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### February 11, 1993

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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#### Recommended Citation

Arkansas Baptist State Convention, "February 11, 1993" (1993). *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1990-1994*. 43.

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# ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 92, Number 3

February 11, 1993



*"Be Shall  
Be My  
Witnesses"*

**1993  
Arkansas Baptist  
Evangelism Conference**



# Super Bowl Sunday provides super outreach opportunity

Super Bowl Sunday was not only super for the victorious Dallas Cowboys. It also provided a super outreach opportunity for at least three Arkansas Baptist congregations.

Rather than quietly anticipating a smaller-than-usual Sunday night crowd, churches in Bryant, Little Rock and Rector invited members and prospects to watch Super Bowl XXVII, fellowship together and hear Christian testimonies and messages at halftime.

At West Rock Church in Little Rock, the church's fellowship hall was transformed into a "stadium area" with three television sets and decorations featuring team colors and posters. Pastor Frank Gantz shared a "mini-sermon" based on 1 Corinthians 9 concerning "running the race to win the prize." Halftime also featured an informal testimony time in which members shared what Jesus and the church mean in their lives.

## Simultaneous services

First Southern Church in Bryant held two evening services on Super Bowl Sunday. Their traditional service was held at church while the Super Bowl service was held at the community center. The game-related service, coordinated by minister of youth and education Bill Guillotte, featured a testimony by Arkansas Razorbacks football coach Joe Kines, a member of University Church in Fayetteville.

"Our motive was to try to expose people to the gospel who might not normally come," explained Bryant pastor Jim Lagrone. He said commitment cards were distributed to those in attendance and two

people indicated they prayed to receive Christ as Savior during the service.

Halftime activities at First Church, Rector, included a video featuring Christian testimonies by former Cowboys coach Tom Landry and several football players. Pastor Ardell Polk said he asked the crowd if they had ever had an experience like the one Landry described and nine young people indicated an interest in receiving additional information.

Although some people may view such activities as "giving in to what the world's doing," Polk said approximately 25 percent of those attending the special event were guests or prospects. "I see it as an avenue of ministry to get people involved who would not normally attend a church service," he explained. "It's very low-key but it gets the message across where they can respond."

Gantz said the Super Bowl services are designed "to try to build some relationships around a common theme with people who are unchurched. It allows them to see us as real people as we develop some relationships and present the gospel in the context of victory."

According to Lagrone, the fellowship, refreshments, big-screen TV and other aspects of the event helped the church "use a contemporary event that attracts a lot of interest and tie in a message of hope." He affirmed the ongoing importance of churches taking the time and effort to discover "creative ways to make an impact and spread the gospel."

Based on these three churches' Super Bowl statistics, the Dallas Cowboys weren't the only big winners in Super Bowl XXVII.

## Cover Story



## 'Be My Witnesses' 8-13

Don Wilton (above) and the Alan Celoria Family (cover photo) were among the program participants during the 1993 Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference. The two-day conference focused on the theme, "Ye Shall Be My Witnesses."

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Next issue: Feb. 25

# Arkansas Baptist

(USPS 008021)

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The Arkansas Baptist (ISSN 1040-6056) is published bi-weekly by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc., 601-A W. Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201. Subscription rates are \$8.85 per year (individual) \$6.36 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$7.00 per year (Group Plan), Second Class Postage Paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Arkansas Baptist, P.O. 952, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 501-576-4791.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association Volume 92 • Number 3

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Greg Kirksey, Benton, president; Nelson Wilhelm, Fort Smith; Lane Strother, Mountain Home; Bert Thomas, Searcy; Rick Hyde, Murfreesboro; Curt Hodges, Jonesboro; Lucie C. Hagins, Podyce; Cliff Palmer, Rogers; and Brenda Bruce, Newark.

# Arkansas missionary meets Arab challenge

By Stan Guthrie

Baptist Press

LARNACA, CYPRUS (BP)—Arkansas native Frances Fuller has rarely ducked a challenge.

After a suicide truck bomb killed 241 Marines at the U.S. Embassy in 1983, the Southern Baptist worker and her husband, Wayne, were determined to stay in Beirut with the people they had grown to love. But they finally had to evacuate when the embassy sent a driver and vehicle and ordered them out.

"I feel perfectly comfortable in Lebanon," said Fuller, a fluent speaker of Arabic who for the last three decades has worked in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

"We didn't leave because we wanted to leave. There have been plenty of times when nobody was safe in Lebanon, but we were there, nonetheless. We were just simply enduring the same thing our neighbors were enduring."

The latest challenge for Fuller, who now must work out of the agency's international office in Cyprus while the staff of about a dozen Lebanese workers remain in Beirut, shows the same commitment to people in the Arabic-speaking world. She is overseeing the publication of the world's only indigenous Arabic Sunday School curriculum. Arab Baptist Publications, with about 130 current book titles, serves the Arab world from Morocco to Iraq.

The project had an unlikely beginning a decade ago when Baptist leaders in the Middle East requested that the red-haired mother of five produce a Sunday School curriculum. This jolted Fuller, who knew her five or six workers could not compare



FMS photo

*Frances Fuller, a native of Wynne, has ministered in the Middle East for three decades. She currently is producing Sunday School curriculum designed for the Arab world.*

with the 1,400 employees at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"I can't talk with you about how Baptist Publications and Frances Fuller will produce a curriculum and give it to you," Fuller said she told them at the special meeting. "The only thing I can talk about is how we together might become a community of people who could produce its own curriculum."

"So with fear and trembling," the Wynne, Ark., native said, "we all made the decision to try."

In 1991, the first year of the Faith and Life Curriculum was marketed for ages 5-6, 7-9 and 10-11. It included teachers' manuals, student activity leaflets, teaching pictures, flannelgraph figures, a song book and cassette as well as a self-instruction manual on how to use the material and a teacher-training video.

Last summer the second-year lessons

were introduced, along with the first years for ages 12-13 and 14-16. Fuller expects the entire project to be largely completed this year.

Robert Reekie, a longtime friend and advisor who is the head of Media Associates International, an international print consulting agency, calls the curriculum "totally unique."

"It is the only truly indigenous curriculum anywhere in the Middle East today. It was a risky thing for Mrs. Fuller to do since the usual practice would be to simply adapt and translate the existing Southern Baptist curriculum," Reekie said. "She avoided that by really starting from scratch and developing a curriculum that is truly right out of the heart and soul of the people there."

Fuller said the interdenominational curriculum team "realized that the resource materials in America aren't the same as what we have (in the Middle East). Every time they said, 'Use a glue stick, ...we'd know it's not ours, and in a few years we'd want to throw it out and do our own.'"

So far, according to Fuller, the curriculum—called "House of the Source of Life"—has been received warmly not only by Baptists, but also by Nazarene, Brethren and Coptic churches, as well as a group of Chaldean churches in Iraq.

"I really see that churches are going to be lifted up and much better grounded in the Scripture from the beginning," Fuller said. "Children are going to have solid education in the Scripture, and they're enjoying Sunday School. They are excited about it."

## Baptist missionaries evacuate capital of Togo

By Donald D. Martin

SBFC Foreign Mission Board

LOME, TOGO (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries planned to evacuate Lome, the capital city of Togo, last week as a deepening political crisis fuels the spread of violence and civil unrest in the city.

Most of the 14 career missionaries, their children and three International Service Corps workers planned to drive to Cotonou in the neighboring nation of Benin, reported mission chairman Ann White.

Two missionary couples, including White and her husband, Mark, a music evangelist, decided to drive to northern Togo, an area free of the unrest. They will

stay with Southern Baptist missionaries there.

The latest wave of violence erupted Jan. 30 in Lome when government troops looted and burned the home of an opposition leader, according to press reports. That same day Togolese security forces reportedly killed at least six people, including two foreigners, when troops loyal to President Gnassingbe Eyadema rampaged through the city looting homes and businesses.

"The weekend of violence shocked us, but things have been tense for awhile," White said. "After meeting together we decided the wisest thing to do was leave (Lome) for a short time."

The missionaries could return fairly soon if there are no additional flare-ups of violence and looting, she said.

Lome's weekend unrest follows an incident Jan. 25 when government security forces fired into a crowd of 10,000 pro-opposition demonstrators and killed at least 20 people and wounded 25 to 35 others, according to reports.

Tension was already high in Togo because of the success of a three-month-old general strike. In mid-November a union of opposition parties campaigning to end Eyadema's 26-year rule shut down schools, shops, banks and government ministries. Most press reports say the strike shows no signs of weakening.

## YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE  
ABS-C Executive Director

The memory verses for the last session of "Experiencing God" are Hebrews 10:24-25. Verse 25 is very familiar. Verse 24 is not so familiar but it is filled with unbelievable potential for changing our lives and the life of our families, churches and convention. It says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."

The first challenge of the verse is to "consider one another." The Amplified has it, "Give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another." How like the Good Shepherd we would be if we really cared enough to continuously seek the welfare of each other. The early churches modeled this. We should not give up our efforts to do the same thing today. We all are so needy. God pity the Christians who do not have a number of people who watch over them through prayer and encouragement.

"To provoke" is translated variously as "to incite, spur, stimulate, or to inspire." We can easily incite negativism, criticism, judgmentalism, anger, suspicion, doubt, fear and rebellion. That all fits the natural man. But to stir up people to love and good works we must be deeply spiritual. How often our claim to spirituality is contradicted by what we "provoke" in others.

What a marked contrast between the devil and the Spirit-directed Christian. The devil is identified as "an accuser of the brethren." The spiritual person is an affirmer and encourager of the brethren. We can quickly judge whether we are walking in the Spirit by how we act toward the brethren and the kind of effect we have on them.

I was "provoked unto love and good works" by our BSU directors who on Jan. 28 committed the month of February as a month of special prayer for me. What encouragement and confidence come to those who have others practicing this scripture! When God's people follow God's instructions we will have a harvest of good results that will honor God and bless others.

WANDA ROCKETT

## Woman's Viewpoint

### Single Adults: Wholeness in Christ?



As single adult Christians, we're constantly challenged to develop a wholeness in Christ, thus achieving our full potential. Wholeness in Christ may mean different things to different people, therefore, I'll share my perspective.

Wholeness can be defined as complete, not divided up or altogether. In the Christian life, wholeness manifests itself both inwardly and outwardly, in all aspects of our lives, such as physically, intellectually and emotionally.

Inwardly, Paul assures us in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." We, as Christians, have the peace of knowing that our faith in God will make us whole.

Outwardly, we need a reason for existence as noted in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." It is my goal to fill my life with

a rich, deep, meaningful purpose as I serve our Lord.

God desires wholeness in our lives. We are to strive to bring the different aspects toward harmony within our own lives to achieve a wholeness, or balanced lifestyle. If any aspect becomes too dominant, our character may reflect an imbalance. It's evident that as we work toward wholeness, it will take a lifelong commitment as we're bombarded with the pressures, anxiety and uncertainty of our world. Our daily lives should reflect a wholeness in Christ, no matter what level of "completeness" we have achieved, knowing that one day, another wholeness - a final, ultimate wholeness will be achieved through eternal life with our Father in Heaven.

Wanda Rockett, who is single, is a fire claim superintendent with State Farm Insurance in Little Rock. She is a member of Immanuel Church where she is active in the single adult ministry, sanctuary choir and teaches Acteens.

## Personal Perspectives

"The most important thing to do is determine the will of God for your life and then do it."

—Don Wilton, professor of preaching, New Orleans Seminary

"Soul-winning takes our attention off things that don't matter as we begin to focus on eternal things."

—Neal Prock, pastor, Haven Heights Church, Fort Smith

"When prejudice precedes the gospel, the gospel is always hindered."

—Eddie Harrison, pastor, Dollarway Church, Pine Bluff

"God is in the business of making divine appointments.... We have to be a willing witness."

—Howard Ramsey, evangelism consultant, Home Mission Board

"Jesus didn't compromise the message. He made the gospel available, not acceptable."

—James Merritt, pastor, First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga.

# A vital partnership

The *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* has the privilege of welcoming a significant new group of readers from across the state. Thanks to the vision and leadership of state convention executive director Don Moore, Executive Board funds have been provided to purchase one-year subscriptions for all Arkansas Baptist pastors who were not previously receiving the *Newsmagazine*.

The cooperative effort between the Executive Board staff and the *Newsmagazine* is a vivid reminder of the vital partnership between the two. The convention's stated purpose is to "assist the churches of the convention in fulfilling their mission, and to encourage cooperative support of and involvement in our worldwide mission enterprise." The *Newsmagazine's* purpose is to "aid and support the Arkansas Baptist State Convention to report and to interpret events and movements that affect the welfare" of Arkansas Baptists. The more Arkansas Baptists who become regular readers of the *Newsmagazine*, the more effectively both purpose statements can be fulfilled.

On a practical level, I have told many groups that the ongoing goals of the *Newsmagazine* are to provide Arkansas Baptists with needed information, inspiration and interpretation. Hopefully our new readers will recognize and appreciate these goals and become enthusiastic supporters of the *Newsmagazine's* ministry efforts.

Using this issue of the *Newsmagazine* as an example, items of information range from the foreign missions update on page 7 to the "Arkansas All Over" local church news on pages 14-15. Other articles on page 15 tell how to become involved in a national secretaries conference or in the SBC's "Crossover Houston" witnessing effort. Readers also can find responses to President Clinton's policies on abortion



## STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON

and homosexual rights on pages 16-17, the number of new church starts in the Southern Baptist Convention on page 18 and details of the Annuity Board's effort to combat the sale of pornographic material at Waldenbooks on page 22. The point is the *Newsmagazine* regularly offers Arkansas Baptists needed information in an easily accessible form.

The area of interpretation includes the editor's personal perspective as well as a regular column from executive director Moore and letters from our readers. Interpretation also includes interviews with Arkansas Baptist leaders and others on key issues facing Southern Baptists.

A significant series of interpretive articles scheduled to begin next month are being written for the *Newsmagazine* by Baptist statesman Herschel Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City. Dr. Hobbs, who was chairman of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement committee, has agreed to write a 10-part series on "The Baptist Faith and Message Revisited," examining the historical significance of the document as well as current application for Southern Baptists in the 1990s. It promises to be "must reading" for Arkansas Baptists.

In addition to information and interpre-

tion, my favorite part of Christian journalism is providing articles of inspiration. Examples this week include our page 2 feature about three Arkansas Baptist churches that turned Super Bowl XXVII into an outreach opportunity. Such articles may challenge your congregation to explore other creative methods to communicate the timeless message of the gospel. The missionary work of Arkansas native Frances Fuller highlighted on page 3 offers both inspiration and a timely reminder to pray for her and our other missionaries serving throughout the world.

The *Newsmagazine's* primary inspirational focus this week is a six-page report on the 1993 Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference. In addition to the 1,100 Arkansas Baptists who took the opportunity to experience the conference firsthand, this week's coverage allows our 40,000-plus subscribers to experience the inspiration as well.

I could go on and on about the significance of the *Newsmagazine* to our readers, but I think you get the idea. The examples noted above are representative of the information, interpretation and inspiration that is available in each issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

During my first editorial last October, I emphasized the following philosophy: "For the *Newsmagazine* to effectively serve *any* Arkansas Baptists, it must fairly serve *all* Arkansas Baptists." That remains the commitment of the *Newsmagazine* staff to Arkansas Baptists.

To our new readers, we welcome you and hope that the *Newsmagazine* meets specific needs in your life and ministry. To all our readers, we thank you for your support and request your continued prayers and suggestions as we work to make the *Newsmagazine* all it needs to be for the benefit of Arkansas Baptists.

## Faith fosters growth

By Arthur L. Walker

Southern Baptist Education Commission

As Southern Baptists observe Baptist Seminary, College and School Day on Feb. 21, the theme "Faith Fosters Growth" emphasizes that the Christian believer seeks true maturity. This means that the believer must grow both intellectually and spiritually. It is the way to "love God with one's mind."

Southern Baptist educational institutions are committed to this dual growth.

As the professors and staff members in these schools encourage intellectual growth, they also encourage the students to become believers and to develop spiritually.

Spiritual development results as both faculty and students integrate their personal faith with their professional and intellectual development. Concern for spiritual development is the value-added element in church-related education.

The close tie between faith and learning has long been evident in Christian

experience. Throughout the history of Christianity, a major force has been the development of schools which emphasized both intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

Southern Baptist higher education has stressed that the dual emphasis on intellectual and spiritual growth is a significant way to fulfill God's calling in one's life. Many see higher education as a way to heed the admonition of Peter to "grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

## Loyalty to God's Word

I am deeply disturbed by the attitude of some in our convention regarding the controversy. I hear loyalty being expressed to our denomination, to the Cooperative Program and to missions but rarely, if ever, do I hear anyone express loyalty to the Word of God.

It is not our commitment to missions that unites us as Southern Baptists, it is not our belief in the Cooperative Program, nor our autonomy; it is our commitment to the Word of God. If we forsake the Word of God, what message will we proclaim to lost people when we do go and do mission?

We have become so "autonomous" that theology is unimportant. I am all for diversity but I cannot and will not accept actions such as the resolution by the Baptist General Association of Virginia regarding homosexuality. The controversy is unpleasant but it is necessary. If you are not willing to stand and fight for the truth of God's Word, what will you stand and fight for?

**Tim Hobbs**  
Branch, AR

*Editor's Note:* As background information for our readers, the Virginia resolution, according to the *Virginia Religious Herald*, "encourages Baptists to minister redemptively to all persons, including homosexuals" (but) does not condemn homosexual behavior. It describes homosexuality as a 'difficult issue... which must be faced by our churches' and calls upon Virginia Baptists "to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Bible in dealing with this issue."

## Victims of abortion

As a registered nurse involved with pro-life and abstinence education, I heartily agree with most aspects of your recent editorial in the Jan. 14 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. When nurses or doctors in our organization address students in schools or in churches, we constantly remind ourselves to deliver the truth in love. We recognize that some individuals in our audiences may have been touched by the pain of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, abortion or sexually transmitted diseases.

All pro-life Christians who participate in picketing, sidewalk counseling or rescue must remember to carry out these activities within the law and with compassion. The media often portray them as mean or radical. Many of these courageous Christians have made a difference in preventing abortions and victimization of the women about to go through the proce-



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

dure. Women who have changed their minds and carried their babies to term have thanked the rescue participants for their intervention.

In this battle there is a place for Christians to work compassionately in education, legislation, crisis pregnancy centers, homes for unwed mothers and sidewalk counseling. Those with the courage to work on the sidewalk have kept this tragedy visible, awakened some of us from apathy, and above all have saved some lives of babies and spared some women grief these past 20 years. There are at least two victims in every abortion. We must strengthen our resolve to save the lives of babies and to protect women from damage to their reproductive and emotional health.

Yes, there are many victims in every abortion. Compassion, perseverance and the direction of the Holy Spirit must permeate the lives of every Christian as we purpose to end our tolerance of this destructive act.

**Carolyn Green**  
Jonesboro, AR

## Avoid silent consent

In an article published in 1986, I blamed Christians for the "Great American Holocaust." My views haven't changed.

If we Christians are too lazy to stand for moral values, who will, the heathen? What do they know about morality? Abstinence is not on their agenda.

With the exploitation of our kids and Roe's contribution of unlimited abortion, we've witnessed a holocaust of some 30 to 40 million unborn infants, the homosexual revolution and the AIDS death trip with 1.5 million infected and multiplying, while God's children remain silent, trusting all will be solved by prayer alone. That didn't come from God!

Did God leave the children of Israel safely in their tents, praying while He took to the battlefields to zap the enemy, then call them in to occupy the land? If we see a child being beaten to death, shall we stand by praying and watch him perish or make an effort to save his life?

If a loved one was in a burning building, would we not, with a prayer on our lips, rush to his rescue? Or consider why we routinely go to the polls to exercise our patriotic duty, when we could remain

home praying that God would fix it for us.

If all this sounds ridiculous, then I've made my point. As a great grandmother, I could rock myself into a state of oblivion, praying for the soon return of our Lord, but Jesus instructed us to occupy until His return. He wants our kids! So, with a little unfolding of the hands, we could get involved in an effort to rescue them from the clutches of the deceiver.

I'm not talking about demonstrations and sign-bearing. Dozens of Christian organizations are working for peaceful solutions to prevent abuse of the laws God set forth for us to live by. They are answerable only to God and concerned citizens whose prayers and funding they depend upon.

**Laura Puryear**  
Bryant, AR

## Identify Bible versions

It seems to me that it is a courteous gesture to identify the version of the Bible used when reading the Scripture in public. If it is not the King James Version, the translation may not be readily recognized by the audience.

Listeners may have more than one versions of the Bible at home and may be able to refer to the passage later, if they do not have the same version the reader uses in a given service. If the version used in public reading is identified, the listener can at least have some explanation as to why his version does not read the same.

**Harrison Johns**  
Stuttgart, AR

## Lottie Moon support

I simply want to express my appreciation for your support for foreign missions, especially in regard to your paper's recent emphases for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. I have been heartened by the many positive messages of foreign missions coming from our state papers.

Because of your willingness to run numerous foreign missions articles, and due to the supportive words of your editorials, we look confidently for a strong ingathering of this offering. Of course it will take some time before we know the full outcome of the offering, but you deserve an immediate expression of gratitude for your efforts which promote the offering.

Once again, thanks for your vision of taking the gospel message to the uttermost parts of the earth. May God continually bless you in your worthy ministry.

**Don Kammerdiener**  
Foreign Mission Board  
Interim President

## British Baptist leaders affirm Parks' decision

RICHMOND, VA (ABF) — British Baptist leaders have affirmed Keith Parks' decision to direct the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's missions program as being "in the best interests of the work of Southern Baptist world mission."

The leaders acknowledged "the visionary leadership" given by Parks, who resigned as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board at the end of October. In November, he accepted the Fellowship's offer to become its missions coordinator, a post he assumed Feb. 1.

In a statement faxed to the Fellowship's Atlanta headquarters, the British leaders also expressed their intent to work with both the Fellowship and the Foreign Mission Board and their hope that the mission agencies "will cooperate with each other."

Signing the statement were David Coffey, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, most of whose churches are in England; Peter Barber, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland; Peter Dewi Richards, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Wales; and Reg Harvey, general secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, Britain's 200-year-old mission-sending agency.

"We recognize that with his gifts and experience he (Parks) still has an ongoing contribution to make to the cause of world mission and regret that he did not feel able to continue doing so with the Foreign Mission Board," the statement says.

"Knowing him to be a man of prudence, wisdom and integrity we cannot but believe that he has accepted his new position with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship because he genuinely believes this to be the will of God for himself and in the best interests of the work of Southern Baptist world mission."

The statement concludes with a pledge to work with both the Fellowship and the FMB and "our hope that during Dr. Parks' term of office in the coming years both of these bodies will cooperate with each other, as with us, and in a spirit of gospel reconciliation."

## Elliff declines FMB president nomination; search continues

DALLAS (BP/ABF)—The trustee committee searching for a president for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board said Jan. 29 it had "narrowed its interest to a single candidate" but that the candidate had not accepted the nomination.

Committee chairman Joel Gregory declined comment on whether that candidate was Oklahoma pastor Tom Elliff, a name widely reported in news media after FMB trustee chairman announced Jan. 11 that the committee chosen a nominee.

But Elliff confirmed Jan. 29 that he talked to the committee Jan. 27 and gave them his decision not to accept the position.

He said he prayed diligently about the position, including at least one prolonged prayer session "from nine in the evening to noon next day." But he said he never was convinced that "God was initiating" the move.

"When 15 people call and say, 'We have reached a unanimous conclusion,' it looks like God's leadership," Elliff said.

"At one time I got about 20 seconds away from calling and accepting," he recalled. "I figured I would accept and get peace about it later on. Of course, I would not be accepting the position, just accepting the search committee's invitation to proceed further. But that would not have been honest."

Gregory said he was bound by a covenant between committee members to go no further than to say the committee had narrowed the list to one man in its nine-month search and he had decided not to accept.

A search committee statement, released Jan. 29, said: "The committee recently narrowed its interest to a single candidate, only to find with prayer an apparent mutual and bilateral determination by the

candidate and the committee that the will and timing of God rested in another direction."

Gregory said the 15-member committee, which has met 13 times and held five teleconferences since April 8, has invested a lot of effort in the search and will continue to seek a candidate.

The search committee statement said: "We intend to follow the prayerful and deliberate process already under way to find God's person for leadership. We covet the prayers of Southern Baptists everywhere in the continuation of this process."

The statement said the committee expected to make no recommendation on a candidate at this week's meeting of Foreign Mission Board trustees in Richmond. Gregory declined to speculate on when a candidate will be presented to the trustees. The board's next meeting is scheduled for April 19-21 in Columbus, Ohio.

By trustee action any candidate elected to succeed R. Keith Parks as Foreign Mission Board president must receive a 75 percent vote of the trustees.

### Bledsoe affirms process

Arkansas trustee Jack Bledsoe, director of missions for Carey Association, encouraged Arkansas Baptists "to place their trust, faith and confidence in the process that the search committee is undertaking."

Emphasizing the committee's need for confidentiality, he said he is confident the group "will come up with the man who God wants for us — and that's what we all want."

The search committee statement said the committee interviewed four nominees "on two occasions each." It said 74 nominees were ranked into four tiers, with 16 nominees in the top two tiers.

## Physicians needed to work in Yemen

JIBLA, YEMEN (BP)—Southern Baptists need permanent and short-term physicians to reinforce their medical staff at Jibla Baptist Hospital.

Two Southern Baptist physicians have just left Yemen permanently to come back to the United States and marry, said Gerry Volkart, the Foreign Mission Board's associate area director for the Middle East.

With others on furlough, that leaves only one Southern Baptist physician working there. Southern Baptists try to keep at least three to four physicians under ap-

pointment to work at the Yemen hospital, with short-termers available as needed, Volkart said.

The most immediate need is for short-termers until new career missionaries respond to this need and are appointed, she added.

The 77-bed hospital, opened by Southern Baptists in 1967, treats up to 40,000 people a year and performs an average of 400 surgeries monthly. It offers Yemenis one of their few opportunities to have contact with Christian people.



# 'Ye shall be my witnesses'

*Conference speakers emphasize the importance of personal witnessing*

By **Trennis Henderson**

Editor, *Arkansas Baptist*

A series of 20 messages and testimonies by 14 speakers highlighted the 1993 Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference held Jan. 25-26 at First Church, Little Rock. Focusing on the theme, "Ye Shall Be My Witnesses," speakers and musicians emphasized how to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ through personal witnessing.

Conference coordinator Clarence Shell, director of evangelism for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said the theme offered "a very personal word from our Lord. I hope God will grip our hearts and make it very personal to us," he added.

Following the conference, Shell told the *Arkansas Baptist News-magazine* that the conference "may have been one of the most complete presentations of personal evangelism of any program we've ever had."

Bill Elliff, pastor of the host congregation, told conference participants during the meeting's opening session, "I'm thrilled to be a part of anything to stir our hearts up to lead people to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm anxious to hear from the Lord."

Speakers during the two-day conference included a layman, four pastors and nine denominational workers. Arkansas Baptist pastors on the program included Neal Prock and Eddie Harrison.

Prock, pastor of Haven Heights Church, Fort Smith, addressed the topic, "Christians Who Are Wise Will Evangelize." Preaching from Proverbs 11:30, he emphasized that Solomon "was the world's wisest man and he tells us who is wise. He said: 'He that winneth souls is wise.'"

Pointing out that Solomon's statement suggests that "he who does not win souls is not wise," Prock added, "God said souls are the most precious treasure in all the world and that the winning of those souls is the most important task in all the world."

Although "the world won't call you wise for winning souls," Prock insisted, "If a person is saved, he ought to be concerned and have a desire to be involved in some kind of soul-winning."

The Fort Smith pastor said six reasons why soul-winning is wise are that it gains lost souls, grows the saint, glorifies the Savior, gears a church to accomplish its



*Dozens of people knelt in prayer at the conclusion of the recent Evangelism Conference.*

task, generates joy in one's heart and gives soul-winners an eternal reward.

"Soul-winning takes our attention off things that don't matter as we begin to focus on eternal things," Prock pointed out. "Nothing will glorify Jesus more in the church than for people to win souls."

"Where will you be 50 years from today?" Prock asked. "More than 50 percent of us will be in eternity. Some will be in eternity in five years and some will be in eternity this year. What are you going to take into eternity with you?...People are lost, they must be saved and we must win them."

## 'No respecter of persons'

Harrison, pastor of Dollarway Church in Pine Bluff, shared his personal testimony in a message which emphasized that "God is no respecter of persons."

Harrison, who served last year as second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, is a fourth-generation American-born Gypsy who dropped out of school in the seventh grade.

"When I started to school, I found the cruelest people in all the world were the kids I went to school with," Harrison recalled. "They began to say, 'There are the Gypsy kids. Stay away from them.'"

Harrison said he still carries pain and hurt from those childhood encounters, including his second grade Valentine's Day party when the only Valentine card he received was from his teacher. "I cried all the way home," he noted.

"Life was hard for us," Harrison ac-

knowledged, sharing that his father was an alcoholic. At age 18, Harrison got married but by that time he also had become addicted to gambling. "I became as much a gambler as my daddy was an alcoholic," he said. "After I got married, I loved gambling more than I loved my wife."

Contemplating suicide, Harrison's life was turned around in 1972 after he followed his wife to a worship service at Dollarway Church where he now serves as pastor. "I wouldn't have been welcome in most churches. I was a stinky, smelly mess," he noted, but the pastor "preached the Word of God...and Jesus came into my heart. I cannot begin to tell you the changes God has made in my life."

Affirming that Jesus Christ will save Jews and Gentiles, women and children, "religious folks" and even "half-breeds," Harrison emphasized, "When prejudice precedes the gospel, the gospel is always hindered....My joy is to know that God is no respecter of persons."

Among other Arkansas Baptists who preached during the Evangelism Conference were Jimmy Millikin, president of Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, and Jack Ramsey, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department.

Preaching from Romans 1:13-18 on the topic, "Unashamed of the Gospel," Millikin declared, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. That should be the testimony of every Christian."

Millikin said the text offers an implied accusation, an explicit assertion, an inher-

ent truth and an encouraging explanation. He said the implied accusation is that Paul was hesitant to proclaim the gospel in Rome but that he assured his readers he was ready and willing to preach there when God allowed him to do so.

Millikin said Paul's assertion is that "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Pointing out that "we need to be reminded regularly of what the gospel is," Millikin added, "The gospel has a definite and specific content about it—the good news of Jesus Christ....It's through the gospel that people are saved."

Millikin said the inherent truth in Paul's assertion is that "there is an offense in the gospel." He said the gospel is offensive to people socially, religiously, intellectually and philosophically.

Warning against trying to make the gospel "palatable to an unregenerate world," Millikin declared, "The gospel is the same for every person....There is only one gospel."

The encouraging explanation about the gospel is that it "is the power of God unto salvation," Millikin remarked. "The gospel is not simply a psychological pill that cures all our emotional problems....The fact that the gospel saved you ought to put some boldness and courage and, in the right sense, pride in your heart over the gospel."

### 'Evangelize, congregationalize'

During the conference's closing session, Jack Ramsey detailed the importance of "evangelizing through new missions." Preaching from Acts 5, he emphasized that "it is impossible to evangelize without doing missions and it is impossible to do missions without evangelizing."

Describing the church-planting efforts of the apostles, Ramsey added that a speech by Gamaliel "may have helped break down three common barriers to planting churches that the apostles faced." Affirming that Arkansas Baptists have begun to destroy similar barriers in recent years, he said those barriers include being overly cautious, making outlandish comparisons and using outdated criteria.

Christians have a mission, a mandate and a message from God "to evangelize and congregationalize those people God sends to us," Ramsey declared. "The best way to reach people is through new churches."

As barriers are broken down, Christians are faced with an overwhelming conclusion, Ramsey noted. "When you're filled with the Holy Spirit and you see the need, you've got to go out and fill that need," he said. "The Great Commission is not to just do missions in Arkansas. The Great Commission is worldwide."

## Wilton urges Arkansas Baptists to 'tell about the Lord Jesus'

"There is no greater privilege than to tell about the Lord Jesus Christ," declared Don Wilton, professor of preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Wilton had the opportunity to do just that—preaching three times during the recent Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Speaking in what he described as his South African-Scottish-Australian-New Orleans-Cajun accent, Wilton joyfully shared his energetic, enthusiastic preaching style as he emphasized the importance of personal witnessing.

In his opening message about "Missionary Witnessing," Wilton affirmed that "it's a wonderful thing to contemplate all Jesus Christ has done for us."

Preaching from Acts 16, he said the first key to missionary witnessing is understanding the dynamic of the call of God upon a person's life. "The most important thing to do is determine the will of God for your life and then do it," he advised. "The greatest call God can give anybody is to tell people about the Lord."

He said Christians also must understand the dynamic of the activity of the Holy Spirit in missionary witnessing. Warning that many Baptists "have got such a weak theology of the power of the Holy Spirit," he said many Christians act as if their only two options are to "either belong to the happy clappers or the frozen chosen."

Wilton urged Arkansas Baptists to remember that "the Spirit of the living God precedes me as I go to tell people about the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Wilton said a third key to missionary witnessing is understanding the dynamic of the resulting power of God. "If we're going to experience missionary witnessing, we've got to understand God is still on His throne, God is still in control," he declared, adding that God is still the God of covenant, creation, commandment and commission.

Wilton's second message addressed the importance of evangelistic preaching. "I cannot think of anything the Lord gives me greater joy in than evangelistic preaching," he noted. "One of the greatest challenges we have as preachers is to be biblical preachers."

"We cannot and we must not im-

pose our basic presuppositions on the Word of God," the seminary professor cautioned. "All preaching ought to be expository preaching. All preaching ought to be evangelistic preaching."

Warning against attaching "unbiblical standards" to evangelistic preaching, Wilton said, "The number of people who walk down the aisle is not an indicator of my faithfulness in preaching the Word of God."

He said biblical standards include one's own personal conversion, convictions about God, strong biblical content, preaching Christ crucified and leading a consistent lifestyle.

"If we're going to be involved in evangelistic preaching, we must be sure about our own personal conversion experience," he emphasized. "You cannot separate the evangelist from the preaching dynamic."

Effective ministers also "must focus everything we say on the crucified Christ," Wilton remarked, adding that "many a sermon could be delivered in a Jewish synagogue and not offend the rabbi because it doesn't preach Christ and Him crucified."

The final key, Wilton added, is for ministers of the gospel to lead consistent lifestyles. "I must practice what I preach," he reminded his listeners.

### 'When God acts...'

During the closing message of the two-day conference, Wilton asked the crowd, "When God acts, how do you react?"

"The question is not if God acts, but when God acts, how do I react to the actions of God?" he pointed out. "One of the greatest tragedies of this conference is some people will hear what God has called them to do but will not respond."

When God acts, some people will resort to silence and some will become angry, but "some people are always going to get saved," Wilton noted.

"There are always the bystanders who say that is wonderful but it's not for me," he acknowledged. "But there is no such thing as a fence-sitter in the kingdom of God. The Bible says, 'Choose you this day whom you will serve.'"

"The real issue," Wilton concluded, "is are we ready to act on what God has told us to do?"

# Zacchaeus, transient inspire vital lessons

Recounting the story of Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus, Dennis Swanburg reminded Arkansas Baptists that "as we share the gospel, wherever we go, there is going to be somebody who is watching."

Swanburg, former pastor of Second Church, Hot Springs, currently is pastor of First Baptist Church, West Monroe, La. He spoke twice during the recent Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Addressing the importance of "Witnessing by the Wayside," Swanburg pointed out that Zacchaeus "was caught up and captivated by Jesus and he wanted to see Him."

"I believe he was up a tree and he was out on a limb because he wanted to hide but somehow he wanted to be able to see," Swanburg continued. Noting that Zacchaeus "had built some walls around his own life," he added that the tax collector's life "was one of alienation and estrangement. He was so alone."

"How many people do you know like that?" Swanburg asked the crowd. "God says to you and He says to me, 'As you pass by, I have an agenda for you to be on the lookout for people who are lonely and hurting.'"

Suggesting that Zacchaeus may have heard that Jesus was "the kind of man who would sit down with sinners and publicans, that He would eat with them and fellowship with them," Swanburg added, "I be-



Dennis Swanburg

lieve that said to him, 'Here's a man who will accept me before I have to be repentant.'"

Swanburg emphasized that Zacchaeus was able to repent "all because of a personal touch from the Savior."

Challenging Arkansas Baptists to personally reach out to people in need of the gospel, Swanburg declared, "That's what people need. How many lost people do you eat with during a week? How many

lost people do you have in your home?"

"Opportunities can pass you by," he cautioned. "People want to love and people want to be loved. We need to be that servant as we go along the pathways of life...and get personally involved with them so that they can receive the good news."

During his second message, Swanburg detailed an encounter with a transient while he was still pastor of Second Church, Hot Springs. Explaining that he discovered the transient outside the church one Saturday morning, Swanburg said he began visiting with the man and invited him to ride along as Swanburg ran some errands.

When he offered to buy the stranger some lunch, the man replied, "I have meat to eat that you know not of."

"You've had these transients before," Swanburg interjected. "This guy was trying to be a little spiritual with me. It made me a little nervous."

As they continued driving around Hot Springs, the transient continued to recite Scriptures. As Swanburg showed him the church's Christian school, the man noted, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Passing a funeral home, he remarked, "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted."

After pausing to visit with some "rough, shady characters," the man told Swanburg, "They that are whole do not need a physi-

## Home Mission Board speakers emphasize

The man standing before the crowd told them he really believes Christians can win this nation to the Lord. Not unusual really, for an evangelism conference. What was unusual was that the man's father and grandfather were Native American medicine men, and that the man himself is a full-blood Navajo.

Russell Begaye was one of three Home Mission Board personnel who delivered messages dealing with lifestyle evangelism, each from his own unique perspective, during the conference.

Begaye was raised in a traditional Indian home — his father a powerful medicine man, like his father before him. He was not above visiting dark spirits on his children so that he could draw on their power, Begaye said. There was, however, a Southern Baptist missionary who came Sunday after Sunday to hold worship services nearby, despite all his father's attempts to drive him off. "Thank God for stubborn missionaries," Begaye said.

His father fell ill, and when all the prayers and chants of the medicine men did not work, Begaye, his mother and sister, walked eight miles to "pray at the white man's church." There, he heard "Just as I am" in Navajo, and watched as his mother walked the aisle. Within the month, his father could walk and communicate again. He began to attend the mission church with Begaye's mother, and was won to the Lord. A month later, Begaye also became a Christian and began a life of witnessing, no matter what the odds.

He began witnessing to families living in remote hogans, who also were "medicine men people." Even though warned not to return, Begaye went back with the simple message, "Jesus is the only way." From the desert carpet and open skies of New Mexico, from UCLA to Chicago, to the guerilla-controlled areas of Honduras, Begaye has taken his message to everyone who would listen, especially those Native Americans he connects with best.

A similar message was echoed by Maurice Smith, from the HMB's interfaith witnessing department. Witnessing to people of other religion calls for Christians to learn and listen and to ask appropriate questions, Smith said.

Problems often arise, Smith said, because "we have a lot of Baptists who think they know about their faith, but can't explain it." It is important, he continued, for Baptists to understand their own faith as well as the beliefs of other religions to be equipped to witness.

"To the Hindu the basic problem is the cycle of birth and rebirth, and its answer is release, or absorption into the whole.... Christ's reply is, 'Come ye that labor and are heavy laden and ye shall find rest.'"

"To the Buddhist, the basic problem is karma and the search to rid oneself of ego's desire. To the Buddhist, Jesus says, 'In this world you shall have tribulation, but I will overcome the world.'"

"Learn to ask the right questions, to

## Sutton, Williams, Jordan affirm witnessing and church growth

By Colleen Backus

Arkansas Baptist

Attorney Buddy Sutton, president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, explored three witnessing myths during the recent state Evangelism Conference. Speaking in quiet, even tones, Sutton brought a different perspective to the conference as the only lay speaker on the program.

The first myth used by Satan is that it is very hard to get the unsaved to a church service where the gospel is being preached. "It may be true that we're not doing it, but that it can't be done is the devil's lie," Sutton emphasized. In addition to asking those acquaintances who are not saved to services, he urged participants not to overlook one primary "unsaved" audience — the children.

"Don't forget the fundamentals," Sutton warned. "If I asked you how you were saved, for a lot of you it would be by the witness of your mother." Children have been prepared by the best lay witnesses there are, he said, because the person most concerned for a child's soul is his or her mother. "Don't you forget it, and don't you let her down," he cautioned pastors.

Often, he said, in reporting revivals results, someone will say, "Nobody came forward but a few kids." He reminded the crowd that Jesus said we must all become as little children to receive the gospel. "Don't make it less of a miracle than it is," Sutton emphasized. "Don't overlook the precious children."

The second myth is that laymen will not get out and witness to the unsaved. "They're not, but they will." He said many laymen are not witnessing "because they are not being challenged."

The third myth — it is very hard to broach a person's lost condition with him — also is easy to dispel, Sutton said. Just like Ananias, who was very reluctant to witness to Saul, God will tell Christians what they need to say.

"What the Lord Jesus wants is for us to love His children," Sutton told the hushed crowd.

Another testimony that held the audience was Dawson Williams' search for "where it's at." Williams currently is Baptist Student Union director at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

Williams started life on what he calls a "21-year wild goose chase." As an elementary school student, Williams and his peers were pursuing "where it's at," presumably to be found in junior high or high school. By the time he made it to high school, Williams and his friends found that, as residents of Sparkman, "it" was not available. When he eventually traveled to the "big cities" of Arkadelphia and Little Rock, Williams found that "where it's at" was not to be had in Arkansas, either.

While his peers were trying to figure out what to do next, Williams joined the Navy. He was sure that "it" could be found on one of the coasts. His fellow sailors had alarming news — "it" was overseas. After being stationed in Spain, Italy and other foreign ports of call, one Sunday morning a fellow sailor came to share a word of scripture, John 10:10. The sailor then invited him to a Bible study aboard ship, where on a Tuesday night in the corner of a room, Williams found Jesus to be "where it's at."

Now, Williams said, "We're trying to head off a campus full of young people trying to find where it's at."

### Church growth

In a testimony about the Southern Baptist Church Growth Plan, L.B. Jordan emphasized that creating anticipation about the worship service is an important tool. Jordan is director of Church Leadership Support for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

"Anticipation can be created in three distinct ways, Jordan explained — knowing that God will be there, that the Bible will be open, and that there will be powerful soul-searching.

Jordan has observed something of a pattern — that dread can be created by the same behavior. He challenged participants to renew their commitments and have fresh hope for church growth.

But, he emphasized, preachers are not to do the work of the church, they are to equip the church, just as Jesus quipped His 12 disciples. Toward that end, he presented the Southern Baptist Church Growth Plan.

"A pastor must be an example," Jordan emphasized. "But a witnessing church on mission for God is an immense improvement on what one pastor can do."

clan, rather they that are sick." Passing the bank, he counseled, "Store not for yourselves treasures on earth."

Before returning to the church, the two men paused alongside a road overlooking the city. "Hot Springs, Hot Springs, how often I would gather you unto myself even as a mother hen gathers her chickens, but ye would not," the transient commented.

Back at the church, the man asked Swanburg three times, "Do you love me?" When Swanburg assured him that he did, the man replied, "Feed my sheep."

"As He walked out the back door, He lifted up His hand. It looked as though there was a nail scar in it," Swanburg said. "And He said, 'Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.'"

"No, I didn't have that encounter with someone in the flesh," Swanburg acknowledged. "But I did that day in the spirit with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As I drove all around Hot Springs that day, preparing for Sunday, He did have a word to speak to me.... He spoke to my heart that day."

"Have you had any time like that?" he asked. "There is one messenger who wants to speak and speak and speak and that's the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.... He has something to say about your life and He has something to say about your world and He has something to say to us about feeding the sheep."

"If you listen real close," Swanburg urged, "it will move you to hear: 'Do you love me?'"

## diversity

listen more than talk," Smith concluded, and Christians will find the right answers in witnessing to those of other faiths.

Howard Ramsey, from the Home Mission Board evangelism section, spoke from Acts 10, on "Witnessing by Divine Appointment."

"The Holy Spirit continuously works both in the hearts of lost people and those who are saved.... God will arrange a meeting," Ramsey asserted. He noted that "God is in the business of making divine appointments," citing Saul and Ananias, Paul and Lydia and Jesus and the Samaritan woman as examples.

"God has a divine appointment for you and me," Ramsey explained. "We have to be a willing witness."

In a second message, Ramsey continued his emphasis on a lifestyle of evangelistic witnessing. Citing the Great Commission and Acts 1:8, he said, "After the Spirit indwells, you cannot keep silent about the good news of Jesus Christ."

## Sullivan describes Jesus as 'the master of witnessing'

During two messages at the Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference, John Sullivan pointed to Jesus as the definite example of witnessing. Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, drew from John 4 for his first message, proclaiming Jesus as the "master of witnessing."

In witnessing to the woman at the well, Jesus had to overcome several obstacles, Sullivan explained. One was genetic — men of the time did not talk to women about spiritual matters; another was racial — Jews avoided contact with Samaritans. Yet another obstacle was moral — the Samaritan woman was an adulteress, and also a bit of a smart aleck, Sullivan noted.

The thrust of overcoming these kind of obstacles is that Jesus is the Savior of Gentiles, Jews and Samaritans — Jesus cares for the person, Sullivan noted. Similar, seemingly insurmountable, obstacles must be overcome for Southern Baptists to witness, he emphasized.

"We are developing an unhealthy attitude toward people of other religions," Sullivan said. "If they're religious, we don't

bother them." He insisted that "we have universalists in our pews — they don't believe Jesus is really the answer." Sullivan explained that people involved in cults, humanism and universalism are still lost. "How lost is lost?" he queried. "The lost person cannot understand the purpose of God for his life."

Another obstacle to witnessing is the "theology of exclusion," Sullivan said. He said he is tired of people saying, "They're not our kind" or not in the "target audience." "Our target audience should be the whole wide world."

### 'Confront the lost'

Some Christians are socially and intellectually ashamed of the gospel, he commented, and they must realize that non-confrontational evangelism is a misnomer. "You must confront the lost person with his life," Sullivan emphasized.

Jesus knew all there was to know about the Samaritan woman, he said, and overcame it all. Like Him, Sullivan commented, "we must be about the business of winning people to Christ."

In a second message entitled "The Cross is Love," Sullivan further explained the necessity of understanding what Jesus did for mankind. Drawing on Galatians 6:14, he emphasized, "Paul said, 'God forbid that I should brag about anything but that I should brag on Calvary.'"

"Why is that so important?" Sullivan queried. "Because we will never know the depths of our sin until we come to the cross of our Lord."

As Christians, we still have a sin problem, he continued. Many Christians have a tendency to "categorize by innuendo," he explained, like saying an untruth is a "little white lie." That way, the big sins are always in someone else's life and the little sins are in your own, he commented.

Christians also have a tendency to rationalize sin, according to Sullivan. "That's just how God made me, I can't help myself," is often the excuse. "We don't have to sin!" Sullivan emphasized. "Sin can destroy you. It can happen to you — don't ever imagine that you're not tempted by the wiles of the devil."

"I will never understand the means of my salvation until I come to the cross," Sullivan added. "When we are saved, it is not on the basis of our own understanding," he concluded, but because Jesus comes in to one's life.

## Merritt warns of sin, affirms righteousness

"Man is on a guilt trip — a life on the run," declared James Merritt, pastor of First Church in Snellville, Ga. Taking his message from Genesis 3, Merritt said that although "thousands of years removed, people are still making the same mistakes." From a sermon entitled, "The Lostness of Man," he further emphasized that "sin will take you farther than you want to go."

After eating of the tree of good and evil, Adam and Eve were sincerely shamed, experiencing that shame for the first time, Merritt said. "What Adam and Eve had been wearing was the radiant glow of the majesty of God," he noted. After eating the fruit, they wore garments of "guilt and grief." But at least they were ashamed, he said. "We are living in a nation that has forgotten how to blush."

Merritt said there are different stages of sin: shame, no shame and glory in sin.

Further, Adam and Eve were spiritually aware of their sin and tried to cover their shame, he said. Man is still trying to cover up sin and shame with man-made institutions — government, rules and righteousness, Merritt asserted. "Only one thing can cover sin — the righteousness of God."

Then God came walking through the Garden, Merritt continued, adding that

"nothing can hide you from God." Again applying biblical principle to the nation, he said, "Americans better learn that your sin will find you out."

"Adam was not seeking God, God was seeking Adam," he said. Often Christians comment about a lost person, "He's searching." Emphasizing that "God is not a fugitive," Merritt said God went looking for Adam.

Adam's first answer was "I was afraid," after which he began the "blame game," according to Merritt. Adam blamed Eve, and she blamed the serpent. In applying that "game" to the modern world, Merritt asserted, "We live in a no-fault society; we have forgotten how to take responsibility for our actions."

God then put enmity between the man and women, Merritt continued, and man and woman paid the price for their sin. "The devil offers high wages, but pays off in counterfeit ways," he said. Then Adam and Eve were "booted out" of the Garden of Eden. Sin had led to shame, shame to separation, separation to sorrow, and sorrow to suffering. "Adam made the down payment on sin and we've been making payments ever since," Merritt remarked.

In Genesis 3:15, Merritt said, a vicious

battle is prophesied — a war between flesh and spirit, light and dark, God and Satan. In the enmity between man and woman, a virgin birth is prophesied. And salvation is dependent on the virgin birth as the only solution to sin. "Only a second Adam could replace the sin of the first Adam," he said.

In a second message, Merritt drew from Mark 10, the account of the rich young ruler, to exemplify "Witnessing to the Up and Outers."

"Jesus was no respecter of persons," he said. The rich young ruler was the right person in the right place at the right time, who asked the right question and received the right answer but did the wrong thing.

Jesus did not give the man what he wanted, He gave him what he needed. The problem the young man had with God was his wealth. "The worst form of human badness is human goodness when it is sacrificed," Merritt commented.

Even though the young man followed all the rules of his religion, there is all the difference in the world between religion and salvation. "Salvation is God's way of getting heaven into man," he concluded. "Jesus didn't compromise the message. He made the gospel available, not acceptable."

# First 'Festival of Evangelists' meeting held

By Millie Gill  
Arkansas Baptist

The first Festival of Evangelists of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention was held Jan. 25 at First Church in Little Rock. Tom Cox, president of the organization of Arkansas Baptist evangelists, preached one of three messages presented during the festival which preceded the state evangelism conference.

"We do not need to be soul winners just because we are Southern Baptists, but because peoples of the world, our nation, and our home are lost without Christ," Cox emphasized as he preached from Lamentations 1:12.

"How we need a spirit of awakening for winning souls," he continued. "When winning souls becomes our first priority, we are going to see souls won to the Lord." Cox who travels throughout the world with evangelistic teams, was assisted in presenting special music by his wife, Kay, who travels with him.

The need to proclaim the reality of hell was theme for the message preached by evangelist William Blackburn of Fort Smith. "Today we have churches filled with people who do not have the Spirit of God within their hearts," Blackburn declared. "This is made very clear when SBC statistics reveal only one-third of our churches are showing membership growth through baptisms," he said. "Chris-



Tom McEachin (left), associate director of mass evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, spoke to the organization of Arkansas Baptist evangelists Jan. 25 prior to a business session in which 1992-93 officers were elected. Re-elected to office were (left to right) Johnny Jackson of Little Rock, secretary/treasurer, Ronnie Mayes of Beebe, pastor/advisor; Judy Martin of Benton, music director; Shelby Bible of Jacksonville, vice president; and Tom Cox of Mountainburg, president.

tians must be awakened to the reality of hell and motivated to making a difference in a world which currently is going to hell."

Evangelist Johnny Jackson of Little Rock, the organization's secretary/treasurer and a former ABCS president, preached from Mark 10:17 on "With God all things are possible."

He encouraged his fellow evangelists

to preach Jesus to all and to share the plan of salvation with all. "Make clear to all that Jesus is the only way to eternal life. There is no 'Plan B,'" Jackson added.

The festival also featured special music by music evangelists The Martins from Benton, the Brown Family from Gurdon, the Lisenby Family from New Edinburg and Denise Bettis from Arkadelphia. Judy Martin directed congregational singing.

## Conference music features worship, praise

A spirit of worship during the 1993 Arkansas Baptist Evangelism Conference was created through music, featuring voices that ranged in age from the young children's choir of First Church in Newport to the combined senior/adult choirs of Immanuel Church, Pine Bluff, and Beech Street First Church, Texarkana.

The Celoria Family of Jackson, Miss., was featured in each of the conference's five sessions. An acappella arrangement of "Sweet, Sweet Spirit" was chosen by Alan Celoria and his three sons, Jon, 18, and twins, Mark and Matthew, 16, as their opening selection on Monday afternoon. Janice Celoria and their daughters, Beth, 13, and Kathy, 11, joined other family members for the Monday and Tuesday evening performances. The Celorias were joined in their final performance by the Newport children's choir.

During the conference's closing session Celoria noted that Jon, Matthew and Mark will enroll next year at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., while other family members continue their evangelistic ministry.

Soloists for the conference included Wes Beavers from Beckspur Church at Forrest City, Sheri Swindler from Calvary Church of Little Rock and trumpet soloist Bob Roberts of Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

Ensemble groups performing included Second Chance, a vocal ensemble from Second Church in Little Rock and the Master Singers brass ensemble. A parade of elaborate worship banners highlighted the mini-concert presented Monday evening by the adult choir of First Church of Little Rock, directed by Tom Bolton. Also featured Monday evening was Arkansas Baptists' All-State Youth Choir, directed by Larry Grayson, minister of music

for Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock. The Arkansas Baptist Master Singers, directed by Lester McCullough, director of the ABCS music department, and the Singing Women, directed by Jean Pilcher of Little Rock, were featured choirs in the Tuesday evening session.

Congregational praise sessions were directed by McCullough, who coordinated the conference's music; Glen Ennes, associate director of the ABCS church music department; Bryan Faus, minister of music for First Church in Cabot; Alan Moore, minister of music for South Highland Church in Little Rock; and Bolton.

Accompanists were Lyndon Finney from Immanuel Church in Little Rock, Martha Rosenbaum and Eloise Hynes from First Church in Little Rock, Grayson and John Dresbach from Central Church in Jonesboro.

## Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

## Church News

**East Mount Zion Trinity Church**, Clarksville, held a noteburning service Jan. 17, celebrating payment of a \$40,000 indebtedness in three years. Pastor Robbie Jackson moderated the service which signified payment on the church's renovated fellowship hall and newly constructed sanctuary. Louie Don Leeds served as building committee chairman. George Domeres, Clear Creek Association director of missions, was speaker.

**Concord Church**, Van Buren, recently had a "Harvest Crusade" that resulted in 91 decisions, including 46 professions of faith. Rodney Gate of Dallas, Texas, was the evangelist. Tim Prock is pastor.

**El Dorado First Church** observed Darlene Reynolds Day Jan. 24, recognizing her Jan. 31 retirement as custodial supervisor. Reynolds, who will continue in a part-time position, is retiring from her full-time position, following 21 years of service.

**Markham Street Church** in Little Rock ordained Alan Terrell and Webb White to the deacon ministry Jan. 24.

**Forrest City First Church** will have W.A. Criswell as guest speaker in a 6 p.m. service March 7. Criswell, who has been serving as pastor of First Church of Dallas, Texas, since 1994, is author of 54 books, has served in leadership positions for both the Texas Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention, having served as SBC president in 1968-69.

**Springdale First Church** launched "The Servant Fellowship" ministry Feb. 4. Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor, will lead the monthly study for all men, women and young people who have made commitments to full-time Christian ministry.

**Paragould First Church** observed Pauline Sheridan Day Jan. 31, recognizing her 60 years of service as church organist. Sheridan, who has served under 13 pastors, was presented a money tree and honored with an afternoon reception.

**Bella Vista Church** held a reception Feb. 7, honoring associate pastor Bob Hartmann, his wife, Leesa, and their children for five years of service.

**Brinkley First Church** mission team was in Belize Jan. 16-23. The 13-member team worked near the capital city of Belmopan,

constructing a dining hall at the Camalotte retreat center.

**Park Hill Church** in North Little Rock will host Wayne Watson, Texas music recording, in concert Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. Further information may be obtained by calling the church's music ministry office at 501-753-3413.

**Oak Cliff Church** in Fort Smith ordained Stan D'Aublin to the deacon ministry Jan. 24.

**Beech Street Church** in Gurdon launched a weekly Bible study Jan. 6 in the Gurdon Senior Adult Center. There were 88 K-6th grade students and 12 workers present for the first session of "New Vision-Reach All Persons."

**Wm. Francis McBeth**, the Composer Laureate of Arkansas and professor of music at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, is the subject of a front cover photograph in a recent issue of *Instrumentalist* magazine. McBeth wrote a story for the Chicago-based magazine titled "Interpretation: Unlocking the Drama in Music." The magazine has a circulation of approximately 25,000 readers and is regarded as the consummate voice of music instrumentalists in the world.

## Staff Changes

**Steven Cole** has joined the staff of East Mount Zion Trinity Church in Clarksville as minister of music. A native of Fort Smith, he is a student at Ouachita Baptist University. Cole previously has served on the staff of both Getsemane Church in North Little Rock and Rye Hill Church, Fort Smith.

**Danny Joe Burroughs** has joined the staff of Indian Springs Church, Bryant, as minister of youth and education. He is a recent graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Burroughs previously served on the staff of First Church of England.

**Clark Lasse** resigned Jan. 24 as pastor of First Church of Winslow. He is moving to Fayetteville to begin a new ministry sponsored by First Church of Farmington.

**Timothy L. Deahl** was called Jan. 3 to serve as pastor of First Church of North Little Rock where he had been serving as interim pastor since Oct. 18, 1992. Deahl

and his wife, Carolyn, have two children, David and Sherri.

**Benny Brooks** has resigned as pastor of Mount Pisgah Church, Jonesboro.

**Leland Worlow** began serving Jan. 17 as pastor of Mount Pisgah Church, Jonesboro. He previously served as pastor of Providence Church, Jonesboro.

**James E. Black** is serving as pastor of Liberty Church, Norman. He was ordained to the ministry Jan. 24 at Murphy Church, Norman, where he was a member and where his father, Marvin Black, serves as pastor.

**Anthony Clem** is serving as pastor of Old Walnut Ridge Church, Walnut Ridge. He is a student at Williams Baptist College.

**Bill Duvall** is serving as pastor of Calvary Church in Ward. He previously was pastor of Mount Carmel Church.

**Sunny Williams** will begin serving in May as pastor of Shell Lake Church. He will come there from Iowa.

**James Nowell** began serving Jan. 10 as pastor of First Church of Turrell. He is a student at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Noble Wiles** is serving as pastor of Ash Flat Church. He previously was pastor of Oxford Church.

**Russell Draper** is serving as pastor of Immanuel Church in Paragould. He moved there from Ash Flat Church.

**James R. Wiles** has resigned as pastor of Union Hill Church in Rocky Bayou Association to serve as pastor of Gum Springs Church in Missouri.

**Michael Hollowell** is serving as music director of Plumerville Church. He is a student at the University of Central Arkansas, Conway.

**Heath Clower** began serving Jan. 24 as youth director at Ironton Church, Little Rock. He is a junior at Ouachita Baptist University.

**Danny Dean** is serving as interim pastor of Trinity Church in Alma.

**Andy DeWitt** has resigned as pastor of Kelsco Church to serve as pastor of a church in Illinois.

**Jeff Jones** joined the staff of Mount Olive Church in North Crossett Jan. 31 as associate pastor of youth and education. He came there from Arab, Ala., where he has

been serving on the staff of First Church as associate pastor in youth and education. Jones is a 1991 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Dori, have one daughter, Emily.

**Glenn Morgan** has retired as pastor of East Main Church in El Dorado after 21 years of service. He and his wife, Margaret, were honored Dec. 27 with an afternoon reception. They were presented with a trip to Hawaii and a handmade quilt designed with the names of the church's resident members and a replica of the church.

**Sam Higgs** is serving as pastor of First Church of Callon. Higgs, who is serving for the first time as a pastor, was a member of Harmony Church, El Dorado.

**Don Cameron** is serving as pastor of Victory Church, El Dorado. He was a member of the church.

**Jim Malone** is serving as the first full-time pastor of Immanuel Church, located between West Memphis and Marion on Highway 77. He moved there from Bartlett, Tenn.

**Will Kitchingham** has joined the staff of Richwoods Church in Arkadelphia as minister of music and education. He moved from Mount Ida where he was serving on the staff of First Church.

**Oscar Golden** has announced his retirement as pastor of Calvary Church in Benton, effective June 1. The retirement date marks the 29th anniversary of his service as pastor of Calvary Church.

**Richard Rose** joined the staff of Highland Heights Church in Benton Jan. 31 as minister of music. Rose served the church as part-time music and youth director while a student at Ouachita Baptist University and as a full-time staff member from 1971-1977. He and his wife, Nancy, have three children, Ambi, Melode and David.

**Ron LaCaze** began serving Feb. 1 as minister of music and youth at First Church of DeWitt. He came to DeWitt from Goodrum Church in Vicksburg, Miss.

**Larry Bailey** has joined the staff of Central Church in Jonesboro as minister of missions and prayer, a newly created ministry of the church. His special assignment will be to assist in laying the foundation for Central Church to become a missionary strategy center and a house of prayer for all nations. Bailey and his wife, Sheila, have been on leave from their assignment as missionaries to Togo, West Africa.

**Bill Passmore** began serving Jan. 31 as pastor of Mount Zion Church of Jonesboro. He previously was pastor of Pilgrims Rest Church, Batesville.

## *National secretaries meeting planned, charter bus available for Arkansans*

NASHVILLE, TN—Training church and denominational secretaries to achieve professionalism in their ministry role will be a focus of the National Association of Southern Baptist Secretaries meeting April 28-May 1 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Skills conferences will be helpful for church secretaries or secretaries at state convention or SBC agency offices, said Betty Walker, president of the association and pastor's administrative assistant at First Baptist Church of Burlington, N.C.

In addition to training seminars, the meeting will feature Dale Steele, pastor of Penelope Baptist Church in Hickory, N.C., leading a daily Bible study and Esther Burroughs, assistant director of lay evangelism at the Home Mission Board, as keynote speaker.

Registration of \$100 for NASBS members, \$125 for non-members and \$15 for

spouses should be sent to Becky Brown, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 457, Branson, MO 65616. Lodging reservations should be made with Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Box 128, Ridgecrest, NC 28770.

For the convenience of secretaries in Arkansas, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Discipleship Training department is offering travel arrangements by charter bus and motel arrangements enroute. Each secretary must send her own conference registration and Ridgecrest lodging reservation directly as indicated above. The cost for the travel arrangement, which is \$160 per person based on double occupancy, includes round-trip transportation, motel room for April 27 and May 1; and Thursday afternoon tours in the Asheville, N.C., area. Additional information is available from the ABSC Discipleship Training department at phone 376-4791, ext. 5160.

## **'Crossover Houston' volunteers needed**

ATLANTA (BP)—Volunteers are encouraged to sign up now for "Crossover Houston," an evangelistic thrust to precede the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Houston.

The SBC meeting is scheduled for June 15-17, with the evangelistic emphasis set for June 9-13. Volunteers can register by writing to Bobby Sunderland at the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30367-5601.

Volunteers are needed for local church revivals, mass evangelism rallies, street

evangelism such as puppet shows or concerts, block parties, door-to-door campaigns and a three-day prayer conference, said Sunderland, evangelism assistant for promotion and project development.

Last year in Indianapolis, 1,043 people made professions of faith because of Crossover activities.

Evangelistic efforts have been held prior to the annual meeting since 1989. In 1991 hunger relief ministries and street evangelism were added to the door-to-door campaign for Crossover Atlanta.

## **BOYCE BIBLE SCHOOL**

### **Term IV - March 5 - April 30**

The following college-level courses of Boyce Bible School are being offered in Little Rock beginning March 5.

- 07500 Christian Family Enrichment taught by Larry Henderson
- 05360 Interpreting the Book of Job taught by Ron Ford
- 07390 The Pastor's Personal Growth taught by Bill Falkner
- 06750 World Religions taught by Pete Petty
- 06590 Contemporary Evangelism taught by Paul McClung

For further information please call Lehman Webb at 376-4791, ext. 5249.



# Homosexuals in the military: Opponents criticize proposal

By Tom Strode  
SBC Christian Life Commission

WASHINGTON (BP)—President Bill Clinton's arrangement with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Senate Armed Services Committee chairman Sam Nunn, D-Ga., may have bought him some time on his plan to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military, but it did not satisfy many of those opposed to changing the policy.

Congressional Republicans, as well as leaders of military, evangelical, pro-family and conservative organizations, decried the president's Jan. 29 announcement of a period of consultation leading to a July 15 deadline for a draft executive order permanently dropping the ban.

"The political trade-offs are continuing," said Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "Our commander in chief is pursuing a policy which is dictated by the homosexual political lobby and is opposed by the overwhelming majority of military personnel. There are good, sound reasons of military discipline, good order and morale for keeping the time-honored policy in place until now."

Secretary of Defense Les Aspin had presented to Clinton early in inauguration week a proposal on how lifting the ban could be accomplished.

Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., leading the Senate opposition to Clinton's position, said after the president's announcement of his plans, "It is hard to conclude that this delay is anything but an attempt to gain cover in a political firestorm of the president's own creation."

The president's effort gained legal assistance Jan. 28 from a federal judge in

California, who said the ban of homosexuals in the military is unconstitutional. The ruling by U.S. District Judge Terry Hatter Jr. of Los Angeles applies only to the court's jurisdiction in California but may set the tone for other rulings.

The arrangement announced by Clinton, one which Nunn and he described as a compromise, not only sets the date for a draft executive order but the following policies in the interim:

- The question on homosexuality will be eliminated from the enlistment application, a change which Clinton said the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to.

- Members of the military in the process of being discharged under current policy because of their homosexual status will be put on standby reserve. He or she may return to active duty if the ban is lifted.

- Members found guilty of homosexual conduct under the Uniform Code of Military Justice will be discharged.

- Commanding officers may resign homosexual members who are in the

course of discharge proceedings.

Clinton also announced the executive order would "set rigorous standards regarding sexual conduct to be applied to all military personnel."

The Armed Services Committee will hold a series of hearings on the homosexual ban, Nunn said. While he favors maintaining the ban, Nunn said he would make a final judgment based on the testimony at the hearings.

"I have a feeling on the subject, and I don't have any present intention of changing my mind," Nunn said. He would not say whether he would sponsor legislation lifting the ban if Clinton issues the executive order.

Controversy over the president's proposal to lift the ban has resulted in more than 400,000 calls to the Capitol switchboard on some recent days. An overwhelming number of those reportedly have been opposed to changing the policy.

"We will be working with members of the House and Senate and other organizations to encourage Congress to pass legislation codifying the current policy," Land said. "We urge all Southern Baptists to contact their representatives and senators and inform them of their convictions and concerns on this matter."

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# Pro-lifers deplore Clinton abortion policies

WASHINGTON (BP/ABN)—On his third day in office, President Bill Clinton rescinded four anti-abortion federal policies implemented by the Reagan and Bush administrations during the previous three terms. They included bans on federal funding of abortion counseling and referral by non-physicians at family planning clinics and on funding of fetal tissue transplantation research.

The symbolism of the date on which Clinton acted was not lost on pro-life or pro-choice advocates. On Jan. 22, 1973, the Supreme Court declared abortion a constitutional right. Clinton signed the presidential memoranda as about 75,000 pro-lifers concluded their annual March for Life from the Ellipse, just south of the White House, to the Supreme Court.

"Today is a sad day for America and a horrifying day for unborn children," said Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"As if to add insult to injury, President Clinton takes these actions on the 20th anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision. These are truly cruel and spiteful acts meant to break the will of the pro-life movement.... It will not work."

Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said in a written statement, "Today's action has special significance on the historic 20th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, because it

signals the dramatic and decisive shift in White House policy on a woman's freedom to choose.

"President Clinton has, indeed, ushered in a new day for choice in America. Today's action is only the beginning," said Michelman, who said NARAL will work with Clinton and Congress to pass the Freedom of Choice Act, an abortion rights bill.

The pro-life movement will not falter under a pro-choice administration, Land said.

"We are more resolved than ever that unborn human life is sacred and must be accorded equal protection under the laws and Constitution of our land," he said. "We will not retreat from our conviction that a nation which allows the slaughter of the most defenseless human beings of our society is a nation which will reap a whirlwind of cheapened and degraded life at all points in the life cycle."

## Hot Springs church responds

In response to the president's action, the deacons and members of First Church, Hot Springs, adopted a statement affirming "our belief that human life begins at the moment of conception, that such life is sacred, eternal and created in the image and likeness of God.

"Furthermore, we disagree with the recent action by President Clinton to lift the ban on abortion counseling at feder-

ally supported clinics and to permit research using fetal tissue from aborted babies," the statement noted.

"We see these actions as further disregard for the sanctity of unborn life and an effort to lend moral legitimacy to what is historically and biblically moral."

The Hot Springs congregation also voted to "affirm our commitment to pray for President Clinton, as well as all of our leaders at the local, state and national level, that they will be the beneficiaries of God's divine leadership."

The four policies rescinded by Clinton were:

■ The regulations in the Title X program preventing federal funding of family planning clinics which allow non-physicians to do abortion counseling or referral. The regulations were first adopted in 1988. They were upheld by the Supreme Court in 1991.

■ The moratorium on federal funding of transplantation research using tissue from elective abortions. A temporary ban was established in 1988. It was extended indefinitely in 1989 despite a conflicting recommendation from a National Institutes of Health panel. Under the moratorium, tissue from ectopic pregnancies and miscarriages was allowed for use.

■ The policy prohibiting the Agency for International Development from funding family planning organizations which perform abortions, provide abortion counseling or lobby foreign governments to legalize abortion. Known as the Mexico City Policy, it was adopted in 1984. The American and International Planned Parenthood federations lost their U.S. funding because of this policy.

■ The ban on privately funded abortions in overseas U.S. military medical facilities. The policy was adopted through memoranda in 1987 and 1988.

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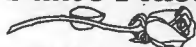
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**Leader:** Jimmie Sheffield, Associate Executive Director, ABSC, and Certified Professional and Bi/Polar Program Leader.

For information, contact Jimmie Sheffield, 501/376-4791, ext. 5103

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# HMB reports 1,138 church starts in 1992

ATLANTA (BP)—The number of church starts reported by state Baptist associations in 1992 exceeded 1991's total by more than 117.

Preliminary statistics from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board show that 1,138 new congregations were formed last year, compared to 1,021 in 1991, an increase of approximately 12 percent.

As part of the Bold Mission Thrust goal to establish 50,000 churches by the year 2000, the Home Mission Board launched the 15,000 Campaign at the 1991 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

President Larry Lewis calculated data at the start of the decade revealing the need for 1,500 church starts a year in order to meet the Bold Mission Thrust goal. The HMB hopes to increase church starts to 1,500 a year by 1995. Subsequent yearly increases will be necessary to meet the ultimate goal. Because of the increase, "we are right on target with our goal," said David Bunch, HMB vice president for strategic development.

Support has been offered by the Home Mission Board to help Southern Baptists

enter unreached counties, identify key churches for sponsorship and link churches together to promote church starting. These strategies have aided in the increase of church starts, Bunch noted. However, the most important factor in starting churches, he emphasized, is a heart with a burden for an unreached area.

Nationwide, a total of 325 counties have no Southern Baptist churches. Of these counties, 137 have a population over 20,000.

Because older congregations tend to plateau, Bunch said, "the crisis need is for new congregations. New congregations reach more people for Christ."

## DALLAS HOLM

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Williams Baptist College

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\$2 donation at the door with a canned food item for the Lawrence County Food Bank.

A free will love offering will be received during the concert for the ministry of Dallas Holm. Limited seating available.



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COST: "Early Bird Special" - \$7.00 per PERSON until February 22.

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DEADLINE for receiving fees: March 24.

TIME: Friday, 7:30 P.M. - Saturday, 3:00 P.M..

Registration begins Friday at 6:30 P.M..

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

State WMU Office, P.O. Box 652, Little Rock, AR 72203; (501) 376-4791, ext. 5137.

# Masons responding to Baptist investigation

By David Winfrey  
SBC Home Mission Board

WASHINGTON (BP)—From letter writing campaigns and special meetings to a call to attend the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Houston, Masons are defending their lodge membership and denying any conflict with Christian doctrine.

"We are simply trying to set the record straight," said John Boettjer, managing editor of *The Scottish Rite Journal*, which dedicated its February issue to the topic of Freemasonry and religion.

Masonic response comes as Southern Baptists await a study on Freemasonry by the Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department.

Meanwhile, Freemasonry critic Larry Holly said he will publish a second book on the subject to be available at this year's convention. Holly, a Beaumont, Texas, physician who initiated the call for a study of Masonry, mailed his first book to several thousand Baptists prior to the 1991 SBC meeting in Indianapolis.

Holly said his second book also will be mailed to HMB trustees before they vote at their March meeting on whether to accept the study by the board's interfaith witness department and send it to the convention for consideration. Holly contends that a sound study of Freemasonry will find it to be occultic and incompatible with Christian doctrine.

## Masonic perspective

Masons counter that critics misquote Masonic writings, use outdated material or elevate one Mason's beliefs to the level of doctrine. Freemasonry encourages church involvement, they say, and it simply refuses to allow religious differences to prevent good men from becoming better through civic and charity projects.

"Even a casual perusal of these pages should convince any person open to reason that Freemasonry is not only compatible with religion but also confirms and complements religious faith and church participation," wrote C. Fred Kleinknecht, sovereign grand commander of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, in the journal.

The Journal, which has a circulation of 550,000, features essays and letters by Southern Baptist pastors and laymen, as well as others such as *Guideposts* publisher Norman Vincent Peale.

Its cover features a photo of Baylor University as well as photos of Baylor president Herbert Reynolds and president Emeritus Abner McCall. The issue contains articles by both men.

Essays also note that George W. Truett, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, was a Mason, as is U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

Holly said the reaction is not surprising. "Anyone could expect that the Masons, who are very powerful and very wealthy, were not going to roll over and play dead."

Officials with the southern jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry have mailed about 2,800 copies of the journal to Southern Baptist leaders, Boettjer said.

Also in the journal, two Baptist laymen call for Baptist Masons to attend the SBC annual meeting in Houston, June 14-17 as messengers.



## Woman's Missionary Union ANNUAL MEETING

March 19-20

Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana

Friday Sessions: 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 6:45 p.m.

Saturday: 9:30 a.m.



Monte Clendinning  
SWBTS



Dottie Williamson  
Mississippi



Jean Huley  
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Max Alexander  
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- Praise & Worship - Beverly Coad ● Theme Interpretation - Lonnie Latham, Warren
- Acteans Panelists/Activators ● Fellowship, Friday Evening
- Commissioning Service for 1993 Volunteers ● Love Offering - Magazines for Arkansas Missionaries
- Nursery for Preschoolers ● Baptist Book Store

For More Information, Contact: Arkansas WMU, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203 • (501) 376-4791, ext. 5137

## Southern Baptist chaplain returns from 'harsh' Somalia

BELLEVILLE, IL (BP)—Returning from Somalia, chaplain Jack Elliott is convinced Southern Baptists must find creative ways to minister in predominantly Muslim countries.

In 23 years with the Air Force, this was Elliott's first assignment to a Muslim country. "We know little about them and vice versa," Elliott said. More dialogue between cultures is necessary to alleviate fear and suspicion, he said.

Elliott, who is endorsed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board chaplain's commission, arrived in Somalia on the fourth day U.S. troops were in the country. He described it as a "very harsh, austere environment."

"The first challenge was to personally survive," Elliott said.

"You lose two things right away: privacy and control."

For more than two weeks, Elliott lived with 400 troops in an open-air hangar at the Mogadishu airport. Yet he saw few selfish acts among the troops.

One of Elliott's memories is celebrating Christmas without commercialism. At 2:30 p.m. Christmas Eve, Elliott stood in the hot African sun singing "Joy to the World"

with noise from helicopters overhead. The experience forced him to focus on the spiritual meaning of Christmas, he said.

Elliott led Wednesday evening Bible studies, prayer meetings and three Sunday worship services, two at the airport hangar and one at the U.S. Embassy compound. Christians found their faith gave more meaning and purpose to their relief efforts, Elliott said.

### Classifieds

**For Sale** — Office equipment. Gestetner duplicator, model 4170. (Plus 17 ink cartridges) 3-yr.-old. Great condition. Stencil Maker by Gestetner, Model 1103. Viking Folding machine. All 3 for \$250. Will negotiate for items purchased separately. Parkway Place Baptist, L.R. 224-3003.

**For Sale** — Church bus for sale. 1979 Thomas cruiser. Call 367-3449.

**Wanted** — Part-time youth director, organist and Nursery Worker. Paid Positions. Call 562-5657 or 565-6276.

**Position Open** — Minister of Education. Parkway Baptist, one of the leading churches in Louisiana, is seeking an experienced Minister of Education. Candidates must have had at least five years in a medium to large church with total educational responsibilities for all age levels and be innovative in finding ways to reach adults. Our current attendance level is approximately 1,100. Send resume' to Parkway Baptist Church, Education Search Committee, 11795 Jefferson Hwy., Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70816.

**Seeking** — Full or part-time youth director. Send resumes to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 430, Calico Rock, AR 72519.

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

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More than 500,000 people in America die each year from heart disease, often as a result of not recognizing and responding to the early warning signs of a heart attack. These signs or symptoms can be easily learned, identified, and with an attitude of zero tolerance and prompt medical attention can be relieved many times without serious consequence or damage to the heart.

At Baptist Medical System, we have responded to these facts by incorporating, along with approximately 250 hospitals, in a nationwide early cardiac care program initiated by St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. We have opened Chest Pain Emergency Centers in the emergency departments at Baptist Memorial Medical Center in North Little Rock and Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock.

Through an enhanced delivery system, patients with symptoms related to cardiac disease who come into one of our new Chest Pain Emergency Centers will be treated promptly and with special sensitivity. The atmosphere we have created eliminates what many chest

pain victims describe as feelings of "intimidation," "embarrassment," or "shame" when entering a traditional emergency room.

We have also made a strong commitment to help educate the community and train, free of charge, anyone interested in becoming an "Early Cardiac Care Giver." This educational program marks another step in Baptist Medical System's commitment to meeting the community's need for wellness and disease prevention.

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T O L E R A N C E

## 'East/West Challenge' boosting student work

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—From providing funds to help pay salaries and housing costs of student ministers to linking college campuses for prayer and missions support, the "East/West Challenge" is "nothing short of a miracle," one student ministry leader said.

"God is meeting so many specific needs through this program, it's really amazing," said Frank Cofer, director of Baptist Student Ministry for the Chicago Metro Baptist Association in Illinois. "It's really been a reminder to me of something I've known all along — students believe in sharing the gospel with other students."

Coordinated by the Baptist Sunday School Board's national student ministry, East/West Challenge is designed to strengthen student work and extend the gospel outreach in newer convention areas. The program is currently focusing on three target areas: Boston, Chicago and the state of California.

Baptist Student Unions and student groups from Southern Baptist churches can get involved in East/West Challenge in one of three ways — by "adopting" and

committing to pray for a student group in a newer convention area, making financial contributions or making a mission trip to one of the target areas.

According to student ministry leaders, student groups from across the country already are responding in all three ways. Examples include:

■ Approximately \$35,000 in gifts and pledges already have been received to boost student work in the three target areas.

■ The BSU at Westark Community College in Fort Smith, Ark., has decided to donate offerings collected at its noon program meetings to help pay the salary of a student minister at Chicago's Truman College.

■ The Ohio State University BSU has adopted and committed to pray for the Northwestern University BSU in Chicago.

■ Funds channeled to Boston already have been used to pay for a much-needed fax machine and housing costs for a semester missionary doing student work.

■ A student who wishes to remain anonymous donated \$350 to help pay the

way for seven Chicago-area students to attend the 1993 Student Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.

■ Tennessee BSUs raised \$1,000 to help pay the salary of a student minister at the College of Dupage/Wheaton College in Chicago. A student at one of the Chicago area BSUs heard about the need for a printer for the student ministry office at the same colleges, so he bought one and donated it himself.

■ California state student ministry director Dale "Gino" Robinson said funds funneled to his state through East/West Challenge have been used to help support Mission Service Corps volunteers working with students and to meet a personal emergency need of one student worker.

"We are hopeful (the East/West Challenge) will spark something in the heart of students who visit our state," Robinson said. "We want them to realize the unique kind of challenges we face here, to understand what we're dealing with everyday. Hopefully, it will broaden their horizons a little bit and give some of them a vision for future ministry here."

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## Annuity Board files resolution with K-Mart

DALLAS (BP/ABN)—The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has filed a resolution with K-Mart Corporation, concerning the sale of pornographic materials through its Waldenbooks subsidiary. Board officials are seeking the inclusion of the resolution in proxy materials and its consideration by K-Mart shareholders at their annual meeting May 25.

The resolution asks K-Mart's board of directors to "instruct the management of K-Mart Corporation to stop the promotion, display and sale in its Waldenbooks subsidiary of literature and other media that is largely devoted to the description of sexual encounters or that has a graphic depiction of exploitative sex and/or gratuitous violence."

Paul W. Powell, Annuity Board president, said he has asked every church pension board in the nation to study and support the resolution.

Trustee chairman William "Lonnie" Willis, a retired insurance executive and member of Calvary Church, Little Rock, told the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, "Our board doesn't want anything to

do with pornography. In fact, we voted unanimously against pornography.

"We decided to use our stock, along with a number of other pension boards to ask K-Mart to clean up Waldenbooks stores," he added. "We thought before we sold it, the thing to do would be to get out front and get an official hearing and we can only

do that as stockholders."

If K-Mart shareholders reject the Annuity Board's effort, "we'll sell our stock. That's the strategy," Willis emphasized. "If they're not interested in our ideas, we're not interested in their stock and we will immediately eliminate it" from the Annuity Board's investment portfolio.

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# Virginia conservatives form new fellowship

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Claiming that Virginia Baptist leadership is moving away from the Southern Baptist Convention, conservative Virginia Baptists have voted to form an organization to increase their fellowship and influence.

The organization, named Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, was formed to "assist local Southern Baptist churches in Virginia to win the lost to Christ, to develop believers and to promote missions and evangelism," according to a vision statement adopted by almost 700 conservatives Jan. 28 in Lynchburg. Robert Jackson, director of missions for New River Baptist Association and an SBC Executive Committee member, was moderator at the meeting.

Meeting at Old Forest Road Baptist Church, where 13 years ago Paul Pressler announced conservatives were "going for the jugular" to win the SBC, Virginia conservatives took steps to build "a solidifying organization" and "to have a more influencing voice in the Baptist General Association of Virginia," said Bill Templeton, pastor of Charlottesville's Northside Baptist

Church and one of the pastors who mapped out strategy for the meeting.

However, the new organization is not a new state convention to rival the BGAV, insisted Tommy Taylor, pastor of London Bridge Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, who was elected president. "Some felt like we need to make a break now. I don't feel that way and obviously most here do not." Taylor denied that an unstated purpose of the SBCV is to take over the BGAV. "This is not an anti-BGAV movement. Our tone will be positive."

## Break with state rejected

One person at the gathering who said he wanted to make a break with the BGAV was Ronald Young, pastor of Plantation Road Baptist Church in Roanoke. As the four-hour meeting opened, Young made an appeal to begin the process of forming a new convention of "Bible-believing churches in Virginia" that would seek formal recognition by the SBC.

Several others endorsed his proposal, saying it would be more appropriate to withdraw from the BGAV out of protest

rather than remain in a divided fellowship.

T. C. Pinckney, a member of Good News Baptist Church in Alexandria and a member of the SBC Executive Committee, countered that "conservative strength is growing every month in Virginia."

Young's motion was defeated and, when a recommendation was offered to form a conservative Baptist organization, not a new state convention, consent was almost unanimous.

The action comes in response to a defeat of conservative candidates and agenda at last November's annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Also at that meeting messengers elected to take no action on a statement condemning homosexual behavior adopted by the Virginia Baptist general board and adopted a resolution that many conservatives felt approved homosexuality.

During the Jan. 28 meeting, conservatives elected a 26-member executive committee to guide their development over the next year. Apparently one of the first actions of the newly elected SBCV executive committee will be to set up a channel to receive and disburse funds from conservative churches dissatisfied with the new giving plan adopted by the BGAV.

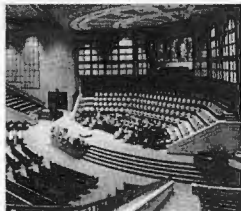
The BGAV giving plan provides missions-giving options opposed by conservatives, funding in part the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Theological Seminary of Richmond and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

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## Conference centers seek summer staff

NASHVILLE, TN — Applications are being accepted at Ridgecrest and Glorieta Baptist conference centers for the 1993 summer staffs. Applicants must be age 17 or older.

Glorieta workers are needed May 30 through Aug. 21, although those who can work beyond then will be given first consideration, said Glenn Compton, Glorieta administrative services coordinator. Some applicants will be hired to work from June 11 through Sept. 6.

Ridgecrest workers are needed June 6

through Labor Day, according to George Boswell, Ridgecrest administrative services coordinator. Some personnel will be chosen to work for a shorter term or selected to arrive at a later date than June 6.

For additional information contact: Summer Employment, Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, P.O. Box 8, Glorieta, NM, 87535-0008; phone 505-757-6161 or Summer Employment, Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, P.O. Box 128, Ridgecrest, NC, 28770; phone 704-669-8022.

## Conferences address managing church conflict

Three area conferences addressing the need to manage church conflict have been scheduled for February. The conferences, entitled, "Building and Maintaining Healthy Relationships at Church," will be led by Mike McKinney, pastor of Leawood Church in Kansas City, Kan.

"Every Christian should profit from the studies," said L.B. Jordan, director of the Arkansas Baptist Church Leadership department. "However, our target audience

includes pastors, staff members, deacons, church program directors and spouses."

The dates and locations include:

■ Feb. 22, 7-9 p.m., Siloh Church, Texarkana.

■ Feb. 23, 7-9 p.m., Fordyce First Church.

■ Feb. 25, 7-9 p.m. Temple Church, Fort Smith.

For more information, call Jordan at 376-4791, ext. 5148.

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## Convention Uniform

### *A Spirit of Unity*

By Hunter R. Douglas, Woodlawn Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Romans 15:1-13

Focal passage: Romans 15:1-13

Central truth: God is our creator.

The Bible teaches that God is our creator. No two are alike, not even "identical" twins. Yet, "There is no difference, for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:22-23). Alike in our sin-problem, we go about things differently. We are not identical robots since God gave us individuality of mind as persons. We are free moral agents with our own viewpoint and our own interests reflected in our own actions. How is this to work in the church?

Paul has been dealing with differences in the church in Romans. "Accept him whose faith is weak" (Rom. 14:1). "For none of us lives to himself alone" (Rom. 14:7). "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). This is a call for finding ways to get along, not a call to gather the church, and expel those with whom the "strong" disagree.

"Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up" (Rom. 15:2). This is hard for us, since it can be against our own self-interests. Also, we fight stumbling blocks. "Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way" (Rom 14:13). Paul taught that this should not be done in churches. Yet, look at the reality.

Paul reminds us of the insults upon Christ (Rom. 15:6), who did not please Himself, but served. "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ" (Rom. 15:5). "Unity," is not the same thing as "a spirit of unity." "Unity" can be enforced upon people against their will. Better that they willingly come together with "a spirit of unity." Christ died for us even though we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8). Christ has accepted us, even with our differences. Paul would have us accept one another, just as Jesus did (Rom. 15:7). This is a call for serving others (Rom. 15:8), not a demand for all to march in disciplined lockstep with the "strong."

On a much higher plane, it is a call that "with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:6). A spirit of unity is a spirit of service. The reward is hope, joy and peace by the power of the Holy Spirit that we may glorify Him (Rom. 15:13).

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## Life and Work

### *Reconciliation*

By Bruce Tippit, Fianna Hills Church, Fort Smith

Basic passage: Genesis 32-33

Focal passage: Genesis 33:1-17

Central truth: It's impossible to live in fellowship with God while there is broken fellowship with our brother.

Jacob knew that some day he must face the brother he had wronged. It was that broken fellowship that had driven him from his home (Gen. 27:41-45). At long last the reconciliation would come but it would be a Jacob weathered by the hand of God, not a man of his own strength. While Jacob knew it was God's will for him to possess the land of his fathers, he also knew it would cost him reconciliation with his brother.

There are three movements to this dramatic encounter with Esau. First, there is Jacob's sincere humility (Gen. 33:1-3). This passage is rich with oriental custom and pageantry. Jacob approaches his brother after sending herds of gifts for Esau (Gen. 32:13-21). Jacob was fearful of this meeting (Gen. 32:7) so he meets Esau with total submission. Next, there is Esau's forgiveness (Gen. 33:4). Perhaps there was some demonstration for the "gallery" here but this is a beautiful scene of forgiveness between two brothers. Jacob was relieved and overwhelmed by such a gracious reception. Then there follows a peaceful parting (Gen. 33:5-17). Esau accepts all the gifts Jacob had given. He knew he couldn't buy Esau's forgiveness but the gifts demonstrated his honest desire to be reconciled.

This story parallels the principles taught in Matthew 5:23-24. Before Jacob could enjoy the fulfillment of God's promise, he had to be reconciled to his brother (Matt. 5:23). Somewhere God's Spirit prompted Jacob to inventory his life and caused him to make this a priority. Also, Esau's hurt was more important for the time being than the blessing God had promised (Matt. 5:24). Jacob took the initiative to act even if it meant risking his life. This would be the final obstacle to peace in Jacob's heart. After this, the only opposition to fulfillment of God's promises would be without, not within.

Who needs your reconciliation? Will you make an inventory and take the initiative to settle that issue with your brother? We cannot know the depth of God's blessing until we are reconciled with our brother.

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## Bible Book

### *God's Adequate Care*

By George O'Neal, Bella Vista Church  
Basic passage: Psalm 23, 27, 118

Focal passage: Psalm 23

Central truth: God will fully and adequately meet every need of His children in life and in eternity.

While the theme of this psalm is that of the shepherd and the sheep, there are two other pairs of figures noted as well: the host and the warrior, and the father and his child. The late Dr. J. P. McBeth sums it up well. "The Shepherd gives His sheep ease, rest and refreshment. The Host gives the guests satisfaction, fullness, and excess. The Father gives His children goodness, mercy and eternal life."

I. The Personal Shepherd, verses 1-4. The very first word of this psalm is the most important of all. It is "Lord" or "Jehovah," the eternally self-existent God. When Jehovah becomes our personal Shepherd, by faith, then all of His provisions are ours also.

Those who raise sheep say that there is no animal who needs more care and attention than any other kind of livestock. The illustration of our being like sheep is extremely appropriate.

The psalmist makes much use of the first person pronoun. He receives the Shepherd's rest for his weariness, water for his thirst, direction for his ways, calm for his fears. The presence of the Shepherd brought great assurance and security.

II. The Table Host, verse 5. The scene changes from a pasture to a battlefield, from nature to a table, from Shepherd to Host. David was a warrior and he knew what it was to have the enemy camped very close by. But in that setting he sees Jehovah providing a banquet for him, nourishment, rest and refreshment even before finishing the battle at hand. For God to provide a meal indicated a covenant friendship and fellowship with David, giving him assurance of victory over the enemy even before it came.

III. The Eternal Father, verse 6. Again the setting changes. Now it is from the battlefield to a house, from a warrior to a child, and from Host to Father. David reflects on his life which was certainly not nearly over and expresses great confidence about the love and loyalty God has shown him. By faith he anticipated the joy of dwelling in God's presence and experiencing His goodness for all eternity.

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## Convention Uniform

### Teaching the Word of Truth

By Hunter R. Douglas, Woodlawn Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: 2 Timothy 2:14-3:9; Titus 2

Focal passage: 2 Timothy 2:14-26

Central truth: We are to fight sin and ignorance.

In writing to Timothy, Paul speaks to us. "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:7). Paul, in chains, knew shame and suffering (2 Tim. 1:8) and abandonment by Christians (2 Tim. 1:15). He warned that anyone seeking to live a godly life will be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12).

Paul's advice is to "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). How do we correctly handle the word of truth?

I. We teach in power. "Keep reminding them of these things" (2 Tim. 2:14a). The gospel cannot be stopped. Our voices cannot be stilled. There will be ungodly talk and this will probably spread like gangrene (2 Tim. 2:16-17). "Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm" (2 Tim. 2:19a). We, ourselves, will not overpower those who oppose God. The power of the gospel rests upon solid foundations laid by God, and God's Word will succeed (Isa. 55:11) as we keep on teaching the truth, in power.

II. We teach in love. We avoid quarreling about words (2 Tim. 2:14), "avoid godless chatter" (2 Tim. 2:16). "Instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful" (2 Tim. 2:24). Here is love. "Those who oppose him He must gently instruct" (2 Tim. 2:25). We seek salvation, not punishment (2 Tim. 3:15-16).

III. We teach in self-discipline. "A workman who does not need to be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2:15). Rightly handling the Word calls for devoting the mind to study of God's Word, and to living out its righteous precepts. "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22).

IV. We teach with a purpose. "In the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:25-26). Sin and ignorance, we fight. People, we love.

## Life and Work

### Bethel at Last!

By Bruce Tippit, Flanna Hills Church, Fort Smith

Basic passage: Genesis 35:1-15

Focal passage: Genesis 35:1-15

Central truth: Regardless of our distance from God there is always a road home.

Jacob's life had taken many paths. He had been a deceiver to his brother, a virtual slave to his uncle, risked death in reconciling to his brother and would fail to be the father he should be. Still, God would meet him in every circumstance. There would be one crucial place to which Jacob must return, Bethel—the place where he had met God for the first time years before. God would call him to His house to renew their fellowship and His promises. This call to come "home" would be due to the obvious sin and failure in Jacob's life and his family.

Jacob hears a familiar voice but demonstrates an unfamiliar response (Gen. 35:1-4). Before, when God called there was resistance. Now, there is none. This call came after the crisis in Genesis 34 and the obvious break with total commitment to the Lord. The whole family buries their gods and goes with Jacob to Bethel. Jacob's obedience resulted in an awesome respect for God (Gen. 35:5-7). Because of Jacob's obedience, people around him are affected (Gen. 35:5). Arriving at Bethel, Jacob builds an altar in the very spot where he first met the Lord. God was gracious to seek and meet him there (Gen. 35:9-15). This makes the third manifestation God had given Jacob. He reminds Jacob of who he is and will be (Gen. 35:10) and recounts His promise (vs. 11-13). Jacob responds by doing the same thing he did years before (Gen. 28:18ff). Jacob was home!

This passage reminds us God's love is unchanging. His justice unbiased and His grace undeserved. Without these characteristics of God there is no road home once we have disobeyed Him. This passage tells us that it may take something shocking to wake us up from disobedience (Gen. 34). As we try to draw near to the Lord we may only then realize how far we have strayed (Gen. 35:2). Drawing near to God means remembering what you promised. To draw near we must cleanse our heart and do those things we did when we first began our walk with Him.

Jacob had drifted. So do we. The beauty of God's grace is that we are never so far from Him that there isn't a road home!

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## Bible Book

### Under God's Watchful Eye

By George O'Neal, Bella Vista Church  
Basic passage: Psalm 18, 66, 121

Focal passage: Psalm 121

Central truth: The child of God can fully trust the Lord to care for and protect him in every detail of life.

This "Song of Ascents" is a song of confidence and assurance for the believing pilgrim. It was sung by the Hebrews as they anticipated returning from their exile in Babylon or as they traveled to Jerusalem for one of the feasts. The message is one of complete trust in the Lord Who takes knowledge of every need on the journey.

I. The Needy Traveler, verse 1. The roads in ancient days were little more than trails or wide paths and often went through rugged or deserted terrain. So the dangers of rocks, wild animals and thieves were prevalent. Realizing the risks of the pilgrimage, the psalmist directs his eyes toward the hills which surround the Holy City where the Lord resided in His temple.

II. The Sovereign Creator, verse 2. The pilgrim acknowledges that his blessing of peace for his journey rested in the name of Jehovah, his covenant-keeping God. And even more, He was the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth. He has sufficient power to guide the traveler safely to his destination.

III. The Watchful Guardian, verses 3-6. The psalmist affirms that the Lord is mindful of his primary mode of transportation which is his feet. He is confident that God will not allow his foot to stumble or suffer injury along the way. It was said that pagan gods sometimes went off duty or fell asleep, but the man of faith knew that the God of Israel never slept. He never even got drowsy. And so, he knew by faith that God's eyes were ever open to his personal needs as well. He trusted and worshipped an omniscient God.

Jehovah identified with the needs of the pilgrim. From the burning sun His presence provided shade to prevent dehydration or a sunstroke. At night He protected from any unseen dangers. He was always there. What an awesome God!

IV. A Complete Confidence, verses 7-8. The phrase "going out and...coming in" refers to one's total life activities. The pilgrim was announcing his new found conviction that Jehovah could be trusted to sovereignly care for His believing child in all of the details of his life.

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### Church votes to leave SBC over homosexual issue

SAN FRANCISCO (ABP/BP) — Dolores Street Baptist Church in San Francisco has left the Southern Baptist Convention because the denomination excludes churches that condone homosexual behavior. Last June, messengers to the SBC took the first step toward revising the SBC constitution to exclude churches that "affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior."

The San Francisco church was expelled from the California Southern Baptist Convention and its local Baptist association in the San Francisco Bay area after declaring its openness to homosexuals in 1981. The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board later withdrew funding for ministries of the congregation.

At least three churches — in Houston, Washington and Dolores Street — have left the SBC over the convention's anti-homosexuality stance and one church in Indiana has joined the SBC as a result of the convention's actions.

### Home missions personnel decreases slightly in 1992

ATLANTA (BP) — The number of Southern Baptist home missions personnel remains ahead of schedule for meeting the Bold Mission Thrust goal of 5,000 by the year 2000 despite a slight decrease in 1992.

Missions personnel numbered 4,868 by the end of 1992, down 1 percent compared to 4,922 at the end of 1991. Bold Mission Thrust's goal called for 4,172 missions personnel by the end of 1992 in order to reach the goal of 5,000 by the year 2000.

The number of mission pastors decreased by 173, while the number of Mission Service Corps volunteers who serve more than two years increased by 157. The number of missionary apprentices also dropped from 147 in 1991 to 117 in 1992.

### Arthur Walker to retire as Education Commission director

NASHVILLE, TN (BP) — Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission since 1978, has announced he will retire effective Sept. 1.

Walker also will retire as executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary which, along with the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., operates American Baptist College (ABC) in Nashville, a four-year Bible college established to provide education primarily for black church leaders.

Walker, who will be 67 in April, is the longest-tenured director in the Education Commission's history. The commission promotes and supports the work of 71 Southern Baptist-related seminaries, universities, colleges, Bible colleges and academies. Walker also serves as executive secretary for the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

### Former Missouri politician takes Southwest Baptist helm

BOLIVAR, MO (BP) — Roy Blunt, who has finished eight years as Missouri secretary of state, has assumed the presidency of Missouri Baptists' largest college, Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar.

Blunt, a 1970 SBU graduate, began full-time duties at the college Jan. 12, the day after leaving his office in state government. The Baptist layman was an unsuccessful candidate for governor in last August's Republican primary.

Blunt, an SBU trustee since 1985, was unanimously elected as SBU's 23rd president by trustees and given a three-year contract.

SBU has been without a president since October 1990. And, last August, trustees voted 31-1 to dismiss chancellor James L. Sells, alleging he had made "a deliberate attempt...to interfere" with the selection of a new university president.

### TV anchor suspended after comments about media bias

JACKSONVILLE, FL (ABP) — A television anchorman has been suspended from his job after telling a group of conservative political activists that the news media are "liberal" and biased against Christians.

Lee Webb, news anchor for WTLV in Jacksonville, Fla., was suspended by the NBC affiliate for three days for "violating company policy," news director Kevin Brennan told the *Florida Times-Union*.

Webb was a speaker for a leadership training seminar sponsored by the Jacksonville chapter of the Christian Coalition, a national organization to mobilize Christians for political action on conservative causes. In his address, Webb mentioned "the obvious bias that exists in the media against you as Christians," showing a videotape of an NBC News story on the Religious Right which he said illustrated the bias.