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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Nashville, Tennessee

AUG 25 1997



a mission of love

Summer missionary Idvi Rivera of Puerto Rico, one of 19 student workers supervised by the Arkansas Baptist missions department, embraces a North Little Rock youngster during a missions project at Gloryland Church.

Baptists in Guam play key role in airline crash relief

James Dotson

SBC North American Mission Board

Tony and Kristi Smith have experienced their share of natural disasters in the two years Tony has served as pastor of Marianas Baptist Church in Guam, including four major earthquakes and two typhoons. But it was the Aug. 6 crash of Korean Air Lines Flight 801 less than five miles from the church that has become the most intense and emotionally draining relief effort the church has ever undertaken. At least 199 of the 226 people aboard the plane were killed.

Smith was asked by the Salvation Army to coordinate counseling services for rescue workers and family members of victims, as well as collection and distribution of food and drinks at the site. About 125 of the approximately 200 members of the church were involved in relief efforts the week following the crash.

"One of the greatest things I've learned is that you can never have your church overprepared to deal with emergencies," Smith said. "One of the greatest things for our church was that we were as close as we were and that we responded." He noted that relief officials "said they had never seen a church respond as quickly as we did and with the force that we did."

Smith said he first learned of the crash from an emergency medical technician who is a member of the church. The call came at 4 a.m., about two hours after the accident. Several other members were among the first on the scene, helping pull some of the 27 survivors from the wreckage.

Community ministry effort

Smith, who hosts a weekly talk program on the Christian Trans World Radio network in Guam, went on the air to enlist support for relief efforts. "Stuff started coming in from hotels, restaurants, other churches...it was just a matter of the whole community joining together," he said.

Three relief stations were established to support rescue and recovery workers: one at a highway several miles from the site, one at the top of a cliff near the site that also served as a counseling center and another at the bottom of the hill at the crash site itself.

The lower camp — closest to the grisly task of removing the remains of victims — was supervised by Smith's wife, Kristi. She, her daughter and two others manned the tent for four days.

"We felt like the people needed to see our face every day and get familiar with us and talk with us...so we could help with counseling," she said.

"I never realized I could do the things and see the things I saw without being very emotional," she added. "But I didn't even have to think about it....I just hauled down some ice and started to work. It didn't even occur to me to be scared or that sort of thing. I felt it was an honor to be able to help."

Tony Smith also helped coordinate counseling services for about 300 family members of victims who came to Guam, most from Korea. Counselors dealt with the immense grief, frustration and anger, particularly as families visited the site.

Smith said he worked non-stop for about two days and nights after the accident, culminating in the gut-wrenching task of working with family members at the site on Aug. 9. "It was the most emotional day I think I have ever spent in my life," he said.

At the church, members were busy around the clock making sandwiches and preparing supplies. The last of the volunteers were relieved at the site by Korean Air Lines workers by Aug. 13, but Smith said his counseling work is far from over. Those who assisted with the effort continue to deal with the trauma of what they have seen and experienced. AGANA, GUAM (BP)

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



Cover Story

Summer missions...10-11

Summer missionary Idvi Rivera of Puerto Rico, one of 19 student workers supervised by the Arkansas Baptist missions department, embraces a North Little Rock youngster during a missions project at Gloryland Church.

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'Adopt an Annuitant'

Volunteers help provide resources for retired ministers and widows

Little Rock

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

More than a third of retired Arkansas Baptist ministers or their widows who receive retirement benefits through the Southern Baptist Annuity Board receive less than \$200 per month. They are among nearly 10,000 retired Southern Baptist ministers and widows throughout the nation who receive minimal annuity benefits for a variety of reasons.

According to John Ambra, manager of the Annuity Board's "Adopt an Annuitant" program, those with inadequate retirement income include many ministers who served in small, rural congregations. Other reasons cited include failure by churches to adequately provide for their ministers' retirement and failure by ministers and other church workers to adequately prepare for their own retirement.

In an effort to respond to the financial needs of retired ministers, Ambra led a training session at the Baptist Building in Little Rock July 30 for a group of volunteers who will help the Annuity Board create a renewed awareness and participation in the board's Adopt an Annuitant program.

Several Arkansas volunteers have made a one-year commitment to serve as part of an Arkansas Retired Ministers' Support Corps, a new organization designed to help heighten awareness of the needs of retired ministers and widows. The volunteers will offer a local presence as well as knowledge of churches and leaders in their regions in an effort to strengthen communication links between the Annuity Board and local Baptist churches and members.

The Annuity Board's three primary responsibilities among Southern Baptists include retirement administration and insurance services for those currently employed in Southern Baptist churches and organizations.

Relief assistance, the board's third major area of ministry, serves those who no longer are employed and do not have the means to improve their financial situation without outside assistance.

"Fulfilling the Promise" will be the theme of a three-year volunteer ministry seeking to establish a \$12 million endowment fund to address the critical financial needs facing many retired Southern Baptist ministers, workers and widows. Noting that all gifts donated to the fund will go directly to meeting retirement needs, Ambra said the campaign is designed to

inform and educate Southern Baptists about specific needs.

Clarence Allison, pastor of Brookwood First Church in Little Rock and a retired Southern Baptist missionary to Botswana, is among those who have agreed to serve as a volunteer in the Retired Ministers' Support Corps. Noting that he is doing so because he wants to assist in encouraging Arkansas Baptists to give additional support to the Adopt an Annuitant program, Allison explained, "I think it is something Southern Baptists have neglected for a long time. If I can be a little bit of the remedial action, I want to do so."

During the training session, Ambra told the volunteers that nearly 10,000 of the 27,000 individuals receiving Annuity Board benefits are having difficulty meeting the basic needs of life such as food and medical care. Among 823 Arkansas Baptist annuitants, 284 receive less than \$200 per month, 124 receive less than \$100 and 59 receive less than \$50.

In response to that need, the Annuity Board established the Adopt an Annuitant program in 1981. As a result, Ambra noted, "there are 78 retired Arkansas ministers or their widows who are receiving a \$50 supplement."

Supplement qualifications include a monthly income of less than \$1,200 from all sources for a married couple or less than \$900 for widowed or single individuals. Annuity Board officials currently are evaluating the availability of funds for increasing the \$50 supplement to \$75. "The good news is that 2,900 individuals are being provided with monthly supplements," Ambra emphasized. "This is three times as many as were being assisted in the summer of 1995."

"This has been made possible because of increased awareness of Sunday School classes, men's and women's groups, churches, associations, individuals, family members, business associates and organizations or workshops," he reflected. "In 1996, 41 Arkansas donors, 13 of them first-time donors, gave \$36,036 toward the annuitant ministry (not including wills

or trusts) with Second Church of Russellville leading in church contributions."

David McLemore, pastor of the Russellville church, said the church's leadership in this program is a result of contributions from "grassroots-level folks" who have responded to the needs of retired ministers.

Other organizations assisting Arkansas annuitants include the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.

James Walker, director of the ABS Convention and annuity department, said the Adopt an Annuitant ministry meets real needs identified by the Annuity Board. "While the \$50 a month is considered a supplement, ministers or their widows use it to purchase essentials."

"Volunteers for the Ministers' Support Corps in Arkansas have not forgotten their brothers and sisters in ministry as they encourage contributions for the Adopt an Annuitant program," he concluded.

Retired Ministers' Support Corps

The following Arkansas Baptist volunteers are part of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's Retired Ministers' Support Corps. They are available to provide information to churches, Sunday School classes and individuals about the "Adopt an Annuitant" program.

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Clarence Allison | Little Rock | 501-863-1106 |
| John Ashcraft | Little Rock | 501-562-4437 |
| Ray Branscum | Little Rock | 501-225-4313 |
| Sherman Bridgman | Coiway | 501-329-4614 |
| Carroll Caldwell | Texasarkana | 870-773-0925 |
| Aaron Carter | Little Rock | 501-562-4165 |
| Charles Christie | Pangburn | 501-728-4877 |
| Ed Claybrook | Hope | 870-777-4499 |
| David Crouch | Searcy | 501-268-3937 |
| Orvind Dangeau | Eureka Springs | 501-253-5801 |
| John Finn | Parkin | 870-755-5267 |
| Bernard Ford | Hot Springs | 501-623-3125 |
| Jimmie Garner | Trumann | 501-483-7831 |
| Earl Goatcher | Clinton | 501-745-4884 |
| Glenn Hickey | Benton | 501-376-7991 |
| Harrison Johns | Harrisburg | 870-578-9235 |
| L.B. Jordan | Arkadelphia | 870-246-8934 |
| Bill Kendrick | Harrison | 870-743-2171 |
| Alfred Mansell | Heber Springs | 501-362-8705 |
| Fred Savage | Walnut Ridge | 870-886-2479 |
| James A. Walker | Little Rock | 501-376-7991 |
| Harold White | Benton | 501-776-2055 |
| Jesse Whitley | Mabelvale | 501-557-2540 |
| Glenn Williams | Clinton | 501-745-3360 |

A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABCS Executive Director

Which way to the tram? The hurried traveler asked. The shoe-shine man interrupted his work to give directions. "Where is baggage claim?" Dallas airport's busy travelers asked the shoe-shine man for directions five times in the 30 minutes that I waited to catch my flight. Each time, the patient man would give directions. Each time, the traveler would rush away. Each of the five times the shine man called out, "You're welcome." Not once while I watched did anyone thank him for his help.

Jesus healed 10 lepers. Only the Samaritan returned to thank him. Busy travelers and nine lepers have a bit in common. Lately, I've thought about gratitude a lot.

Gratitude, or your lack of it, reveals

what is in your heart. I believe we sometimes fail to show gratitude because we believe we "deserve" certain types of treatment. Aren't you glad we don't get what we truly deserve? I am glad that I don't.

Have you expressed gratitude to your pastor lately? Pastor, has anyone shown you a kindness? Gratitude glorifies God (Luke 17:15-16) and shows that you understand your relationship with Him and those around you.

By the way, thank you for allowing me to minister to Arkansas Baptists. It is a privilege to work with people who work for the Lord.

Have you read *Counterfeit Revival* by Hank Hanegraaff? (WORD, 1997). This is a blistering critique of the "signs and wonders" movement. It gives the historical precedent of such excesses, including an account of the first American instances of being "slain in the Spirit." Dr. Hanegraaff is right — it's not biblical.

Executive director's schedule:

Aug. 27 Central, Magnolia
 Aug. 28-29 Boyce Bible School, Louisville, Ky.
 Sept. 5 (a.m.) Furloughing Missionaries Meeting
 (p.m.) Campers on Mission Rally

Jeb, caught up on sleep but not food, was dressed before his mom came in the next morning. Before his mother could say anything, Jeb said, "Mom, it's going to be a great day!" Jeb's mother knew how to make an attitude adjustment in her son.

Christian people should be the most optimistic people in the world. Every day should be met with thanksgiving to God for life and the opportunities of service. Instead, for some, it always seems like it is "going to be a lousy day." Some people live as though pessimism and doubt are listed among the fruit of the Spirit!

Dr. Robert Naylor was president of Southwestern Seminary in my years there. After seminary, I have had the opportunity to get to know Dr. Naylor and listen to his wisdom. On any number of occasions, I have mentioned matters that disturbed me. This wise preacher would say (and still says), "Rex, remember God is bigger than all that."

Jeb, the prophet of despair, became a possessor of hope within 24 hours. An early start and a few chores was small in comparison to a warm home and good food. We have been saved by the matchless grace of God. The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers us. The Lord Jesus is over all. Brothers and sisters, it is going to be a great day!

Rex Norrie, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

President's Perspective



Rex Norrie

ABCS President

Zig Ziglar tells the story of Jeb. When Jeb was growing up, his mother would awaken him every morning at 5:30 with the words, "Jeb, it is going to be a great day." Jeb's job first thing each morning was to go outside and get coal to start a fire and heat the house.

One morning Jeb snapped at his mother, "No, Mom, it is going to be a lousy day. I'm tired. The house is cold. I don't want to get up and get the coal. It's a crummy day." His wise mom replied, "I didn't know you felt that way. Why don't you just go back to sleep." Jeb did!

When Jeb woke up a couple of hours later, the house was warm and the smell of food filled the house. He dressed and came to eat. Mom said, "Jeb, you don't get any food today. Remember, it is going to be a lousy day. Go back to your room and stay all day. You're not allowed to come out. I'll see you tomorrow morning at 5:30 a.m.!"

quotes

"It was the most emotional day I think I have ever spent in my life."

—Tony Smith, Baptist pastor in Guam, who ministered to families of victims killed in Aug. 6 airplane crash

"It's lonely out here. We are a minority of a minority."

—Richard Lamborn, Baptist Convention of Iowa missions department director

"If every believer was on ministry and mission in the way God was leading them, we could win the world."

—Brenda Clark, Southern Baptist missionary to southern Africa

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

NEWS MAGAZINE

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A ministry of Christian compassion

Making appropriate financial plans for retirement is a top priority for many people in our society today. Unfortunately, that was not a widespread financial focus just a few decades ago. As a result, thousands of people have reached retirement age with insufficient resources to maintain an adequate standard of living.

One of the tragedies in Southern Baptist life is that hundreds of retired pastors or their widows are among those who don't receive enough retirement income to make ends meet each month. And we're not talking here about retirees who can't afford a luxury vacation or a condominium near the beach. According to the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, nearly 10,000 retired Southern Baptist ministers and widows receive less than \$200 a month in annuity benefits. Even coupled with retirement funds from other sources, hundreds of retired ministers live below the poverty level, struggling to pay for groceries, utilities and medical expenses.

The Southern Baptist Convention first began offering retirement benefits through the Annuity Board nearly 80 years ago. William Lunsford, the board's first president, encouraged ministers to "give yourself wholeheartedly to the work," assuring them that "we will stand back of you. If you fall in the work, we will care for you. If you die, we will not permit your family to suffer. If you grow old in it, we will comfort your declining years."

While growing into a \$6 billion ministry providing both insurance and annuity programs, the Annuity Board has sought to fulfill Lunsford's initial promise. Even amid the board's numerous accomplish-

Straight from the Editor



Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

ments, however, the willingness of local churches to invest in their ministers' retirement plan remains a vital link to the true success of the effort.

Christ reminded His followers in Matthew 10:10 that "the worker is worthy of his support." Yet, even today, there are many churches that fail to provide basic retirement resources for the future benefit of their pastor, staff and their families.

For pastors still actively serving in a local church, now is the time for church leaders to make certain that appropriate arrangements have been made to provide financially for their ministers' retirement years. For those already in retirement, the Annuity Board administers a voluntary program designed to provide income assistance for the most needy denominational retirees.

The program, called "Adopt an Annuitant," was launched in 1981. It currently provides a monthly retirement supplement of \$50 each to more than 2,800 needy annuitants. In an effort to provide financial assistance to thousands more retirees with similar needs, Annuity

Board officials have established the Retired Ministers' Support Corps. The volunteer organization involves concerned Baptist leaders donating their time to make churches and individuals aware of the needs of retirees and the availability of the Adopt an Annuitant program.

As part of the expanding network of volunteers, the Annuity Board recently sponsored a support corps orientation session in Little Rock. The needs speak for themselves with nearly 300 Baptist retirees and widows in the state receiving a monthly annuity benefit of less than \$200, including 59 who receive less than \$50 a month.

A total of 24 Arkansas Baptists have agreed to serve in the corps (see list on page 3). They are available to share information with local church groups about the steps involved in providing financial aid to those in need.

According to current Annuity Board president Paul Powell, the Adopt an Annuitant ministry is "more than just a program — it is the very work of our Lord in caring for His people. In a very real sense, we are His hands and feet, extending care and compassion on His behalf."

Churches have a timely opportunity to help impact the lives of ministers who have faithfully answered God's call over the years. The first step is to make certain that your current pastor and staff are receiving adequate, appropriate salaries, insurance and retirement benefits. The next step is to consider helping meet the immediate financial needs of retirees who have nowhere else to turn. It is a Christ-honoring opportunity to extend care and compassion.



letters to the editor

A call for open communion

Our church joined the local association in September of 1996. The next step our church would like to make is to join the state convention. However, at this time I am unable in good conscience to lead my congregation to take this step. I am unable to do so because of the requirement stated in Article III — Membership of the state convention's Articles of Incorporation, which states, "The Baptist Faith and Message shall not be interpreted as to permit open communion."

The Baptist Faith and Message most certainly does not forbid open communion. It states that this ordinance is for members of the church. It also states that the church is composed of "all of the

redeemed." Scripture says nothing about the observance of this important church ordinance being limited to a particular local body of believers, or to Southern Baptist believers.

The only scriptural requirement for the partaking of the Lord's Supper is found in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30. "But let a man examine himself" clearly places the responsibility on the individual, not the pastor, church board, association or convention. It is in the heart of the believer that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the individual, and it is here that the decision to take communion or to abstain should be made. That non-believers should not take communion is true, but who among us can look into another man's heart and determine if he is one of the redeemed?

I believe there are many other pastors and members of our churches who believe that open communion is in accordance to scripture. The legalistic practice of censoring those who chose to practice open communion in accordance to scripture is a hindrance to the gospel, and a source of reproach to Southern Baptists.

Although I certainly respect the state convention's right to limit membership to whomever they please, it troubles me that such a legalistic stand is taken on a matter that is purely church tradition. As such, I believe it should be a matter left up to the individual churches if local autonomy is to be maintained.

Jenny Hall
Fayetteville, AR

Iowa: Why are we needed there?

Ministry provides challenges, say Baptist partners

Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

"I'm lonely out here," said Richard Lamborn. "We are a minority of a minority."

Lamborn, director of the missions department for the Baptist Convention of Iowa, can make a good case for his opinion. With fewer than 13,000 Iowa Baptists, the BCI is often given a cult status by other, more established religious bodies.

"When you list the denominations in Iowa," said BCI executive director Wendell Jones, "the list almost runs out by the time you get to Iowa Baptists." Jones noted that Catholics are the largest denomination in the state, followed by Lutherans.

It is into that situation that Arkansas Baptists have entered into a multi-year missions partnership with Iowa Baptists. The partnership, which runs through 2000, is designed to strengthen Southern Baptist churches in Iowa through encouragement, missions projects and prayer.

Although the Arkansas Baptist State Convention is among the smallest of the state conventions in the Old South, it is still in a position to contribute immense human resources to Iowa. For example, while there are about 12,500 Iowa Baptists in a state of nearly 2.8 million people, Southern Baptists comprise the largest denomination in Arkansas, numbering just under a quarter of the nearly 2.4 million people in the state.

Financially, about 1,300 Arkansas Baptist churches contribute to a \$17.6 million Cooperative Program state budget, while Iowa Baptists operate on a \$1.3 million budget from 103 churches.

But numbers and dollars don't give the total picture of the challenges of ministry in what is truly a pioneer work state. According to Lamborn, 43 of Iowa's 99 counties have no Southern Baptist presence: They are what are termed "uncentered" counties by the BCI.

Among the challenges of ministry in Iowa is the prevalence of more established denominations, such as Catholics and Lutherans, that historically have been wary of more evangelistic Baptists.

Mark Elliott, director of missions for two associations that cover western Iowa, noted the small Baptist presence in his area. "Lutherans make

up 19.4 percent of church membership and Catholics are 18.6 percent. Southern Baptists make up 0.3 percent of church members."

Ray Telschow, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Ottumwa, emphasized the minority of Southern Baptists in that city. "We have 78 churches in Ottumwa and 28,000 people, but only two Southern Baptist churches." He noted that about

40 percent of the city claim Catholicism as their faith.

He said that survey teams that were part of a mission team from First Church in Lonoke encountered "a little bit of opposition" this summer. "We had 12 groups, with three in a group, but only came up with 10 contacts."

Jesse Smallwood, a student at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary who served as a summer pastor for Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Council Bluffs, noted the distrust of Baptists among other denominations. Following witnessing efforts aided by Second Church in Forrest City and First Church in Hot Springs, Ridgecrest saw 26 children and youth make professions of faith.

"Of the 15 we've followed up on so far," he said, "none of their parents have let them be baptized. Most have said that they've already been

baptized (sprinkled) when they were babies."

Praxis team member Phil Hamline, who is working to start a mission church in Stuart, said that his challenge has been ministering in "closed Catholic communities. They don't even want to talk to me. They won't open their door or they open it and say, 'Oh, yeah, I read about you,' and then close the door. They see us as a cult."

Rich Keyser, a summer Praxis mission team member from Midwestern Seminary, said he found the same resistance to the gospel, especially among Catholics, as he witnessed in Kingsley. Keyser knows why: He grew up in the Roman Catholic faith.

"It was tough going door-to-door. All you rely on is the Lord," he observed. "The challenge is that Catholics do not want to be converted."

"I tell them that they let a Catholic be a Southern Baptist minister and that helps," he laughed. "It is not as important, though, to push religion, but a personal relationship with Christ. Religion is not going to save them."

BCI president John Shaull, pastor of First Baptist Church in Winterset, said Iowa Baptists are up



John Shaull, pastor of First Baptist Church in Winterset, said that among ministry challenges in Iowa, "the biggest single detriment to a church reaching a community is our desire to pay the price to accomplish it. I sense sometimes that we are swallowed up in the activities of our lives and we lose the vision of what matters in eternity."

"They (Catholics) don't even want to talk to me. They won't open their door or they open it and say, 'Oh, yeah, I read about you,' and then close the door. They see us as a cult."

—PHIL HAMLINE

Praxis team member and church starter in Stuart, Iowa

Planting seeds of hope, reaping a harvest of faith

against more than denominational loyalties in ministering in Iowa. "It's sin. Having grown up here, I haven't seen anything different about the people here. The issues in people's lives are the same.

"The biggest single detriment to a church reaching a community," he said, "is our desire to pay the price to accomplish it. I sense sometimes that we are swallowed up in the activities of our lives and we lose the vision of what matters in eternity."

Jonathan Wade, pastor of Ida Grove Baptist Church, said he has noticed that ministry in Iowa is tough "because Iowa is like another country. People up here don't like to be messed with. You try to get too deep and they shut you off.

"You don't build churches here with a 'big bang theory,' but by building relationships slowly."

"The fruit is not as obvious here," agreed Leo Endel, pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church in Sioux City. "It's slow in coming but when it does, it moves quickly."

Wade said limited resources also hamper Southern Baptist efforts in Iowa. "The churches are extremely small and their support is limited. Just in this area, we've lost two pastors in six months. We just don't have the resources."

"Churches struggle and many of them fade out of existence," admitted executive director Jones. "They just don't survive two or three bad experiences. Our churches that have been successful have been started by pastors who have stayed with it and gotten involved in their communities."

Jones said that low resources often result in pastor resignations due to lack of support. "Small congregations can't afford a pastor. We appreciate the support that comes from Arkansas, but we have a real need to provide resources to pastors."

Part of the answer, Jones said, is for pastors in states that have an established Southern Baptist presence to seek God's will to minister in a pioneer setting.

"We have a need for experienced pastors," he said, "pastors who have a definite call to minister with a sacrificial mindset, willing to take a lesser salary or certainly a smaller church and dig in and stay with it until it grows."

Sunny Williams, pastor of Pioneer Baptist Church in Denison, was pastor of Shell Lake Church in Arkansas when he answered that missions call.

"We had a good ministry at Shell Lake and baptized lots of people," he noted. "But we really care about this place, there is an overpowering need here, just as much as in places like Mexico or Brazil. This town is the size of Wynne, Ark., but has half the churches.

"This is America's heartland," he observed as he witnessed and distributed tracts at a ministry booth at the Crawford County Fair, "but Iowa has a darkness."

Uncommon pastor takes Word to 'investigators' in Des Moines

The pastor of Common Ground Ministry isn't what many would call a "common" Southern Baptist pastor. He has shoulder-length hair, talks the language of the street and plays lead guitar during worship services.

But Scott Willsey, 32, said he is reaching an alternative audience of urban young people in Des Moines who "don't know Christ or know Him nominally" since he established the mission church in January.

Common Ground developed out of Willsey's vision for a church in Des Moines "that would primarily reach out to unchurched people and share the gospel of Christ with them," he explained. "God gave me a vision of a church that was a place where everyone was accepted where they are, but that showed them a better way."

That vision first came to him as a student last year at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Richard Lamborn, director of the missions department for the Baptist Convention of Iowa, talked about the challenges of ministering in Iowa as a guest lecturer in a church-planting class where Willsey was enrolled.

Willsey admitted that the prospect of listening to church-planting strategies in Iowa hardly enthused him enough to distract from studying for a church history exam he anticipated in his next class.

But during the lecture, Willsey recalled, Lamborn said that "a contemporary church would go like wildfire in Des Moines."

That perked Willsey's interest enough to listen. He worked for Lawson Baptist Church in Kansas City as a youth and drama leader and played guitar for a Christian rock band. A contemporary, style church was an ideal vehicle for his ministry vision.

He said that Lamborn's call for an urban ministry in Iowa "cut me to the heart. After I finished the history exam, I showed up for an interview with no resume and told them, 'I have no idea what I'm doing here.'"

The interview with Lamborn at the seminary was followed by another in

Iowa. He said that as Iowa representatives drove him and his wife, Lisa, through Des Moines, which has a population of about 300,000, "God said, 'This is the place.'"

Common Ground held its first service in January at a Des Moines hotel and had an average of 16 in attendance that



Scott Willsey is pastor of Common Ground Ministry, a non-traditional church that reaches urban young adults through contemporary worship and Bible study.

month. By June, the church was meeting in a Missionary Baptist church facility downtown and the monthly average attendance was up to 27. Willsey said the congregation, which is mainly attended by college students and young adults (the oldest member is 47) is geared to "investigators."

"An investigator's service is a place where somebody can go that seeking," he said. "That's what we get. They don't know Christ or know Him nominally. Our mission is to provide people with a safe and healthy environment to investigate, grow and practice their faith in Jesus Christ."

In addition to the investigator's services that feature a contemporary format, Willsey hosts Tuesday Night New Beginnings group in his home for those who have recently accepted Christ as their Savior and those who want to learn more about Christianity.

As the church continues to grow, he said the church plans to offer life skills groups and develop a youth ministry.

Mission support

State WMU leaders expand vision and opportunities



“We will be doing a broader approach to all areas of missions support and education, such as customizing a mission strategy for a church that doesn't have a WMU.”

JULIA KETNER
Team leader of proposed mission support team

The new team bears an obvious resemblance to the existing Arkansas Baptist State Convention Woman's Missionary Union department, but if Arkansas Baptist messengers approve a proposed convention-wide restructuring plan at their annual meeting this November, they will enable the team to promote missions support among a larger public.

Team leader Julia Ketner said that with the reorganization, "we will be doing a broader approach to all areas of missions support and education, such as customizing a mission strategy for a church that doesn't have a WMU. We can do one for their church."

"With a church that is looking for greater mission awareness, we can sit down with a planning group or pastor and develop a year's calendar at no or very limited cost and with a minimum of leadership," Ketner explained. "We're not seen as being able to do that now."

While team duties will enlarge, the number of members will remain the same, with no plans to hire an additional member to fill a vacancy left by Sandy Wisdom-Martin, who resigned earlier this year to work in the ABSC missions department. "We have functioned as a team, so teamwork is no stranger to us," Ketner noted. "Our support staff will be involved more and will be part of the team planning."

ABSC executive director Emil Turner said he is "particularly excited about this team. This does something that no other state convention has done: It creates a team of people that will promote missions through any means that exist in the world."

"It will in no way neglect those churches with

WMUs and the team will continue to offer the fine service it has in the past," he emphasized.

Ketner agreed. "This does not change our relationship to WMU leadership in the state or

national WMU. The names of the organizations in local churches will be the same: Women on Mission, Adults on Mission, Acteens, Youth on Mission, GAS, Children in Action and Mission Friends."

While Turner noted that the team will not neglect WMU needs, "they will have to familiarize themselves with materials and resources they have not been required to be familiar with in the past and it will require churches that do not have WMUs to give this team the opportunity to serve them."

For example, he said, "Many churches no longer have Ras or GAS and have accepted the Awana program. Awana promotes missionaries that are not Southern Baptist."

"If a church wants to have an Awana, they should have Awana, but the missions support team is customizing missions materials that will allow the church to have the Awana ministry it wants and promote Southern Baptist missionaries," Turner explained. "That's just one example of what they'll be able to do."

The new functions of the team can be found in its five impact statements that members developed to gauge team performance. Included in the statements is the desire to: promote missions "through every means possible"; lead more churches to increase annual mission offerings; involve more age groups in missions education; enable more churches to be involved in ministry; and promote missions praying.

To accomplish those goals, member Monica Keathley noted that the team must rely on volunteers. "We're planning to use technology to help do that, such as an e-mail prayer partnership with missionaries and using a homepage" that will be part of a larger convention website.

Member Angela Lowe will focus part of her new duties on enlisting volunteers for "ministry projects to enable churches to be involved in more ministries" including Project Help, Christian Women's Job Corps (a welfare-to-self-sufficiency program in a Christian context) and enlistment of missions team volunteers.

The team also will focus on prayer enlistment and bolstering financial support by adopting a goal to involve 2,500 Arkansas Baptists to intentionally pray for unreached people groups by 2000 and networking with the International Mission Board to customize promotion for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Vision statement:
The Mission Support Team seeks to enable every ABSC church and association to do what they can to fulfill the Great Commission through greater missions awareness, increased missions praying and giving and more personal involvement in missions.

Mission support team members

Mission support team members, who will be assigned tasks according to the proposed team's five impact statements, include:
Team leader Julia Ketner will coordinate mission support and provide team administration, as well as leading churches to increase annual mission offerings and prayer for missions.
Member Monica Keathley will coordinate missions promotion and support among preschool children, adults and language groups as well as working with local congregations to help "customize" missions approaches for them.
Member Angela Lowe will coordinate state missions ministries efforts, missions promotion and support among children, youth and college students and work with churches to develop ministry projects.
Office support team members Helen Moran and Linda Myles will develop team communication strategies and facilitate document processing.
In addition to their newly assigned duties, members will work to involve more Arkansas Baptists in missions education programs and activities.

Redeker resigns Sunday School leadership post

Milton Redeker, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's Sunday School department, has announced his resignation, citing "personal reasons." His final day of service with the state convention was Aug. 15.

Redeker, who is 58, was elected to the Sunday School leadership position by the Arkansas Baptist Executive Board in April 1994. He previously was minister of education at Putnam City Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. He also served 10 years as minister of education at First Baptist Church, Alva, Okla., as well as other ministry positions in Oklahoma and Texas.

Noting that his denominational ministry "has been highlighted by my association with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and specifically with Dr. Don Moore and Dr. Emil Turner," Redeker said both state convention leaders "have been encouragers and exhorters who have been fair in all of their dealings with me and the Sunday School department."

Voicing appreciation for the support of Executive Board staff members, church leaders, directors of missions and others, Redeker said, "The joy of my life has been watching God perform miracles in individual lives in churches as well as in my own personal walk with Him.

"Because of personal reasons," he added, "it is my feeling that God is leading me in another direction." Redeker said he plans to move back to his home state of Oklahoma and pursue other employment options.

Affirming that Redeker "has a good grasp of Sunday School and church growth principles," Turner noted, "The personal circumstances related to his decision to leave are regrettable. My prayer is that his personal issues will be resolved as quickly as possible so that his gifts and abilities can once again be used effectively in ministry."



Arkansas missionary elected to lead Costa Rican mission

Wally Poor

SBC International Mission Board

Greg Smith of Hot Springs was elected chairman of the Costa Rica Baptist Mission during the group's recent annual meeting. The mission is the organization of Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries in the country.

Smith, who has served as a Southern Baptist missionary since 1987, had been serving as mission administrator since last July, while his predecessor, Mark Grumbles, was on furlough.

"It's been a very positive experience, I've enjoyed it," Smith said of his work as administrator. "It's been a real learning experience for me just to understand how the mission works."

Smith and his wife, Sue, who is from Carthage, first served in Costa Rica's Caribbean port of Limon in religious education promotion and theological education by extension. They moved to the nation's capital in 1994. He teaches in the Baptist Seminary as well as traveling each week to teach in seminary extension classes in Punta Arenas, on Costa Rica's Pacific coast.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Costa Rica formally relate to approximately 20 churches of the National Union of Baptist Churches (NUIB). They also relate on an informal basis to the 25 to 30 churches of the Costa Rica Baptist Convention.

The two Baptist groups came into being as a result of a split in the convention in the late '70s. The Costa Rica Mission, while relating formally to NUIB, collaborates with any Baptist church which requests help.

Although the majority of the churches have a "fairly decent" Sunday School program, Smith is working to teach seminary students specific practices they can put into use in the churches where they work.

All the students are required to develop

a ministry either in their home church or the church they are attending.

"I've tried to encourage students to try new work," Smith noted. Although initial efforts have had a "very limited success," he added that "it's something we hope to encourage some more."

Smith's call to missions was influenced by his experiences at Ouachita Baptist University. He had grown up in Second Church of Hot Springs and a mission of that church started by his grandfather, Bill Williams. The mission became Vista Heights Church.

"In college I began feeling more and more a growing burden to minister outside the States," Smith recalled. "One of my professors emphasized it was a shame how many folks stay in the States after they graduate."

That planted the seed for missions in his heart. "It wasn't something that all of a sudden impacted me that I had to go do missions but it was a seed that grew."

Smith met his future wife at Ouachita. They were married before their senior year there. After graduation, the Smiths went to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he earned two degrees.

As the couple considered mission service, the job description prepared by the Costa Rica Mission caught their eye because it sought someone with Smith's qualifications in religious education and mentioned theological education by extension. "I was very interested in teaching and being a part of that," he explained.

Mrs. Smith is involved in full-time ministry as coordinator for the numerous volunteer groups serving in Costa Rica as part of the Costa Rica-Tennessee partnership. Born in Fordyce, she considers Antioch Church near Royal her home church. The Smiths have two son, Jason, 12, and Kyle, 8.

OBU Fall Pastors' Conference to focus on Luke

Participants at Ouachita Baptist University's Fall Pastors' Conference, to be held Oct. 23 at OBU, will study the book of Luke in preparation for the 1998 Winter Bible Study. The conference is sponsored by OBU's Center for Christian Ministries.

The program will feature instruction from OBU religion department chairman Bill Steeger and faculty members Terry Carter, Scott Duvall and Isaac Mwase.

Participants will receive a complimentary copy of *The Message of Luke* by Michael Wilcock, study helps on Luke and access to the OBU religion department computer lab.

The program will begin Thursday at 1 p.m. and conclude Friday with lunch. The cost for the conference is \$35 per person and includes three meals and conference materials. Participants must secure their own lodging.

To register by phone, contact OBU at 870-245-5599 and ask for "Pastors' Conference registration." To register by mail, contact the Center for Christian Ministries, Ouachita Baptist University, OBU Box 3787, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001.

Summer missionaries help meet missions strategies in Arkansas

College students serve in diverse ministry settings

College students from six states, Mexico and Puerto Rico played a major role in Arkansas Baptists' missions strategy by serving as summer missionaries deployed by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department.

The 19 students worked in a variety of ministries, noted Tommy Goode, church and community ministries associate for the ABCS. He explained that the students worked in "Vacation Bible Schools, Backyard Bible Clubs, evangelistic activities, resort ministries, a shopping mall, a school yard, a nursing home, a cotton field, a chicken house, a playground, in the backyard and in the church yard."

Goode said the summer missionaries provide critical services in priority areas for Arkansas Baptists' missions strategy.

"We accept applications for field missionaries based on need," he explained. "Then we prioritize those requests based on our state strategy. This ministry is advancing missions work in Arkansas and strengthening a missions strategy of a church or association."

He noted that the 19 students, chosen from among 25 applicants, received a



Ben Ellington of Texas leads a Bible study during a Vacation Bible School held at Gloryland Church in North Little Rock. He was one of three college students assigned to Gloryland as summer missionaries through the ABCS state missions department.

summer stipend of \$1,000 each. Fourteen of the slots were partially funded by the North American Mission Board, with the rest of the stipends and five additional slots being funded by the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering and associations.

"The state missions department attempts to match a student's abilities and interests with a suitable ministry," Goode said. "We also train a local supervisor for the missionaries and help them come up with a covenant with the students."

Three of the summer missionaries — Ben Ellington of Texas and Idvi Rivera and Madeline Reyes, both of Puerto Rico — were assigned to work at Gloryland Church in North Little Rock, a predominantly black congregation. Was the assignment of an Anglo and two Hispanics a mismatch?

No, said Rita Frazier, summer program director for the church. "God has known exactly who to send to us. It has been wonderful to know that they're ready at any time to do whatever you ask them to do."

Working with Gloryland also has had an effect on the students. "The neighborhood and the people I'm so quick to drive by in Texas are probably the best people I've ever

met," she said. "It's been eye-opening. I know why Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh, but now I can see why the Ninevites need to hear about the Lord."

"Ben has gone the extra mile with some of the boys," Frazier said. "They don't have men in their lives. The majority of our children don't have dads, so any male contact they have is important they have a good experience."

Building trust

"Ben is white and the majority of our children being black has also been positive," she said. "In some homes, people still teach racism, black or white, and this has given them an opportunity to get to know a white man and to trust him."

Rivera said she has been blessed "to come from a different country and a different culture" to minister in the United States. "It's great. The Lord called me to come here, because He wanted me to be prepared for what I have to do in my country. I've never been a missionary even in Puerto Rico."

Reyes emphasized the close relationships the missionaries formed with the children. "The kids are already starting to cry because we are leaving next week and part of my heart is going to stay. I have had an opportunity to encourage and counsel



Sarah Hitt, a sophomore at Arkansas State University, was one of two students working as resort missionaries at DeGray Lake State Park, leading Backyard Bible Clubs and other Christian activities for visitors.

the girls here and because of that, I said, 'Definitely the Lord had put us in the work here.'"

They made an equal impact on the children where they ministered. Suzy Thomas, 7, noted, "They do stuff for you. They can teach you how to do English and stuff and make things. That's why I like them."

Two other associational summer missionaries served at DeGray Lake State Park. Each day Jennifer Crain and Sarah Hitt, both Arkansas State University students, met children and their parents under the oak tree by the park's visitors' center for day camp activities.

"We do day camp every day and make campground rounds, inviting kids to day camp and to Wednesday night services," said Hitt, who added that part of their job is to function as naturalists for the park. "They'll respect us more and they'll let us do what we want to do, which is religious activities. It is a trade-off."

While many of the students reported victories, they also reported challenges they found on the mission field. Kimberly Bounds, who was assigned to work with Trinity Church in Fort Smith, said that her "first attempt at a BBC didn't go as well as I planned. There were about 20 kids at the activity center of a local government housing project. These kids were more interested in games, snacks and seeing how many fights they could start."

But did her experiences deter her from wanting to participate in missions? No, she answered. "I find myself ready to go back to school, but not ready to leave."

"When I finish school, I will be ready to spend my life in full-time Christian service," Bounds said. "I hope and pray that I have at least planted the seed of God's love in every life I have come in contact with."

Andrea Lamb of Illinois served as part of the North Arkansas Adventure Team in North Arkansas Association. She, too, worked with children, including a group from Lead Hill First Church who thought she wasn't going to attend a program when she was late.

When she arrived, "I heard the children yell my name and I felt what seemed to be hundreds of children hugging my legs. In that moment I learned that the most important part of my job here is to love the children."

"I know that there have probably been many people that have let those children down," she found. "If I introduce them to God's love, they will have a love with them that will never let them down."

Sara Martinez, a student from Mexico, worked in the Migrant Center in Hope. She related that by using a "salvation bracelet" witnessing tool, she led a migrant woman to "accept Jesus as her personal Savior."

"She touched my heart," Martinez said, "and I was very happy because she let Jesus be in her heart."

Jericho speakers emphasize ministry begins at home

Linda Lawson

Baptist Sunday School Board

For most Christians, initial opportunities to witness and minister are not on the opposite side of the world but right in their own home, church or community.

That's what speakers, conference leaders and missionaries emphasized during the Jericho Southern Baptist Missions Festival, July 26-Aug. 1 at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center.

Approximately 1,200 people participated in the conference based around the theme, "Whatever It Takes." The week was sponsored by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Sunday School Board and Woman's Missionary Union. Among participants were 255 emeritus international missionaries with 7,179 combined years of service.

Ministry often begins with a "simple commitment to think about the needs of people," Richard Leach, NAMB consultant in lay renewal and church renewal, said during a conference on starting relevant ministries. "Over a period of time God begins to move us from one place to another."

He cited his 78-year-old mother, Bernice, who pledged to distribute five gospel tracts each week. That commitment led her into a nursing home ministry and to visits to a child-care center.

Leach urged participants to seek ways to share the gospel through their daily activities. He listed a five-step method for finding a relevant ministry:

- Explore the possibilities.
- Experiment with as many opportunities as possible.
- Examine your feelings.
- Evaluate your effectiveness.
- Expect confirmation from the church.

Robert Pepper, a missionary doctor in the West African nation of Guinea, uses ministry to the physical needs of people to meet their spiritual needs.

"It would really be a tragedy if someone suffered physically in this world and then spent eternity in hell,"

Pepper said in a testimony during a worship service.

Camille Simpson, who directs community ministries in San Antonio, Texas, said Southern Baptists can and must minister in the inner cities of the United States.

"We can go by the thousands," she said. "We can mentor little boys without male role models. We can mentor young parents and see their children grow up to love God. We must start thousands of new congregations in the inner cities. We can do whatever it takes."

Brenda Clark, a missionary to southern Africa, described making cakes and serving as toilet attendant workers in her community, an effort that led to varied ministries she and her husband, Dave, discovered

through their hospitality.

"Be involved for Christ where He is working," she urged. "Don't give God a list of 'I can's and I can't's."

Kimberly MacNeil, a US-2 missionary in Southern California, said working as a public school teacher and part-time minister of youth in Virginia prepared her for her current role in teaching Christians how to witness.

"If every believer was on ministry and mission in the way God was leading them, we could win the world," MacNeil declared.

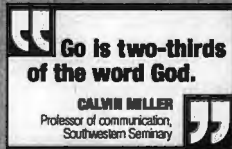
Baptist Sunday School Board president James T. Draper Jr. traced his experiences in volunteer mission projects in the United States, Kenya, Hong Kong, Brazil and other countries.

"There's something significant for all of us in stopping doing what we're doing and allowing God to use us in some extraordinary ways," Draper said. "It is a wonderful privilege to be a volunteer. It will change your life."

Calvin Miller, professor of international and ministry studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, added in his Sunday morning message, "What are we doing with that powerful sense of conviction that made us a people?"

Christians today must be who God calls them to be, take stands and go, Miller said, emphasizing that "go is two-thirds of the word God."

GLORIETA, NM (BP)



people & places

COMPILED BY MILLIE GILL

TRANSITIONS

Michael G. Seabaugh will begin serving Aug. 24 as pastor of First Church in Camden, going there from Crosspoint Church in North Little Rock where he has served since 1994. He was pastor of Pike Avenue Church in North Little Rock prior to leading the congregation to merge with Gethsemane Church to become Crosspoint Church. Seabaugh is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He currently is working on a doctor of ministry degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Seabaugh is married to the former Laurie Lynne Griffin of Magnolia. They have two children, Shelby and Haydn.

Jim Gentry is pastor of Cole Ridge Church near Blytheville. He previously served in Michigan for two years as a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board church planter apprentice and five years as bivocational pastor of Harvest Church in Waterford. Gentry is a graduate of Arkansas State University and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Laura, have two daughters, Elizabeth and Hollie.

Bill Carpenter will begin serving Aug. 31 as pastor of First Church of Prescott, coming there from First Southern Church of Bearden where he has served for six years. He previously was pastor of Bakers Creek Church in Russellville as well as churches in Louisiana and Texas. Carpenter is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Carol, have two children, Jeffery, who is in the U.S. Army, and Anna, who, will be a student at Baylor University this fall.

Walter Gilbreath began serving in July as pastor of Kelso Church of McGehee where he had been serving as a supply preacher. He previously served Old Union Church near Monticello. Gilbreath, who has been a Southern Baptist minister for 40 years, retired in 1992 after serving churches in Arkansas and Texas. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Mary, have four adult children and eight grandchildren.

Gary Gregory is interim pastor of Saint Francis Church. He is a faculty member at Williams Baptist College.

Ricky Blackwell recently resigned as

pastor of Etowah Church. He is available to serve as a supply preacher or interim pastor. Blackwell may be contacted at 870-764-2031.

Allan E. Norton has resigned as associate pastor and youth minister at Fairdale Church in Hot Springs to continue his education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

CHURCH LIFE

Sloan Springs First Church will observe its 125th anniversary of ministry Sept. 27-28. A Saturday evening potluck dinner will launch the observance with Sunday activities to include a special anniversary worship service, followed by a community open house of the church's new facilities from 2 to 4 p.m. Dan Stewart is chairman of the celebration committee. Steve Abbott is pastor.

Shilbun First Church will dedicate its new facility Sept. 7 at 2 p.m. Arkansas Baptist State Convention president Rex Home, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, will be the featured speaker. A reception, an open house and the burial of a time capsule will follow the dedication service. Ed Simpson is pastor.

Brookwood First Church in Little Rock will observe the 30th anniversary of its relocation with homecoming Sept. 14. Walter Allen, a retired Southern Baptist missionary to East Africa, will be the speaker and music will be led by Ben Craft, minister of music for Rosedale Church in Little Rock. A noon potluck luncheon will be served. Revival services, which will be led by Allen, will begin that evening at 6:30 p.m. and continue nightly through Sept. 17. Clarence Allison is pastor.

Maumelle First Church will launch observance of its 20th anniversary with a dinner at the Maumelle Country Club Sept. 27. Former pastors Steve Wilkes and Marty Brown will be dinner speakers with Bob Eters, Charlotte Miller and Stephen Cole providing special music. Cline Ellis, the church's first pastor, will be the speaker and former minister of music James Burison will be the soloist for the Sept. 28 worship service that will be followed by a noon potluck meal. A 2 p.m. gospel music program featuring the Arkansians will conclude activities. Virginia Craddock is serving as anniversary coordinator. John Matthews is pastor.

Ruanyan First Church of North Little Rock's mission team of 15 teenagers and four adult counselors recently returned from Altoona, Iowa, where they worked for the second consecutive year with Cornerstone Church and its pastor, Howard Williams. The team led backyard Bible studies during the day and conducted an evening "Good News Stampede" Vaca-



Patients visit a medical clinic during a recent "Miracle in Monterrey" missions project in Monterrey, Mexico. Bob Shelton, pastor of First Church of Alma and founder of Mission Corps, coordinated the effort which involved 128 volunteers from six states, including team members from First Church, Alma; First Church, Farmington; First Church, Lavaca; and Combs Church, Fayetteville. The effort included evangelism, construction, medical and dental teams as well as a gift box team that distributed 3,000 boxes filled with personal hygiene items and Spanish Bibles. More than 500 people made professions of faith in Christ and more than 2,500 people were treated in the clinics during the project.



David Johnson, pastor of First Church, Mountain Home, guided the plow which was pulled by members Aug. 3 to break ground for a \$2.75 million multi-purpose building as part of the church's "Miracle on Spring Street" campaign. The new facility will house 22 classrooms, a firestone room to be used for special meetings and occasions, a commercial grade kitchen, additional restrooms, an exercise/fitness area, storage areas, recreation space, a walking track and craft, quilting and other special areas. It also will enable the congregation to remodel the current facility to provide better and more convenient classroom space for senior adults, a new youth area and an expanded preschool wing. Committee chairmen for the project include T.C. Carter, steering; Herman King, plans/construction; Paul Simmons, finance; and Dee Leach, furnishings.

tion Bible School. Charles Mays is pastor of Runyan First Church.

Hamburg First Church sponsored an eight-member men's construction team which recently returned from Martinez de La Torre, Mexico, where they put a roof on the second floor of First Church and floored the auditorium and parsonage of God Is Love Church. Pastor Bobby Pennington, who was part of the team, also preached during the Sunday morning service of First Church and led a Thursday evening service for both churches. The group worked with Southern Baptist missionaries Phillip and Peggy Templin.

Jacksonville First Church observed Church Staff Appreciation Week July 28-Aug. 3 by preparing special meals for the staff, providing them with a day off and honoring them at a deacon-led Sunday recognition service.

Kolse Church of McGehee held revival services Aug. 3-6 as a renewal effort for members. Pastor Walter Gilbreath was the evangelist and his son, Paul Gilbreath, of Dallas, Texas, was music director. A highlight of the revival included a 20-year reunion on Sunday for former youth department members.

Springdale First Church will observe Camp Meetin' Sunday Aug. 31 by hosting The Martins, an Arkansas-based family music group. They will lead the congregation in the 9:15 a.m. worship service and present a half hour of gospel music during "dinner on the grounds" following the worship service.

Ouachita announces new faculty, staff

Several new faculty and staff members will be serving at Ouachita Baptist University during the 1997-98 academic year, which begins Aug. 27. New faculty are:

■ Blane Baker, assistant professor of physics, who holds degrees from William Jewell College and Washington University.

■ Joveta Arnold, instructor in health, physical education and recreation, a 1995 OBU graduate who also is a graduate of Henderson State University.

■ Jeffrey Smith, instructor in health, physical education and recreation, who is a 1986 OBU graduate as well as a graduate of Henderson State University.

■ Preben Vang, associate professor of religion, who holds degrees from Danish Baptist Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ Terry Sergeant, assistant professor of mathematics and computerscience, a 1991 graduate of OBU who also holds degrees from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and the University of Texas at Arlington.

■ Randy Miller, associate professor of chemistry, who holds degrees from Illinois State University and the University of California-Davis.

Individuals who have joined Ouachita's administrative and athletic staffs are:

■ Chance DeRouen, athletic trainer, a graduate of Northeast Louisiana University and Henderson State University. He is a certified athletic trainer by the National Athletic Trainers Association.

■ Margaret Graziop, director of campus housing, a 1965 graduate of Ouachita. She previously was administrative assistant to Bill Dixon, OBU vice president for student services.

■ Jason Greenwich, admissions counselor, a 1997 OBU graduate who will be responsible for student recruitment. His wife, Alyson, is a current student.

■ Bryan McKinney, director of annual giving and development officer, is a 1993 graduate of OBU and a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law. His wife, Leigh Anne, serves OBU as international student admissions coordinator.

■ Jaime Melcher, admissions counselor, a 1997 OBU graduate, is responsible for student recruitment in northwest Arkansas and Oklahoma. Her husband, Brad, is a current student.

■ Tammy Robbins, student loan counselor, is a 1995 OBU graduate.

■ Kevin Wieser, associate dean of student development, graduated from OBU in 1997 and holds a degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

ORDINATIONS

Russellville Second Church ordained Ed Blackard and George Lewis as deacons in the morning worship service July 6.

Waldenburg Church ordained pastor Don Howard to the ministry July 20.

Searcy First Church licensed Bart Patton and Scott Fitzgerald, students at Ouachita Baptist University, to the ministry Aug. 3. Fitzgerald has been serving as summer pastor for First Church of Augusta.

MILESTONES

Larry Loggins observed his 10th anniversary as pastor of Friendship Church of Clinton July 21 when he and his wife, Mary Lee, were honored with a church-wide reception. J.D. Todd, chairman of the deacons, presented the couple with an all-expense paid vacation to California, an oversized oak-framed clock and monetary gifts. Frank Shell, director of missions for North Central Association, was the guest speaker for the event.

David McLemore, pastor of Second Church of Russellville, recently graduated from the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff School in Fort Leavenworth, Kan. McLemore, a major, is a chaplain in the Arkansas National Guard.

Patty Hinton, organist for Rosedale Church in Little Rock, was recently presented a certificate of excellence by pastor Aaron Carter in recognition of 19 years of perfect attendance in both Sunday School and morning worship services.

World missions

Southern Baptist hunger gifts up 26% in first half of '97

Southern Baptists' concern for the world's hurting and hungry is evident as gifts designated for Southern Baptist hunger ministries continue on the upswing.

For the first six months of 1997, both Southern Baptist mission agencies, the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board, reported a 26 percent increase in gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund compared to the same period last year. Through June 1997, hunger gifts received by the IMB totaled \$2,804,370 while those received by the NAMB totaled \$548,881.

Steve Nelson, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, voiced hope that the increasing awareness of hunger needs "will eventually allow both our domestic and international missionaries to expand their vision."

According to Bill Cashion, human needs consultant for the International Mission Board, "As we continue to see the doors open for ministry evangelism to many of the unreached people groups around the world, we are grateful for the rise in gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund."

He added, however, that "we must remind ourselves that we are still far below the years of the mid-'80s when nearly \$12 million was given for world hunger needs."

David Wigger, director of church and community ministries for NAMB, said increasing contributions to domestic hunger ministries will provide an opportunity to impact chronic hunger concerns as well as meeting emergency needs.

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)

Yeltsin expected to seek alternative religion law

Russian President Boris Yeltsin is expected to set up a committee to draft an alternative to a law he vetoed that would have curbed protection for religious minorities.

The vetoed measure would have placed sharp curbs on evangelicals, Catholics and other minority religious groups in Russia. In a seven-page veto message, Yeltsin said the law, which passed overwhelmingly by the Russian Duma and was supported by the Russian Orthodox Church, violated the Russian Constitution.

Chadwick Gore, communications director for the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, popularly known as the Helsinki Commission, said the Russian president would probably work on an alternative bill that falls "within the constitutional framework as Yeltsin sees it." Gore said it would be difficult for Yeltsin to veto such a popular bill without offering an alternative.

While the Russian Constitution calls for the separation of church and state, Russians interpret religious freedom differently than Americans. The constitution allows the government to view the Russian Orthodox Church as a state church or as "first among equals," Gore said, but does not allow the government to prohibit religious practices of other groups.

The vetoed law was not directed at Russia's established faiths, but newer, smaller religious groups would have faced registration requirements and would have had to wait up to 15 years to gain legal status allowing them to own property or have bank accounts.

WASHINGTON (ABP)

IMB sells Coke stock after links made to Brazilian brewery

The Southern Baptist International Mission Board has sold all of its stock in Coca-Cola after a July 28 article in the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the soft-drink manufacturer owns 10 percent of a brewery in Brazil. The sale totaled about \$6.5 million.

Carl Johnson, IMB vice president for finance, announced the sale during a July 28-31 meeting of trustees at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center.

About 8 percent, or \$16 million, of the mission board's 1997 budget of \$205.5 million is expected to come from investment income. But the board has policies prohibiting investments in companies involved in tobacco, alcohol, gambling, pornography or abortion.

After reading the *Wall Street Journal* article, IMB officials contacted Coca-Cola for an explanation, and the company did not deny the accuracy of the story, Johnson said. IMB leaders then told the investment manager holding the stock to immediately sell it.

The *Journal* article identified Kaiser as the Brazilian beer connected with Coca-Cola.

"Though Coca-Cola may be only a minority partner in Kaiser, its influence in the crucial distribution side of the business helped Kaiser amass its 16.2 percent share of the Brazilian beer market," the article reported.

GLORIETA, NM (BP)

Chinese Christian leader blasts religious freedom report

A Chinese Christian leader has criticized a United States government pledge to end persecution of Christians and push for religious freedom around the world.

Bishop K.H. Ting, honorary president of the China Christian Council, charged that the U.S. government is becoming an international "protector of religion" and warned that U.S. intervention would harm relationships developed between China's official religious organizations and government.

According to a report from Ecumenical News International, Ting wrote an article in a Chinese Christian newspaper saying he read "with deep regret and fear" a recent report by the U.S. State Department detailing Christian persecution around the world.

The State Department report said China's constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief, but the government restricts religious practice to government-authorized religious organizations and registered places of worship. Chinese officials have cracked down on unregistered Catholic and Protestant movements in the past three years, the report said.

Ting, 81, led the government-sanctioned China Christian Council, which represents 10 million Protestants, 15 years before retiring last year.

Ting acknowledged that religious freedom problems remain in China. But he insisted that the best way to resolve them is through the "Three-Self" movement which organizes Chinese Christianity on principles of self-government, self-support and self-propagation of the gospel.

Ting warned that U.S. intervention in the name of religious liberty would "only jeopardize what we have been doing ourselves" and would give Chinese Christians "the unenviable image of collaborating with the U.S. government."

BEIJING (ABP)

Clinton issues religious freedom guidelines for federal workers

President Clinton issued guidelines Aug. 14 clarifying the extent of religious freedom for federal government employees. The guidelines drew the support of organizations ranging from civil liberties advocates to conservative evangelicals.

The 15-page directive requires all non-military, federal agencies and their officials to allow to the "greatest extent possible" personal religious exercise, to not discriminate on the basis of religion and

to "reasonably accommodate" religious practices by employees.

In a draft version, the "Guidelines on Religious Exercise and Religion Expression in the Federal Workplace" specify that an employee will be able to:

- share his faith with fellow employees;
- keep a Bible or other scriptures on his desk and read it during breaks;
- wear religious apparel or jewelry or clothing with religious messages;

- invite co-workers to church services;
- be protected from discrimination based on his religious beliefs;

- meet with other employees for Bible study and prayer during lunch in a conference room used on a first-come, first-served basis;

- have his observation of the Sabbath or a religious holiday accommodated;
- be exempted from an assignment he finds objectionable on religious grounds.

Limiting factors are workplace efficiency and activity that would lead a "reasonable observer" to conclude that the government is endorsing religion.

"Whether by allowing religious speech, preventing religious coercion or harassment, or making accommodations to religious practice, the federal government must act to ensure that the federal workplace is generous to followers of all religions, as well as to followers of none," Clinton said in a memorandum to agency heads.

Endorsers of the guidelines included such diverse organizations as the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, People for the American Way, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the National Council of Churches. The Christian Legal Society and American Jewish Congress were prime drafters of the guidelines.

"The president's directive to all federal employees makes it clear that Americans have the right to freedom of religious expression in the federal workplace," said Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "The president's leadership initiative in issuing these binding guidelines will have an enormously positive effect not only in the federal workplace but by example in the private workplace as well."

Brent Walker, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel, said in a written statement that the guidelines "do not solve every problem but do promote understanding and facilitate decision making. These guidelines represent a proactive attempt to accommodate the practice of religion and religious expression in the federal workplace consistent with the government's constitutional obligation not to advance religion."

The new guidelines follow by three years a controversy ignited when the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission proposed religious harassment guidelines. The ERLC and other organizations opposed them on the basis of their threat to religious expression. After the EEOC received a record 100,000 comments, the guidelines died.

WASHINGTON (BP)

1997 Annual Associational Meetings

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|---|
| Arkansas River Valley | Oct. 14 | Russellville First |
| Arkansas Valley | Oct. 20 | Marvell First |
| Ashley | Oct. 20 | Meridian, South Crossett |
| Bartholomew | Oct. 20 | Westside, Warren |
| Big Creek | Oct. 17 | Spring River, Hardy |
| Black River | Oct. 20-21 | Sedgwick; Jacksonport |
| Buckner | Oct. 14-16 | Waldron First; Mansfield |
| Buckville | Sept. 27 | Rock Springs |
| Caddo River | Oct. 20-21 | Refuge, Story; Glenwood First |
| Calvary | Oct. 21 | Central, Bald Knob |
| Carey | Oct. 20 | Bearden First Southern |
| Caroline | Oct. 22 | Hazen First |
| Centennial | Oct. 13-14 | Reydel; Gillett First |
| Central | Oct. 7 | Calvary, Benton |
| Clear Creek | Oct. 21 | East Mt. Zion, Clarksville |
| Concord | Oct. 14 | Spradling, Fort Smith |
| Conway-Perry | Oct. 21, 23 | Houston; Solgohachia |
| Current-Gaines | Oct. 20-21 | Rector First; Shannon, Pocahontas |
| Delta | Oct. 13-14 | Lake Village; Dermott |
| Faulkner | Oct. 19 | Woodland Heights, Conway |
| Garland | Oct. 13-14 | Antioch, Royal; Grand Avenue, Hot Springs, Bethel Station |
| Greene | Oct. 21 | Immanuel, Pine Bluff |
| Harmony | Oct. 20 | Batesville First; Eastside, Cave City |
| Independence | Oct. 13-14 | Camden First |
| Liberty | Oct. 27 | Pines, Quitman |
| Little Red River | Oct. 20 | Murfreesboro First; Oden First |
| Little River | Oct. 13-14 | Armored |
| Mississippi | Oct. 27 | Monette |
| Mt. Zion | Oct. 20 | Jasper First |
| North Arkansas | Oct. 14 | Fairfield Bay; Leslie First |
| North Central | Oct. 13-14 | Gloryland, North Little Rock |
| North Pulaski | Oct. 20 | Lowell First |
| Northwest | Oct. 20 | DeQueen First; Hatfield First |
| Ouachita | Oct. 13-14 | Archview; Reynolds Memorial |
| Pulaski | Oct. 13-14 | Marlbrook, Blevins; Lakeview, Arkadelphia |
| Red River | Oct. 20-21 | Dolph; Evening Shade First |
| Rocky Bayou | Oct. 16-17 | Calvary, Hope |
| Southwest | Oct. 16 | Cherry Valley |
| Tri-County | Oct. 20 | Rivervale; Central, Marked Tree |
| Trinity | Oct. 20-21 | Berry Street, Springdale |
| Washington-Madison | Oct. 21-22 | Yelville First; Midway |
| White River | Oct. 20-21 | |

WORLD MISSIONS

Arkansas couple appointed by IMB to serve as missionaries to Senegal

Phillip and Karen Brown are among 43 people recently appointed as missionaries by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board during an appointment service at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center. The Browns will join nearly 4,200 IMB missionaries serving among 336 ethnic groups in 126 countries.

The Browns will serve as missionary associates in Senegal, a nation where 92 percent of the population is Muslim. Brown, who has been a staff evangelist with Third Street Church in Arkadelphia since 1994, is co-founder and president of Brown Family Ministries.

He also is president of Arkansas Baptist Evangelists, music director for Red River Association and associate pastor of New Hope Mission of Third Street Church.

Brown will start and develop churches in Senegal and his wife will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. Baptist work is strong in Senegal with new work among four unreached people groups as well as several ongoing human needs projects.

Brown, who was born in Gurdon, is the

son of Harvey and Marguerite Brown of Hot Springs. He has been pastor of Calvary Church and staff evangelist for Pleasant Lane Church, both in Crossett. He also has been involved in four mission trips to Central America.

Mrs. Brown is the daughter of Don and Sue Hogan. A former receptionist and secretary at Third Street Church, she considers the Arkadelphia congregation her home church. She also has worked as an office manager and bookkeeper at a nursing center in Hamburg.

The Browns, who have two grown children, will go to the IMB's training center in Rockville, Va., this month for an eight-week orientation before leaving for their overseas assignment.

The new missionaries are the first group appointed by the IMB since changing its name from the Foreign Mission Board in June. In 1996, IMB missionaries helped lead 283,674 people to faith in Christ and baptism. They and their overseas partners started 2,367 churches and reported a record 4.1 million members in 39,876 churches overseas.



MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in September:

■ Sept. 3: Katrina Owen, OBU Box 4137, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; junior from Guatemala.

■ Sept. 5: Andrea Loucks, University of Arkansas, 1331-A Steuben, Springdale, AR 72762; senior from equatorial Brazil.

■ Sept. 5: Adam Hodges, OBU Box

3525; freshman from Senegal.

■ Sept. 19: Bryan Collins, OBU Box 4082; junior from Mexico.

■ Sept. 19: Sean Nicholson, OBU Box 3537; junior from Nigeria.

■ Sept. 30: Tyler Anthony, OBU Box 3342; sophomore from Israel.

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Baptist Book Store to relocate to West Little Rock site

After nearly 15 years at its present Markham Street location, the Little Rock Baptist Book Store will relocate in September to West Little Rock.

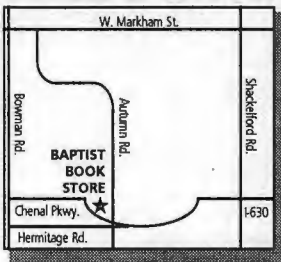
Manager Bob Barnett said that the store will close at 6 p.m. Sept. 6 and immediately begin moving its stock to the new facility, located at 11600 Chenal Parkway in the Alhambra Square near Best Buy and Home Quarters. The store will reopen for business Sept. 12.

Barnett noted that the move is part of an upgrade in store facilities being enacted throughout the Baptist Sunday School Board's 70 Baptist Book Stores and Lifeway Christian Stores nationwide.

"The idea is that we're coming in with more modern, high-tech retail stores," he explained. "It's part of a larger philosophy in the Sunday School Board."

Mark Scott, vice president of the BSSB's retail group, said that philosophy is based on improving service. "As we open each new store, we work to improve our stores and our customer service."

"As we expand our business and ministry throughout the country," Scott emphasized, "we want our stores located in viable retail areas like this one that provides



the best opportunity to service both churches and individuals with products to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"Our idea is to move into an area with more floor space and traffic, while maintaining interstate integrity and remaining close to Baptist Medical Center," Barnett said. "We'll be between Barnes & Noble and Books-a-Million, so we will have plenty of book customers in that area."

Barnett said that the store moved to its present 10,000-square-foot facility in 1982

from a South University Ave. location. The new facility will increase the store's floor and warehouse size to 12,400 square feet.

"The new store will have new fixtures and the arrangement will be friendly, with easy chairs for reading, pleasing colors and the merchandise area will show materials to the best advantage," said Barnett.

He emphasized that the new store will continue to offer all of the popular features of the present facility, including a gift area, music and video department with a listening center and built-in video monitors and church resources.

The store's telephone number — 501-225-6009 — will remain the same, he said. "We will be the same Baptist Book Store you are used to dealing with, a complete store with mailing capabilities."

Following the Sept. 12 opening, he said the store will hold several events connected with a grand opening, "probably in mid-October," including "special buys," promotions and coupons.

Also connected with the grand opening is a Sept. 27 book signing by Gov. Mike Huckabee from noon until 2 p.m. He will be signing his new book, *Character Is the Issue*.

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- ♦ The Jan. 7-16 tour will include visits to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, the Sea of Galilee and numerous other sites.
- ♦ The tour will be hosted by Newsmagazine editor Trennis Henderson and will include on-site Bible studies led by Bill Steeger, chairman of the division of religion and philosophy at Ouachita Baptist University.
- ♦ There are a limited number of tour spaces available at the ministers' discount rate. Call the Newsmagazine office at 1-800-838-2272 or in Little Rock at 501-376-4791, ext. 5153 for more information.



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IMB completes reorganization, questions independent group

Southern Baptist International Mission Board trustees put the final touches on the recent reorganization of overseas operations and passed a resolution warning Southern Baptists to be cautious of independent religious groups from overseas that are raising funds in the United States.

During their recent meeting, trustees elected the final two of 14 regional leaders in the board's new configuration overseas. They also affirmed the naming of the 53 associates who will assist regional leaders overseas and at IMB offices in Virginia.

Elected regional leaders were Phil Templin for Middle America and Larry Gay for western South America.

Templin, 52, was appointed as a missionary in 1984 with his wife, Peggy. He has been a general evangelist in Mexico. Gay, 44, was appointed a missionary in 1982 with his wife, Susan. He has been chairman of the organization of IMB missionaries in Mexico since 1991.

The reorganization expands the administration of the overseas office from

nine geographic and one non-geographic area to 14 geographic regions covering the entire world outside of North America.

Rankin's report to the board and a resolution the board adopted warned Southern Baptists about fund-raising efforts in Southern Baptist churches by independent groups claiming to do more effective missionary work than the IMB in countries where the IMB has missionaries.

Rankin said a number of overseas national groups are seeking Southern Baptist funds, are making unproven promises of missionary successes and are using practices that the IMB questions missiologically.

Resolution issues warning

The trustee resolution expresses specific concern about Gospel to the Unreached Millions, a Texas-based ministry that works in parts of India.

"Based on information available at this time, the trustees of the IMB do not have confidence in the ministry of the Gospel to the Unreached Millions, founded by

K.A. Paul," the trustee resolution says.

Paul was invited to speak at the 1997 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference by Pastors' Conference president Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale. The board's concern focuses on the perception that the high-profile speaking engagement created an implied endorsement of Paul's ministry.

The resolution further states, "The trustees of the IMB commend to Southern Baptist churches the mission program of the IMB as being faithful to the biblical principles of missions and accountable to the churches," adding that "our basic task is evangelism through proclamation, discipling, equipping and ministry that results in indigenous Baptist churches."

Board chairman Bill Blanchard said the trustee resolution was intended to "alert our constituency" to "reservations" about Paul's ministry.

Sources say SBC leaders are divided over Paul. Some embrace him as the "Billy Graham of India." Others say he has deceived prominent pastors with exaggerated ministry claims.

Steve Marcum, a Southern Baptist who recently went to work for Paul's evangelistic organization, accused convention leaders of "a vicious attempt to discredit us." GLORIETA, NM (BP/ABP)



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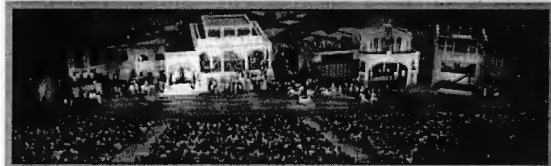
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Mormon views examined as SBC prepares for '98 Utah meeting

Mormons have been holding a higher-than-usual profile in the news media recently, with new attention being placed on both their history and beliefs.

The interest is largely due to the 150th anniversary of their forefathers' arrival in Salt Lake City, celebrated with a reenactment of the historic trek west. But the Southern Baptist Convention's planned annual meeting in the Utah capital next year — just three years after the SBC's own 150th anniversary — also is drawing attention to essential doctrinal differences.

Time magazine, in the cover story for its Aug. 4 issue, took an in-depth look at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The article cited the church's business and financial strength, immense stockpiles of food for an anticipated period of tribulation before a coming millennial reign of Christ on earth, and dedicated lay leadership with real-world business experience that has made the church financially successful.

It is precisely that all-loyal clergy, however, that leads to a discussion of their beliefs. "Religious observers point out that this creates a vacuum of theological talent in a church with a lot of unusual theology to explain," the *Time* article stated.

The article noted that the mainline Presbyterian Church (USA) issued guidelines stating that Mormons are not "within the historic apostolic tradition of the Christian Church," echoing longstanding views of Southern Baptists and other evangelical Christians. The Presbyterian denomination's Utah subunit went further, concluding that the Mormons "must be regarded as heretical," the article said.

In recent years, the article reported, the church has been downplaying its differences with traditional Christianity — even talking more about Christ and less about Joseph Smith during official tours of Salt Lake City's Temple Square.

Their president and chief prophet, Gordon B. Hinkley, also emphasized the

church as "Christ-centered" while downplaying the Mormon doctrine that God was once a man and men can become like God.

Phil Roberts, director of the interfaith witness evangelism team at the North American Mission Board, said he has written a letter to the editor to *Time* applauding their objective, comprehensive treatment of the Mormon church.

"My concern is that people in the United States in general look at Mormonism as a sociological or religious phenomenon without really looking at its theological roots and asking the question, 'Are they what they say they are and are they genuinely Christian?'" he said. "The thing about Mormons is they say...they are fully Mormon, but they also want to be fully Christian."

In news coverage related to Southern Baptists, the *Salt Lake Tribune* recently published two articles concerning Southern Baptists' arrival in their city next June. One article examined the recent NAMB video, "The Mormon Puzzle," designed to introduce Southern Baptists to Mormon history and beliefs. Unlike some videos about Mormonism, the writer noted that an effort was made to let Mormons explain their beliefs in their own words while allowing Southern Baptists to explain how those beliefs differ from historical Christianity.

Another article went into some detail preparing Salt Lake City residents for Southern Baptist evangelization efforts through Crossover Salt Lake City before the SBC annual meeting next June. Mike Gray, pastor of Salt Lake City's Southeast Baptist Church, explained in the article the difference in proselytization efforts aimed at recruiting members and evangelism efforts aimed at introducing people to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Mormons practice proselytization, so the Southern Baptist evangelistic motive is not as well understood. ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)

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'97 Fall Festival of Marriage to focus on 'Greatest of These'

Participants at the 1997 Fall Festival of Marriage in Hot Springs will focus on "The Greatest of These" in improving their relationships with their spouses. The festival, to be held Oct. 24-26 at the Arlington Hotel, is sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship and family ministry department.

Conference coordinator Gerald Jackson said the weekend will provide an opportunity for participants "to renew their faith in God and each other." He said the program's flexibility will allow couples to "create your own weekend by choosing workshops that meet your specific interests and needs."

In addition to marriage-related workshops, the program will feature general sessions with keynote speakers Bob and Yvonne Turnbull as well as music and drama led by Mark and Scarlett Knight.

Jackson, an associate in the discipleship and family ministry department, noted

that almost 400 couples attended last year's festival, making it the largest of the festivals held in a resort hotel setting. Because of the festival's popularity, he added, "It is important to make lodging reservations as soon as possible to assure a room at the Arlington. The reserved block of rooms has been sold out each year at this festival."

To prepare for the Fall Festival of Marriage:

■ Contact the ABSC discipleship and family ministry department for more information by calling toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5160.

■ Register by calling the Baptist Sunday School Board at 1-800-254-2022. While registration can be made upon arrival at the conference, early bird discounts are available through Sept. 24.

■ Reserve lodging separately by calling the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs at 501-623-7771. The room rate is \$58 per couple, per night.

missionary notes

Dennda and Judi Folda, missionaries to Japan, are on the field (address: 1-13-6 Miyoshigaoka Asahi, Miyoshi-cho, Nishi Kamogao Aichi-ken 470-02). He is from Texas. The former Judi Synco, she was born in Crosscut, and also lived in Hot Springs while growing up. They were appointed by the IMB in 1980.

Daniel and Gretchen Sowell, missionaries to Zambia, are in the States (address: 124 Bristol Lane, Hot Springs, AR 71913). He considers Houston, Texas, his hometown. The former Gretchen DeYoung, she considers Hot Springs her hometown. They were appointed in 1993.

Ronald and Alana Greenwich, missionaries to Brazil, are on the field (address: Caixa Postal 1041, 88010-970 Florianopolis, Brazil). He was born in Memphis, Tenn. The former Alana Ichter, daughter of missionaries, she grew up in Louisiana and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Both consider Monticello their hometown. They were appointed in 1983.

Michael and Kathy Kompor, Baptist representatives to Romania, are in the States (address: 21 Impala Dr., Jackson, TN 38301). He was born in Pine Bluff. She is the former Kathy Woody of Tennessee. They were appointed in 1993.

Guy and Elena Key, missionaries to Brazil, are in the States (address: 3820 Ashley Lane, Fort Worth, TX 76123). Both are children of missionaries. He considers Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and North Little Rock his hometowns. The former Elena Cowser, she considers Goiania, Bofas, Brazil, and North Little Rock her hometowns. They were appointed by the IMB in 1984.

Ron and Jan Langston, missionaries to Botswana, are in the States (address: 7612 E. Highland, Jonesboro, AR 72402). He lived in Etowah, Keiser and Osceola while growing up. The former Janice Wilmoth, she was born in Jonesboro and considers Etowah her hometown. The Langstons were appointed in 1983.



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Family Bible

Final remarks to the Hebrews

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

Basic passage:

Hebrews 13:1-25

Focal passage:

Hebrews 13:1-25

Central truth:

Christians are to live faithfully in this world in preparation for the world to come.

The final chapter of Hebrews contains concluding remarks of the author. Verses 1-6 contain concluding remarks concerning moral issues. Brotherly love is the broad category and the issues of entertaining strangers, sympathy for prisoners and the mistreated, marital relations, covetousness and contentment are addressed. The author tells us to relate to strangers as if they were angels. Prisoners should be dealt with as if they were bound to them.

Marital relations are unrestricted within God's ordained marriage, but strictly judged outside of the right relationship. We should be content and not looking to others, coveting their possessions. We should understand that God Himself has promised to provide for us and not forsake us. We should have no fear of lacking anything.

Verses 7-17 deal with the author's concluding religious remarks for the Hebrews. Respect for rulers and spiritual stability are discussed in verses 7-9. Verses 10-15 discuss the fact that our spiritual

satisfaction does not come from this world. Just as Christ suffered at Golgotha outside the city gate, so are we to be outside the camp of this world. Verses 13-14 indicate that this world is a reproach to us. We are in search of a city to come and not satisfied by a city of the present world. We should give thanks for the city being prepared for us.

Verses 16-17 remind us that we are, however, still in this world. We should not forget to do good, to share, to obey our rulers, and be submissive. By doing this we give living testimony to the faith we have. Verses 18-19 are a request by the author for the Hebrews to pray for his protection and a speedy return.

Verses 20-25 contain a benediction, final exhortation and farewell. The writer prays for completion of the saints to do every good work. He prays that the Hebrews will do the will of God and be pleasing to Him. The benediction is concluded with a commendation of all glory and honor to Jesus Christ.

Life and Work

Abstain and proclaim

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

Basic passage:

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

Focal passage:

Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-32

Central truth:

A wise person preserves his family, relationships and testimony by abstaining from alcohol.

The wisdom of Proverbs is quite pointed in its warnings against the use of alcohol. It is a wise man who would not allow alcohol or any other substance or abusive activity the opportunity to control his mind, thus robbing him of his wisdom. Alcoholic beverage mocks a man and dulls his senses. It promises him satisfaction and draws him in as it offers a false level of security which leads to outrageous acts, self-abuse, possible violence and character disintegration.

The deceptive allure of alcohol is a mere disguise for its powerful serpent fangs and viper-like poisons (vv. 31-32). It is without question a deadly and destructive poison which has left devastation in the path of families, relationships and our society.

Additional adverse effects of alcohol are graphically demonstrated through the author's rhetorical questions posed in verse 29: woe, sorrow, strife, needless bruises and bloodshot eyes. The media assault of beverage advertisements paints a far different picture. Their goal is to portray alcohol and its benefits as powerful, seductive

and debonair. Alcohol producers will utilize whatever ammunition is available to bombard us and our children in order to gain a sale. The enticements of alcohol, drugs and abusive activity such as gluttony lead to headache and ruin.

Two other considerations regarding our view of alcohol which should be pondered by every Christian include: (1) the possibility of becoming a "stumbling block" to a young brother or sister in the faith or even a friend to whom you may be trying to convey a positive witness for Christ; and (2) the reality that as a believer in Jesus Christ our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We should honor our bodies and be diligent in our care of them since the Holy Spirit has established His residency there. We must also consider the devastating effects it would bear on our personal testimony if we are seen having a "social drink" in a restaurant by someone who looks up to you as a spiritual leader in your church. We must flee from the presence of evil, do good and proclaim the love of Jesus to the world.

Explore the Bible

Stewardship is a response to grace

By James Swendenburg, member, Trinity Church, Benton

Basic passage:

I Corinthians 15:58-16:24

Focal passage:

I Corinthians 15:58-16:4

Central truth:

Christian stewardship challenges believers to enlarge their ministry.

I Corinthians 15:58 is both a summary statement for closing chapter 15 and a transitional statement for the final chapter of the book. Paul encouraged the believers to keep on becoming steadfast, to continue being unmovable and to always abound in the work of the Lord.

One of "the works of the Lord" was that of meeting the human and physical needs of the poor believers in Jerusalem. Circumstances in Jerusalem left the poor in great need. Paul refers to these collections, probably made on his third missionary journey (Acts 24:17). A severe famine had occurred and the believers were hurting (Acts 11:27-29). Christians were often jailed, their possessions were taken away from them and they paid great price for their faith (Acts 8:1-3, I Thes. 2:14).

Throughout I Corinthians Paul encouraged the believers to create a sense of unity and to stop practices that disturb the unity of the fellowship. Evidently the project of raising the money for the poor in Jerusalem was a success. It was also a good

way to work toward unity. To some degree it should have shown existing unity encouraged by Paul.

By way of application, Paul's expectation (v. 1) that the Corinthian Christians would participate in the offerings has particular reference to a practical method of raising funds to help destitute people and to express Christian love to them. However, here is an appropriate plan for Christians to give personally and faithfully to their local church as an act of worship.

While our Christian stewardship involves our money and has first claim on it, Christian giving begins with who God is as owner and who we are as servants. Recognition of God's ownership of His creation and recognition of the believer's role as servant is foundational in stewardship. Stewardship involves our concept of God and our concept of man and their relationship to each other. You may enlarge your study of Paul's instructions to the Corinthians about Christian giving by a careful review of II Corinthians 8:1-15.

LESSONS FOR LIVING

In California there is an official Vexatious Litigant List of people who have abused the system and now are prevented from filing lawsuits without an attorney or judge's special permission. One man was on the list because, among other suits, he had one suit against the prison cafeteria for serving him a broken cookie. Everyone on this list has found that their behavior has produced results that limit their rights.

Faithless actions had dire consequences for the nation of Israel too. The same will be true for us. As individuals we still find that ungodly behavior can have disastrous results. For Israel, it was a captivity in a foreign land. Many of God's people would think that He had forsaken them. Yet all the while, God had a perfect plan.

When a fire truck is involved in an accident with another vehicle, the other driver's most frequent excuse is, "I didn't see it." For this reason, many fire companies have repainted their trucks chartreuse. While this new color is more visible,

many people still want fire trucks to be red.

Centuries before this passage in Isaiah, God told Abraham that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). But God's people kept the message of God's love to themselves. They failed to become a "light to the Gentiles." So God had to do something that they would never expect. He would allow them to be taken into a foreign land as captives.

Then He would send them a charter fire truck by the name of Cyrus. This pagan king would be God's chosen instrument to set His people free. If God can use a pagan who had no understanding of Him to accomplish such a great task, imagine what He can do with one who does know Him.

No wonder God said through His prophet Isaiah, "So that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is no other....I the Lord do all these things" (Isaiah 45:6-7).

Many nonbelievers will agree with Christians on one point: Jesus was a great man. Those who know His teachings realize they are timeless and brilliant. Any number of false religions, from Jesus' day to our own, have lured followers with this true but altogether incomplete promise.

The first chapter of John states plainly that Jesus was much more than a great man. He was, and is, God incarnate, the one and only Son of God.

The gospels of Matthew and Luke open with details of Christ's earthly heritage, how He descended from David to fulfill Bible prophecy. These were aimed at convincing a Jewish audience that Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah.

To the many other names we know for Jesus (Son of Man, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, etc.), John adds *Logos*, or "Word." It is fitting. In scripture, "word" generally refers to a message directly from God. It is the same here.

As God in the flesh, Jesus presents us with the clearest picture we can have on this earth of who God really is. Through Jesus, we discover God's

very personality, His love, compassion and holiness. We rightly aspire to be Christlike, because we know it is to be Godlike.

By instruction and by example, Jesus lays out God's plan for all of humankind. He shows a confused world the things that really matter. To those who will deny themselves and follow Him, He shows what God is about, and what He is after.

Above all, He has provided us with our one and only true hope. Only one sacrifice could bridge the gap between a sinful humanity and a holy God. God's Son, perfect and blameless, was that sacrifice. In paying that price for all of us, the Word again painted an exquisite picture of the God we serve.

Why do we take time to study about Jesus Christ as the one and only God in the flesh? Because it is indispensable to our faith, and it is not as widely accepted as we might hope or even imagine. That is why it is crucial that we study, and lead others to see, that Jesus, the Word, is the one and only God.

Genesis is a book of beginnings. In the first chapter of Genesis we read the account of God's creative and purposeful activities. No attempt is made by the biblical writer to try to prove God's existence; it is simply assumed. Throughout this opening chapter, one is confronted with the fact that God is the central figure in the creation story. He is seen as active, powerful and sovereign.

The activity of God as seen in this opening chapter is that of creating. This is something only God can do. By means of His powerful spoken word (Gen. 1:3, 1:6, 1:9, 1:11, 1:14, 1:20, 1:24, 1:26), creation took place. Once again, we should understand that the act of creating is distinctly a feature of God. Mankind may build, make and form, yet this is not the same as creating. God, our creator, was involved in everything that came into existence.

One cannot read this passage of Scripture without being struck by the design and detail of God's creation. God speaks and everything listens.

In an almost rhythmic pattern, the creation account unfolds. We are told in this place of beginnings how everything from light (1:3) to human life (1:26ff) came into being. Six times in the first chapter of Genesis, creation is marked as "good." In fact, the text tells what God thought of His creation. God looked over His creation (1:31) and saw that "it was very good." A perfect world.

We need to take time to quietly reflect on the awesome truth of creation. The portrait of God as creator is indeed a significant truth. As we consider God's creative activity as it is recorded in Genesis, the only appropriate response we can have is to worship the creator.

Some see the opening chapter of Genesis as ground for much debate and argument. A better resolve is to engage in worship and praise of the eternal God. How great He is!

Family Bible

Where is God?

By Randy Maxwell, pastor,
Mount Olive Church, Crossett

Basic passage:

Isaiah 44:21-45:8

Focal passage:

Isaiah 44:24-26; 45:1, 5-7

Central truths:

Even when we feel that God is nowhere near, He is still at work and His work is always for the good.

Life and Work

The one and only God

By Brett Cooper,
director of public relations,
Williams Baptist College

Basic passage:

John 1:1-8

Focal passage:

John 1:1-5, 10-14, 16-18

Central truths:

It is imperative to realize that Jesus is not only a great man, but the one and only Son of God.

Explore the Bible

Worshipping the Creator

By Ken Shaddox, pastor,
First Church, Fortyce

Basic passage:

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Focal passage:

Genesis 1:1-3, 6, 9, 11, 20-25, 2:1-3

Central truths:

God our Creator is to be worshipped and praised.

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Disney responds to SBC as ethics agency prepares mallout

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—For the first time since Southern Baptist Convention messengers voted in June in favor of a resolution challenging the Walt Disney Company and others for their "promotion of immoral ideologies and practices," a spokesman for the entertainment giant has said Disney is ready to talk.

"We think there is room for discussion and in the meantime would hope there's a sense of tolerance and attempt to treat each other decently," said Disney spokesman John Dreyer, according to an Aug. 8 article in the *Nashville Banner*.

The afternoon before a planned July meeting in Washington, a Disney executive told meeting participants he would not be able to attend. A company lobbyist attended in his place. An earlier meeting was canceled when the same Disney executive changed his plans at the last minute.

Richard Land, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said he is pleased Disney is noticing Southern Baptists, who are now in month two of their economic action against the company. Disney's response came as the ERLC prepared a mallout designed to quantify Southern Baptists' economic protest against Disney.

Alaska Baptists endorse Disney boycott

JUNEAU, AK (BP)—The Alaska Baptist Convention, in its 52nd annual convention Aug. 5-6 in Juneau, highlighted a partnership linking Baptists in Alaska and Far East Russia slated to begin next year.

Messengers also endorsed the Southern Baptist Convention resolution adopted in June for a boycott of the Disney Company for moral stewardship reasons in light of the entertainment conglomerate's anti-family direction.

Messengers also approved resolutions commending state legislators for a ban on partial-birth abortion and a requirement for parental consent for abortion on a minor in Alaska; for recognizing home schooling as a legitimate form of education and allowing home-schooled children the use of publicly funded facilities; and for setting aside the first Thursday of May each year as a state day of prayer, in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer.

Alabama leaders recommend no CP funds for university

MONTGOMERY, AL (BP)—The executive committee of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions has recommended that the University of Mobile be excluded from the state convention's 1998 Cooperative Program budget. That action came after almost four hours of debate behind closed doors July 25.

The executive committee action said the university could be restored to the budget if it submits "an acceptable response" to a June 3 resolution the committee adopted concerning the university's financial crisis.

On June 3, the executive committee asked the University of Mobile to certify in writing that it was living by the 1994 agreements specifying that the Nicaraguan campus of the university will be funded only by money generated by that campus or given for the work of that campus. The university also agreed to send no more funds from the Mobile campus to Nicaragua after the 1994 date.

In addition, the school was to return to the Mobile campus about \$2.3 million already spent on the Nicaraguan campus. However, on May 22, following the ouster of Michael Magnoli as president, University of Mobile trustee chairman Robert Maxwell told the Alabama board executive committee that the Latin American debt had grown to \$3.2 million despite the university's announcement the previous November that the debt had been reduced to about \$1.6 million.

Walter Hovell, the university's interim president, said it is "mandatory" that the university respond positively to the executive committee's action. The university's 1997-98 budget of \$25 million includes \$2.1 million from the state convention.

Baptist World Alliance launches Internet web site

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Baptist World Alliance has launched its own Internet site on the World Wide Web at www.baptistnet.org, according to Wendy Ryan, director of communications.

The web site contains general information about the BWA with separate pages that describe fellowship, evangelism, aid, justice, human rights and the work of the men, youth and women's departments, Ryan said. A special news and information section includes the latest news releases from the BWA as well as files for *BWA News*, the monthly newsletter, and *Baptist World*, the quarterly magazine.

