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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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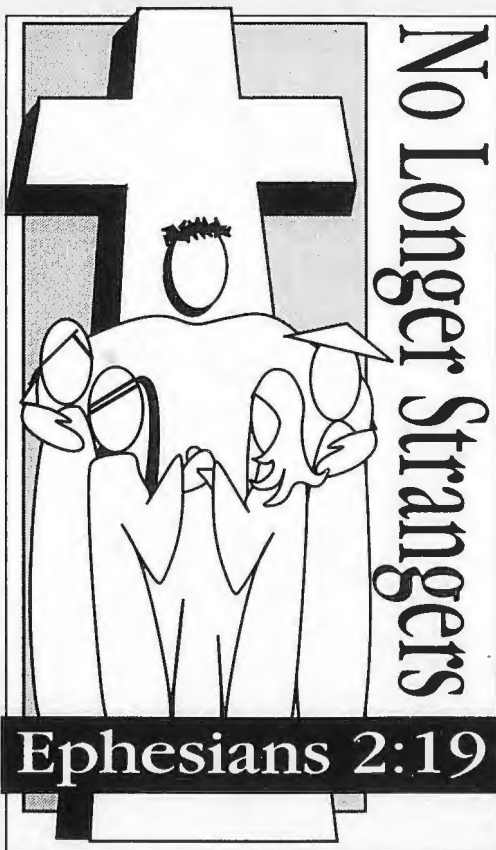
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 95, Number 18

September 5, 1996



'96 State
Missions
Season
of Prayer
Sept. 15-22

Dixie
Jackson
State
Missions
Offering
\$750,000

Concentrated prayer emphasis to precede appointment service

In preparing for the 1997 Foreign Mission Board appointment service to be held in Little Rock, Bill Elliff reminded Arkansas Baptists, "Without prayer, we get what man can do; with prayer we get what God can do."

Elliff, pastor of First Church in Little Rock, is chairman of the appointment service's prayer committee. He urged Baptists in the state to prepare for the service by "praying for this historic moment."

The appointment service is one of many held across the Southern Baptist Convention by the Foreign Mission Board. In addition to appointment ceremonies, the program will include worship, testimonies and special music from Arkansas musicians.

It's importance, he noted, is not just the recognition of new missionaries. "We believe that this event can result in a great blessing for appointees, a new missionary vision for our churches, dozens of new missionaries called out to the harvest, and a great uniting of our Arkansas churches around our primary purpose."

He added, however, that "we also believe this will not happen without concentrated, corporate prayer."

The prayer committee has devised what he called a "simple prayer plan" to be used statewide prior to the service, which will be held April 8 at Robinson Auditorium in Little Rock. He said the plan calls for

Arkansas Baptists to participate in prayer for the appointment service by:

- Answering a general call to prayer.
- Mobilizing existing prayer groups across the state "to focus on concentrated prayer for the service for six months — October 1996 through March 1997."
- Entering into 40 days of fasting and prayer. "We are asking each association to take one day to fast and pray in whatever manner they choose leading to the appointment service," Elliff explained.

He said associational directors of missions will announce the date for each association's prayer time.

■ Participating at a pre-service prayer meeting at Robinson Auditorium one hour prior to the service.

On the local church level, Elliff said, churches may begin the prayer process for the appointment service by "calling your church to prayer, mobilizing your prayer warriors to pray weekly, joining us in your associational Day of Fasting and Prayer, and in the pre-service prayer meeting."

He noted that a monthly prayer guide will be mailed to churches in mid-September to help highlight the statewide prayer effort.

Additional information about the FMB appointment service is available by contacting Jimmie Sheffield, Arkansas Baptist State Convention associate executive director, toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC, or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5102.



Cover Story



State missions 12-13

Focusing on the theme, "No Longer Strangers," Arkansas Baptists will observe the annual Season of Prayer for State Missions Sept. 15-22. This year's goal for the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering is \$750,000.

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Next issue: Sept. 19



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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Churches join governor to fight arson crisis

By Russell N. Dilday
Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Gov. Mike Huckabee has announced a four-fold plan to aid black churches burned in Arkansas. During the Aug. 26 press conference at the state capitol, Arkansas Baptist leaders presented a financial gift to two burned churches. The checks came from an offering collected during the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting to help burned African-American churches across the South.

Huckabee told reporters that "I want to make sure the state of Arkansas understands that today there will be a solid and very unified response to what, at least on the surface, appears to be the intolerable and outrageous burnings of churches in eastern Arkansas."

Fires claimed the facilities of St. Matthew's Missionary Baptist Church and Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, both predominantly African-American congregations near Turner, on Aug. 21. A white congregation, Kentucky Missionary Baptist Church near Benton, lost its building in an Aug. 24 blaze. Preliminary reports from authorities indicate that arson may be the cause of all three fires.

"Up until recently, our state has been able to be one of the only southern states in the country that had seemingly escaped these racially-motivated, targeted attacks against places of worship," Huckabee said.

The governor made his remarks at the conference with clergy and church leaders from several denominations standing behind him in support. Representing the Arkansas Baptist State Convention were executive director Emil Turner; state convention president Rex Horne; Jack Kwok, director of the ABSC cooperative ministries department; and Fred Major, pastor of Turner Church.

Turner presented a check for \$2,000 to D.L. O'Neal, president of the Regular Missionary Baptist State Convention of Arkansas, to aid in relief for the two recently-burned churches.

"This is a gift for each of these churches, \$1,000 for each church," Turner told O'Neal. "They come from Southern Baptists across America through the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. We understand that you are co-workers with us and we are co-workers with you."

The \$2,000 was made available through an offering collected during the 1996 SBC annual meeting in New Orleans to help black churches that have been burned in a two-year-long rash of arson-related fires.

Responding to former SBC president Jim Henry's call to "be doers of the word



Arkansas Baptist executive director Emil Turner presents a \$2,000 check to D.L. O'Neal, president of the Regular Missionary Baptist State Convention of Arkansas, as Gov. Mike Huckabee and church leaders from across the state observe.

by taking an offering to help our brothers and sisters in Christ," SBC messengers contributed more than \$282,000 in cash and pledges to the offering.

To date, the SBC has received more than \$293,000 in the arson fund, which was disbursed to 14 state conventions this summer. The ABSC received \$3,000 in the disbursement, which was formulated by the SBC Inter-Agency Council's Racial Reconciliation Task Force.

Governor outlines goals

Gov. Huckabee detailed a set of plans to protect black congregations from arson and to help victimized churches recover from their losses.

The first action, he said, calls for "the director of the state police, the director of the crime lab, as well as the state fire marshal to give highest priority to work with the federal authorities who will be taking the lead in the investigations of these and any other churches where arson is suspected."

He said he also "will be proposing legislation for the session in 1997 which will increase the level of criminal penalty for activities directed against congregations, whether they be churches, synagogues or mosques."

Although the specifics for the legislation have yet to be formulated, he said proposed measures may be similar to comparable legislation recently passed in Tennessee.

Third, he announced a campaign calling for churches to "adopt" sister churches. "We realize the level to which government can go is limited," he noted. "There are no limits for the churches to act like churches."

"We are calling on churches to voluntarily open their hearts as well as their hands to do more than simply say, 'We are going to pray for you,'" Huckabee said.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for many of the predominantly white congregations in our state to finally do something that will demonstrate that the days of racial bigotry that often long existed in our churches have come to a screeching halt."

Huckabee's fourth emphasis was the announcement "that funds have already been set up to assist the two churches which burned." Included in the announced funds is the one set up within the ABSC to aid any black congregation that loses its building through arson.

Speaking in support of the funds, St. Matthews pastor Ken Daniels emphasized that with "your prayers and support, with God's grace and God's love, we can build more churches than they can burn down."

Turner told the *Arkansas Baptist News-magazine* following the conference that the \$1,000 for each church "is the same amount our missions department gives to a white Arkansas Baptist church that burns."

Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, added that while the "seed money is significant" to furthering race relations in the state, "I can't help but think how far we still have to go."

"Sometimes it's the easiest thing to do, whether we are in a local church or a statewide need like this, of giving something and not changing our own attitude...to watch out for our brothers," he said. Urging fellow Baptists to additional commitment to racial reconciliation, he said, "I'm ready to get past the starting line and see even more significant things take place."

The ABSC will continue to seek to aid black churches whose facilities have been burned in arson-related fires. Contributions may be sent to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention marked "Arson Fund," P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER
ABS-C Executive Director

A Navy veteran, she also worked for the Texas legislature. Tonight she's spending the night at Tucker Prison, having been sentenced to 60 years for selling drugs. One of your chaplains led her to Christ.

Their world shattered when they found the body of their son - hanged in their apartment. No one they knew could help. But at the Migrant Mission Center in Hope they found someone who cared and someone who could help.

The church is less than two years old. The attendance averages more than 100 every week. The pastor recently told me, "The state convention has been invaluable in helping us get started."

Your state missions offering provides the resources that meet real needs and changes real lives and starts real churches. Give generously. God will use your gifts to His glory.

■ Have you read *Sit Walk Stand* by Watchman Nee (Christian Literature Crusade, 1957)? This is an old study of Ephesians by modern standards. It is an excellent resource to prepare for the Winter Bible Study. Nee's devotional insights and his practical help are great. You'll grow spiritually by applying these sound biblical truths.

Executive director's schedule:

- Sept. 8 (a.m.) - Friendship Church, Clinton; (p.m.) Grace Church, Rogers.
- Sept. 9 (noon) - Washington-Madison Bible Conference, Springdale.
- Sept. 11 (p.m.) - Baring Cross Church, North Little Rock.
- Sept. 12 (p.m.) - "Glorieta East," North Arkansas Association, First Church, Harrison.
- Sept. 13-14 - Home Mission Board, Alpharetta, Ga.
- Sept. 18-20 - Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va.
- Sept. 20 (p.m.) - State Sunday School Convention, Geyer Springs First Church, Little Rock.

BARBARA WIKMAN

Woman's Viewpoint

Stay close to Christ

Twenty-five years ago in India, Mother Teresa built one of her Homes for the Dying Destitute about six miles from our Bangalore Baptist Hospital. My husband and I were privileged to be in the opening ceremony with her then. Frequently when she visited her hospice she would stop and visit the Baptist Hospital. The two institutions have worked well together throughout the years, with the hospital providing acute medical care and her hospice serving as a nursing home with custodial care.

Recently we had an opportunity to revisit Mother Teresa's hospice near the Bangalore Hospital. We were shown around by a lovely Indian nun of the Sisters of Charity. They now keep a census of 120 women and girls. They are always full. The patients were obviously well cared for, well fed, kept clean and clothed. You can easily sense the love expressed. The secret of Mother Teresa and the Sisters' ability to minister so well is that they believe that

what they do for their patients is equal to doing it to Christ. "In as much as you have done it unto one of the least."

While touring the hospice I kept seeing a precious retarded, deformed girl scooting along followed closely an older demented lady. The girl seemed quite determined to not let the lady out of her reach. I asked the sister about the two and she said the older demented lady always fed the meals to the deformed girl; therefore, the girl always kept very near the older lady.

I thought, "What a lesson for us. With all that Christ does for us it would seem so natural for us to stay close to Him, even scooting along, to be near Him and sharing in what He is doing."

Barbara Wikman, a former missionary to India, is president of the Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union. She and her husband, John, a surgeon, are members of Fianna Hills Church in Fort Smith. They have two daughters and three grandsons.

Personal perspectives

"With your prayers and support, with God's grace and God's love, we can build more churches than they can burn down."

-Ken Dantels, pastor, St. Matthews Missionary Baptist Church

"Some of the darkest moments in a person's life can happen on a college campus. My goal is to infiltrate that area."

-Jackie Flake, newly elected BSU director, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

"It's not a sin to fail. It's a sin to not move past failure."

-Jimmy Draper, president, Baptist Sunday School Board

"The dire needs of our world and the decadent condition of our nation have driven Christians to our knees."

-Larry Lewis, president, Home Mission Board

Strong words demand strong action

Citing the biblical admonition to "bear ye one another's burdens," Southern Baptist Convention messengers adopted a resolution this summer strongly condemning the arson of African-American churches.

"Attacks against any church constitute an attack against the entire believing community," the resolution declared. Emphasizing that Southern Baptists "deplore these despicable and abominable acts of lawlessness and racism," messengers pledged "to pray for, support, encourage, stand with and assist our sister churches and fellow believers in the African-American community who have been victims of these criminal acts."

Convention messengers backed up their words by raising an estimated \$282,000 in cash and pledges to aid African-American congregations victimized by arson. During the past two months, that amount has grown to almost \$300,000, with the bulk of the gifts already distributed to 14 state conventions for immediate use.

Pledging to "target our efforts toward racial reconciliation in those communities hardest hit by racial violence against churches," the SBC resolution concluded by urging "local, state and federal governments to investigate promptly and vigorously these hate crimes, apprehend those who are responsible for these cowardly acts of bigotry and prosecute perpetrators of church arson to the fullest extent of the law."

Such strong words demand strong action — and the time has come to put those words into action here in Arkansas. While arson-related fires swept throughout the South in recent months, Arkansas remained largely sheltered from such attacks until the past few weeks. The recent burning of two Missionary Baptist church buildings near Turner on the same night has clearly brought the crisis to Arkansas.

In addition to the destruction of the two black churches, the facilities of a rural white Missionary Baptist congregation near Benton were burned three nights later.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

The separate attacks highlight the fact that the current rash of church burnings is not strictly a racial issue. Along with the 40-plus African-American churches burned nationwide in the past two years, a comparable number of Anglo congregations also have been struck by arson.

Regardless of racial distinctions, the question that now faces Arkansas Baptists and other concerned citizens is how to respond most effectively to those who have been victimized.

State convention executive director Emil Turner, convention president Rex Home, cooperative ministries department director Jack Kwok and other Baptist leaders from across the state took an initial step last week as they participated in a conference with black church leaders hosted by Gov. Mike Huckabee.

Turner used the opportunity to present a check from the SBC Arson Fund for use by the two African-American churches burned near Turner. "We understand that you are co-workers with us and we are co-workers with you," Turner told D.L. O'Neal, president of the Regular Missionary Baptist State Convention of Arkansas.

Gov. Huckabee unveiled a four-fold plan to respond to the arson crisis, including proposed anti-arson legislation and an "adopt-a-church" campaign in which local congregations voluntarily work together across racial and social lines.

Recounting the story of Joseph in Genesis 51, Huckabee noted that Joseph

told his brothers, "What you intended for harm, God has used for good." I think we should say very clearly today that what some have intended for harm, God is going to use for good."

On the national level, President Bill Clinton recently signed the Church Arson Prevention Act. The measure was adopted by Congress with widespread bipartisan support led by Democratic Sen. Ted Kennedy and Republican Rep. Henry Hyde.

Recently helping reconstruct a burned church in Tennessee, President Clinton told church members, "You're not just rebuilding your church here; you're showing America what's special about America. And by doing that, you're leading us into a brighter and better future instead of back into the kind of dark path that is divided and torn asunder....You're standing up against what is tearing the rest of the world apart."

In addition to responses from political leaders, action in the Christian community has come from such diverse organizations as the National Council of Churches, the Christian Coalition and the American Bible Society. Even amid impassioned resolutions, generous offerings and calls for swift government intervention, however, individual Christians and local churches must be willing to do even more to respond to the victims of undeserved violence.

Perhaps it is as simple as picking up the phone and pledging sincere prayer support to a pastor or church member who is grieving over the loss of their house of worship. Perhaps it is volunteering to donate a piano or hymnals or other items that a congregation needs as it prepares to rebuild. Perhaps it is donating personal time to help physically build a new church facility or to provide child care or meals to church members as they spend time rebuilding.

"Bear ye one another's burdens," Galatians 6:2 instructs. Passing legislation and resolutions and donating funds is a good start. One-on-one personal involvement is even better.

Dixie deserves faithful support

Highlighting the theme, "No Longer Strangers," Arkansas Baptists' 1996 state missions emphasis will seek to mobilize church members to provide prayer and financial support for such vital ministry efforts as chaplaincy, language missions and church extension projects.

This year's Season of Prayer for State Missions is set for Sept. 15-22. The Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering goal is \$750,000. Emphasizing that "prayer undergirds all the work we do," state convention missions department director Jimmy Barentine encouraged Arkansas Baptists to faithfully support the annual prayer emphasis as well as the statewide offering.

"No Longer Strangers" comes from a passage in Ephesians 2 which declares that Christ "came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household."

This year's Dixie Jackson emphasis offers every Arkansas Baptist an opportunity to support life-changing ministries that will reach out to "strangers and aliens" and invite them to become eternal members of God's household. Don't miss the opportunity!

Board affirms \$17.6 million budget proposal

By Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

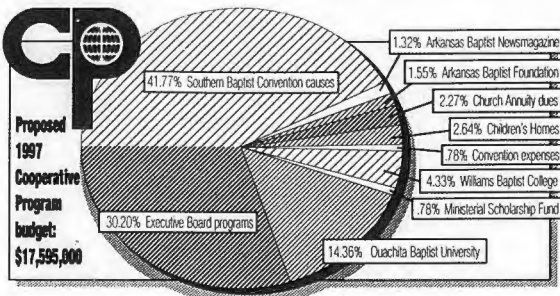
A proposed 1997 Cooperative Program budget of \$17,595,000 was among major items of business addressed Aug. 20 by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board. The budget recommendation will be presented to convention messengers during the state convention annual meeting in November.

The budget proposal is a 2 percent increase over the current budget of \$17.25 million. Noting that CP gifts from local churches have increased an average of 2.1 percent during the past three years, ABSC associate executive director Jimmie Sheffield said the proposed 2 percent increase is an effort "to keep our budget in line with income."

The budget recommendation includes 41.77 percent for Southern Baptist CP causes, with the remaining 58.23 percent distributed among various state convention-related causes.

State convention executive director Emil Turner pointed out that an addition to this year's Executive Board budget is a line item for Arkansas designated receipts. Although not previously budgeted, gifts designated specifically for Arkansas causes totaled more than \$200,000 last year.

Explaining that "there are monies that come to us that are not through the Cooperative Program," Turner added, "We do not do anything to produce these gifts but they come to us. We have not attempted to budget those receipts until this year."



During an interview following the meeting, Turner said, "I'm humbled and sobered by the responsibility of the budget. It is my desire that we be good stewards not only of what we have been given but what we will be given. I do not want us to spend more than we receive."

"The key to the state convention's budget growth is the stewardship growth of church members," he emphasized. "The focus of our budget is aimed back at the local church."

Budget formula revision

Another budget-related issue addressed by board members is the proposed 1998-2002 unified budget formula. The formula, which was first adopted in 1964, is evaluated and updated every five years.

The current formula, which has been in effect since 1993, provides for CP gifts to SBC causes to increase the same percentage that churches increase their percentage of giving to total CP causes. The new formula calls for any increase to be based on "the average percentage increase of the previous five years" of church gifts to the Cooperative Program. The proposed change is designed to more accurately reflect overall giving trends in the state.

The new budget formula also provides for all state convention agencies and institutions to receive increases in CP allocations "equal to the percentage increase in the amount allocated to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention over the prior year." Under the current system, agencies and institutions receive specified percentage increases which are lower than the state convention's rate of increase. The proposal will allow CP allocations for all state convention entities to increase at the same percentage rate.

In addition to budget issues, Executive Board members approved a proposal to extend the state convention's missions partnership with the European Baptist Convention through 1999. The partnership, organized in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, began in 1994 and was originally scheduled to conclude at the end of 1996. Convention messengers voted last year to extend the partnership through 1997. The current proposal would extend the effort to a total of six years.

Background information provided to board members stated that "the leadership of the EBC has expressed appreciation for the ABSC and its participation with them in taking the gospel to the English-speaking population of Europe." The proposal added that Arkansas native James Heflin, the EBC's

Turner shares structure study update

Plans for evaluating ministry needs and structures in Arkansas Baptist life are on target, according to Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Emil Turner.

Sharing a brief report with Executive Board members, Turner said three subcommittees which are working with a study steering committee "have completed their reports and finalized their initial studies." The committees have been given the task "to study and recommend a plan by which the Arkansas Baptist State Convention can most effectively meet the challenges of the 21st century."

The subcommittees have focused on the work of the state convention's Executive Board staff, institutions and agencies. Their proposals will be forwarded this month to the steering committee which

will study and finalize recommendations during the coming year.

"The recommendations from the subcommittees are substantive," Turner reported. "They represent real restructuring, genuine change, things that can help us be more effective."

Turner said the subcommittee report addressing Executive Board programs "will deal with a tighter, team-based organization, organized around functions of ministry within the local church. The desire is to organize our work around the work that exists in local churches rather than to organize around specific departmental programs and titles."

Noting that he "applauds" the initial proposal, Turner said the plan would "make for fewer groups, more productive groups and more responsive groups" within the convention's staff structure.

general secretary-elect, and the EBC partnership committee "have expressed a strong desire for this partnership to continue."

Turner told the News magazine that FMB officials have described the current partnership as "one of the most trouble-free partnerships and, hence, most cost efficient and productive."

Noting that European Baptist leaders have requested the extension "because they see the value of the partnership," Turner added, "The rationale for maintaining it is that we're being effective." He said convention leaders are considering additional partnership projects and sites, explaining that "we do not anticipate this being an exclusive partnership."

In other action, board members approved the employment of two new Baptist Student Union campus directors (see related article). Sharing his personal guidelines for hiring new staff members, Turner emphasized that each employee is "expected to have total, absolute confidence in the Bible...and an undivided loyalty to our Cooperative Program."

Board members approved revised guidelines for the state convention's ministerial scholarship fund. Scholarship committee member Jim Edwards said the group started with a "good problem....We had more money than applicants."

In addition to providing scholarships for ministerial students and their wives who attend Ouachita Baptist University or Williams Baptist College, the guidelines have been expanded to include students enrolled in Boyce Bible School, Seminary Extension or Ouachita's associate of arts degree in religion.

The maximum scholarship amount for eligible students at OBU and WBC will increase from \$700 per semester to \$825. The maximum amount for wives will increase by \$25 per semester to \$325. Students attending Boyce or OBU's associate of arts program will be eligible for up to \$115 per semester and Seminary Extension students can qualify for up to \$30 per semester.

Board members also approved 1997 Executive Board priority projects and heard updates concerning the state convention study committee and the 1997 Foreign Mission Board appointment service to the held in Little Rock.

"Strengthen the Family" will be the focus of the convention's 1997 priority projects. The emphasis is part of the state convention's current five-year "Arkansas Awakening" theme.

Encouraging Arkansas Baptists to "expose your church members...to this foreign missions service" next year in Little Rock, Turner added, "God can change the world through what happens here April 8, 1997."

Executive Board unanimously elects two new BSU directors

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive board unanimously elected two new Baptist Student Union directors to posts in Pine Bluff and Fort Smith during its Aug. 20 meeting at the Baptist Health Center in Little Rock.

Elected were Jackie Flake as director of the BSU at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and Tim Stewart as director of the BSU at Westark Community College in Fort Smith.

Flake, a May graduate of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, earned the master of divinity degree there, graduating with honors. He also holds the bachelor of science degree from Paul Quinn College in Dallas and the associate of arts degree from Carl Albert Junior College in Poteau, Okla.

He has served as an elementary school teacher in Fort Smith and Dallas and as an area coordinator for Sylvan Learning Center in Dallas.

While in seminary, he was student body vice president and assisted in the enhancement of the Christian education department of Shalom Baptist Church in Kansas City, and taught new members and leadership training classes at Shalom.

He also has taught college and career Sunday School class and assisted with youth ministries at Eastside Church in Fort Smith.

David James, director of the ABSC student ministries department, said Flake, along with his wife, Cedra, "will be a key team" in Arkansas student work.

"Jackie has a strong theological background and youth commitment," James commented. "He is committed to impact college students and brings a great personality and spirit to Baptist student work. He will attract crowds, but when he has attracted them, he will invest deeply in their lives."

James said that the election of Flake, who is an African-American, shows that "Arkansas Baptists, and Pine Bluff area Southern Baptists in particular, are serious about partnering with the African-American world."

The UAPB campus and the BSU work

there has traditionally been an African-American work, James explained.

Former UAPB Baptist Student Union director Dawson Williams "pulled race relations to a higher level and developed a great network," said James. "Jackie now has the freedom to impact that campus."

Flake told board members he felt led into BSU work because "some of the darkest moments in a person's life can happen on a college campus. My goal is to infiltrate that area."

Stewart, who currently is a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, earned the bachelor of business administration from Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe.

Prior to his election, he served as associate director of the Northeast BSU and as youth minister for College Place Baptist Church in Monroe. He also has served as interim youth minister at First Church in Crossett, as an intern at churches in Louisiana and Mississippi and as outreach coordinator at the Northeast BSU.

While in seminary he was a mental health technician at Charter Hospital of Fort Worth.

Stewart said he seeks to "shape" the lives of college students because of his BSU activity.

"I was active in Northeast Louisiana BSU and through (its programs) God started shaping my life and molding my life!" Stewart told Executive Board members. "Through a two-year process of Bible study and prayer, I came to the understanding that God wanted me to do student work."

"I sensed that this is where God was leading me," he added, "and I believe this is where God has led me today."

James said that Stewart "brings a lot of experience and a strong BSU background to Arkansas."

"Tim brings a strong personality and strong church experience into a commuter world," James explained. "In that environment, you can't have someone who can't make things happen."



Flake



Stewart

Baptist women's Summit '96 to focus on lifestyle, missions

Arkansas Baptist women will gather to "Share the Light" during Summit '96 Oct. 18-19 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock. The sessions will feature worship, seminars and drama in a missions-oriented environment "that meets the needs of women as well as nurtures their missions involvement," explained event coordinator Monica Keathley.

Keathley, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Woman's Missionary Union department, said that planners are seeking "to offer a missions conference for women featuring something new and different that will allow more women to have the missions experience."

Seminar topics will include: "Cherries and Pits," "Dare to Care," "Called to Pray," "Why We Act the Way We Do," "Earn the Right: Be Salt and Light" and "Ephesians 4:32." While offered during regular seminar times, the above seminars also will be offered as "early bird" seminars on Friday from 3-5:30 p.m.

Other seminars will include: "How to Get Along with Cranky People Without Being One Yourself," "Sharing the Light in Tennessee," "Straight Talk to Women Who Do Too Much," "Precious in His Sight," "Raising Beaver Cleaver Kids in a Beaver and Butthead World," "Sharing the Light in Asia," "Marriage: Communication, Conflict and Compassion" and "A Place for You."

The program will feature keynote speaker Jeannette Clift George, an author, playwright and Bible teacher from Houston, Texas, and praise and worship leader Karla Worley, a writer, musician and artist from Franklin, Tenn.

Other program highlights include home missionary Ken Weathersby of Memphis, Tenn.; Susan Partridge, a foreign missionary to Asia; and the A.D. Players drama team from Houston.

Keathley said that a highlight of the program will be a "Late Night Special" featuring the A.D. Players in two back-to-back performances.

Participants also will celebrate the missions partnership between the ABCS and the European Baptist Convention through a "Bibles for Europe" emphasis, which seeks to provide 600 pew Bibles for EBC churches. Keathley said participants will have the opportunity to purchase Bibles for the project during Summit '96 at \$5 per Bible or \$120 per case of 24.

The program will begin at 3 p.m. Friday with early bird conferences, with the first general session beginning at 7 p.m. It will

conclude Saturday at 3 p.m.

The cost for Summit '96 is \$25 per person and includes materials, lunch and the Friday night drama.

For more information or a registration form, contact Keathley at the ABCS Woman's Missionary Union department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5137.

Keyboard workshop is 'hands-on event'

Keyboardists will have an opportunity to enhance their skills during the State Keyboard Workshop Nov. 2 at Second Church in Little Rock. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m.

"It's been several years since we've had a keyboard workshop that wasn't part of a larger conference," explained Peggy Pearson, an associate in the state church music ministries department. "The electronic keyboard in particular is increasing in use and popularity, so it's a great opportunity to inspire keyboard musicians."

The workshop will feature clinics for all three keyboard styles: piano, electronic keyboard and organ. The clinician for the pianists will be Martha Kirkland, author of *Better Accompaniment Next Sunday*, who will be teaching the clinic from her book.

Kathy Cooper, from Second Church, Little Rock, will be the clinician for electronic keyboardists. She currently plays in a Christian band, Pilgrim Voyage. The clinician for organists will be Gail Scott Robins of Tulsa, Okla., who has published arrangements for piano and organ.

"This is a practical, hands-on event as well as enhancing worship ideas," Pearson pointed out. "We hope to help those keyboardists who help in worship planning. We'll also have a closing instrumental worship session using all the instruments."

The registration fee for the event is \$10 before Oct. 7 and \$15 thereafter. For additional information, contact Pearson toll-free at 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5121, or locally at 376-4791, ext. 5121.

Brotherhood, RA training event set

A conference for leaders of Royal Ambassadors and Brotherhood groups will feature a "different format," said planner Harry Black, "that will offer flexibility for new leaders as well as sessions for people who have been involved in the work for a long time."

The RA/Brotherhood Leadership Workshop will be held Oct. 5 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock.

Black, director of the Arkansas Baptist

State Convention Brotherhood department, noted that the program will feature an "interest conference" format that will include a variety of conference topics, including instruction in men's ministries, disaster relief, crafts, youth missions, construction ministry, World Changers, RA advancement, EZRA (Easy RA) and a special camp cooking conference with volunteer home missionary John Ragsdale, author of *dutch oven cooking books*.

Black, who planned the program along with state RA director Ozzie Berryhill, said that the event "will introduce, in a special two-hour session, the new MissionKids material."

"MissionKids is a coed option for small churches that looks at missions through the eyes of children of missionaries" and features a curriculum for grades one through six, he said.

Black emphasized that the new curriculum will continue to be relevant despite the restructuring changes related to the work of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

"Even with the Brotherhood's merger into the North American Mission Board, missions education...will continue to be a priority," he said. "The things we introduce will continue to be practical for the next few years."

The program will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m. The cost for the conference is \$5 per person and includes lunch.

For more information or to register, contact Black at the ABCS Brotherhood department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5158.

Association offers Christian deer camp

Southwest Arkansas Association will sponsor a Christian deer camp at Camp Canfield Assembly Oct. 22-26. The camp, which begins with an evening meal Tuesday, will feature muzzleloading rifle hunting Wednesday through Friday at noon. Modern rifle hunting will begin Friday at noon and conclude Saturday.

Camp Canfield is located 12 miles south of Lewisville on Highway 29 on a 32,000-acre game preserve.

The cost for the camp is \$150 per person and includes all meals, bonus deer tag, worship services and lodging. The cost also includes a permit that may be used year-round in the game preserve.

Registration is limited. For additional information or to request a registration form, contact James Lindsey at 501-772-3922 or Southwest director of missions Jerry Creek at 501-772-3370.

Variety characterizes student mission work

By Colleen Backus

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

From China to South Africa and Hawaii to Israel, student missionaries served in diverse settings this summer. "We had more of a variety of ministries than we've ever had before," noted Diane Parker, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist student ministries department.

A total of 100 Arkansas students participated in summer missions sponsored by Arkansas Baptist Student Unions, accompanied by 11 team leaders and seven out-of-state students. Eleven Arkansas students sponsored by the Home Mission Board through the state missions department also served as summer missionaries, along with one leader and 12 out-of-state students.

"Many summer missionaries have unique opportunities to lead someone to Christ," Parker pointed out. "More than 200 professions of faith were made as a result of the efforts by Arkansas student summer missionaries." Sixty-three commitments and 13 commitments to missions or ministry also were recorded. "Thousands of lives were touched that are not recorded anywhere," Parker added.

"Two things really touched me personally as I was reading the students' reports," she noted. "One student became very close friends with a homeless family and is continuing to keep in touch with them. Another built a relationship with a Muslim family — these students are not out there doing a task, they are really getting involved in people's lives."

"All in all it is a great summer," affirmed Pete Petty, an associate in the state missions department. "They did what they came to do."

"Our summer missionaries were well equipped, and took their responsibilities seriously and made good impressions where they served," Petty added. "We even had calls from the state parks praising them for doing such a great job."

Summer missionaries from Arkansas BSUs served around the state, nation and world, including:

- Teaching English as a second language classes in Korea.

- Staffing the Baptist Village camp in Israel.

- Starting churches with an association in Canada.

- Assisting in convention work in Washington state and Maryland.

- Interning at a new convention, Pennsylvania/South Jersey.

- Providing assistance at two mission centers in New Orleans.

- Helping children at various Arkansas

Baptist Children's Homes ministry locations.

- Assisting with resort ministries in Hawaii.

- Traveling with the SummerServe Team.

Carmen Norris, a native of Beebe and a student at Ouachita Baptist University, worked with children at the Little Rock Emergency Receiving Home. "For a whole month I just helped with a baby and was getting impatient," she explained. "But then we got a houseful of girls and devotions turned into a great time of female bonding," she shared. "Two of the girls got saved and one went through with baptism. That was worth waiting for — God's timing is perfect."

Joni Hanks, a student worker from Louisiana, said she "was expecting to work with abused children. But they were mainly neglected or abandoned, so I had to do a lot more discipline than I expected. But then we went to a Christian concert and had professions of faith — it was so memorable."

Peter Newland, a native of Ozark and a student at Arkansas Tech University, found that his personality aided his ministry assisting the recreation director at the Baptist Home for Children in Monticello. One of a team of five, Newland "bonded with the rowdies" through recreation activities such as swimming, horseback riding, hiking, camping and canoeing. "I let them know that you can praise God and be yourself," Newland said.

"I see us continuing to grow in this area because of this generation," Parker commented. "They are risk takers and love a challenge. This is exciting for the future of missions because they are the kind of people that we need." Parker added that one Arkansas student missionary made her best contacts while surfing on the beach, taking a break from her daily ministry. "How else is a girl from Arkansas going to witness while surfing other than through summer missions?"

The students who minister on the field are not the only ones participating in summer missions. The funds that go to support summer missions are raised by students from BSUs around the state. This year they gave more than \$50,000. "The other students participate financially and



Students and staff from Ouachita Baptist University, under the leadership of Ian Cosh, started their African summer mission trip with a visit to a statue honoring David Livingstone, Scottish missionary and explorer.

through prayer, making this truly student missions," Parker said.

She also pointed out the importance of the role of short-term mission projects, which are growing because increased numbers of students have to work during the summer. Short-term teams participated in projects at the Olympics, in China, on a Mississippi River Ministry project and in South Africa.

Ian Cosh, BSU director at Ouachita Baptist University, took 16 students and four faculty and staff on a month's missions trip to South Africa and Zimbabwe.

"We really had a broad variety of ministries," Cosh explained. "The students participated in traditional Sunday services, spoke in public schools, conducted a youth professionals fellowship, ministered in a squatters' camp and in an orphanage where children had been abandoned because they had AIDS."

"They seemed to relate particularly well to children — the squatters' camp was particularly emotional for them," Cosh added. "But they were very well accepted everywhere. You find people pretty open to the gospel because the message of Christianity hasn't pervaded the culture — there is freshness and interest there."

Staff changes

Jerry A. Kirkpatrick retired Aug. 18 as pastor of First Church in Heber Springs, following more than 13 years of ministry. A native of Little Rock, Kirkpatrick has ministered for 35 years in Southern Baptist churches in Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arizona and California. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served on the Executive Board of both the Arizona Baptist Convention and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Kirkpatrick will begin serving this month in a six-month interim pastorate with International Baptist Church in Zurich, Switzerland. He and his wife, Norma, have three grown children and two grandsons.

Jimmie Garner will retire Sept. 30 as director of missions for Trinity Association, following 29 years of ministry. Garner, an ordained Southern Baptist minister for 44 years, has been pastor of Eastside Church of Trumann, Valley View Church of Harrisburg, First Church of Fisher and Calvary Church of Paragould. He is a graduate of Southern Baptist College (now Williams Baptist College) and Arkansas State University. He and his wife, Evelyn, are parents of two adult children, Becky Self of Monette and Matt Garner of Fort Smith. They have two grandchildren. The Garners plan to do volunteer mission work with the Nalibenders of Arkansas and Campers on Missions. He will be available to serve as an interim pastor or supply preacher and may be contacted at P.O. Box 192, Trumann, AR 72472; phone 501-483-7821.

Brian Pettit joined the staff of Central Church of North Little Rock Sept. 1 as minister of youth and young adults, coming there from Alton, Ill., where he was minister of education and youth for First Southern Church. He is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Penny, have two children, Allison and Zachary.

James Wesley George is pastor of Wynne Church, coming there from Maple Grove Church of Trumann. He previously was pastor of Central Church of Dyess. A native of Wynne, he is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and Mid-America Seminary. George and his wife, Lisa, have two sons, Jonathan Wesley and Caleb Charles.

Steven Gregg Wright began serving Sept. 2 as pastor of Shepherd Hill Church of Pine Bluff. He and his wife, Christine, moved to



ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

Pine Bluff from McComb, Miss., where he had been serving as minister of youth for North McComb Church. He previously served as a staff member of other Mississippi churches. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Michael Seay began serving Aug. 11 as pastor of Lee Creek Church. He and his wife, Belinda, moved there from Holiday Island where he was pastor of Dove Circle Church. He previously was pastor of churches in Texas. Seay is a graduate of Southern Baptist Center for Biblical Studies, Jacksonville, Fla., and Andersonville Baptist College of Camilla, Ga.

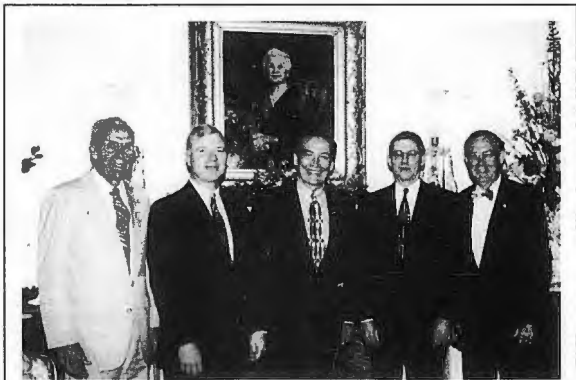
Harold Russell is pastor of New Antioch Church of Brookland. A native of Lawrence County, Russell has served for 26 years as pastor of churches in Black River Association, including First Church of Black Rock where he served more than 11 years. He and his wife, Viola, have two adult children, Sandy Alstadt of Little Rock

and Randy Russell of Jonesboro. They also have two grandchildren.

Walter D. Draughon III resigned Aug. 11 as pastor of Calvary Church in Little Rock, following more than four years of service. Draughon, who came to Little Rock from Arapho Road Church in Garland, Texas, has accepted the call to become pastor of First Church of St. Petersburg, Fla. He is a graduate of Samford University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Draughon and his wife, Jane Marie, have three children, Meghan Leigh, Jacob Kenyan and Haley Marion.

Robby D. Sherman has joined the staff of First Church of Van Buren as minister of students and recreation. He and his wife, Natalie, moved there from Fort Worth, Texas, where he was youth ministry field education intern for North Richland Hills Church. He previously was youth ministry intern for Geyer Springs First Church of Little Rock and youth minister for First Church of Murfreesboro. In addition, Sherman has been assistant director and recreation director for Arkansas Baptist Assembly, Siloam Springs. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Allen E. Morton has joined the staff of Fairdale Church in Hot Springs as associate pastor and youth minister. Morton, who



The Hammons Charitable Foundation recently was established to assist students from eastern Arkansas and western Tennessee to attend selected schools, including Ouachita Baptist University, Williams Baptist College and East Arkansas Community College. Managed by the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, the fund's founding board of directors are (left to right) Roger Reynolds, Forrest City; David Moore, Little Rock, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation; Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn.; chairman Edward Hammons, Forrest City; and Myram Barefoot of Jackson, Tenn.

was ordained to the gospel ministry Aug. 18 by the church, previously served there as youth minister. A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, he is married to the former Teri Sherman.

Rick Posey is serving as bivocational minister of music and youth at First Southern Church of Bearden. He came there from Sparkman where he was a member of First Church. Posey and his wife, Tina, have two sons, Tyler and Austin.

Anton Uth is interim pastor of First Church of Pangburn. He retired from the pastorate in 1994, having served churches in Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas. Uth is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Henry Richerson is serving as interim minister of youth for Calvary Church of Blytheville. A native of Tennessee, he is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin and currently is a student at Mid-America Seminary.

Jack Nicholas of Hot Springs Village is serving as interim pastor of Pincey Church of Hot Springs. Nicholas is the retired chancellor of Williams Baptist College.

Ross Layne resigned Aug. 11 as pastor of Faith Church in Batesville to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Church news

Ruddell Hill Church of Batesville celebrated its 56th anniversary Aug. 4 with a worship service, potluck dinner and a musical program. Shelby Bittle, pastor of Brownsville Church, was the guest speaker. Margaret Wayman Bittle presented the church history. Her father, the late Floyd Wayman, presented the history when the church was dedicated in 1945. Pastor Jim Black moderated the anniversary celebration.

Springdale First Church will change its Sunday morning program Sept. 8 by launching three Bible study hours and two worship services to create more options for participants, as well as enabling the church to better serve that region of northwest Arkansas. Pastor Ronnie Floyd will preach the 9:15 a.m. and 10:55 a.m. worship services with Bible study sessions to be at 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. and 10:55 a.m.

Chapel Hill Church of DeQueen has launched a new Pic Evangelism outreach ministry in which church members have made commitments to provide pies for first-time church visitors contacted by pastor John D. Davey or church outreach

director Bob Levesque. On Monday afternoon, following the guest's visit, two members of the outreach team deliver the freshly baked pie and a brochure about the ministries of the congregation.

Greens Ferry Ministers Fellowship will sponsor an areawide tent crusade Sept. 8-13 at Greens Ferry on the corner of Highways 16 and 92. Services will begin at 5 p.m. Sept. 8 with other evening services to begin at 7:14 p.m. Shelby Bittle, pastor of Brownsville Church, will be the evangelist. Local churches will coordinate the music services each evening.

Obituaries

Charles W. Nash of Stephens died July 21 at age 76. His funeral services were held July 23 at Salem Church in Stephens and memorials may be made to that church where he was a member. Nash had been a Southern Baptist minister for 58 years, serving churches in south Arkansas and north Louisiana. He was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College (now University). Survivors are his wife, Venell Nash of Stephens; three daughters, Joyce Cathey of Smackover, Camile Lenderman of Crossett and Jacqueline Ford of West Palm Beach, Fla.; five sons, Charles D. Nash of Stephens, Joseph G. Nash of Mount Holly, Dewayne Nash of Temple, Texas, Richard L. Nash and Horace D. Nash, both of San Antonio, Texas; one sister; 16 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

Ruth Mary Light of Rogers died Aug. 14 at age 91. She was a member of Open Door Church of Rogers and a former Woman's Missionary Union director for Northwest Association. She also had led numerous prayer seminars and had worked in literacy missions. Survivors are one son, Fred Lollar of Rogers; two daughters, Jean Kelly of Ogden Dunes, Ind., and JoAnn Lynxwiler of Las Vegas, Nev.; 13 grandchildren; and 26 great-grandchildren.

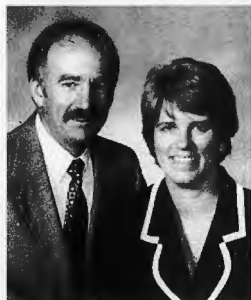
Ordinations

Lake City First Church recently ordained Jeff Gammon and Gary Weveras deacons.

North Maple Church of Stuttgart ordained Bob Bronson as a deacon Aug. 4.

Goshen First Southern Church ordained associate pastor Mike Martin to the gospel ministry Aug. 4.

Malvern Third Church ordained Joe Bittles, Mel Efirid and Jerry Skinner as deacons Aug. 11. Jesse Rucker was installed as a deacon.



Donald and Diana Barr

Barrs appointed to serve in Italy

Arkansas native Diana Barr and her husband, Donald, were among 61 people appointed Aug. 14 by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for missions service in 29 countries. The appointment service at First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga., brought the total number of FMB missionaries to 4,150.

The Barrs will serve as missionary associates in Italy, where he will start an English-speaking international Baptist church in Milan.

Since 1989 he has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Ouray, Colo. He lived in Wyoming and Utah while growing up and is a graduate of Westminster College of Salt Lake City and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Mrs. Barr, who was born in De Queen, is the daughter of Lavon Rhodes of North Little Rock and Donald Rhodes of Louisiana. She considers North Little Rock her hometown and attended Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin, Tenn.

FMB president Jerry Rankin told the new missionaries their move overseas must parallel that of Abraham's some 3,000 years ago. He said God first called Abraham to leave Ur of Chaldees and follow Him before He led Abraham and his family to the Promised Land.

"Because you are obedient and willing to go," he added, "God will bless you by touching and blessing others through you."

Barrentine cites 'advance' in state missions efforts

Jimmy Barrentine can describe the impact of the Dixie Jackson Offering for State Missions coupled with this year's statewide efforts in one word: "Advance."

"State missions in Arkansas is moving forward," explained Barrentine, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department.

Planners of the annual week of prayer and offering, named for a pioneer state missions supporter and Woman's Missionary Union leader, are seeking to raise \$750,000 in gifts while highlighting the week of Sept. 15-22 as a season of prayer for state missions projects. The 1996 offering goal represents a \$25,000 increase over last year's goal, which Arkansas Baptists exceeded by more than \$17,000, raising a total of \$742,278.

"This is strictly a faith offering, though," Barrentine noted as he reflected on last year's successful offering. "By the time the money comes in, all of it will be previously committed. We work this entire year on faith. We're not raising money for next year, we are paying bills for this year."

Emphasizing the importance of the week of prayer in conjunction with the offering, Barrentine added that "state missions doesn't run off of the money, but the Spirit of God."

However, he added, "If the offering falls short, we dare not say that would cripple what the Spirit of God is able to do, but it would mean fewer church starts, ministries and people being won."

The Dixie Jackson Offering represents 46 percent of the state

missions budget. It is aided by Cooperative Program funds (38 percent) and funds from the Home Mission Board (16 percent).

Hoping to surpass this year's goal, Barrentine said the Migrant Missions Center in Hope will receive all money that is raised over the goal. "I do believe it is important that the churches understand that any average of the \$750,000 goal for the offering will go to the construction of the new center." (See related article on page 13.)

He gave much of the credit for the "advance" in state missions work to Baptist associations, explaining that "we can't talk about state missions without talking about associations. It is a direct partnership where the associations and their directors of missions are engaged with state personnel in new church starts and missions ministries. They are indispensable in what's going on in state missions."

Evidence of the advance, he said, can be found in the following areas of state missions:

■ **New church starts.** "The Father has started 35 new churches this year," he said, "compared to an annual average of 25. We know that there are four to five being cultivated and expect five in the immediate future. If they do, that would be 40. That's an incredible high."

He speculated that "the difference" in this year's new start statistics "is that God's people really are serious about reaching the state for the Lord and are in prayer."

Of the 35 new churches, he said 10 are new language starts, two are African-American churches and 23 are new Anglo church extensions. "There is a strong commitment to the nurturing of new works, which means that Arkansas has one of the lowest 'death rates' among churches," he explained.

Established churches, he said, "nurture not only through funding, but through love, prayers and acceptance, they celebrate their existence and give them special recognition. That makes it more difficult for a work to die than one that has been neglected."

■ **Chaplaincy.** "People in the churches I'm in are continually praying that spiritual awakening will break out," he said. "I

think they will rejoice to know that in the prisons, it is breaking out.

"The chaplains have reported, at the end of June, 760 salvations this year," he said. Arkansas Baptist chaplains reported more than 1,100 professions of faith in 1995 and more than 600 in 1994, most from prison ministries.

"In chaplaincy, sometimes we hear that chaplains and volunteers are out there just to pat the inmates on the back, but it is critical to know that chaplains are not there to coddle the prisoner," Barrentine said. "They are catalysts of change.

"Their goal is that the inmates be changed, not just comforted," he added. "Real comfort does come as Jesus enters their hearts, their values change and they live out their new life. That is one reason we have seen so much change and this outbreak in the prisons."

■ **Church and community ministries.** "In the days ahead, there will be two vital types of ministries we want churches and associations to grapple with" to reach an advance in ministering to fellow Arkansans, he said.

"With the changes in the way that poor people are being viewed, there must be a continuing commitment to maintenance ministries; for the churches to feed and clothe and help provide shelter. There is still a need for those.

"What is a most urgent ministry need," he added, "are developmental ministries. These are ministries that empower people for the future to feed and clothe themselves and provide their own shelter, to help people find and keep jobs and provide, prepare and stretch their budgets.

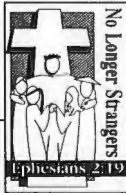
■ **Prayer.** "If we had the choice, and Arkansas people said, 'We will give you our money or our prayers,' we would always take the prayers," said Barrentine. "Prayer undergirds all the work we do and the season of prayer is more urgent than the fund raising."

He noted the need for Arkansas Baptists, during the Dixie Jackson season of prayer, to pray not only for the offering and the work of state missions, but also for personnel needs and Iowa/Arkansas missions partnership.

"We have three prayer requests for personnel," he said. "We need a church planter/strategist for black church work, for Anglo work, and a field consultant for church and community ministries."

Although it does not receive direct funding from the Dixie Jackson Offering, the Iowa partnership needs the prayers of Arkansas Baptists, Barrentine added.

"Four of Iowa's eight associations reported 37 summer projects, 28 professions of faith and seven projects related to new church starts," he said. "Even with these victories, there is still much more to do."



Dixie Jackson Offering: Helping churches, ministries

Missions ministries • Church & community ministry • Chaplaincy
Theological education • Associational ministry assistance

\$427,500

57%

43%

\$322,500

New church extension • Black church extension
Language missions • New church assistance to associations

A haven of hope

Migrant Mission Center is focus of 1996 missions offering

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Planners for Arkansas Baptists' 1996 state missions offering have made the Migrant Mission Center in Hope the top priority for this year's campaign for a simple reason: If the center doesn't relocate in less than a year, it will go from ministering to more than 10,000 migrants to less than 2,000.

The center is the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's ministry to thousands of migrants who travel through the state each year on the way to farming-related jobs in the northeast. It is located on Highway 67 near Hope, near a government-run rest stop, education center and medical clinic for migrants.

The government facilities will be moved in 1997 to a new, more convenient location north of town on Interstate 30. According to center director Paul Roaten, that means "when they move, we need to move the same day."

If the center is not moved to a site adjoining the government facilities, added ABCS missions department director Jimmy Barrentine, "We will be going from witnessing to and ministering to 10,000 migrants every year to less than 2,000."

The move, however, may cost Arkansas Baptists "a ballpark figure of \$300,000," Roaten predicted. He said the proposed 6,000-square-foot center will not cost nearly as much as equivalent facilities because planners "hope to have Church in a Day come in and do the outside shell. After that we'd like to get Nailbenders and other volunteers to do the inside part."

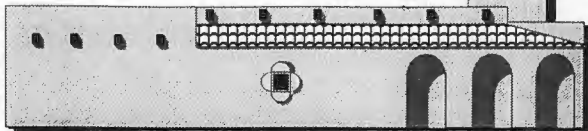
"At present, we don't have monies specifically designated for the project," Barrentine explained. "What we have been able to do is pull money from other state missions projects over the last two years."

He said those funds, which total \$220,000, represent losses to other state missions efforts. "We wouldn't be doing that if it were not a critical need, but we've kept it like that to keep from having a fundraising campaign."

In addition, Barrentine noted, other funds for the construction and move will come from "any overage of the \$750,000 goal for the 1996 state missions offering."

The center's current ministry is housed in a 3,200-square-foot facility next to the Migrant Farm Labor Center, a federally funded, state-run complex which provides traveling migrant families with sleeping quarters for rent, a laundry, showers, medical clinic and education center.

Many of the Migrant Farm Labor



Center's employees see a close working relationship between their services and those the mission center provides.

Evelyn Hicks, program supervisor for the Migrant Farm Labor Center, said that employees "don't see a line between our services here. We've joked about it for years. We provide service here for the body, the mission provides service for the soul and the education department provides service for the mind."

Positive relationships

That solid working relationship led to the inclusion of Baptists in the planning process for the new farm labor center. "When the government was looking to relocate," said Roaten, "they invited us into their planning meetings, where they talked about their project."

When the mission center moves along with the Farm Labor Center, Roaten said, First Church in Hope plans to purchase the present five-acre location and building from the ABCS to use as its Spanish mission facility.

The new mission center will be located on a one-acre plot adjoining the new Farm Labor Center. "When the government bought its 16 acres, the owner, a member of First Church, donated one acre expressly for the mission center," Roaten explained.

The ministry of the mission center provides migrants with the means to meet many needs. "We have used clothing, health kits, literature in Spanish and English, Bibles, refreshments, recreation for the young people and coloring books, toys and a playpen for the children," Roaten

Mission Center director Paul Roaten discusses the proposed 6,000-square-foot relocated center facility (above) with volunteer Margaret Fortenberry of Hattiesville, Miss., in the shadow of the existing center, which has approximately half the floor space.

listed. "We also have worship services during the busy times every night.

"We need more space," he added. "In the present worship space there are 50 chairs, but we've had 100 in our worship service and have had 150 to 180 in our building at one time."

Roaten, a former missionary to Uruguay who has served as the center's director since 1991, said the center's facilities are designed to reach migrants in a time span of "as little as 10 to 15 minutes to as much as 12 hours."

"In that time," he said, "we just try to show them — in the way we treat them and our attitudes — love.

"We serve mainly Hispanics," he said. "Ninety-nine percent of them are U.S. citizens who live in south Texas. They are income tax payers just like we are.

"They are going to jobs strictly related to farming," he explained. "About 45 to 50 percent of them will end up in Michigan in agricultural jobs and some in processing plants after the harvesting is done.

"These are family units. A third of those who visit the center will be 10 years of age or younger," he added. "A good percentage are Catholics, but we have Baptists, Pentecostals, Lutherans, Methodists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, but our ministry is the same to everybody. We've had 55 professions already this year."

The volume is "huge," he noted. "The government center will have about 40,000 total registrations in a year, going both directions. We estimate 22,000 to 25,000 different people come through every year."

Roaten said peak travel time is late May through early June. "We have 200 people or more every day come through our facility during the peak times. They return between late August and early September.

"More people will be stopping at the new location," he said. "I'm predicting a 20 to 25 percent increase soon."

FMB implements work with China Christian Council

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has been given a new opportunity to work with the China Christian Council, the Chinese government's official body for churches and ministries in China.

To implement the work, Gwen Crofts, a 20-year veteran of FMB work in Hong Kong, was appointed China ministry coordinator, effective July 15. Crofts will live in Hong Kong and direct ministries and personnel in China who work with the Chinese Christian Council.

Crofts served from 1987-95 as director of Hong Kong's Baptist Press, which publishes Christian literature for Chinese around the world.

"Gwen Crofts is a perfect fit for the task that lies ahead," said Faye Pearson, director of Foreign Mission Board work in East Asia.

Great challenges

"The challenges facing the Chinese church are great," Pearson said. "One-fifth of the world's people (1.2 billion) live in China. God has been at work in China throughout the years, and it is a privilege to learn from these Chinese Christians. Gwen will do an excellent job working in this environment."

Pearson said Crofts and other East Asia personnel "will have many opportunities to work with Amity Foundation, a social service arm of the Chinese Christian Council, to provide ministries through education, sports, music, rural development, medicine and social services.

"As our personnel work with the China Christian Council and its subsidiary social and publishing arm, the Amity Foundation, they will have the privilege to learn from Chinese Christians and support their ministries as they seek to enrich lives physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually through the betterment of their country," Pearson added.

She said reports indicate that record numbers of Chinese young people are accepting Jesus Christ as Savior, and Chinese churches often are more than half composed of these young converts.

"During their spring vacation, 53 students from the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary conducted lay training and baptism classes in churches scattered across China," Pearson said. "Many participants, after working all day, walked up to 15 miles to attend classes held at night."

"A vote for WBC's Local Church Campaign....without financial support now leaves Williams with a vote of false hope rather than a vote of support"

Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church in Hot Springs, on why he supports the Local Church Campaign at Williams Baptist College:

"Williams needs the support of our churches to move its ministry forward. A vote for WBC's Local Church Campaign at the 1995 state convention without financial support now leaves Williams with a vote of false hope rather than a vote of support."



WBC needs the support of all Arkansas Baptists to provide more scholarship dollars, and to upgrade its facilities.

For a video on the Local Church Campaign, please call the WBC Office of Institutional Advancement, 1-800-722-4434, ext. 164.

WILLIAMS
BAPTIST COLLEGE

Local Church Campaign

Draper visits state, affirms relationships

Declaring that "whatever the future holds for Southern Baptists is going to be built on the wings of relationships," Jimmy Draper put that philosophy into practice during a recent visit with Arkansas Baptist leaders.

Draper, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, has scheduled trips this year to 14 state Baptist conventions in an effort to "open lines of communications and address issues of concern to the states." His recent trip to the Baptist Building in Little Rock was his ninth such excursion of the year. He plans to visit every state convention staff in a span of three years.

"It dawned on me back in January that I know all these state executives but I had never been in their offices on their home turf," Draper explained. "I've come to feel that each of us is a steward of our influence and relationships. I felt I needed to do my part to build relationships."

With that goal in mind, Draper met with state convention executive director Emil Turner as well as convention department directors whose work relates to the Sunday School Board. "I'm here to listen,"

he emphasized. "I want to know what Arkansas is doing, what concerns they have. There is a wide range of differences and diversity that ought to be applauded and encouraged."

Turner agreed that Draper's visit "is an acknowledgement that the denomination of the future will be based on relationships between its agencies and their constituents. The stronger the relationship," Turner added, "the more healthy and viable those relationships will be."

Draper noted that staff members in several states have raised "a lot of questions about how we will do ministry for women and men; how we are going to do field service — it really touches on every area. If I don't know there is a problem, I can't fix it."

Evaluating the board's ministry role, he pointed out, "We don't have the program of Sunday School; we have the process of Sunday School. The program of Sunday School belongs to the churches."

With its numerous products geared toward local churches, however, the Sunday School Board has "networks into

the churches and we've got to strengthen those networks," he explained.

Acknowledging that his first five years as BSSB president have been challenging, he said personnel downsizing "has been the most traumatic thing I've ever gone through." The board's full-time staff has been reduced by approximately 130 employees during the board's restructuring process.

On the positive side, Draper added, "I feel good that we've been able to make substantive changes to provide more economical resources to the churches." Noting that the board has "26 to 28 good competitors" in the area of Bible study curriculum, he remarked, "We've got to be the very best at what we do if we're going to command the respect of our people."

"Change is inevitable but I think the massive changes are over," he said. "We've relied on the strength of the past while moving into new areas."

"The greatest thing is see our people cut loose to dream," he affirmed. "I tell our people it's okay to risk and fail. It's not a sin to fail. It's a sin to not move past failure."

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Baptist resources available as prayer movements grow

By Sarah Zimmerman
SBC Home Mission Board

ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)—Emphasizing that he "sees a crescendo building," Henry Blackaby said he has noticed a growing emphasis on prayer during the past three years.

"Every major denomination has prayer and revival as its number one goal," noted Blackaby, a Southern Baptist leader in prayer and spiritual awakening. "I know of at least 130 global prayer networks" of people seeking revival.

Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis, who is serving on the executive committee of a November fasting and prayer gathering, said Christians are emphasizing prayer now more than any time he can recall.

"The dire needs of our world and the decadent condition of our nation have driven Christians to our knees," Lewis declared.

Upcoming prayer-focused activities include:

■ Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff is leading convocations for pastors and other church leaders at seven seminars to emphasize prayer for spiritual awakening. The series will begin Aug. 29 and conclude Sept. 12, with one also slated for the HMB staff.

■ SBC Executive Committee chairman Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, has called for Southern Baptists to focus on prayer and fasting and to seek revival during the week of Oct. 27 to Nov. 3.

■ Celebrate Jesus 2000 is the HMB strategy to present the gospel to every American by the year 2000. The first phase of the four-year plan encourages Southern Baptists to pray specifically for

lost people during 1997.

■ The annual "See You at the Pole" prayer emphasis is set for Sept. 18. Christian students gather at their school's flagpole before class to pray for their peers and issues on their campuses.

■ A multidenominational effort called "Fasting and Prayer '96" is scheduled for Nov. 14-16 in St. Louis. Its co-chairmen are Bill and Vonette Bright, founders of Campus Crusade for Christ. In addition to Lewis, Southern Baptists on the event's executive committee include author and speaker Kay Arthur and former SBC president Adrian Rogers.

■ Presidential Prayer '96 is another movement led by the Brights and Paul Cedar, chairman of a group of evangelicals known as Mission America. Labeled "non-partisan, non-denominational and non-issuic," the prayer network encourages Christians to pray for events and candidates in the upcoming presidential election.

Several products and services are available from Southern Baptist agencies to help churches plan prayer emphases.

A special edition of *Evangelism Today* will be printed in September. Produced by the HMB evangelism staff, the publication will include articles on authentic prayer and fasting and the biblical basis for prayer and fasting. It will be mailed to pastors and associational, state and denominational leaders.

Among other current Southern Baptist resources for prayer ministries are:

■ The Watchmen Revival-Prayer Network links churches in a 24-hour prayer ministry focused on revival and spiritual awakening. Participating churches pray for one hour then call the Watchmen coordinator at the next church on the prayer chain.

The Watchmen Network is coordinated by Conrad Keil in the Home Mission Board prayer and spiritual awakening office. For more information or to participate, call Keil at 770-410-6521.

The Baptist Sunday School Board offers resources for a similar program to be used in individual churches. A Watchman Prayer Ministry planning kit, prayer guide and promotional material are available. The BSSB also offers a "Church Prayer Ministry Manual" to help churches establish prayer ministries.

■ Study books and a video on "Disciples Prayer Life: Walking in Fellowship with God" are available from the Sunday School Board. The 13-session study and thirteen 30-minute video segments help adults learn to pray through experiences.

■ Guides to praying for the president, one's spouse, family and pastor are available from the Brotherhood Commission. Each guide offers a 40-day plan to give structure to prayer in those areas.

To order material from the Home Mission Board, call 1-800-634-2462. To order from the Sunday School Board, call customer services at 1-800-458-2772. To order from the Brotherhood Commission, call 1-800-727-6466.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

Training conference to 'Share Christ's Love'

While the 1996 State Sunday School Convention will feature worship, messages and special music, the convention's main emphasis is clear: teach Arkansas Baptists to "Share Christ's Love" through 65 personalized special-interest conferences available in 138 sessions. The event will be held Sept. 20-21 at Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock.

Milton Redeker, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, said that following the Friday evening session, "consultants from seven states and Baptist Sunday School Board personnel will cover a variety of subjects that touch and meet the needs of churches."

Redeker said the many conference topics "came from conferencing questions in the state and as a direct result of needs expressed in the associational Sunday School conventions last year."

With one session time offered Friday night and three offered Saturday, Redeker said participants may choose any of four sessions from the 138 options. "They can make up their own schedules to meet their needs and the needs of their churches' Sunday Schools."

Preschool teachers will have the opportunity to attend conferences that include the topics: "Hygiene, Safety and Security," "Using the Bible with Preschoolers," "Addressing Legal Issues," "Ministering to Parents," "Establishing Positive Discipline," "Making Room for Preschoolers"

and planning sessions for babies through five-year olds.

Leaders of children's Sunday School classes can learn about topics including: "Teaching With Less Stress," "Why Kids Do What They Do," "Creative Ideas for Parental Support," "Children and Conversion," "Managing Classroom Behavior," "Learning Styles" and "I'm a New Teacher - What Are the Basics?"

Youth leader-oriented training includes: "Ministering to Youth from Different Cultures," "Creative (Off-the-Wall!) Sunday School Ideas," "How to Build Meaningful Personal Relationships with Students in Sunday School" and an overview of new curriculum.

Adult Sunday School leaders can attend such conferences as: "A New Paradigm for Reaching the Unchurched," "Helping Teachers Teach for Life-Change," "Leading Adults toward 2000," "Building the Team Spirit of the Bible Reaching-Teaching Ministry" and "Leadership 101."

Conferences for general officers represent the largest group of options for participants, including: "Prayer and Spiritual Awakening for Men," "Prayer and Spiritual Awakening for Women," "Growing Believers," "Developing Visitation Skills," "Organizing the Smaller Sunday School for Growth," "Motivating Volunteers," "Help! I'm a Pastor," "The Teaching Ministry of the Church," "Seven Stages of Outreach," "People Sharing Jesus" and conferences for directors of missions.

The convention will begin at 6:30 p.m. Friday with the opening session. Participants will hear a challenge from ABSC executive director Emil Turner and a message from keynote speaker Cliff Jenkins, a Baptist Sunday School Board consultant and pastor of New Hope Fellowship in Fayetteville.

Also included in the opening session program will be music from choirs from Levy Church in North Little Rock, First Church in Sherwood and Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock.

Also available at the convention will be High Attendance Sunday materials packets that include a calendar, attendance posters, an instruction sheet, clip art, publicity posters and attendance stickers. The packets, available for \$10 per packet, promote High Attendance Sunday, which is scheduled for Oct. 27.

"One packet will serve every 125 in attendance in churches," said Sunday School department associate Benny Grant. "I found that, as a pastor, when we had a high attendance Sunday, then the next three or four Sundays continued to stay there."

There is no cost for the convention. No child care is provided.

For additional information or to order High Attendance Sunday packets early, contact the ABSC Sunday School department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC, ext. 5128 or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791.



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Assemblies of God leaders vote to boycott Disney

SPRINGFIELD, MO (ABP/BP)—Leaders of the 2.5-million-member Assemblies of God has voted to boycott the Disney Co.

The boycott, adopted by the Pentecostal group's 250-member governing body, follows a resolution adopted in June by Southern Baptist Convention messengers. The SBC resolution called for church members to boycott Disney products and theme parks unless the company becomes more family oriented.

"In recent years we have watched with dismay the productions of the Disney Corporation abandoning the commitment to strong moral values, and have noted this moral shift in a number of Disney-sponsored films and events," stated the Assemblies of God's General Presbytery. A Disney spokesman declined to comment on the boycott.

Like the Southern Baptist action, the Assemblies of God resolution objected to the book, *Growing Up Gay*, published by a Disney subsidiary, and Disney's acquisition of Miramax, which distributed the movie "Priest," about a homosexual cleric.

The General Presbytery appealed to Assemblies of God "national and district publications to inform our constituents" of the boycott, and it asked that the denomination's Spiritual Life Committee "monitor Disney parks and theme parks until Disney returns to its former stance of producing products of high family and moral values."

In May, the denomination's executive board officially canceled the denomination's participation in the Disney theme park promotional, "Magic Kingdom Club."

The Assemblies of God is the nation's

15th largest denomination. The 16-million-member Southern Baptist Convention is the second largest, behind the Roman Catholic Church.

Others joining the call to boycott Disney include the 250,000-member National Association of Free Will Baptists, which adopted a resolution in July, and the Oklahoma State Church of God Ministerial Fellowship.

Tim Wildmon, vice president of the American Family Association, which initiated a Disney boycott in February, said, "This is just more proof that concern over Disney and its crumbling morals is not just an AFA thing or a Southern Baptist thing—it's a values thing and the values of Disney are moving away from what the average American family wants to expose their children to."

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Fall Festival of Marriage, scheduled for Oct. 25-27, to focus on intimacy

Couples will have an opportunity to help make a good marriage better as the annual Fall Festival of Marriage explores the 1996 theme, "Intimacy: To have and to hold." The retreat will be held Oct. 25-27 at the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs.

The festival is sponsored jointly by the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipline and family ministry department.

One of 22 fall marriage retreats scheduled across the United States in 1996, the retreat is expected to draw about a third of its participants from Arkansas churches.

"Last year we had 320 couples attend," noted Gerald Jackson, discipleship department associate. "More than 120 of the couples were from within the state. One Arkansas church brought 19 couples."

The weekend schedule includes three worship celebrations with a keynote speaker, video drama presentations, five workshop opportunities, free time with one's spouse and a candlelight renewal of commitment ceremony.

The keynote speaker at Hot Springs will be Arkansas native Charles Petty, a professional humorist who is president of Family Success Unlimited, based in North Carolina. He also will be featured on the program of the state convention this fall.

Music will be led by Jeff and Debby McElroy of Lubbock, Texas, a couple who share the gospel through music, comedy, mime and juggling.

The festival will feature conferences exploring the theme, including such topics

as parenting, making love last forever, communication, biblical perspective of marriage, balancing responsibilities, blended families, emotional intimacy and the five love languages.

"Marriage enrichment is a growth event," Jackson explained. "This is not a problem solver, but is for couples that already have a good thing going and want to make it better." Jackson hopes that the festival also will provide a catalyst for churches to provide marriage enrichment opportunities.

"With so much emphasis on separate issues - men's ministries, women's ministries, parenting - we need to emphasize the priority of marriage," Jackson pointed out. "Marriage enrichment is the key to strengthening families."

The cost for the festival is \$99 per couple. For those who register at least 30 days prior to the weekend, the cost is \$84. Couples must make their own arrangements for lodging at the Arlington Hotel, where a block of rooms has been reserved for the event.

"We may max out the space," Jackson said. "We almost did last year." However, he added that couples who do not pre-register are welcome to pay their registration fee and be accommodated as long as there is available space.

To register for the event, call the Baptist Sunday School Board at 1-800-254-2022. For more information, contact Jackson at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; phone 1-800-838-ABSC or 376-4791, ext. 5160.

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FMB seeks African Americans for missions careers

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Sunday School Board

RIDGECREST, NC (BP)—Of approximately 55,000 American Christians serving as foreign missionaries throughout the world, only about 100 are African Americans.

Of Southern Baptists' career foreign missions force of 4,200, only seven are black, according to David Cornelius, who is serving as black church relations consultant at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

After its establishment in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention appointed 61 African Americans as foreign missionaries in its first 30 years. In the

20th century, only 10 have been appointed.

A former foreign missionary to Ghana, Cornelius now focuses his energies on spreading the word among African American Southern Baptists that they are wanted and needed on the foreign mission field. He took his message to Black Church Leadership Week, Aug. 19-23, at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.

Despite these statistics, Cornelius is optimistic that the future is bright for African American Southern Baptists serving as career foreign missionaries.

"I'm happy to say I'm seeing change in more black Americans being interested in going to other parts of the world as missionaries," Cornelius said. "I am convinced God is calling more."

He noted that about 15 Southern Baptist African Americans currently are preparing for foreign missions service. As many as six could be appointed in 1997.

"If all 15 get to the field, we will have more serving as career missionaries than any time since the 1800s," Cornelius said.

African Americans who are interested in exploring foreign missions opportunities may contact Cornelius at 1-800-999-3113, ext. 1422.

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Needed—Full-time secretary. For information, please call 501-945-4174 or send resume to: Calvary Baptist Church, 5025 Lynch Drive, North Little Rock, AR 72117.

Seeking—Full-time minister of music and outreach sought for growing church. Send resume to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church of Troy, 800 Cap-au-Gris, Troy, MO 63739; phone 314-528-4407.

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CHURCH PLANTING

Home Mission Board unveils new church planting thrust

SCOTTSDALE, AZ (BP)—Southern Baptists need a new paradigm for 21st-century church planting, said Charles Chaney, Home Mission Board vice president for church extension.

"We need a Southern Baptist strategy of church multiplication which would entail thousands of churches committed to multiplying themselves by starting churches that would, in turn, start other congregations, reaching into every piece of the cultural, racial, socio-economic mosaic of North America," Chaney said as he announced a new "Church Planting System" to state missions directors during an Aug. 16 conference.

Although Southern Baptists have started 3.1 churches a day since 1978, 3.6 a day since 1991, and four a day two of the last three years, that is not enough, Chaney insisted.

Citing a growth of Eastern religions, cults and human secularism, Chaney said, "We desperately need new churches to reach these and all of the unreached people groups."

Russell Begaye, HMB director of language church extension, agreed. "We work with 106 ethnic groups out of 600 that exist in the United States, and we are the most ethnically diversified denomination in the world.

"Though we are the most successful denomination in establishing ethnic congregations and the fastest-growing

denomination in evangelizing ethnic groups," Begaye added, "we are losing the ethnic population to the secular world, and we are not able to keep up with the population explosion among ethnic groups."

A pilot project for the new Church Planting System, which includes mentoring and assessment of church planters and a multiplying church network, has been conducted in several states.

The mentoring phase seeks to pair every church starter with a trained minister to offer encouragement and support. Mentors guide church planters through the process of starting a new church.

Clusters of several church planters, their spouses, mentors and the new church leadership form a church planter network which meets monthly for the first year of the new church. The networks provide skill development, fellowship, prayer support and encouragement.

"Our most valuable resource in church planting is the church planter," explained Joe Hernandez, HMB assistant vice president for extension. "We can never do enough to encourage, equip and resource. This is an effort to do that."

The second part of the system is church planter assessment. Church planter candidates are assessed by a two-person team to determine if they will be effective church planters.

The third system is the multiplying church network, which is a cluster of church leaders committed to being part of a church-planting effort in their area. The networks provide encouragement and peer consultation about church planting.

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"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles..."

Isaiah 40:31

Family Bible

God still calls

By Jim Lagrone, pastor,
First Southern Church, Bryant
Basic passage: Jeremiah 1
Focal passage: Jeremiah 1:4-12
Central truth: God will make His message known.

Jeremiah began his ministry the 13th year of the reign of Josiah. It was a critical time for God's people. They were making the choice of which direction they would go. They could go back to the covenant relationship with God or they could go back completely as they had been before Josiah brought reform. Jeremiah reinforces for us that God will still make His message known.

■ *God still calls out people to share His message.* Jeremiah was born a priest, but began to function as a prophet when the Word of the Lord came upon him (v. 4). God gave him a direction from the beginning. Our modern debate over when life begins is answered in verse five. The Word tells us that God had a plan for, and even knew Jeremiah, while he was in the womb. God was going to use this man to proclaim His message to His people. God, even today, has a purpose for His creation.

■ *God still empowers His message.* Jeremiah said words similar to others in the Old Testament when he implied he was unworthy to share the Word of God. But he was assured that the power would be there. Jeremiah was not the source of strength—God was and is the source. The use of the almond tree in verse 11 reminded him that God was not asleep and would be watching. His call and message were now clear. What was the message to be?

■ *The message is that God still holds people accountable for their actions.* You see, one's past history does not protect from one's present sin. These people would see the judgment of God in spite of the fact that they had once walked mightily in His power and blessing. Jeremiah gives his people no false hope! We really do reap what we sow. Verse 16 tells us that the worship of God alone was not happening. Captivity was the result. Judgment will always come to God's people when they forsake Him for social or political convenience.

■ *We can expect God to act in the same way today.* A preacher was once heard saying, "When you are dealing with God, there is only one side—His side!" Nothing else matters.

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Life and Work

Called to maturity

By Jere D. Mitchell, pastor,
First Church, Fayetteville
Basic passage: Hebrews 5:12-6:6, 9, 12
Focal passage: Hebrews 5:12-6:6, 9, 12
Central truth: The Christian is called to mature in Christ.

Becoming a mature Christian is a challenge. The Bible teaches that believers are to grow into the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:13). In this passage, the writer of Hebrews urged readers to grow up. Their problem was wanting to return to old ways of being made right with God.

Today, people want to have multiple ways of being right with God. This temptation is great with so many world religions and cults. There is only one way of salvation, and that is through God's Son, Jesus Christ. That issue needs to be resolved and the believer needs to move on to maturity.

Verse 6:1 uses the word "press on." That indicates maturity is something gained by effort. Several people are involved in a person's spiritual maturity. Parents should teach children spiritual things. Sunday School teachers should guide classes in spiritual maturity. Pastors have a responsibility for developing disciples. Ultimately, each believer must take responsibility for his or her own spiritual growth.

Several spiritual disciplines contribute to spiritual growth: regular Bible study, prayer, witnessing, worship, ministering to the needs of others and giving of one's financial resources are all disciplines that contribute to spiritual growth. None of them are automatic. They all require time and effort. Remember, maturing in Christ is expected. It is possible. It requires work. It pays great dividends.

There is another thought in Hebrews 6:12 that believers need to consider. The writer encouraged readers to be imitators of those who had grown in maturity. Christ is our great model of maturity. Other New Testament characters provide good examples for a maturing faith. However, there are probably people around you who are living examples of a maturing relationship with God. Learn from them.

Also, look around and help someone else grow in the Lord. Encourage them, share the things Christ is teaching you. You can be a model to others. Parents, this is especially true of you. Wouldn't it be great one of these days for your child to say, "My parents are the greatest Christians I know. They have taught me so much about the Lord." May it be so.

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Bible Book

Seven visions of the end

By Rodney Reeves, pastor,
Central Church, Jonesboro
Basic passage: Revelation 19:1-21
Focal passage: Revelation 19:1-6
Central truth: Our God reigns.

While the friends of Babylon mourn her death on earth (vv. 18:9-19), praises to God are sung in heaven (vv. 18:20, 19:1-6). "Hallelujah" (praise Yahweh) is shouted four times by the heavenly host (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6). The final demonstration of divine judgment has rid the earth of the evil empire (great harlot, v. 2).

This is cause for celebration. God has avenged the righteous, the wicked endure everlasting punishment (smoke rises forever); God fulfilled His promise (v. 17:1). Curiously, it is God's judgment of the harlot that leads to the marriage of the Lamb and His virgin bride (saints in fine linen, vv. 7-8). John is told to write in an invitation, which includes a beatitude, "blessed are the invited guests" (v. 9), the true words of God (v. 9). The announcement has been made, the invitation sent out, the bride has been dressed, and the banquet is ready for the bridegroom. The reader expects the next scene to include the appearance of the bridegroom and the marriage ceremony. Instead, John sees seven visions of the ultimate revelation of the reign of God (v. 6b).

Seven times John introduces each vision with the expression, "And I saw" (vv. 19:11, 17, 19; 20:1, 4, 11; 21:1). The first three visions return to the military scene depicting the final battle between the forces of God and Satan. In each vision, John's perspective changes. From heaven, Jesus is pictured as a mighty warrior, leading the armies of heaven to do battle with "the nations" (enemies of God, vv. 11-16). Between heaven and earth, an angel commands vultures to dine on the flesh of kings and commanders (consumed during the "supper of God," vv. 17-18). Then, the seer is taken to earth, where the rulers gather to make war against the horseman and his army (vv. 19-21). In every scene, the actual battle is never described. John only sees what happens before and after the final conflict. The beasts are captured, "thrown alive" into the lake of fire (eternal damnation), while "the rest" (kings, commanders, mighty men) are killed by the sword of Jesus' mouth (judged by the Word of God, vv. 20-21). The final battle will reveal that Jesus is indisputably KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (v. 16).

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Family Bible

Obedience is required

By Jim Lagrone, pastor,
First Southern Church, Bryant
Basic passage: Jeremiah 7
Focal passage: Jeremiah 7:1-11, 23-26
Central truth: A true walk with God is illustrated by an obedient walk with God.

Shocked! Saddened! Surprised! Those words should describe one's reaction to the description of the believers that Jeremiah displays in chapter seven. The lack of obedience to the commandments of God were displayed everywhere. Yet the people saw no problem in going to the temple to offer sacrifices to the living God. Live one way, worship another way — no strings attached. This passage could have been written about modern-day believers.

■ *False religion will bring punishment.* A sort of religious tradition and even a holy building do not offer protection for those who engage in false worship. An unjust society is the end result of a people building their lives without God. He alone is the authority on ethics and the way we treat one another. This especially is true in the way we treat those less fortunate. The people even believed that they could live as they choose, worship any god, listen to any words and everything would be okay in their life. False religion always will result in punishment!

■ *Believers cannot separate their walk with God and their actions.* The people were content with being hypocritical in their lifestyle. One cannot serve two masters. God's people need to remember all of God's Word, not just the parts they may like. In Jeremiah's day, the people conveniently forgot the call of a moral lifestyle and preferred to act as they wanted. In their arrogance, they would then ask God to bless their lives. A speaker once defined a hypocrite as "someone who complains about the nudity, gross violence and filthy language — on their VCR."

■ *Obedience is required for God's blessings to flow.* The blessings of God and obedience to God are intertwined. You cannot separate the two, even though people continue to try. Disobedience also will lead to punishment. Just as the presence of the tabernacle in Shiloh did not save that city from falling, so the presence of the temple would not save Jerusalem. The same is true today. There is no army, no holy place, no navy that will save disobedient people. God is still on His throne!

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Life and Work

Called to faithful living

By Jere D. Mitchell, pastor,
First Church, Fayetteville
Basic passage: Hebrews 11:1-2, 5-6,
13-16, 39-40
Focal passage: Hebrews 11:1-2, 5-6,
13-16, 39-40
Central truth: God expects every Christian to trust Him and walk by faith.

Several years ago, I saw a poster caption that said, "Faith is walking to the edge of all the light you have and taking one more step." The writer of Hebrews said that faith is the "the conviction of things not seen" (v. 1). If you already know everything and how it turns out, it is not faith. The exception to that is knowing everything is going to be okay and you are going to be provided for because God is in charge. That is faith.

There is a lot of misunderstanding today about faith, because some teach that if you have enough faith, nothing will ever go wrong in your life. Life will be smooth, healthy and happy. The problem with that is the Scripture. Daniel had faith and landed in a pit of hungry lions. Jesus had faith and died on a cross, the object of scorn and ridicule. Countless others have had faith and were beaten, persecuted and killed.

Faith is easy to define and talk about, but difficult to live. It is saying:

"I don't understand how a man can die and then come back from the dead, but I will believe it and trust God to save me from myself and my sin.

"I don't know how we can give 10 percent or more of our income to the Lord's work, but I will.

"I don't know if I can share Christ with my neighbor, but I will.

"I don't know how I can make it without my wife, husband, child or parent who has just died, but with God's help, I will.

"I don't know how I can leave a secure career and answer God's call to ministry, but I will.

"I don't know what I will do since the divorce, but I will trust God to help me."

Faith is for now as well as hereafter. Without faith, it is impossible to please God and walk where He leads, because He goes some places you have never seen before. Faith is an adventure and demands courage and patience. Faith is more than just saying you will trust God. It is actually taking that one more step when you have come to the edge of all the light that you have.

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Bible Book

Seven end visions, part II

By Rodney Reeves, pastor,
Central Church, Jonesboro
Basic passage: Revelation 20:1-15
Focal passage: Revelation 20:4-6
Central truth: The last judgment is final.

Where the first three visions recount the final battle of Christ overcoming the beasts (vv. 19:11-21), the next three visions picture God's mastery over Satan (dragon, vv. 1-15). Rather than a battlefield, a courtroom appears as the venue of Satan's demise in the fourth vision (vv. 1-3). Without a fight, Satan is arrested and sent to prison (the abyss, the home of the destroyer, v. 9:1). His temporary punishment precludes the deception of the nations for the length of his incarceration (1,000 years, v. 3). Evil is held in check as God's kingdom reign is established by the enthronement of the co-regents of Christ (martyrs and faithful witnesses) in the second vision (vv. 4-6). Notice that no specific location of the kingdom reign is mentioned, whether in heaven or on earth. The realm of the reign is seen in their resurrection from the dead (sharing in Christ's resurrection, v. 5-6). The kingdom of priests (the Church, v. 5:10) escape the second death (lake of fire, v. 14) because they overcame the enemy and remained faithful witnesses to the end (v. 4).

Before the sixth vision of the last judgment (vv. 11-15), Satan's temporary release from prison leads to his last resurrection (vv. 7-10). Once again, Satan tries to get others to do his work. This time he gathers "Gog and Magog," the archetypal enemies of God (Ezek. 38-39), to make war on the saints (Rev. 13:7), laying siege to the "beloved city" (v. 9). The outcome is the same as Ezekiel predicted: fire from heaven consumes those opposed to God (Ezek. 38:22, Rev. 20:9). The devil meets the same fate as the beasts: evil is destroyed forever (v. 10).

Ultimately, the final judgment concerns not the beasts, the demons or Satan. The last judgment deals with humanity (vv. 11-15). Scrolls are unsealed as "the dead" (those who did not share in the first resurrection) are judged by the contents of the scrolls (vv. 12-13). One scroll in particular, however, determines their eternal destiny. Whether "great or small," those whose names were not found in the scroll of life (unbelievers, v. 3:5) were doomed to the second death where Satan, death and Hades meet their end (v. 14).

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Ohio court rejects appeal effort to halt voucher plan

WASHINGTON (ABP)—An Ohio appeals court has refused to block implementation of a voucher program that will use tax dollars to help low-income students attend religious and other private schools in Cleveland.

The ruling is the second to uphold the \$5.25 million voucher program. In July, Franklin County Judge Lisa Sadler rejected arguments that the program would violate the Constitution's requirement of church-state separation.

Lawyers appealing Sadler's ruling had asked Ohio's 10th Judicial District Court of Appeals to halt the program pending outcome of the appeal, but the appeals court turned down the request.

Ohio's pilot voucher program will pay \$2,250 in private school tuition for low-income students. Of the 671 students who had been accepted into the program as of June 13, at least 580 had selected religiously affiliated schools. Of the first 54 private schools registered for the program, only four were not affiliated with a religious organization, according to court documents.

Voucher opponents say such programs rob needed funds from public schools and could open the door to indirect government funding of sectarian schools.

See You at the Pole leaders request on-line reports

ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)—This year's See You at the Pole participants can report results of their gatherings on-line.

See You at the Pole is the annual meeting at school flagpoles for students to pray before class, said Dean Finley, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board youth evangelism specialist. See You at the Pole is the third Wednesday each September, making this year's date Sept. 18.

This year participants can report results of their meeting on the youth evangelism Internet home page. The address is <http://www.ozarksol.com/youthsbc>. Results also can be sent to the CompuServe address of 103441,2742.

In previous years, reports have indicated as many as 60,000 students participated in See You at the Pole, Finley said. With the ease of electronic reporting, he hopes to have quicker, more accurate information. People who report their participation will be asked the name of their school and the number of participants.

People without computer access can phone or fax results to 417-862-1111 or write Youth Evangelism Office, 906 S. National, Springfield, MO 65804.

BSSB initiates study to explore possible name change

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—As a continuing step in preparing for its 21st-century ministry, the Baptist Sunday School Board has named a 19-member employee committee and contracted with an outside consultant to study the name of the board, according to BSSB president James T. Draper Jr.

"We are entering this process with no preconceived ideas about whether our name should be changed," Draper said.

In the last five years, he added, the board has introduced a new vision statement, core values, operating principles and business and financial objectives. Also, the board has been restructured and processes are being re-tooled to continuously improve products and services.

"Evaluating our name and making a conscious decision to retain it or make a change is a logical next step," Draper said. "With the Southern Baptist Convention undergoing major restructuring, including name changes for several denominational entities, this seems to be the right time to look at our name."

He said Mike Arrington, executive director for corporate affairs, is coordinating the project. Anspach Grossman Enterprise, a national firm specializing in identity and name change, has been selected to work with the committee.

Southwest Baptist University names Taylor president

BOLIVAR, MO (BP)—C. Pat Taylor was elected president of Southwest Baptist University Aug. 20 in a special meeting of trustees at the Bolivar, Mo., campus.

Taylor, 50, currently serves as provost at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. He will succeed Roy Blunt, SBU president since 1993, who is seeking election to the U.S. Congress in November. Blunt had announced he would leave the presidency by Dec. 31.

A native of Kentucky, Taylor has served as chief academic officer at Oklahoma Baptist University since 1986. In addition, he has been a professor of education. Earlier he served in several academic and administrative roles at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn. He is a graduate of Memphis State University, Western Kentucky University, and the University of Tennessee, Martin.