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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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AUG 27 1996



ARKANSAS BAPTIST

Volume 95, Number 17

August 22, 1996

NO GAMBLING! PHASE 2



Christian Civic Action Committee executive director Larry Page (foreground) and campaign coordinator Barry King unveil a series of 15 "town hall meetings" to debate the effects of legalized gambling in Arkansas. The meetings, along with a CCAC-initiated drive to register 250,000 new voters, are part of the group's second phase of efforts to gain support for a proposed amendment on the Nov. 5 state ballot that would outlaw all gambling in the state.

Arkansas Baptist Foundation Sunday affirms estate planning

When observing Foundation Sunday Sept. 8, Arkansas Baptist Foundation president David Moore wants Baptists to remember what the agency can do for them in estate planning and supporting Baptist ministries. But to do that, he admitted, Baptists have to "overcome resistance" to working with Foundation representatives in planning their future.

"Consumers today are often prone to sticker shock when they see the price of new cars and other such items," he explained. Likewise, he added, "Baptists are prone to 'professional shock' when confronted with financial planners, attorneys and accountants."

Moore said that many people have "a certain fear of professionals and we try to remove that fear. In fact, the Foundation allows Baptists in Arkansas access with no cost to the services and insights of such professionals."

Another resistance to using Foundation services, he noted, "has to do with the prospects of death. To think about estate planning, a person has to be willing to admit that he will die one day."

"But, after all," he countered, "don't we all admit that when we give our hearts to Jesus Christ as our Savior?"

Free seminars available

Moore highlighted the variety of services that the Foundation can provide Arkansas Baptist churches and their members, noting that the Foundation staff "provides free seminars when requested by churches and associations across the state."

Foundation attorney Paul White said the Foundation's services "are the best-kept secret in Arkansas. If our Baptist folks

understood what we are willing to do for them, they would be jamming the phone lines trying to get in."

"In addition to preaching, the Foundation staff can provide seminars for senior adult groups, as well as multi-age groups," Moore noted. "With a mix of humor and information, we can educate a church about wills and trusts, the probate process, tax issues and charitable gifts."

Often, after a seminar, someone will call with a question or concern.

"At that point, the resources of the Foundation are at the disposal of the individual to assist them in understanding and implementing an estate plan, a charitable gift or provide them other services," he said.

A new addition to the Foundation staff is Tammy Davis, who recently began serving as controller for the agency. Davis, a Certified Public Accountant, is a youth leader at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

Moore said he is "delighted to add Mrs. Davis to our staff in servicing the needs of our donors, institutions and agencies."

He added that Davis is familiar with Baptist institutions, having audited the Foundation accounts when she audited Ouachita Baptist University and the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

The Foundation also provides free wills and trusts for ministers and wives in Arkansas, as well as drafts of documents for donors.

For more information on how churches may observe Foundation Sunday or to schedule a seminar, contact Moore at the Foundation offices toll-free in state at 1-800-798-0969 or locally at 376-0732.

Cover Story



Anti-gambling effort 3

Christian Civic Action Committee leaders have unveiled a series of 15 "town hall meetings" to debate the effects of gambling in Arkansas. CCAC workers also are seeking to register 250,000 new voters.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



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Proposal faces 'big battle'

Gambling opponents seek new voters, announce 'town hall' meetings

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Following a successful petition drive for a proposed amendment seeking to outlaw all gambling in Arkansas, gambling opponents are setting their sights on increasing the number of voters to prepare for the November election. Anti-gambling advocates also plan to hold 15 town hall meetings throughout the state to debate the gambling issue.

Larry Page, executive director of the Christian Civic Action Committee, said he was notified Aug. 2 by the Secretary of State's office that the CCAC's petition had qualified for the Nov. 5 ballot.

The proposed amendment calls for all legalized gambling to be outlawed in the state, including existing gambling on thoroughbred racing at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs and greyhound racing at Southland Park in West Memphis. The CCAC amendment also seeks to counter up to four proposed amendments aimed at legalizing casinos and state lotteries.

"Unlike the pro-gambling amendments, we qualified our amendment with only one submission of petitions," Page noted. "We turned in nearly 87,000 signatures and qualified almost 77,000 of those. That's a phenomenal rate of 90 percent."

"All the sponsors of the pro-gambling amendments fell short of the necessary number of valid signatures on their initial submissions and have had to submit additional signatures," he explained. "They suffered disqualification of their signatures at rates up to 42 percent. And this, despite the fact that they paid canvassers handsomely to gather signatures — up to \$5 for each signature."

Page said that the "battle for ballot approval... was a big battle," and that "God deserves all the glory for that win."

He said gambling opponents "have reason to be encouraged" in other areas, too. "Recently, Gov. Huckabee indicated that he would vote 'yes' on our amendment. Also, numerous newspapers have stated editorially that passage of our amendment was the wisest course of action in dealing with the numerous and confusing amendments to expand gambling."

Looking to the future of the battle over gambling, Page warned that "we haven't won the war yet and we... can't let up and lose the advantage of momentum that qualifying our amendment has gained us."

During an Aug. 15 press conference in



in the voter registration drive. "If your church has an average attendance of less than 150, we would suggest that you set a goal of registering at least 25 new voters."

"For churches with an average attendance of 150 to 450, the suggested goal should be to register at least 50," he continued. "For those churches with attendance in excess of 450, we would request that you seek to register at least 75 individuals."

He said Arkansans may call the Secretary of State's office toll-free at 1-800-482-1127 or locally in Little Rock at 682-5070 "and request the number of forms you anticipate needing."

Page, along with CCAC gambling campaign coordinator Barry King, unveiled the group's newest project during the press conference, a series of 15 town hall meetings and debates to be held across the state from Sept. 3 through Oct. 29.

"The purpose of the meetings," Page told reporters, "is to provide public forums in which those sponsoring the various proposed constitutional amendments involving gambling can have an opportunity to discuss the merits of their respective initiatives."

He added that "precautions have been taken to preclude a 'home field' advantage for anyone. The meetings will be held at neutral sites and sponsored by nonsectarian groups. The meetings will include brief presentations followed by questions from members of the press and audience and limited debate."

Page indicated that he had invited at least four prominent gambling promoters or their representatives to speak at the meetings. "We will not let them escape the scrutiny that their proposals deserve," he declared. "They must hold their promises and claims up to the light of truth."

"We'll be there. We've nothing to hide. We are anxious to present our case... We are quite comfortable with the truth," Page insisted. "Not so the other side. Don't be surprised if they find it convenient to duck these meetings."

He told reporters that gambling opponents "look forward with great anticipation to these town hall meetings. We are anxious to engage the gambling promoters in debate. We know, beyond any doubt, that the exaggerated claims of the gambling promoters always end up as broken promises and empty dreams."

the rotunda of the Arkansas State Capitol, Page highlighted "the next step" in the campaign. "The challenge before us now is to register our people to vote. If they aren't registered, there is no way they can participate."

Seeking 250,000 new voters

"We are seeking to register 250,000 new voters in the state," he remarked. "Many say that this can't be done. Those same people said in April and May and June that we wouldn't get more than ten or twelve thousand signatures on our petitions. They quit saying that in July."

"Voter registration has been made so simple by changes enacted by the legislature in 1995," he added. "A simple form is available free from the Secretary of State. The form takes a minute or two to fill out and is designed to be mailed in. It can be sent to the Secretary of State's office or dropped off at your county clerk's office."

Emphasizing the need for Christians to "participate in the political process," Page said, "What is needed is for Christians to realize that while we are citizens of heaven, we are also citizens of this state and nation."

"We are responsible for the kind of laws that are enacted," he emphasized. "If we think our current laws are contrary to the Bible and run afoul of Judeo-Christian values, then we have every right under the Constitution to mobilize our people to go to the polls and vote in keeping with the values we cherish so highly."

Page urged local churches to participate

A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER
ABCS Executive Director

David's wife died from cancer. She left him with a first grader — a little girl. David met Sarah (not their real names) at a school program. Sarah's husband deserted her with a first grade daughter.

Sarah worked with Mark and Mark and his wife had just made professions of faith. Mark started witnessing to Sarah at work. Soon she brought her little girl to Sunday School. Then she brought David and his daughter, too.

I talked with David and Sarah and they received Christ. Sunday School teachers led the two little girls to Christ. David and Sarah were engaged by this time. All four were baptized the same day. A new family became theirs — God's family — and soon they became a new family.

Mark started a process that changed eternity for four people. He invited someone from work to attend church with him. He talked about his faith at work. It was simple, but it was eternal. You can do that. Those with whom you work need you to do that for them.

Your Arkansas Baptist Executive Board employees witness to lost people. We have recently begun keeping a record of our evangelistic contacts. The department directors and their associates have witnessed more than 2,300 times since January. They understand — eternity is at stake.

■ Have you read *Spiritual Intimacy for Couples?* (Cromway Books, 1996). Charles and Virginia Sell have written a great book to help couples have quiet time together. This is a great resource for couples who want to do devotions together, but are unsure how to begin.

REX HORNE

President's perspective

Significance in God's sight



Exodus 1:8 is one of the most incredible verses in the Bible: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph." Imagine that! A man whose God-given insight, integrity and ability had spared Egypt and surrounding nations from starvation would surely not be forgotten...not in Egypt. After all, Joseph was next to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said, "Without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 41:44).

Joseph was certainly a pivotal character in the book of Genesis, in the country of Egypt and in the history of the people of God. His life was lived in submission to the sovereign purposes of God. Joseph learned that man's ill will could not thwart God's perfect will.

Bob Buford, a Christian businessman, has written a book, *HalfTime*. He speaks of half time rather than mid-life. Buford divides a person's life into two sections. The first half of life Buford calls the quest for success. The second half is the search for significance. His premise is that a time of evaluation is useful and necessary in aligning our years and energy with the priorities God has established.

Do you and I live to be successful or significant? These, of course, do not have to be mutually exclusive. Success, however, is often defined by man's arbitrary and ever-changing standards.

Most Christians desire to live significant lives — lives that profoundly touch people and point them to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only hope today and forever.

As Christians, we are working with our eyes upon eternity. While we should be relative to today, we must prepare ourselves for eternity. If something does not stand the test of eternity, it may be of little good today.

Our lives do impact people. Our ministries, fellow pastors, may not appear to be remembered after we exit our work in this life. If Joseph was forgotten, there is more than ample reason to think we will be, too.

Joseph, of course, was not forgotten. His life will ever be read and inspire because it is recorded in God's eternal Word. More is written of Joseph in Genesis than any other character except Abraham.

Joseph served, not to be successful but to be faithful. God used this man significantly. There will come people after us who do not know us, neither remember anything we did. God will never forget the smallest ministry we have performed in Christ's name.

May we, as Arkansas Baptists, strive to do what is significant in God's sight.

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

Personal perspectives

"The exaggerated claims of the gambling promoters always end up as broken promises and empty dreams."

—Larry Page, executive director, Christian Civic Action Committee

"The style of worship is not as important as the spirit of worship."

—Ken Hemphill, president, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

"What good does it do if all the people of faith end up running into the church and hiding? That's the last thing we ought to do."

—Gov. Mike Huckabee

Righteousness exalts a nation

He is a young, enthusiastic, outspoken Christian politician seeking to make a positive difference in a difficult setting. But he is not among our nation's line-up of prominent political leaders who have been chosen to speak during this month's major political conventions. In fact, his name will not appear on any ballot in any state this fall.

Yet he remains strongly committed to helping reform the political process in the country he deeply loves. His name is Viorel Pavel and he already holds national office — in Romania.

Met Viorel during a recent partnership missions project to Romania. He is an active lay leader in the first Baptist congregation organized in his hometown of Giurgiu, a city of 90,000 people near the capital city of Bucharest.

Following the nation's 1989 revolution which culminated with the execution of Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, political leaders sought to steer the former Soviet bloc country toward democracy. Viorel said he was gripped with the burden that "somebody must bring the responsibility to do good things in my town and in my area."

With that goal in mind, he joined the rejuvenated National Peasant Christian Democratic Party and soon became a candidate for a seat in the Romanian Parliament's House of Deputies. Despite needing a "miracle" to successfully challenge the powerful Social Democratic Romanian Party — organized by the country's former Communist leaders — Viorel refused to abandon his goal.

Even after the campaign concluded and the polls closed, he had to wait three days before the outcome of the election was determined. "After three days, someone called me and said, 'Good morning, Mr. Deputy,'" he recalled. "The miracle was done. I told everyone this was a miracle from God."

Although the new Parliament deputy was quick to give God credit for the victory, he acknowledged that he did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ at the time of his election. "I thought for many, many years I was a religious man," he reflected. "I went to the traditional Orthodox church almost every Sunday."

Describing the Orthodox faith as a collection of "ceremonies and traditions," he said he longed to "know God better."

Soon after his election, Viorel met Peter Dugulescu, a Baptist pastor who also had been elected to Parliament. "God prepared somebody to tell me about Him," Viorel explained.

When he asked Rev. Dugulescu about

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

the traditions of the Baptist church, Viorel said, "I found a surprise when he didn't tell me about traditions. He started to tell me about God Himself."

Setting up an appointment to visit together in greater detail, Viorel said his colleague shared "words I had never heard before. The first words were that God loves me.

"I said, 'I am a sinner. How can God love me?' and he said, 'I am a sinner also.' It was the first time I had heard a priest or pastor say he was a sinner also."

"I feel all the time the need to tell someone about this joy and about Jesus."

—Viorel Pavel
Romanian Parliament

Explaining that "there is a solution for all of this and this solution is Jesus Christ who died on the cross and gave His blood to cleanse our sins," Dugulescu invited Viorel to accept Christ as his personal Savior.

"It was the first time in my life when I started to pray personally and directly to God," Viorel shared. "I was trembling with all my body and I invited Jesus Christ with His blood to cleanse my heart and I made a commitment to Jesus Christ to follow Him all my life."

As Viorel's life was transformed with "the joy, the peace and the love of Jesus Christ," his wife, Michaela, also eventually became a Christian.

The Pavels began a prayer group in their home which has now grown into a Baptist church. Reflecting on his newfound

faith, Viorel emphasized, "I feel all the time the need to tell someone about this joy and about Jesus."

Viorel doesn't limit his evangelistic enthusiasm to church-based activities. "My first wish is to share Jesus Christ with the people and with my colleagues in Parliament," he explained. "I want to inspire them to feel the responsibility of making good laws that are obedient to God's Word."

Although he faces ridicule from Orthodox supporters and former Communist sympathizers, Viorel remains steadfast in his Christian faith. He and fellow Christian leaders in Parliament even hold a weekly prayer meeting together — in one of Ceausescu's former offices.

"It's wonderful how Jesus works," Viorel affirmed. "The first needs are spiritual needs. It is written in the Bible, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God...'"

Along with the spiritual needs of his country, Viorel also sees the overwhelming physical needs. "Even when we have good land and good weather, we are not able yet to use it because we lost the feeling to be owners," he pointed out. "In communist times, all the goods belonged to all but nothing belonged to one.

"Now after the changing laws, people are like small children. They must learn again the love of property, to have something that is their own.

"God gave us the land. It is a gift from God," he said. "But communists made a separation between man and God and between man and the land. These are wounds not easy to heal — but we try to do it by providing good laws to take care of the people, to understand their needs, to help the poor and to encourage the free market."

"Please pray for my country," Viorel urged. "We want our people to choose Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord... We need Him to give us wisdom."

As our own nation approaches the 1996 election season, what can we learn from a dedicated young politician boldly serving God in Eastern Europe?

We can be reminded about the priority of expressing one's Christian faith even in the sometimes hostile environment of secular politics. We can be reminded that one person deeply committed to God truly can make a difference in our world today. And we can be reminded that God desires to bless those who honor Him.

"Righteousness exalts a nation," Proverbs 14:34 declares. Amid all the hype and hubbub of another election year, always remember that a nation's righteousness begins one person at a time.

State conference highlights worship, spiritual awakening

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

The disciplines of pastoral leadership and music were combined Aug. 13 to focus on worship during a Worship and Spiritual Awakening Conference at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock.

The conference, sponsored jointly by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries and church leadership support departments, was a 1996 ABCS "Live the Word" emphasis project. The event drew about 150 participants, mainly pastors, ministers of music and accompanists.

Participants heard conference leaders Ken Hemphill and Benjamin Harlan share biblical, theoretical and practical ways to enhance worship in churches. Hemphill is president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Harlan is dean of the School of Church Music there.

Rob Hewell, director of the ABCS church music ministries department, said conference planners had "two things on our hearts and minds in planning the program: One was to continue to affirm and support and champion the idea that pastors, ministers of music and accompanists need to work together to plan worship in the church; the other was to highlight the connection between worship and spiritual awakening."

Church leadership support department director Bruce Swihart added that he wanted "pastors and music leaders to be revitalized in their vision for what God can do and will do in their churches."

The program included a model worship service during the morning session, conferences for pastors and worship leaders in the afternoon and a question-and-answer session to end the conference.

Hemphill told pastors that they are worship leaders in their churches "even if you have a worship leader."

Noting that the congregation will watch the pastor during the worship service, he added, "I was, for a period, one of those fidgety preachers...but when I came to the point when I learned to worship, it enhanced the worship of our church."

"If the pastor is not involved in that worship service, paying attention and singing, the worship service is dead," he explained. "They are following his lead."

Hemphill, a former church growth specialist with the Home Mission Board, listed worship at the top of a list of "Seven Essentials for Healthy Church Growth." He said other key elements include

"powerful prayer, healthy community relationships, relevant Bible teaching, intentional evangelism, a purposeful missions statement and ongoing discipline ministries."

He also highlighted the "Impact of Worship on Church Growth," telling pastors that: authentic worship provides supernatural empowering for the people of God; God often communicates His strategy for His people during worship; authentic worship is the key to committed service; and worship is essential to the evangelistic ministry of the church.

Speaking on the importance of music in worship, he said that music style "is one of the most divisive issues in Southern Baptist life. We are struggling because we have up to five generational musical styles of worship."

"Most churches will end up with a blended style," he said. "One of the things I have learned to do is celebrate our diversity. The style of worship is not as important as the spirit of worship."

Switching to spiritual helps for pastors desiring to change the worship in their churches, Hemphill warned them to make their changes "carefully."

Noting that "change in worship must be initiated by trusted worship leaders," he encouraged pastors to "move slowly and lovingly" because "worship may well be the most ingrained and important traditions people have."

During a noon luncheon, participants also heard ABCS stewardship department director James Walker review the need for "Worship through Giving."

"Make the offering an act of worship," he encouraged participants. "Our gifts are a result of our attitude about the God we serve."

"When we bring our gifts, it is a tangible, visible expression of our gifts to God," he added. "Let it show that God is doing something."

Harlan took the lead in responding to participants during a wrap-up session, answering questions ranging from applause to music style. Among the questions and responses were:

■ When is applause

appropriate? "That is a sticky issue, but one that can be controlled," Harlan answered. "It comes down to sensitivity: Reading your people, knowing how to set things up."

■ What styles of music are appropriate? "It's not what hymns you sing, it's how you sing them," Harlan emphasized. "It's not the fact that you did three hymns, but how you put them together."

"Look at all music as a palette of colors for an artist and each Sunday you have a blank canvas that you craft and create and you weave what your congregation needs," Harlan urged. "What your congregation needs is not necessarily predicated on what this one needs or what Nashville tells you is the latest popular thing to do."

■ How much time do you spend in planning worship with the pastor? "Churches are different. That is really pastor-driven," Harlan noted. "If he doesn't want to be involved and he just wants to throw it my way, then I don't mind that."

The conference met with favorable responses from participants. Alan Moore, minister of music and education for Woodland Heights Church in Conway, said the program "was real helpful. It's always good to...revisit what I know I should be doing as worship planner and applying myself."

Mike Raymond, pastor of Chapel Hill Church in Jacksonville, said the conference was "really appropriate for me" because he is both pastor and worship leader.

"I have to do both jobs, so I put together a lot of information I needed," he said. "It put me in touch with resources that I could spend weeks searching for or get them here in a two-hour conference."



Benjamin Harlan, dean of the School of Church Music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, takes a question during a forum session at the Worship and Spiritual Awakening Conference held Aug. 13 at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock. Southwestern president Ken Hemphill, who also responded to questions, looks on.

'Extraordinary' experience

Gov. Mike Huckabee addresses key issues during first month in office

By Trennis Henderson
Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Addressing a variety of key moral and social issues during his first month in office, Gov. Mike Huckabee has seldom been out of the media spotlight since his July 15 inauguration. The new governor's agenda has included a number of issues that are perennial concerns of Arkansas Baptists, including gambling, capital punishment and government-funded abortions.

Huckabee, former president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and a longtime Arkansas Baptist pastor, stepped into the governor's role following former Gov. Jim Guy Tucker's resignation due to a pair of Whitewater-related felony convictions.

Reflecting on his first 30 days as governor during an interview last week with the *Arkansas Baptist News Magazine*, he noted that "the biggest surprise has been the volume of things that have been thrown at us in such a short period of time. It's been extraordinary."

He said his greatest challenge as governor is "coping with the fact that you are faced every day with decisions which will have extraordinary impact on people's lives."

"There's not a perfect solution" to most issues he faces, Huckabee acknowledged. "We are dealing with imperfect solutions in an imperfect world being carried out by imperfect people."

Despite that fact, Huckabee affirmed the opportunity to help seek solutions to such troubling issues as Medicaid funding for abortions due to rape or incest. He refused to authorize payment for a recent rape-related abortion, citing Amendment 68 to the state constitution which allows the state to fund abortions only to save the life of the mother.

While the specific crisis "was sudden and new, the issue was not," he pointed out. Conflicting lawsuits have been filed, beginning in 1993 with an effort to invalidate Amendment 68. A more recent suit seeks to eliminate state involvement in Medicaid.

Explaining that the latest incident was the first time the state had ever been presented a Medicaid bill for an abortion related to rape or incest, Huckabee said,



Voicing concern over Christians who think we shouldn't get involved in our world," Gov. Mike Huckabee emphasized that he remains "on permanent duty as a believer."

"We were in the position of ignoring Amendment 68 or changing it or dropping out of Medicaid."

Legal, financial and political concerns included jeopardizing federal Medicaid payments of up to \$1 billion a year in Arkansas or violating state law. "We realized it was a lose-lose situation," he said.

In response, the governor presented a plan to federal officials calling for a third-party provider to meet the state's financial obligation to Medicaid when such conflicts arise. He called the agreement "a win-win situation" which allows the state to maintain a strong pro-life position while still meeting federal Medicaid guidelines.

Noting that his personal preference is to limit funding to saving the life of the mother, he acknowledged that exceptions for rape and incest are supported by many pro-life advocates.

"Whatever my view personally may be, I cannot enforce it without a corresponding mandate from law," he added, affirming that a key concern throughout the crisis was "preserving medical care for 400,000 Arkansas people when it was truly at risk."

During his initial days as governor, Huckabee also has had to face the emotionally laden issue of capital punishment. He authorized the execution date for convicted killer Frankie Parker who was put to death by lethal injection Aug. 8.

Calling the decision "the most difficult,

most horrible, most gut-wrenching decision I've ever been called upon to make," Huckabee said, "It's a lot different preaching about it or discussing it at a coffee shop with friends than it is to sit there and be on the other end of the line when the warden calls and says, 'Governor, we're waiting on your word to proceed.' I did it with a sense of resolve and duty but I took no pleasure in it at all."

Huckabee said his action was based on his commitment to uphold state law which specifies that "there are crimes which should be penalized by death."

Insisting that "this is not a candle-counting decision" based on how many protesters hold candlelight vigils in front of the governor's mansion, he added, "You've got to do what you've taken an oath to do."

Another high-profile issue currently facing Arkansians is the debate over legalized

gambling. An effort to outlaw all gambling in the state will compete on the November ballot with proposals to legalize casinos and a state lottery.

Huckabee, who will vote for the anti-gambling amendment "as a matter of personal preference," said he will not actively campaign for the measure. He added that the "bigger priority" is to "put our energy into defeating the casino and lottery proposals."

"I oppose gambling as a revenue stream for the state," he insisted. "We need to teach our children that the way to have something is through the virtue of work, not the vice of wagering. The whole of gambling is predicated upon greed and the idea that people can get something for nothing — which is fundamentally untrue."

Assessing his role as a Christian leader in state government, Huckabee pointed out, "For those of us who are Christian believers, we see that life is a lot more than the term we have in office. I respect very much the fact that I am on temporary duty as governor but I'm on permanent duty as a believer."

"I have a real problem with believers who think we shouldn't get involved in our world," he noted. "What good does it do if all the people of faith end up running into the church and hiding? That's the last thing we ought to do.... This is my world. I'm going to participate."

Summer camps provide 'great' experience for Arkansas youth

Camps in Arkansas drew thousands of campers around emphases of music, evangelism, missions and fun during the summer of '96, resulting in hundreds of decisions by children and teenagers.

Arkansas Baptist Assembly, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's camp at Siloam Springs, continued to be the most popular camp destination. Camp director and ABSC Sunday School associate Pat Batchelor said that "just over 8,000" children, youth and adults attended the camp this season, which included the all-youth "Power Week" and a new week-long Children's Camp.

Batchelor reported 403 professions of faith, 746 recommitments and 28 other decisions during the eight sessions.

He said that the number of decisions, including more than 100 at Children's Camp, was "God's validation" of the camp's programs. "I've really been encouraging churches to bring lost kids to camp and, the way camp works, it's easy to be saved."

Batchelor credited adult sponsors with Siloam's witness. "The adults who came really were crucial to the process. Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship and, as the adults shared their relationship with Jesus Christ, they showed their faith with the kids."

More than 220 boys and girls and their leaders from National Baptist churches focused on the theme, "Our World, Your Serve" at a combined Hart of the Hills Camp at Paron July 29-Aug. 2.

Camp director Jack Kwok, director of the ABSC cooperative ministries department, said the program "was an experimental partnership with the Baptist Sunday School Board's Centrifuge team" and used college students from all over the nation as staff.

Participants, who ranged in age from nine to 16, made 26 professions of faith and 33 rededications.

Two music camps attracted almost 550 young Arkansians to learn choral and instrumental skills.

"We had an outstanding week" at Music Arkansas youth music camp July 22-26 at Ouachita Baptist University, said Rob Hewell, director of the ABSC church music ministries department. "We had exceptional times of worship, great fellowship and the young people worked hard in two youth choirs."

The camp's 179 participants were "way up from my first year," he said, noting that the "focus of the week was providing a place where young people can have a salvation experience and

focus on God's call...to serve Him."

Youth Musicians Camp for 369 children in grades 4-6 "featured a band for the first time," said director Peggy Pearson, a church music ministries associate. "We wanted to try to impact kids through music to be able to help them realize a relationship with God or to develop one that they already had." She reported that nine children accepted Christ.

Missions emphases drew Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action to Camp Paron for RA Camp and GA Mini-Camps and Mother-Daughter Camps.

RA Camp, held July 8-12, attracted more than 215 boys to hear missionaries, participate in camping and recreational opportunities and respond to camp pastor Jim Lagrone. Forty-one responded to Lagrone's call to make decisions, 23 of them for profession of faith.

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, an associate in the ABSC Woman's Missionary Union department, said GA Mini-Camps and GA Mother-Daughter camps, which attracted 730 campers from 53 churches, had an Olympic theme.

The program featured "people going to Atlanta as Home Mission Board representatives and foreign missionaries at two camps," she said, prompting campers to give "\$869 to the MK offering for missionary kids going to school in Arkansas."

One camper wrote Wisdom-Martin following camp that she "had a very, very fun time at camp. The food was great, the pool was great, the cabin was great, the songs were great. Face it: The whole camp was great."

Nearly 1,700 youth attended Super Summer evangelism training camps on the Ouachita campus in June.

"We had a total enrollment of 1,694 in both sessions, with 74 professions of faith, 202 rededications and 63 calls to church vocation," reported Randy Brantley, an ABSC evangelism department associate.

The Super Summer program featured a new three-day session for junior high school students. The session was started "because each year we were having to turn away hundreds of students because of lack of space," said Brantley.

"Our theme was 'Shine,'" he noted, "and our challenge to students was to let their light so shine before men that others might see Christ in their life."

"The students took that seriously and one of our schools made it their goal to share Christ with the Upward Bound Students on the Ouachita campus - about 100 of them - and invited them to one of our services. Seven accepted Christ."

'96 RA Camp offers worship, missions, fun



More than 215 Royal Ambassadors and their leaders met July 8-12 at Camp Paron for a week of worship, recreation and missions. Some of the camp activities included (top to bottom) messengers from camp missionary O.K. Bozeman,

archery training with Pulaski Association RA director Jim Vaughn and ropes course fun with camp assistant director Scott Edwards. One camper (below) makes it through the "Spider's Web" at the ropes course without touching a strand.



Harmonious colors

Early childhood experts urge positive blend to enhance teaching style

By Millie Gill

Executive Assistant, Arkansas Baptist

Using the primary colors of red, yellow and blue in a humorous dialogue, Willa Ruth Garlow highlighted various characteristics of teachers during a WEE (Weekday Early Education) Workshop held Aug. 1-2 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock. The workshop, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, involved 270 early childhood workers. A similar session held earlier in the week attracted 400 participants.

Garlow, an early childhood consultant from Oklahoma City, noted that those teaching younger children should not be red snappers or hard-headed rednecks that make children shudder. "Successful teachers will be red badges of courage with high self-esteem and loving what they are doing," she affirmed.

"They must not be yellow-bellied wimps with yellow hearts that are always critical of both parents and children," Garlow continued. "Teachers must have bright yellow attitudes, giving joy to each child."

"They also must not be blue-bearded tyrants that give children no leeway, but rather must be blue-blooded royalty who help determine the lives of the children they are teaching," Garlow said. She encouraged teachers to be a "rhapsody of blue" through attractive appearances, calmness, patience and "blue ribbon" teaching.

Urging the group to not let the colors in their world fade, she added, "You determine the color of the children's world whose lives you have in your hand."

Leading a seminar on "Being Burned Out Is Not So Hot!," Pat Ratton explained that "a depletion of energy and a feeling of being overwhelmed by the problems of others is one of the first steps in burnout."

Ratton, recently retired children's director for the ABSC Sunday School department, said other signals of burnout include a loss of enthusiasm, idealism, perspective and purpose as well as stress-induced mental, physical and spiritual exhaustion.

"Burnout can be reversed through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual changes," Ratton said, emphasizing the need for proper exercise, diet, rest, laughter, Scripture memorization and relying on Christ.

Carol Ann Adams of Tyler, Texas, encouraged directors of early childhood children's centers to set measurable goals for themselves. She noted that one way to



Willa Ruth Garlow reminded teachers at Arkansas Baptists' WEE Workshop to share love and joy with their students.

help accomplish such plans is to share the goals with faculty members through creative assignments.

She said ways to build a staff team that works together include learning to be an effective manager, learning to listen to staff members and learning to admit when you've made a mistake.

"Your learning center will never be better than you are as a director," Adams emphasized. "Therefore you must continue to grow and learn."

Building relationships

Wayne Coley, director of special education/preschool ministries/church weekday education for the Baptist General Association of Virginia, led a seminar concerning communication and building relationships in family ministry.

Encouraging parental involvement in the learning process, Coley said, "It is important for you as a weekday teacher to visit in the student's homes. It not only will help you to know and develop a friendship with the child and his family, but it will help you better understand the child's classroom behavior."

Coley cited parent meetings and parents serving as volunteers as ways to involve parents in teaching activities. He listed a monthly calendar and newsletter as another important parent/teacher communication tool. "Your best communication

tool," he added, "is your availability when parents come seeking help."

The workshop also featured creative learning seminars such as a session led by C. Morrell Jones from the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Jones highlighted creative techniques for teaching eye/hand coordination, relationships with people and animals, the importance of caring, perception, shapes, rhythm, sound, reading and language.

"Through creative visual aids, children learn not only how to make things, but also language and pre-reading skills," Jones said. He added that teachers, "through hands-on activities, experience the learning capabilities of children."

Ann Pamell, director of Weekday Early Education Ministries for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, focused on the use of music throughout the day's school schedule, affirming its use for transition between activities. She encouraged teachers to use songs consistently so the children would become familiar with the routine.

Pamell also emphasized that music can be used with a disruptive child rather than reprimanding the child for misbehavior. "Music can be used to make the child feel welcome and wanted in the group," she concluded.

A Christmas Capers seminar led by Susie Shumaker encouraged weekday teachers to emphasize the religious celebration of Christmas rather than the secular aspect of the holiday. Shumaker, director of the Weekday Early Education ministry for the host church, said a birthday party for Jesus is an experience to which young children can relate.

"As you plan bulletin boards and room decorations make sure they will not distract from what is being taught in Sunday School classes," she added. "Sunday morning is the only time many children hear about Jesus.... Weekday program activities must not interfere on Sunday."

Janet Williams, preschool and children's director for the ABSC Sunday School department, said she was pleased with the participation in the workshops. "The seminar leaders provided positive information with steps for practical application for children as well as encouraging the developmentally appropriate activities for them," she noted.

Affirming participants' commitment to "improving the excellence of their programs," Williams added, "The workshops also provided opportunities to emphasize the spiritual foundation which teachers are laying in the eyes of young children."

Church news

Inmanuel Church of Little Rock honored Lynn Madden with a reception Aug. 11 in recognition of 10 years of ministry as associate pastor of music and media. Madden directs and coordinates the church's music and worship ministry which involves 28 different musical organizations with an enrollment of more than 1,000. Madden, a graduate of Mississippi College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, currently is editor of *The Newsletter*, the professional publication of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference. He and his wife Linda have two children, Melodie and Philip.

Sylvan Hills First Church of North Little Rock recently approved VISION 2000 as a long-range plan that includes relocation of morning worship to a recently constructed 28,000-square-foot Special Events Center. Sunday evening worship will be rescheduled as a celebration worship service on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Discipleship will be given a two-hour schedule on Sunday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m., 26 weeks a year with remaining weeks to be used as family time. The long-range plan includes a new 10,000-square-foot facility to house administration and youth. Abundant Life Schools, a ministry of the church, also plans expansion with a new fine arts wing and math-science wing in the high school and a new kindergarten wing with new indoor and outdoor playground areas. The projected cost of the construction projects is \$3,217,850.

Nashville crusade involves 20 churches

A Nashville areawide crusade set for Aug. 25-28 in the Nashville High School Stadium will involve more than 20 area churches. The crusade will be led by evangelist Kelly Green of Brandon, Fla., and music director Don Vaughn of Nashville.

Special emphases and guests will include Gov. Mike Huckabee Aug. 25; children's night Aug. 26; youth night Aug. 27; and family night Aug. 28. Youth speaker Ronnie Hill will speak to participants during the Youth Crazy Olympics at 1-6 p.m. Aug. 24 at Nashville City Park.

Sen. Neely Cassidy of Nashville is crusade chairman; Jim Agee, minister to students at First Church of Nashville, is vice chairman; and Marty J. Polston, pastor of Ridgeway Church of Nashville, is publicity chairman.



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

Cross Road Church of west Little Rock conducted a tent mission vacation Bible School July 17-21 in Moody Hollow with an average attendance of 40. The tent, which was furnished by the missions department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was used for VBS in the morning and for evening revival services that featured Pete Petty and Jack Ramsey of the ABCS missions department, Pulaski Association director of missions Ed Hinkson and pastor L.B. Atchison of Cross Road Church as speakers. A Friday evening Parents Night concluded the mission event. The church conducted two five-day VBS missions sessions this summer.

Riverside Church of Donaldson celebrated its 40th anniversary July 14 with a worship service and covered-dish luncheon. Clarence Shell, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department, was the featured speaker. Special music was provided by former pastor Milton White.

Harlan Park Church of Conway will observe its 30th anniversary Sept. 8 with traditional morning services, followed by a churchwide cook-out at Toad Suck Park. The afternoon events will include guest speakers, special music, games and fellowship. The church will hold revival services Sept. 14-16 with Frank Harber of Fort Worth, Texas, as evangelist. The Sunday service will begin at 10:50 a.m. with a harvest dinner to be served at 7 p.m. Other evening services will begin at 6 p.m.

Central Church of Jonesboro recently purchased the home of Sue Lady and the late Frank Lady to be used as a missionary residence as another step in its missions global vision. Southern Baptist furloughing missionaries who will reside there include Al and Karen Hodges of Senegal, July 1996-January 1997; Cindy Jones of South Africa, July 1997-January 1998; Barry and Tammy Walker of Japan, January-December 1998; and Boyd and Rhonda Hall of Botswana, January-April 1999.

Missions trips

Clarksville Second Church recently concluded a 10-day mission trip to Chiefland, Fla., where the 26-member team led backyard Bible clubs, conducted a church survey and assisted with a new church start in Fanning Springs. The group

also conducted revival services that resulted in 40 professions of faith and three commitments to vocational ministry. Pastor Joe Craft served as the evangelist with other team members leading the praise sessions and serving as counselors.

Harlan Park Church of Conway recently sponsored a 22-member mission team that served in East Carbon, Utah, where they held revival services, conducted a Vacation Bible School and led backyard Bible studies. Their effort resulted in 41 professions of faith.

Oak Grove Church of Van Buren recently sent a 24-member mission team to Ida Grove, Iowa, where they assisted the Ida Grove Church with a Vacation Bible School that resulted in six professions of faith. They also assisted Southern Mills Church of Sioux City, Iowa, with construction of a new sanctuary.

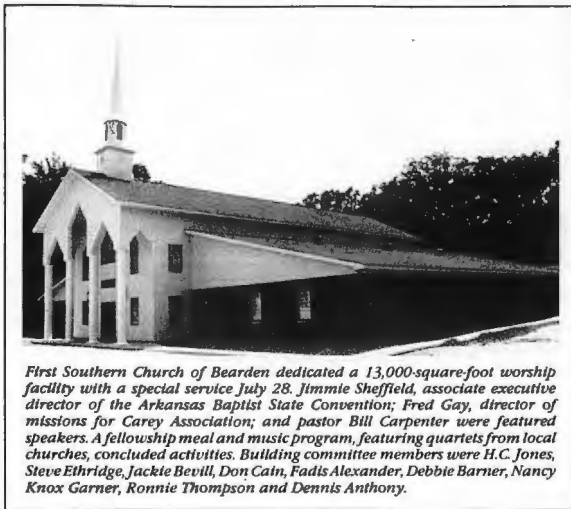
Monticello First Church recently sent a 28-member mission team to Des Moines, Iowa, where volunteers conducted backyard Bible clubs and assisted with minor construction work. The youth also presented the musical, "People Need the Lord," at various sites. The "Mission Is Possible" trip involved the entire congregation which participated in a missions banquet and provided funding for the trip.

Obituaries

Karen Gross, a former staff member of the Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union department, died Aug. 6 of cancer. At the time of her death, she was Bible Learners biblical studies designer at the Baptist Sunday School Board where she had served since 1994. She previously was a products editor for the national Woman's Missionary Union as well as minister of education for First Church of Hope and Girls in Action and Mission Friends director for Arkansas WMU. She had been a Southern Baptist home missionary in Arkansas and a missionary journeyman in Vietnam. She is survived by her husband, Bob, former director of the Hope Migrant Mission Center, and one daughter, Janan.

Jurdon E. Hays of Black Springs died Aug. 5 at his home. A retired employee of Red River Army Depot, he was a lifelong member of Black Springs Church. Survivors are his wife, Ollie Hays; one son, David Hays of Sulphur, Ia.; one daughter, Donna Brant of Bryant; eight grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Julian Rowton of Clarksville died Aug. 2 at age 82. Rowton, who had served as a Baptist minister for 30 years, was a member of East Mount Zion Trinity Church where



First Southern Church of Bearden dedicated a 13,000-square-foot worship facility with a special service July 28. Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; Fred Gay, director of missions for Carey Association; and pastor Bill Carpenter were featured speakers. A fellowship meal and music program, featuring quartets from local churches, concluded activities. Building committee members were H.C. Jones, Steve Ethridge, Jacke Bevell, Don Cain, Fadis Alexander, Debbie Barner, Nancy Knox Garner, Ronnie Thompson and Dennis Anthony.

he had been pastor for more than 15 years. In addition, he had served other churches in Johnson County. Survivors include his wife, Mattie Vaughn Rowton; three daughters, Judy Shook and Patty Rowton of Clarksville and Mary Spainhour of Crossett; one sister; eight grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to East Mount Zion Church of Clarksville.

Vernon Monette Bellue of North Little Rock died Aug. 2 at age 85. He was a retired Baptist minister, having served churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama and Michigan. He was a member and Sunday School teacher at Immanuel Church of Little Rock. Survivors are two sons, John Bellue of Charleston, W. Va., and Dan Bellue of Houston, Texas; one brother; and two grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Arkansas Children's Hospital or to Immanuel Church.

Roy O. Beaman, 92, of Memphis died Aug. 4 at his home of cancer. He was a retired seminary professor, having taught for 41 years at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Mid-America Seminary and Central Baptist College in Conway. He is survived by his wife, Mary T. Beaman; a daughter, Mary Ann Gwin of Selmer, Tenn.; two sisters; a brother; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Memorials may be sent to Mid-America Seminary.

Ray S. Nelson of Gadsden, Ala., died July 23 at age 73. Nelson, who was born in Benton, had served as a Southern Baptist pastor for 35 years, serving Walnut Street Church of Jonesboro, as well as churches in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. At his death, he was a member of First Church of Gadsden where he was an assistant Sunday School teacher. Nelson was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Samford University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Survivors are his wife, Joyce Nelson; a daughter, Rhoda Elrod; a son, Michael Nelson; both of Gadsden; three grandsons; and two brothers, Hershell Nelson and Herman Nelson, both of Benton. Memorials may be made to the Billy Graham Evangelical Association.

Staff changes

Allan R. Greer began his ministry Aug. 18 as pastor of Parkway Place Church in Little Rock, coming there from First Church of Marianna where he has served since 1992. He previously was associate pastor, minister of education and minister to senior adults and single adults for Baring Cross Church of North Little Rock. He also has served as a staff member of Glenview Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and Forty-Seventh Street Church of North Little Rock. Greer is a graduate of Hendrix College

and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children, William Hunter and Megan Allyson.

Tim Coop has resigned as minister of music and youth at First Church of Marked Tree. He and his wife, Melinda, are moving to Fort Worth, Texas, where both will be students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lonnie W. Latham has resigned as director of missions for Bartholomew Association where he has served since 1989 to become executive director of Tulsa Metro Association in Tulsa, Okla. Prior to moving to Arkansas, Latham was the founding pastor of DeSoto Church of DeSoto, Texas, as well as pastor of other churches in Texas. He is a graduate of Dallas Baptist College, Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Sandra, have one son, Christian Andrew, a student at the University of Arkansas.

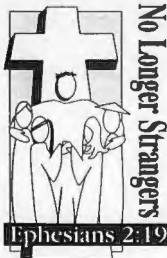
John Fream joined the staff of First Church of Lavaca Aug. 11 as minister of students, coming there from Oklahoma City, where he has been serving as minister of youth for Putnam City Church. Fream and his wife, Darla, have a daughter, Megan Elizabeth.

Stephen R. Patterson began serving Aug. 7 as pastor of First Church of St. Francis, coming there from Ivanhoe Church, Ivanhoe, Texas. He previously was pastor of First Church of Success and Hopewell Church of Corning. A graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he also has served as a missionary to Baptist Friendship House of New Orleans as well as in Pierre, S.D. Patterson and his wife, Stephanie, have two sons, Matthew and Joshua.

Jack C. Pilgrim Jr. is pastor of Twin Lakes Church of Hot Springs. He previously was pastor of Sardis Road Church of Mabelvale as well as two churches in Oklahoma. Pilgrim attended Alva State University and Oklahoma Missionary Baptist College.

John Sammons of Sherwood is pastor of Steel Bridge Church of Lonoke. Sammons, who attended Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, has served as pastor of Calvary Church of Ward and Fair Park Church of Russellville. He also has been a staff member of churches in Little Rock and North Little Rock. He and his wife, Kay, have three children, Shannon, Joey and Kaysi.

Todd Ewing is pastor of Oak Grove Church of Pochontas, the home church of his wife, Angie. Ewing currently is completing his doctoral work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.



State Missions Season of Prayer

...AND THE DIXIE JACKSON OFFERING

Together to spread the Word in Arkansas

State Missions: Changing lives

1996 Goal:
\$750,000

Funds from the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering are allocated between helping churches and ministries in Arkansas.

43%

\$322,500
New church extension
Black church extension
Language missions
New church assistance to associations

57%

\$427,500
Missions ministries
Church & community ministry
Theological education
Chaplaincy
Associational ministry assistance

BLESSING BASKETS IN SPRINGDALE. Guillermo Rolando is pastor to Hispanic Ministries at First Church of Springdale. Guillermo and his wife are from Peru, where he was raised in a Catholic family.

"For over 10 years, God sent people to share the gospel with me, but I didn't want to listen," he said. "I was very comfortable with myself and the kind of life that I was living. I wasn't a bad person, but I was selfish. In 1990, a missionary led me to Christ and my life changed completely. Jesus gave me a new life. Since then my desire has been to serve Him and share the salvation He gave me."

Rolando moved to San Antonio to study at the Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary. After graduation, he and his family moved to Springdale, where they now serve.

The church has a program to assist people with food at Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is called "Blessing Baskets." The people are invited to come and receive food to celebrate the holiday after a short service that gives them the opportunity to give their lives to Jesus.

"We not only provide physical food, but spiritual food as well," Rolando said.

A total of 176 Hispanics have been saved this year through the "Blessing Baskets" program. First Church in Springdale has the opportunity to see how God touched and changed Victor and Martha Flores' lives.

Flores noted, "Last year I came and took home a basket of food, but I took Jesus in my heart forever."

EVERYONE WORKING TOGETHER! Jordan is a community 11 miles north of Calico Rock that has seven new housing developments, with about 1,000 home sites expected to be developed in the next few

years. Calico Rock First Church saw the need for a new mission. People began praying about the possibility of a Southern Baptist witness in Jordan. Late one evening,

pastor Charles Baskin received a call that a couple was willing to provide the property for the new mission church. This was an assuring signal the Lord was moving in Jordan.

A second signal came after searching for a

mobile home chapel, but none were available. Plans for constructing a temporary chapel were made. Then Jack Ramsey of the Arkansas Baptist Missions Department called to say a mobile chapel would be available soon. Mt. Zion Association donated the foundation blocks, porches and steps. Individual churches from all over Arkansas provided gifts which included pews, pulpit furniture, hymnals, a piano, tables, chairs and a communion set. The first service at the Jordan Mission had 18 people present.

NEW FRIENDS. Sometimes out of tragedy, strangers become friends. One spring evening, a young couple came to visit the Hope Migrant Mission Center with their two boys. They were returning to Indiana from their home in Texas. The family was trying to cope with a recent tragedy. While they were in Indiana, the mother returned late one afternoon to find their third child hanged in the apartment. They were not sure if it was an accident. There was a rumor that some teenagers were seen in the area. The police were investigating.

The family returned to Texas for the funeral and were on their way back north when they stopped at Hope. Paul Roaten, director of the Hope Migrant Mission Center, provided comfort to the grieving family. "I have plans to try to find them when I visit Texas next year," Roaten said. "It will give me another opportunity to share with them in their loss." In a time of crisis, Arkansas Baptists were able to minister to new friends.

The Hope Migrant Mission Center is in the business of making friends of strangers. Last year, Arkansas

1996
STATE MISSIONS
SEASON OF
PRAYER

September 15-22

Baptists made 10,901 new friends. The Hope Migrant Mission Center is located across the road from a rest area provided by the government. Migrant workers en route to their next job stop 10-12 hours at the government center to sleep, rest and shower. About one in four of the migrants who stop at the government center come across the street to the Hope Migrant Mission Center where they can receive a health kit, clothing, food vouchers, participate in worship services and make new friends. Last year, 55 professions of faith were made through this ministry.

1997 will bring a time of change. The government will be moving its rest area to a different location. As a result, the Hope Migrant Mission Center will need to relocate. Moving the Hope Migrant Mission Center will be challenging, but not impossible for Arkansas Baptists.

New churches: a state missions priority



New church starts far outstrip church losses in Arkansas, which has one of the lowest loss ratios in the Southern Baptist Convention. Starting new churches and revitalizing existing ministries remain as top priorities of the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering.

NO LONGER STRANGERS, EVEN IN PRISON. There is no lonelier place in Arkansas than one of the 46 cells in Block 5 at the Diagnostic Unit of the Arkansas Department of Corrections. Every newly-committed inmate, except those sentenced to death row, will find himself in one of these cells. It is here that the chaplain first comes into contact with these individuals.

A chaplain reported that he was recently asked by one man in this cell block to come and see him. "I just

needed someone to talk to, chaplain," he began.

"You can't imagine how lonely it is back here. The shadow of those bars on the floor is the most lonely sight in the world. You feel like everything is gone." The chaplain can take away his loneliness with his presence for only a few minutes, for there are 162 other men feeling the same loneliness. The chaplain's coming reminds him that God, through His church, has not forsaken him.

Through the love of Arkansas Baptists who provide a chaplain to this institution, this man and many others are assured of the truth of Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yea, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness."

MARIE MAKES FRIENDS OF STRANGERS. Marie Bishop is a volunteer with the Jacksonville Caring Center, which is a ministry of Arkansas Southern Baptists and North Pulaski Association. She accepted Christ 57 years ago. Soon after Marie became a Christian, she gave her parents their first Bible. Marie's goal is to see all of her close relatives saved and active in church. She makes a garden on land that God gave her. She has given it and her house back to God. Marie says she pays her tithe first, and God has never left her with unpaid bills or needing food.

Marie heard about the Caring Center through an announcement at church. She knew God wanted her to be involved in this ministry. Marie has a love for the people in her community. Volunteer duties include welcoming people when they come in, packing food into bags, sweeping the floor, cleaning, and telling people about Jesus. The center provides many opportunities to meet the physical needs of local people as workers share the good news of Jesus Christ.

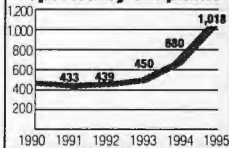
Marie has a servant's heart. Working at the Jacksonville Caring Center is not her only ministry. For the last eight years, Marie has been in the ukulele band at her church. Members pray for residents in nursing homes every month. Marie's favorite scripture verses are, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory," and "He will never leave or forsake you." Marie lives out the 1996 State Missions theme every day, believing no one is a stranger in the Kingdom of God.

State Missions in Arkansas

un-churched
churches

Arkansas goes to church? More than 1.3 million Arkansans are listed on a church role, but almost as many, 1,033,000, do not have any church affiliation.

Professions of faith reported by chaplains



Chaplains working in rehabilitation, military, education, prison and training facilities led 1,018 people to Christ last year.

26 summer missionaries

121 people led to Christ

An average of 26 state missions department-sponsored student missionaries lead an average of 121 people to Christ each summer.

Season of prayer information, missions video available

For more information about the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering, the Arkansas State Missions Season of Prayer or how missions is changing the face of Arkansas, contact the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department toll-free at 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5149. The 1996 Mission Arkansas video also is available now. It can be borrowed from your associational missions office and can be copied for your use. It makes a great program piece for missions festivals, missions meetings or for viewing by youth and children's missions organizations. Contact your local director of missions to obtain a copy!

Baptists go for gold in Olympic ministry

ATLANTA (BP)—Atlanta International Ministries '96, Southern Baptists Olympics-based ministry, has reported 790 professions of faith in Christ at ministry sites within Atlanta's Olympic ring. Eighty percent of the '96 Olympic activities were held in the Olympic ring, a three-mile radius near downtown Atlanta. Baptist ministry sites in the area attracted people by offering free water, a place to rest, entertainment and children's activities.

Southern Baptists' main witnessing tool was an interactive Olympic pocket guide, which included a six-page explanation of the gospel. The Home Mission Board sold 3 million pocket guides which used the "More Than Gold" theme to emphasize that a relationship with Jesus Christ is more valuable than a gold medal.

Most pocket guides included a response card for people to mail back to the HMB. By Aug. 13, board officials had received 2,221 responses with 1,316 people indicating commitments to Jesus Christ and 905 requesting Bible study material. The total includes the 790 decisions from the AIM '96 downtown ministry sites and 77 responses of people from other countries.

Transplant is first in mission hospital

ASUNCION, PARAGUAY (BP)—Doctors at the Baptist Medical Center in Asuncion, Paraguay, recently performed what is believed to be the first heart transplant in an overseas Southern Baptist mission-related hospital — and the first in Paraguay.

Receiving a new heart was Pedro Nunez, 36. He was released July 22, recovering satisfactorily. FMB missionary Hebert Palomino, medical center chaplain, was called to counsel the families of Nunez and the donor, Juan Bautista Chaparro, 41, who had suffered a massive cerebral aneurysm.

"Through this historic chain of events, the Lord spoke to Pedro about more than physical life," Palomino said. "Just days after the transplant, Pedro believed and received Jesus Christ as a born-again Christian."

Following the surgery, the donor's widow and daughters and Nunez, his wife and five children participated in a thanksgiving service in the medical center chapel. An overflow crowd spilled into an adjoining hall.

HMB radio spots gain positive response

ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)—"Save the Family," a set of 12 radio public service announcements sent to 7,500 stations nationwide, is receiving favorable responses from secular and Christian stations.

Selected radio stations received a compact disc with the six 30-second and six 60-second spots in June. The 366 stations which returned the enclosed response card indicated plans to run the public service ads a total of 3,602 times each week.

Produced by the Home Mission Board, the ads encourage commitment to families and integrity. The package asks radio stations to "help us conserve the nation's most precious natural resource...the American family."

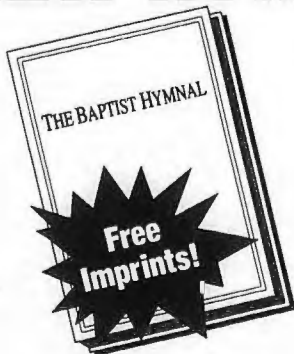
Rather than presenting a direct gospel message, the spots seek to "create a positive view of Southern Baptists," said Ron Lawson, director of the HMB media department. A voice at the end of each spot notes the message is from Southern Baptists.

Churches can purchase the set of radio announcements without the reference to Southern Baptists and put their local church information in its place, Lawson said. Churches which purchase spots can then deliver them to local radio stations.

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CWT conference seeks to boost church involvement

A two-day conference will be held in September to discuss ways to better use what Paul McClung calls "the Cadillac of witness training" among Arkansas Baptist churches.

McClung, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department, said the Continuing Witness

Training Conference Sept. 23-24 at Cedar Heights Church in North Little Rock is only for CWT-trained pastor-leaders and will focus on ways to better carry out CWT in churches.

Continuing Witness Training involves a 13-week training cycle during which apprentices memorize a model witness

presentation, then become equippers for other witnessing apprentices. Pastor-leaders lead the weekly Bible studies that accompany CWT training cycles and give direction to the process.

McClung said that CWT's use is declining in Arkansas. Following a questionnaire he recently sent out, he determined that "we have 292 churches in Arkansas that have used CWT and 250 pastors certified as pastor-leaders — but only three churches responded that they are currently using CWT."

He admitted that he did not know why CWT's use was not as common, but added that "it may be the big time commitment."

McClung said that CWT "is the Cadillac of witness training because of its content. It is the most complete witness training process."

The program will feature Keith Walker of the Home Mission Board's personal evangelism department.

"He will be doing an update and looking at ways to use CWT innovatively," McClung explained. "What he wants to do is get participants' creative juices flowing — rather than looking at the 13-week format, using other ways."

The program will begin at noon Monday and conclude at noon on Tuesday. The cost is \$10 and includes two meals.

For more information, contact McClung at the ABCS evangelism department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABCS or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5132.

1996 Annual Associational Meetings

Arkansas River Valley	Oct. 8	Dardanelle First
Arkansas Valley	Oct. 21	West Helena Baptist
Ashley	Oct. 22	Wilmet
Bartholomew	Oct. 21-22	Eagle Lake, Hermitage; Calvary, Monticello
Big Creek	Oct. 10-11	Viola; Saddle First, Mammoth Springs
Black River	Oct. 21-22	Swifton; Imboden
Buckner	Oct. 15, 17	Fellowship, Huntington; Southside, Waldron
Buckville	Sept. 29	Rock Springs
Caddo River	Oct. 21-22	Amity First; Black Springs Second
Calvary	Oct. 15	Trinity, Seary
Carey	Oct. 21	Calvary, Camden
Caroline	Oct. 22	Hazen First
Centennial	Oct. 14-15	St. Charles; Southside, Stuttgart
Central	Oct. 17	Calvary, Benton
Clear Creek	Oct. 15	Alma First
Concord	Oct. 15	East Side, Fort Smith
Conway-Perry	Oct. 15, 17	Harmony, Perryville; Plumerville
Current-Gaines	Oct. 21-22	Corning First; Greenway
Delta	Oct. 14-15	Eudora; South McGehee
Faulkner	Oct. 20	Conway First
Garland	Oct. 14-15	Harvey's Chapel, Hot Springs; Park Place, Hot Springs
Greene	Oct. 21-22	West View, Paragould
Harmony	Oct. 21	Matthews Memorial, Pine Bluff (morn./aft.); Watson Chapel, Pine Bluff (eve.)
Independence	Oct. 14-15	Desha First; Newark
Liberty	Oct. 21	El Dorado Second
Little Red River	Oct. 21-22	Brownsville, Greens Ferry; McJester, Pangburn
Little River	Oct. 14-15	Oak Grove, Ashdown; Central, Mineral Springs
Mississippi	Oct. 28	East Side, Osceola
Mt. Zion	Oct. 21-22	New Hope, Jonesboro; Nettleton
North Arkansas	Oct. 15	Eagle Heights, Harrison
North Central	Oct. 7-8	Clinton, First; Formosa, Clinton
North Pulaski	Oct. 21	Sylvan Hills, North Little Rock
Northwest	Oct. 21	Bella Vista
Ouachita	Oct. 14-15	Vandervoort First; Gilham First
Pulaski	Oct. 21-22	Bryant First Southern; Little Rock Second
Red River	Oct. 21-22	Boughton, Prescott; Richwoods, Arkadelphia
Rocky Bayou	Oct. 10-11	Midway, Melbourne; Mt. Pleasant
Southwest	Oct. 17	Trinity, Texarkana
Tri-County	Oct. 21	Calvary, West Memphis
Trinity	Oct. 14-15	East Side, Trumann; Calvary, Harrisburg
Washington-Madison	Oct. 21-22	Farmington First
White River	Oct. 21-22	East Side, Mt. Home; Cotter First

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Clinton signs measure to study impact of gambling

WASHINGTON (ABP) — President Bill Clinton signed a measure Aug. 3 that sets up a commission to study the effects of gambling on crime, families and the economy.

"Too often, public officials view gambling as a quick and easy way to raise revenues, without focusing on gambling's hidden social, economic and political costs," Clinton said.

The measure was sponsored by Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., and Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va. It passed the Senate July 17 followed by the House July 22. Simon described the gambling industry as "the fastest growing industry in the nation."

The measure will create a nine-member National Gambling Impact Study Commission to conduct a two-year study on the social and economic impacts of gambling on state and local governments, individuals, families and businesses of the United States. The panel will also assess the relationship between crime and gambling as well as the impact of pathological or problem gambling on society.

The measure gives some subpoena powers to the panel but the Senate removed a House provision allowing the panel to subpoena witnesses if necessary to testify before the commission. The subpoena powers are primarily targeted at documents and written answers to questions.

The president, speaker of the House and Senate majority leader will each pick three individuals to sit on the panel.

American Gaming Association president Frank Fahrenkopf said the

legislation "provides the commission the tools necessary to conduct a fair and balanced study of the gaming industry, while recognizing the privacy rights of our customers and the privileged business information of our customers."

At its annual meeting in June, the Southern Baptist Convention passed a

resolution calling for establishment of a national commission on gambling and urging those responsible for naming the commission to avoid picking individuals "whose primary interest in the outcome of the commission may be motivated by protection of the pecuniary interests of the gambling industry."

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Mattie Lou Bible, a missionary to Brazil, is in the States (address: 303 W. 6th St., Smackover, AR 71762). A native of Louisiana, she was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1956.

Barry and Sonia Burnett, missionaries to the Dominican Republic, are in the States (address: c/o Dale Lindstrom, 1485 Deer Creek Dr., Cedaredge, CO 81413). He and his wife, the former Sonia Lindstrom, both consider Arkadelphia their hometown. They were appointed in 1992.

Keith and Jane Byrd, Baptist representatives to Western Republics, are on the field (address: P.O. Box 2876, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine). He and his wife, the former Jane Chastain, consider Norfolk their hometown. They were appointed in 1994.

Mike and Kerry Gilchrist, missionaries to Windward Islands, are in the States (address: 4829 Nerida, Fort Worth, TX 76115). She is the former Kerry Duke of El Dorado. They were appointed in 1993.

Charles and Audrey Morris, missionaries to Kenya, are in the States (address: c/o Second Baptist Church, 4680 Walnut Grove Rd., Memphis, TN 38117). They are natives of Arkansas. He is from Parkin. The former Audrey Dulin, she was born in Earle and considers Memphis her hometown. They began serving with the FMB in 1986.

Glenn and Pauline Nicholson, missionaries to Panama, are in the States (address: 336 North 8th St., Arkadelphia, AR 71923). He is a native of Forrest City. The former Pauline Vaughn, she was born in Harrisburg and considers Cherry Valley her hometown. They were appointed in 1987.

Carl and Martha Rees, missionaries to Honduras, are on the field (address: Apartado 3588, Tegucigalpa, Honduras). A native of Missouri, he also lived in Jonesboro. They were appointed in 1978.

Joel and Rhonda Sutton, missionaries to France, are in the States (address: 1619 Karen Circle, Magnolia, AR 71753). He was born in Hot Springs and both consider Magnolia their hometown. They were appointed in 1988.

Ron and Elinda West, missionaries to Taiwan, are in the States (address: 1104 Dogwood Lane, Booneville, AR 72927). They are natives of Booneville; she is the former Elinda Tidwell. They were appointed in 1978.

Rick and Beth Wolfe, missionaries to Indonesia, are in the States (address: 429 Wilson, Liberty, MO 64068). He is a native of Alabama, and she is the former Elizabeth Brooks of Rogers. They were appointed in 1987.



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Isaiah 40:31

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Bivocational, smaller membership ministers to meet Sept. 27-28

A conference for bivocational ministers and ministers in smaller-membership churches will be held Sept. 27-28 at Markham Street Church in Little Rock. The event will focus on fellowship and "a realization of their importance," Bruce Swihart explained.

Swihart, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church leadership support department, said the conference will highlight the need "to strengthen the effectiveness of the minister and his family."

He emphasized that both ministers and spouses should attend because "they are both important to a ministry. They need to realize that both of them have roles in ministry and a wife plays an important role in a pastor's ministry."

"I think, with bivocational and smaller-membership ministers, that realizing their vital role in the state is important," Swihart said. "There are more smaller-membership and bivocational churches in Arkansas than any other kind, about 70 percent."

The program will feature keynote speaker Emil Turner, ABSC executive director; convenor Ed Hinkson, director of missions for Pulaski Association; and worship leader Mike Raymond, pastor of Chapel Hill Church in Jacksonville.

Swihart will lead the conferences, "Profiles of an Effective Church" and "Steps to Developing Your Ministry Priorities,"

while his wife, Whanda, will lead, "Prayer Life for Women" for ministers' wives.

There is no cost for the program, which includes an evening meal, but participants must provide their own lodging. The program will begin at 6 p.m. with the meal on Friday and conclude at noon on Saturday.

For more information, contact Swihart at the ABSC church leadership support department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5148.

Boys' Ranch festival features open house, tour of ministry site

Arkansas Baptists will have the opportunity to tour their ministry to boys overcoming chemical addictions and family problems during the Arkansas Baptist Boys' Ranch Open House and Fall Festival Sept. 28 at the Ranch near Harrison.

Russ Draper, recreation director and farm manager for the Ranch, said that the "primary emphasis" for the day "will be getting churches to come tour the facility. It is a chance for churches around the state to get up here and see what we do and where their money goes."

He said the activities, which will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m., will include slide shows at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and residents giving tours of the facility.

The Ranch has been in operation since 1989, serving boys who have completed a chemical addiction recovery program, as

well as boys who are placed there by family services organizations.

There is no cost for the events. The Ranch is located north of Harrison. From Highway 65 in Harrison, turn north on Cottonwood Road, travel five miles on Cottonwood, take a left at West Branch Road and then follow the sign to Boys Ranch Road.

OBU's annual Fall Pastors' Conference scheduled Sept. 26-27

Quachita Baptist University will host its annual Fall Pastors' Conference on campus Sept. 26-27. Participants will study "Ephesians," the 1997 Southern Baptist Convention Winter Bible Study book.

The conference is sponsored by OBU's Center for Christian Ministries. The program will begin on Thursday at 1 p.m. in Berry Chapel and will conclude with a noon luncheon on Friday.

The program will include OBU professors Bill Steeger, chairman of the division of religion and philosophy and the W.O. Vaught Professor of Bible; Bob Stagg, J.C. and Mae Fuller professor of Bible; and Scott Duval and Terry Carter, associate professors of religion.

The cost for the Pastors' Conference is \$35 per person, which includes registration, materials and meals, including a banquet dinner, fellowship breakfast and a discussion lunch. Participants must make their own lodging arrangements.

To register for the conference or for more information, contact Steeger's office at OBU by mail at P.O. Box 3787, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001 or by phone at 501-245-5599.

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Girls to hear 'lots of missionaries' during GA Spectacular

Girls In Action and their leaders will have the opportunity to "hear lots of missionaries" during GA Missions Spectacular, according to Sandy Wisdom-Martin. Focusing on the theme, "Hand in Hand," the event will be held Oct. 12 at Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

"It's going to be fun and exciting," noted Wisdom-Martin, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Woman's Missions Union department. "The kids will have an opportunity to hear about missions -- we hope to have 1,000 kids."

She said the event is for girls in grades 1-6, GA leaders and adults interested in missions. The girls will have a chance to participate in a walk-through prayer experience. For example, Wisdom-Martin explained, "We will have an African hut and the girls will be requested to pray specifically for prayer needs."

An offering will be taken for the national

WMU ministry project; the 1996-97 project is "Project Help: Child Advocacy." The offering will go the Nimit Mai Man Dormitory in Thailand, which provides a home away from home for disadvantaged children who live too far away to attend school otherwise. The offering will allow Arkansas GAS the opportunity to aid girls their own age.

The cost for the Missions Spectacular is \$12 per person. The registration cost,

which is due in the state WMU office by Sept. 27, will pay for program fees, a t-shirt and lunch for each participant. There also will be a GA store at the conference. Registration at the event begins at 9:15 a.m. and the program will start at 10 a.m.

For more information, contact Wisdom-Martin toll-free at 800-838-ABSC or locally at 376-4791, ext. 5137. Registration fees can be sent to the state WMU office at P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

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★ The church in Wuppertal, Germany, has asked for any musical instruments we could provide -- the church is predominantly African; therefore instruments they could use would be particularly appreciated.

For more information, contact Doyle Plummer, Partnership Coordinator, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5190 or 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5190.

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Youth ministry—seeking a part-time minister to youth. Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, 27025 Kanis Rd., Little Rock, AR 72211 or phone Cliff Springer 821-4309 or 663-3542.

Receiving nominations—Corpus Christi Baptist Association announces it is receiving nominations for Director of Missions. Please send cover letter and resume to: CCBA DOM Search Committee, 4301 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412.

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Full-time music/youth minister—needs to be experienced. Send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 1601 Chickasawba, Blytheville, AR 72315. Attention: Pastor.

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BSSB 'One Spirit' ministry to aid women in leadership

GLORIETA, NM (BP)—"One Spirit," a ministry to women serving in ministry leadership positions, was unveiled during a National Conference for Church Leadership at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center. The new ministry is part of LeaderCare, the Baptist Sunday School Board's strategy of personal development for pastors and staff.

Linda Miniard, BSSB consultant in the pastor-staff leadership department's personal development section, led the introductory conference for women to launch the "touch point" at the BSSB for the more than 22,000 women in ministry positions in churches, associations, state conventions and national agencies.

The purpose of One Spirit, named from Philippians 1:27, Miniard said, is "to minister to women serving in ministry leadership positions for the purpose of personal, spiritual and professional affirmation, encouragement, nurture, enrichment and education as they live their call to serve Christ."

Like the overarching LeaderCare strategy, One Spirit will provide a network of personal development help. Included in resources from the BSSB will be a bimonthly newsletter, networking receptions hosted in conjunction with many state Baptist convention meetings, regional conferences, a prayer network and vacation options. A 911-type number will be added for all church staff members

desiring resources and referrals for personal and career assistance.

Regional meetings for One Spirit beginning in 1997 will offer sessions on emotional, physical, spiritual and professional development. Vacation options, planned in response to an expressed need for fellowship among women in ministry leadership, also will be offered.

Loneliness has been cited by women as a "top issue because of the difficulty of developing peer relationships," Miniard said. "They asked us to provide the opportunity to network on a strictly recreational basis."

Choices of a cruise, an "American adventure" and an international vacation are expected to be offered, with the option for participants to travel with a friend, family member or as part of a larger group.

Miniard led conference participants in a biblical study of women in ministry leadership roles, including Deborah, Abigail, Esther, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, Mary and Martha, Dorcas and Priscilla. She said their roles demonstrate servanthood, systematic obedience to God and lives with purpose.

"These women were not accidentally there," Miniard said. "They are examples for us to follow."

"You don't have to be radical, angry or militant in order to accomplish all God intended you to be," she added. "If your purpose is platform recognition and honor, you need to rethink your purpose. No matter who you are and what you do in life, you do it for God's honor."



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First Southern Church, Bryant
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20:1-11

Central truth: God honors people who put their trust in Him and punishes those who dare mock Him.

The stress of life at times becomes difficult for all of us. Bad things really do happen to good people and not so good people. However, it is in those times of stress that one finds out a lot about oneself. When a sponge is squeezed, whatever it has soaked up comes out. Life will squeeze at times and what has been soaked up in one's life will come out.

King Hezekiah was being squeezed! The pressure was on and we see what he truly believes in.

■ **God was being challenged.** Hezekiah began to reign at the tender age of 25. He turned the people back to God. He had torn down the pagan idols and called his people back to the one true and living God. Sennacherib of Assyria came and threatened Jerusalem. He even went so far as to claim revelation from the God of Israel who had told him to ask for Hezekiah to surrender. God has never, and will never, honor false religious claims. People can be sincere in what they believe and at the same time, be sincerely wrong.

■ **God punished the wicked.** Hezekiah did not waver in his commitment. The pressure was bearing down not only on him, but also on his kingdom. The prayer he utters (vv. 19:14-19) demonstrates his commitment to God. He prayed for deliverance — not for himself, but for God to share with the world that He alone is God. And God delivered Hezekiah! Sennacherib and his men died exactly as the prophet Isaiah foretold.

■ **God honors those who trust in Him.** Not only did God deliver His people, He responded to a passionate plea from His servant Hezekiah. Chapter 20 tells us that Hezekiah had fallen ill and even Isaiah had told him he would not recover. Hezekiah cries out to God and Isaiah then returns and shares with him that God would heal after all. The king was granted 15 more years of life, during which time Manasseh would be born. God honored his devotion.

■ **God honors devotion to Him today.** The prayer of Hezekiah demonstrates that the universe is not a closed, planned system. Prayer really can change things!

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Life and Work

Called to commitment

By Jere D. Mitchell, pastor,
First Church, Fayetteville
Basic passage: Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-3,
17-18
Focal passage: Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4,
17-18

Central truth: We have been called to commitment by God through Jesus Christ, His messenger.

Hebrews is a wonderful book that challenges us to grow in our commitment to Christ. Any growth process must have a beginning point. Our beginning point is when we make a choice for Christ.

The writer of Hebrews, known only to God, laid out reasons for choosing Christ:

■ **Jesus is God's choice.** Life's ultimate question is, "Who is God?" God revealed Himself in many ways in ancient times. His ultimate way of revealing Himself was in His son, Jesus. If we truly want to know about God, we must know about Jesus. He shows us what God is like. His nature and His character are displayed for us in Christ. We also know God by coming to know Jesus. Knowing Jesus is an act of the heart and will. Both are necessary.

■ **Jesus is superior to all other messages or messengers.** In the Old Testament, God often spoke through angels to His people. The writer of Hebrews says Jesus is superior to the angels. There are many messengers today with a "message" about who God is. None of them are even close to Jesus. Don't be fooled by false messengers. Jesus is still the best choice.

■ **The Holy Spirit makes the truth of Christ real.** The greatest gift of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. That brings us to the point of conversion. Jesus also taught that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things. We have the Holy Spirit to teach us. The Holy Spirit will never lead you to disobedience of God's Word.

The call to commitment cannot be taken lightly because it comes from God, King of the universe. Give very close attention and obedience to that call and make your choice for Christ.

Once you have answered that call to commitment, you must be steadfast. The writer of Hebrews said don't drift away from God's message and your commitment to it. There is also here the idea of God's purpose drifting by you. If you are not steadfast, you will miss the great blessing of being used by God. Be diligent!

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Bible Book

The bowls of God's wrath

By Rodney Reeves, pastor,
Central Church, Jonesboro
Basic passage: Revelation 15:1-16:21
Focal passage: Revelation 15:1-8
Central truth: Worshipping God overcomes evil.

The scene always begins with heavenly worship. Prior to the breaking of the seals and sounding of the trumpets, John sees the congregation in heaven worshipping God, where prayers are offered as incense and praises are sung to the Lamb. In the same way, John's vision of worship in heaven comes before the seven bowls of God's wrath are poured out (vv. 2-8).

The seven angels stand ready to plague the earth for the last time (v. 1). But they do not draw from the pool of God's wrath until the "temple" is opened (worship is completed, v. 5). The victorious celebration in heaven is led by those who conquered Satan (refused idolatry, v. 2). The praise they sing (vv. 3-4) blends the song of Moses (Exo. 15:1-18) with the song of the Lamb (Ps. 86:1-13), testifying to the two "righteous acts" of God's deliverance: the liberation of Israel and the resurrection of Jesus. Upon the praise of His people, God's shekinah glory fills the temple — a veiled holy presence (no one could enter, v. 8). Then the angels are sent to plague the earth (v. 16:1). It is the worship of God that overcomes evil; enslavement to Satan perpetuates destruction.

The seven bowls of wrath replicate the plagues of the seven trumpets (earth, sea, rivers, sun, darkness, the Euphrates, loud heavenly voice). This time, however, God will not spare two-thirds of the earth. The seven plagues of the bowls will bring total destruction. Every satanic slave, every sea creature, all rivers, the entire kingdom of darkness will experience the wrath of God (vv. 16:2, 3, 4, 10). Every nation will fall at the war to end all wars (vv. 16:14, 16, 19). "It is done," the seventh angel declares (v. 17). God's final judgment will plunder the earth "like a thief" (v. 15), ridding it of evil once and for all.

Predictably, the effect of the plagues on unbelievers will be the same as it was in the days of Pharaoh. Rather than repent, unbelievers will harden their hearts, blaming God for the consequences of their wickedness (16:9, 11, 21). Yet, "the angel of the waters" will declare the righteousness of God, that His judgments are right (vv. 16:5-6): When it comes, "they deserve it."

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Convention Uniform

Obedience is required

By Jim Lagrone, pastor,
First Southern Church, Bryant
Basic passage: II Kings 22:1-23
Focal passage: II Kings 22:13-20,
23:1-4
Central truth: Obedience to God
reveals the truth of one's
commitment.

Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, had led his people in complete and arrogant disobedience to God. He had left the faith of his father and, by the time Josiah came into power, the people were far from God. Josiah, however, had a heart for obedience to God and did what was right in His sight.

■ *Obedience to God's Word is required.*
The truth of God's Word is not open to debate. Josiah immediately saw that God's anger was great against them because the people had failed to follow the standards that God has. He knew that the wrath of God was a real possibility. Wrath is God's punishment of those who knowingly disobey Him and refuse to respond to His loving will.

■ *Obedience contains humility.*
Josiah's heart was humbled. He was a broken man! When he had realized the guilt that existed between his people and God's standard, he repented and pleaded with God. The realization of sin always humbles. We must come to God with a brokenness if we ever expect a fruitful relationship with Him. We see little brokenness over sin in our time. We have become arrogant in our walk and, many times, fail to honor God and His word.

■ *Obedience leads to renewal.*
Josiah renewed the covenant with God. He then began to further dismantle the pagan temples and idols that had overrun his country. The legacy of disobedience was vast indeed! But reform must be more than a one-time act. True revival, renewal, will result in a change of direction. It must be rooted in one's life.

■ *The character of leadership does make a difference!* Josiah demonstrates how his intensity in trying to do God's will influences other people. This passage also reveals that the wickedness of Manasseh was transferred to his people. Obedience, or the lack of it, reveals who really is in control of one's life. We ask the wrath of God when disobedience reigns. We enjoy the fullness of His presence when we renew our covenant with Him.

Life and Work

Called to obedience

By Jere D. Mitchell, pastor,
First Church, Fayetteville
Basic passage: Hebrews 3:1-2, 12-14;
4:14-16; 5:7-9
Focal passage: Hebrews 3:1-2, 12-14;
4:14-16; 5:7-9
Central truth: As children of God
and followers of Jesus Christ, you
are to be obedient to Him.

The Bible teaches that God has work that each of His children is to do (Eph. 2:10). The writer of Hebrews urged believers to press on in carrying out the work God had prepared for them. It is often true that when you begin a project it is exciting, but then the bloom begins to fade a little.

Living the Christian life gets difficult. There are hardships. There are conflicts with others and with self. In such times, remember the great things God has done for you and that you are to be obedient to God, no matter what. Remember:

■ *Jesus was faithful.* His life was not easy. He was ridiculed, challenged, rejected, physically abused, even put to death. Yet He was faithfully obedient to the Father. You are not Jesus, but you can determine you will be faithful because He was and because you grow in difficult times.

You can be faithful in witnessing even when it is not easy — which is a lot of the time. You can be faithful in worship, even though it requires time and humility. You can be faithful in helping to spread the good news in your community, state and around the world, even though it is costly.

■ *Jesus was not only faithfully obedient to the Father who sent Him, He is also faithful to help us now.* Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit to help you. The writer of Hebrews says to draw near and we will find help. How true! When you find it difficult to break away from your rebellion, ask for help. God never gives you anything to do that is impossible. It may be impossible for you alone, but with His help, all things are possible.

■ *You also find help in the encouragement of fellow believers.* God is your help, but fellow believers are, as well. This is one of the reasons you need to be active in a local church. The other side of that is that as a believer, you are to be an encourager.

Obedience is not an option for the believer. Obedience does not make you a believer, it shows you are one. Focus on Jesus, pray for help and encourage others while being obedient to your great Heavenly Father.

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Bible Book

The fall of Babylon

By Rodney Reeves, pastor,
Central Church, Jonesboro
Basic passage: Revelation 17:1-18:24
Focal passage: Revelation 18:1-3
Central truth: Evil will be destroyed.

When John saw the seventh bowl of God's wrath poured out on Babylon, he witnessed from heaven the end of the evil empire. In the next vision, John is invited to get a closer look on earth of God's judgment against Babylon. From the beginning to the end, Babylon epitomizes the evil kingdom that opposes God (Gen. 11:1-9, Isa. 14:4-22, Rev. 17:5). The great city is pictured as a harlot (vv. 17:1, 18), who first sits on "many waters" (universal empire, v. 17:15) and then rides a red beast with seven heads and 10 horns (vv. 17:1-3). She is the antithesis of the virtuous woman, the mother of the child of God, who was attacked by the same beast (vv. 12:1-6). The virtuous woman is clothed with the creation of God (sun, moon, stars), the harlot is adorned with the merchandise of men (dyeing garments, gold jewelry, pearls, v. 17:4).

Empowered by Satan (red dragon/red beast), the city of abominations is guilty of idolatry (wine of her immorality, vv. 17:2, 18:3) and murder (blood of the saints, vv. 17:6; 16:6). The "mystery of the woman" is that she represents the empire that reigns over all kingdoms (Babylon/Rome, vv. 17:7, 18). The devilish power behind the throne is a beast that "was, is not, and is about to come" from the abyss (pseudo-resurrection, vv. 8, 13:3). The satanic alliance (the devil, seven kings and their allies) will fight against the Lamb. In the end, the evil kingdom will implode, as sovereigns turn on each other in their pointless quest for supremacy (vv. 17:12-17). God will finally allow evil to self-destruct, destroyed by its own "common purpose" to war and rule the world (v. 17:17).

It's finally over. An angel makes the much-anticipated announcement (vv. 18:1-3): Babylon is dead! Friends of the deceased mourn the dead. Each one sings a lament, grieving over their loss, "the kings of the earth" mourn her sorrowful passing (v. 18:10); land merchants weep over lost business (vv. 18:15-17a); sea merchants mourn the loss of wealth (v. 18:19). The blow of her death lies in how suddenly destruction can come. Yet, the faithful escape God's punishment, warned before the end to "come out of her" (v. 4).

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The *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* offers subscription plans at three rates:

■ **The Every Resident Family Plan** offers churches a premium rate when they send the *Newsmagazine* to all their resident households. Resident families are calculated to be at least one-fourth of the church's Sunday School enrollment. Churches who send only to members who request a subscription do not qualify for this lower rate of \$6.36 per year for each subscription.

■ **The Group Plan** allows church members to receive a discount when 10 or more individuals send their subscriptions together through their local church.

FEC sues Christian Coalition for partisan campaigning

WASHINGTON (ABP) — The Federal Election Commission filed suit against the Christian Coalition July 30 for improperly spending money during the last three federal election campaigns to "influence the election of candidates for federal office."

The FEC, an independent bipartisan agency of the U.S. government, filed the suit after a unanimous vote by its panel. An FEC spokesman said the Christian conservative group was targeted for failing to report political activities to the FEC and for consulting with Republican officials about the voter guides the group distributes.

No corporation can spend money in partisan campaigning without reporting the activity to the FEC, which the coalition apparently did not do. The coalition claims its political activity is educational and non-partisan, and therefore not subject to campaign reporting laws.

But the FEC suit says that during the 1990, 1992 and 1994 campaigns for federal office, the Christian Coalition worked for the campaigns of several Republicans including former President George Bush, Sen. Jesse Helms, Senate candidate Oliver North, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Reps. Robert Inglis and J. D. Hayworth.

Christian Coalition executive director Ralph Reed said the organization "has abided by both the letter and spirit of the law. We are absolutely and totally confident that we will be fully vindicated and the courts will affirm that people of faith have every right to be involved as citizens and voters."

Federal appeals court upholds religious liberty act

WASHINGTON (ABP) — A third federal appeals court has upheld a 1993 act Congress approved to protect religious liberty. The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected arguments by Wisconsin officials that Congress overstepped its authority by enacting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Wisconsin attacked RFRA after prisoners used the law to challenge state regulations that banned inmates from wearing religious jewelry such as crucifixes. Federal District Judge Barbara Crabb and the federal appeals court sided with the prisoners.

Federal appeals courts in the 5th Circuit and the District of Columbia had earlier upheld RFRA's constitutionality, although one of those rulings is being appealed.

Under RFRA, government cannot substantially burden the free exercise of religion unless it uses the least restrictive means available to further a compelling governmental interest.

The 7th Circuit's opinion, written by Chief Judge Richard Posner, said Congress did not exceed its authority to pass laws. Posner's decision also made clear that RFRA protects religiously motivated conduct, not just practices mandated by religion.

Bivocational Texas music minister seeks SBC presidency

HEARNE, TX (BP)—A Texas bivocational minister of music has announced his candidacy for president of the Southern Baptist Convention when it meets in Dallas next year.

Dan Bates, minister of music at First Baptist Church, Hearne, Texas, noted that he will "run against Tom Elliff's re-election as president of the SBC in Dallas in June 1997." He will be nominated by his pastor, Larry Blackmon.

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., was elected SBC president this year in New Orleans. SBC presidents traditionally are elected to a second one-year term following their first year.

Bates said he wanted to create a "Southern Baptist Bureau of Reclamation" which he said would restore some of the Baptist distinctives lost during the past 16 years of the SBC's conservative resurgence. He cited the loss of "freedom, liberty and the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer," adding that he "will be a free voice for Southern Baptists."

SBC LIFE associate Jon Walker named Home Life editor

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Jon Walker, associate editor of *SBC LIFE*, journal of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, will become editor of the Baptist Sunday School Board's *Home Life* magazine Sept. 1.

Walker succeeds Charlie Warren, who was recently dismissed as editor following eight years of service. Warren is now serving as director of public relations at Oklahoma Baptist University.

Walker joined *SBC LIFE* in 1994. Prior to that, he was news and information director for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of the University of Florida and Southeastern Seminary.

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