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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



news magazine

Hands-on Ministry

Churches such as First Church in Springdale and Guion Church are representative of Arkansas Baptist congregations doing hands-on ministry this summer. Doug Sarver (left), minister of missions for First Springdale, prepares to baptize a new Christian converted during one of the church's six evangelism festivals held this summer. A volunteer from Rocky Bayou Association (below) participates in a home-building project for a needy couple. The project was sponsored by Guion Church and the association.



ARKANSAS BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Nashville, Tennessee

U.S. Supreme Court strikes down RFRA

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Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist was joined by Justices Anthony M. Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Antonin Scalia in the majority. Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, David H. Souter and Stephen G. Breyer dissented.

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Rep. Charles Canady, R-Fla., has called a hearing to discuss the implications of the ruling and possible legislative solutions. The House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution will hold a hearing on the high court's decision July 14.

In addition to the Southern Baptist ERLC and the Baptist Joint Committee, other organizations in a 60-member coalition defending RFRA include the National Association of Evangelicals, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Jewish Congress and the Christian Legal Society. WASHINGTON (BP/ABP)

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Cover Story

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Next issue: July 24

A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABCs Executive Director

He looked like he got a suntan through a screen door. The well-freckled young man was about 12 years old. A perfect picture of what Tom Sawyer must have looked like. With a gap-toothed grin that spread from ear to ear, he announced to us, "I got saved tonight!" And he had been saved. He had no doubt, no "hope so" — he had the confidence and radiance that comes from the Spirit's regenerating work.

He didn't really have a church home, but godly church members saw him as a prospect and invited him to come with their church youth to a week at Siloam. There, along with 1,200 other young people, folks prayed for him. The gospel

was demonstrated, taught and proclaimed. And for the first time in his young life, someone loved him because of Christ's love for him. His eternity was changed. He was transferred "from the domain of darkness to the Kingdom of the beloved Son." That night 70 other young people were saved, too.

I've just returned from several days at our assembly at Siloam Springs. God is saving lost young people there. Your Cooperative Program gifts change eternity.

■ Have you read *Renewing America's Soul* by Howard E. Butt Jr. (Revell, 1996). This is a helpful book for business leaders and for pastors. There are good illustrations and practical applications of Scripture to life. It also comes with a small group study guide.

Executive director's schedule:

July 14-15 Baptist Memorial Health Care board meeting, Memphis
July 16 RA Camp, Camp Paron
July 17 Operating Committee, Baptist Building
July 20 FBC, Stephens
July 21 Young at Heart, Brinkley
July 24 Retired Workers' Meeting
July 27 FBC, DeQueen

Woman's Viewpoint



Sandra Kommer

First Church, Brinkley

Our only child graduated in May. During one of our mother-daughter talks she commented on how much she had learned at school and at church. The talk left me being grateful to the Lord for all of the Christian people and experiences she has been influenced by in her 17 years.

In the nursery she learned to trust those loving hands and cooling voices singing and caring for her. Those first years, where she learned to love going to church and to trust, were a beginning for her future trust of the Lord.

Mission Friends and preschool Sunday School teachers taught her the Bible was a special book that tells us about God and Jesus. Many times, after Mission Friends, we would bathe Boaz and Ruth's baby, Obed, and talk about how God made families. She learned Jesus was a person with a family and that He loves all people. She also learned not everyone knows about

God's love. Simple Bible truths were taught such as "God is good to us" (Psalm 73:1) and Jesus loves me. She began to pray for missionaries. She heard missionary stories and about giving and caring for others. I know those teachers and leaders made it easier for her father and me to teach her to share with others.

Girls in Action was just that — action! GA camp, at Camp Paron, every summer, taught her group living, camp crafts, a deeper understanding of God, Christian principles and the biblical basis for missions. She also learned to wear flip-flops in the shower and to push the bunk beds together so no one would fall off the top bunk! The missionaries' autographs in her autograph book are still a treasure to her. Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teachers taught her more Bible truths.

What better role models or experiences could her father and I have chosen? She accepted Jesus as her Lord when she was eight years old.

Please, think of a child you can influence and see that they get to church (Matt. 19:14).

Sandra Kommer is a member of First Church, Brinkley, and is WMU director for Arkansas Valley Association. She and her husband, Bob, live and work on their farm and go on mission trips whenever possible. Their only child, Allison, will be a freshman at Ouachita Baptist University this fall.

quotes

"If we are going to be effective in our world evangelism, we'd better be very effective in our home evangelism."

— Doug Sarver, minister of missions, First Church, Springdale

"We will stand firm on our convictions, but we will not stand still."

— Bob Reccord, president, North American Mission Board

"Our God is more powerful than any law any legislature could pass."

— Danny Panter, Southern Baptist missionary to Russia

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

NEWS MAGAZINE

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Trouble in the land of the free

The timing couldn't have been more ironic. One week before Americans celebrated Independence Day, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the Religious Freedom Restoration Act unconstitutional.

As legislative debates rage over religious freedom in Russia, Israel and other parts of the world, it seems unbelievable that our nation's highest court would strike down a law requiring the government to show a "compelling interest" before restricting religious practices. Without appropriate legislative or judicial intervention, the ruling promises to have a chilling impact on religious expression for years to come.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, called the ruling "the worst religious liberty decision of the last 50 years."

According to James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, "The First Amendment has just been gutted by the Supreme Court."

"The original intent of the Constitution and its framers has been almost completely obscured by this decision," warned Rita

Straight from the Editor



Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Woltz, legal coordinator for the Rutherford Institute, an international civil liberties organization. "We are now on the verge of true religious apartheid in this country."

Why has the ruling generated such alarm? RFRA was enacted in 1993 in response to an earlier Supreme Court declaration that government no longer had to show a compelling interest before restricting religious practice. In practical terms, that means it is now easier for the government to interfere with citizens' religious exercise.

Two days after striking down RFRA, the Supreme Court vacated a federal appeals court decision that tithes given to a church cannot be seized to pay the debts of a couple who later declared bankruptcy. The court let stand a ruling by California's top court that RFRA did not protect a landlord's refusal to rent to unmarried couples because of her belief that sex outside of marriage is wrong.

If the loss of RFRA means tithes can be confiscated and religious beliefs cannot impact business dealings, the U.S. has taken a giant step backward in our historic role as "the land of the free." It also means that a post-RFRA America may soon limit religious freedom from Gravetté to Eudora and every city and community in between.

What is the solution? Many observers are calling for new legislative action while others are advocating a constitutional amendment. Another option involves passing acceptable RFRA-type legislation on the state level. Now is the time for grassroots Americans to contact government leaders and make their voices heard.



letters to the editor

Obedience vs. rebellion

In this entertainment-oriented era, Southern Baptists are to be commended for taking a Christian stand against the Disney giant — which appears to prefer offending families rather than anti-family groups.

Of even greater significance, the SBC passed a religious liberty resolution calling for sanctions against nations which violate religious liberty rights, and that we refrain from international trade with violators — such as China. The convention took a stand against the cloning of human beings, both unwise and extremely expensive. The SBC maintains its pro-life stand against killing helpless human beings.

Will America go God's way — and live — or rebel against His authority — and die? We are deciding.

Gwen Carpenter
Magnolia, AR

An issue of family values

In answer to Bob Parsley's recent letter to the editor concerning "why Disney was singled out" in the recent meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, I just can't believe that 12,000 Southern Baptists went to Dallas to "get even" with Dr. Jim Henry, whom I admire and greatly respect.

Southern Baptist went there to send the Disney Corporation a very clear mes-

sage that we are fed up with companies that embrace the homosexual lifestyle and beam it into our homes via TV and set aside "Gay Pride Days" at their amusement parks.

This is a moral issue that is spreading like a deadly cancer into our society and has nothing to do with "settling an old score."

America is dying from within and Southern Baptists, along with other denominations, had better wake up and be alarmed about what is taking place (Jeremiah 6:17, Ezekiel 3:17).

I am glad that I was part of this strong resolution that our convention adopted. Again, contrary to what some may think, this issue had nothing to do with Dr. Henry.

Yes, we are to pray for the homosexual community, but we are to also take our stand as Christians when Disney ignores the Christian communities' concerns involving family values.

Charles Mays
North Little Rock, AR

Southern Baptist purge

In the June 12 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist News Magazine*, two letters to the editor appeared. One writer was from Arkadelphia, the other a missionary from Taiwan.

Both wrote, without discernible sympathy, about the "conservative resur-

gence" in Southern Baptist life. Whose words are these, or better said, who spun them out? What we have had in our convention is a purge, not a re-surge.

"Resurgence" means to "rise again." How do you rise again to where you "ain't ever been?" Current Baptist leadership seems to be strangers to a large part of Baptist doctrine, traditions, history and practice. From Roger Williams forward, Baptist leaders never favored, but would have vigorously resisted ideas of:

The government taking tax dollars to finance private (religious) schools.

Never urged that school children be required to participate in prayer programs prescribed by the State.

Never tried to mandate, from the top down, how its institutions, churches and members would conduct their business and worship, manage their churches, and their personal practices and preferences.

Never formulated a litmus test of a person's value in denominational life; or mandated that prospects not only "walk the walk" but also "talk the talk." No deviation, or errancy, permitted.

So, call it a "purge," not a "re-surgence." These people's ideas may be hot in Lynchburg, but they're alien to Baptist beliefs and practice. Our forefathers wouldn't have recognized them as Baptist.

Frank J. Haskins
Mountain Home, AR

Arkansas pastors join Disney debate

Amid all the media attention focused on Southern Baptists' recent Disney resolution, several Arkansas Baptist pastors have entered the boycott debate with columns in their local church newsletters. Among the opinions on various sides of the issue are:

■ **Bill Elliff**, pastor of First Church, Little Rock: "I served on the resolutions committee during our Southern Baptist Convention. Last year, our convention passed a resolution calling for a potential boycott of the Disney Company because of their continual drift toward some very immoral agendas....In response to last year's resolution, and to the increasingly clear agenda of the Disney Company, another resolution was passed this year. Instead of a rebuke to the Disney Company, per se, it was a statement regarding our 'moral stewardship' as believers....This resolution reminds us that everything we have is given to us as a stewardship entrusted to us by God for which we are to give an account....We have a right, and a responsibility, to support and promote that which we believe is most beneficial for our families, our nation and God's kingdom....The Elliff family is going to seek to be faithful in this area of moral stewardship....I'm actually grateful for this opportunity to teach our children that there are some places in life where you graciously draw the line and go no further."

■ **Bruce Tippitt**, pastor of First Church, Jonesboro: "The Mickey Mouse Club theme song had the words, 'M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E.' For the recent Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas it might be rewritten, 'B-O-Y-C-O-T-T, that spells S-B-C.' Regardless of the other issues or concerns that were the intended focus of the past week, all people are talking about is the boycott of Disney....Here is the key issue as I see the SBC resolution: It has made ideology equal to or more important than theology....A person's spirituality will now be judged, by some, according to their participation in the boycott regardless of their conviction about the blood atonement of Jesus. How we behave has suddenly become more important than the depth of our belief....By a decision to use a secular tool of persuasion (i.e. a boycott), our denomination has weakened its position and ability to bear witness for Christ in a lost world. The issue no longer is, 'What will you do with Jesus?' but, 'What have you done to Mickey Mouse?'...I encourage you to respond by advocating a higher road, one of proclamation above protest."

■ **Jack Abrtton**, pastor of Lake Village Church: "Don't be deceived by the liberal bent from the national press. The Disney Company is the largest and most visible company in the United States and the world that claims to be a leader in promoting family values. The gays are permitted to parade down Main Street promoting their values but a youth choir is not allowed to sing about Jesus because that promotes our religious values. Can you imagine the impact it can have on your children and grandchildren to see Mickey Mouse embrace the gay lifestyle as acceptable and refuse to embrace the cross?...Our resolution has said that we, along with our heavenly Father, will embrace the sinner with love but reject the sin."

■ **Don Lowery**, pastor of Grace Church, Camden: "The only controversial moment (at the SBC) came when the Disney resolution was discussed....I personally did not vote for the boycott. I agreed with the principle behind the resolution, that is, that Disney needed a reprimand. However, I didn't feel like a boycott was the appropriate response....I didn't feel like a boycott would be something that Jesus would advocate. He proved Himself extremely patient and gentle with lost people. The Lord was harsh with hypocrites. Secondly, I felt like the resolution worked at cross purposes with the Christian mission of redemption. Our goal for all people is to see them come to Jesus Christ. How is a boycott going to bring homosexuals or Disney

corporate heads to the Savior? When I was lost, the last thing I needed to get me saved was a slap on the face. In effect, this is what we have done to Disney."

■ **Nitch Tapson**, pastor of Mt. Carmel Church, Cabot: "At this year's convention the vast majority of messengers approved a resolution to denounce the operating philosophy of the Disney Company....The secular media has had a 'field day' with this resolution. The picture painted by the media would make the conventioners appear as backward idiots. Even worse, they are prejudiced, homophobic and intolerant, all of which is un-American, and in some eyes, un-Christian....Now for the 'rest of the story.' One of the biggest news stories of the year was about TV actress Ellen Degeneres who declared herself a lesbian on her show, 'Ellen.' That show is run on the ABC network which is owned by Disney. Have you heard about 'Gay and Lesbian Day' at Disney World? Those parents that have been there on that day (with their children) came away disgusted over the overt display of sexuality between those men and women there....This is not about 'Snow White' and 'Prince Charming.' This is about a major promoter of family and children's entertainment which has taken a decided turn toward worldliness and sin."

■ **John McCallum**, pastor of First Church, Hot Springs: "Like the majority of the messengers at the convention, I too am offended by Disney's apparent embrace of the homosexual lifestyle....While we are certainly offended at their stand on homosexuality, we should not be all that surprised. Lost people (and companies) act like lost people....Even though organized boycotts sometimes accomplish their purpose, I don't believe they are the best way. For one thing, an organized boycott arbitrarily selects one business even though other businesses may be guilty of the same sins....An organized boycott also smacks of power-mongering and, in my opinion, is a worldly tactic. Spiritual warfare is not fought with worldly weapons like threats and financial hardball....While we do have a responsibility to speak out on moral issues when we feel so compelled by the Spirit, we can surely find better ways to do it than a chest-thumping, in-your-face boycott."

■ **Wes George**, pastor of Wynne Church: "With all the great things that God has done in our convention, there is little wonder that the enemy will seek to attack and divide our most united convention. It appears that the attack is at the point of the Disney resolution....I voted for the resolution myself because of the aggressive campaign to promote homosexuality and immorality contrary to our Christian standards. Our convention has set a high standard as it should. I believe that each of us personally must work out in our hearts and convictions how we will respond to the aggressive...attack against Christian values."

■ **David Newberry**, pastor of First Church, Crossett: "I mentioned in my sermon this past Sunday that the issue with the Disney Corporation, or any other corporation, is not a matter for the convention or the church, but it is a matter between you and Jesus. If Jesus is the Lord of your life, then He must also be the Lord of your entertainment. What you watch, read and listen to is between you and Jesus, not you and the Southern Baptist Convention or the First Baptist Church."

■ **Mike Seabaugh**, pastor of Crosspoint Church, North Little Rock: "As Southern Baptists, we need to make sure that we are putting our trust in Almighty God and not the almighty dollar....Regardless of how you personally feel — we, as God's people, have put His reputation on the line. (However, God's character is never at risk.) If we do not support the stand that has been taken, we only give the world another reason to mock our 'inconvenient' convictions. But let's be sure and take this stand — on our knees."

Widespread ministry projects available

According to Jimmy Barrentine, when Norman Lewis accepted the job as coordinator of volunteers for the partnership between Iowa and Arkansas Baptists Feb. 1, "the partnership had four project requests.... The partnership was in a coma."

Resuscitating the missions activity between the two states became Lewis' priority, explained Barrentine, director of the Arkansas Baptist missions department. Lewis is now busy contacting churches and associations in the Baptist Convention of Iowa, discovering their needs and ways Arkansas Baptist churches can respond.

His findings will be listed in a project requests directory available this month from the state convention missions department. The guide lists specific mission needs from churches in Iowa.

"To date, we have about 40 projects in Iowa," noted Lewis, retired director of missions for Black River Association. "They take the form of Vacation Bible Schools, Backyard Bible Clubs, revivals, surveys, youth rallies, camps, building projects, and renovation and repair projects."

But even with the active projects in Iowa, there are still many left to be filled. "Have we met their needs?" Lewis asked. "No. Are churches still needed? Yes. Right now there are 41 new projects in the project directory and 10 have been taken. There are still 31 projects that haven't been completed."

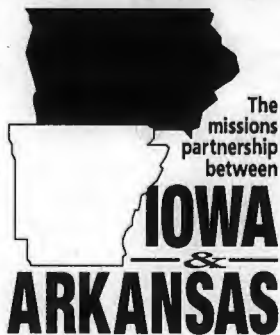
Emphasizing that participating in a project can "change the life of a church," Lewis noted that several Arkansas Baptist churches have shown "some renewal of interest for next year" for filling those requests.

He pointed to a recent trip by members of Loneke Church. According to associate pastor Danny Loretz, the project "will truly be remembered as a time that God made a difference in our lives.... They will never again be the same."

Loretz said 10 adults and 42 youth participated in '97 Summer Xtreme, which involved door-to-door surveys, witnessing and holding revival services through New Hope Baptist Church and Albion Road Baptist Church, both in Ottumwa, Iowa.

The witnessing opportunities changed lives, Loretz affirmed. "Our youth had been instructed to share their testimonies and faith as the Lord gave them the opportunity. I believe our kids really had their eyes opened as to the condition of a lost and dying world. They came back excited as they shared the opportunities that God gave them to witness."

Lewis said that while projects such as mission trips are necessary for the



partnership, "they are not the bottom line. Projects aren't going to win Iowa to Christ. Winning Iowa to Christ is going to happen when a pastor answers the mission call, dedicates his life to doing that, and can carry that on without worrying about where his tires are going to come from, where he will get clothes for his children and his medical insurance."

Because of that need, Iowa has made some project requests for financial support for mission pastors, Lewis said, explaining that Arkansas Baptist churches can make a difference through the "adoption" of a church-planting pastor." He added that the financial requests are limited to project needs only and are made by the Iowa convention to assist with their convention's church-planting strategy.

Larry Wartsbaugh, director of missions for Great Rivers and North-east Iowa associations, also underscored the need for supporting pastors in Iowa. "If Arkansas churches and associations wanted to enter into a three-to-four year commitment for salary support for a pastor, this would be a great way for them to have a significant part in ministry in Iowa."

In addition, Wartsbaugh said, "Those who contribute financially could also serve as prayer warriors for these pastors and perhaps could take mission trips to the places they are supporting."

While help from Arkansas takes the

form of projects or assistance, Barrentine emphasized, "The priority has to be assistance to churches in Iowa. We are engaged in this partnership for them and not for us."

"Also, at the heart of the partnership is prayer. Prayer, mutual caring and fellowship undergird this partnership and they need to know we are praying for them and caring for them."

Barrentine said that in addition to mutual caring and fellowship between the states, "reaching people for Christ and new church starts" are primary goals of the missions partnership.

Although the emphasis is on Iowa, Barrentine added, "part of the partnership we do not stress enough is that the Iowa Baptists are willing to conduct projects in Arkansas. There are Iowa partners open to coming to work in church camps, Vacation Bible Schools and Backyard Bible Clubs."

"Iowa Baptists are a small convention with many strong and mature leaders," he explained, "but they need the linkage with Arkansas because they need to know they are part of something bigger - not a sect, but part of a large denomination of faith."

"The partnership allows them to have volunteers for what they couldn't do otherwise, such as VBS, construction, surveys and Friendship Center ministries," he said. "We provide people essential to carrying out the Great Commission in Iowa."

Barrentine emphasized the need for churches to contact Lewis if they feel led to conduct missions work and praised Lewis for helping revive the partnership.

"Norman has solid experience and has done work in this context in Nevada," Barrentine said. "He has a gift for organization and is a fantastic promoter."

"He also has worked extremely well with the Iowa leadership and pastors," Barrentine continued. "The revitalization of this ministry came because of a single trip Norman made. He

and Iowa Baptist leaders solidified their friendship and were speaking the same language."

For more information about participating in Iowa missions projects, contact Norman Lewis at the ABCS missions department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC, or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5193.

Have we met their needs? No. Are churches still needed? Yes. There are still 31 projects that haven't been completed.

NORMAN LEWIS
Coordinator of Volunteers,
Arkansas-Iowa Partnership

Members of Guion Church and Rocky Bayou ▶ Association Brotherhood members move building materials into Henry and Lois Kronk's new home, which will replace their old one (below), made of plywood and plastic sheeting.

Practical ministry

Home construction project unites church and association to help meet family's needs

Russell N. Dilday Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Lois Kronk, in poor health from kidney failure, struggled up from her wheelchair. She moved to the door of her house, a 10-by-20-foot, one-room dwelling built from the scraps of her former home, destroyed by a storm. Afraid that Lois might fall, her teenage daughter urged her to hold onto the door for support. "I just have to see," said Lois.

What she saw as she opened the door made her catch her breath. Brotherhood members from Rocky Bayou Association and members of Guion Church were completing the nailing of studs for her new home. The church and associational Brotherhood members constructed the new home for Lois and Henry Kronk and their daughter, who live in the Guion community, as a Mississippi River Ministry project. Volunteers completed the home building project, which began in February, in late June.

The project began with a visit to the Kronks from Guion Church member Charline Davis, who "discovered their condition," explained church deacon Joe Moser, who has worked on the project. "She came to the church and asked if there was something that could be done to help." Moser said Guion pastor Noble Wiles "got involved, then everybody else got involved."

"Everyone else" eventually included 40 to 50 volunteers from 10 churches "either through donations of money or men," noted project co-coordinator Jim Jackson. "The people who have worked have a heart for people because they understand the need and are so thankful for the blessing they have."

"When I first heard about it, I said, 'No way,' because there are people all over who need help," Wiles recalled. "But I came out to visit the family and it was obvious they needed help. I began to decide how to repair their house."

Wiles involved Jackson, a cabinet maker and member of Mt. Pleasant Church who served last year as associational Brotherhood director and caught the vision for the building project. He served not only as the mission project's co-coordinator but also as one of the volunteer builders.

"It is the effort of a lot of men and women," Jackson remarked, urging other Baptists to participate in similar projects. "We are out there doing God's work. We're so busy these days it's hard to help your neighbor, but it's the Lord's time we're talking about. We can get involved in a lot of things—not only the men, women can visit with them and work inside homes. Many of these people are lonely and just need someone to visit with them."

S.D. Hacker, director of missions for Rocky Bayou Association, said the Kronks fit the needs highlighted by Jackson. "It's hard to describe their residence. It is constructed of building scraps left from their original structure, which was damaged in a storm. The roof and some of the side walls are covered with plastic sheeting."

Series of setbacks

"We have lived here 15 years and it's beginning to fall down," Lois explained. "I didn't mind it till the mice began coming in. There are so many holes. We had planned on building, but I got sick and the bills are bad."

Her kidneys failed last August, she noted, putting her into a coma. "Now I am on dialysis. I was dying. My sister's church and another church started praying for me and I got better."

Her medical problems came on the heels of another tragedy last year, when their son and daughter-in-law were killed



in an automobile accident. She now receives kidney dialysis treatments three times a week, has limited mobility and uses a wheelchair, but the medical bills are also disabling.

Lois Kronk said the group's efforts are "a great burden off me. Some months Henry doesn't make but \$18. For a full week he gets \$300 and the hospital gets a third of that."

She said the hospital is garnishing his paycheck \$100 per week to pay for her bills. Noting that "we have over a \$10,000 hospital bill and Medicaid hasn't paid any," she emphasized that the new house "will take a lot of a burden off me."

Lois said Henry "is tickled to death" about the project. "He was so surprised when they wanted to come out here."

"I can't hardly wait!" Henry agreed as he walked around the house to see the progress, talking with the volunteers.

The project has built a relationship between Guion Church and the Kronks and they have begun attending services there and a son has professed faith in Jesus Christ because of the witness of the building project and the builders.

It also has strengthened relationships among association members, Hacker pointed out. "A man in one of the churches which had cut back on its percentage

giving to the association called the other day to say, "This has restored our church's confidence in the association. We will be increasing our association giving next year." This church voted to give \$1,000 to the general fund of the association above their percentage gifts when they learned of the project."

Although the new structure is modest by most standards (a 16- by 30-foot house with a large room, bathroom and small bedroom), it was a challenge for the volunteers to collect the resources for construction.

"We had no money in the association fund to do this," explained Wiles, who has served as Guion's pastor since December. "We first talked about putting a roof over it like some people do for mobile homes. Me and two deacons and a couple of other men met to decide what we could do."

Wiles said one of those men, David Bromwell, a member of Franklin Church, donated an old store building that he was planning to tear down.

"When David saw what they live in, he said, 'These people need a home. If you will help tear it down, we will build these people a home,'" he recalled.

Associational Brotherhood director Bill Haynes, a member of Horseshoe Bend Church, said the building effort also has "received donations from churches. Someone donated the tin for the roof, some siding, others lumber."

Wiles said local businesses also helped with donations. A flooring company donated linoleum and a lumber company donated other materials. He spoke to one businessman who had some siding left over from a job and volunteered to install it free of charge.

Tommy Goode, Mississippi River Ministry coordinator for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said that the construction project "is a great example of how God is calling out His people to minister to persons in need."

Goode called the project "a perfect example of what Mississippi River Ministry is all about. MRM is about churches discovering the needs of poor people and then doing something practical to help them have a better life. And doing this ministry in Jesus' name brings honor and glory to God."

"Several things are obvious about this project," Goode explained. "God put it in the heart of a Christian woman and a church to do something to help this family, the pastor of the church had to give leadership for it to happen and the director of missions had to get personally involved and give his support."

Wiles has a slightly simpler explanation for the success of the project: "The size of the church don't have anything to do with the size of the ministry."

The "Critical Legal Trends and the Church" seminar will offer information to youth and children's workers and church leaders on legal issues that Bruce Swihart said "continue to touch the lives of churches." Swihart, director of the ABCS church leadership support department, added that "litigation continues to be more of an option. If churches take precautions on the front end, they can save themselves heartache and - if they are under-insured - financially." The seminars will be held in three locations: Aug. 11 at Ridgeview Church in Fayetteville; Aug. 12 at Nettleton Church in Jonesboro; and Aug. 13 at First Church in Conway. All workshops will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 5 p.m. The program will be led by Steven Lewis, an Oklahoma City attorney and president of Church Legal Advocate, a non-profit ministry that helps churches deal with legal and business issues. The program will consist of two workshops: "The Church and the Law" and "The Church and Child Safety." There is no cost for the program. Ext. 5148.

Eureka Springs Kid's Day, to be held Aug. 2 in the historic northwest Arkansas town, will be sponsored by Southern Baptists and the Eureka Springs Chamber of Commerce. Tommy Goode, an associate in the ABCS missions department, called the event "a fantastic opportunity for ministry." He said it will feature "a day of Christian fun and activities. Beginning at 10 a.m. and continuing all day, kids and their families will experience a day of fun, games, drama and music suited just for them. The sponsors hope this will be a day of affirming Christian family values for all present." Kid's Day is being coordinated by the ABCS, North Arkansas Association and First Church in Eureka Springs. Goode urged church groups which have entertainment ministries such as clowns, puppets, mimes, vocal groups, face painters, balloon sculptors or musicians and are interested in providing entertainment at the event to contact him at ext. 5150.

VolleyFest '97 is the second annual "For the Kids" volleyball tournament to benefit the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home. The tournament, to be held July 19 at the Children's Home in Monticello, will be limited to 24 four-person teams and will be played on four courts. Tournament co-director Terry Hopper, a Monticello businessman, said he wants "to create an awareness" for the Home and for participants to "come together and show our support for these children who come from bad home situations. We need to do what we can to provide a better future for them." According to Mark Hailey, director of recreation and activities for the Home, last year's tournament "helped provide some much-needed recreation equipment as well as provide several recreational activities for our kids." The registration fee is \$60 per team prior to July 17. First place prize for the winning team is four pairs of Oakley sunglasses. For more information or to register, contact Mark Hailey at 870-367-5358.

Eight Area Pastor-Director Workshops will be held Aug. 2 from 9 a.m. until noon to introduce pastors, church staff and Discipleship Training directors to discipleship materials available for the 1997-98 year. According to Bob Holley, director of the ABCS discipleship and family ministry department, the area format in August marks the first time that the workshops have been held in all eight state districts "to put them as close as possible to churches and at a time to get them ready for the new year and for curriculum selection." Holley also noted that the program will include "basic and innovative approaches to discipleship ministry, strategies for discovering and meeting your church's discipleship needs and the latest and best discipleship resources available to your church." The workshops will be held in the following locations: The Washington-Madison Association office in Fayetteville; Eastside Church in Mountain Home; First Church in Walnut Ridge; the Clear Creek Association office in Ozark; Parkway Place Church in Little Rock; the Tri-County Association office in Wynne; First Church in Arkadelphia; and First Church in Monticello. There is no cost for the program. Each participant will receive a free copy of *Leading Discipleship in a Church*, Ext. 5160.

For more information about ABCS-related events, call 1-800-838-ABSC. In Little Rock, call 376-4791.

**TRAINING
UPDATE**

in J.B. Hunt, Sam's Club, banks, businesses and doctor's offices - any place where we can go to get the Word of God spread."

That long-term commitment to missions and evangelism has resulted in First Church leading the state in baptisms for years. In 1996 the congregation reported 565 baptisms, 400 more than the church with the second-highest number. More than one of every 25 people baptized in Arkansas Baptist churches last year were baptized at First, Springdale.

Words of encouragement

Salver encouraged other churches to perform multihousing ministries in their communities, offering some advice for those wanting to start a ministry.

"Applegate Apartments is managed by the City of Springdale Housing Authority and we are one of the program providers for the City of Springdale Housing Authority," he explained. "The first thing that means is, the idea that churches cannot get into a location because it is government-run is a farce. You can. It's equal access."

"We provide religious and social activities for them," he said. "We've been at this location for about four years and have BBCs, a senior adult craft/Bible study class, a women's ministry starting up and financial courses. We want to share the gospel in the cultural environment of the people we're trying to reach."

The festivals are staffed by volunteers assigned through Sunday School classes. "We link up adult Sunday School classes to

a particular BBC or festival," said Salver. "During the summer, our adult Bible study classes do not have weekly or bimonthly Sunday School socials, so we use a mission project for their social event. It is a strategy to take our adult Bible study division from an introverted idea to giving of ourselves."

"We can come together in a social event, but we can also do it in the power of the Holy Spirit while we're sharing the gospel," he said. "Every year we have people who are hooked and they lead their classes to do more."

Member participation during the summer BBCs and festivals will involve about 500 adults and youth from First Church, he noted. "My prayer is that we will reach 2,000 folks, see 100 saved and 25 baptized."

The Applegate Apartments supports the church's goals. About 200 attended the event. Following an afternoon of games, fellowship and door prizes, Salver preached a sermon on the activity area lawn and issued an invitation to accept Christ. Twenty-five came forward for counseling by members, with 10 accepting Christ and being baptized - in a stock tank set up at the festival.

Among those who came forward and were baptized were Tanya, her daughter, Amber, and son, Gregg.

"It makes me feel good to be baptized with my whole family because...we have Jesus in our hearts," Amber remarked.

Tanya said the experience "makes me proud of the kids. At their age, they understand what this means and...it makes me feel good that I could do it with them."

Workers hope that the conversions result not only in eternal life, but also in a lifetime of service.

"Over a period of time we've seen youngsters who've made a decision here that have continued on in their life," said member Bill Hamilton. "They've plugged into the church and caught the vision."

One youngster, Getty, may illustrate Hamilton's observation. During last year's BBC, at age eight, he accepted Christ then led three other children to Christ "because they weren't saved, they were my friends and I wanted them to go with me to heaven. So I helped them go to the Lord."

"The returns are greater than what we put into it," said Hamilton, "being able to share our love for them and, more importantly, how much Jesus loves these kids."

"That is why we're here," he said. "Look around. Look at these kids around here and see their eyes and see the love that they need and are seeking. We're just filling a void in their lives."

Because adults like Hamilton and other members of First Church participate in the missions ministries, children like Jerry, who attended the BBC "every day" and accepted Christ can say, "It made me feel happy. I am going to heaven."



A mix of evangelism, entertainment

A member of First Church in Springdale (above) witnesses to a girl following a sermon by minister of missions Doug Salver during a Community Evangelism Festival held June 29 at the Applegate Apartments in the complex's recreation area. A young festival-goer (left) has her face painted during the event which also featured pony rides (above left), a dunking booth, carnival-style games and door prizes. The event concluded with a message, baptisms and a picnic.

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CHURCH LIFE

Faith Southern Church of Huntsville dedicated a 5,000-square-foot building debt-free June 1. The facility, built through the volunteer efforts of church members, includes preschool classrooms and other educational space. Work is now under way to enlarge the sanctuary to a seating capacity of 130. Speakers for the dedication service were Jack Ramsey, church extension director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department; Harold Gateley, retired director of missions for Washington Madison Association; Parrell Ard, pastor of First Church of Goshen; and Gary Faulkner, a church member who presented a history of the church. Pastor Robert Grummer reported a record Sunday School attendance of 93 and a worship attendance of 163.

Pain Bayou Church of Wright dedicated a 2,880-square-foot fellowship building May 25. The \$60,000 building, which houses a fellowship hall, kitchen and three classrooms, was dedicated debt-free as the result of donated materials and the volunteer labor of members, according to pastor John Hagan.

Hatfield First Church dedicated a new worship center June 13 with a worship celebration led by pastor Brad Justice. Guest speakers included Rex Horne, president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and Dillard Miller, director of missions for Ouachita Association. The 6,000-square-foot facility is valued at \$350,000 and includes a worship center, classrooms and nursery. Jim Burnett served as building committee chairman.

Jessieville First Church has voted to build a 15,500-square-foot multi-purpose facility debt-free. Fund-raising efforts have included a record one-day offering of \$76,700. Pastor Gene Anderson recently celebrated 25 years of ministry there.

South Side Church of Pine Bluff celebrated its 80th anniversary June 19 by dedicating a remodeled sanctuary. J.R. DeBusk is pastor.

Bothwell Church of Chambersville will observe its 150th anniversary Aug. 10 with a program that will include a worship service, testimonies and a history of the church. An afternoon music program will follow a potluck noon meal. Larry McDaniel is pastor.

Immanuel Church of Fort Smith held its first Community Appreciation Day June 8. The special emphasis included providing area business owners a continental breakfast, recognition of their businesses

in the morning worship service and a momento of the occasion. Church members also made a commitment to pray for the businesses and the community. Special guests included state Sen. Peggy Jefferies, Fort Smith mayor Ray Baker and city director Rick Parrish. Denny Neff is pastor.

Beach Street First Church of Texarkana dedicated its remodeled fellowship hall as a senior adult center June 22. The center, which houses senior adult Sunday School classrooms, was dedicated in memory of Grace Gantt Schooley.

Arkana Church of Mountain Home recently held revival services that resulted in 24 professions of faith and one rededication. Tommy Stacy of North Main Church of Jonesboro was the evangelist. Tom Stover is pastor.

Bingham Road Church of Little Rock held revival services June 7-9 led by evangelist Frank Harber of Fort Worth, Texas, and minister of music Jamie Staley. Pastor Bill Hilburn reported the crusade resulted in 14 professions of faith.

Sloan Springs First Church is launching new mission outreach programs that include "First Tuesdays," a weekly outreach ministry to senior adults in the church and community. Brotherhood members recently returned from Cherokee City where they constructed a building for Cornerstone Mission. A mission team of 21 youth and five adult sponsors recently traveled to Gulf Shores, Ala., to teach at day camps, lead afternoon beach evangelism outreach and present evening music programs.

OBITUARIES

Gene Wagner of Mansfield died May 29 at age 69. He was a retired Southern Baptist pastor, having served Hawk Creek and James Fork churches, both in Buckner Association. He is survived by his wife, Ann Wagner; three daughters, Glenda Minnick of Springfield, Mo., Janis Holmes of Greenwood and Laura Gillis of Mansfield; one son, William Wagner of Shirley; and 10 grandchildren.

Robert J. Farris of Little Rock died June 4 at age 90. He was a member of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock where his son, Kent Farris, serves as business administrator. Farris was a retired Southern Baptist minister, having served churches in Illinois and Wisconsin. He also was a teacher and school administrator. Other survivors are a son, Don Farris of Maryville, Ill.; a daughter, Audrey Burrus of Louisville,

Ky.; eight grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Park Hill Church.

Robbie L. Hobbs died June 11 at age 65. His funeral service was held at First Church of Stephens where he retired as pastor in 1993, following 22 years of service. He also had served churches in Florida, Alabama and Texas. Survivors are his wife, Wanda Hobbs; four sons, Brent Hobbs of Virginia Beach, Va., Mark Hobbs of Memphis, Tenn., Keith Hobbs of Challis, Idaho, and Scott Hobbs, pastor of First Church of Lewisville; a brother; two sisters; and four grandchildren.

Ann P. Westfall, 68, of Fort Smith died June 14. Her funeral service was held at Grand Avenue Church of Fort Smith where she was a member and had retired as a secretary, following 15 years of service. Survivors are her husband, Earl Westfall; three sons, Ernie Westfall of Pine Bluff, Ethan A. Westfall of Lockney, Texas, and Earl J. Westfall Jr. of Brookhaven, Miss; one sister; two brothers; and six grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Grand Avenue Church or Fort Smith Community Hospice.

TRANSITIONS

Larry White began serving June 9 as director of missions for Trinity Association. He previously was pastor of three churches in the association: Neal's Chapel of Lepanto, Rivervale Church and Calvary Church of Harrisburg. White attended Bethany Bible College and Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, Angie Carol, have two children, Ashley and Wayne.

James Blackwood is pastor of Tulp Memorial Church near Carthage. He previously served Shady Grove Church near Arkadelphia as well as churches in Oklahoma. Blackwood and his wife, Judy, have six adult children and six grandchildren.

Toby Taley is pastor of Bradley Church. He and his wife, Rachel, moved from Hot Springs where he served on the staff of Second Church as interim minister of youth.

Denny Neff began serving May 18 as pastor of Immanuel Church in Fort Smith. He and his wife, Beverly, came there from Aurora, Colo., where they served as Mission Service Corps volunteers. They have two children, Trace, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Cory, a student at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.

Mike Fowler began serving May 25 as pastor of Lamar Church. He previously served Lakeview Church of Arkadelphia, Immanuel Church of Wabash, West Acres Church of West Helena and Dermott Church. He has been serving as a church

planter strategist for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Fowler is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, Kathy, have two children, Jennifer and David.

Michael S. Wakefield is pastor of First Church of DeWitt, going there from First Church of Stuttgart where he served for eight years as minister of youth. He previously served churches in Missouri and Tennessee. Wakefield is a graduate of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Tricia, have two children, Hannah Elizabeth and Joshua Brett.

Joel Faircloth has resigned as pastor of First Church of Mansfield to become pastor of First Church in Andalusia, Ala.

Mike Lindley has resigned as pastor of North Maple Church of Stuttgart, effective June 29. He will be available to assist churches as an interim or supply pastor. Lindley may be contacted at 734 Good Springs Road, Heber Springs, AR 72543; phone 501-362-6116.

Charles Ballentine has resigned as pastor of Little Hope Church in Caddo River Association. Ballentine, who is available to do supply preaching and lead revivals, may be contacted at HC 67, Box 41X, Pencil Bluff, AR 71965; phone 870-326-4661.

Don Blackmore is serving as minister of education at First Southern Church of Bryant. He previously served on the staff of First Church of Gentry. He also has been an admissions counselor for Ouachita Baptist University and minister of education for Second Church of Arkadelphia. Blackmore is a graduate of Williams Baptist College, Ouachita and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his

wife, Barbara, are the parents of four daughters, Allison, Meagan, Anna Marie and Katelyn.

Chris Wilkerson has joined the staff of Clear Lake Church as minister of music. He previously served at Shiloh Church in Harrisburg. Wilkerson and his wife, Jennifer, have a daughter, Anna Beth.

Dewey Burge has joined the staff of Calvary Church in Blytheville as minister of music and youth, coming there from a five-year ministry with Fellowship Church in Neosho, Mo. He and his wife, Rhonda, have three children, Tabitha, Richard and Nicholas.

Paul Weed has joined the staff of West Side Wood in Higden as minister of youth, coming there from First Church of Leavenworth, Kan. Weed is a graduate of Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Ariz., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Sheryl, have three children, Tesla, Almee and Trae.

Stephanie Staudridge is serving as minister of music for First Church in Mount Ida, the church in which she grew up. She has attended Arkansas Tech University and the University of Arkansas.

Ann Young is serving as youth minister for Elaine Church. A native of Jacksonville, she is attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary extension classes in Little Rock.

J.D. Woodard joined the staff of First Southern Church of Magnet Cove June 8 as youth director. He previously served as youth director of East End Church of Hensley. Woodard is a graduate assistant football coach at Ouachita Baptist University and served for five years as a football coach at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

James Thomsson has joined the staff of Second Church in Little Rock as minister to senior adults and Albert Pike chaplain. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has two sons, Ethan and Lane.

Jason Miller has joined the staff of First Church of Mount Ida as minister of youth. He is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University.

Scott Gumbly of Warren is serving as bivocational music director for Columbia Jarrett Church of Maynard. He is a music major at Williams Baptist College.

Bryan Campbell, who has been serving as part-time minister of youth and students at Bingham Road Church in Little Rock, is now serving full-time.

Jamie Staley has resigned as minister of music at Bingham Road Church in Little Rock to continue his studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Brian Craig of Gravel Ridge is part-time youth director of Owensville Church. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

Doug Hibbard is summer youth minister for First Church of Morrilton. A junior at Ouachita Baptist University, he previously served as youth minister for First Church of Dierks and as youth assistant at Central Church of North Little Rock.

Patrick Rider and **Laura Ross** are summer interns for the family life and youth ministry of First Church of Blytheville. Rider is a recent graduate of Union University in Jackson, Tenn. Ross will be a senior this fall at the University of the South in Seawane, Tenn.

Paul Lewis and **Rachel Rollins** are summer youth interns for First Church in Little Rock. Lewis, son of minister to youth families Dave Lewis and Carol Lewis, is a junior at Williams Baptist College. Rollins, daughter of associate pastor of education and administration Nolen Rollins and Clarice Rollins, is a junior at Shorter College in Rome, Ga.

MILESTONES

Jennifer Barry was recognized June 22 by First Church of Little Rock for five years of service as director of preschool ministries. She was presented with a monetary gift.

Stan Ballard observed 10 years of ministry June 1 as pastor of Nettleton Church in Jonesboro.

ORDINATIONS

Indianhead Lake Church of Sherwood ordained Ron Antonacci and Don Shelby as deacons May 25.

Watson Church ordained pastor Bob Black to the ministry June 29.



Beth'El Church of Green Forest dedicated a 7,280-square-foot worship center June 8. The two-story facility is located on seven acres of property that was purchased through a \$10,000 grant provided by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department. Beth'El Church, constituted in December 1992, was first launched as the Busy Bee Mission by First Church of Green Forest. Ray Edwards is pastor of the congregation that currently is averaging 80 in worship attendance. Participants in the dedication service included Edwards, Don Taylor and Jack Ramsey, ABSB church extension director.

A tradition of service...

The Sunday School Board



The Sunday School Board has a long tradition of providing high quality church literature and many other products and services that you need to minister to your community. We also have a long tradition of giving back to our Southern Baptist neighbors. Last year, Arkansas churches spent \$3,209,041 on Sunday School Board literature, and the Board returned \$118,562 for ministries of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. As always, our goal is to make a difference in the lives of Southern Baptists!



The Sunday School Board of
the Southern Baptist Convention
327 Ninth Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37234
James T. Draper, president

Chaplaincy study dominates CBF business

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has declared itself "a religious endorsing body," allowing the group to endorse chaplains without officially becoming a denomination.

The vote, recommended by the group's Coordinating Council after a two-year study, permits the CBF to resolve the question of chaplain endorsement without taking the step rejected a year ago of forming a denomination.

The action came during the CBF's annual general assembly June 26-28 in Louisville, Ky. In other business, the Fellowship elected Missouri layman John Tyler as moderator-elect, approved a \$14.3 million budget, and urged members to skip meals and send funds for famine victims in North Korea.

Registration for the seventh general assembly was 3,565. Participants gathered to worship, send out new CBF missionaries, hear reports of the CBF's work and conduct business. They dispersed to more than 50 breakout sessions, where they received training for a variety of ministries and interests.

In his first major address to a general assembly, Fellowship coordinator Daniel Vestal described the group as "a Fellowship of hope," outlining his vision of a future marked by spirituality, community and commitment to global missions.

He also said he has had to "repent" of his earlier opposition to the ordination of women as pastors and deacons, predicting

the Fellowship's openness to women "will attract an increasing number of Baptists because we believe in the wind of the Spirit of God."

In a commissioning service, global missions coordinator Keith Parks urged 11 new CBF missionaries to take up the "towel" of humble service, recalling Jesus' washing of His disciples' feet.

"You may preach powerful sermons and demonstrate amazing technology, but the people of the world will be impacted more when you pick up your towel and get down on your knees than at any other time," Parks told the new missionaries, who join about 150 CBF missionaries already at work around the world.

'Religious endorsing body'

The topic of chaplains dominated the business sessions, although there was little disagreement about how to handle the issue.

Generally, denominations or conventions endorse chaplains, who then are hired to work in hospitals, the military and other specialized settings. But the CBF, a loose-knit organization of individuals and churches, has resisted becoming a convention.

Chaplaincy has become an issue for some CBF supporters who prefer not to seek endorsement through Southern Baptists' North American Mission Board.

According to Ed Beddingfield of North Carolina, who led the chaplaincy study

group, "We would not have to declare ourselves a denomination in order to endorse chaplains."

By adopting the specific language of "religious endorsing body," the CBF meets criteria established by the Congress on Ministry in Specialized Settings and other chaplaincy groups, Beddingfield said. Whether or not the U.S. military will accept CBF endorsements remains to be seen, he added.

The Fellowship's \$14.3 million budget for next year includes \$9.7 million for the CBF's global missions program. It also includes \$20,000 for the Baptist World Alliance, partially restoring funds cut in an earlier draft of the budget. Although the Fellowship contributes to BWA, it is not a member of the worldwide Baptist group.

Fellowship participants unanimously approved a motion to urge individuals to skip one meal a week and send the equivalent cost for famine relief in North Korea.

In a closing sermon interpreting the 1997 general assembly theme, "Blessing the Future," Carolyn Knight, preaching professor at Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, said Christian hope is based on eternal promises of God.

Such a hope "makes us part of the struggle for a better humanity and a better world," she added, urging Christians to work to make a difference in problems such as economic disparity and violence among young people.

"We can bless the future because God is for us and is with us," she said. "We are in God's hands."

Martha Teague Smith of Gastonia, N.C., will lead the Fellowship in 1997-98, succeeding Oklahoma pastor Lavonn Brown as the group's moderator. John Tyler, a Bell Telephone executive from St. Louis, was chosen as moderator-elect to serve in 1998-99. LOUISVILLE, KY (ABP)

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Emeritus missionaries: God's work is never finished

What do Guatemala, Panama, Hong Kong and Russia have in common? The diverse settings are linked as fields of service for retiring missionaries with Arkansas ties.

A group of 65 emeritus missionaries were honored recently for ministry through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board). The retiring missionaries served a combined total of 1,897 years in 41 nations. Two couples with Arkansas connections — Ted and Sue Lindwall and Kenneth and Lou Ann Locke — were among those honored as they retired.

The Lindwalls served in both Guatemala and Panama during their years as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, which started in 1960. Lindwall is a graduate of California State University and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. Mrs. Lindwall, born in Morrilton, also attended college and seminary in California.

The couple first served in Guatemala, where Lindwall held several positions. He worked as a general evangelist in western Guatemala, a church planter in Alta Verapaz and as director of the Paul Bell Baptist Theological Institute. In 1975, he became director of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Panama. Returning to Guatemala, he served as director of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Guatemala, and spent several years as an urban church planter in Guatemala City. He also served as director of a national lay training program and wrote lay training, evangelism and discipleship materials.

Assigned as a church and home worker, Mrs. Lindwall also served as church programs promoter from 1990-96. She was the first missionary woman to be elected national Woman's Missionary Union president in Guatemala's 50-year WMU history, serving from 1984-96.

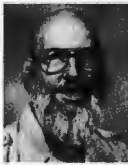
The couple always felt that the primary hope for impacting Guatemala with the gospel involved the multiplication of laborers. "We are surrounded by



Ted Lindwall



Sue Lindwall



Kenneth Locke



Lou Ann Locke

Guatemalan heroes raised by God in each village and community to bring about the greatest revolution that man has ever been privileged to observe," they recounted.

The Lockes, former professors at Ouachita Baptist University, served in a completely different part of the globe. Locke is a graduate of Texas A & M University, the University of Hong Kong and North Texas State University. Mrs. Locke is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, Texas Christian University and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

The Lockes were Southern Baptist missionary associates in Hong Kong for six years before resigning in 1976 to serve several years at OBU. From 1987 to 1993, they served as Cooperative Services International representatives in Asia. They transferred to career missionary service in 1993 where they both served as teachers at Moscow Baptist Seminary in Russia before retiring earlier this year.

The Lockes affirmed that "being on the field was an opportunity and a pleasure." "God's work is never finished," they pointed out. "There are still classrooms calling for Christian teachers, churches needing encouragement, the unsaved waiting to be touched by a believer. We would admonish everyone to be involved."

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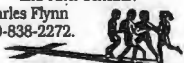
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Sunday School training scheduled

Arkansas Baptists' 1997 State Sunday School Convention will focus on the theme, "Carry the Light...Follow Christ's Example." The convention, set for Sept. 19-20 at Central Church in Jonesboro, will feature small-group conferences, worship and music.

Mike Martin, minister of education and senior adults at Central Church, said that he and other local arrangements planners "are excited to host the Sunday School Convention in northeast Arkansas."

Martin said the event will feature 24 conference personnel who will lead sessions for general officers and age-group leaders and teachers. "This year the conference program not only has leaders from Nashville," he noted, "but leaders

from states and local folks too."

The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. Friday with music and worship and a general session featuring keynote speaker Bobby Boyles, pastor of Eagle Heights Church in Oklahoma City. Following the general session, participants will have the opportunity to attend a small-group conference.

On Saturday, participants may attend their choice of any three conferences, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at noon.

There is no cost for the program and no pre-registration. For more information, contact Mike Martin at Central Church at 501-935-1950 or the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department at 800-838-ABSC, ext. 5129.

Missionary Parents' Fellowship planned

Plans to organize an Arkansas Missionary Parents' Fellowship will be presented during a Sept. 13 meeting at South Highland Church in Little Rock, according to Pat and Lee Roy Walker.

The Walkers, whose son, Lee, has served 15 years as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary to Chile, are leading in organizing the fellowship which will be for Arkansas Baptists whose children serve on foreign mission fields.

The couple said the support group will be a place where parents of missionaries can share the joys and challenges of having their children and grandchildren serving

overseas. It also will include a prayer chain in which parents will be informed of prayer needs of families serving on mission fields throughout the world. When fully organized, the state will be divided into three or four areas with a leader in each area to keep others informed of mission needs.

The Sept. 13 meeting, which will feature a foreign mission speaker, will include a luncheon prepared by the host church.

Missionary parents are encouraged to send their names and addresses to Pat and Lee Roy Walker at 6808 Sandpiper, Little Rock, AR 72205; phone 501-666-3843.

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WORLD

Netanyahu opposes proposal to curb evangelism efforts

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has assured evangelical Christians that his government will defeat a proposed bill to outlaw certain methods of evangelism.

Dubbed the "anti-missionary law," it has triggered an outpouring of opposition from inside and outside of Israel. It was introduced as a private members' bill after the government committee that represents Netanyahu's ruling coalition refused to support it. It passed in its first of four readings with scarcely a fourth of the legislature, the Knesset, voting.

"The government strenuously objects to this bill and will act to ensure that it does not pass," Netanyahu said in a letter to Elwood McQuaid, executive director of the U.S.-based Friends of Israel.

"Israel deeply values your support and that of Christians throughout the United States," Netanyahu added.

Netanyahu's resolve pits him against radical Jewish parties he needs in his government coalition to maintain a ruling majority. That still leaves open the possibility that, even without his support, proponents of the restrictions could garner enough votes to push the bill through.

The proposed law would alter Israel's penal code to prohibit "inducement for religious conversion" and set a one-year jail term for "whoever possesses contrary to the law or prints or imports tracts or publishes things in which there is an inducement for religious conversion."

RICHMOND, VA (BP)



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Russian proposal restricts religious freedom

Marty Croll

SCB International Mission Board

A Russian Orthodox-backed law to restrict the free practice of faith and limit missionary work sailed through two final votes in Russia's legislature in late June. It soon will face action by President Boris Yeltsin.

Orthodox leaders and nationalists proposed the bill as a surprise to evangelicals in Russia and then quickly pushed it through. The latest vote was 330-8.

Evangelicals had been working with a legislative committee to help frame a law that would appease Russians protesting cult activity but not violate human rights under international agreements.

But they were shut out of the process as extremists revised the proposed law, stripping religious groups of legal rights if they were not registered with the communist government 15 years ago. The revision affords special rights to groups with a 50-year history and a presence in half of Russia's regions and territories.

Depending on how officials interpret the law, it could affect the witness of every faith except Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam, human rights advocates say. It surely would impede much of the evangelical activity that has developed since the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism. It also

Reader response

To protest legislation restricting religious freedom in Russia, contact:

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c/o Presidential Administration
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would regulate any church that refused to register during the time of Soviet rule and operated underground.

The bill would eliminate missionary activity except as approved by religious groups with legal rights. It also would curtail the activities of many groups without legal rights, unless they get permission from local government overseers. Evangelicals fear their overseers could be hostile Orthodox leaders, non-Christian religious leaders or even atheists.

In principle, the bill reverses the religious freedom won in Soviet Russia just before the country embraced democracy in 1991.

Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, has urged Yeltsin to veto the law, which Lotz describes as

"an intrusion into soul liberty and freedom of conscience" that violates guarantees in Russia's new constitution.

It's unclear whether Yeltsin will veto the law, and if he does, whether the legislature will override his veto. Some analysts say Yeltsin is less likely to stand against this law than he was a similar one passed in 1993, which died later that year when he dismissed parliament.

"This is not the first time the Orthodox Church has postured itself to move in an effective way against (other) religions," said Danny Panter, who leads Southern Baptist International Mission Board work in Russia and other former Soviet republics.

The organization of IMB missionaries in Russia, which owns property there, has enjoyed status as a legal entity since 1993. But its work could be affected under a combination of the 50-year and 15-year clauses in the bill. Exactly how those rules could — or would — be applied is anyone's guess, human rights analysts say.

Southern Baptist missionaries remain positive, however, Panter said. "We do not feel threatened in any way. We know our God is more powerful than any law any legislature could pass. The game isn't over yet, that's for sure."

Missionaries consider Russia still a largely untapped harvest field, where scores are responding to the gospel daily. "We're on Satan's territory, and we're giving him such a hard struggle that he wants us out of there," Panter said. "But we're depending on the Lord."

MOSCOW (BP)

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Reccord urges NAMB staff to 'stand firm...move forward'

North American Mission Board president Bob Reccord encouraged the new Southern Baptist agency's staff to "stand firm and urgently move forward" during NAMB's first chapel service June 25.

"We will stand firm on our convictions, but we will not stand still," Reccord declared. "We must move forward in reaching this continent for Christ."

Announcing new requirements for every NAMB employee to "get in the game," Reccord said, "Everybody at NAMB will be trained to give away their faith—everybody. If we can't effectively share our faith, we have no business being at the North American Mission Board. That is a requirement."

Every employee also will be required to give one week a year to a mission project, Reccord said. "It is ludicrous for us to say we're a mission board if every one of us is not on mission....It is critical that we walk the walk and not just talk the talk."

Acknowledging that some employees may resist the two requirements, Reccord added, "That's fine. That means God has another place of service for them. We must get in the battle of reaching our world for Christ."

"No one is here by accident," he emphasized. "God called you here by name before the foundation of the world."

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"Nobody here is more important than anyone else. Everybody plays in the game."

Noting that "my greatest call is to make you successful," he added, "Our greatest call as the North American Mission Board is to make the local churches successful. "Our calling is not to produce great

materials or programs. Our calling is to help churches, associations and state conventions fulfill the dream and vision God has given them."

Reccord announced that all employees will participate in three days of prayer and renewal Sept. 9-11. Noting that all normal business of the agency will be suspended during that time, he added, "I think our convention will understand if we're not available for a few days because we've set aside time for prayer and fasting and worship together." ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)

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Arkansans among 175 volunteers to France

More than 100 people claimed Jesus Christ as Savior during an 11-day partnership evangelism campaign conducted across France by approximately 175 Southern Baptist volunteers from 18 states, including two Arkansas Baptists.

French Baptist leaders praised the revival efforts, increased missions awareness and renewed enthusiasm for the Christian faith that the volunteers brought to more than 30 French churches.

The volunteers distributed tracts, publicity leaflets and Bibles, and presented concerts of Christian music, puppet shows and skits in churches and on the streets.

Jim Pate of Russellville led services and seminar-discussion groups with a 33-member Baptist church in the Bordeaux area.

Pate said his work with Evangelical Baptist Church in Latrance raised his appreciation for Southern Baptist mission efforts. "I was raised in a home where my mother was active in WMU, but I came back even more committed to the Lottie Moon Offering than I've ever been."

He explained that "most French churches rent, but this church owns its building and land because of Lottie Moon money."

Pate preached through an interpreter for the international congregation, which he said "looked like the United Nations." In addition to preaching each Sunday, "I also had home visits and fellowships and evening services featuring discussion."

Citing Psalm 126:5-6, Pate credited prayer for the success of the trip. "I wish

that our people in America would make the earnest commitment to sacrificial prayer," he said. Pate, a Sunday School teacher at First Church in Russellville, has made similar trips to Denmark and Sweden.

"It was a type of feeling when you knew God was in control," he said of the recent mission effort. "We never went to bed before midnight. It was a humbling feeling that doesn't puff you up."

It was the seventh campaign in France led by W.H. "Dub" and Doris Jackson, crusade coordinators in Western Europe for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. About three dozen Southern Baptist missionaries are assigned to France, a nation of approximately 58 million people with only about 6,000 Baptists.

Randi Lea Wormington, a senior French major at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, described her 10 days with a Baptist church in Brignoles, France, as "the most incredible week I have ever spent."

Wormington, who attends Markham Street Church in Little Rock, added, "Spending time with Christians from another part of the world was really wonderful. It has opened me up to how much they love the Lord here and how we should all be as excited as they are to praise our Lord Jesus Christ."

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Family Bible

Our perfect High Priest

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

Basic passage:

Hebrews 4:14-5:10; 7

Focal passage:

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Central truth:

Jesus is the perfect High Priest because He sympathizes with our weakness.

Every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God. Jesus is the perfect High Priest because He sympathizes with our weakness. Because Jesus was subject to weakness in that He was in all ways tempted, He can best serve as our High Priest. He sympathizes not in our failure but in our struggle.

The purpose of the high priest was to be a go-between for man to God. The high priest offered gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the people. The high priest also was an intercessor for the people. He offered up prayers and supplications on behalf of others.

Since Jesus lived as a human, He is able to plead our case before the Father in heaven. Because He Himself became the atonement for our sin, He is both the one who pleads for our justification and provides for our justification. As an intercessor, Jesus stands before the Father and begs for God to have mercy on us. He can present our case as one who has been where we are. As our propitiation,

Jesus not only presents the case for mercy, but provides for the payment to satisfy our sin debt.

Picture for a moment a lawyer standing before a judge in defense of an already convicted thief. The lawyer begs for mercy. He explains to the judge that he himself knew what it was like to be in need and tempted to steal. Then the lawyer offers to make restitution for the thief. He offers to pay back everything taken by the thief. Now we should understand that this was not petty theft. For this lawyer to make restitution would take every resource available to him.

In the case of Jesus, it took more than money to pay for our sin. It took Jesus' death on a cross to pay for our sin because the wages of sin is death. Not only does He plead our case, but He paid our debt. Because of Jesus, we have the opportunity for our case to be heard. Moreover, because of Jesus, we have God's grace available to us. We can boldly approach the eternal judge in the confidence that we are justified by Christ Jesus.

Life and Work

As white as snow

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

Basic passage:

Psalm 51

Focal passage:

Psalm 51:1-4, 7

Central truth:

Open confession of our sins to God will reap His forgiveness and cleansing.

The Bible tells us we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23); for there is none righteous (Rom. 3:10; Psa. 14:1-3, 53:1-3). The grim position we find ourselves in as descendants of Adam is bleak, evil and full of the blackness which accompanies sin. Believers in Jesus, however, praise God that we can lay aside our sinful garments and rejoice in the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb. We reap the benefits of His cleansing and experience forgiveness when we openly confess our sins to God (I John 1:9). Confession to God is to agree with Him that we have sinned against Him and need to be pardoned.

David penned this penitential psalm after Nathan informed him of God's judgment against him because of his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband, Uriah. David was acutely aware that although he had done a great injustice to Bathsheba, Uriah, his family, his kingdom and himself, all of this paled in comparison to the evil he had committed in the sight of God. He plainly communicated this to God in verse 4.

David, a man after God's own heart, humbled himself before his Maker and on his knees begged for mercy. He could have, in a very haughty spirit, reminded God of all the glorious things he had accomplished for His Kingdom and His people. Fortunately, David knew these acts were but filthy rags in the sight of God. He knew to receive mercy, God required a broken and contrite heart.

God used David in mighty ways beyond these days of turmoil. We, too, can enjoy restoration of our broken relationship with the Lord. God has promised our sins can be removed from us as far as the east is from the west (Psa. 103:12). This is when the joy of our salvation is rediscovered and the Lord can "then" (vv. 12-13; II Chron. 7:14) use us to win others to salvation through Jesus Christ.

Apply the praying and singing of this psalm over and over again as you seek to maintain a close relationship with the Lord. It is a blessing to know we can find mercy and pardon through Jesus. It is by His red blood that our black sins are washed as white as snow.

Explore the Bible

Essentials for a healthy church

By James Swendenburg, member,
Trinity Church, Benton

Basic passage:

I Corinthians 12:12-31

Focal passage:

I Corinthians 12:1-18

Central truth:

Christ gives gifts to his church as he desires.

Joel prophesied that the coming of Christ would be attended by the coming of the Holy Spirit. "It shall come to pass in those days that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2:17-21). Before His crucifixion Jesus said that the Spirit would come to instruct and guide the church (John 4).

In chapter 12 of I Corinthians, Paul seeks to assist the church to cease the misuse of the gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit did come on the day of Pentecost. Paul explains the kinds of ministries possible for the church. He told them that every believer possessed a gift that God gave to be expressed in the church ministry (vv. 11, 18).

Paul also encouraged the church not to abuse their grace gift as they had abused the Lord's Supper. All the gifts are important in the church and all are needed for the whole body to be strong (vv. 21-23).

The analogy between the human body and the church is a clear statement that Christ is the head of the church. He put it together and continues to

do so (vv. 11, 18). The health of the church is then dependent upon all members discovering their grace gift. The need of the church is for each to dedicate themselves to the degree that their gifts will be developed to their maximum usefulness. Renewals and revivals are greatly needed in the church.

However, a real renewal will be experienced both corporately and individually when all the grace gifts God has given are employed for renewal and church growth. In this context, Paul expects the use of the gifts to produce unity in the church (vv. 25-26).

Paul mentions gifts of the Spirit in two other places in the New Testament. In Ephesians 4:11-15 Christ gave leadership gifts to be exercised in the church for the purpose of attaining unity and Christ-likeness. In Romans 12:6-8 Paul stresses the importance of using gifts given to us so that the body of Christ may be strong and effective in ministry.

In this passage, the author of Hebrews discusses the sacrifice of Christ which satisfied our sin debt once and for all time. The sacrifices of animals in the Old Testament had to be celebrated repeatedly because animal sacrifices were never sufficient to put the issue of remission of sin to rest. When Jesus went to the cross and died, the debt of sin against us was settled. It was paid in full.

In verse 9:15, the illustration of a testament is used to explain the necessity of the death of Christ in the remission of our sin. This analogy has multiple applications regarding our eternal inheritance.

It is as if we are in a probate court and the last will and testament of Christ is being read. Verses 16-17 describe how the testament would have no power if the person were not deceased. Verse 15 indicates that the issue is our eternal inheritance. Our eternal inheritance is that estate which Christ has paid for by His death on the cross.

The will of God has always been for our sin debt to be satisfied. Verses 18-20 speak of the first

covenant with Moses in which the blood of the covenant was commanded by God. Verse 22 explains why blood was required.

Even so, the blood atonement of bulls and goats and the ashes of heifers which cleansed the flesh pale against the atonement of Christ. Christ was pure and, even though tempted, had never sinned. When Christ died on the cross, it was far more powerful than the death of an animal, which provided only temporary purification. The high priest of the old covenant went into the holy of holies to sacrifice to God. Verse 24 tells us that the holy of holies was only a copy of heavenly things. Because Jesus died Himself, He now enters into heaven itself and stands before God for us.

Unless Jesus paid the debt He did not owe and the sin debt against our eternal inheritance was now forever satisfied. Because of this, we can know that when we do stand before God in the probate court of eternity, we will find our estate with no debt against it and our inheritance intact.

There has been much ado these days regarding angels: from movies, television series, general conversation and a plethora of bookstore paraphernalia. Although the concept of having a "guardian angel" and the very existence of angels is enjoying widespread popularity, it is a reality in people's lives which has spanned the centuries. (Gen. 18:2-19:22; Matt. 1:19-25; Luke 1:5-38, 2:8-15; John 20:11-13.)

We hear of moving stories all the time where people tell how their lives were spared because of a guardian angel's watchful care. I have personally experienced angelic encounters during episodes of near tragic auto accidents and even in the midst of a traumatic refinery explosion. You and I both know that although it may be the hand of an angel in circumstances such as these, it is ultimately the compassionate, protective intervention of the heavenly host's Commander-in-Chief, The Lord God Almighty. It is He, Jehovah El Roi, The LORD God who sees, whose watchful eye and hand of protection is upon those whom He loves.

The absence of love - Each grace gift named in chapter 12 is good and profitable for the church. They are good because God gave them to members individually (v. 12:11) and to the church corporately (v. 12:18). The gifts are profitable so that every believer may participate in the life of the church (vv. 12:12, 25, 27). Paul ends the chapter with a conviction that the ability of the church to be a loving people is the greatest gift (v. 12:31).

The church will survive if the gifts in chapter 12 are lacking. The church will lose its power to affect the community in any way if love is absent.

Love is necessary to speak effectively in the church. The power behind one's speech is not so much in vocabulary or in delivery, but in love. Eloquence without love is just noise (v. 1:2).

Love is necessary to lead successfully in the church. Spiritual maturity, the gift of prophecy, knowledge of God's mystery, the full extent of the power of faith is valueless without love (v. 2).

Love is necessary to experience growth in the church. Philanthropy and sacrifice profit

My wife, children and I have been admiring a nest of baby birds and their parents we recently found in a Boston fern on our back porch. It has been a blessing to watch God's creation unfold as the mother cared for the eggs and now nurtures her young. Just like the mother bird, our Lord cares for us as He watches over His children and keeps us in the shadow of His wings (v. 4).

The presupposition of Yahweh's protection is grounded in the knowledge that His care is reserved for those who trust Him, love Him and have made God their Refuge. Psalm 91 represents an affirmation of faith used in worship, first by a leader who states the theme (vv. 1-2) which is then expounded upon and confirmed by the congregation (vv. 3-13). The last three verses, delivered by a priest in the Temple, are precious promises from God of His deliverance, protection, presence, honor, long life and salvation to one who loves Him. Salvation provides not only the opportunity for life eternal, but also life abundant as we can now be free from fear with the Lord.

nothing. Any motive other than love will bring no gain or Christian good (1 John 3:17-18).

The character of love - Love does not boast of its virtues, freedoms or achievements. Love does not find strength in the inflation of a puffed-up spirit. There is a gentleness that does not want to hurt others. Love is not rude. Paul speaks of the kind of love that does not insist on its own way. It cares about the well-being of others. It is not resentful or mean, but forgiving and forgetful. It finds joy in doing right. Love is loyal to truth.

The power of love - Love bears all things against all odds. Its attitude is one of trust toward others. It never waivers nor ceases to love and it never gives up. Love believes in others against all disappointments. It does not lose faith. Love is eager to believe the best in others. Love endures all things. Love is a winner. There is no limit to its strength and its patience. It is grounded in the character of God and learned from the compassion of Jesus. The ability to love is truly the supreme gift - the gift to which we should all aspire.

Family Bible

Jesus Christ is our Estate

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

Basic passage:

Hebrews 9:11-10:18

Focal passage:

Hebrews 9:15-10:18

Central truth:

Because of Jesus, our heavenly estate is bought and paid for.

Life and Work

The promise of protection

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

Basic passage:

Psalm 91

Focal passage:

Psalm 91:1-4, 11-12

Central truth:

The protective hand of God is upon those who love and trust Him as their Refuge.

Explore the Bible

Love is the supreme gift

By James Swedenburg, member, Trinity Church, Benton

Basic passage:

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Focal passage:

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Central truth:

The ability to be truly loving Christians is the greatest gift of all.

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Anonymous donor pledges \$1 million to conference centers

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—An anonymous gift of \$1 million has been given as the first pledge to Southern Baptists' national conference center capital campaign. The "Renewing the Place of Renewal" campaign will fund improvements at Gloriaeta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Centers.

"We have known all along that for this campaign to succeed, the Lord would have to get into the hearts of Southern Baptists to see what a valuable asset we have in our conference centers at Gloriaeta and Ridgecrest," said campaign cabinet chairman Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla. "The anonymous gift of \$1 million gives us a tremendous lift, at this stage of our efforts."

Official campaign solicitation is slated to begin at the end of June, according to campaign coordinator Mike Arrington, executive director for corporate affairs at the Baptist Sunday School Board. The campaign, targeted to about 1,500 donors, will seek to raise as much as \$67 million to improve facilities and programming and provide conference scholarships.

Book Stores launch Minister's Discount Plan

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—A new discount plan for paid ministerial staff who are customers of Baptist Book Stores and Lifeway Christian Stores becomes effective Aug. 1. The plan was announced by Baptist Sunday School Board officials during last month's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

"We want to show our appreciation for our customers who are pastors and ministers who are committed to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ in our local communities," explained Mark Scott, vice president of the BSSB's retail group.

All paid ministerial staff members are eligible to join the Minister's Discount Plan, which offers 20 percent off single copies of a select group of products, such as regularly priced books, Bibles and printed music for personal use.

Qualified individuals may visit their local store any time beginning Aug. 1 and request an application for the discount plan. Each member will receive a membership card to present with each purchase.

ATS officials remove 'notation' from Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE, KY (BP)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's primary accrediting agency has notified seminary officials that a "notation" on its accreditation has been removed following the recommendation of a committee of the agency.

Seminary president Al Mohler affirmed the decision as a "significant achievement for Southern Seminary."

In a June 19 letter to Mohler, an official with the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada reported that the agency's Commission on Accrediting has voted to remove the notation imposed in January 1996. The notation had specified that the "general tone of the school impairs the capacity to provide significant theological education and ministerial training."

According to its report, the ATS committee found that the seminary has made progress in "addressing the concerns regarding academic freedom, status of contract and tenure-track faculty, the faculty's role in shared governance and communications among the board, administration and faculty."

HMB approves formal ties with Virginia conservatives

RICHMOND VA (ABP)—In one of its final acts before being merged into the North American Mission Board, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's executive committee voted to establish a formal relationship with the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV).

Recognition by the national agency adds legitimacy to the SBCV, a conservative Baptist state convention in Virginia which splintered last year from the long-established Baptist General Association of Virginia. It also allows NAMB—which succeeds the work of the HMB and two other SBC agencies—to begin providing joint funds for missionaries and ministries with the SBCV.

The action marks the first time for the SBC to recognize two conventions in the same state. Urging NAMB officials to treat both bodies in a "fair and equitable" manner, BGAV executive director Reginald McDonough noted, "I'm committed to working through these issues. I never want politics to quench the advancement of the kingdom. However, fairness and equity are two very important principles in order to make relations between various Baptist bodies work."

