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September 4, 1997

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



news magazine



start something new

1997
Season of
State Missions

*Week of Prayer
for State Missions
September 21-28*

*Dixie Jackson Offering
for State Missions
Goal: \$750,000*

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Nashville, Tennessee

Three trips strengthen European partnership

THREE RECENT mission trips by Arkansas Baptist churches helped strengthen European Baptist partner congregations through education, evangelism and encouragement. The three groups went as part of a six-year partnership between the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the European Baptist Convention.

Twelve members of First Church in Harrison led a revival and training conference during a recent project with their partner church, Kitzingen Baptist, in Germany.

"The main objectives for the mission team were to provide seminars for the adult members and programs for the children," explained team member Larry Brandt. He said members presented the adult seminars "Love is a Decision," "When God Speaks" and "Personal Finance."

Other team members provided programs and care for children for birth through sixth grade and a hand chimes class for youth, who performed during a service.

Brandt added that pastor Jim Perkins "preached the Sunday message, provided counseling to families and always provided spiritual guidance to the mission team during team devotionals and mission activities."

Team members also participated in a prayer walk at two military installations - Marshall Heights in Kitzingen and Leyton Barracks in Wurzburg.

Pastor Ray Higgins and member Charles Ray of Second Church in Little Rock led a weekend discipleship conference Aug. 8-10 for members of its partner congregation, International Baptist Church in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Higgins led a discipleship class, "The Bible and the Christian Life," while Ray taught Sunday School. Both preached during services, held at the church's meeting location - Bulgaria's World Trade Center.

Ray noted that the church continues to flourish even in Bulgaria, "a state where control of people's minds is still an art form," he said. "However, the gospel is bringing broad smiles and a new life to those hearing it. When church members ride a bus four hours to get there or walk one and a half hours each way, you know they have found a new reason to live."

Higgins cited pastor James Duke's work in a spiritually depressed climate. "I was so impressed by James and Audrey Duke's practical, friendship style of evangelism and how genuine and effective they are," he noted. "I also was impressed with the faith and commitment of the members of the church."

Kevin Hendrix, minister of youth for First Church in Heber Springs, led 16 college and high school students and three adults on a 20-day mission trip to Germany.

"The first week we went to Interlaken and the students went to EuroVenture in the Alps," he said. Interlaken is the EBC's annual leadership training conference and EuroVenture is a youth-oriented conference led by Centrifuge personnel.

Following the training, the team traveled to Grace Church near Heidelberg, Germany - where Hendrix's father, Paul, is pastor. "We did Backyard Bible Clubs at a military base," Kevin Hendrix explained. "You can't imagine the size of the housing situation there and you can't imagine the number of kids. We had three locations there."

The team also performed skits and music and witnessed on the streets in Heidelberg. "We had to buy a permit to do street witnessing and they gave us a time and place to do that," he noted. "We were trying to make contact with English-speaking German students, so we went to a place that is a student hang-out."

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



Cover Story

State missions... 12-13

Highlighting the theme, "Start Something New," Arkansas Baptists' 1997 Week of Prayer for State Missions will be observed Sept. 21-28. This year's state missions offering goal is \$750,000.

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What they did this summer

BSU student missionaries witness nearly 250 professions of faith

Colleen Backus

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

ARKANSAS STUDENT missionaries served from their own backyards to the far reaches of the globe during the summer of 1997. A total of 99 Arkansas students served in summer missions or ministries in six countries and 15 states.

Fifty-two students were appointed by the Baptist Student Union, with their ministries resulting in nearly 250 personal professions of faith in Christ. Forty-seven other student missionaries were appointed through other avenues, including the state missions department, the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board as well as church, associational and campus appointments.

Jennifer Lake, a senior at the University of Central Arkansas, and Monte Weaver, a senior at Ouachita Baptist University, served in Israel through an Arkansas Baptist Foundation endowment. They worked as cabin counselors at the Baptist Village Camp, located about 30 miles from Tel Aviv, as part of a team of BSU summer missionaries from several states. Lake also taught sign language classes for each camp and learned Palestinian and Hebrew sign language.

As part of BSU's emphasis for campus directors to "go," as well as send, Jeff Noble, BSU director for the University of Arkansas at Monticello, and Mark Robinson, BSU director at Henderson State University, co-led a group to China. "It was really a powerful experience," Noble stated. The group, consisting of the two directors, four college students

and one seminary student, went to the city of Yanti in the Shandong province for 16 days early in the summer. They lectured to Chinese university students about American college culture.

"This is the same province where Lottie Moon served," Noble pointed out. "We went to Peng Glai, to see the church that she started. The students saw what a difference the life of just one Christian woman made."

The trip may change the life direction of some of the students, Noble observed. "It forever changed their impression of the world."

"In order to share the gospel in all nations today, including the United States, Christians must be willing to take risks," noted Diane Parker, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist student ministries department. "College students today are riskers and they are willing to go. That's why we're excited about student missions."

Serving in the States can be very rewarding, according to Jocelyn Campbell, a University of Central Arkansas student who served in Kentucky. "In two days of camp, God used me to lead five girls to Him," she remarked. "I was so excited!"

Sarah Beth Milam, a junior at Ouachita Baptist University, spent the summer as a recreation counselor at the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children in Monticello. "I didn't know what to expect, since I'd never been there," she recalled.

Milam and two other students headed up the summer recreation activities for the kids, organizing activities and taking them on trips. "It was pretty packed, and I was so exhausted that I just wanted to go to bed at 9 p.m.," she noted. "But that was when the real mission work began. A girl would come in my room and need counseling, just for me to be a friend.

"I come from a great family and don't really understand what some of these kids have been through," Milam explained. "But God just wanted me to listen, to show that I cared.

"I think the kids understood we cared for them, because we tried to provide fun activities," she added. "It was a wonderful experience - one I'll never forget."

Parker affirmed that this summer's missions experiences are representative of what the student ministries department seeks to provide. "Our goal is to participate in God's plan for world evangelization by challenging students to be Great Commission Christians and by providing opportunities for them to serve," she said.



“I hope that through the relationships I am building, I can help the kids better understand who God is and lead them to His saving grace.”

CALEB FITTING
Summer missionary
to New Orleans



University of Arkansas at Monticello student Laura Wilson and friend take a break during a summer missions activity in Memphis.

A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABCS Executive Director

SEVEN MONTHS before the tornado touched down, Arkansas began to prepare. All over Arkansas in small and large churches, God's people had given to the state missions offering. No one knew how the money would be used to help mend lives torn by the March 1 tornadoes – yet we gave, and God used our gifts.

Evangelistic outreach programs led by summer workers in Huntsville – 30 were saved. The state missions offering you gave last year played a role. Dental clinics for poor Arkansans in Delta Association – again, the state missions offering made its mark. Churches damaged by fire, new churches being

established. Lives being changed because of a gospel witness in the community – your state missions offering helps make it possible.

Your gifts don't go to "headquarters," "the denomination" or "administrators," they go to churches, to people, to reach lost people, to help needy people and to change eternity. Give and encourage others to give to the state missions offering. Lives will be changed.

■ Have you read *Returning for Personal Revival* by Larry White? This is a step-by-step guide for personal revival. You will be impressed with Larry's testimony and his simple 13-week plan to renew your walk with God. Larry is the director of missions for Trinity Association. You can get a copy of his workbook by calling his office at 870-483-2300.

Executive director's schedule:

Sept. 9 ABCS Operating Committee
Sept. 13 Sunday School Banquet, Pine Bluff
Sept. 14 (a.m.) FBC, North Little Rock
Sept. 14-17 Dermott Crusade
Sept. 19-20 North American Mission Board

not the good I want to do."

Because my children are now grown and beginning a life outside our home, my fear is they too will know what is good but not carry it out. I am afraid they will live by many of my actions. Now my prayer is, "God, please undo any harm I have done by my actions and let your word permeate their lives. May they know my love for you and be stronger than I have been, keeping close to you. Please do not let them put earthly goals first in their lives, only to lose the full measure of joy and happiness that only you can provide."

Remember, no matter how old your children are, it is never too late to begin being an example of a good Christian. Let your actions show that you believe God's way is the best way. It may not be easy to undo lessons taught, but I know a God so great and strong that with Him nothing is an impossible mission.

Bekky Hardwick is business manager of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* and serves as coordinator of the Potential Leadership Training, chairman of the finance committee and a choir member at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock. She and her husband, John, have two young adult daughters.

Woman's Viewpoint



Bekky Hardwick

Park Hill Church, North Little Rock

HOW OFTEN have we told our children that God's ways are what will make them truly happy, only to show them by our actions that it is the worldly things we seek? If we spend great amounts for houses, cars and luxuries at the expense of tithing and giving to missions, what do our actions say? Do we spend as much time praying or in Bible study as we do watching TV or working long hours? What do our actions show? What do our children see us doing?

If we really believe God's way is the way of peace, joy and happiness, why do many of us do what we do? How well I understand Paul's words in Romans 7:18-19, "For I have desire to do what is good, but I do not carry it out. For what I do is

quotes

"In order to share the gospel...Christians must be willing to take risks."

—Diane Parker
 ABCS student ministries department associate

"God calls you to Himself...so that you can make a difference in everybody else's life."

—Bob Reccord
 President, SBC North American Mission Board

"The best way to win kids to Christ is to teach them how to witness."

—Pat Batchelor
 ABCS Sunday School department associate

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

NEWS MAGAZINE

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'If any man be in Christ...'

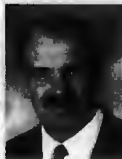
THE CALL to "Start Something New" is a worthy goal for this year's state missions emphasis. It grows even more significant when coupled with the theme verse, II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

As important as it is to talk about funding state and associational missions, new church starts, language ministries, community ministry projects and chaplaincy programs, it's even more important to focus on the end result of those efforts: "new creatures in Christ."

According to Jimmy Barrentine, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department, "Over 1 million Arkansans are without a church home." Noting that state missionaries "see those people as 'pre-Christians,'" he added, "Working together, directed by God's Spirit, we can erase that 'pre' and embrace more and more fellow Arkansans as fellow Christians."

Spiritually undergirding that goal is Arkansas Baptists' annual Week of Prayer for State Missions. This year's prayer emphasis is set for Sept. 21-28. The eight-day prayer guide calls for Arkansas Baptists to start with their eyes, ears,

Straight from the Editor



Trennis Henderson
Editor, Arkansas Baptist

mind, heart, feet, hands, mouth — and "you!" to support state mission ventures.

Declaring that "prayer is the most important thing you can do to support state missions," the prayer guide asks: "Will you give eight days to prayer for state missions?" All Arkansas Baptists committed to seeing spiritual victories throughout our state should be willing to respond with an enthusiastic "yes."

Among specific prayer requests highlighted in the prayer guide are that at least 45 new churches be started in the state this year, that churches and individuals help break down cultural barriers in their communities and that the number of mission volunteers serving in the state will increase by 20 percent.

On the nuts-and-bolts side of the issue,

the annual week of prayer is accompanied by the Dixie Jackson Offering for State Missions. The 1997 offering of \$750,000 is designed to provide financial resources to fund mission projects and personnel throughout the state.

Noting the importance of funding the annual missions goal, Barrentine said, "For that amount, Arkansas Baptists provide missionary pastors, regional missionaries, chaplaincy missionaries, center-based missionaries and nine statewide missionaries."

Affirming that Arkansas Baptists have the opportunity to "undergird a state missions ministry that literally touches every county in the state," Barrentine pointed out that missionaries supported by the annual offering are actively involved in ongoing efforts to "start churches, minister to human hurts and reach people for salvation."

As Arkansas Baptists prepare to enter the 1997 season of state missions, it is essential for individuals and congregations to determine specifically how they will be involved in helping "start something new."

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," our theme verse declares. There's no better reason for committed Christians to help "start something new."



letters to the editor

Reconciliation affirmed

I support the proposed reconciliation agreement on how we elect Ouachita Baptist University's trustees for the following reasons:

1. A representative group of some of our most respected leaders with proven integrity developed the agreement.
2. It is a win-win solution. OBU gets deserved input. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention retains ultimate control.
3. The agreement hopefully eliminates the future possibility of the unfortunate action/reaction of 1996 between the state convention nominating committee and OBU trustees.

I may be wrong but I believe the reconciliation agreement is best for Arkansas Baptists. I plan to elect and inform our quota of messengers to attend the convention and vote their convictions and I urge my fellow pastors to do the same.

Larry Pillow
Conway, AR

Appreciation for prayers

On May 22 while painting my house, I fell about 35 to 40 feet. I was rushed to the hospital where it was discovered I had three fractures in my pelvic area and two crushed vertebrae. A 10-hour surgery on May 25, another 90-minute surgery two weeks later, and most recently another surgery on Aug. 20 was required. I have been in a healing process that continues to this day.

I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the people of Arkansas Baptist churches who prayed for me and continue to pray for me. We all appreciate when someone prays for us, but when we are in a time of deepest need, we are most grateful for those prayers. I have received cards and letters from churches throughout our state expressing their concern for me, my family and my church during these days. Your prayers, compassion and concern have been gratefully received.

I also want to say a particular word of acknowledgment to the wonderful people

of Cabot First Baptist Church. First Baptist Church has truly been Christian to me during this time of recovery. Because of my fall, I had to spend four weeks in the hospital and was unable to attend any services or be in the church for about six weeks. Even now I am only able to preach on Sunday mornings and to work a couple of hours a day in the office.

It has been a tremendous encouragement to me to have people who love me simply as a child of God and not because I am "producing" for the church. There is nothing worse than when the relationship between pastor and church breaks down. On the other hand, there are not many things better than when a pastor and his people care for each other and minister to each other in the name of Christ.

Again, thank you for your prayers and concern, and I hope you would join me in praying for a revival and awakening throughout our state and nation.

Del L. Medlin
ABSC first vice president
Cabot, AR

Board members discuss OBU, '98 CP budget, structure study

DISCUSSION about the state convention's reconciliation agreement with Ouachita Baptist University once again was the primary focus of attention during the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board meeting Aug. 19 in Little Rock.

Amid a full agenda that included action on the 1998 Cooperative Program budget, convention structure study, 1998 "Arkansas Awakening" projects, a "Celebrate Jesus 2000" evangelism emphasis and election of a new staff member, board members debated the impact and timing of proposed bylaw changes that are being written to implement last year's agreement between the state convention and Ouachita.

Noting that the bylaw changes require a two-thirds majority, Jim Richards, director of missions for Northwest Association, suggested establishing a contingent budget in case convention messengers decline to implement the reconciliation agreement.

State convention executive director Emil Turner responded that "prudence would be to approve one budget and take it to the convention," noting that "if we approve two budgets, the opportunity for confusion is multiplied." Regardless of the reconciliation agreement with Ouachita, Turner added that the convention already has the precedent of budgeting funds for a statewide organization, the Christian Civic Foundation, without the requirement of electing their trustees.

Following discussion of the fact that the convention budget is expected to be voted on by messengers prior to the vote on the Ouachita issue, Lowell Snow, pastor of Three Creeks Church in Junction City, made, a

motion that "we as the Executive Board insist that the Ouachita issue be voted on before we vote on the budget."

"This board needs to be careful that we don't over-react," responded James Guthrie, pastor of Beech Street Church in Gurdon. "Right now we've serving a state convention that voted last year to enter into a reconciliation agreement with OBU. To me, that's what we're working under. If we're not careful, we're sending some signals that I don't think we need to send. We need to be occupied with going on with this budget and assuming that we're continuing in partnership with Ouachita."

Snow said his concern is that the Ouachita issue "came up all of a sudden" last year and there was confusion over the reconciliation agreement. "I think it would be embarrassing, if not a tragedy, to vote on the budget and then the convention votes against" the bylaw changes to implement the agreement. Snow said he believes "the logical thing to do" is for messengers to vote on the bylaw issue prior to voting on the 1998 budget.

Following further discussion, board members agreed that the timing of the vote was the responsibility of the convention's Committee on Order of Business. Rather than voting to instruct the committee how to arrange the agenda, Snow said he would be satisfied for Turner to suggest such a change to the committee.

With other board members voicing concern that such a suggestion not be viewed as an official Executive Board action, Turner agreed to convey the spirit and content of the overall discussion to the Committee on Order of Business for their consideration.

In other actions, board members:

- Adopted a proposed 1998 Cooperative Program budget of \$17,682,975. The budget proposal, which is 0.5 percent above this year's budget goal, includes 41.77 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes, 30.2 percent for Executive Board programs, 14.36 percent for Ouachita, 4.33 percent for Williams Baptist College, 2.64 percent for Children's Homes and Family Ministries, 2.27 percent for church annuity dues, 1.55 percent for the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, 1.32 percent for the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, 0.78 percent for the ministerial scholarship fund and 0.78 percent for convention expenses.

- Approved recommendations from the Arkansas Baptist Structure Study Committee concerning Ouachita, Williams, Children's Homes and Family Ministries, the Foundation, the *Newsmagazine* and the Christian Civic Foundation. Recommendations related to the Executive Board staff structure were approved earlier this year, with both sets of recommendations to be presented to convention messengers in November.

- Approved the 1998 Arkansas Awakening theme of "Build the Church," including seven priority projects ranging from evangelism and church worship to children in crisis and ethnic church leadership.

- Endorsed a "Celebrate Jesus 2000" proposal "to pray for and share Christ with every lost person in Arkansas through the end of the year 2000." The evangelism strategy calls for prayer, personal witnessing, proclamation and preservation of new converts.

- Heard a report from the state convention's 150th anniversary committee concerning events planned to celebrate the convention's 1998 sesquicentennial, including a special service scheduled Sept. 21, 1998.

- Heard an update from Turner concerning plans to replace Camp Paron's dining facility which was destroyed by fire in July.

Tucker unanimously elected as state evangelism director

James D. "Sonny" Tucker was elected unanimously as director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department by members of the ABSC Executive Board during their Aug. 19 meeting at the Gilbreath Conference Center at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock. Tucker has served as pastor of Second Church in Monticello since 1994 and as a member of the Executive Board since last year.

ABSC executive director Emil Turner said that in addition to meeting the operating committee's requirements, Tucker also met "requirements that I have for staff—they must be innaterrants, they must be soul winners and they must be people strongly supportive of the Cooperative Program. Sonny meets all of these characteristics."

Turner also noted that if messengers to the ABSC's annual meeting adopt a convention-wide reorganization, Tucker will assume the leadership of the proposed evangelism and church growth team in January.

Turner said Tucker also meets the criteria for team leader. "That person had to be the leader of different-sized churches, had to have a winsome spirit, a passion to win a lost world, a balanced view of

church growth and a heart for reaching Arkansas people."

He also emphasized that Tucker will not be "reviving a dead department. Last year we had a 12-year high in baptisms. Sonny will be charged with taking this strong group to new heights and leading the evangelism and church growth team into a new century."

Tucker shared his philosophy of evangelism and church growth. "The main thrust of church growth should be salvations...and the process is not complete until the converted are responsible church members," he explained. "The key would be...to make it fit your church situation."

Tucker is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Mid-America Seminary. He currently is enrolled in Mid-America's doctor of philosophy degree program.

During Tucker's tenure as pastor of Second Church in Monticello, the congregation had 140 additions in his first 18 months. He also has served as pastor of West Helena Church, Fair Oaks Church, Shady Grove Church in Sparkman and as youth director of Antioch Church in Hot Springs. Tucker and his wife, Nicki, have two children, Megan and James.



Sonny Tucker

Turner cites 'seven-step' OBU process

Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

HIGHLIGHTING a seven-step process for nominating trustees for Ouachita Baptist University, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Emil Turner said the steps are necessary to implement an agreement adopted last fall by state convention messengers.

That agreement, approved by a vote of 801-456, called for OBU trustees elected this fall and each successive year to be nominees "jointly approved by resolution of the (OBU) board of trustees...and by the Nominating Committee of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention."

While the steps outlined by Turner already have been used by this year's ABSC Nominating Committee, the process is complicated by the fact that state convention bylaw changes being drafted to formalize last fall's agreement must gain a two-thirds majority vote of messengers this fall and again in 1998. Although nearly two-thirds of messengers approved the initial plan last fall, organized efforts to defeat the bylaw changes are under way by opponents of the plan.

Emphasizing that the seven-step implementation process is separate from the agreement approved last fall and the bylaw proposals to be considered in November, Turner explained, "The convention adopted an agreement (with OBU) last year. This is the mechanics of how that agreement works. This is mandated by the convention vote because there's no other way to get it from the convention's vote in November to the shoe leather apart from this process."

Noting that "I have read a number of things recently that are not true about the OBU implementation process," Turner added that the seven-step process "is what happened this year and what must happen each year for this agreement to work."

The process begins by securing nominations from Arkansas Baptists at-large. Turner said, noting that "we let Arkansas Baptists nominate to anything."

The next step involves the Nominating Committee subcommittee compiling recommendations from Baptists across the state, from committee members and from Ouachita representatives and reaching a consensus with OBU's representatives. The subcommittee then votes on nominees to recommend to the full Nominating Committee which can either accept or reject the nominations.

Once that process is finalized, the Nominating Committee recommends OBU trustees to state convention messengers, who have the final vote as well as the option of substituting nominations from the floor of the convention.

Affirming that "the process begins and

Quachita agreement implementation process

Step 1: Nominations are secured from Arkansas Baptists at-large.

Step 2: Convention Nominating Committee subcommittee meets, discusses Ouachita Baptist University trustee needs.

2.a. Nominating Committee subcommittee consults with Ouachita representatives. Potential nominees from Arkansas Baptists at-large are submitted; Nominating Committee subcommittee presents potential nominees; OBU representatives submit potential nominees. Consensus is reached.

Step 3: Nominating Committee subcommittee votes on nominees to recommend to full Nominating Committee.

Step 4: Full convention Nominating Committee meets, hears recommendations of Nominating Committee subcommittee.

Step 5: Full Nominating Committee votes on subcommittee's recommendations.

5.a. If full Nominating Committee rejects the subcommittee's recommendations, then subcommittee must repropose 2, 3 and 4.

Step 6: Full Nominating Committee recommends Ouachita trustees to Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Step 7: Arkansas Baptist State Convention votes on the trustees.

7.a. Convention can substitute nominations from the floor.

ends with all Arkansas Baptists," Turner said last year's agreement does not give Ouachita the standing to nominate trustees to the convention or to elect their own trustees. Noting that "the Nominating Committee determines who is nominated as trustees," Turner emphasized that "messengers are the only ones who determine who is elected as trustees."

Committee affirms process

During an interview following the ABSC Executive Board meeting, Nominating Committee chairman Rodney Reeves said this year's committee agreed that Turner's outline is an accurate reflection of the nominating process. Reeves, pastor of Central Church, Jonesboro, is a former faculty member at Williams Baptist College.

Calling the process "a workable solution," Reeves pointed out that it is very similar to the way the statewide nominating process has traditionally worked. "It was an oral tradition and now it's a written policy," he explained.

As a member of last year's Nominating Committee which declined to accept any of the recommendations presented by OBU president Ben Elrod, Reeves added, "The majority of last year's Nominating Committee did not take seriously the oral tradition in the process."

Reeves said the agreement adopted last

year and the process followed by this year's Nominating Committee provides "a more tailor-made approach to meeting Ouachita's needs rather than a more vague process."

Suggesting that "we ought to take seriously the suggestions of our agency and institution leaders," Reeves added, "They know their field of labor better than anybody else."

"I don't see how anyone could say the process is somehow jeopardizing the system," he said, noting that each nomination "still has to be approved by the Nominating Committee and, more importantly, by the convention messengers."

According to OBU president Elrod, the seven-step process outlined by Turner "is absolutely accurate."

Emphasizing that the plan adopted by convention messengers "is a good-faith agreement," Elrod said the traditional nominating process "has worked for us since 1914 with one horrible exception." Looking to the future, he added, "I think it will work fine."

Elrod said OBU's trustees recently voted "to affirm the agreement and urge the messengers of the convention to ratify it with their votes this fall."

"I don't know what legitimately could be a red flag," he added. "We're as solid and conservative as we can be.... We think the convention has adopted its position."

The continuing challenge

Iowa missions partnership still faces numerous needs

RICH KEYSER has a message for Arkansas Baptists. Keyser, a Praxis pastor who led a small mission congregation last summer in Quimby, Iowa, emphasized that "Arkansas Baptists need to be here," citing a recent survey conducted by the mission.

Iowans "want a ministry that is friendly," he said. "They are crying out from their hearts for people of the Lord to visit with them.

"That is the reason to come," he urged, "because they are calling you. God's people are calling you. 'Where are you?'"

Even after nearly four years of participating in a missions partnership slated to extend through 2000, Arkansas Baptists must still answer the call to serve in Iowa. But what is still needed?

"We need more of what we've had a little bit of," said Larry Wartsbaugh, director of missions for Great Rivers and Northeast Southern Baptist associations. "We need the help of Arkansas associations or churches, we need Mission Service Corps volunteers, we need laymen to work alongside mission pastors and — eventually — we will need help with our buildings."

Among other needs, Wartsbaugh said, are "general projects such as outreach, building and Vacation Bible Schools," camps and "ongoing partnerships where Arkansas churches and associations team up with Iowa churches."

He also noted "a whole area of untapped resources" that can be used to plant or strengthen churches in Iowa: retired Arkansas Baptist ministers. "I have one retired Southern Baptist minister in my associations, which include 23 counties, 1.1 million people and about 5,000 Southern Baptists."

In addition to what many consider traditional mission projects for churches, Dan Cookson offers mission volunteers a crash-course in ministry at the busy Friendship Center, a ministry center on Des Moines' north side.

Cookson, director of the Friendship Center and church and community ministries consultant for the Baptist Convention of Iowa, said the ministry is always in need of support and action by mission groups.

"We are the largest food distribution center in the state," he noted. "We serve from 350 to 400 families at our food pantry each week and served about 3,400 different families last year."

He said Arkansas churches have participated in mission trips to the center, but more is needed, including "church planting support and construction projects on our property such as a cinder block wall, paving and work on a recreation area."

While short-term projects are popular with Arkansas churches, BCI missions department director Richard Lamborn said in planning missions projects that



Mission needs by Iowa Baptist churches continue to center around construction projects, Vacation Bible Schools and Backyard Bible Clubs. Sioux city pastor Leo Endel, (pointing) shows director of missions Mark Elliott work performed during a mission trip by First



Church, Searcy, this summer. The trip combined construction with a VBS and BBCs. Iowa DOM Larry Wartsbaugh (inset) noted that retired Arkansas pastors are "a whole area of untapped resources" that can be used to plant or strengthen churches in Iowa.

Arkansas Baptist churches should look to fill "short-term projects that fit into a long-term strategy of church growth. We have 43 of 99 counties without a Southern Baptist witness. We must take a long-term approach, such as adopting an unentered county."

Arkansas Baptists who want to participate in projects do have an option to participate as long-term partners, said partnership coordinator Norman Lewis.

He noted that 13 Arkansas Baptist churches and associations have ongoing partnerships that include "first, joining in prayer with an Iowa church and second helping through financial assistance, improvement projects, establishing new work and pastoral assistance."

Among those churches is Cherry Hill Church in Mena, which contributes monthly financial assistance to its partner in Maquoketa, Iowa; First Church in Runyan, which has a long-term relationship with Cornerstone Baptist Church in Altoona; and Centennial Association, which has a partnership with Solid Rock Baptist Church in Wappello.

Regardless of how Arkansas churches relate to Iowa Baptists, Iowa mission pastor Les Stevens said there is a reward for the help — "the reward that comes when someone does accept Christ and watching God change people's lives. You're not going to get rich at it, but you will have rich experiences."

"We need more of what we've had a little bit of."

— LARRY WARTSBAUGH
Director of missions, Great Rivers and Northeast Southern Baptist associations

Planting seeds of hope, reaping a harvest of faith

Partnership 'shopping list' full of mission opportunities

NORMAN LEWIS, volunteer coordinator for the missions partnership between Arkansas and Iowa Baptists, noted that the following missions projects are still available for Arkansas Baptist churches:

■ **Jericho Hills Camp.** Two couples needed to serve on staff at a youth camp, including a music leader, accompanist and counselor. One week. The camp will provide lodging, meals and materials. Contact Tammy Proenneke, 434 Quincy, Ottumwa IA 52501; phone 515-682-1787.

■ **South Central Association, Lucas.** Six to seven people needed for one week, including a music teacher and leader, possibly a pianist and four or five older youth or adult counselors, mostly male. July 1998. Contact Bob Eastwood, 1009 N. Kent, Knoxville, IA; phone 515-842-3311.

■ **Campus ministry, Iowa State University.** Financial assistance for associate director of Baptist Campus Ministries needed. Associate director is a Mission Service Corps volunteer assigned to this ministry and must raise her own salary. She needs \$1,000 monthly. Contact David Young, Campus Minister, University Baptist Church, 2400 Motenson Parkway, Ames, IA 50010; phone 515-292-5052.

■ **Ninth Street Baptist Church, Spencer.** Eight to 15 people needed to re-shingle roof. Roof has a radical pitch, so workers need experience with a steep roof. Probable cost is \$5,000 for materials. Contact Delmar White, 901 E. 14th, Spencer, IA 51301; phone 712-264-9208.

■ **Hispanic work, Des Moines.** Begin new work in Hispanic community of several thousand. People who speak and understand Spanish preferred. Need survey materials, housing, meals, Bibles. Contact William Spencer, 806 NE Trilein Dr., Ankeny, IA 50021; phone 515-964-5034.

■ **Church start, Webster City.** Survey teams and Backyard Bible Club teams to work with pastors of three churches and a Praxis team seeking to start new church work in Webster City. The pastor of University Baptist Church will lend support in enlisting and supervising people to aid in this work. Date negotiable. Contact William Spencer, 806 NE Trilein Dr., Ankeny, IA 50021; phone 515-964-5034.

■ **New work in Des Moines.** Need strong churches to take as a long-term project financial support of a new church, including building needs, literature, pastoral support, equipment. A couple there has committed to begin a new work in West Des Moines. Contact William Spencer, 806 NE Trilein Dr., Ankeny, IA 50021; phone 515-964-5034.

■ **Interim pastors, central Iowa.** Several struggling churches would be helped by retired, self-supporting pastors who could bring a camper and stay for a year to help disciple and show members how to be involved in outreach. Contact William Spencer, 806 NE Trilein Dr., Ankeny, IA 50021; phone 515-964-5034.

■ **Outreach volunteers, central Iowa.** Couples needed who could bring a self-contained camper to stay for the summer to reach children and parents. Contact William Spencer, 806 NE Trilein Dr., Ankeny, IA 50021; phone 515-964-5034.

■ **Interim pastor to help establish a new church start.** Contact Larry Wartsbaugh, 156 Brentwood Dr. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402; phone 319-395-9544.

■ **Adult or youth mission teams to do surveys and visitation in towns that have no Southern Baptist work.** Contact Larry Wartsbaugh, 156 Brentwood Dr. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402; phone 319-395-9544.

■ **Immanuel Baptist Church in Waterloo.** Team to do community survey work for Waterloo and possible new church start in Waverly. Contact Al Stewart, Immanuel Baptist Church, 325 Sager Ave., Waterloo, IA 50701; phone 319-232-2465.

■ **Bethel Baptist Church, Independence.** Team to conduct Backyard Bible Clubs or Vacation Bible School. Contact Gerald Van Doorn,

Bethel Baptist Church, 614 Third St. NE, Independence, IA 50644; phone 319-334-6617.

■ **Trinity Baptist Church, Waterloo.** Team to conduct Backyard Bible Clubs or Vacation Bible School. Contact Marion Livingston, Manchester Baptist Fellowship, 1019 Bowler St., Hiawatha, IA 52233; phone 319-393-2097.

■ **Calvary Baptist Church, Glenwood.** Provide baptistry and installation in recently constructed building and minor construction to complete first unit building project. Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

■ **Memorial Baptist Church, Shenandoah.** Plot consultation — assistance with development of long-range building plans and funding programs. Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

■ **Victory Baptist Church, Atlantic.** Community cultivation projects for a small church with new pastor that needs assistance to reach into community (special outreach events, community survey, staffing fair booth). Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

■ **Carroll Mission Probe sponsored by Pioneer Church, Denison.** Survey and Backyard Bible team to assist Praxis team with cultivation of Denison. Could use long-term commitment to see a new work through the early years. Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

■ **Marcus Mission of Quimby Baptist Church.** Survey and Backyard Bible Club team to assist Praxis team with cultivation of Marcus. Could use long-term commitment to see a new work through the early years. Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

■ **Common Ground Baptist Church, Des Moines.** Worship team development for new church start. Training local musicians and helping develop new music ministry. One to 10 people.

— **Door-to-door survey.** Backyard Bible Clubs and VBS. Eight to 25 volunteers needed. Need to provide transportation, meals, housing, VBS materials. Contact Scott Willsey, 3315 SW 44th Place, Des Moines 50321; phone 515-285-2982.

■ **Friendship Baptist Center, Des Moines.** Two needs:
— New church start: Worship services at center. Need retired ministerial couple, self-supporting. Need own transportation.

— Work, develop and direct pantry ministry. Two people, self-supporting with own transportation. Contact Daniel Cookson, 4000 Columbia, Des Moines, IA 50313; phone 515-243-9692.

■ **Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Sioux City.** Construction team to assist with remodeling education space and baptistry installation. Contact Chuck McGruder, 1522 Douglas, Sioux City, IA 52205; phone 712-255-5964.

■ **Western Iowa.** Assist in gathering demographic and religious data for the development of church-starting strategy. Need one or two people who can furnish their own transportation. Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

■ **Primera Iglesia Bautista, Sioux City.** Mission team to assist with Backyard Bible Clubs. Need assistance with purchase of van or donation of used van. Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

■ **Northwest and Southwest Associations:**
— Mission team to assist with Vacation Bible School
— Assistance with basketball camp. Usually have an NBA player lead the camp. Contact Mark Elliott, P.O. Box 337, Sloan, IA 51055; phone 712-428-4328.

For more information or to volunteer for the above projects, contact Norman Lewis at the ABSC missions department at 1-800-838-ABSC in state or in Little Rock at 378-4791, ext. 6249.

TRANSITIONS

James Summers Jr. is serving as pastor of North Maple Church of Stuttgart where he was ordained to the ministry in 1995. He previously was pastor of First Church of Aberdeen and interim pastor of Hagler Church. He and his wife, Tia, have a son, James Taylor.

Van Brown is pastor of First Church of Ash Flat. He previously served Saddle First Church near Mammoth Springs and Elizabeth Church as well as Pomona Church in Missouri.

Bob Shaddox has retired as pastor of Ironton Church in Little Rock, following 12 years of ministry. He came to Little Rock from Helena, Mont. In addition, he was associate pastor of First Church of Harrison and served as a chaplain during the Vietnam war. Shaddox is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Ethel, have four children, Ken Shaddox, pastor of First Church of Fordyce, Janice Shaddox of Fort Worth, Texas, Klint Shaddox of Seattle, Wash., and Kent Shaddox of Nashville, Tenn., and one granddaughter. The couple may be contacted at P.O. Box 39, Harrison, AR 72601.

L.H. McCollough will retire as pastor of Highway Church in North Little Rock Dec. 31, following more than four years of service. He previously served other churches in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. He has served as chairman of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention credentials committee and moderator of North Pulaski Association. McCollough is a graduate of Mississippi College, Clinton, Miss., and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Leah, are the parents of five adult children.

Shannon Byrd has joined the staff of First Church of Bay as minister of music and youth. A senior at Williams Baptist College, he previously served churches in Batesville, Hardy, Desha and Cord.

Rebecca Norton Helm began serving Aug. 10 as minister of worship and nurture at Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the University of Central Arkansas. She and her husband, Tim, have two children, Sarah and Ethan.

Archie Mason has joined the staff of Wynne Church as minister of education and evangelism. A member of the church since 1989, he is a graduate of Arkansas Tech University and is currently a student at Mid-America Seminary. Mason and

his wife, Angie, have two children, Tyler and Taylor.

John "Jed" E. Harris will join the staff of First Church of Greenwood Sept. 14 as minister of youth. He and his wife, Jennifer, will move there from Des Arc where he was minister of youth and music at First Church. Harris, who has served as a staff member of other Arkansas churches, is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Mid-America Seminary.

Jay Taylor has accepted a call to join the staff of Bella Vista Church as minister of youth and children. He will move there from Mountain Home where he has served as minister of youth and media for First Church. Taylor, a native of Georgia, is a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children, Jayme and Clara Beth.

Lynwood Henderson of Almyra, a retired Southern Baptist minister, is serving as interim pastor of Dermott Church.

Stan Ballard resigned Aug. 17 as pastor of Nettleton Church in Jonesboro, following more than 10 years of ministry. He and his wife, Beth, are moving to Kettering, Ohio, where he is serving as pastor of First Church of Kettering.

CHURCH LIFE

Rosedale Church of Little Rock will celebrate its 50th anniversary Sept. 14 with an 11 a.m. worship service led by former pastor J.C. Myers. Lunch will be followed by a 1:30 p.m. commemoration service in which several former members will share testimonies.

Stamps First Church will observe its centennial anniversary Oct. 5, beginning with a 9:30 a.m. fellowship that will be followed by a 10:30 a.m. worship service and noon luncheon. Afternoon activities will include the opening of a time capsule at 1:30 and a 1:45 worship service. Speakers for the day will include pastor Richard Young, former pastors Clayborn Bratton, James Preston and Lynn Robertson and Arkansas Baptist News-magazine associate editor Russ Dilday. Former members, staff and friends of the church will be special guests.

Park Hill Church of North Little Rock launched Lighthouse Support and Growth groups Aug. 26 for church members and community residents. Available support groups include Divorce Recovery, First Place, Caregiver Support, Recovering from the Losses of Life, New Faces in the Frame, Cancer Fights, Conquering Chemical Dependency, Taking Every

Thought Captive, Moving Beyond Your Past, and Why the Big Deal Over Money?

Immanuel Church of Fort Smith launched the new school year with a prayer ministry for teachers in Fairview Elementary School and Ramsey Junior High School. Church members will pray for teachers each Wednesday and send a prayergram to the school. The church also provided lunch for all faculty Aug. 13-14 when classrooms were being prepared for the coming year. Pastor Danny Neff spoke at the luncheons, sharing with the faculty the prayer covenant the church has made. He also invited teachers to contact the church with specific prayer needs.

Baring Cross Church of North Little Rock's Women on Mission held a "Back to School Celebration" and launched a prayer ministry Aug. 11 for church members who are either current public school teachers or retired teachers. Suzanne Dilday, a member of First Church of Benton and a faculty member of Benton High School, was the featured speaker. Teachers were presented with handmade gifts for their classrooms.

MILESTONES

Bob Harper recently was honored by First Church of White Hall in recognition of 10 years of ministry as pastor. He was presented with a love offering.

Hilda Huneycutt was honored Aug. 10 by Cullendale First Church of Camden in recognition of 25 years of service as church secretary. She was presented with a plaque, flowers and a love offering at a reception given in her honor.

Lavanda McClung was honored Aug. 10 by Bingham Road Church of Little Rock in recognition of her retirement as volunteer Sunday School secretary, following 22 years of service. She was presented with flowers by Joyce Brewer and a plaque by pastor Bill Hilburn.

OBITUARIES

Dennis Bergfeld of Conway died Aug. 26 at age 54 of an apparent heart attack. His funeral services were held Aug. 28 at Second Church of Conway where he had served for more than 17 years as minister of music. The youth choirs he directed participated in annual mission trips that ranged from Canada to Mexico. He also served as an associational music director. A native of Missouri and a veteran of the Vietnam war, Bergfeld had previously served churches in Missouri. He was a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and the University of Texas in Austin. Survivors are his wife, Nelmarie Bergfeld; two sons, Rick Bergfeld of Little Rock and Adam Bergfeld of the home; and a sister. Memorials may be made to

the music ministry or to the Spirit Wind youth choir of Second Church, Conway.

Peggy L. Edwards Warnock, 67, of Elliott died Aug. 22 in Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock as the result of an automobile accident. She was a nurse and a member of Elliott Church where her funeral services were held Aug. 24. Survivors are her husband, Cecil L. Warnock of Elliott; one son, Jerry Warnock of Tupelo, Miss.; two daughters, Peggy Lynn Burton of Forest Park, Ill., and Becky Horne of Little Rock; two sisters; and nine grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Elliott Church.

C.R. Pierce Jr. died Aug. 15 at age 75. A native of Arkansas, he had been pastor of Arkansas churches, including Lake Village Church and First Church of Foreman. He served for more than 27 years as pastor of Grace Church in Asheville, N.C., and since retirement had been a member of Beverly Hills Church there. Pierce was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Survivors are his wife, Archie Smith Pierce; three sons, David Pierce of Hendersonville, N.C., Jon Pierce of Columbia, S.C., Dan Pierce of Asheville; two sisters; and seven grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Ouachita Baptist University or the Little Moon Christmas Offering.

Conrad Arendt of North Little Rock died Aug. 25 at age 73. He was a retired employee of Southwestern Bell and a member of Baring Cross Church where he had served as chairman of the building committee and was a member of the XYZ senior adult organization. Survivors are his wife, Ruth (Tiddle) Campbell Arendt; two sons, Danny Arendt of North Little Rock; and Tommy Arendt of Rogers; one daughter, Lisa Arendt of North Little Rock; one brother; and five grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Baring Cross Church.

ORDINATIONS

Bethel Station Church of Paragould ordained Matt Woodside and Albert Camp to the gospel ministry Aug. 24.

Meridian Church of Crossett ordained Herman O. White to the deacon ministry Aug. 24.

Correction

The "1997 Annual Associational Meetings" list published in the Aug. 21 issue contained several errors. Buckville Association will meet Sept. 27 at Mount Tabor Church. Caroline Association will meet Oct. 21 at First Church, Cabot. Central Association will meet Oct. 16 at Second Church, Hot Springs.

Camps draw more than 10,000 for training, inspiration, fun

SUMMER CAMPS sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention drew a huge number of participants in 1997. According to figures from some of the larger camp options, the camps served more than 10,000 children, youth and adults—and resulted in more than 800 professions of faith in Christ.

Arkansas Baptist Assembly at Siloam Springs continued to be the most popular venue for Arkansas Baptists, drawing more than 7,000 campers in eight weeks of camp. Two sessions sponsored by other Christian groups prior to the ABCS camps drew an additional 1,000 youth.

Camp director Pat Batchelor, an associate in the ABCS Sunday School department, said that the sessions resulted in large numbers of decisions this year.

"Everything we saw shows that 720 people made professions of faith," he said, adding that figures also showed "1,438 commitments and 96 people said that they felt God was calling them to some kind of ministry."

Batchelor added that in the Children's Camp session alone, more than 90 children responded to an invitation from camp pastor Mike Seabough.

He attributed the large response in part to camp staff, invitations of lost youth by churches and prayer.

"The staff operated smoothly and they were committed," he explained. "Also, churches have been bringing many more lost kids to camp and we sent out about 5,000 prayer bands before camp. We had people praying for us all over Arkansas."

'Best way to win kids'

Batchelor said that campers used the witness training curriculum, "How to Share Your Faith Without an Argument," by Bill Fay. Noting that "the best way to win kids to Christ is to teach them how to witness," Batchelor said, "One girl got convicted about her father — he had come to Siloam as a counselor with another church — and she shared this system with him and won him to the Lord."

Witness training also was the focus of two sessions of Super Summer '97, which, at 2,150 participants, was "the largest enrollment ever, more than 400 more than last year," said Randy

Brantley, director of the witness-training camp and an associate in the ABCS evangelism department.

"One of the things that says it that students are desiring something deeper, being a partner with Christ in daily ministry," he emphasized. "That's what Super Summer is all about — mobilizing students for ministry."

The camp was held in two sessions, Super Summer for students in grades 10-12 and Super Summer JV for students in grades 7-9. Brantley added that the "20 hours of discipleship instruction" that participants receive "are the equivalent of 20 weeks of Sunday School."

He noted that 79 participants made professions of faith during the two sessions, mainly because of the use of small groups. "It's in the small groups that the Holy Spirit seems to work most."

Heart of the Hills Camp, which is held jointly by Arkansas Baptists and the National Baptist Convention, drew 306 African-American campers in two co-ed camp settings at Camp Paron.

The program, which featured a Centrifuge leadership team, resulted in 20 professions of faith and 27 rededications, said Diane Moss of the ABCS's cooperative ministries department.

Two music camps drew children and youth to focus on music training and worship at OBU.

Music Arkansas attracted 180 high school students for a session that Rob Hewell, director of the ABCS church music ministries department, called "an incredible week of worship. I don't know when I've attended so many consecutive worship services that were that meaningful."

Music Arkansas campers participated in a variety of activities, including vocal and instrumental choirs, discipleship and ministry. Hewell also observed that "the musicianship and interest in church music" had "never been higher" in previous camps.

Young Musicians Camp brought children in grades 4-6 to focus on "Families Strong in the Lord," said Peggy Fearson, a church music ministries associate. "We held classes to help prepare them for musicals and featured specialty classes, including creative movement, signing and off instruments."



start



something



new



State missions is...

State Missions is missions...it crosses racial, cultural, social, economic and geographic boundaries. State Missions is ministry...it seeks to heal hurts through meeting human needs. State Missions is evangelism...it is never satisfied until the gospel has been shared in full. State Missions is church-based...it serves established churches and helps start new churches. State Missions is kingdom-based...through it, churches send missionaries to those people and to those places beyond the ordinary reach of the church.

Car companies offer several models in order to reach as many people as possible. For the same reason, Arkansas Baptists have several models of missionaries:

Missionary Pastors: *The missionary pastor serves a newly formed congregation. Some are called missions. Others are called missions churches. Still others identify themselves as*



churches from the beginning. Call them what we will, they are new congregations served and led by a very special and critically needed model of missionary.

Regional Missionary: The regional missionary serves three or more new congregations. This model is rare... as in hard to find and difficult to train. This model is a treasure from God that requires the earnest prayers of God's people in order to perform well.

Minister of Missions: Serves on a multi-staff church and leads in starting as many as five new missions ministries per year. We have just a handful of these models in Arkansas. They do a "ton" of kingdom work each year.

Associational Director of Missions: The Associational Director of Missions receives no state missions salary support, but is a critically important partner in starting and developing missions ministries.

Chaplaincy Missionaries: The chaplaincy missionaries serve in settings, generally institutional ones, beyond the daily reach of the church. This model of missionary is a kingdom investment on the part of the churches. Their work does not result in immediate local church growth, but results in MORE PEOPLE knowing God, following Christ in discipleship and going to heaven.

Center-based Missionaries: The center-based missionaries serve in places like the Hope Migrant Center and associational benevolence centers. Only one state missionary serves full-time in this capacity, but many serve on a part-time or volunteer basis.

Statewide Missionaries: There are nine statewide missionaries who help start and mature new missions ministries and who give leadership to other missionaries.

Whatever the model, Arkansas missionaries will be found engaged in actively seeking to reach people for the Lord Jesus. They need your prayers and they thank you for your love and support.



Missions is showing God's love to more than 60,000 migrant workers traveling in Arkansas each year.

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Missions is giving hope to the hopeless in prisons, jails and other institutions.

1997 Season of State Missions

Week of Prayer for State Missions – September 21-28
Dixie Jackson Offering for State Missions – Goal: \$750,000

Where does the money go?



- 15%** State & Associational Missions Development & Priority Ministries
- 38%** New Church Starts & Language Ministries
- 24%** Church & Community Ministries
- 23%** Chaplaincy Ministries

ARKANSAS Population: 2.4 million. Area: 53,187 square miles. Water area: 600,000 acres. National forestland: 2.4 million acres. Climate: Average temperature 61.4F. State bird: Mockingbird. State Flower: Apple blossom. State Tree: Pine. State Beverage: Milk. State Fruit/Vegetable: Pink tomato. State Gem: Diamond.

Your personal, prayerful gift to the Dixie Jackson Offering for State Missions...

MISSION ARKANSAS I'm glad to help reach Arkansas for Christ with my gift to the Dixie Jackson Offering for State Missions.

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Jack & Modena Ramsay

Jack is a consultant who helps congregations begin new works.



Eddie & Barbara Jones & family

Eddie helps start new African-American churches in Arkansas.



Jim & Jean Hausler

Jim works with language groups, starting new ministries and developing existing ones.



Frank & Sandy Wisdom-Martin

Sandy consults with churches, helping them develop their community-based ministries.

Texas study committee calls for state-focused resources

A TEXAS BAPTIST committee is recommending that the state convention publish its own church literature emphasizing Texas missions and Baptist distinctives. The proposed material could supplement or replace products of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The 20-page report of a committee named to study "efficiency and effectiveness" of the Baptist General Convention of Texas also calls for increased emphasis on reaching the state's growing non-Christian population by magnifying multicultural and family ministries, theological education and partnership missions.

BSSB president Jimmy Draper objected to parts of the Texas report. "While the report does not specifically name the Sunday School Board, it suggests that the best possible biblically based materials to meet the needs of Texas Baptists cannot be provided by a national entity. We take exception to that," he said. "We have the ability to customize resources for a geographical area such as Texas and even for individual churches."

The full efficiency and effectiveness report will come as a recommendation at the state convention annual meeting Nov. 10-11.

Citing the recent reorganization of the Southern Baptist Convention, which "some view as centralizing authority," the report adds that "efforts to control state conventions are obvious. Vital issues are at stake that must not fall prey to a mindset of control."

"There's no question Texas Baptists have seen what has happened in the SBC and said this won't happen in Texas," explained state

convention president Charles Wade. "We're going to protect Texas from a control mentality. We're going to do our very best to maintain an openness to every Texas Baptist who wants to participate and help."

"This document says we are not in opposition to the SBC," he added. "We want the SBC to do what it does as well as it can. We're not in opposition to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. We're willing to help them where we can."

"But Texas Baptists will go their own way. We'll work with those who want to work with us, but we will not be held hostage to the demands of those who would tell us how we must operate."

Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, responded to the report by saying, "This report seems to signal a substantial departure from cooperative relationships of long duration. The report, if approved and implemented, has the potential to significantly impair those relationships, specifically in reference to home and foreign missions, literature production and theological education."

"If this causes Southern Baptist churches in Texas to have to decide whether they are principally Baptist General Convention Baptists or Southern Baptists, it would be extremely unfortunate. Should that climate prevail, it would mean that more direct relationships would have to be forged between Southern Baptist Convention entities and the Southern Baptist churches of Texas."

DALLAS (ABP/BP)

EMPLOYMENT

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries has the following openings for employment:

- Houseparent couple for Arkansas Baptist Home for Children
Call Royce Aston at 870-367-5358
- Houseparent couple for Camden Emergency Shelter for Children
Call Frank Martin at 870-862-0095
- Relief Houseparent for Tommy Jones Memorial Home in West Fork
Call Mark Weaver at 501-521-1296



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Ministering to ministers

Leadership and worship team to give direction on administrative issues

AT FIRST GLANCE, a team that combines the ministries of church leadership, music, giving and counseling may seem like an unlikely mix. But that is among teams which will be proposed to state convention messengers this fall as part of convention restructuring.

Bruce Swihart, leader of the proposed leadership and worship team, affirmed that the group, which combines elements of the current church leadership, stewardship and annuity, church music ministries and ministry of crisis support departments, will work well together.

"It is very compatible in that they are all leadership issues in churches," he explained. "This team will deal with strengthening the church staff as it ministers to people and it relates to each other."

ABSC executive director Emil Turner noted that "administrative responsibility of church leadership ties this team together. When a pastor deals with administration, he's dealing with budgets and church staff. These needs bind this team together for viable ministry to our churches."

"Budgets, personnel issues, counseling needs, stewardship and music all surface as a pastor relates to his staff and administration needs," Turner added. "We hope this team can lead a pastor and staff to work together more effectively, help a church...better fund its ministries and provide the counseling that churches need to pastors and staff."

Rob Howell, current director of the ABSC church music ministries department, said the new team "will allow the leadership and worship team members to build relationships with churches and church leaders in ways that seem to appeal to many in Arkansas Baptist church life. I believe that worship and leadership are two of the strategic issues facing congregations today and in the future. Healthy churches in the days ahead will be intentional in how they approach both of these matters."

The team will seek to increase its effectiveness through fulfilling eight impact statements, which include:

- Equip church leaders to grow healthy churches by developing members.
- Foster "authentic worship experiences in more congregations."
- Lead more church members to give more tithes and offerings.
- Aid the spiritual, emotional, mental and relational well-being of more church staff members and their families.
- Strengthen the skills of more church musicians and expand music ministry participation in churches.

■ Assist in the development of vocational, bivocational and volunteer church leaders.

■ Provide vocational guidance and resume referral services to more individuals.

■ Increase participation of churches and church staff in the protection and retirement programs of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board.

Representative of the teamwork among the staff will be "eight high-impact leadership labs in '98 in different areas of the state," said Swihart. "The labs will offer conferences for bivocational/volunteer staff and full-time staff to deal with those issues."

Swihart noted two changes that also will affect church staffs. J.D.

Stake will administer the resume referral service from his office at the Baptist Medical Center (Swihart currently is managing the service as director of the church leadership support department) and the addition of staff development of church staff and secretaries. Those functions are currently led by the ABSC discipleship and family ministry department.

"It's going to be an interesting year," Swihart reflected. "This team is diverse. We've had wonderful meetings and are excited about working together. If this team can work together, it can be a model for church staff working together. We are all committed to do what it takes to help the church reach people and accomplish its mission."

VISION STATEMENT
"To cultivate character, competence and commitment among God's people, as leaders and members together build His Kingdom."



“ If this team can work together, it can be a model for church staff working together. We are all committed to do what it takes to help the church reach people and accomplish its mission. ”

BRUCE SWIHART
Leader, proposed ABSC leadership & worship team

Leadership & worship team duties

The leadership and worship team will have responsibility to relate to Arkansas Baptist churches in a variety of areas, including:

Team leader Bruce Swihart will direct the work of team members as well as be responsible for pastoral ministries that include personal and spiritual growth for ministers and their mates, church planning, preaching and worship, and bivocational and smaller membership church pastors. He also will lead in church staff development and enrichment, church conflict resolution, forced termination and interim ministry and intentional interim ministry training.

Team member Glen Ennes will relate to volunteer and part-time music leaders and church orchestra and instrumental musicians.

Team member Rob Howell will continue to develop adult and youth church music ministries, church music administration and full-time music ministries as well as helping churches manage change and transition.

Team member Peggy Pearson will provide leadership and training to church secretaries, children's music ministries and keyboardists as well as leading in the development of state music special.

Team member J.D. Stake will continue to lead the ministry of crisis counseling for ministers and their families, as well as provide churches' leadership in developing communication skills and building relationships. He also will manage the ABSC's resume referral service.

Team member James Walker will continue to lead stewardship in functions of fund raising, staff salaries and relating to stewardship and finance committees, as well as the annuity functions of retirement and health protection.

'Arkansas Baptists Committed' elect part-time coordinator

AN ORGANIZATION formed in response to concerns over state Baptist convention politics and nominating practices has hired an administrator to coordinate activities for the group. Tony Woodell was elected president of Arkansas Baptists Committed by the organization's board and began his duties Aug. 1.

Woodell explained that he will "coordinate activities around the state. I will not be the only person representing Arkansas Baptists Committed, but will be the liaison for a wide variety of people in the state."

He noted that the group's goals are "education and healing. Number one, we are about education - educating people to what traditional Baptist beliefs are, what the Arkansas Baptist convention has been in the past and what it is now."

He said the group also wishes to promote healing. "The Southern Baptist Convention and the ABCS, at times, has only allowed one kind of Baptist in leadership positions. What we hope to do is bring about a healing of that rift and allow the wide variety of Baptists that existed before 1979 come back into leadership positions."

"Hear me say that we are not out to eliminate fundamentalism inside of Arkansas Baptists," he emphasized. "What we are out to do is to broaden that spectrum of what Arkansas Baptists represent."

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ABC board chairman Ted Snider, a member of Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock, agreed, emphasizing that "the purpose of Arkansas Baptists Committed is not to squash anyone's thoughts or beliefs or to control any aspect of Baptist life, but to bring openness and balance."

Snider said Woodell brings "enthusiasm and a dedication to openness among Baptists," adding that the group hired a paid staff member "because it takes someone who has a good amount of time" to coordinate ABC projects.

Woodell's position and other ABC costs are funded through private donations and a matching gift from Texas Baptists Committed, a similar group that has served as a model organization for ABC.

"When Arkansas Baptists Committed contacted Texas Baptists Committed, TBC said that once \$25,000 was raised for ABC, they would match that," Woodell said. "Those funds were a start-up. Once we are up and running and we have \$25,000 in reserve, we

are to give that to another state to allow them to have start-up funds as well."

He noted that the funding also will be used for travel and to finance a quarterly newsletter.

Woodell, who will work from an office provided by Pulaski Heights Church, is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as interim youth minister at Second Church in Hot Springs and as associate pastor of First Church in Lewisville before enrolling in seminary.

Following seminary, Woodell served as executive director of the housing authority in Norman, Okla., and owned a business in Norman.

Woodell said that the group has no current plans to field candidates in upcoming convention elections, but said that "we would support any candidate, regardless of their theology, if they were open to bringing about healing inside the ABCS and broadening their appointments."

"We are here to support the convention in any way we possibly can," he said. "We want to show support, but we also want to make sure that all the voices in the convention are heard."

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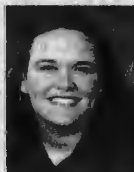


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MISSIONS



Shannon Bettis



Laurie Howell

Two Arkansans among new US-2 missionaries

TWO ARKANSANS are among 19
US-2 missionaries recently appointed
by the North American Mission Board.
US-2 missionaries are college graduates
who serve two years under appointment
with NAMB and state conventions.

Shannon Bettis will serve in Louisiana,
where she will be serving through NAMB's
Church and Community Ministries unit.
She will be involved in weekday ministries
in New Orleans. A native of Pocahontas,
Bettis is a graduate of Williams Baptist
College.

Laurie Howell will be serving through
the NAMB Evangelization Group in Iowa,
where she will be involved in youth and
women's evangelism in Des Moines. A
native of Little Rock, she is a graduate of
Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee.

"There are hundreds of people in this
room right now who have been given the
same ministry that (US-2 missionaries)
have—the ministry of reconciliation, the
ministry through which God wants to
draw all men to Himself," Howell said
during the commissioning service.

Bob Record, president of the North
American Mission Board, told the new
US-2ers that God "calls you to Himself
so that He might send you out, so that
you can make a difference in everybody
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Foundation-managed assets top \$63 million

FOLLOWING a phenomenal year of growth, Arkansas Baptists have plenty to celebrate as they observe Arkansas Baptist Foundation Sunday Sept. 14. The Foundation is reporting its largest annual jump in assets under management, reaching more than \$63 million in August.

Agency president David Moore said the Foundation previously experienced its best year of growth in 1993 "when assets jumped up almost \$7 million. However, assets in the first eight months of 1997 have grown over \$9 million."


What caused the growth? "God is blessing us with generous donors," answered Moore, who has served as president since 1994. "We have assembled excellent leaders and the people have trusted us with their money. In 1995 we added Paul White as our vice president and general counsel and in 1996 we added Tammy Davis as our CPA/controller."

Moore noted that the growth also is due in part to "a number of new trusts and accounts" that were established during the year. "Additionally, several significant

individuals have appointed the Foundation as trustee of their revocable living trusts."


He pointed out that "the markets have also helped the Foundation's assets to grow."

White noted that future service options through the Foundation look positive. He said the agency's twofold goal is "to serve as a faithful steward of Baptist funds, and to assist Baptist members in accomplishing their estate planning and charitable giving goals."



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Students, adults prepare for 'See You at the Pole'

ABOUT 20,000 Arkansas students are expected join hundreds of thousands – possibly millions – of teenagers worldwide at school flagpoles once again Sept. 17 for "See You At The Pole." The annual student-led prayer effort has served both to mobilize student prayer efforts and bolster the organization of Christian clubs on campus.

Randy Brantley, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department, encouraged parti-

cipants in the student-led event to gather at about 7 a.m. around flagpoles to "pray for your school teachers, friends, family, government and nation."

He added that parents and other adults can be a part of SYATP, "but not on campus with kids. Pray at an alternate location off-campus, such as around a courthouse flagpole or across the street from the school."

Dean Finley, a student evangelism associate for the North American Mission Board who helps coordinate the event among Southern Baptists, said one estimate put the total at 2.5 million participants in 1995, with indications of

continued growth last year.

Finley is asking leaders this year to file reports on an Internet-based form as soon as possible after the event through a web site sponsored by his office (www.syatp.org). Updates will be posted on the site every two hours on Sept. 17, including both numbers and anecdotal information.

See You at the Pole began in 1990 as an emphasis of the Texas Baptist Convention. More than 45,000 participated the first year, and in 1991 the effort gained the support of a broad range of evangelical organizations in the United States and other countries. It is held annually on the third Wednesday of September.

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NATION

Accrediting agency drops two notations against Midwestern

The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada has removed two notations filed against Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1994.

The notations citing problems between trustees and the administration were placed in 1994 by a team investigating concerns over trustees' refusal to grant tenure to a professor.

The ATS notations said the school's board of trustees exercised "inappropriate control over the administration and faculty" and noted a general tone at the seminary which "impairs the capacity to provide significant theological education and ministerial training."

Seminary trustees drew ATS scrutiny in 1993 by denying tenure to theology professor Wilburn Stancil over his view of the Bible, despite a recommendation by then-president Milton Ferguson.

Another accrediting team at the seminary on a scheduled five-year visit this February, however, found improved relations among faculty, trustees and administration since the 1995 election of seminary president Mark Coppenger.

The accrediting team said a policy statement on "Academic Freedom and Tenure" adopted by trustees in 1996 with faculty approval adequately addressed accrediting concerns about inappropriate control by trustees.

Coppenger said seminary leaders were "very encouraged" by the visiting team's comments.

Seminary officials asked the team to review the notations, along with two earlier notations citing seminary finances and evaluation procedures. While noting progress in finances and evaluation, the team decided to leave those notations in place, pending additional reports due in December 1998. KANSAS CITY, MO (ABP)



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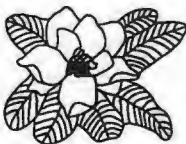
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Annual Arkansas Master Singers Retreat scheduled for Oct. 16-17

PARTICIPANTS ATTENDING the Arkansas Master Singers Retreat, to be held Oct. 16-17 at Ouachita Baptist University, will meet for fellowship and rehearsal for a future mission tour. The retreat, which begins Thursday at 10:30 a.m. and concludes at noon on Friday, is designed for the Master Singers women's and men's choruses and instrumentalists.

Men's chorus director Rob Hewell noted that the "fusion of our ministry, music and passion for the Source and Theme of our song always creates a unique season of celebration and devotion" at the annual event.

Jean Pilcher, director of the women's chorus, said the rehearsal is particularly important this year because "we will be rehearsing music not only for our Arkansas presentations...but also for our European tour." The group plans to perform in Germany in May 1998.

There is no cost for the retreat program, but participants must provide their own meals and lodging, \$1 for a rehearsal tape and men must bring \$15 for a new tie.

For more information, contact Hewell toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5121.

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Auction - benefiting new church building, Gateway Baptist Church, Hwy 157 North, Providence, Ark. Sept. 13, 9 a.m.

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Seeking - pastor for small rural church. Send resumes to: Sulphur Springs Baptist Church, Pulph Search Committee, 9127 Sulphur Springs Road, Pine Bluff, AR 71603.

Seeking resumes - minister of music/youth, First Baptist Church, Box 1568, Leesville, LA 71498.

Publications secretary - and secretary to pastor and minister of music. PageMaker experience helpful. 35 hrs/wk. Send resume to Ross Burton, Calvary Baptist Church, 1901 N. Pierce, Little Rock, AR 72207.

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Family Bible What will satisfy?

By Randy Maxwell, pastor,
Mount Olive Church,
Crossett

Basic passage:
Isaiah 55

Focal passage:
Isaiah 55:1-3

Central truth:

God's call offers freedom and life today for all who will seek the Lord on His terms.

"I did it my way!" Sinatra sings it, but almost all of us practice it—at least occasionally. In fact we have been taught to establish our sense of worth by what we accomplish doing it "my way." That's the reason so many people misunderstand the grace of God. A free gift is really too easy, so a scheme of "godliness" must be pursued. Yet it is a scheme with no power to save (II Tim. 3:5).

In Isaiah 55, the prophet begins with God's invitation to all, even those who have no money. God will supply life (represented by the water), enjoyment (wine) and nourishment (milk). The materialistic things that we labor for and spend our money on will never give us satisfaction. What a strong word to our materialistic, self-gratifying age. Only God can offer the guidance and nourishment that will truly satisfy.

For those who hear God's Word and obey it, God promises life for the soul and an everlasting covenant for guidance and direction. When the kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians and

King Zedekiah was removed from power, it may have appeared that the promise to David would be nullified. After all, his house was to rule forever. Of course, Jesus Christ came to receive "the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32).

It is important that each one of us respond to the Lord's invitation by seeking Him while He may be found. He is not to be found in any wicked path. True seekers must turn to the Lord in repentance. When we meet Him on His terms, our horrid sins vanish in His abundant pardon.

In 1933, the German Evangelical Church was controlled by Nazi sympathizers who were demanding allegiance to Hitler above Jesus. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of hundreds of ministers who objected, believing that this was not the way God would have him live. For publicly stating his beliefs, he was silenced and imprisoned. Bonhoeffer died on the gallows at a concentration camp, yet his inspiring book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, still lives.

Life and Work The one and only Savior

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

Basic passage:
John 14:1-12; I Timothy 2:5-6;
I John 5:6-12

Focal passage:
John 14:5-9a; I Timothy 2:5-6;
I John 5:6-12

Central truth:

There is only one way to bridge the gap between a holy God and sinful humanity, and that is faith in Christ.

The Grand Canyon is one of those sights you simply have to see to appreciate. What words and pictures fail to capture is the size of the thing. Nearly 10 miles across and a mile deep, it is so huge that the rim of the canyon and its floor are in entirely different climates.

It is humorous to watch people at the Grand Canyon's observation posts. Although nowhere near the edge, tourists still feel inclined to cling tightly to safety rails. It is so inconceivably massive that it is actually frightening.

But there is something even more frightening. The gulf that separates sinful human from a holy God is so broad as to make the Grand Canyon look like a glorified ditch. It is a gap so wide that no person is able to cross it no matter how hard they try, and some try very hard.

There is only one way to bridge the gap, it is easy to find and there is absolutely no charge for it. Yet, tragically, people still turn away in droves from the one passage across that gulf, the freely offered grace of Jesus Christ.

As we continue to study the exclusive claims of Christianity, we turn to a truth that many see as naive and even arrogant on the part of believers. To say that there is only one way to God seems quite presumptuous to some. But our focal passage, John 14:5-9a, I Timothy 2:5-6 and I John 5:6-12 all clearly state this basic truth, the truth that the only way to salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is easy to see why so many religions have invented so many routes that supposedly lead to a relationship with God. People have a natural tendency to seek God. They develop schemes, often very elaborate, and convince followers that their way leads to salvation. But all their best-laid plans are man-made plans. For all their work and sacrifice, they are drawn no closer to God.

Regardless of how noble the intentions may be, the massive gulf between God and humankind remains. So does the truth remain that the only way to bridge that gulf is the grace of Jesus Christ.

Explore the Bible The crowning work of creation

By Ken Shaddox, pastor,
First Church, Fordyce

Basic passage:
Genesis 2:4-25

Focal passage:
Genesis 2:7, 15-24

Central truth:

Man is the highest creation of God.

The first two chapters of Genesis reveal to us the creation account. The climax of creation took place when God created Adam (Gen. 2:7) and Eve (Gen. 2:22). Humanity should be seen as the crowning work of the Creator.

God's intimate involvement is seen in the creation of mankind. God is said to have formed man (Gen. 2:7). The imagery used here is that of a potter. Just as a potter (Jer. 18:2, 4, 6) works with and shapes clay into a beautiful work of art, God also actively formed Adam and then Eve. The wording suggests an artistic activity. The Creator is seen as both skillful and intentional in the creation of mankind. Mankind is of supreme worth to the Creator. He created us to have fellowship with Him.

In verse 15, we understand that God set man in the garden of Eden. In the garden, mankind enjoyed fellowship with God along with peace, protection and blessings. The garden was not designed for endless leisure. Man was given responsibility in the garden. Work was required

and instituted from the beginning. Adam was told to cultivate and keep the garden. In so doing, Adam cooperated with God in caring for creation. How many of us see our vocation and work as a way of rendering service unto God?

Responsibility is a part of the message found in Genesis 2. Another emphasis conveyed in this same chapter is that of human freedom. Human beings have freedom. Such freedom implies choice. Once in the garden, mankind was allowed to eat freely from the fruit of the garden with one exception. The exception was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Man had the ability to obey or disobey God. We still have choices every day. With each choice, there are consequences.

Companionship is part of the creation account. We need others. The most intimate expression of such companionship is marriage. God gave unto Adam a suitable helper in Eve. God's plan for a healthy marriage is expressed here. Marriage should include a permanent, lifelong relationship between one man and one woman.

LESSONS FOR LIVING

Family Bible What matters most?

By Randy Maxwell, pastor,
Mount Olive Church,
Crussett

Basic passage:

Haggai

Focal passage:

Haggai 1:2-9, 2:1-5

Central truth:

One of our greatest sins is the sin of neglect as we give our attention to our selfish desires.

Now, I'm busy." How easily and carelessly we sometimes brush off our children with those words. Sometimes we really are busy with important matters. Other times, we just don't want to be bothered.

Any parent who has been in that position can surely identify with God's feelings in this book written by the prophet Haggai. God had called the captives of Babylon back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, but His people said to Him, "Not now, we're busy!"

When the Jewish captives returned to Jerusalem, they eagerly built an altar and restored their ancient way of worship. Enthusiastically, they planned to rebuild the temple. Joyously they laid down the foundation. But that enthusiasm was not easy to maintain. For nearly 16 years, the temple lay partially completed.

Then, as often happened during crucial periods in Old Testament history, God raised up a prophet to convey His message to His people. Haggai

came forward to stir up an indifferent people to resume work on the long-neglected temple.

Haggai addressed the two most prominent leaders of the people: the governor and the high priest. "Is it time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house (the Temple) remains a ruin?"

The Lord told His people to look carefully at themselves and to think about how to change their ways. After all, God told them that obedience to Him would bring an abundance of blessings—disobedience would yield a variety of dreadful curses. As the people resumed work on the temple, they proved that God's covenant was dependable. They proved their love by obeying Him as He proved His love by blessings their crops, their families and their nation.

Though not as ornate as Solomon's Temple, the greater glory would not come until God's Son stood inside, driving out corrupt traders to make the temple a house of prayer for all nations.

Have you even driven down an Arkansas back road and happened upon an old cemetery? Cemeteries can be fascinating, and if you know what to look for, they can offer some valuable lessons for the living. Headstones tell the tales of the lives that have been lived before us.

There are those who died serving their country. There are some who never lived to see their adult years. And there are the ones whose tombstones stand as great monuments to their lives.

These are the ones I find interesting. The big, beautiful slabs of marble inform all generations that this person made a real mark in the world. This was someone who achieved wealth and the social status that went with it.

And, like the others interred there, the person with the big headstone left every one of those earthly prizes behind. Just like their cemetery neighbors, the only thing they took with them to the grave was the spiritual status, good or bad, they achieved while on this earth.

That's the hard truth Paul writes about in

Philippians 3, and he was in a position to know. Paul had made it as a Jew. He achieved everything he had ever desired, either by birth or his own dogged effort. It was precious to him.

But one eventful meeting with Jesus Christ changed all that for Paul, and he was eternally grateful. What he came to realize was that earthly gain was, in the eternal realm, worth less than nothing.

In following Jesus, Paul left behind everything that had mattered to him before. He gave up a comfortable life and a brilliant career in the Jewish religion. He sacrificed great status to become despised for his Christian beliefs. In the end, he gave his life for Christ. And it was the wisest decision he or anyone else could make for it won him eternal rewards.

Today, we find ourselves wanting to invest our lives in what the world tells us is worthy. But there is only one thing in this life we can take with us when we go. That one thing is faith in Christ. Everything else is simply loss.

Throughout the first two chapters of Genesis we see the Creator at work. Frequently we read the phrase, "God saw that it was good," summarizing the creative work of God. God's provision was evident in this paradise. Food, companionship, beauty, meaningful work and innocence were all a part of the life that Adam and Eve knew. It was a perfect environment. The third chapter tells the story of how mankind sinned while in this perfect environment. A harmonious relationship between God and mankind became marred.

Temptation is powerful. In verses 4 and 5 the tempter came to Eve and implied that God and His word about the eating of the tree that was in the middle of the garden could not be trusted. When temptation comes to our lives, it whispers our name and appeals to our senses. The tempter knows how to draw us away from God and to make us doubt the standard that is set by our Creator.

Many of us can remember participating in a

tug-of-war at some point in our life. Such an event is played by two teams pulling one rope in opposite directions. In the unfolding of the events surrounding Eve being tempted there must have been a feeling of being pulled in opposite directions. God had spoken to this first couple and given them specific instructions to guide them. The tempter had also spoken and denied the validity of God's word. What would Eve do? Who would she listen to? Verse 6 reveals the fact that Adam and Eve chose to disobey God as they both ate of the forbidden fruit. Temptation becomes sin when we yield to it. Sin is disobeying God. That's exactly what this first couple did in the garden of Eden and sin entered into the story of the human race (Rom. 3:23). Sin creates barriers vertically, between us and God, and also horizontally, between us and others.

Verse 9 reveals the mercy and grace of God. God sought Adam and Eve. He is still seeking a relationship with a sinful people. He alone can forgive and restore the consequences of sin.

Life and Work The one and only response

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

Basic passage:

Philippians 3:2-11

Focal passage:

Philippians 3:2-11

Central truth:

The most important decision anyone can make is to accept Christ as their personal Savior.

Explore the Bible A marred relationship

By Ken Shaddox, pastor,
First Church, Fordyce

Basic passage:

Genesis 3

Focal passage:

Genesis 3:4-6, 8-15, 21

Central truth:

Sin separates us from God; God's grace reaches out to sinful humanity.

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Arson blamed in fire at Baptist ministry center in Gaza

GAZA CITY, GAZA (BP)—Arson has severely damaged a reading and ministry center operated by Southern Baptists in Gaza City.

The fire at the Center of Culture and Light destroyed 40 to 50 percent of its 11,964 books and all of its 274 videos, said Southern Baptist representative Paul Lawrence. Police are investigating the fire, which was started in two places in the center between noon and 2 p.m. Aug. 10.

Most of the books are in Arabic, and many are irreplaceable because they are no longer in print, Lawrence said. A television, video cassette recorder and computer were stolen at the same time, leading police to believe that was the motivation for the fire, he added.

Arson also was blamed in a 1992 fire that heavily damaged the center. Southern Baptist representatives opened the Center of Culture and Light in 1968 and since then it has remained the only general public library in the Gaza Strip.

WMU adopts water purification project

BIRMINGHAM, AL (BP)—Woman's Missionary Union has assumed responsibility for Pure Water-Pure Love, a ministry launched by the Brotherhood Commission in 1995 to provide water purification units to Southern Baptist missionaries living abroad.

The transfer of the project to WMU came at the request of Brotherhood Commission officials earlier this summer as the agency's work was transferred to the North American Mission Board.

Jim Burton, who coordinated the project for the Brotherhood Commission and is now director of volunteer mobilization for NAME, called the transfer of Pure Water-Pure Love to WMU a practical move. He said NAME will continue to "do all it can" to promote the ministry.

According to Joyce Mitchell, WMU associate executive director and new coordinator for Pure Water-Pure Love, "Staff at the national WMU are delighted that we can provide the continuity in fulfilling this worthy project."

Wisconsin appeals court invalidates voucher plan

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The push to fund parochial education with tax dollars suffered a setback Aug. 22 when a Wisconsin appeals court ruled that religious schools' participation in a Milwaukee voucher program violates the state constitution.

Milwaukee started a school-choice program in 1990 after state lawmakers enacted the plan the previous year. Under the plan, a small percentage of public school students from lower-income families could use tax dollars to attend the private nonsectarian school of their choice.

But by expanding the program in 1995 to include religious schools, the state legislature trespassed the church-state separation requirements of the state constitution, the 4th District Court of Appeals said.

In addition to Wisconsin, courts have invalidated religious school-choice plans in Puerto Rico, Vermont and Ohio.

N.C. Baptist leaders propose compromise with college

RALEIGH, NC (ABP)—North Carolina Baptist leaders have approved a compromise plan that would modify the state convention's ties with Meredith College, a 106-year-old women's school in Raleigh.

Under the measure, adopted by the convention's executive committee, Meredith would no longer receive Cooperative Program funds and the convention would no longer elect the school's trustees. The school would maintain Baptist ties by establishing an endowed scholarship fund for Baptist students and creating an office of church relations.

The compromise, which must be approved by the full general board and the state convention in November, is aimed at ending an impasse created in February when Meredith College trustees decided membership on their board would no longer be determined by the state convention.

Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem has a similar arrangement. The school has a "fraternal relationship" with the state convention but is run by an autonomous board.

