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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 94, Number 16

August 10, 1995



changing
the
world



High school students from nine states challenged the heat of an Arkansas summer to repair 25 homes in West Memphis during a World Changers work project there July 30-Aug. 5.

New BSU directors to serve Camden, Harrison campuses

New Baptist Student Union directors will greet students on two campuses this fall. Neal Nelson will be serving as BSU director at Southern Arkansas University Tech in Camden and Todd Hunt is assuming the BSU director duties at North Arkansas Community College in Harrison, both effective Aug. 1.

Nelson, currently serving as summer youth minister at Towering Oaks Baptist Church in Greeneville, Tenn., is a native of Little Rock. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Nelson will continue to pursue his theological education in Seminary Extension through Southwestern Seminary. He also has served as director of the Care Center of Benton First Church, an off-campus mission where meals and counseling are provided.

"The former directors at SAU Tech have done an excellent job representing Arkansas Baptists, as evidenced by the reception I received during a visit to the campus," Nelson commented. "It is my desire that with the training, the support of many in the Camden area, and much prayer, God will use me to help carry on the work of reaching students for Christ at SAU Tech."

George Sims, an associate in the student ministries department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, has known Nelson since he was a boy growing up in

Life Line Church in Little Rock.

"We believe that Neal will serve well at SAU Tech," Sims said. "He has spiritual gifts that allow him to build relationships with people who need a ministry. It is remarkable to note how God has led Neal to this point in preparing him for this position."

Todd Hunt, a native of Harrison, will be returning to the area to serve on the campus where he accepted Christ, North Arkansas Community Technical College. He is a graduate of that institution and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. For the past two years, Hunt served in student work in New England through the Home Mission Board's Semester Missions program. He was minister to students at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and Northeastern University in Boston.

"It's nice to go back to a place where I was saved and serve the students," Hunt said. "There are a lot of opportunities; it's a growing school. It will be tough, but it will be an adventure."

"His strength is in building caring relationships with students," Sims said of Hunt. "He already knows many people in the area and can immediately begin to strengthen the BSU program. He wants to help current students to make the same Christian decision he did while at NACTC and to grow spiritually."



Neal Nelson



Todd Hunt

Cover Story



World Changers 6-7

High school students Jonathan Halthcox of Sanford, N.C., and Robbie Baker of Harrison, Tenn., tear off old roofing at a West Memphis home as part of a World Changers project there July 30 - Aug. 5.

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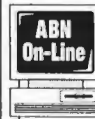
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Arkansans provide leadership at Interlaken '95

A team of 25 Arkansas Baptists provided worship and conference leadership at Interlaken '95, the summer assembly of the European Baptist Convention in Interlaken, Switzerland.

About 900 Baptists from across Europe, including 215 youth and 204 children, gathered July 8-13 for Bible studies, preaching and a series of 31 conferences on topics ranging from parenting skills and teaching English as a second language to the Holy Spirit and church growth.

Judith Lynn Bloomer, editor of the EBC's newsletter, *Highlights*, described the annual assembly as "similar to Ridgecrest or Glogieta.

"During the morning hours, Bible study and seminar sessions are conducted," she explained. "The afternoon is free for touring the area and appreciating God's beautiful creation of the Alps. Each evening there is a worship service."

"Interlaken '95 was more than that," added Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

"Here in the United States, we have access to Baptist friends," he said. "So having a gathering like that doesn't mean as much to us as it does to them. These 64 churches are scattered out from an area the size of Alaska to Florida and from Greenland to Hawaii."

Moore presented a daily series of Bible studies on Romans 8 highlighting the assembly theme, "More than Conquerors."

He told participants how God helped him through the death of his first wife. Christians in several locations were moved to pray for him during specific times of need, he said, although they didn't know why at the time.

One couple prayed at the exact hour he was planning the funeral. "God is always at work to make all kinds of circumstances and situations work for our good," he said.

Arkansans lead conferences

The Arkansas team provided conference leadership throughout the assembly on several topics. Included on the program were: Bob Holley, director of the ABCS discipleship and family ministry department; ABCS Brotherhood director Harry Black and his wife, Ivetta; John and Nadean Bell of First Church in Bentonville; Reg Hamman of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock; Donna Harrison of First Church in Norphlet; Frank Gantz, pastor of West Rock Church in Little Rock; Tom Walker, associate pastor of First Church in Russellville; and Laurie Harrison and Jeanie Williams of Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

Arkansans such as Martha Dewbre,



ABCS executive director Don Moore gave children stiff competition during a Bible drill at Interlaken '95, the European Baptist Convention summer assembly.

Kathy Hagins, Flo Hardwick, and Pat Tucker of Park Hill in North Little Rock worked in the hospitality booth during the week and Pam Avery of Magnolia, Ann Mary Layman, Denea Layman and Jimmie Loyd of Springdale and Billye Tissue of El Dorado conducted Vacation Bible School.

Alan Moore, minister of music and education at Woodland Heights Church in Conway, was the assembly's music leader and led a creative worship seminar.

Participants also heard Avery Willis, senior vice president of overseas operations for the Foreign Mission Board and author of the well-known MasterLife discipleship program, who preached during the assembly.

Relating the conference theme to missions, Willis said Christians are saved "to take (God's) message so others can hear and understand and know Him."

The problem is that some Christians don't do that, he said. "The problem with a lost world isn't that the lost world won't receive the gospel. It's that God's people won't take the gospel."

During the assembly EBC leaders also proposed the extension of their three-year missions partnership with Arkansas Baptists by an additional year. Don Moore will bring the proposal before the ABCS Executive Board during its regular meeting in August.

"The general council of the European Baptist Convention voted to request an extension of our missions partnership for one year," Moore reported. "They did this

in response to an earlier request from (EBC general secretary) John Merritt."

Harry Black said the partnership "is currently scheduled to go through 1996 and they would like for it to extend one additional year, through 1997."

He said the primary reason for the extension request "is because two of the key leaders in the EBC are retiring in 1996. Ray and Helen Reynolds, Foreign Mission Board church planters, are retiring in mid-1996 and John and Elizabeth Merritt are retiring at their (EBC) annual meeting in October."

The request comes at a critical time for European Baptists, said Moore. Because of the retirements, he said, "They will lose their top administrative leaders.

"They'll just lose the heart of their operation," Moore said. "They feel the partnership has been successful, meaningful and most helpful and they feel an extension of the partnership will help tide them over in this time of transition."

Black said the EBC's transition needs are not just in leadership. "The EBC is going from primarily military ministries to international ministries. Arkansas has a major role in that transition. Their desire is that we would continue the partnership to provide continuity in that mode."

Fourteen EBC churches have ceased to exist in recent years as the United States has slashed its military forces in Europe. But the convention has responded by starting 17 international congregations, many in Eastern Europe.

Partnership produces blessings, opportunities

Our mission partnerships are proving to be a source of great encouragement to both those being assisted and those assisting. Some 25 to 30 Arkansas Baptists recently assisted the European Baptist Convention in its annual assembly at Interlaken, Switzerland. With only 64 churches scattered over 20 countries, you can imagine their numbers are small and their needs are great. That is true! Yet, their spirit is great. We were blessed to have interacted with them.

It is amazing that with only 4,500 members, 891 people were registered for the summer assembly. There were 216 youth and 185 children. A number of volunteers from outside Arkansas assisted with various aspects of the assembly. I was privileged to be the Bible teacher for the week with the assignment being Romans 8:26-39. Alan Moore of Woodland Heights Church in Conway was music leader for all services. Avery Willis, who is vice president of the Foreign Mission Board, was the evening speaker.

Missionaries from all over Europe came. A number of Baptist leaders from the former communist countries were in attendance. From a designated gift to our Brotherhood department, we were able to provide scholarships that made it possible for them to come. They were from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABSC Executive Director

and the Ukraine. The testimonies of God's blessings upon their work were thrilling.

It was also a particular blessing to visit with James Duke, a former Arkansas pastor, and his wife who serve as independent missionaries in Bulgaria. What a price they are paying to help get the gospel into Bulgaria! They have to leave the country and go to another country every month and recenter Bulgaria again as visitors in order to work there. He recently baptized his first converts after four years of work.

John Floyd, area director for Europe of the Foreign Mission Board, and Mrs. Floyd, both native Arkansans, shared in the assembly. He, representing the FMB, and

John Merritt, general secretary of the European Baptist Convention, requested the Arkansas Baptist State Convention to extend the partnership one year beyond the three-year agreement. I will recommend this to our Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board in August.

Fifty-one churches of the European Baptist Convention are partnered with individual Arkansas churches or associations. The first six months of this year have seen 25 projects completed. Without a doubt, the key to the partnership has been the Arkansas couples who have volunteered their time to go and work as field coordinators out of Weisbaden, Germany. They have included Doyné and Betty Plummer of First Church, Cabot; John and Katsy McAlister of First Church, El Dorado; and the present coordinators, Norman and Kay Roberts of Park Hill Church, North Little Rock.

The needs faced are for more churches in Arkansas to adopt partnerships and projects, the scholarship funds which provided scholarships for the Eastern European leaders to attend Interlaken to be replaced, and for funds to be given to replace the old, high-mileage car our coordinators have been using to do their work. God may place it on the heart of someone reading this to meet one of these needs.

FRANCES HOUSE

Woman's Viewpoint

Three little words

Because God first loved us, we can love others. This involves showing love to all, but I'd like to address an area that is often taken for granted. It should be the easiest thing to express our love to our children, yet we hear of so many who do not hear the words, "I love you."

I feel that I grew up in a loving home; however, I really cannot remember my parents saying those precious words to me as a child. I want my children to remember hearing me tell them of my love.

There are times when we are especially thankful for more time to share our love with our children, and we use these times to renew our

commitment to do better. I recall days in the hospital with a seriously ill child, and once coming home to discover that a child had been injured in a car accident. We are reminded when friends die or disasters occur, that we must express our love more often.

My 12-year-old son doesn't want kisses now. It's hard to get a hug, but I can tell him that I love him.

My son who is away year-round for college, is more open and clings for the hugs and kisses. More often it has to be "I love you" over the phone. He can say it as easily as I can.

My daughter who recently married had to "leave and cleave," but I know she will always have hugs, kisses and verbal ability



to give and receive love from her mother.

My own mother, who is 80 years old, usually gives me a nervous laugh when I tell her I love her. It's still difficult for her to say she loves me, but I know she does. She knows I love her.

Have you told your children that you love them, have you given them a hug or a kiss? This should be one of the easiest things to do. Do not take it for granted that your children know you love them. As years pass on, it will be very important for them to look back and remember hearing, "I love you."

Thank you, God, for showing your love for us as our heavenly Father. Help us express this love first to our family members and then to the many others who do not know your love.

Frances House and her husband James, are new members of West Church in Batesville. She currently is the director of an after-school program for K-4th grade. She also is the former secretary of North Pulaski Association. The Houses are the parents of three children: two college students and a sixth grader.

Salvation for all or only for the elect?

In recent months, a small group of scholars has gained attention through its efforts to move Southern Baptists back to what it views as their Calvinistic roots. Supporters insist a return to the views of election and predestination are needed to recover the denomination's heritage and to put an end to shallow and insincere evangelism. Others condemn Calvinism as a threat to evangelism and missions.

At issue are differences between Calvinistic and Arminian views. The Calvinist view is that humans are naturally so corrupt and spiritually dead that they are unable to respond to God. All are bound for hell, but in grace God chooses to save some. It was for these, the elect, that Christ died on the cross. The Arminian view is that, while all are depraved, they still have the capacity to exercise free will to respond to the gospel. Both views are found among Baptists and Protestants as early as the 1600s.

The issue bubbled to the surface in news stories about negative reactions to Southern Seminary president Al Mohler's efforts to return the seminary to its theological principles set forth by the school's founder, James Petigru Boyce, who was a "five-point Calvinist."

On one side of the issue are the views of John Calvin (1509-1564), a Swiss theologian of the Reformation Era, who believed in limited, or particular, atonement. While the gospel is to be preached to all persons, only the elect will be drawn by God's Spirit to Christ.

The five points of classic Calvinism are:
 ■ Total depravity of man — all humans exist in a fallen state and cannot save themselves.

GUEST EDITORIAL



By GLENN A. BROWN
 Editor, Oklahoma Baptist Messenger

■ Unconditional election — those who are saved are saved only because God has chosen to save them, not because of any merit on their part.

■ Limited atonement — Christ died only for those predestined to be saved, not for all people.

■ Irresistible grace — persons who are predestined to be saved cannot resist salvation, but will be brought by some means to that point.

■ Perseverance of the saints — "once saved, always saved."

Calvinist views formed the theological base of the Puritan-Separatist movement in England and many early Baptists were of this persuasion.

Opposing this point of view was the Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) who believed in general atonement — that Christ died for every person and that all have the capacity to respond to the gospel. He also taught that a believer might "fall from grace."

Of the two Baptist groups that formed in England, General Baptists date back to 1609 and were so named because they held to "general atonement." The more Calvinistic group was formed in 1638 and was called Particular Baptists. While the groups shared much in common, they were poles apart on the question of whether all persons can choose to be saved.

When Baptists migrated to America, they brought the "election debate" with them. The streams of both schools of interpretation were fed into the pool of Baptist diversity in this country and are a part of Southern Baptist history.

According to H. Leon McBeth in *The Baptist Heritage*, "Southern Baptists have retained some Calvinism, but their doctrinal inheritance from General Baptists of England and Separate Baptists of the South, plus their commitment to evangelism and missions, have muted the Calvinist part of their background." However, many Southern Baptist theologians and scholars have been strongly Calvinistic.

Although there is general agreement among Southern Baptists on three of the five points of Calvinism — total depravity, unconditional election and perseverance of the saints — there are degrees of differences in the interpretation of each. Limited atonement and irresistible grace have been more controversial.

The issue of Calvinism is not one over which Southern Baptists should generate division. Instead, we should let the discussion drive us to examine the issue in light of Scripture.

Amazing love, amazing grace

By Timothy George
 Dean of Beeson Divinity School
 Samford University

Historically Baptists have affirmed both the formal and material principles of the Reformation: Scripture alone, and justification by faith alone through grace alone because of Christ alone.

God's grace is at the heart of all we believe and do in the name of Christ. But, like all other Christian teaching, it can be distorted and misconstrued if it is not kept in proper biblical balance.

The Bible teaches both divine sovereignty and human responsibility with respect to the process of salvation. How can these two principles be reconciled? Dr. Herschel Hobbs has given the best answer I know to this question: "On the level of finite intellect, the sovereignty of God, and the free will of man cannot be harmonized, but in the infinite wisdom of God there is no conflict" (Isa. 54:8-9; Rom. 1:13:3f).

Some people speak of "irresistible grace" as though God were a giant magnet mechanically drawing sinners unto Himself. But the history of salvation shows that human beings have been resisting God's grace since the Garden of Eden. I prefer to speak

of God's overcoming grace. His love that will not let us go, His never-failing mercy which pursues us, wins and woos us, unto the joy of a costly obedience.

But if God is sovereign, why should we bother to witness or preach or even pray for the lost? As a young pastor in England, William Carey confronted this attitude when a senior minister rebuked him. "Sit down, young man. When God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine!" But Carey knew that God had appointed the means as well as the ends to accomplish His purpose of grace. God's Word makes clear that we are to pray, plan, give and go!

The Great Awakening was spawned by people of faith who believed that the Great Commission was still in effect and who saw no contradiction between the sovereignty of God and the command of Christ to preach the gospel to all people everywhere.

The doctrine of grace underscores the fact that while we are called to be co-laborers with God, all of the glory belongs to Him alone. The realm of grace is where all the boasting stops. Here no one has bragging rights for, as Paul asked the Corinthians, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

Changing the world

World Changers repair homes, see West Memphis as mission field

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptists

More than 260 high school students from nine states challenged 93-degree heat and long workdays to repair 25 homes as part of a World Changers work project in West Memphis July 30-Aug. 5.



Most of the World Changers projects in West Memphis involved participating youth re-roofing homes and repairing porches.

World Changers is an annual ministry of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission. It involves high school and junior high school students participating in hands-on co-educational missions construction and renovation projects.

The West Memphis project involved the renovation of 25 low-income homes, most in one neighborhood.

B.J. Avery, project construction coordinator and a member of Oak Grove Baptist Church in Covington, Tenn., described the area where the work was done.

"Most of them are shotgun-style houses, being maybe three or four rooms," he explained. "For the most part, to qualify for this they had to be homeowners. The neighborhood is in pretty good shape. Most of them are low-income residents and 95 to 100 percent of them are on fixed or government-assistance incomes."

Like other World Changers projects, the West Memphis project involved coordination by the city government, local churches and the association.

Steve Smith, associate pastor for First Church in West Memphis, said, "God has really opened the doors for us to break down a lot of barriers in our city," because of the World Changers project. First Church provided the youth with sleeping quarters as well as meals and worship and recreation areas.

"Our mayor's staff has been very

cooperative during this project," added Smith. "It's been amazing to watch how God has broken the barriers not only in our city government but also denominational and racial barriers in our city. Doors have been opened through World Changers that could not have been opened otherwise."

The project was funded by a block grant from Housing and Urban Development, said Jim Covington, director of planning and development for the city. He said the project will cost \$35,000 in materials, but World Changers is saving the city thousands of dollars in labor.

"Normally, if we'd have rehabbed it this way, would have cost us \$10,000-\$12,000 per house, including labor. So we are getting 25 houses done for a real bargain.

"I get calls every day from people needing their homes repaired," he said. "We can only help 20 or so families every year. To do our 20, plus another 25 or so, well, it takes care of a lot of those phone calls."

The youth not only contributed time to the project, Avery noted, but also paid an average of \$250 for travel and other expenses, participated in a construction project at home and completed a mission study course before participating.

Observers of the World Changers project noted that participants were well-informed about the missions emphasis of the week.

"It's a missions trip," remarked Katie Rosser, a member of Broadway Baptist Church in Sanford, N.C. "We're painting, putting in 11 storm windows and putting in a ceiling in the kitchen. We're putting up sheet rock now. I'm doing this painting and stuff for the Lord."

David Taylor, a member of First Baptist Church in Roswell, Ga., agreed. "Basically you're working for God. You're giving your life to Him by helping out people who could use some help."

Pointing to the house he was helping re-roof, Taylor said, "It's not something she could do herself. She didn't have the money. She's a good person."

Noting that the temperature would rise to 93 degrees that afternoon, though, Taylor said, "The lake would be nice right now."

"They are strongly committed," said Avery. "That's an eye opener for the residents we talk to.

"What's this bunch of kids doing over here?" I get asked. "Well, this kid paid \$250 to sweat, fight mosquitoes and work on your house," I say. They can't believe it."

Ronnie O'Neal, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Brotherhood department, agreed. "I talked yesterday with a lady who helped fix lunch for a crew and she was asking me, 'Is this a government project?'"

"No ma'am," I said. "This is church. The city agency is buying the material, but we are providing the labor."

"What do you pay these children to come in here?" she asked. I said, "They pay to come here!" She couldn't believe it."

O'Neal said World Changers works hand-in-hand with city officials to complete construction projects.



Mayor Al Boals (left) thanks World Changers participants for renovating 25 low-income houses in West Memphis.

"It says a great deal to the community," he said. "It says the Lord has opened a door through the World Changers organization for a ministry for our young people."

West Memphis mayor Al Boals said World Changers "is going to bring the people of West Memphis together. It has

already shown that by involving the different denominations that are helping to put this program on through the Baptist association. There are not very many times you can get 11 different denominations working together on anything. It's a big asset to the city.

"Those kids are something else," Boals remarked. "I made nine jobs yesterday and I'm seeing cooperation. No arguing. They are just there to do a job and they do it."

City planning specialist Ramona Taylor said World Changers is part of a national trend in community development.

"There's a lot of interest nationally in developing communities," she said. "This project embodies the idea of service and responsibility: To give and not just get."

She said the site location was especially important for Arkansas. "In the Delta, especially, there is never enough money. We have city money for housing rehabilitation, but it's never enough. It's just a drop in the bucket."

Community members also expressed appreciation for the help. Arthur Hayes, 78, had his house repainted, a new roof installed, a ceiling replaced and a new porch built.

"I appreciate that," commented Hayes, a 47-year resident of the house. "That means a lot to me. It's something that I couldn't do. I wasn't able to do it and I'm too old to try."

Rebecca Waters also received a new roof. "This means my house is going to stop leaking," she said. "It's been leaking a pretty good while, but they are doing a beautiful job. They are wonderful."

"We had prayer together when they first got here," she recalled. "If they had not come, I'd be putting buckets on the kitchen floor when it rained."

Although participating youth were from out-of-state, Arkansans provided much of the construction leadership.

Turk Cunningham, a member of Newark Church, was "crew chief" at the Waters residence. He described the work: "We are stripping and repairing decking, replacing shingles, painting and are going to do some sheetrock work on the inside."

Like many of the leaders, he was impressed by the quality of the participants. "They are great. It's a lot of work in the heat and getting coordinating with everybody."

Construction supervisor Hunter Douglas, a member of Woodlawn Church in Little Rock, said participants "are the greatest kids in the world."

"You don't have to make them work, you have to hold them back. You have to make them rest," he said. "They are the salt of the earth. If this is what the next generation of Southern Baptists is going to be like, then we are going to make it."



Oscar Gutierrez, pastor of the First Church, Fort Smith hispanic mission, greets members of Clarksville Second Church's mission during Sunday services.

Fort Smith Spanish mission joins Clarksville church to begin new work

Arkansas Baptist mission leaders hope a new strategy in hispanic mission starts will grow strong Spanish-speaking works in the state. Their simple strategy: Use an hispanic mission in Fort Smith to begin an hispanic mission in nearby Clarksville.

"This is, to my knowledge, the first time we've used a Spanish mission to start another spanish mission," noted Jim Hausler, language missions associate for the Arkansas Baptist State Convntion missions department.

The missions partnership involves members of the hispanic mission of First Church, Fort Smith, using the facilities of Second Church in Clarksville to minister to hispanics in the Clarksville area.

The state convention is the third support group, Hausler said, helping with financial needs and organization such as revival preparation. He said the missions department has "committed to them (the First Church mission) \$500 a month in Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering funds for travel. They bring several cars and vans over from Fort Smith."

He said the missions department has plans to involve the strategy elsewhere in the state in the future.

Oscar Gutierrez, pastor of the First Church hispanic mission, also serves as pastor of the effort at Clarksville. Each week he holds Sunday afternoon worship services along with 30-50 First Church mission members that make the hour-long drive from Fort Smith.

Gutierrez, a native of El Salvador, said they learned about the need for a mission in Clarksville from Hausler earlier in the year. Following meetings with Second Church and Clear Creek Association leaders, Gutierrez agreed to the partnership.

They held their first service at the new mission June 24.

"I am expecting the Lord to do a great work here," Gutierrez declared.

Joe Craft, pastor of Second Church, said he saw God's hand in establishing the ministry. "When he placed us together with the Spanish-speaking church at Fort Smith, doors started opening. The first Sunday they had seven saved and the next Sunday they had three more.

"Besides that, this facility needs to be used 24 hours a day," he said. "It would be poor stewardship to have a building sitting here empty."

Hector Mendez, a member of the First Church mission, said the ministry fulfills a two-fold purpose.

"What we would like to do, first of all, is spread the Word in this community," he said. "And maybe at the same time provide them with some type of aid."

"Our people have various needs, like housing, education, employment and health. This gives us an opportunity not only to teach them the gospel but also to help them out," said Mendez, a native of Puerto Rico.

Many new hispanic immigrants value the experience that members of the First Church mission offer.

"They do everything from helping fill out immigration papers to finding housing," explained Hausler. "A lawyer might charge \$800 to fill out that form, but it's just filling out the form and sending it in. It is a ministry of the church to just fill out those papers."

Spanish-speaking people are drawn to Clarksville, said Hausler, because of jobs in peach orchards, chicken production and small companies there.

Not the end of the world

Arkansas author overcomes handicap to compile third book on end-times

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

End-time events seem clear to Terry James, who recently had his third book on biblical prophecy published. Not everything, though, is as clear: Since he began writing the series three years ago, he has become blind.

James, a member of Highland Heights Church in Benton, is editor and contributing author of *Earth's Final Days*, published recently by New Leaf Press in Green Forest. It is the third in a series of biblical prophecy books written about the end-times. More than 100,000 copies of the three books are in print.

James said the idea to write a series of books about eschatology (the study of the biblical end-times) was sparked by the Holy Spirit. He explained that he sensed the Holy Spirit's leadership "to put together a group of experts in the field of eschatology. I couldn't think of any books that I had seen where there was a format involving a number of authors."

James was a public relations director for several companies, noting that he "has written and edited all forms of business communications, both in print and electronic media." Prior to his public relations career, he was a creative director of advertising agencies and "did extensive political and corporate speech writing."

He said he found the transition from public relations writer to end-times writer "easy, because these are things that fascinate me."

Recalling how he recruited authors for his first book, *Storming Toward Armageddon: Essays in Apocalypse*, James said, "I simply wrote letters" to potential contributors. "The first one I wrote was Texe Marrs, a very controversial author today."

He said the essay format of his books, relying on several writers, is effective. "It is much quicker to solicit chapters from others," he added. "I could not have possibly put out three books in three years by myself."

"That's the beauty of having contributors," James noted. "You can make everything so much quicker in a book format. They are like yearbooks in prophecy."

James used a variety of writers for the series, including Houston evangelist Phil Arms, author and lecturer David Breese, Tim LaHaye, and *McAlvany Intelligence Advisor* editor Don McAlvany.

He said his selection of authors "is cross-denominational and non-denominational. All I'm looking for are people who are pre-

of the fact that we are living in times that look very much like the 'perilous times' that Paul wrote about in 1 Timothy. I hope this will exhort Christians to godly living and putting out the Word."

Although James has edited and published three books in three years, his work was not without hardship: He gradually lost his eyesight throughout the writing process.

"In 1977, I went to a doctor in Little Rock who diagnosed me with retinitis pigmentosa," he explained. "He told me that most people who had this disease go blind. I was scared. I was 35 and had a family to support."

James prayed that God would spare him from the fear he felt. "From the moment I prayed that, I have not had one second of anxiety about losing my eyesight. His grace is sufficient."

"Eventually, I lost all visual acuity," he continued. "I could no longer see anything."

Faced with blindness, James began a search for a new set of "eyes" to help him with his writing.

Angie Peters, a former writer for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and member of Highland Heights, answered the call.

"Angie has such great editorial skills," he said. "She has an ability to research. It's a unique talent and gift. She is a tremendous writer in her own right and is not only an excellent typist but also a gifted editor."

Peters, who typed the copy for the third book, said she types "from dictation, through tapes and over the telephone" and works with James in editing.

Blindness was not the only hardship he endured. He also survived a fire that destroyed part of his home, the death of long-time companion Buckley, his bulldog, and a melanoma which had to be taken from his leg through surgery.

"It feels like you're under attack sometimes," he said. "You can almost sense you are under assault. But the Lord is in control and has seen me through it."

Although James said he feels "very content" about the series, he continues to pursue other projects.

He is working on the publication of his first novel, which he wrote prior to the prophetic series, and is working on the fourth book in the *Apocalypse* series.

"These are things that we have to keep updated," he emphasized. "God's prophetic word is still there and still true."



Benton author Terry James (left), has just compiled his third book on the end-times with help from Angie Peters. James lost his eyesight while working on the three books.

millennial prophecy believers."

Among his contributors for *Earth's Final Days* was Steve Butler, pastor of Highland Heights Church.

"He brings into his sermons up-to-date news items," James said. "He will do something a lot of preachers won't tackle today — an occasional prophetic theme."

Readers of the series note that current events are highlighted in the essays. James said that is by design since "people are more interested in something they know about — that they are more familiar with."

Rather than getting "too theological, too in-depth in regard to dissecting biblical prophecy," he said, "If you can relate the eschatological events to what's going on right now, people are going to read that. We're trying to gather some of these signs, document them and report them from news sources. It makes an interesting reading format, hopefully."

By compiling the series on the end-times, James said he hoped to share his philosophy of prophecy, "which is the same as my theology."

"The importance of prophecy is to confirm God's existence," he explained. "My purpose is to lift Jesus up through the prophetic word so that the lost will be drawn to Him."

"Second, it is to make Christians aware

Moore to retirees: Be disciplined and obedient

By Millie Gill

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was honored by the Fellowship of Retired Baptist Workers in Arkansas during the group's annual meeting held July 20 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock.

Fellowship president R.B. Crotts presented Moore with a plaque which expressed appreciation for Moore's leadership in organizing, supporting and encouraging the retired Baptist workers' fellowship, as well as for 13 years of service and leadership as ABCS executive director. Moore has announced plans to retire next February.

Moore, the featured speaker for the annual meeting, challenged the retirees to use Hezekiah as a role model rather than other older prophets of the Bible. Preaching from II Chronicles 32, Moore asked, "Have you noticed how many times in Scripture God's people, as they grew older, nullified almost everything they had done as youth because of their senior year actions?"

"In our senior years, rather than coasting, becoming arrogant or careless in personal behavior, we must be as disciplined and obedient as Hezekiah who obeyed God by reviving the priesthood



Newly elected officers of the state Fellowship of Retired Baptist Workers are: (left to right) Charles Atkinson, second vice president; Erwin L. McDonald, president; Harold White, first vice president; and Earlene Bauer, secretary (seated). The four were elected July 20.

and cleaning it up and then appealing for repentance that was responded to in great numbers," Moore said.

He noted that as individuals act by faith, their destinations often are "unto the uttermost parts of the world," citing his own recent missions involvement in Senegal and with the European Baptist Convention. "As God has used me to do something for all nations while serving as

your executive director, my desire is that He will not lessen but expand my service to all nations as I retire.

"As Hezekiah was rewarded at death for his service as a mighty warrior, we too will be rewarded in our senior years if we respond to God in service by saying, 'Wherever you lead, I will go,'" Moore concluded.

Erwin L. McDonald of Little Rock, editor emeritus of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, was elected to serve as the 1995-96 fellowship president. Serving with him will be Harold White of England, first vice president; Charles Atkinson of Little Rock, second vice president; and Earlene Bauer of Little Rock, secretary.

Other program highlights of the meeting included memorial moments and an annuity update led by ABCS annuity director James Walker and Joe McIntosh, vice president of endowment for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board.

McIntosh noted that 91 Arkansas Baptists are receiving additional benefits as a result of the board's Adopt an Annuity supplemental income program.

Walker pointed out that annuitants drawing retirement benefits can continue to serve as ministers and contribute to their accounts. "This will provide you with some protection service," he said.

Springdale media ministry throws 'net a little farther'

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—The goal of Ronnie Floyd's media ministry is simple. It is that in every message he delivers people have an opportunity to respond to Christ.

"The vast majority of so-called Christian programming doesn't give people that opportunity," said the preacher for Invitation to Life, seen weekly on ACTS and FamilyNet.

Floyd, pastor of First Church in Springdale, said most alleged Christian programming is non-confrontational.

"Some preachers are so afraid of offending viewers that they don't offer them the plan of salvation," he said. "I don't think (that) offends the majority of viewers. What I think offends them is a watered-down version of what the Bible says we must do to be saved."

"Many people say we're preaching to the choir on Christian television, reaching a lot of people over 60 and shut-ins who are even older. That's not true, but if it were I'd have to say that millions of people over 60 haven't experienced the saving grace of Jesus Christ."

Floyd said that each week Invitation to Life receives calls from people in practically every state.

"And those calls come from people of all ages and from every walk of life," he said. "Quite a few of our callers, young and old, profess faith in Christ as a result of our invitation to accept him and Lord and Savior."

"If asking people to accept Christ is confrontational, I guess

our ministry is confrontational," Floyd remarked. "But it's also very New Testament."

Floyd said when "hurting" people write Invitation to Life or call the program's 800 number asking for help, they are assisted by volunteers from the church's Sunday School classes.

"We have 10 phones now," he said, "and have as many as 500 calls a week. When people call, one of the primary things our counselors are trained to do is to encourage the caller to seek out a Bible-believing church."

He said one of the greatest decisions the church made was to go on television. "For us, it's missions," he said. "It enables us to reach behind closed doors with the message of Christ."

In October, First Springdale will celebrate five years of television ministry. The church used radio exclusively before making the commitment to television more than three years. Floyd has served more than two years as preacher for Invitation to Life.

The church's worship service is carried locally by the ABC affiliate in nearby Fayetteville. Floyd said broadcasting in the area has been a factor in church growth.

"This area is experiencing excellent growth," he said, "but I attribute much of the growth of the church to exposure on television. When I came here we had a membership of 3,800. We now have more than 9,000 members."

"What we're doing with our media ministry is throwing the net a little farther."

Fellowship avoids denomination decision

By Bob Allen

Associated Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, TX (ABP) — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship adopted a detailed mission statement July 21 describing its role in the shadow of the Southern Baptist Convention.

But some participants at the Fellowship's general assembly July 20-22 called for the four-year-old moderate organization to move beyond the SBC and declare itself a new convention.

The mission statement describes the organization as "a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist faith and practice."

The Fellowship's mission, the statement says, is "to network, empower and mobilize" Baptists "for effective missions and ministry in the name of Christ."

It lists seven priorities, led by "doing global missions in a world without borders."

The Fellowship was chartered in 1991 by opponents of the SBC's current conservative leadership. This year's general assembly in Fort Worth gave attention to a growing sentiment that the Fellowship should become a new Baptist convention.

Bill Montgomery of San Antonio, Texas, offered a motion asking the Fellowship to vote on declaring itself a denomination separate from the Southern Baptist Convention in 1996.

Moderator Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler ruled the motion out of order. Parliamentarian Bart Tichenor explained that this year's general assembly could not dictate to next year's meeting.

Despite the motion being rejected, the Fellowship's new moderator, Pat Anderson of Lakeland, Fla., told reporters he plans to appoint a committee to study the question more fully.

"It wasn't an avoidance of the denominational question, but a motion that was ruled out of order," commented Dianne Swaim, moderator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas.

"Denominational status is premature (for CBF)," she added. "That's not what was intended and not where we were headed. There are still too many people who do not want that."

The Southern Baptist Convention, which has instructed its agencies to no longer accept gifts channeled through the CBF, has encouraged the Fellowship to withdraw from the SBC. Fellowship leaders

say they have no plans to start a new convention but acknowledge the possibility has been discussed informally since the Fellowship's early days.

The study commissioned by Anderson will be fueled by a recent survey which showed Fellowship members evenly divided on the question of becoming a convention.

Twenty-four percent strongly favor the move, and another 18 percent show some agreement. But 20 percent strongly disapprove of such a move, and another 16 percent show some disagreement. The rest (22 percent) are uncertain.

Fellowship coordinator Cecil Sherman told Associated Baptist Press the CBF is not yet ready to be a convention. "I would be surprised if this group votes to do that next year, but I'd be a lot surprised if this group hasn't done that within 20 years," he added.

Participants heard theme interpretations about Bible freedom, soul freedom, church freedom and religious freedom.

"Freedom lies very deep in the DNA and chromosomes in the life of Baptists," declared Russell Dilday, acting dean of Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary. "The only true Baptists are free Baptists."

One important aspect of that freedom has been called "Bible freedom," he said.

Baptists interpret the Bible according to the dictates of individual conscience and historically have rejected "all manmade creeds and look(ed) to Jesus alone" as the

object of their faith, Dilday said.

The "aimless, uncertain, postmodern type of culture" modern Baptists live in, however tempts "even Baptists" to adopt creeds or "draw up firm statements of orthodoxy," Dilday noted.

"Authentic Baptists," however, "must reject" that temptation, he said and "affirm our unshaken allegiance to the authority of the Bible."

Noting that early Baptists died for the freedom to interpret the Scriptures, Dilday said "we need some Baptist freedom fighters" for today.

In other business, the general assembly elected Oklahoma pastor Lavonn Brown moderator-elect. Pat Anderson, a Florida college professor, assumed office as moderator for 1995-96, succeeding retired Woman's Missionary Union executive Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The general assembly approved a \$13.3 million budget for 1995-96, including a \$3 million goal for the Fellowship's global missions offering. The budget includes funds for both the Fellowship's own ministries and for various independent ventures such as new theology schools and Associated Baptist Press.

Sixteen new CBF missionaries were commissioned during the meeting, bringing the CBF's total global missions force to 71.

Registration totaled 3,015 for the meeting in the Tarrant County Convention Center, down from the 4,433 registered at last year's meeting in Greensboro, N.C.

CBF defunds Baptist Peace Fellowship

FORT WORTH, TX (ABP) — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship cut its funding of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America July 20 because of the peace group's stated openness to homosexuals.

"That is not why we funded them in the beginning," said CBF coordinator Cecil Sherman, noting the peace group recently broadened its agenda beyond "any normal understanding of peace" to welcome gays into its fellowship and encourage churches to do likewise.

An allocation of \$7,000 for the Peace Fellowship was deleted from the 1995-96 budget of the CBF Coordinating Council by vote of the council July 20, hours before the Fellowship opened its annual general assembly in Fort Worth.

Joel Snider of Nashville, Tenn., chairman of the CBF's ethics and public

policy group, said the ethics panel is open to funding specific projects of the Peace Fellowship or may renew the original relationship "if there are changes" in the organization.

In other action, the CBF Coordinating Council:

- Approved spending \$105,000 to hire seven part-time field representatives for an 18-month trial period. The representatives would promote the work of the Fellowship in churches east of the Mississippi River.

- Distributed \$9 million in surplus mission funds among 13 reserve accounts, with the largest portions going to missionary support (\$3 million) and new-church loans (\$1.5 million).

- Approved funding for various conferences covering such topics as evangelism, church-state relations and biblical interpretation.

Promise House offers 'support and love'

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Virginia, 18, holds the story of her life in her hands. It's a poem she has written to the birth mother she has never seen. The first few lines mirror the questions she has asked repeatedly about her life:

*She used to love me once,
Once when I was small.
She used to love me once,
Now not at all.
Why does she hate me, Lord?
I don't understand.
Did I do something wrong, Lord?
Or did I fall out of command?*

"It's about my mother," she explained. "I needed to know what was going on and it's about what I was feeling when I wrote it last semester."

Virginia (not her real name), a former resident of Promise House in El Dorado, lived there for two years.

Promise House was established four years ago by the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries as a care facility for unwed teen mothers and for non-pregnant girls who need a smaller care environment than the Children's Home in Monticello.

A renovated plantation home, Promise House can provide care for up to 11 girls at once.

Jennifer Cloyde, caseworker for the ministry, said Promise House was created to "help girls who are already pregnant keep that pregnancy and have a healthy baby. We are helping girls through a medically difficult time as well as an emotionally difficult time."

She said it was the best placement choice for Virginia, who was not pregnant, when they learned her story.

"She was adopted at age three with her sister," Cloyde explained. "The couple that adopted her divorced and the mother remarried. That man died, so she was raising his son as well.

"Her mom then married another husband and he was abusing Virginia," Cloyde continued. "When Virginia told her, she refused to believe her and kicked Virginia out instead."

Virginia ended up in one of the ABCHFM's six Emergency Receiving Homes before being placed in Promise House.

"She did real well," Cloyde recalled. "One of the neat things the Lord brought about with her being here was that Virginia was living here where we deal with adoption.



The Promise House in El Dorado, a Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries facility, provides care for unwed teen mothers and as well as young women who need residential care in a small setting.

"She knew some of the pain of being adopted and gave me some insight as to knowing what her pain was and knowing what to do to help these other babies who are being adopted," she explained.

Virginia said the love expressed by the Promise House staff made a life-changing difference for her.

"I came to Christ as my Savior at one of the Emergency Receiving Homes," she said. "I was baptized after I went to Promise House. I have struggled with my relationship with Christ, but it helped me a great deal living at Promise House. I don't know how I would have gotten along without it."

Living at Promise House also changed her outlook on school. She had originally planned to not finish school, working instead on her Graduate Education Diploma.

"When she first came, her grades were not good," Cloyde said. "She decided last year that she was going to put her mind to it and stay in school. Her grades went up to As and Bs."

Living with pregnant girls also changed her outlook on marriage. "It makes me want to wait," she laughed. "But it's exciting getting to feel a kick or they come to you and say, 'I'm going into labor.'"

Cloyde said nine pregnant teens and four other girls lived at Promise House during the 1994-95 year. Five babies were born to residents.

"We have had quite a few girls this year who have had an abortion prior to coming here," she said. "Because they chose Promise House, they didn't have another one."

"A lot of these girls did not have another place to go," she noted. "We see some who have been kicked out of their homes. This is a chance for their education to continue."

She urged Arkansas Baptists, especially pastors, to "call me" when they see a need in their community.

"When pastors call, it's usually just before they have an appointment with a pregnant girl," she explained, adding that "a lot of pastors don't have an appointment until the girl wants to get married."

Cloyde said the ministry receives some intake recommendations from pastors, some from crisis pregnancy centers and some from parole officers. She said the majority are from Department of Human Services officials.

"One thing that I'm seeing is that of the girls who are coming that have been from a church background, many of those have had an abortion," she said.

"We have to realize that, in our churches, the girls there are getting pregnant," she explained. "So many times the church gets the idea that, 'We need to keep them at home,' that 'We don't need to send them away. Promise House is a place where only homeless girls go."

"That's not the case," Cloyde countered. "What I'm seeing is that the families who say, 'Let's just keep her here,' are wonderful and supportive, but they are not looking at the statistics of second pregnancies."

"When I do finally get the church to make a referral, it's usually a second pregnancy, either after an abortion or maybe they placed the first one up for adoption or a family member is taking care of the first one," she said. "They are in our churches. They are pregnant and we have to get the counseling to go with it."

She pointed to Virginia as a case where living at Promise House can make a difference in a resident's life. "She's a different girl. She has grown up so much. She was a scared little girl when she came. The girl she became was such a different young lady."

Noting that many girls who enter Promise House "are scared, lost and need a friend," Virginia affirmed that the home's staff members provide much-needed "support and love."

People

Rev. and Mrs. Gary Hawkins of Thornburg, Alice Collins of Maumelle and Rev. and Mrs. Chester Gray and Daniel Gray, all of Booneville, have returned from a mission trip to Australia.

Milton James and his wife, Pat, were recently honored with a banquet by First Church of Greenwood in honor of his 20 years of service as pastor. State Rep. Ed Wilkinson presented them a plaque from the Arkansas General Assembly. The church has voted to name a youth education building under construction in honor of James. "We wanted to do something that will last for a long period of time," said church member Lee McMillan. "He certainly deserves this honor." James has led the congregation in a membership growth of 1,000 and in paying a \$3 million building and improvement indebtedness. A noteburning service was held July 23 to celebrate payment of the program which included a 1,250 seat auditorium, multipurpose building, two-story educational building and office complex. In addition, the church has contributed \$982,190 to missions since 1975. James is a native of Scott County and a graduate of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife are parents of six children.

Captain F. Lovell, who celebrated 20 years as pastor of First Church in Harrisburg June 25, retired that day and was honored by the church and the community "as being pastor to everyone in town." "I feel like he's served the community as well as our church, whether you go to our church or not," said Lee Siller. "He is willing to do for anyone that needs help." A homebound Sunday School class telephone ministry was another of Lovell's ministries. "As a result of the class, eight professions of faith were made," Lovell said. "I baptized all but three of these before their deaths." Lovell, who had served as chaplain for Poinsett County Jail in Harrisburg since 1985, is now serving the Poinsett County Sheriff's Office as chaplain, ministering to staff members and inmates. Prior to serving the Harrisburg church, Lovell had served churches in Tennessee, Missouri and Florida. He served in numerous associational and state convention leadership positions that include serving as a member of the Arkansas Baptist State



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

Convention Executive Board and moderator of Trinity Association. He is a graduate of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Mo. and served in the U.S. Army in Korea. He and his wife, Ruby, will reside in Harrisburg.

Staff changes

Clark Colbert has joined the staff of Second Church in Arkadelphia as minister to youth. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Rachel Williams retired July 31 as secretary of First Church in Crossett, following 24 years of service.

Howard L. Webb began serving June 18 as pastor of Phoenix Village Church of Fort Smith. Webb, who is retired from the United States armed forces, has more than 37 years of experience working in ministry, church administration, the military and management in the defense industry. He has served churches in Texas, California and Arkansas. Webb attended Central Baptist College in Conway and is a graduate of the University of Central Arkansas. He and his wife, Mary Louise, have three sons.

Jeff Alford has joined the staff of Immanuel Church in Pine Bluff as associate pastor. He comes there from Boynton Church in Ringgold, Ga. He and his wife, Darla, have two sons, Stephen and Philip.

Byron Kennedy is serving as bivocational pastor of McJester Church (formerly Grace Church) in Pangburn. Kennedy, who completed seminary extension courses through Calvary Association, is an employee for White County Memorial Hospital-Home Health. He and his wife, Rebekah, have a son, Brandon.

Brownsville Church in Little Red River Association honored pastor Shelby Bittle July 16 in recognition of his 40th anniversary in the ministry. He was presented plaques and a book of letters in the morning service for which his son-in-law Danny Veteto, director of missions for Independence Association, was the speaker. Bittle previously has been pastor of Union Avenue Church of Wynne, Corners Chapel of Trumann, First Church of Fisher, First Church of Evening Shade, Lone Star Church and Woodrow Church. In addition, he has served as director of missions for Rocky Bayou Association. Bittle is secretary-treasurer of the Arkansas Baptist Evangelists Association.

James Hoffpauir is serving as pastor of Mountain Home Church, coming there from First Church in Timpon, Texas. He and his wife, Cathy, have two children.

Raymond Atwood, who recently moved to the Jonesboro area, is serving as interim pastor of Philadelphia Church. He recently retired as director of missions in Lenoir, Tenn.

Ronnie Simmons and **Chris Bonifant**, who have been serving as interim youth ministry team for Mount Carmel Church in Cabot, have become fulltime staff members. Simmons will become minister of youth and Bonifant will serve as associate minister of youth. Simmons is a University of Central Arkansas graduate. Bonifant is a graduate of Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg and has served churches in Nevada and Texas. She and her husband, Steve, have two sons, Eric and Andy.

Chris Hicks has resigned as pastor of Bethabara Church near Lake City to attend Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ronnie Lowery will begin serving Aug. 13 as pastor of Grace Church in Camden, coming there from Mineral Springs Church in Lockhart, Texas. He previously has been a staff member of two Texas churches. Lowery is a graduate of Criswell College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Deborah, have three children.

Gordon Lunceford will join the staff of First Church in Pine Bluff this month as youth and children's minister, coming there from Kentucky. He and his wife, Kristi, have one son, Kent.



Gene Crouch (left) hands the keys of a 1995 GMC pickup to Captain Lovell and his wife, Ruby, at a retirement reception June 25. The pickup was a gift from members of First Church in Harrisburg in appreciation of the couple's 20 years of service. The Lovells were also given a key to the city and engraved plaques of appreciation by Harrisburg mayor Donnie Faulkner.

Obituaries

Geneva Hairston Dorsey of Warren, age 76, died July 25. She was the wife of Luther F. Dorsey, a retired Southern Baptist pastor. In addition to dedicating herself to the support of her husband's ministry, she had been a teacher in schools in Arkansas, California and Hawaii. She was a member of First Church in Warren and the Warren Women's Club. Dorsey was an honor graduate of Ouachita Baptist University where she was a member of the debate team. She also studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and universities in California and Hawaii. Other survivors are children Fred Dorsey of Warren and Ann Castleberry of Denham Springs, La.; a sister, Martha Hairston of Little Rock; a brother, Hugh Hairston of Paducah, Ky.; and five grandchildren. Memorial gifts may be sent for Baptist mission work in Brazil through First Church, P.O. Box 189, Warren, AR 71671.

Ordinations

Lexington Church in North Central Association ordained Charles Deckelman to the gospel ministry July 16.

Jacksonville First Church ordained Jim Barton, Gene Marak and Paul Chastain as deacons July 23.

Life Line Church in Little Rock ordained Russ Burleson, Jerry Carroll, Kevin Davis, Mark Ellis, Larry Hogue and Dale Terry as deacons July 23.

Beech Street Church in Gurdon ordained Larry Plyler, Bryan Caldwell and Charles Woolf as deacons July 23.

Sheridan First Church ordained Mike Watson, Mack Dixon, Steve Bray and Steve Murphy as deacons July 30.

Lepanto First Church recently licensed William Thomas Johnson and Kevin McCloud to the preaching ministry.

Church news

Central Church in North Little Rock youth and college and career departments were recently in Waterloo, Iowa to assist Trinity Church there with surveys, evangelistic enlistment and Vacation Bible School. The VBS enrolled 50 and resulted in seven professions of faith.

Park Hill Church in North Little Rock will host Christian music recording artist Bryan Duncan in concert Aug. 26 at 7 p.m.

Clarksville Second Church youth have returned from a mission trip to Macy, Nebraska. Their work in an Omaha Baptist center resulted in three professions of faith. Vacation Bible School sessions and revival services on an Indian reservation resulted in 90 professions of faith.

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— registration fee required by Sept. 1. Final payment is due by Oct. 1.

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Annuity Board trustees hear of 6-month record earnings

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO (BP)—Net earnings of \$416 million in six months pushed total assets of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to \$4.797 billion, a 9.4 percent increase over June 30, 1994.

The large increase in earnings, an 18.4 percent increase in benefits paid, and notice of an anonymous gift to endowment exceeding \$1 million were highlights of reports to Annuity Board trustees in their summer meeting at Colorado Springs, Colo.

The earnings reflected dramatically improved stock and bond markets in 1995. John R. Jones, senior vice president for investments, reported nonannualized performances of the board's four investment funds in the first half of 1995: 2.74 percent for the International Equity Fund, 18.19 percent for the Variable Fund,

13.33 percent for the Balanced Fund, and 3.07 percent for the Fixed Fund.

Paul W. Powell, president, told trustees, "God has given to you and me one of the most fulfilling ministries imaginable: to ensure and insure protection, comfort, security and dignity for the people he has called in churches and institutions affiliated with Southern Baptist state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention." He noted total assets of the board grew at a rate of \$2.18 million a day since Jan. 1, 1995.

Harold Richardson, treasurer, reported the first two quarters of the year produced "by far the best report of earnings since the inception of the different investment funds." He said contributions to individual accounts totaled another \$123.3 million, an increase of \$4.8 million or 4.5 percent

above the same six months in 1994.

Richardson cited a large increase in benefits paid as an indication of people retiring with larger accumulations. A total of \$97 million was paid out in the first six months, compared to \$81.9 million in the first six months of 1994.

Relief ministries of the board, bolstered by growth in Cooperative Program receipts, reported payments totaling \$576,472 in six months. The Annuity Board receives no Cooperative Program money for operations. All CP money received by the board is used in relief payments to aged ministers, missionaries and their widows who are in financial trouble. More than half of the 505 individuals and couples on relief do not receive any benefits because their churches never enrolled them in a retirement plan.



UPDATE

Arkansas/European Baptist Partnership

Twenty-five Arkansas Baptists have just returned from Interlaken, Switzerland, where they had wonderful experiences serving in leadership roles for the EBC Summer Assembly. The Assembly was attended by nearly 900 people from 22 European countries.

Don Moore served as Assembly Bible Study teacher and Alan Moore as music director.

Others with leadership roles were: Martha Dewbre, Bob Holley, Frank Gantz, Tom Walker, Nadean Bell, John Bell, Reg Hamman, Laurie Harrison, Jeannie Williams, Harry Black, Ivetta Black and Donna Harrison.

Needs:

★ Arkansas church partners for churches in Naples, Italy; Athens, Greece; Augsburg and Ansbach, Germany.

★ Help on a construction team in Kaiserslautern, Germany, Sept. 17-30, 1995.

★ Interim pastors

★ Leadership for Sunday School Conference (by age groupings), in the Netherlands and Germany, Sept. 23-30, 1995.

★ Team members to help survey Berlin for new work.

Please contact the ABSC Brotherhood Dept., Doyle Plummer or Harry Black, 501-376-4791, ext. 5190, for more info.

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For more information, contact the Ouachita BSU office at 245-5536.

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SACS affirms 'good standing' of Southwestern Seminary

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—A recent evaluation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools affirmed Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's standing with the accrediting agency.

According to David Carter, associate executive director of SACS' Commission on Colleges, "Southwestern remains as a member in good standing" with SACS.

The report follows an announcement by the Association of Theological Schools earlier this year that the accrediting agency

was placing Southwestern on probation for two years, beginning last January, in the wake of the March 1994 firing of president Russell H. Dilday by seminary trustees.

According to Southwestern president Ken Hemphill, SACS' positive remarks are a reflection of the good spirit on campus.

"This is an affirmation of the cooperative spirit among our students, faculty and trustees—that everyone is working for the continued progress and health of the seminary," Hemphill said.

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The Sunday School Board
Serving God by Serving You

Discipleship consultants to meet with pastors

Like the message on the pizza delivery truck, "We deliver," said Bob Holley in anticipation of the Discipleship Training and Enrichment Project, a state first.

Holley, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship training and family ministry department, said the project, held Aug. 28-31, may reach 250 Arkansas Baptist churches.

"We will deliver the latest in materials and approaches for strengthening Discipleship Training in every church," he noted.

It is, he said, "an attempt to help churches look at their unique needs and concerns - to help them discover the best approaches and resources to strengthen their discipleship ministry."

"The project, though, does not involve meetings," he noted. "It relies on well-trained, experienced consultants who will make personal visits with pastors."

Holley said 26 consultants have been trained and consultations are already scheduled in 36 associations in the state.

"The consultants have been trained to be good listeners," he explained. "They will explore approaches and resources during the consultations."

The project, he said, is not only a first for Arkansas but other Southern Baptists. "We will have consultants from other states here to observe what we are doing."

For more information or to schedule a consultation, contact Holley at the ABSC discipleship and family ministry department; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5160.

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CHILDREN'S HOME

Children's Home collects \$750,000 in receipts in 'Apples for Students' drive

Although the 1994-95 "Apples for Students" campaign fell short of its goal, Children's Home leaders hope to achieve the 1995-96 \$1 million campaign goal.

Kim Bussell, director of special activities for the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home in Monticello, said Arkansas Baptists collected more than \$750,000 in receipts from shopping at Harvest Foods supermarkets for the 1994-95 campaign.

The receipt tally was almost a quarter of a million dollars short of the campaign goal, but the Children's Home was able to redeem the receipts for computer equipment for Home residents.

The Apples for Students program allows supporters of not-for-profit children's charities to redeem Harvest Food receipts for Macintosh "Apple" computer products.

The coupons were redeemed by the Home for two Macintosh computers, two printers and matching software programs.

"The equipment went to the Children's

Home to be used by residents," she said.

"The biggest thing this does," she explained, "is move residents into competitiveness. It gives them the opportunity to have added help at the Home that they would not have otherwise had."

In addition to the two computers the Home won during the campaign, the Home won a third computer system for collecting the largest number of receipts per child.

Bussell noted that 37 Arkansas Baptist churches were active during the campaign and cited Cullendale First Church in Camden, Fairdale Church in Hot Springs and Second Church in Little Rock as congregations collecting the most receipts.

She said she anticipates achieving \$1 million in receipts during the 1995-96 campaign. "All you have to do is, when you shop at Harvest Foods, save your receipts and send them directly to me," she said. "You can send them from your church on a weekly basis or personally.

But it is important to send them weekly or bi-weekly."

She said the 1995-96 campaign will begin when Harvest Foods begins broadcasting promotional television advertisements for campaign kick-off in September.

For more information or to send receipts, contact Kim Bussell at the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home, P.O. Box 180, Monticello, AR 71655; phone 501-367-5358.

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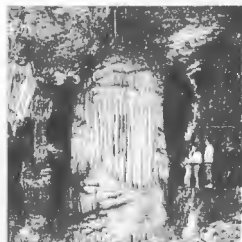
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Fired Texas BSU director sues

GALVESTON, TX (ABP) — A woman who was fired from her job as a Texas Baptist Student Union director after being ordained to the gospel ministry is suing her former employer, claiming gender discrimination.

The woman, Raye Nell Dyer, 44, who now lives in Houston, was removed from her campus ministry position at University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston because of controversy over her ordination. Later, after turning down a demotion, she was terminated by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, her

employer for 10 years.

The suit, filed July 17 in Galveston County district court, names as defendants the state convention, Galveston Baptist Association and Jack Greever, who recently resigned as the Texas convention's director of student work.

While several controversies have erupted in the past over the issue, Dyer's is thought to be the first lawsuit in Southern Baptist life involving women's ordination, said a spokesperson for Baptist Women in Ministry, a national clearinghouse based in Louisville, Ky.

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Wanted — Full-time pastor. Send resume to: Lee Creek Baptist Church, 2445 Old Uniontown Road, Van Buren AR 72958.

Needed — Lead custodian's assistant. Apply Life Line Baptist Church, 7601 Baseline Road, Little Rock, 72209. Attention: Larry Sherman, 568-5433.

Part-time youth minister — Lamar Baptist Church is now accepting applications for a part-time youth minister. Please send resume to: Youth Committee, P.O. Box 196, Lamar, AR 72846. Resumes need to be received by October 1, 1995.

Children's minister — Full-time position. Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas. Please send resumes to Staff Search Committee, c/o Ross Burton, 1901 North Pierce Street, Little Rock, AR 72207.

Cook — to work 10 hours each Wednesday, contact Janet Golman 565-3474, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Monday through Wednesday.

Accepting resumes — for full-time pastor. First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 88, Harrisburg, AR 72432.

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WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION

Changes in WMU structure to be covered at IMPACT

"Train to be your best," Julia Ketter urged Woman's Missionary Union leaders, "by attending one of the IMPACT '95 training meetings."

IMPACT, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention WMU department, will be offered at nine locations across the state in August and September.

Ketter, executive director of Arkansas WMU, said attending this year's IMPACT was important because of "the changes in WMU structure, leadership and literature,"

referring to the WMU's new Women on Mission organization, which begins in October.

"It will be important for Women on Mission leaders to know how to function in October," she added. "They will need to know how to start the new year excited and informed."

All IMPACT meetings will be held in two sessions: morning sessions, 9:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. and evening sessions, 6:30 p.m.-9:15 p.m. One-day meetings will begin

with a morning session and conclude with an evening session. Two-day meetings will begin with an evening session and conclude with a morning session.

They will be held at the following dates and locations: Aug. 28 at First Church, Warren; Aug. 29-30 at Central Church, Magnolia; Aug. 31 at Park Hill Church in Arkadelphia; Sept. 11 at Calvary Church in West Memphis; Sept. 12-13 at East Side Church in Paragould; Sept. 14 at Central Church in North Little Rock; Sept. 25 at First Church in Harrison; Sept. 26-27 at First Church, Prairie Grove; and Sept. 28 at Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith.

The training meetings will offer one-hour conferences for participants, including Mission Friends, Girls in Action and Acteens basic and advanced conferences, a preview of the 1995 Foreign Mission Study and "creative ideas" conferences. Also offered are conferences for new WMU directors and assistant directors, church missions coordinators.

Ketter urged all Women on Mission leaders and members to attend a special two-hour conference highlighting Women on Mission.

A Baptist Book Store also will be available during the meetings, as well as preschool child care.

There is no cost for the meetings. For more information, contact the Arkansas Baptist State Convention WMU department; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5137, or your associational WMU director.

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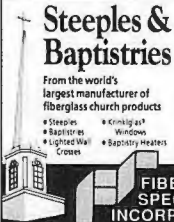
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Convention Uniform

God hates it most of all

By David Welch, associate pastor,
Geyer Springs First Church,
Little Rock

Basic passage: Isaiah 9:8-10:4

Focal passage: Isaiah 9:8-12

Central truth: God hates arrogance
in His people most of all.

Blindness is a terrible condition. It is like living life in a long hall of darkness. Spiritual blindness is worst of all. It makes one a bumbling fool. The one cause of it is pride: the sin of self-sufficiency.

Such was the condition of Israel during the ministry of Isaiah. Though the prophet had encountered God in a powerful and humbling way in chapter 6, His people were totally blinded by their own arrogance. Devastation was on its way.

■ *Arrogance blinds one from recognizing God's judgment when it comes* (vv. 9:9-10). Verse 8 declares God's judgment on the nation. In fact, Assyria had already made some devastating attacks. Yet Israel arrogantly responded with, "We will rebuild...we will replace..." (v. 10). They couldn't see God's judgment happening right before their eyes! The same could be true in our land today. Chapter 1 of Romans declares that God's worst judgment is to give one over to what they want.

■ *Arrogance keeps one from repenting even while experiencing God's judgment* (v. 9:13). In Verse 12 we see Aram attacking from the east and Philistia from the west, yet Israel would not repent! What blindness! If only they would turn back, God would relent. But they had become so hardened that they were no longer sensitive to the Lord at all. So is the effect of a sin pattern in our own lives. Like drying cement, it slowly hardens us beyond repentance.

■ *Arrogance blinds one to his own sinful treatment of others* (vv. 10:1-4). Here it is again. Does it surprise you how often God declares judgment because of our unfair treatment of the helpless? In Verse 1, he used the official pronouncement of doom — "woe." Because Israel refused to help the poor and helpless, the prophet declared, in Verse 4, that "nothing remains but to crouch among the captives, or fall among the slain." It is over for Israel. Judgment will come to any nation who refuses to turn to God and care for the needy among them. Will it happen to us?

This lesson treatment is based on the International Bible Lesson for Christian Teaching Uniform Series. Copyright International Council of Education. Used by permission.

Life and Work

An effective worker

By David Napier, associate pastor,
Immanuel Church, Little Rock
Basic passage: Colossians 4:7-18

Focal passage: Colossians 4:7-12, 16

Central truth: We can find support
for our work through friends and
prayer.

Paul concluded his letter to the Colossians with words of love and greetings sent through his fellow workers. He had addressed the problem of gnosticism and given correct teaching regarding the centrality of Christ its manifestation in the life of a Christian. As he wrote these last words, we see attributes that made Paul an effective worker for Christ.

■ First, we see that Paul did not try to do everything on his own. Often when I think of Paul and other great disciples, I envision men who removed themselves from others, living much like spiritual hermits. However, we see that Paul relied on friends and co-workers who were instrumental in helping the gospel explode during the first century. Paul probably realized early in his ministry that he needed help not only in spreading the Word, but in finding support during times of difficulty. No doubt the support of these "beloved brothers" and "fellow prisoners" helped him endure the persecution he often encountered. We are reminded that in our own lives, we need to surround ourselves with fellow Kingdom workers who will help hold us up when life gets weary.

■ Equally important to Paul's ministry was prayer. Ephraim was singled out as one who prayed fervently, personally and specifically (v. 12). He also prayed with "great zeal" (v. 13). Today many Christians have a disciplined time of prayer each day, but often it is more of a habit and this type of zeal and concern is lacking. We are reminded that there can be no blessing if there is no burden. Praying that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. As we carry our petitions before God, we should do so with a sense of urgency and concern.

Paul closes by reminding Archippus, and all of us, that our ministry has been "received in the Lord." It is a gift. He instructs us to fulfill that gift by allowing God to work through us to complete good works. Here Paul captured the premise of the book of Colossians. If we allow ourselves to be filled full of Jesus, we will be fulfilled in our ministry through Him. In a world of frustration, violence and sin, what a wonderful blessing for Christians!

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Bible Book

Can these bones live?

By Marty Watson, pastor,
Baring Cross Church,
North Little Rock

Basic passage: Ezekiel 36:16-39:29

Focal passage: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Central truth: In the midst of total
hopelessness, God provides life and
hope.

"Can these bones live?" Just as this question penetrated the mind and heart of Ezekiel in Israel's exile, it penetrates our hearts today. As we look over the dry bones of dusty membership roles and wonder if they can ever be revived into a mighty army, Ezekiel looked intently over the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37.

This vision of a valley of dry bones, symbolizing the spiritual condition of Israel, was the method God used to convey His message of hope to a people who had given up hope. God transported Ezekiel through this vision to a valley of dry bones, bleached by the sun and utterly lifeless. He then asked Ezekiel if these dry, lifeless bones could live. Ezekiel gave the perfect answer: "O Lord God, you know" (v. 37:3). God then instructed Ezekiel to "prophecy to these bones." (v. 4). His message reveals God's promise, "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live" (v. 5).

Ezekiel did as he was instructed then watched as the bones came together, as sinews and flesh covered the bones and then as skin covered them over (vv. 7-8). One thing was still missing, however. There was no life in them. Ezekiel was then instructed to prophecy to the breath, "Come from the four winds, O breath and breathe on these slain, that they may live" (v. 9). The breath of God entered the bodies and they become a great army.

God then drew the parallel between the dry bones and Israel. Israel had said, "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost and we ourselves are cut off" (v. 11). God promised to "open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you into the land of Israel" (v. 12). He also promised to put "My Spirit in you, and you shall live!" (v. 14).

How often do we feel like the people of Israel? This passage is a reminder that no matter how desolate our situation, no matter how dry our bones, no matter how empty our spirit may seem, God can still breathe fresh air into our lives and make us alive. We may at times be helpless, but we are never hopeless. Praise God!

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Convention Uniform

Wine is a mocker

By David Welch, associate pastor,
Geyer Springs First Church,
Little Rock

Basic passage: Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21, 29-35

Focal passage: Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35

Central truth: The use of alcohol in a believer's life makes him "unwise."

Though there are many who say the Bible does not prohibit the believer from drinking alcohol, it only takes a few moments of study to realize that the Bible gives extraordinarily strong warnings about alcohol's dangers. In Verse 20:1, a person who drinks wine and strong drink are characterized as one of degraded character: a mocker and a brawler. The idea is that wine mocks the one who drinks it and strong drink (beer) makes one aggressive and belligerent. The word for "wine" in this passage refers to fermented grape juice. "Strong drink" refers to drinks that were made from barley, dates or pomegranates. It was intoxicating and was forbidden for priests (Lev. 10:9), Nazirites (Num. 6:1-3) and others (Isa. 5:4). The proverb describes one who is willing to become intoxicated as "unwise." Knowing what we know about a human's predisposition toward addictions, why would believers even take the chance of allowing alcohol to be a part of our lives?

Verses 23:29-35 are the longest and clearest warning in Proverbs against drunkenness. Six questions call attention to emotional problems: "woe" and "sorrow," social problems—"contentions" and "complaints;" physical problems such as "wounds"—from brawls or falling into things while staggering—and "redness of eyes" that stem from lingering long "over wine and mixed wine." Wine seems attractive; it is red, sparkling and smooth to our senses. But eventually, it will bite like a snake.

Drunkenness also leads to mental problems (v. 23:33): hallucinations and perverse or abnormal things. Physically, a drunkard is off-balance as he walks. In his stupor, he imagines himself moving like a sailor swaying at the top of a ship's rigging. Also a drunkard is insensitive to pain when people hit him. Sensing his stupor, he still longs to escape by having another drink (v. 23:35). Alcohol controls him and he is a slave to wine. As believers, we strive only to be slaves to righteousness and not any kind of sin (Rom. 6:19).

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Life and Work

Alcohol's deception

By David Napier, associate pastor,
Immanuel Church, Little Rock
Basic passage: Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21, 29-35

Focal passage: Proverbs 23:29-35

Central truth: Drugs and alcohol may appear to be the elixir of the affluent and happy, but the appearance is not the reality.

Despite our growing awareness of the problems associated with chemical dependency, alcohol and drug abuse continues at an epidemic pace. Often these chemicals are portrayed as a panacea by the media. However, God's word teaches us the opposite. The writer of Proverbs addressed this issue in no uncertain terms.

■ **Conviction**—In Verse 20:1, the writer stated that anyone led astray by alcohol is lacking in wisdom. To put it bluntly, they are ignorant. Chemical abuse is a result of overindulgence and a lack of self-discipline. These two deficiencies are visible in our country today. For the most part, we are able to instantly indulge our every whim.

Access to immediate gratification often clouds our judgment and makes it difficult to see the negatives associated with many things. An intelligent person will have the wisdom to recognize these, and other, pitfalls of substance abuse and avoid them.

■ **Companions**—The writer noted in Verses 23:19-21 the two best ways to avoid substance abuse. The first is to be careful about those with whom we associate. Again he uses the word "wise" to describe those who avoid the companionship of "winebibbers." Peer pressure can affect anyone, so it is important to associate with those who share similar values with us. We are also advised in Verse 19 to let our wisdom guide our heart. Too often we let our emotions rule our actions. If we are prepared mentally, we won't be as likely to be swept away in the "fun and frivolity" of the moment. This means knowing your convictions and sticking with them.

■ **Consequences**—Verse 29 begins a list of consequences resulting from drunkenness. The writer also closed with a warning about the deception of alcohol. It looks so appealing, "sparkling smoothly in the cup" yet it has the bite of the serpent. Finally, in Verse 35, we see how it can "strike" and "beat" us, yet our senses are so dulled, we can't perceive the damage. That leads to the desire for more: "waking that I may seek another drink." Wisdom is avoiding drug and alcohol abuse.

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Bible Book

Abstinence is right choice

By Marty Watson, pastor,
Baring Cross Church,
North Little Rock

Basic passage: Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21, 29-35

Focal passage: Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21, 29-35

Central truth: The wise person abstains from the use of alcohol.

We are bombarded daily with the image of alcohol as a positive part of society. The most appealing, expensive advertisements convey this message. At the same time we are being made increasingly aware of the dangers and devastation of alcohol's control on our society. The writer of Proverbs addressed this problem long before our society decided that alcohol and drug abuse was something to be dealt with.

In Verse 20:1, we are introduced to the corrupting power of alcohol: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler and whoever is led astray by it is unwise." Alcohol produces an attitude contrary to the Spirit of God. In Verses 23:19-21, we are encouraged to choose against indulging in alcohol. The emphasis is on our responsibility and opportunity to choose our path.

In Verses 23:29-35, the negative effects of alcohol are addressed when the writer asked, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?" His answer: "those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine."

The dangerous perception of alcohol is characterized by its visual, physical and social appeal (v. 31). The reality, however, is that "at last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper" (v. 32). It causes eyes to see strange things, a mind to imagine confusing things, a body to never rest, senses to grow unresponsive and desires to crave more of the same thing.

Our society's addiction to alcohol and drugs is symptomatic of a larger problem. It is the symptom of souls crying out for help and finding temporary relief in a bottle, a syringe or a pill. The relief they are seeking will not be found there.

The relief they seek will only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. His relief brings solace to the soul, not numbing to the mind. His relief brings the power to endure and overcome one's circumstances rather than succumb to one's circumstances. Abstinence: It is the only choice!

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SBC Cooperative Program gifts down for July, up for year

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program gifts for July dropped 2.68 percent below the same month a year ago, but the totals for the year-to-date still are above the previous year by 2.02 percent, according to Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

CP gifts for the month of July totaled \$11,708,855 compared to July of 1994 of \$12,030,817, a drop of \$321,962 or 2.68 percent. For the ten months of the SBC's fiscal year, the totals stand at \$121,023,134 compared to the same period a year ago of \$118,630,576, an increase of \$2,392,558 or 2.02 percent. The SBC's fiscal year is from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30.

Designated gifts for July were up 32.55 percent over the month a year ago: \$5,624,435 compared to \$4,243,380 — a \$1,381,055 increase.

The SBC's Program Allocation Budget requires \$11,378,310 each month. Thus July's gifts were 2.91 percent above the monthly budget requirement, or \$330,544. For the year-to-date, the CP gifts are 6.36 percent above the budget requirement, or \$7,240,026.

Southern Baptist hunger gifts drop for 1994

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist giving to world hunger was down by almost \$1 million last year, from \$7.93 million in 1993 to \$6.96 million in 1994 — more than a 12 percent decrease.

Figures from the Home Mission and Foreign Mission Boards show giving for hunger was down in 25 of 40 state conventions.

According to Jim Foster, the FMB's human needs consultant, the drop in giving to hunger and relief threatens ministries to hungry people in the very near future. "At the current rate at which gifts are being received, and if projects are submitted in the same numbers as last year, the available funds will be completely depleted as early as January or February 1996.

"The loser will be the poor, the hurting, the suffering peoples to whom our missionaries minister."

While there is no single offering for world hunger, most Southern Baptists will observe World Hunger Day Oct. 8, 1995.

Jim Henry withdraws as NOBTS presidential candidate

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The apparent leading candidate for president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary — SBC President Jim Henry — has withdrawn his candidacy.

New Orleans Seminary is in a search for a new president to succeed Landrum P. Leavell II who has retired. Henry had been identified as the leading candidate by sources close to the search committee.

"I am deeply grateful that the school I love so much considered me as a candidate for president," Henry told Baptist Press. "I believe at this time, it is best for me to withdraw my name and to continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to lead the committee to his man at this critical time in the seminary's life."

Henry, 57, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., declined to elaborate on his decision.

Penn./Jersey board criticizes SBC trustee election process

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The Pennsylvania/South Jersey convention's executive board has charged "abuse" of the trustee election process at the June Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta.

The criticism from the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey came in the form of a resolution adopted by its executive board July 7 in Harrisburg, Pa. A letter, signed by the state convention president and the president of the executive board accompanied the resolution, both sent to SBC Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman, Nashville, Tenn.; Bob Hutcherson, chairman of the SBC Committee on Nominations, Smyrna, Ga.; and SBC president Jim Henry.

The resolution cites the "shared commitment" of the churches, associations, state conventions and national body, charging there was outside intervention in the nomination process for the state's SBC Executive Committee representative and circumvention of the nomination process in a state vacancy for the board of trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

The resolution said "a handful of members of the committee on nominations, consisting of only 10 percent of the whole, including a certain pastor from Kentucky who was assigned to follow up on the nominee from Penn./South Jersey, rejected the nominee put forth by our own representatives on that committee and in turn ratified (a) Virginia layman's choice."

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