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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Graham Sets Date

Arkansas Baptist

October 20, 1988



**Hardly
Surprising**

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In This Issue

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ABN photo / Mark Kelly

Hardly Surprising 10

When Ken and Hope Overton of Arkansas City heard God's call to missions in Brazil, hardly anyone was surprised.

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IT'S UPLIFTING

'Our Dream Came True'

by Elizabeth Watson
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas—Growing up in Etowah, Tenn., Lisa Condee Witt and Kathy Crockett Burton were so close they were often mistaken for sisters.

In August they found out it was no mistake.

Witt, the wife of Robert Witt, a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, is the adopted daughter of Southwestern graduates Ernest and Wilma Condee. She has discovered that Burton is her biological sister and that she has another sister as well.

"I wasn't sure if I was awake or dreaming when I received that phone call from the Tennessee Department of Human Services informing me I had two sisters trying to locate me," she said.

"I just didn't believe them," Witt said. "I knew I was adopted but I didn't think I had any biological siblings."

The Condees adopted Lisa in 1966 through an agency in Cleveland, Tenn., when she was 16 months old.

In 1975, Condee became pastor of Goodsprings Baptist Church in Etowah—the town in which Witt's older sister Kathy was living.

"Even though Kathy was two years older than me, we became fast friends," Witt said. "Her family attended Goodsprings Baptist Church and we went to the same grammar school.

"A special bonding occurred when we discovered we were both adopted," Witt said.

The two shared a passion for music. "We both loved to play the piano and occa-

sionally we would sing duets together," Witt said.

Their paths parted when Lisa moved to Jefferson City, Tenn., to attend Carson-Newman College. Burton married shortly after high school graduation and Witt married in her first year of college.

But their friendship took on new dimensions when Burton asked the Department of Human Services to help locate her biological siblings. Unknown to Burton and Witt, Karin Clark LeMay, their middle sister living in Hermitage, Tenn., was also seeking her sisters.

After Witt's sisters contacted each other they found her.

"I didn't know what to do for several days after I received the call," Witt said.

Her parents were participating in partnership missions in Venezuela at the time, so Witt finally called Burton's mother for advice.

"Before I could say anything she told me what Kathy had been up to," Witt said.

"When I called Kathy to talk about it, it didn't take long before she said, 'Lisa, you're that third sister we're looking for.' My birthday matched that of the missing sister and she was convinced it was me."

Just days after she requested information about her biological sisters, Witt's mother-in-law died and her brother was hospitalized. She immediately flew to Knoxville, Tenn.

While in Knoxville, a neighbor from Fort Worth read over the telephone to Witt a letter from the Department of Human Services confirming the sisters' relationship.

"Driving back home to Fort Worth we were so excited," Witt said.

"We all grew up with brothers—great brothers—but we secretly wished for sisters. Our dream came true."

GOOD NEWS!

A Wonderful People

Isaiah 42:6-9

This Old Testament passage magnifies the fact that the church is no fly-by-night operation. Her roots are in ancient Israel, even as her flower is in the New Israel created in Christ Jesus. Note three important truths about God's fellowship.

Called in righteousness (v. 6)—On the basis of his righteousness, God took the initiative to call his church from darkness to light and to constitute her by his redemptive act in Christ.

Kept in love (v. 6)—"I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you" (NASB v. 15). The fellowship is in the Father's grasp and under his watchful eye. Some congregations may act defeated and forsaken but God's church is triumphant and secure in his hand.

Appointed to mission (vv. 6-7)—God's fellowship is his gift to the nations. To the church God has given responsibility to proclaim Jesus as light, sight, and liberty.

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Sacrificing for Missions

J. EVERETT SNEED



During the recent SBC Executive Committee meeting, Dr. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, evaluated Southern Baptist mission activities around the world as representing "the best of times and the worst of times." It is the best of times in that there are more mission opportunities than there have been since the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention. Doors are open all around the world. New strategies are being developed to present the message of Christ as never before in the history of our convention. The best trained missionary personnel in the history of the convention are available.

But it is also the worst of times because our giving is not matching the opportunities which are available. The actual dollars given for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering have risen from \$40.5 million in 1979 to \$69.9 million in 1987. But the purchasing power in 1979 was \$30 million; in 1987 the purchasing power was only \$35 million based on the adjusted inflation rate base of 1976. This means that Southern Baptists are only slightly more than keeping pace with the inflation rate.

During this same time period our missionary force and the number of countries we serve has grown dramatically. In 1979 there were 3,010 missionaries serving in 95 countries. Today there are 3,843 missionaries in 113 countries.

The Foreign Mission Board is to be commended for accomplishing almost the impossible. But money can be stretched only so far. The 1989-90 operating budget for missions around the world will be reduced 12 percent. This means that the money available for ongoing operations will be reduced significantly. This obviously will hamper the work of our foreign missionaries in every country.

Southern Baptists can be justly proud of the quality of our foreign missionaries. They are well-trained people. In order to be a career missionary, one must have a master's degree or its equivalent. A typical missionary will hold the baccalaureate degree from an accredited college and a master's degree from a seminary. Many of our missionaries hold the terminal degree, such as the Ph.D., Th.D., or M.D. Each missionary must also have at least two years of practical experience.

Our foreign missionaries make dramatic sacrifices to be on the mission field, but

most Southern Baptists have not given sacrificially to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering or to the Cooperative Program. For the past six years Southern Baptists have failed to reach the Lottie Moon Christmas offering goal. This accounts for the small increase in real money available to the Foreign Mission Board.

The question arises: What kind of sacrifices do our foreign missionaries make? First, they are removed from their roots. Family and friends in the United States are no longer readily available to the missionaries. This in itself constitutes a major sacrifice.

Second, in order for a foreign missionary to be effective in most places in the world, they must learn a new language. Good communication is absolutely essential if

missionaries are to reach people and to provide quality leadership in the countries where they serve. While language aptitude varies greatly with individuals, there are few who can effectively master a second language as an adult without great effort.

Third, and possibly the most difficult, is mastering the culture of a new country. Every nation has its own customs, which must be acquired by our missionaries. Some of these are easily learned while others are exceedingly difficult for a missionary to accept.

Another sacrifice faced by missionaries in many parts of the world is the necessity of sending their children away to boarding schools at an early age. Often, it is necessary for missionaries to teach their children at home through grade six and as early as junior high school send them away to boarding school. In many countries this might be several hundred miles.

Southern Baptists can take great pride in the quality and commitment of the missionaries that we are placing on the foreign field. The Foreign Mission Board is also to be commended for its excellent management of funds Southern Baptists have given. However, we are fast approaching the time in which our mission work will come to a standstill unless we give more money. Our Lottie Moon goal for this year is \$84 million. It is essential that we meet this goal.

The most important question for each of us is: What would God have me to give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this year? If active Southern Baptist families will seek God's guidance regarding the amount to be given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the goal will be met!

Arkansas Baptist

VOLUME 87 NUMBER 36

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DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know



I have some information that you may use to effect savings in your church and to create better attitudes. It surely could clear up some misunderstandings.

First, recent studies reveal that literature produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board (BSSB) is less expensive than Scripture Press, David C. Cook or any other independent literature source.

Second, BSSB literature is written and edited by Southern Baptists and for Southern Baptists with sound educational considerations for each age-group. The *Baptist Faith and Message* is the doctrinal standard by which the content is controlled.

Third, the BSSB receives no Cooperative Program funds. The revenue from literature sales and Baptist Book Store sales are all put back into Southern Baptist work. No independent literature companies do this.

The BSSB will put \$72,897 back into the Arkansas Convention work this year. How will it help us? It will be divided: BSU, \$22,725; Church Music, \$12,711; Sunday School, \$20,736; and Church Training, \$16,725. Within these funds are services for architectural consultations, media-library consultations, recreation and family ministry helps and church administration helps. This is cash that helps fund our state work.

This just begins the story. Ridgcrest and Gloriaeta are funded by the BSSB. The many consultants who come to do conferences throughout the year come at the expense of the BSSB. Isn't this amazing? It makes you wonder where the profit goes when independent publishers sell at higher prices. You can be sure it does not come back to help Southern Baptist churches. Besides the above mentioned benefits, the BSSB has never received allocations for capital expenses such as buildings. Rather, the BSSB has made contributions to the SBC capital expenses.

There may be a better plan. I doubt it. We ought to appreciate this amazing arrangement and help our people to understand and appreciate it, also. Remember these things when you are tempted to complain or switch to non-convention literature publishers.

Don Moore is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

MISSIONS ADVANCE 87-89

Missionary to the Core

Southern Baptists are a missionary people to the core. The emphasis on reaching a lost world with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has been our inspiration and the main reason for our growth as a denomination. I believe God will continue to bless us only so long as we make obedience to the Great Commission our highest priority.

"Missions Advance 87-89" is an attempt to do just that by encouraging all of our Arkansas Baptist State Convention churches to increase their Cooperative Program giving. Our state convention is following a plan of annual increase as all of us agreed we should, but unless our churches do likewise it will become increasingly difficult to keep that commitment on schedule.

In 1985, Park Hill Church voted to increase its Cooperative Program giving by .5 percent each year until the year 2000, when we would be at the 20 percent level. Like individuals, churches need to be reminded of their commitments from time to time. With that in mind, we invited Bud Fray to speak to us not too long ago and challenge us to continue our church's own missions advance.

There are over 100 "Missions Advance 87-89" speakers across our state who would be delighted to share this challenge with your church. If you would like the names of these individuals, contact Jimmie Sheffield in Little Rock. After all, missions is not just another program, it is our reason for being and, perhaps, the most obvious test of our loyalty to Christ and his mission.—**Cary Heard, pastor, Park Hill Church, North Little Rock.**

Woman's Viewpoint

Visitation Is Worth It

NANCY JORDAN

One of the hardest programs for any church to keep going is the outreach visitation program. Is it worth the time and trouble? Do people really want us to visit them? I, for one, am thankful that some people thought so.

My earliest memory of visitation was in hearing some men from a church visiting a business man who did not attend any church. The only reason they gave him for coming to their church was that it was just good business to attend. He would be able to make the "right" contacts, and his business would grow. Somehow, even though I knew very little about churches, this did not ring true to me.

Then my husband and I moved to Fordyce. We were just a very young couple with two little children. We could not



have added any prestige to the church, and definitely not any significant amount of money. I was not a Baptist, L.B. was not a Southern Baptist, but none of that mattered to the folks at First Church, Fordyce. Not just one person came to visit us, but several, and some of them more than once.

I laugh at us as I look back on our reason for not attending. I told them we couldn't get off and leave our children, that maybe we could take turns about going sometime. They didn't put me down in any way, or even try to correct me. They just said that

would be a good way to get started.

One Sunday one of the women picked me up, took me to her Sunday School class, sat with me in church and afterwards said, "Let me show you our nursery." The next Sunday, one of the men picked L.B. up, took him to his Sunday School class, sat with him in church and afterwards said, "Let me show you our nursery."

What a blessing we received by becoming a part of that church, receiving friendship, encouragement and Christian education. I'm sure those folks had no idea they were visiting a future minister, but I'm thankful it was worth their time and trouble to visit a young couple.

Nancy Jordan is the wife of L.B. Jordan, director of missions for the Red River Association. She has three grown children and five grandchildren.

Couples Sharing and Supporting

by Rick M. Smith

The value and experience of Covenant Marriage cannot be limited to a 13-week course on Sunday evening at the church. Covenant Marriage must become a lifestyle that is challenged and affirmed through the experiences a couple face and the other couples they interact with. The lifestyle of Covenant Marriage involves couples learning principles, ideas, and skills as they observe their friends' marriages and the marriages of relatives. It involves consistently assessing aspects of their own marriage and celebrating their strengths while developing plans and working for change and growth.

Southern Baptists have a wide variety of resources available for couples to continue in the process of enriching their marriage. These include features in *Home Life* magazine such as "Couples Bible Study" and "Couplettime." Hundreds of couples have benefited from participation in a Baptist marriage enrichment retreat. Other group and couple studies can be offered in the church and community to reach couples for marriage enrichment. These include Church Training Equipping Center Modules and other book studies. Associational, state, and national conferences like the Fall Festivals of Marriage offer couples unique opportunities for marital growth experiences. Making a commitment to each other to participate in some of these growth opportunities will help a couple realize this lifestyle.

Covenant Marriage has other goals intended to help bring marriage and family enrichment into the mainstream of the local church ministry. One of these is to train other couples in the local church to be actively involved in marriage enrichment leadership. In the administrative guide of the Covenant Marriage Leader's Notebook, an effective four-hour leadership training model is provided to help train couples for this unique ministry. Since the ideal size for a Covenant Marriage study group is five to seven couples, many churches could have multiple groups meeting simultaneously. When several couples have a commitment to and training in marriage enrichment, this will assure that such a ministry will have the potential to be on-going within their church.

Another goal is to establish couple support groups out of the initial experience of Covenant Marriage. Some couples will sense the need to continue a ministry of support and encouragement to one another. As they meet in perhaps a home from time to time they can share together their progress in living out the skills and principles of Covenant Marriage. Again, churches who can create multiple Covenant Marriage study groups may also have multiple support groups for couples meeting year-round.

Finally, as couples share their experiences and concerns with each other, the need for other group events may emerge. One possibility might be "Parenting By Grace," another L.I.F.E. course similar in design to Covenant Marriage. Couples might identify other special interests such as sexual fulfillment, dual-career marriages, in-law relationships, money management, and aging parents. A study group could meet needs in couples' lives related to these areas.

Rick Smith is associate pastor of Sylvan Hills First Church in North Little Rock. He serves as family ministry director for the North Pulaski Association.

Letters to the Editor

Powerful Tool

Churches today are spending millions on beautiful buildings for people to meet together and worship in. But how many people of the world come into these buildings to find peace and learn the truth? We loudly protest a movie that desecrates the name of Christ, and we should. We have marches and sit-ins and prayer vigils to protest the abominable abortion clinics, and we should. But can't we counter-attack?

It is past time to take advantage of opportunities that could be ours. We cannot stop the making and showing of ugly movies by ugly people. But Southern Baptist churches could unite, pool their resources and produce movies of their own that would be factual.

There are those who would say, "How dull and unexciting those movies would be." Not so. A few good biblical movies have been made in the past. The Bible contains endless possibilities for film making. Throughout the Bible are stories that contain all the elements that fascinate the human race, such as love, romance, mystery, intrigue, murder, mayhem, rebellion, chaos, miracles, beauty, ugliness, and infinitum. No person has ever written, nor indeed shall ever write, a book more interesting and powerful. Throughout the Bible a web is woven in which God uses imperfect people to carry out his perfect will.

Millions of people will never open a Bible, neither will they enter a house of worship. But these same people will attend movies and rent home movies. These movies could lure the masses and entice them to know more about the Bible and ultimately some will want to know about the Author.

This could be a most powerful tool to reach the world. Yes, we have some good sermons preached on TV, but most worldly people will not watch those. Couldn't this be done on a non-profit basis, thereby making it available to the poorest of the poor? Perhaps someone with power and influence could make this feasible. Am I dreaming an impossible dream? With God's blessing and help, it would not be.—**Madge Harp, Springdale**

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A Visit to China

by J. Everett Sneed
Editor, Arkansas Baptist

In mid-April 1988, a medical team from the Baptist Medical System visited Henan Medical University at the invitation of the University's President Du Bailian. The purpose of the trip was to participate in the celebration of the University's 60th anniversary and to negotiate continuing agreements for exchange visits between physicians of the two institutions. On April 29, the agreement was approved by the Chinese government and was formally signed.

The initial trip included four physicians, a nurse, and two teachers in addition to Russell Harrington, chief administrator for the Baptist Medical System. The group was exceedingly well received and the Chinese government was fully aware that all the team members viewed the trip as a Christian ministry.

China today is more open to foreigners than it has been any time since the end of the cultural revolution. Administrator Harrington said, "Strong and friendly relationships with China are essential to the interest of the United States. It is necessary that we have a proper balance with the growing national powers through out the world. The secret to insuring a proper and healthy relationship between the United States and China depends more upon economics than anything else."

China is currently in need of finding open markets for its goods. It also needs to obtain technical expertise in developing technological skills, so the masses of people can find fuller employment. The need for industrial development in China appears to be almost limitless. Perhaps this is the area in which the United States can provide the greatest benefit. The Chinese have developed traditional skills in contrast to the development of modern technology. The traditional skills have been honed and developed in an atmosphere of isolation.

The current Chinese government, under the direction of Deng Xiaoping, appears to be developing policies which will improve the quality of life for the Chinese people. There is an obvious emphasis on public housing construction. There seems to be

overwhelming support for the government. For the first time in many years, it appears that the desires of the people and of the government are in concert.

One of the first impressions that a visitor to China gains is that there are masses of people everywhere an individual travels. Since one-fifth of the world's population is in China, a visitor immediately senses the impact that the Chinese people can have on the future. It is evident that China could become a world leader. To facilitate this it would be necessary for the government to care for the needs of its own people, harness the massive labor force, and develop the intellectual potential of the people.

The attitude toward Christianity has changed remarkably in the last few years. The official policy of the government is to allow freedom of religion. There is to be no outside denominational influence of Chinese churches. To accomplish this, the Chinese government has actually sanctioned religious freedom by establishing what is called the "Three Self Christian Church"

Baptist Medical System photo



Members of Baptist Medical System's China team.

(self-governing, self-supporting, and self-sustaining). The government has even provided money for construction of new churches as a measure of reparation for the past destruction during the cultural revolution.

Some of the Chinese Christian leaders have reservations regarding government involvement in financial support of the church. But Chinese Christian leaders are taking full advantage of this opportunity to openly spread the gospel. The result is a new awakening to Christianity. This awakening is particularly evident among the large number of young people who attend worship services.

It is possible in the future that official American church input may be allowed. It

is doubtful, however, that the traditional approach to missions being developed by missionaries will be allowed in the foreseeable future. The Chinese people seem to want to develop their churches from within, and it is certain that this is the intent of the Chinese government.

It is possible that organizations such as the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board may be able to help in a variety of ways in the future. If this is allowed, new ways of ministering must be discovered. Long term emphasis must be developed through people to people ministry as opposed to the building of Baptist missions and churches.

The primary concern of the medical team which went to Henan Medical University was to interact with the Chinese medical professionals. They observed that Western influence upon Chinese medicine was obvious. It is not occurring at the expense of traditional Chinese medicine. In the same hospital, traditional Chinese medicine is practiced in one wing while Western style medicine is practiced in another.

Traditional Chinese medicine includes herbal medicine, acupuncture and ChiGung. Research is under way to determine the value and effectiveness of traditional Chinese medical practices. The medical team observed surgery being conducted with the use of acupuncture without the use of anesthetic.

The medical team observed that many of the Chinese physicians are excellent in their practice of medical treatments using the very latest approaches. Some of the hospitals, such as Friendship Hospital in Beijing, are utilizing some of the latest high tech medical equipment. Dr. Walter O'Neal, observed, "One of their greatest difficulties lies at the area of bias against Western medicine. In America we begin with the premise that good medicine can be only practiced in a clean environment. This concept apparently is not well understood in China."

The medical team was agreed that there is a primitive approach in maintaining cleanliness in patients' rooms and through out the hospital. Harrington said, "This is the area in which we probably could provide the greatest improvement in the medical care of China."

Members of the team were: Don Elliott, retired superintendent of schools, Cabot; Russell Harrington, president, Baptist Medical System, Bonnie Hutson, R.N.; Harold Hyder, M.D., occupational medicine; Almeda Elliott, school teacher; Harold Hutson M.D., orthopedic surgeon; Lawson Glover, M.D., endocrinologist; and Walter O'Neal, M.D., chief of medical affairs, Baptist Medical Center.

Spreading the Word

Chinese Woman Taking Gospel to Homeland

by J. Everett Sneed

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Mr. and Mrs. Don Elliott of Cabot were the individuals who were instrumental in securing the medical exchange between the Baptist Medical System and Henan Medical University. The story had its beginning when the Elliots read about the Foreign Mission Board Laity Abroad Program in the *Arkansas Baptist*. They contacted Roy Nix, who was a Mission Service Corps volunteer working on Laity Abroad, and made application with the Foreign Mission Board.

After the Elliots' applications were approved by the Foreign Mission Board, the FMB contacted Mrs. Grace Han to assist the Elliots in locating in China to teach English. Mrs. Han attended school with many of the Chinese government officials or their wives. Grace Han's husband, Daniel, also has numerous contacts among the current Chinese officials.

Daniel Han's father was the first national pastor of the Baptist Mission in Kaifeng. Grace Han's father was a general in the Chinese Army. Both families were well known and had considerable financial resources.

During the Chinese-Japanese War, Grace's family sent her to Louyuan, out of the war zone, to provide protection for her. Her father felt that this was necessary because of his military connection.

After Grace, then 11 years of age, had spent several weeks in Louyuan without any word from her family, she became anxious to return home. A friend agreed to assist her. Several individuals slipped to the Yellow River and paid a large sum of money to a boatman to take them across the river. At length a boat arrived and the

individuals filled the boat quickly. Grace, being smaller than the others, was unable to get on the boat, which was completely loaded. The boatman assured her that he would return and pick her up at a later time. Great caution had to be used because the Japanese were watching for individuals who were trying to cross the river.

When the boat arrived at mid-stream of the swollen river it capsized. Grace could hear the cries of those who were on the boat as they drowned in the river. Because she was unable to get on the boat, her life was spared.

After some hours another boat came, and this time she successfully crossed the river. She was now alone and many miles from home. But she started walking in that general direction. She recalls sobbing, "God, please give me direction because I'm not sure which way to go."

Grace had to be careful because Japanese soldiers were everywhere looking for individuals who were trying to move through the area which they had conquered.

Grace's father had the impression that Grace was trying to come home. In spite of the military occupation and personal danger, he began searching for Grace. He searched unsuccessfully for two days. Eventually Grace made her way home, cold and hungry but unharmed.

Pastor Han offered protection for the

general and his family. Because the Japanese had not occupied the Baptist Mission, Pastor Han could offer sanctuary to a few individuals.

The general did accept sanctuary in the mission. He and his wife were confined to a small room with nothing to do. Pastor Han brought a Bible to the general. It was through the reading of God's word that the general accepted Christ and became a Christian.

Grace attended medical school for one year in China. Her parents wanted to provide her with the best possible education. Through the Southern Baptist missionaries, arrangement was made for her to attend Louisiana College, a Baptist college in Pineville, La. After attending college there for one year, Grace was told by the president that the school did not have the proper curriculum to prepare her in the

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Almeda Elliott, Grace Han, and Don Elliott

medical field. He made arrangements for her to transfer to Baylor University.

Since Grace was not an American citizen at the time, she was told that she could not be licensed as a physician. So she received a bachelor of science in nursing. While working at Baylor Hospital in Dallas, she had contact with Daniel, whom she had dated briefly in China. They began to date more seriously and were married.

Daniel had received his doctor of medicine degree in China and was in the United States to do additional study. It was the Hans plan to return to China, but because of the implications of the cultural revolution they were unable to return. After several more years of medical study, Daniel and Grace became American citizens in 1964. Dr. Han, a noted pathologist, has worked for the government as well as in private practice.

Approximately three years ago, while Grace was reading her Bible, she felt that God wanted her to work to spread Christianity in China. She has a ministry entitled, "Wah-Mei" which has a three pronged goal: to promote Christianity, education, and culture. The Elliots were the second couple that Grace was able to assist to go to China to minister.

Dr. and Mrs. Han are currently in China working out additional details on medical exchange between Baptist Medical Center and Chinese hospitals. She has also been successful in bringing two of the individuals that the Elliots taught English to Baylor to study nursing.



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A SMILE OR TWO

A young mother was surprised and pleased when her 11-year-old daughter gave her a gift she'd bought with her own allowance.

"It's because you work so hard and no one appreciates it," she explained.

"Your father works hard, too," said the mother, feeling a bit guilty.

"I know," murmured the daughter, "but he doesn't complain about it."

A race horse is an animal that can take several thousand people for a ride at the same time.

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Richard Britt is serving as pastor of Falcon First Church, Buckner.

Billy West has resigned as pastor of Tennessee Church, Texarkana.

Allen Thrasher observed his 10th anniversary of service Oct. 2 as pastor of First Church, Booneville, when the church honored him with a reception at which he was presented a camcorder and accessories.

Keith Sandefur is serving as pastor of Palestine Church, Quitman. He and his wife, Theresa, have two children, Jarred and Megan.

Roger Pettit has joined the staff of South Side Church, Heber Springs, as minister of music.

Don Reed is serving as interim pastor of First Church, Henderson.

Douglas Fisher has resigned as minister of youth at Rosedale Church in Little Rock to serve as pastor of Bluffton Church.

Harold Henson is serving as pastor of First Church, Farmington, coming there from Cleburne, Texas, where he served First Church as minister of education. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological, holding both master of divinity and master of religious education degree. Henson and his wife, Kenna, have a daughter, Sydney.

Jack H. Hogue of Little Rock, a retired Baptist minister, died Oct. 8 at age 88.

Hogue, who was ordained as a Southern Baptist minister in 1934 by East End Church, Hensley, was a member of First Southern Church, Bryant. Survivors are his wife, Lavada B. Hogue; a son, Douglas E. Hogue of Little Rock; two daughters, Kathleen Perdue of Benton, and Janita Probst of Memphis; a stepdaughter, Nanette Burch of Conway; three grandchildren; three stepgrandchildren; and two stepgrandchildren.

Briefly

Marianna First Church ordained Ralph Bowman and Glenn Hopper to the deacon ministry Oct. 9.

Gosnell Church recently recognized Bill Decker and Bill Dawson as Baptist Men of the Year and Brenda Davis as Baptist Woman of the Year.

Park Hill Church in Arkadelphia closed its church year with 23 new members, nine of them being by profession of faith and baptism. The church also sent a 12-member summer mission team to Indiana.

Hon Church at Waldron ordained Pastor Hugh Rice to the preaching ministry Sept. 25. Participating in the service were V.W. Simpson, Ed Hon, Glen Wagner, Lee Vaughn, Mrs. Larry Hileman, Euell Plummer, Johnnie Darr, director of missions for Buckner Association, and L.D. Casey.

Parks Church has purchased a maxi-van to be used in outreach and other activities of the church.

Calvary Church near Booneville held a service Aug. 28 in observance of five years of service since its reactivation. Youth and women of the church and members of the Stewart Family presented special music. Speakers were Johnnie Darr, director of missions for Buckner Association, and Elva Adams, former DOM. James Simons is pastor.

Amboy Church in North Little Rock observed 30 years of library service Oct. 2, noting that currently it houses 4,789 volumes of reading materials that have been read by 37,685 individuals. Several years ago the library was named "The Iva Vines Library," honoring Mrs. Vines, who has served as librarian for the 30 years of service. Serving with her are Helen Hollingshead and Shirley Whiting. They are not only responsible for weekly reading services, but coordinated activities for 29 summer reading clubs.

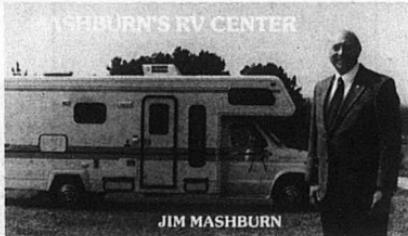
DeValls Bluff First Church, which observed its first homecoming in its 86 years of service Oct. 16, has voted to begin a fund-raising campaign to build a new sanctuary and education building on 20 acres of land on Highway 70. This land was given to the church many years ago by the Mary Parker Hosek Family.

Lakeside Church in Hot Springs is holding a revival Oct. 16-21 led by Sam Whitlow, pastor of Harmony Church in El Dorado, and Donny Casper, music and youth director at Bayless Church in St. Louis.

Dardanelle First Church, in a Sept. 25 service, honored Orville Lee Brown, Clarence Harp, and G.S. Cornell, naming them deacons emeritus.



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Midway Church held a service Oct. 2 to commission Leona Kirby as a volunteer through the Missions Service Corps of the Home Mission Board. The service featured a formal presentation of the Missions Service Corps Commission to Mrs. Kirby. Pastor Bill Mabury led the service.

West Memphis Second Church celebrated homecoming Oct. 9 with both a noteburning service to celebrate payment of its debt-free status and a dedication service for its new educational building. Former pastor Jack Auten was speaker.

Elmdale Church at Springdale ordained Dennis Griffin and Eddie Thomason to the deacon ministry Sept. 25.

Valley Springs First Church is holding its fall revival Oct. 16-23 with John Finn, director of Arkansas Christian Civic Foundation, serving as evangelist.

Hazen First Church became one of the newest members of Baptist Telecommunications Network Oct. 1. BTN committee members are Barbara Moore, coordinator, Reta Chlapecka, Mary Kisor, Donna Coleman, Virginia Westerfield, Faye Patterson, and Franklin Skarda. Howard J. Kisor Jr. is pastor.

Roberson Church of Lonoke, which was constituted in January 1988, became a self-supporting congregation Oct. 1 after receiving pastoral aid as a mission from Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Chesser Honored

A retirement celebration was held by First Church, Carlisle, for Charles Chesser who has served that congregation for more than 22 years. Under Chesser's leadership the church has experienced steady growth both numerically and financially.

The budget has grown from \$34,000 to \$228,000. Under Chesser's leadership, the church erected a complete new educational and worship facility. The church plant is currently valued at more than \$800,000. The church borrowed \$180,000 to complete the church plant in 1977 but eliminated the debt in 1980. The congregation is currently debt free.



Chesser has served churches in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. In Arkansas he has served the Kibler Church, Antioch Church near Hot Springs, First Church, Amity and the Collins Church.

The congregation used Sept. 25, to honor the Chesser's. The speaker for the morning service was Zane Chesser, pastor of First Church, Malvern and the brother of Charles Chesser. Chesser used 1 Samuel 7:12 as his text. He said that, on an occasion such as this, individuals were to look back to the past at victories, look forward for future victories and above all to look up to the one who provides the victory. The invocation was led by Ben N. Elrod, president of Ouachita Baptist University, who prior to his prayer paid tribute to Charles Chesser.

Several members of the Chesser family participated in the service in various ways. Charles Chesser, managing editor for the *Log Cabin Democrat*, Conway, read Scripture and led in the morning prayer. Special music for the morning service was presented by Mrs. Charles Chesser and four of the Chesser's daughters, Ann Brumbelow, Karen Bailey, Becky Perkin and Mary Kelly. The Chesser's have seven children and nine grand children.

The afternoon message was delivered by ABN Editor J. Everett Sneed. Other speakers participating included W. T. Byrum, director of missions for the Caroline Association; Jim Byrum, pastor of Immanuel Church, Carlisle; and Bill Hilburn, moderator of the association and pastor of First Church, Ward.

A number of gifts were presented to the Chesser's. Among these were four plaques, a cemetery plot in Carlisle, a book of letters, and a monetary gift. State Representative Bobby Glover, a member of the Carlisle church, presided over both services.

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CALLED TO BRAZIL

Hardly Surprising

by Mark Kelly

Managing Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Ken and Hope Overton's surprise didn't raise a single eyebrow.

The couple recently told the congregation of Arkansas City First Church that they were about to be appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for service in Equatorial Brazil.

"The folks came by after the invitation to shake our hands, and the main thing we kept hearing was, 'We're not surprised,'" recalls Ken, who has pastored the congregation since 1984. "I guess I had just talked so much about Brazil that everyone expected us to go back as missionaries."

The people had been hearing about Brazil for quite a while. Both the Overtons and a layman in the church, James Kolb, had participated in a 1986 partnership missions trip to Maraba, a boom town deep in the Brazilian interior. Ken had returned to Brazil in 1987 when the Arkansas Singing Men assisted with the citywide crusade in Manaus. Both of the trips had been planned as part of the three-year "AMAR" partnership between Arkansas Baptists and two Brazilian Baptist conventions.

Hope sensed God's call first. In fact, she almost didn't return from Maraba.

"I just fell in love with the people," she recalls. "I told Ken I just wanted to stay and have the kids sent over to us."

"I was really disturbed that I was abandoning the people who had made professions of faith during our trip. I didn't want to lose any baby Christians."

Hope was ready to commit herself to career missions in Brazil. Several years before, while a member of Birchman Avenue Church in Fort Worth, Texas, she had acknowledged a call to missions. She felt now that she knew the "where" and "when" of that call.

But although Ken enjoyed the trip immensely, he hadn't heard a call from God.

"Never in my life had I had anyone come up to me and ask me how to become a Christian, like they did in Brazil," he remembers. "It was exciting to find people so receptive to the gospel." Fifty-two persons accepted Christ in the churches where the Overtons were assigned.

It remained for Ken to return to Brazil a year later to experience his call.

This time their two children, Christina and Adam, were in school, so Ken went by himself. The Music Men team had practiced for months for the three-day crusade which was followed by two sets of three-day revivals in the city of Manaus.

Once again, the people's eagerness for the gospel overwhelmed him. Between the

crusade and the church revivals, an estimated 9,500 people made professions of faith.

"When the time came to go, I could hardly get on the plane to leave," he recalls, with tears brimming in his eyes. "I knew there were so many hundreds of thousands who had not heard the gospel yet."

He took two weeks to reflect on his experience before telling anyone, but the need to be in Brazil didn't go away, so he shared his feelings with his wife. Together they contacted the Foreign Mission Board and began the arduous process of applying for mission service.



ABN photo / Mark Kelly

The next 10 months were filled with reams of paperwork, exhaustive physical examinations, and penetrating personal interviews. They wrote life sketches and personal histories, reviewed books, and took psychological profile tests. Twice they detailed their Christian beliefs. They filled out a statement of their finances and provided 26 personal references.

In August, after eight months of preparation, they were invited to a candidate conference. There they were met by an entirely new round of physical and psychological examinations and interviews with mission board consultants and area representatives. They also participated in intensive sharing times with their fellow candidates.

Near the end of the third day, the Overtons were handed a sheet of paper which said at the top, "Application for Missionary Service."

Ken was bowled over. "What have we been doing for the last 10 months?"

They were told that this would be the cover sheet for the file which would be presented to directors of the Foreign Mission Board when they met in September to consider their appointment. They filled it out and returned home to share with their church and wait for word.

On Sept. 27, the word came, and the word was "yes."

Two weeks later, on Oct. 11, they returned to Richmond, Va., for their formal ap-

pointment service, similar to one which will be held in Little Rock in April 1989. Three weeks after that, they will enter seven weeks of orientation. In February, they will begin language school.

A year later, in February 1990, almost four years after their first trip to Brazil, the Overtons will take the field as the first Southern Baptist missionaries in Macapa, capital of the Amapa territory. The city of 100,000 sits astride the Equator at the mouth of the Amazon River. Ken will serve as a field evangelist; Hope will be assigned as a church and home worker. Together, they will assist four churches in the city and four in the interior.

"Since I said yes to God, I've never had a moment that I felt like we shouldn't be doing this," says Ken. "We are looking for-

Ken and Hope Overton show their children, Adam and Christina, where Macapa, Brazil, is located. The family will leave for orientation in November.

ward to the new work.

"As I look back, I don't ever recall hearing a missionary speaker ever say he had sacrificed anything as a missionary. Now I know why: it wasn't any sacrifice to them. And I don't see anything that looks like a sacrifice for us."

Ken Overton is the son of Carl and Clara Overton of Hot Springs. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. **Hope Overton** is a native of Oklahoma. Her parents, Carl and Alma Wadley, are both deceased.

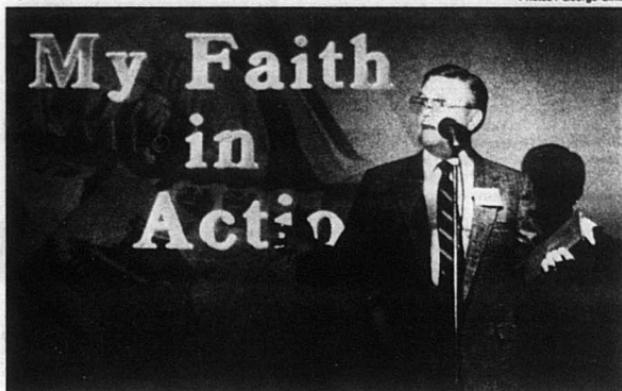
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My Faith in Action—More than 600 students convened on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Oct. 7-9 for the 1988 State Baptist Student Convention. Featured speakers for the convention were ABCS Executive Director Don Moore and Carolyn McClendon, director of Friendship House in New Orleans, La. The theme for the convention was "My Faith in Action... Life Decisions."



CHURCH ARKANSAS

Mission Launched At Midway

Arkansas Baptists launched their 22nd new mission effort for 1988 on Oct. 2 at Midway, located on Highway 22 between Paris and Dardanelle.

The Crestview Mission is sponsored by Southside Church in Paris and Spradling Avenue Church in Fort Smith. It is located east of Midway on four acres of highway frontage purchased by the Concord Association.

Ferrell Morgan, director of missions for Concord Association, preached during the morning service. Likening the mission launch to the birth of a new baby, he said it was "one of the most exciting things ever to happen" in the association.

Morgan said the Midway location was one of 27 sites identified in a 1987 new work probe as capable of supporting a new work. The area has 650 homes and no Southern Baptist witness. The land purchase was made from a new site fund which receives \$7,500 annually from the Concord Association budget. A mobile chapel has been provided by Concord Association and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Missions Department.

Concord Association is planning two new church starts in 1989 and has set a goal of two new starts each year for the next five years, Morgan said.

The mission is being started with the help of Floyd and Vera Trisler and Eldon and Uella Thomas of Paris Southside Church and Gary and Carol Thomas of Delaware First Church. The Trislars previously have been involved in starting the Delaware church and Scranton First Church.

Jack Ramsey, new work consultant for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Missions Department, will serve as interim pastor of the mission from November to January, until a mission pastor can be called. Jan Aiken is pastor of the mission's primary sponsor, Paris Southside.

Investment Returns

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention invested about \$100,000 to start new churches in Fairfield Bay, Hot Springs Village, Horseshoe Bend, Cherokee Village, and Bella Vista. As of 1987, these young churches had already given \$454,555 to worldwide missions through the Cooperative Program. They also had given \$118,499 to associational missions. And they had baptized 543 people.

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Graham Sets Date

Evangelist Billy Graham will conduct an Arkansas crusade at War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock Sept. 17-24, 1989, according to Jimmy Karam, the Little Rock retailer who has coordinated a broad-based effort to bring Dr. Graham to the state.

At a recent dinner meeting, Dan Southern, a member of Graham's staff who will serve as the director for the Arkansas crusade, reported to the local group's interim steering committee that Graham has formally reserved the dates on his 1989 calendar. The Arkansas crusade will be among only three or four the evangelist plans to conduct worldwide in 1989.

An interim steering committee has been selected, with W. H. (Buddy) Sutton of Little Rock serving as chairman.

Karam indicated that Southern and his staff will be relocating in Little Rock sometime within the next few months. At that time, a permanent committee and other planning and activity committees will be formulated and announced.

It has been more than 20 years since Graham and his team have been in Arkansas for a crusade. He receives hundreds of invitations annually to conduct crusades or speak at other events.

Joy Explo Coming

Salvadoran-born evangelist Jaime Mayorga and youth evangelist Buster Soaries will be the featured speakers at Joy Explo, the Arkansas Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference, Dec. 29-30 at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

Also appearing on the program will be musician Al Denson of Houston, Texas.

Mayorga, of Dallas, Texas, has conducted revivals in more than 200 Southern Baptist churches and has spoken to more than 500,000 teenagers in high school assembly programs and crusades. The son of a teenage prostitute, Mayorga struggled with abuse and drugs until he was converted on the streets of New Orleans, La.

Soaries, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., is a full-time youth speaker and evangelist. He is the author of articles which have appeared in *Christianity Today*, *Campus Life*, and *Contemporary Christian Music*. A graduate of Fordham University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Soaries is a member of Shiloh Baptist Church of Trenton, N.J.

Musician Al Denson has performed in more than 40 states before more than 500,000 people. He has worked with other notable musicians such as the Bill Gaither



Mayorga



Soaries

Trio and the Imperials. He has produced a music video which was part of a television special, "Kids in Crisis," with Dawson McAllister.

Also featured on the Joy Explo '88 program will be the All State Youth Band and Choir and a multi-screen video, "Love in A Twisted World."

Registration will begin at 12 noon, Thursday, Dec. 29. The conference will conclude at noon Friday, Dec. 30.

For more information, contact the Evangelism Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 376-4791.

Classifieds

For Sale—1963 IAC 58-passenger bus. Motor good, body fair, good tires. Phone 501-839-3221, Monday through Thursday, 9:00-1:00. Bids taken, to be opened Oct. 30. 10/20

Position Open—North Little Rock Baptist church needs pianist for Sunday and Wednesday services. Call 753-4827 or 758-2351. 10/27

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 85 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

THINK ABOUT IT

He overcomes a stout enemy who overcomes his own anger. —Aristotle

Make three correct guesses consecutively and you will establish a reputation as an expert. —Laurence Peter



ABN photo / Millie Gill

40th Anniversary—Mt. Carmel Church in Cabot, observing 40 years of service this year, held a noteburning service Oct. 9 as a part of its anniversary celebration. Pastor Mitch Tapson congratulated members for their "sacrificial vision" in paying the \$245,000 indebtedness in 12 years. He also commended members for their growth vision, noting that the congregation, which was organized with 19 members, today has a membership of 1,800 with an average Sunday School attendance of more than 520. Burning the note were (left to right) Tapson, former pastor Ron Griffin, W.T. Byrum, director of missions for Caroline Association, and Ken Stump, chairman of deacons.

'Bite the Bullet'

Executive Committee Sets Zero-Growth Budget Goal

by Marv Knox
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Faced with mounting convention-budgeted but unfunded capital expense and stagnant resources, the Southern Baptist Executive Committee has adopted a zero-growth goal for the denomination's 1989-90 operating budget.

The Executive Committee has approved a \$137,610,000 Cooperative Program basic operating budget goal for the 1989-90 fiscal year. That amount is the same as the basic operating budget for the 1988-89 fiscal year, to begin Oct. 1.

The Executive Committee approved the 1989-90 national goal during its fall meeting Sept. 19-20, "subject to review and/or modification" at its winter meeting Feb. 20-22. As approved in February, the budget will be presented to messengers to the SBC annual meeting next summer.

SBC agencies, meanwhile, have requested a total of \$148.9 million in Cooperative Program operating funds for the 1989-90 fiscal year.

Executive Committee leaders cited four primary reasons for the zero-growth budget goal—a weak economy, a mountain of capital needs, an unexpectedly successful annuity program and denominational strife. They explained:

— The economy. Several states where Baptist strength is greatest have been crippled by financial recession. Churches there cannot sustain unchecked growth in the SBC.

"The economy is the culprit," said Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Executive Committee. "Other factors are involved, but the economy is hurting us."

Two economic variables are involved, Bennett explained.

First, state conventions have been caught between receiving decreasing percentages from church budgets and sending increasing percentages of their own budgets to the national Cooperative Program, he said.

Since 1977-78, church gifts to the program have fallen from 8.82 percent of their budgets to 8.40 percent. But state gifts to the national program have increased from 34.82 percent of their budgets to 38.69 percent.

Second, states and national entities carried budget projections from the high-inflation years of the late-1970s too far, he added. Double-digit inflation dropped before state conventions and national agencies quit budgeting double-digit expansion, although corrections were initiated in the mid-1980s.

Consequently, state conventions are tightening their belts and sending smaller portions of their budgets to the national Cooperative Program.

— Capital needs. The SBC approved a 1985-90 capital needs budget of almost \$32 million during its 1985 annual meeting in Dallas. The money was to help construct or renovate facilities for 14 SBC entities.

The capital needs were spread over the five years and were to be paid after each year's basic operating budget was met. But only about \$5.7 million is expected to have been raised when the books close on the 1987-88 fiscal year Sept. 30. That leaves an unfunded but budgeted accumulation of more than \$18 million through 1988-89, with an additional \$8 million to be raised in 1989-90.

Of the unfunded capital needs, only \$8 million used to finance the seven-agency SBC Building in Nashville has been legally committed to pay off a loan. However, Southern Baptists have a "moral obligation" for the balance of the capital needs, leaders said, noting SBC institutions have received matching funds from foundations, based on receipt of the money.

— Annuity. The Southern Baptist Annuity Board recently implemented an expanded annuity program to help churches prepare for the retirement of their ministers.

The program calls for state conventions

to provide matching funds for the annuities. Officials said churches have signed up much more rapidly than the conventions anticipated, creating a drain on convention budgets.

— Denominational strife. Leaders have been hesitant to say just how much of an impact the SBC's 10-year-old theological/political conflict has had on the convention's finances, although most agree it must be having some effect.

SBC "conservatives" have faulted "moderates," such as members of the Southern Baptist Alliance, for pulling back from the Cooperative Program now that "conservatives" dominate the convention's trustee boards. "Moderates" have maintained the new leaders did not support the Cooperative Program when "moderates" were in control and still are not cooperative enough to support the program now that "conservatives" are in charge.

Whatever the factors, the Executive Committee's alternatives are limited, Harrell said: "We're falling more and more behind. Common sense would tell you there's nothing to be gained by adding more money to a budget we're not meeting. We don't need to keep piling deficit on top of deficit."

"We thought it would be best to bite the bullet with a zero-based budget and count on increased income to meet our capital needs obligations."

Tennessee Elects Lowrie

BRENTWOOD, Tenn.— D.L. Lowrie, director of the state missions commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, has been elected unanimously to become executive director-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Lowrie, 53, a native of Tennessee, was elected during a called meeting of the TBC Executive Board Sept. 29. He will succeed Tom J. Madden, who will retire April 30 at age 70. Madden has been the TBC's top executive since Jan. 1, 1979.

Lowrie will join the TBC Jan. 1, and will work with Madden for four months.

Lowrie is a native of Bluff City, Tenn., where his parents still live. He is a graduate of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He has held pastorates in Tennessee and Texas and was pastor of First Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, before assuming the BGCT post in 1986.

He held several key positions in the Texas convention, including two years as president from 1981-83.

Lowrie and his wife, the former Alice Reynolds of Myrtle, Miss., have four sons.

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The Suffering Servant

by Jim Box, Central Church, Bald Knob

Basic passage: Isaiah 53:4-11

Focal passage: Isaiah 53:4-11

Central truth: The suffering servant.

The prophet has been assuring Israel that the departure from Babylon would be orderly and without panic, in contrast to the Exodus from Egypt; but in 52:12 he changes the theme, proclaiming that "the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard" (RSV). Here Isaiah began proclaiming the Servant of Redemption.

Beginning with a statement of the servant's ultimate exaltation, Isaiah said that this goal would be reached through an experience of deep humiliation (v.14). The servant would be abused so as to appear scarcely human, but he would become so impressive that kings would be silent in his presence.

In God's eyes the coming one would be "a tender plant," full of rich fruitage, but to others he would be "a root out of a dry ground," lacking all attractiveness and prospect of achievement. Isaiah presents him as having "no form nor comeliness; . . . no beauty that we should desire him." He was born to a peasant girl, grew up in a carpenter's home, and in manhood could say that he had "nowhere to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20).

The hostile attitudes and actions against him were based on a complete misunderstanding of the mission of God's servant. The false assumption was that his suffering was divine punishment for his own transgressions. This is the meaning of "we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was intended to teach the seriousness of sin, the high cost of forgiveness, and the need for a substitute. In verses 5-6, the truth is affirmed in several ways that "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The sixth verse begins with an "all" of divine redemption.

As Christians we read Isaiah 53 through lenses that are tinted with New Testament truth. We see here the Silent Savior, not protesting the violence done to him, uncomplaining before God and man. The term "lamb" also affirms his sacrificial mission; the blood of a slain lamb provided protection to the homes of Israelites on the first Passover (Ex. 12:3-7).

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Life and Work

Good News for All Persons

by Stephen Pate, Second Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Acts 15:22-31; Galatians 2:1-10; Ephesians 3:1-13

Focal passage: Ephesians 3:4-9; Galatians 2:7-9

Central truth: The gospel is God's way of salvation for all people.

The Jerusalem council was called (Acts 15) to address unforeseen questions which were arising as a result of the gospel penetrating the non-Jewish world. Is it necessary to be circumcised and observe the law of Moses to be saved? The Pharisees said yes, but Peter said no. Others, like James, were in the middle. The decision of the council was crucial to the continuation of the spread of the good news. So, what was it that swung the vote?

Paul and Barnabas informed the council as to what was actually taking place among the Gentiles. Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas were then chosen to inform the Gentiles of the decision at Antioch of the council. The decision was that circumcision and observance of mosaic law was not necessary for salvation. When they learned of the decision they rejoiced (v. 31). Gentiles could and should be fellow heirs. Jew and Gentile would be welcomed alike into the church. The decision was one thing; to deal with the long term prejudice was another.

To see Jew and Gentile equal was unthinkable to most Jews. Aside from divine intervention, long term problems lay ahead. Divine intervention in this case was Paul. It was his responsibility to announce this new understanding. He didn't choose this role. God did! His role being to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ and to help men to see the fellowship of the mystery which was always a part of God's plan. The mystery being Jew and Gentile having equal access to God.

The next problem, no less crucial, was how the new understanding could be reconciled with the old without appearing to abandon the old understanding? Paul tackles this problem in Galatians 2:7-9. It was several years later in Jerusalem when Paul went to present his case for the gospel. Paul, along with Barnabas again convinced the pillars (v. 9) that Gentiles need not become Jews to be Christians.

We all come to Jesus the same way—just as we are Jew or Gentile—no difference!

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Bible Book

Passover and Exodus

by Bradley A. Rogge, Forest Tower Church, Hensley

Basic passage: Exodus 12

Focal passage: Exodus 12:21-24, 29-32, 35-36, 50-51

Central truth: We must follow God's plan.

I have been asked on some occasions, "Why did God require a blood sacrifice for the remission of sin? If God did not require a blood sacrifice, then Jesus would not have had to suffer the cross."

We can find the answer to that question in the third chapter of Genesis. When God found man in sin he replaced the fig leaves that man had fashioned with a cloth covering. This cloth covering could have been fashioned only after the death of an innocent animal. From this point a innocent life was needed to redeem sinful man.

Our passage today gives us a picture of a future event. An event that would occur and for all settle the issue of a blood sacrifice for the redemption of mankind.

At the Passover a blood sacrifice kept the Hebrews safe as the death angel passed through Egypt. A blood sacrifice has always protected man. The Passover pointed to the last sacrifice which was and is Christ.

By following God's instructions the Hebrews were kept safe and allowed to leave the land of Egypt and make their way to the Promised Land.

We know that it would have been several years before Israel would have reached the Promised Land, but that was not God's fault and will be part of a later discussion.

God provides a plan of protection for his people today. The blood over the doorpost in our lives is the blood of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice became the last blood sacrifice that would be needed for the redemption of man. When we accept him into our lives we gain that protection God has for us.

There will come a time when we will face our own exodus across unknown lands to our promised land. We will leave the trappings of this world of sin to the freedom of heaven. We will be protected as we make this passage.

The Passover was the forerunner of our Lord's Supper. In the Lord's Supper we see anew God's sacrifice and the promise for those who are Christians. In the Exodus we see the hope for our own exodus. Like the Hebrews we must follow God's plan. There is no other method of salvation.

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Meals, Medicine, and Hope

Baptists Help Clean Up After Gilbert

by Ken Camp

Baptist General Convention of Texas

CARBONERA, Mexico (BP)—As victims of Hurricane Gilbert began piecing together shattered lives, Southern Baptists ministered in the most devastated area of northeastern Mexico, offering hot meals, medical care and the promise of new life in Jesus Christ.

On Sept. 23, a bi-national Rio Grande River Ministry health-care team expanded Texas Baptists' ministry from the city of San Fernando to Carbonera and surrounding fishing villages in the wind-ravaged Laguna Madre region.

During their first two days in the flooded rural area, the health-care professionals treated 156 families. The four-member team returned to the Carbonera area Sept. 26 for five days of medical, dental and nursing ministry.

After serving 13,000 meals in San Fernando, the Texas Baptist disaster relief unit moved its headquarters and mobile field kitchen to Carbonera the day before the medical/dental team returned. In its first day at Laguna Madre, the disaster relief team served more than 6,300 meals.

Meanwhile, the Louisiana Baptist disaster relief team fed 7,000 meals at Mendez, and the Oklahoma Baptist disaster relief crew served an average of 5,000 meals per day at Monterrey. The Oklahoma team also built several mobile feeding stations in Santa Catarina and trained local Baptist Women's Missionary Union members in feeding operations.

North of the Rio Grande, Texas Baptist volunteers from Wichita Falls and Galveston Baptist associations assisted in feeding, recovery and rebuilding at a community four miles from Donna, Texas.

When the health-care team first arrived at Carbonera after providing treatment to more than 250 patients in San Fernando, they discovered hundreds of malnourish-

ed, dehydrated-hurricane victims.

"The little houses were blown away. Dead animals and waste were starting to attract flies and infection," said Delores York of Cone Oasis Baptist Encampment, a volunteer Mission Service Corps nurse serving with the River Ministry. "We saw children who hadn't eaten in five days. The people didn't have any clean water to drink. Of course, there was water everywhere, but it was all salt water."

During the first two days in the Carbonera area, the health-care team's gospel witness was more through deeds than words, as they distributed baby food and formula for about 350 infants and children.

"We didn't get to share Christ as we would have liked," York said. "There were so many needs—so many people tugging at your arm saying, 'Food for my baby, my baby!'"

When the medical/dental team returned to Carbonera the following week, they were able to build on the relationships established a few days before.

Marcos Peralez, a dentist from Reynosa, and Hilda Gonzalez, a missionary aide from Primera Church in Progreso, worked at a local clinic in Carbonera. Martha Garza, a physician from Miguel Aleman, and York traveled into isolated fishing villages to offer medical assistance and to collect specimens for laboratory analyses and diagnoses.

York said that one disaster relief worker smiled and accused her of lying when she spoke of going door-to-door making housecalls. He pointed out that most of the families the team visited no longer had houses, and the few who did had no doors.

As the medical/dental team offered health care, the Texas Baptist disaster relief crew served hot meals and distributed canned goods throughout the Laguna Madre area.

Long-Time Missionary Dies

Albert J. Bagby, son of Southern Baptists' pioneer missionaries to Brazil, died Sept. 29 in Gadsden, Ala. He followed in his parents' footsteps by becoming a missionary to Brazil for 30 years. His parents, W.B. and Anne Luther Bagby, established Southern Baptists' first permanent work in Brazil after their arrival in 1881.

Missionary Notes

Thelmer H. Williams, father of Mrs. Graydon Hardister, Baptist representative to Jordan, died Aug. 14 in Bauxite. She is the former Betty Williams of Bauxite. Her husband was born in Reyndell and also lived in Pine Bluff. Appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1965, they may be addressed at P.O. Box 17147, Amman, Jordan.

Glenn and Pauline Nicholson, missionaries to Panama, have completed language study in Costa Rica and arrived on the field (address: Apartado E. Balboa, Republica de Panama). He is a native of Forest City. The former Pauline Vaughn, she was born in Harrisburg and considers Cherry Valley her hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1987.

Dirk and Libby Pearce, missionaries to Senegal, have completed language study and arrived on their field of service (address: BP 39, Bignona, Senegal). Son of Southern Baptist missionaries, he grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. The former Libby Tullios, she grew up in Texas. Both consider Monticello their hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1987.

Joel and Rhonda Sutton, missionaries to France, have arrived on the field to begin language study (address: 15 bis, allée de la Suede, 91300 Massy, France). He was born in Hot Springs, and she, the former Rhonda Rainer, in Los Angeles, Calif. Both consider Magnolia their hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1988.

Ron and Elinda West, missionaries to Taiwan, report a change of address (P.O. Box 427, Taipei 10099, Taiwan ROC). They are natives of Booneville; she is the former Elinda Tidwell. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1978.

Organizing Relief for Mexico

People in Arkansas are mobilizing resources to help relieve suffering in Mexico caused by Hurricane Gilbert during September.

According to Raymond Reed, director of missions for Bartholomew Association, the Migrant Mission Center at Hermitage is organizing food, clothing, and money to be sent to the area around Monterrey, Mexico.

Ariel Hernandez, director of the center,

will be sending the resources collected to his brother-in-law, Javier Castellanos, pastor of *Principe de Paz Bautista Iglesia* (Prince of Peace Baptist Church) in Monterrey.

Arkansas Baptists interested in assisting with relief work in Monterrey may send contributions designated for "general relief in Monterrey, Mexico" to the SBC Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

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Funds Inadequate

General Relief Fund Strained by Disasters

by Marty Croll
 SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Recent disasters in Jamaica and Bangladesh have found Southern Baptists lacking the funds they need to adequately respond, according to R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

At the end of August, money available to the board for helping in disasters stood at less than \$100,000. In Jamaica alone, Hurricane Gilbert did an estimated \$2.2 million damage to 180 of the 270 Baptist churches, plus \$273,000 damage to parsonages. This does not count the needs of many Jamaicans whose homes were destroyed or damaged.

During September the board received one gift of \$150,000 and other gifts totaling about \$18,000 designated for Bangladesh. In addition, about \$10,000 has been received for Jamaica and other uses.

Only gifts designated for general relief can be used by the Foreign Mission Board for needs not related to hunger. On average, Southern Baptists designate about 5 percent of their human needs giving for general relief. If it is not specifically marked for general relief, any world hunger donation goes into the hunger fund and is used only for needs relating to hunger.

Hunger funds have been tapped heavily this year to help feed Mozambique refugees and to help cope with recurring hunger in Ethiopia. They also will be used extensively to help Bangladeshis struggling to survive, as well as other worldwide needs. But they cannot provide for the shelter, supplies and other non-food emergency needs of disaster victims, Foreign Mission Board officials emphasize.

"We need to make it known to Southern Baptists that this is the kind of situation that calls for over-and-above giving," said Parks. "With missionaries on the field, we are in a position to utilize every penny that is given, and there are urgent needs at this time."

In early September floodwaters inundated 47 of 64 districts of Bangladesh, a densely populated nation in Southeast Asia. Then in mid-September Hurricane Gilbert pounded the Caribbean from Jamaica to Mexico. The Yucatan peninsula and northeastern Mexico areas just south of the Texas border suffered heavy damage and loss of life. Mexican Baptist relief funds are meeting immediate needs, but the board expects its representatives to request additional funds as the full extent of damage is determined.

Much of the Southern Baptist response

to both disasters will be related to hunger. But there also will be long-range rebuilding needs, Parks noted, and Southern Baptists have an opportunity to share both their compassion for physical need and their spiritual witness.

"I've had the impression that many Southern Baptists feel we have all the funds we need for these crisis situations," said Parks. "In the past when they were informed, they have always risen to the occasion with great generosity. In this situation, I feel they should have the chance to express the same kind of compassion they always have."

Deaf Have New Link

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Deaf Southern Baptists who want current foreign missions information now can call the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and get what they need.

A telephone-typewriter-like machine, called a telecommunication device for the deaf or TDD, will link deaf Southern Baptists to prayer needs throughout the world and to opportunities for missions involvement, said A. Clark Scanlon, the board's director of research and planning. The board's TDD also will be able to take messages 24 hours a day.

The TDD number is 804-754-9402.

"For a deaf person, this opens up a world of communication," said Ray Bearden, pastor to the deaf of First Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va. Using TDDs, deaf people can type messages back and forth over the telephone lines. More than 70 percent of deaf Americans have TDDs, Bearden noted.

There are plenty of deaf people for the board to communicate with—the Southern Baptist Conference for the Deaf encompasses 850 churches with deaf ministries, Bearden said.

Scanlon and Bearden placed the initial TDD call from the board to Bearden's deaf father, Carter Bearden, longtime deaf work consultant for the Home Mission Board.

Opportunities for deaf people in overseas ministry are "growing every day," Ray Bearden said. He credits the board with becoming increasingly aware in the last three years of the needs of some 130 million deaf people throughout the world.

The board now has one request for a deaf person as a career missionary in the Dominican Republic.

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