 percent of the population of the United States.

Robert Wilson, executive director for Michigan Baptists, said the 19-year partnership between Baptists in the north central states and the HMB, Baptist Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood has strengthened fellowship and encouraged church growth in the region.



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Oklahoma

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- Bible Study — Andrea Mullins; Missionaries and Mission Volunteers
- Praise & Worship — Alan Moore; Theme Interpretations — Bill Mabry & Group
- Acteens Panelists/Activators; Fellowship, Friday Evening
- Love Offering — Magazines for Arkansas Missionaries
- BYW Dessert Party; Hope for Hurting Humanity
- Nursery for Preschoolers; Baptist Book Store

For more information, contact: Arkansas WMU, P.O. Box 562, Little Rock, AR 72203 (501) 376-4791, ext. 5137

Mississippi Baptist teen dies in Honduras accident

TELA, HONDURAS (BP)—Southern Baptist volunteer Bradley Boatner, 17, of Brandon, Miss., died instantly Jan. 18 in a truck accident on an unpaved mountain road near Tela, Honduras.

Boatner, the only child of Gary and Paula Boatner of Brandon, was a member of Park Place Baptist Church in Brandon. It was his second trip to Honduras as a mission volunteer.

The crash also critically injured four other Mississippi Baptist volunteers: David Sneed, a dentist from Eupora, Miss.; Anthony Presley, a dentist from Florence, Miss.; Danny Clifton, an optometrist from Louisville, Miss.; and Doug Phillips, pastor of Blackwater Baptist Church in Daleville, Miss.

After initial treatment in a Tela hospital, they were evacuated by helicopter early

Jan. 19 to a hospital in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, said Southern Baptist missionary Glenna Stamps. A total of 17 volunteers, mostly medical professionals, suffered injuries ranging from minor to severe in the accident.

Nine Hondurans, including a mother and her infant, also were injured but none required hospitalization, said Stamps' husband, Stanley.

Most of the volunteers were riding in the back of an open cattle truck when the driver swerved toward the road's edge to avoid hitting an oncoming car, Mrs. Stamps said. Heavy rains had softened the road and its shoulder gave way, causing the truck to crash down an embankment.

Volunteers in the accident said the truck overturned several times. Boatner apparently was crushed under the truck.

Boatner, one of the youngest members of the team, had committed his life to full-time Christian service about a year ago, said Rhonda Williamson, wife of Park Place's pastor.

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- ✦ Laugh a while and give your soul a rest - *John Dresbach*, assistant in music/university/singles, Central Church, Jonesboro
- ✦ If I could do my ministry over - *William V. Philliber*, retired pastor, North Little Rock
- ✦ Stimulating visions and excitement - *Grant Ethridge*, pastor, First Church, Lavaca
- ✦ Worship with purpose and direction - *Rob Hewell*, director, church music ministries department, ABSC
- ✦ Prayer is making a difference - *Tom Smith*, missionary, Philippine Islands (Times have been set apart for intercession)
- ✦ My effort at planning my preaching program - *Rick Hyde*, pastor, Third Church, Malvern
- ✦ My effort to lead an old church to grow - *Stephen C. Martin*, pastor, Flippin
- ✦ My effort to maintain mental and emotional health - *Greg Kirksey*, pastor, First Church, Benton
- ✦ Let's just praise the Lord - testimonies of "What we have seen and heard"

Reservation information will be in the mail to all pastors.

PLEASE PUT THE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

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Don Moore, Executive Director

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in February:

■ Feb. 17: Michelle Nicholson, OBU Box 4077, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001, freshman from Nigeria.

■ Feb. 23: Shad Smith, OBU Box 3846, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001, freshman from Portugal.



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at

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Innovative leaders cite Bible, love as priorities

By David Winfrey

SBC Home Mission Board

HOUSTON (BP)—Whatever non-traditional techniques they use, innovative churches must still be driven by love and based on the Bible to be effective, speakers told more than 1,000 people attending a recent conference on innovative church leadership.

"What drives us to innovate is love," said Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. "Lost people matter to God, therefore they matter to us."

Pastors, church planters and church leaders from at least 32 states, including approximately 40 participants from Arkansas, attended the event, sponsored by the Home Mission Board and 10 pastors.

The event promoted contemporary worship styles and creative methods to reach an increasingly secular society. Topics ranged from "Reaching Baby Boomers" and "Making Evangelism Work in the 1990s" to "Strategic Prayer" and "Avoiding Innovation Disasters."

Like many innovative churches, Willow Creek targets the unchurched, using drama and contemporary praise choruses instead of hymns to help present the message during its weekend services.

The church's burden for reaching lost people fuels its non-traditional approach, Hybels said. "I think the best churches that are being built these days are churches that church leaders are building for their (lost) friends."

But such churches must be based on sound biblical doctrine, said Tom Wolf,

professor of missions at Golden Gate Theological Baptist Seminary.

"Get accustomed to the culture and everything else but...when people come they must hear the Word of God," said Wolf, former pastor of The Church on Brady in east Los Angeles.

Pastors discredited the name of Jesus when they innovate simply to oppose an institution or group, he said. "The reason they want to innovate is because they're really rebellious in their spirit."

"Spiritual innovation is mandated by the gospel, which says this gospel must go to the ends of the earth and it must go in understandable terms," he said.

Effective ministry techniques

The conference drew church planters and pastors from traditional churches looking for techniques to be more effective reaching lost people, said Bill Price.

"More than 50 percent of the people that I've talked to have come from a traditional setting where they don't see the things they've been doing working," said Price, pastor of New Song Community Church in Mobile, Ala.

New Song holds its services in a former department store in downtown Mobile, using praise-oriented worship.

Located near a new convention center,

the church will begin opening next month on Fridays at J.C.'s Place, a smoke-free, alcohol-free night spot with Christian contemporary music and waiters trained in non-confrontational evangelism.

Wolf cautioned traditional church pastors against trying to radically change their church when the congregation does not have the same vision as the pastor.

"It's like trying to fix your motor at 60 mph on the freeway," he said. "Some of us have tire marks down our backs."

Some pastors of innovative churches said the conference afforded them an opportunity to experience affirmation and acceptance they did not get from their regional association.

Some Southern Baptists have accepted black churches and their different method of worship while rejecting contemporary Anglo churches, said Charles Chaney, vice president of church extension for the Home Mission Board.

"It's important for me to say you can have diverse methods and still be full-blooded Southern Baptists," he said.

Jim Herrington, director of missions for Houston's Union Baptist Association, agreed. "Every church ought to be innovating," he said. "If they don't—traditional or contemporary—they're going to die."

TTEOTE Projects

The following mission opportunities are requests from European Baptist churches as part of the 1994-96 Arkansas-European Baptist partnership. Churches or individuals interested in additional information about these and other partnership ministry options may contact partnership coordinator Glendon Grober at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791, ext. 5158.

■ **HOENSBROEK, NETHERLANDS:** A team of eight to 10 people is needed to lead a daytime children's Vacation Bible School and an evening youth VBS the week of Aug. 8-12, 1994. One person is needed to build a pulpit for the church.

■ **HAMBURG, ENGLAND:** 12 to 14 people are needed to lead an "Experiencing God, Knowing and Doing the Will of God" conference.



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Tour SP #4 16 Days Australia and New Zealand - Sept. 21

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Congressional vote expected on alcohol advertising

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Congress is expected to take its first-ever vote on an alcohol advertising bill early this year.

The Sensible Advertising and Family Education Act (S. 674), which requires rotating health and safety messages on broadcast and print alcohol advertisements, may go to the Senate Commerce Committee for a vote next month.

The messages are similar to but more

far-reaching than those already required to be placed on tobacco products and advertisements.

"This bill ensures that Americans, especially young people, will receive balanced information about the leading alcohol-related problems," said Robert Parham of the Baptist Center for Ethics.

"The primary source of information about alcohol comes from alcohol

advertisements which promote drinking as risk-free activity that advances social acceptance, sexual attractiveness and athletic success," Parham said.

The votes of 10 members of the Senate Commerce Committee are required to move the bill from committee to the Senate floor. Parham urged Southern Baptists to call and encourage their senators to express support for the SAFE bill. "Now is the time for Southern Baptists to speak loudly for health and safety messages in alcohol advertising," he said.

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Classifieds

Pastor wanted — The First Baptist Church in Jay, Okla., is currently accepting resumes for the position of pastor. Please send all correspondence to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 304, Jay, OK 74348.

Wanted — Bivocational music/youth director. Move to Arkansas' fastest growing area! Send resume to Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 127, Centerton, AR 72719.

Part-time staff position open — South Highland Baptist Church in Little Rock is seeking a part-time minister of youth and outreach. If interested, send resume to Search Committee, South Highland Baptist Church, 10200 W. 38th St., Little Rock, AR 72204.

Music/Youth minister — First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 578, Des Arc, AR 72040, is now accepting resumes for a music and youth minister.

Part-time youth minister — Send resumes to First Baptist Church, 206 Fairway, Sherwood, AR 72116.

Holy Land/Egypt Tour — March 7-8, 1994. George and Arlene O'Neal, (501) 855-9520.

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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 80 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

Convention Uniform

Building relationships

By Lonnie W. Latham, DOM,
Bartholomew Association
Basic passage: Luke 15:15-30
Focal passage: Luke 15:15-18
Central truth: Some relationships
bless; others destroy.

Imagine a father and two sons. The younger son wants to leave. The father and son may have been on the best of terms, or the worst. The relationship is not explained. We do know the younger brother wanted to leave, and with his fair share. The father agreed. He divided "his living." The younger son set off to capture the world and build new relationships.

Notice how he determined to build new relationships. He first limited his relationship with his family. He left his father and brother.

Secondly, he changed his environment. He went to a far country.

Thirdly, he then tried to build his new relationships on purely physical things. Attempting to buy friends, all he achieved was wasting his "substance with riotous living." Broke and friendless, he went to work tending swine.

His relationship with the pigs seemed hopeless. His freedom was really a horrible prison. Dining on hog slop is sobering. He came to his senses and determined to go home.

But the boy was still ignorant about relationships. He determined to be the lowest servant in his father's household; a hired servant. How sad that he thought he and his family could only relate in such a limited way.

What a surprise when his father rushes out to embrace him, interrupts his canned speech, restores him to full fellowship and has a party in his honor. The ring, only worn by sons, becomes a symbol of their relationship. This father who had a lost son come home, proved his commitment to their relationship by giving him a ring. The son proved his commitment by wearing it.

Do you have a ring from the Heavenly Father? Are you wearing it?

Life and Work

Who is my neighbor?

By Snookie Dixon, minister of
education, First Church, Arkadelphia
Basic passage: Luke 10:25-37
Focal passage: Luke 10:29
Central truth: My neighbor is anyone,
wherever he or she is, who needs my
help.

This story presents several types of characters to us: the foolishly traveler, the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan.

The traveler made a mistake by travelling alone on the treacherous road from Jerusalem to Jericho. It has been called the Bloody Way because of the frequent attacks of robbers on travelers.

The traveler, being robbed and left for dead, was at the mercy of the elements. The priest came, looked and walked by on the other side. If he touched the dead, he would be unclean for seven days and would lose his long awaited turn of duty in the temple. Ceremony was more important to him than charity.

The Levite came by and looked at the fallen traveler, but did not want to risk the possibility of a trap. "Safety first" was his motto.

The Samaritan, a merchant, who may or may not have been racially different, was looked upon with disdain by the Jews. However, he became actively involved in ministry and used his resources. Look at the action verbs: "he came," "he felt," "he bandaged," "he put him" and "he brought him." His help reflected a generous spirit. He took time out of his busy schedule to put the wounded man on his own beast and take him to the inn. He felt responsibility for him and provided for his needs as long as was necessary. The help he offered was very thorough and loving.

How many of us want to look the other way when one is in trouble? Are we like the priest, caught up in legalities or the Levite who was afraid to get involved? Are our neighbors all like us? Our neighbor should be anyone, anywhere, who needs our consistent love and concern. The traveler could be an unbeliever, a seeking student, a transient, the lonely, the sick, the poor, the grief-stricken, the criminal, racially different or denominationally different.

Jesus, through the story of the Good Samaritan, challenges us to "Go and do likewise" (v.37). Someone has said that "one cannot define a good neighbor, but one can be a good neighbor."

Bible Book

Jesus: living water source

By Rex Pilcher, associate pastor,
Parkway Place Church, Little Rock
Basic Passage: John 4:1-42
Focal Passage: John 4:7-24
Central truth: God desires children
who worship Him in spirit and truth.

By speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus swept aside racial and gender-based prejudices that went far back in time. The Samaritans were descendants of Jews and foreign settlers brought in by the Assyrians when they conquered the 10 northern tribes. Then Jews of the south refused to have anything to do with them from that time onward, fostering hurt and hatred on the part of the Samaritans.

Jesus' response to the woman revealed to her how to obtain eternal life. He told her it was "living water" that she could only get it from Him and that to receive it she need only ask for it in faith. The woman was thinking of literal water and responded based on this understanding. Jesus again offered eternal life through living water.

He also dealt with sin in the woman's life. Before she could receive living water, what was preventing this in her life had to be removed: sin. In witnessing to the woman, Jesus modeled witnessing for us. But the focus of the passage goes on to something even greater. We are brought to why we witness: to bring people into a worshiping relationship with the Lord God.

This passage reminds us that God looks not on outward appearance but on the heart. Unlike the pious, self-righteous Pharisees, this woman had a thirsty, empty soul. Jesus told her what God desires: worship Him in spirit and truth.

The Samaritans had false worship. Their worship was aimed at a god other than Yahweh God. They needed to worship in truth. The Jews had the true revelation of God, but they fell into vain worship, being more concerned with ceremonies, rituals and forms than having a right heart. The Jews needed to worship in spirit.

Today there are both kinds of people who sit in Sunday School classes and pews. Some may want to know God but need to be taught the Word and how to be acceptable to God. And there are those who know the right answers and outwardly conform to what are proper "forms," but whose hearts are far from God and who don't worship in the Spirit. Are you like the Samaritan needing basic knowledge or do you have knowledge but need the Spirit's renewal in your life?

Convention Uniform

Christ's authority

By Lonnie W. Latham, DOM,
Bartholomew Association
Basic passage: Luke 20:1-19
Focal passage: Luke 20:1-19
Central truth: Jesus has absolute authority.

In the first year of Christ's ministry He cleansed the Temple (John 2:15). In the last week of His ministry He cleansed the Temple for the second time (Luke 19:45). In response to the first event, the religious rulers asked what this sign meant. Jesus confused them by talking about destroying the temple and in three days restoring it. The second cleansing evoked an entirely different question. By what authority does He do these things? (Luke 20:2). They no longer wanted signs. They wanted explanations.

In traditional rabbinical form, Jesus answered a question with a question. "Of the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" (Luke 20:4). They pled ignorance. Jesus chose to give no direct answer, but He illustrated His authority by telling the Parable of the Vineyard.

The vineyard is the world. The whole world belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). Therefore, He has the right to have authority over all things. He planted it. He rented it out to vine-growers and shared his authority with them. He told them he would come back to receive what was rightfully his. Soon they forgot him and their agreement. But God still is in authority. With or without their acceptance He owns it all.

"Come lets us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). God's authority allowed him to negotiate. Sequentially he sent three servants. Each returned beaten and empty handed. He sent his beloved son. They killed him. Negotiations ended.

The conclusion of God's authority is summed up in "He shall come and destroy these husbandman, and shall give the vineyard to another" (Luke 20:16). The ultimate statement of God's authority is that He will claim what is His and do with it as He pleases. Final authority, though now delegated, will ultimately be the Lord's.

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Life and Work

What's in the dish?

By Snookie Dixon, minister of education, First Church, Arkadelphia
Basic passage: Luke 11:37-54
Focal passage: Luke 11:37-42
Central truth: It is more important to be clean on the inside than to be immersed in tradition and ceremony.

The Pharisees were constantly trying to trap Jesus and catch Him saying something wrong.

The Pharisee who invited Jesus to dine with him provided such a situation. He was appalled that Jesus did not adhere to the ceremonial washing of hands according to the law. He simply reclined at the table. This gave Jesus an opportunity to make some difficult and unpopular remarks to His hearers.

He criticized the Pharisees for stressing the external, while neglecting inner cleanliness (vv. 39-40). He pointed out that God made the inside as well as the outside and that they might become "clean" by giving themselves as alms (vv. 40-41). Their act of giving would not atone for their sin but it would put them in proper relation to the law and to God.

According to the Old Testament law (Lev. 27:30; Deut. 14:22), the Israelites worshiped God by giving one-tenth ("tithing") of their flocks, herds, grain and fruit. God intended this to be a celebration of joy and an offering of love. However, the Pharisees had created so many petty regulations that tithing had become a burden. There was nothing to celebrate.

The title of the Pharisee had become nothing more than a religious show. Tithing can never be substituted for loving God and doing justice.

A person may be faithful in attending church, studying the Bible, giving regularly to the church, and serving on committees. One may have all the outward appearances of a great Christian. However, if in the heart there is arrogance and pride, one is not wholly committed to the Father.

Jesus wants us to replace our ego needs with an attitude of humility and servanthood which enables us to become spiritually clean on the inside in order that we can be His witnesses in our families, in our churches, and in our hurting world. Following rules without helping people has no place in the teachings of Christ. What's on the inside of your dish?

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Bible Book

Jesus heals a son

By Rex Pilcher, associate pastor,
Parkway Place Church, Little Rock
Basic Passage: John 4:43-54
Focal Passage: John 4:46-53
Central truth: Jesus desires that we have complete trust in Him.

Though Jesus desires to heal and save everywhere (II Peter 3:9), He is limited where there is a lack of faith. It was true in His days on earth and today.

After a few days in Samaria, Jesus went to Galilee where He'd performed His first public miracle at the wedding feast. Arriving there, He was approached by a nobleman who had a sick child.

The man showed persistence in coming to Jesus. He didn't worry if going to Jesus was the right step or made him unpopular. He needed help and was desperate enough to go to Him. Do you people hesitate before coming to Jesus for healing?

The man was instantly challenged by Jesus. Jesus essentially ignored his request and challenged the basis of his faith. He also spoke to the bystanders. In v. 48 the word "you" is plural and clearly intended for all who heard Him.

The words "signs" and "wonders" highlight the two main aspects of miracles. Signs refer to the spiritual aspect of miracles and that they're intended to convey a meaning beyond the surface. Wonders point to the outward side of miracles. Jesus did them to startle people and attract attention. Jesus was saying these people needed to see signs and wonders to prop up their faith, as opposed to the Samaritans.

This response likely exasperated and bewildered the nobleman. He probably thought about the distance he'd traveled and the urgency of his son's sickness. His reply was likely spoken reflecting this urgency: Sir, come down here before my child dies. On his first plea he used the usual word for "son." On this second request he used the diminutive, "my little child." He possibly felt this would touch the heart of the Teacher. In English the diminutive might be expressed as "my baby" or "my little girl or boy." In sending the man on his way, Jesus said, "Okay, let's see if you really believe." It is significant that the man did believe His word and his quick departure proved it.

How do you and your class members respond to Jesus' words? Do you take Him at His word, or do you linger at the scene of the request, wondering if anything really is going to happen?

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Mongolian court overturns law limiting Christians

HONG KONG (BP)—The Mongolian Constitutional Court has overturned parts of a new law that would severely restrict Christian activities in Mongolia, according to Christians present at the recent court hearing.

In its written decision, the court ruled several sections of the law unconstitutional — including restrictions barring Christian work outside church buildings and foreigners spreading their faith — because they violate basic human rights.

Reportedly retained, however, are provisions giving Buddhism a chief place in Mongolian religious life, forbidding Christian worship in state-owned buildings and giving the government control of the number of clergy.

The court decision returns the law to the Mongolian Parliament, which passed it, for review and affirmation or rejection.

Russian Baptists murdered in Tajikistan home Dec. 31

DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN (BP)—An ethnic Russian Baptist man, his four children and four others were brutally beaten and shot to death on New Year's Eve in the man's home in Tajikistan. The 34-year-old man, Vladimir Limorev, and his family were active members of Dushanbe Baptist Church in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan in Central Asia. Nothing was reported stolen from his house.

At 2 a. m., while all were asleep, a group of armed men reportedly started beating on the door. Limorev's 30-year-old wife, Helena, who is pregnant with her fifth child, fled for help after the men took her husband outside and shots rang out.

She returned with authorities to find her house on fire and nine dead bodies. Besides her husband and four children — ages 2, 4, 6 and 9 — the victims included her mother; a visiting woman emigrating to Germany and the woman's 2-year-old daughter; and a neighbor Mrs. Limorev had contacted before she went to the police.

Tajikistan, a former republic of the Soviet Union bordering Afghanistan, is heavily Muslim. Tension between native Tajiks and others has run high in the wake of Tajikistan's September 1991 declaration of independence.

Supreme Court rejects challenge to religious display

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The U.S. Supreme Court left standing Jan. 10 a lower court's ruling that a privately-sponsored religious display in a public park is constitutional.

The court declined to disturb a federal appeals-court decision allowing a private group to display scenes from the life of Christ during the Christmas season in San Diego's Balboa Park. The city's policy permitting the display does not offend the First Amendment's requirement of church-state separation, the court said.

Since 1953 San Diego officials have allowed the private group to display eight life-sized statuary scenes. The city maintained that the 1,200-acre park featuring theaters, museums, a zoo, picnic areas and sporting fields is a traditional public forum open to all speakers. The appeals court agreed.

HMB's David Bunch elected to lead Colorado Baptists

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO (BP)—Longtime Home Mission Board administrator David T. Bunch was elected the new executive director of the Colorado Baptist General Convention in a special convention meeting Jan. 11.

Bunch, assistant vice president of strategy planning in the Home Mission Board's extension section since 1989, previously was extension division director from 1987-88. He joined the HMB staff in 1978 as director of the Mission Service Corps.

Bunch also has been executive director of the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship nine years, a church starter in South Dakota five years and a Greek teacher at St. Louis Baptist College five years.

A native of Missouri, Bunch is a graduate of William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo.; Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, Kan., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Joanne, have two grown sons.

Southern Seminary to teach doctoral classes in Korean

LOUISVILLE, KY (BP)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will become the first Southern Baptist seminary to teach doctoral courses in a language other than English.

In July, the Louisville, Ky., school will begin offering doctor of ministry courses taught in Korean, said Kwan Lee, the seminary's coordinator of Korean language D.Min. studies. The program, he noted, will address the unique ministry issues facing the Korean-American community. Koreans compose the largest ethnic group enrolled in Southern's doctoral programs.