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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1985-1989

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

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12-8-1988

**December 8, 1988**

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Breaking the Shell

# Arkansas Baptist

December 8, 1988



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FMB art

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*This spring Arkansas Baptists will host an event in which several dozen new missionaries will be appointed for service overseas. Plan now to be involved.*

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## IT'S UPLIFTING

### Relief Work Produces Church

GAZANKULU, South Africa (BP)—An African mechanic, a village chief and a Baptist relief program have produced a strong church in a corner of South Africa, hundreds of miles from any Baptist work.

Dinga Baptist Church averaged an attendance of 35 adults and 100 children within 10 weeks of its start.

Pastor Peter Khoza intentionally delays baptizing new converts who come from a variety of backgrounds. "We want to solidify their faith and their understanding of what it means to be a Baptist."

Surprisingly, Dinga Church, the first to grow out of the relief project, began in the village of Dinga, not in one of the 23 refugee camps where Baptists minister.

"The chief in Dinga has been unusually supportive of the refugees," Khoza points out. "He has allowed them to build permanent houses and to integrate into the community."

Last January Fabian, a Mozambican refugee employed as a mechanic in a local driving school, told Khoza of his concern for the many spiritually needy people in Dinga. The refugee aid program is not allowed outside recognized government camps, but spiritual aid has no such limits. Fabian opened his home for a Bible study.

Khoza seized the opportunity to establish "a fixed work which would reach both local people and refugees—and would not fall apart if the refugees left."

A Bible study was started, and the congregation had its own permanent building by mid-April.

## GOOD NEWS!

### Life's Prohibitions

On of the marks of immaturity is a belief that we can have anything we want. We can't. In God's economy, there are some things we cannot have.

J. B. Phillips translated Galatians 6:7: "Don't be under any anger: You cannot make a fool of God! A man's harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows." Paul was suggesting that cultivating the spiritual life will bring blessedness and harmony, but life has some prohibitions with which we dare not tamper. We cannot sow thorns and reap daisies. We cannot bear God's name and live like children of the devil.

Because God's law undergirds the world he created, there are some things life denies us, some things we cannot have:

*We cannot have sin without suffering*—One of the greatest needs of our day is to put the label back on sin. We have excused it, condoned it, ignored it, dismissed it. We need to recognize sin for what it is and what it will do to us.

Sinning affects us in a way totally different from any other human experience. It leads us blindly into a vicious cycle of deceit. The more we sin, the less we know about sin; the less we know about sin, the more we are deceived by sin; the more we are deceived, the more we sin; the more we sin, the more we suffer. We cannot have sin without suffering.

*We cannot have success without sacrifice*—The world is full of bargain hunters, people who are trying to get something for nothing. But there are no shortcuts to Christian maturity, no short

cuts to building the church. Jesus affirmed this when he was tempted by Satan to take shortcuts in establishing his kingdom. Christ wisely chose the longer, surer way of teaching, preaching, healing, and showing love. He succeeded in his divine mission, but it cost him his life. You cannot have success without sacrifice.

*We cannot have salvation without surrender*—Trust and commitment are key words in the Christian vocabulary. Salvation in the sense of maturing is not completed by merely trusting Christ. Trusting, like being born, is a beginning. We are born to a new life through trust, but we must complete our salvation through a growing process. For our salvation to be complete, we must surrender our wills, as well as our hearts, to his lordship. We cannot have salvation without surrender.

A minister, speaking in a college chapel, said with strong feeling, "No matter what rights you may feel you have, there are some things a Christian cannot do."

After the service a student approached the speaker and said belligerently: "I consider myself a Christian, sir. What right do you have to tell me there are things I cannot do? Why can't I do anything I please?"

The minister answered quietly, "Because you bear the name, son."

God's laws of life are unchangeable. There are some things we cannot do, some things we cannot have, because we bear his name.

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# Balancing Our History

J. EVERETT SNEED

It is extremely important that Southern Baptists understand the historical factors that have shaped our denomination. Only through a correct synthesizing of the priorities of our Baptist forefathers have we become the greatest evangelistic denomination in the world today. Any drastic rearrangement of this balance could have very undesirable consequences.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, at least four distinct groups of Baptists emerged in the South. Each of these groups correctly believed that the emphasis that they made was drawn from the Scriptures. Each group, however, emphasized its perspective almost to the total exclusion of other needed perspectives.

The first of these groups emerged in Charleston, S.C. It had its roots in the Particular Baptists of England. The Charleston Baptists believed that every individual must have a religious experience and that the Scripture is the sole authority for faith and practice.

We are indebted to this group of Baptists for its emphasis on theological order. In 1767 the Charleston Association adopted and adapted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. It became known as the Charleston Confession. It was Calvinistic in character and became a consensus of Baptist theology in the South.

The Charleston Baptists placed great emphasis on the formal worship experience and the role of the minister in the church and the community. Naturally, they were great believers in the value of education. As a result a number of Baptist colleges, as well as Southern Seminary, were born.

The second group to have an impact on Southern Baptists of today were the Baptists of Sandy Creek, N.C. They were noted for their evangelistic fervor and can be traced back to the Separate Baptists. They came to New England during the era of the Great Awakening.

They believed in religious freedom and had much to do with the establishment of separation of church and state in the South. Because of their emphasis on freedom of individual conscience, they were reluctant to sign any confession of faith.

The Baptists of Sandy Creek were evangelistic in worship. Their ministry was charismatic and they were ruggedly independent. It sometimes was difficult to



determine if they were Calvinistic, moderately Calvinistic or Arminian (believed in falling from grace). They placed little importance on education. They gave to Southern Baptists an evangelistic fervor which has never been matched by any other major denomination.

The third group of Baptist forefathers to have had an impact on Southern Baptists are those of Georgia. This group of Baptists gave us the cooperative method of working together. They placed great emphasis on missions.

With the forming of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, a new kind of denominational structure was born, which was more cooperative than Baptists had ever been in the past.

We are indebted to the Georgia Baptists to a large extent for our mission boards

(home and foreign). But this group of Baptists left a tradition of sectionalism which remained with us for many years, affecting our relationship with the blacks and our outreach beyond the South until recent times. We are indebted to this group, however, for our emphasis on cooperative organization and for our worldwide mission fervor.

The final group of Baptists who have had an impact on Southern Baptists are those from Tennessee. The leader of this group was J.R. Graves. This group left a legacy of both internal and external debating. Because of this heritage several groups of Baptists have emerged and some Baptist groups have been very quick to divide over minor issues. The Tennessee Baptists, however, contributed greatly to our pride in our Baptist distinctives and also assisted us in seeing the importance of local churches.

We owe much to our Baptist forefathers. Each of these groups have provided emphases which have helped to make the Southern Baptist Convention what it is today. Through the years we have been able to combine the strength of these groups, while many of the weaknesses have been eliminated.

We do well, however, to see the weaknesses of the teachings and practices of our forefathers. We must make every effort to not re-inject these weaknesses into contemporary Baptist life. Finally, we should remember that, because many factors have influenced us, inevitably some differences will exist from one individual to another. Baptists have long cooperated despite minor differences of opinion. Our future depends on the continuation of our cooperation.

## Arkansas Baptist

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Mark Kelly . . . . . Managing Editor

Erwin L. McDonald, Litt. D. . . . . Editor Emeritus

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DON MOORE

## You'll Be Glad To Know



Tragedy almost everywhere is met by some part of our Southern Baptist family bringing help and hope. An earthquake in Guatemala or Mexico City, a hurricane in the gulf, a tornado in Lonoke or Scott; wherever tragedy goes, Southern Baptists go. We don't just go where Southern Baptists are; we go where hurting people are.

Recently our Foreign Mission Board provided \$750,000 to our missionaries in Bangladesh. They will oversee the distribution of food and rebuilding assistance to the tens of thousands left homeless after their recent floods. Their witness and acts of mercy will be used of God to further open the door of opportunity for the gospel in their basically Muslim country. Average income in Bangladesh is \$200 per year.

I know you feel good about this. This type story could be multiplied many times over. Southern Baptists can help because they are there and because their Southern Baptist brothers and sisters back home provide financial support in confidence that God will faithfully bless the witness of the Word and the witness of love given by our missionaries.

Could we do more? That is a good question. The answer is obvious. Yes! Out of more than 240 countries, we only have missionaries in 113 countries. In some of those countries, we just have one or two couples.

Could we do less? That is the most piercing question of the hour. The answer is not so obvious. But, again the answer is, yes! In fact, next year all Foreign Mission Board operating budgets are being cut by 12 percent. This is the first time since the Great Depression that Southern Baptists have taken such a backward step. I do not know a single Southern Baptist who is pleased about this. But, the question remains, who will do anything about it? You are the only hope!

You can begin to give or increase your gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering! You can urge your fellow church members to join you in a burden of prayer for church-wide growth in mission giving.

Let's keep going where the people are... where the needs are!

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

MISSIONS ADVANCE 87-89

## Has It Been Successful?

"Missions Advance 87-89" has about four months remaining before completion of this emphasis. Has it been successful? Have Cooperative Program receipts been impacted significantly? How many churches have had a speaker?

These are the questions most often asked about "Missions Advance 87-89." The answers are not easy, except as to how many churches have had a speaker. To date, 267 churches have had a message or presentation about missions support through the Cooperative Program.

At first that may not sound like many, but it represents about 21 percent of our churches. If that many churches increase their Cooperative Program giving over the next few years, it will make a difference.

Has "Missions Advance 87-89" been successful? Yes! When you think of 116 speakers who are committed to Cooperative Program giving and 267 churches who have had a speaker, you better believe it has been successful. Also, as I travel around the state, I sense a greater awareness about Cooperative Program giving. People are aware of "Missions Advance 87-89" and what it is all about.

Have Cooperative Program receipts been impacted significantly? Now that is

a more difficult question. In fact, the jury is still out on this question. This question will not be fully answered until the end of 1989. We do have plans to complete a thorough study of churches involved in "Missions Advance 87-89." We shall be able to determine if Cooperative Program receipts have increased in these churches and how much increase has occurred.

Our 1988 Cooperative Program receipts are 3.96 percent over the receipts for January-October 1987. Certainly, all of that increase cannot be attributed to "Missions Advance 87-89." But, the question is, what kind of increase would be evident if "Missions Advance 87-89" had not been part of our plan for the last 20 months?

"Missions Advance 87-89" is an emphasis born in the heart of several pastors. It is, as we like to say, a "grassroots" plan, but much work remains to be done. We have the opportunity to reach another 100 or more churches before the emphasis ends.

If your church would like to have a speaker, at no cost to your church, just call my office, 376-4791. You still have time to be part of this challenging emphasis.—**Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director**

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## A SMILE OR TWO

"Criticism is cheap because of the abundant supply and the limited demand."  
—Cullen Hightower

"Success is simply a matter of luck. Ask any failure."  
—Earl Wilson

# Food & Fellowship

## Goodbye

VIRGINIA KIRK & JANE PURTLE



"May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all."

With this column we end almost 15 years of sharing our ideas and observations about food and fellowship in Baptist churches. Thank you, readers, for your attention and response to our column. Every month has been fun for us. Thanks also to Dr. Sneed for his encouragement and patience over the years.

Many of you have asked about a cookbook of the recipes from this column. We hope to undertake that project soon. Our column began with the conviction that food is central to our Christian lives—at home and at church. It ends with the same conviction. Eating together was central in Christ's ministry and in the early church. Preparation and serving of food are basic acts of love we experience throughout our lives. The daily bread which God provides each of us reminds us of God's love for us and our dependence upon God.

Our lives have changed in 15 years. I now live alone and teach English at a Methodist junior college. I am building a small log cabin in the country a mile or two from my birthplace. I invite you for tea or supper when you are in the Piney Woods of East Texas.

Each of us chose a favorite recipe for reprinting this month. Breads top my list of foods; and among the quick breads, I make this pumpkin bread more often than any other.

### Pumpkin bread

3 1/2 cups flour	2 teaspoons nutmeg
3 cups sugar	2 teaspoons soda
4 eggs	1 teaspoon salt
1 cup oil	1 pound can pumpkin
2/3 cup water	1 cup raisins
3 teaspoons cinnamon	1 cup nuts, chopped (optional)

Cream sugar and eggs. Add oil, water, flour, spices, soda, salt and pumpkin. Mix. Add raisins and nuts. Pour into small loaf pans and bake for 40-50 minutes at 325 degrees. Makes 6-7 small loaves or 2-3 larger loaves.

*Jane*

In March of 1974, Dr. Sneed, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist*, allowed Jane and me to be a monthly part of the magazine with the "Food and Fellowship" column. What a pleasure it has been for us! Thank you, Dr. Sneed. Thank you, gracious readers.

At that time Jane and I were neighbors here in Batesville and both of us had children at home. Actually we will always be neighbors although Jane lives in Texas now. The children are all grown and on their own. We now have one sweet little grandson, and within a year we expect two more grandchildren. How special they are.

My husband and I are retired and enjoy a bit of motor home traveling, along with a few horse shows, which are my husband's love. This stage of life is exciting and wonderful in a completely different way. God has been good to us and we are thankful.

The recipe I am sharing once more is a favorite dessert. The bowl is always scraped clean and the recipe requested. It appeared in the August 1974 column.

### Strawberry icebox dessert

2 1/2 cups vanilla wafer crumbs	1 quart strawberries, sweetened to taste (fresh or frozen, slightly thawed)
1 stick margarine, softened	1/2 cup chopped pecans (optional)
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar	
1 carton whipped topping	

Spread 1 1/2 cups vanilla wafer crumbs in a large glass serving bowl. Beat the margarine and powdered sugar to a fluffy mixture and spread over the crumbs. Spread mixture to the side of the bowl and seal. Pour sweetened strawberries over this mixture. Cover with the rest of the vanilla wafer crumbs.

Spread whipped topping over this. Sprinkle with pecans. Decorate with a marachino cherry. Serves 10-12.

*Virginia*

Virginia Kirk, professor emeritus at Arkansas College, is a member of Batesville First Church. Jane Purtle teaches at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, Texas. They have enjoyed cooking together for several years.

## Letters to the Editor

### Pastors Renewed

I attended the Arkansas-Southern Baptist Convention and Pastors' Conference this week as a layperson. Arkansas Baptists sitting in the pew next Sunday may notice a change in their pastor. You can expect to find a holy man of God in your pulpit! You may sense a new determination and resolve in his attitude as he realizes that his obligation is to please God. You may find a new emphasis on equipping the congregation for evangelism.

My prayer is that you will support him and encourage him to be that holy man of God. I pray that you will be willing to enlist in the army of God and march behind your commander to win the lost in your church, school and neighborhood. Leadership is of no value without followership.

If your pastor desires a closer walk with God, I encourage you to plan your church calendar around the date of next year's Pastors' Conference. He will be blessed, and so will you.—Robin Cook, Magnolia

### October Cooperative Program Report

Received . . . . . \$1,073,096.82  
Budget . . . . . \$1,072,525.00  
Over budget . . . . . \$571.82

#### Year-to-date

Under budget . . . \$239,539.02

#### Same time last year

Under budget . . . \$198,443.78

Since early this year, our projections have indicated that Cooperative Program gifts would equal between 96 and 98 percent of budget requirements for the year. This projection still holds, even with the great month we had in October. Receipts totalled 100.05 percent of monthly budget needs. Praise God for this wonderful blessing.

Through October, churches have given 97.77 percent of budget requirements for this period of time. This represents a 3.95 percent increase over the same period of time in 1987. Let's just praise the Lord for what he has accomplished this year and what he will do the next two months.—Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director

BOB PARKER

## Today's Issues

### Habits Are OK

Aren't you glad people with whom you associate habitually brush their teeth, bathe, use deodorant and take care of other personal physical needs? Good habits are needed for physical reasons. They are also more desperately needed for spiritual, eternal reasons.

The biographies and autobiographies of those men and women who have been and are spiritual leaders usually reveal that they habitually had a time of private, daily prayer. Such a practice likely came from their obeying the teaching and following the example of Jesus.

Many complaints are often heard about not having prayer in school and in other public places. We should be much more concerned about the fact that most professed Christians do not habitually spend a time alone with God each day as Jesus practiced and taught. Yes, it's true that Paul spoke of praying without ceasing, and that we should always be in places and circumstances

where prayer could be privately or publicly uttered without embarrassment. But we do, however, need to set aside a time in our usually busy schedules to communicate with our wonderful Lord.

The model and intercessory prayers of Jesus are good guides. "The family that prays together, stays together," but better yet, the individual that habitually, privately prays everyday is better prepared for family prayer.

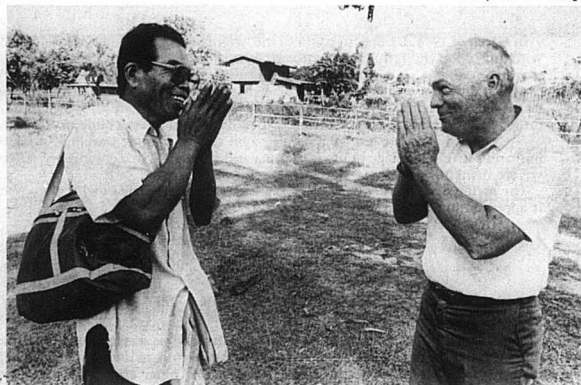
Yes, it's okay to have good physical habits, but for spiritual cleansing, guidance, wisdom and power we must daily, habitually keep an appointment with our Lord!

By the way, it is possible to detect or guess who acts and smells good spiritually? One who is frowning, complaining and being judgmental is likely not spending much time alone with the Master.

Robert A. Parker is director of the Christian Life Council.



FMB photo / Don Rutledge



**Thai greeting**—Bob Spear, Southern Baptist church planter in Thailand, gives a traditional Thai greeting to Tin, one of only 200 Christians in the province of 300,000 people where Spear and his wife, Jeannie, work. The Spears are among more than 3,800 Southern Baptist foreign missionaries who will be the beneficiaries of this week's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. The 1988 offering goal is \$84 million dollars. (See related story, p. 14.)



# Preschool Personality

*Teacher's Work a Calling, Not a Chore*

by Linda Lawson

Baptist Sunday School Board

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. (BP)—Sheri Babb spends the Sunday School hour on her knees, gently guiding the toddlers in her department from one activity to the next, smiling not only with her mouth but with her eyes.

She has a "preschool personality."  
"There are some people the Lord has given the gift of being preschool workers," says Sheri's husband, Bob, co-director of the Sunday School at Westmoreland Baptist Church in Huntington, W.Va., and chairman of the computer science department at Marshall University. "People with preschool personalities have a gentle spirit, are soft-spoken and see their role as teachers, not babysitters."

Sheri Babb is preschool coordinator at her church as well as director of the toddler department, one of six preschool departments. She is also a special worker for the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists.

She has a multi-dimensional relationship with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board as a preschool curriculum writer, conference leader at Ridgecrest and Glorieta conference centers and as a trustee.

Sheri Babb may sound like someone who was enrolled in a Southern Baptist Cradle Roll before she was born, but, in fact, the times she attended church as a child usually were occasions when she sneaked off from home.

She recalled sitting in a pew by herself, looking at other children her age sitting with their parents and determining, "When I grow up I'm going to get married and have a family like that."

Not growing up in a Christian home,

Sheri Babb had to learn by observation what many children are taught by their parents.

For example, she did not know what prayer was all about. Looking around at adults during times of prayer in worship services, she saw a woman picking lint off her clothes. So, she decided, prayer is a time when you clean your clothes.

"I'm glad I can laugh about that now," she said. "However, children in similar circumstances can get embarrassed about what they don't know and drop out of church."

"Whenever adults are with preschoolers and children, they are teaching," she emphasized.

In addition to Sunday School teachers, Babb cites the influence of Southern Baptist literature in her life. The list reads like a Church Literature Order Form: Home Life, Open Windows, Encounter!, Beginning, Living, Growing More, Adventure, Mature Living, church training Equipment Center modules, Bible Learners, Discoverers and Searchers, Living with Preschoolers, Children and Teenagers.

"When I suggest doing something new, my children look at each other and say, 'Mom's read another book,'" she laughed. Sheri and Bob are the parents of three daughters, Renee, D'Lee, and Kara.

In addition to serving as Sunday School director, Bob Babb has taught with Sheri in a preschool department at Ridgecrest and is working on his preschool Sunday School leadership diploma. She is working toward her Sunday School general administration diploma.

"It would be hard to live with Sheri and not work with preschoolers," he quipped.

Bob, a member of the West Virginia convention's executive board, is supportive of

Sheri's denominational activities.

"When we moved to West Virginia we both felt the Lord had something special for us. I believe what he had in mind for me was supporting her in her work. A side benefit is I think I've gotten to know my girls better than a lot of daddies."

As a preschool conference leader and curriculum writer, Sheri Babb affirms constant evaluation of Southern Baptist literature produced by the Sunday School

(BP) photo / Jim Vaneman



Sherri Babb

Board. She praised recent additions of more Bible songs, the use of the Read to Me Bible and more conservation using Bible content with preschoolers.

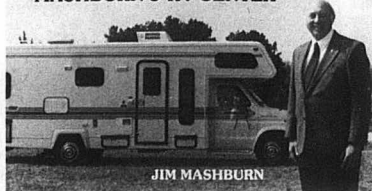
At the same time, she urged, "we must remember that every teacher, parent and pupil is under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We must make room for the Holy Spirit to do his work."



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# LOCAL & STATE

## Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

### People

**Lamar Frizzell** is serving as pastor of Lakeshore Estates Church, West Memphis.

**Timothy C. McIntyre** is serving as pastor of Goodwin Church.

**Ronnie Lace** is serving as pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Wynne.

**Gearl Spicer** was honored Nov. 20 by Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock in recognition of five years of service as minister of education and administration. His wife, Cindy, and their children, Ashley and Caleb, also were recognized at the reception which followed the evening worship service.

**Michael Bradley** of Walnut Ridge is serving as pastor of Sedgwick Church. He and his wife, Kathy, have a daughter, Kristie.

**Douglas Duncan** is serving as pastor of First Church of Kensett, coming there from Central Church of Mineral Springs.

**Roger D. Amon** and **Nadean Riley Bell**, students at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, have been named to *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges*. Amon is a native of Fort Smith and Bell is a native of Van Buren.

**J.W. Royal**, a retired Southern Baptist minister, died Nov. 25 at age 84. He was a board member and active volunteer worker at Baptist Medical System, a former member of the Baptist Medical System in Memphis, and formerly pastored churches in Benton, Judsonia, and Hot Springs. Memorials may be made to Parkway Village Retirement Community in Little Rock. Survivors are a son, Jim Royal of Little Rock; a daughter, Carolyn Neal of Little Rock; a sister, Lois Strauss of Malvern; and five grandchildren.

**Royce Christmas** and **Billy Kimbrough** were recognized Nov. 1 at an appreciation banquet sponsored by the church extension division of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Missions Department. Christmas, pastor of First Church of Marshall, and Kimbrough, pastor of First Church of Alma, were presented plaques by Floyd Tidsworth for their leadership in launching new missions.

**John McAllister**, a member of First Church of El Dorado, recently assisted in remodel-

ing mobile chapels for the ABCS Missions Department, one of which will be used for a hispanic mission sponsored by First Church of DeQueen.

**David Brown** began serving Dec. 4 as pastor of Brookwood First Church of Little Rock.

**Gene Davis** began serving Nov. 30 as pastor of Shannon Hills First Church.

**Milton Cowling** has resigned as minister of music and education at Bryant First Southern Church to continue his education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Glenn Jackson** is serving Woodlawn Church of Little Rock as minister of music.

**Jim Williams** has resigned as minister of education at Second Church of Russellville to serve as pastor of Calvary Church of Dardanelle.

**Jerry Gay** has accepted a call to join the staff of First Church of Stuttgart of minister of education and music. He is a graduate of the University of North Alabama and Arkansas Bible College in Hot Springs. He has served churches in Alabama and Arkan-

sas. Gay and his wife, Rebecca Ann, have two children, Chad, 15, and Jennifer, 12.

**Carl Overton**, who has been serving as pastor of Creekwood Church of Muncie, Ind., has retired and returned to Arkansas. He is residing at 203 Troupe Street, Hot Springs, AR 71901; telephone 501-624-0506.

**Charles Holms** is serving as pastor of Harmony Church of Perryville.

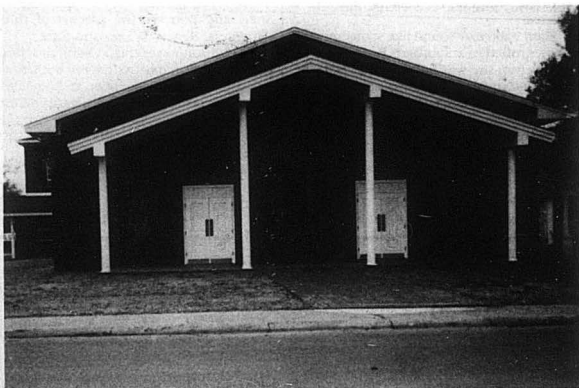
**Gregg Keen** has joined the staff of First Church of Stamps as youth director. He is a sophomore at Ouachita Baptist University.

**Hubert Ekstrum** is serving as interim pastor of Macedonia Second Church of Doddridge.

**James Crabtree** is serving as pastor of Piney Grove Church of Lewisville. He and his wife, Javene, and their three children moved there from Arkadelphia where he is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

**George Wormington** is serving as pastor of South Texarkana Church.

**Mike Swint** is serving as minister of music and youth at Sylvesterino Church of Fouke.



*First Church of Lake City recently dedicated three new buildings: a sanctuary, an educational building, and a parsonage. Pastor Wayne Sanders coordinated the construction with Henry Stone, chairman of the building committee, who served as volunteer contractor. Serving on the building committee were Lilly Anderson, Sherry Ladd, Ron Nunnally, James Wallace, Ronnie Smith, and Terry Short. Stained glass windows, doors, pews, pew cushions, and pulpit furniture from an old building were used to furnish the new sanctuary. The building, valued at \$875,000, was constructed at a cost of \$220,000 with members supplying volunteer labor.*

## Briefly

**Little Rock Second Church** ordained Brad Banister, Hal Hall, Carron Hocut, Jim Jones, and Joe Keeton to the deacon ministry Nov. 27.

**Wynne Church** five-member mission team, composed of Mike Wood, Bill Winkler, Harrell Williams, Vance Perkins, and Hoyt Futrell, left Nov. 27 for Buenos Aires, Argentina, where they are spending two weeks roofing the Martin Coronado Church, doing personal witness, and aiding in an evangelistic crusade. Another group will depart in January to do volunteer mission work.

**Sedgwick Church** observed homecoming Nov. 6 with activities that included morning services, a noon meal, and an afternoon service. Former pastor Bill Ladd of Texas preached the morning service. Special music was by Carl Myer of Ash Flat, David Hoffman, the Whitmire Family, Mr. and Mrs. John Lakey of Walnut Ridge, and Eddie Harris of Poplar Bluff, Mo.

**Nashville First Church** broke ground Dec. 1 for the construction of an educational building, estimated to cost \$715,000. The church has just completed a Together We Build commitment program in which 185 families committed to \$500,000 over the next three years. Dwayne Fischer of Little Rock, program consultant for the Southern Baptist Convention Stewardship Commission, was director. Keith Miller of Little Rock is architect. Granville Parnell is building committee chairman. David Blase is pastor.

**South Highland Church** of Little Rock will launch a new ministry in January when they sponsor a Bible study in the home of Jim and Judy Wheeler in Shackelford Road Mobile Home Park.

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# 'Commission '89'

## Service Will Highlight 'God's Way to the World'

by Mark Kelly  
Managing Editor, Arkansas Baptist

You don't usually get to plan life-changing experiences. Most of the time, they just seem to happen.

But Arkansas Baptists can begin planning now for an event that may well turn out to be a major turning point in their 140-year history.

Tuesday, April 11, 1989, more than 6,000 Arkansas Baptists will pack the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock to take part in the appointment of several dozen new missionaries.

The service, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, is one of six such events each year in which new foreign missionaries are formally set aside for their assignments overseas. It will be only the second time a missionary appointment service has been held in Arkansas.

Two Arkansas Baptist leaders are working to make it a life-changing experience.

Bud Fray, chairman of the religion department at Ouachita Baptist University, and Rex Holt Jr., pastor of Central Church in Jonesboro, have been co-chairmen of a committee responsible for spiritual preparation prior to the service. Both men are former foreign missionaries and both believe the service holds in store "a real outpouring of God's Spirit" which will lift Arkansas Baptists to new heights of missions awareness and involvement.

## A Call to Prayer and Fasting

"This service will underline our reason for being," says Fray, who served 28 years as a missionary in South Africa before coming to OBU in 1985. "This service will remind us that the church of Jesus Christ is missions, that missions is not just something we do if we choose to. Missions is our reason for being."

"The appointment service can do more than we can imagine to unite us," adds Holt, who served eight years as a missionary in Togo. "There's something about missions that brings tears to your eyes. You feel the loyalty rising within you, and you know that this is what makes you tick."

Because the service holds so much potential for Arkansas Baptists, the committee led by Fray and Holt has called for churches to make deliberate and intense preparation for the evening. Four Sundays have been set aside as "Concert of Prayer" days, and the weekend immediately prior to the appointment service has been

designated a day of prayer and fasting.

Holt points to the fact that it was while the Jerusalem church prayed and fasted that God told them to set aside Paul and Barnabas for the task of a missionary journey. That biblical example led the committee to feel that prayer and fasting were appropriate activities to prepare Arkansas Baptists for the appointment of missionaries April 11.

The first Sundays of January, February, March, and April have been designated Concert of Prayer days, according to Holt, and the 24 hours from noon Saturday, April 8, to noon Sunday, April 9, has been set aside as a day of prayer and fasting.

FMB art



Commission '89: God's Way to the World

Prayer chairmen have been enlisted in each association, and they in turn are being asked to recruit a prayer leader for each congregation. Those persons will be asked to work with their pastors to keep the appointment service before their congregations.

To assist the local church prayer leaders, Holt and Fray's committee is preparing a series of four articles, one for each Concert of Prayer Sunday. The articles deal with prayer and fasting and will include a meditation on prayer cast in a responsive reading format.

A fifth article dealing in depth with the how and why of fasting is scheduled for publication in the *Arkansas Baptist* late in February 1989.

According to Holt, the committee felt the five Sundays of spiritual preparation would lay the groundwork for a real movement of the Holy Spirit during the service.

Holt said the committee is praying the service will create a new and heightened awareness of missions which would result

in individuals committing themselves to increased financial support for Southern Baptist mission causes. In addition, they hope many persons will hear their own call to mission service.

"Pray for the service, that God would bless it, that he would call out the called, and that it will be a great rallying point for Arkansas Baptists," Holt said.

## A Firsthand Experience of Missions

The appointment service, dubbed "Commission '89," is the first in Arkansas since 1974.

A highlight of the service will be the brief testimonies shared by the appointees about how God called them into mission service. R. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, will be the featured speaker. The program theme for the evening will be "God's Way to the World."

The two-hour service will feature music from a 500-voice choir and a 60-piece orchestra. Also included in the program will be a parade of flags representing the 113 countries in which more than 3,800 Southern Baptist missionaries work.

More than 6,000 people from almost 1,300 Arkansas Baptist churches are expected to attend. Planning for the event began early in 1987 and has involved 110 persons serving on 11 committees.

A promotional manual designed to assist congregations in publicizing and preparing for the appointment service will be distributed in December.

Two videotaped presentations promoting the appointment service also are planned for distribution. Promotional spot announcements concerning the service also will be available on audio and video tape.

In early February, churches will receive a packet of bulletin inserts and posters to use during their promotion of the appointment service. In addition, a sample of a four-color bulletin blank which may be ordered from the state convention offices will be included in the mailing.

A list of speakers available to local churches immediately prior to the appointment service is available from Glenn Hickey, 1522 W. 10th St., Little Rock, AR 72202; telephone 374-0319. Churches will be able to invite missionary appointees and trustees or staff members of the Foreign Mission Board to speak to their congregations. Invitations will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mailings to local church leaders and articles in the *Arkansas Baptist* will provide additional details as the appointment service date draws near. For more information, contact Jimmie Sheffield at P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 376-4791.

WRAP-UP

# State Conventions

by Marv Knox  
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Baptists' doctrine of the priesthood of the believer topped the list of concerns—aside from mandatory officer elections and budget approvals—expressed at Southern Baptist state conventions this year.

Thirty-eight state conventions or fellowships, involving Southern Baptists from all 50 states, held their annual meetings this fall, beginning with Alaska Aug. 9 and concluding with five conventions Nov. 17. Thirty-seven of the conventions had reported on their meetings through Baptist Press, the denomination's news agency, by Thanksgiving.

A dozen conventions adopted resolutions on the priesthood of the believer. Race relations and gambling were the next-most-discussed issues, with seven resolutions each. Top 10 resolutions also included abortion, six; the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Cooperative Program unified budget and alcohol/drugs, four; and pornography, "The Last Temptation of Christ" and the Baptist Faith and Message Statement, three.

Resolutions are not binding upon Southern Baptists, but they reflect the prevailing belief of messengers present and voting at an annual meeting.

The spate of resolutions on the priesthood of the believer was prompted by a resolution on the doctrine approved during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting this summer. The SBC resolution noted the doctrine "has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist" and that it "can be used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church."

In the following months, some Southern Baptists claimed the SBC resolution undermined the long-standing benefits of the doctrine and over emphasized the authority of pastors.

All 12 state resolutions affirmed the doctrine, although most did not mention the SBC resolution. Missouri's expressed regret for "any unintentional offense or affront to our lay members" caused by the SBC resolution. Virginia's noted no person or creed stands before an individual believer and God. Louisiana messengers defeated an amendment that would have made their resolution conform to the SBC's.

The resolutions on race relations also had an antecedent in an SBC event. During the SBC Christian Life Commission's September meeting, commissioner Curtis

W. Caine Sr. of Jackson, Miss., called the late Martin Luther King Jr. a fraud and said apartheid in South Africa "doesn't exist anymore and was beneficial when it did."

Tennessee's resolution named Caine and said messengers disassociate themselves from his remarks and reaffirm their commitment to the biblical teaching that God "is no respecter of persons." Mississippi's said Baptists in the state "desire to make it known that we in no way endorse these positions espoused by the trustee from Mississippi" on the CLC. Maryland/Delaware's called on the CLC to repudiate "the repressive system of institutionalized racism called apartheid." New York's urged the SBC calendar committee to set Race Relations Sunday on the date nearest King's birthday.

Arkansas' resolution on abortion reaffirmed the sanctity of "both born and preborn" human life, which it said begins at conception, and it stated abhorrence for public money to finance abortions. Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina also passed anti-abortion resolutions.

South Carolina took the strongest stand in support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Washington-based religious liberty organization that has been criticized by SBC conservatives and received a budget reduction from the SBC this year. South Carolinians voted to budget funds in 1990 to support the BJCPA but did not set an amount. Kentuckians referred to committee a motion to budget \$2,500 for the BJCPA. Resolutions in Maryland/Delaware, Missouri and Tennessee expressed support for the agency.

Aside from resolutions, two states took actions unique to them:

— Virginians responded to the SBC "denominational crisis." They asked messengers to next year's SBC annual meeting to: continue to fund the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; permit churches to "negatively designate" their Cooperative Program contributions; support theological education that is serious, open, balanced and responsible; accept the state's elected nominees for the SBC Committee on Committees; and develop "a new style of relating" so that "genuine healing may take place."

— North Carolinians reduced the powers of their president. As opposed to appointing members to the convention's committees on enrollment and committees, the president and two vice presidents now comprise a committee to nominate members to the two committees, and those nominations go before the convention's

general board, which can ratify or substitute the nominations before presenting them to the convention for election.

Several states took measures to finance the new expanded annuity plan for retired ministers. At least five conventions wrote the cost into their budgets as a "preferred item," which is to be paid off the top of undesignated receipts. Four others incorporated the cost into their budgets but cut the percentage they will send to fund SBC causes.

Of 35 states that reported new budgets, 18 voted to increase the percentage they send to the SBC, 13 held the same and four decreased the percentage.

Three conventions—the District of Columbia, Hawaii and Virginia—elected women presidents. Five promoted vice presidents to the presidency, and 12 re-elected incumbents.

Only in Georgia did an incumbent lose re-election. And only four conventions reported presidential contests where aspirants were affiliated in some form with elements of the SBC theological/political controversy. "Conservatives" won in Georgia, and "moderates" won in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

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## FORCED TERMINATION

**Against Their Will**

by Jim Lowry

Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—The issue of fired preachers rattled the foundations of more than 2,100 churches and ministerial careers in the last 18 months, according to a new survey of Southern Baptist directors of missions.

Norris Smith, forced termination consultant in the church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, released results of the new survey to state consultants of church administration during their annual meeting in Nashville Nov. 17-19.

Smith also shared a series of strategies that are planned to help the denomination prevent the growing problem. Reaction, he said, is not stemming the tide of terminations in local churches.

Every month, 116 Southern Baptist churches and pastors sever relationships through involuntary termination. That represents a 31 percent increase over results of a 1984 survey, which reported 88 forced terminations per month.

Respondents to the survey gave reasons for terminations, size of churches most frequently terminating pastors, available resources, and where pastors and churches turned during the termination process.

The top reason directors of missions listed for forced terminations was a lack of communication between the pastor and church leaders. That accounted for 13.4 percent of the terminations. Negative communication usually was mentioned on both sides of the controversy, Smith said.

Second on the list was immorality, which was the primary cause in 12.9 percent of forced terminations. This included sexual immorality, theft of money, mismanagement of church money and problems with personal integrity.

The next four reasons were subjective, Smith said, yet together they accounted for 44.6 percent of all terminations. Included are performance dissatisfaction, 12.4 percent; authoritarian leadership style, 11.4 percent; power struggles, 10.9 percent; and personality conflicts, 9.9 percent.

Other reasons mentioned by a significant number of directors of missions included leadership style, 5.9; incompetence, 5.9; doctrine, 5.4; mismatch between pastor and church, 5.4; family problems, 3.5; and tenure, 3.0.

The highest number of terminations in the convention were reported in churches with fewer than 300 members, Smith said. Many times the pastor and the church repeat the involuntary process because they don't understand how the failure occurred

in the previous experience, he added.

In the random survey, 220 directors of missions reported 40 percent of the churches had terminated more than one pastor, and almost 25 percent of the pastors had suffered a previous termination.

"Not all pastors and not all churches are at fault in forced terminations," Smith said. "Some churches do not have clear procedures for handling internal conflict, for instance. They won't address a problem until it festers."

"There needs to be a purposeful focus on biblical directions for managing conflict within the church family. Learning how to handle conflict is one of the biggest preventative measures."

To seek a solution to the problem, five strategies have been proposed by the church administration department to begin a preventative effort related to the termination issue.

These strategies are part of a continuing response by the Sunday School Board and other denominational agencies to a 1983 Southern Baptist Convention motion requesting help for terminated pastors.

Because directors of missions are listed as the first people to whom pastors and churches turn when conflicts begin, Smith said, the strategies will begin with two national conferences for directors of missions. These meetings, to be held in the

*Many times the pastor and the church repeat the involuntary process because they don't understand how the failure occurred.*

next five years, will provide training to equip directors of missions to recognize and deal with problems between churches and pastors.

Second, the cooperating agencies will move to establish an acceptable referral system to coordinate the systems that now operate independently in several state conventions.

Next, Smith said, resources will be developed to help pastors and churches.

Fourth, a certified training course in conflict management will be developed to certify 50 percent of all directors of missions within the next five years.

And fifth, research will be done with churches that have been involved in a forced termination to provide correctly focused leadership materials.

This last step will seek to provide extensive training in churches for search committees, deacons and other church leaders on conflict management.

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# LESSONS FOR LIVING

## Convention Uniform

### *God's Promise Accepted*

by Norene A. Reed, Bartholomew Association, Warren

Basic passage: Luke 1:26-38

Focal passage: Luke 1:26-38

**Central truth:** God's promises, though often hard to understand, can be accepted.

From the book of Genesis throughout the Old Testament there are repeated instances of the promise of God to send the Savior. Various details as to the place he would be born, his early life, his mission and ministry, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension were told hundreds of years before his visible appearance on earth. Each of these prophecies were completely fulfilled.

People had waited anxiously for God to reveal himself through this Savior. When the time came, Mary, not a daughter of royalty nor of the religious leaders of the day, was chosen to be the mother of Jesus.

The angel Gabriel was sent to give Mary the promise that she would bear this Holy Child. Her response was different to that of Zacharias who had asked for proof. She stated her lack of understanding as to how this was possible since she was a virgin. Gabriel explained to her God's plan for the Holy Spirit to come upon her and then he voluntarily gave Mary a sign that would help her trustful mind to be assured. He told her that Elizabeth, her relative, was to have a baby in her old age and no word from God shall be void of power but shall be fulfilled.

Mary's answer showed there was no more hesitation in her mind; she was willing to be trustingly submissive to God's will. The next months had to be very trying. Would Joseph believe the truth? What about the family? Will friends turn away? The town would be full of talk! Yet Mary had the promise of God to cling to in all the difficulties that followed.

How hard it is at times to understand the how and why of God's will in our lives. God does not expect us to fully understand. Through many instances in the Bible we can see that he wants us to yield ourselves to him, having faith that his will is best. He has the power and desire to work things out for the good of his kingdom and blessings in our lives. God wants us to trust him and accept his promises, knowing that they will be a source of spiritual strength.

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## Life and Work

### *Relating to Christians*

by Stephen Pate, Second Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Philemon

Focal passage: Philemon 7-20

**Central truth:** As Christians we are related to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

When an individual accepts Jesus as their personal savior that person becomes a member of the family of God. God is the father and we are his children. How do we relate to others Christians? Paul's letter to Philemon uncovers key insights to our relationships with other believers.

First, in verses 7-10, we learn that it is a relationship of love—an appeal of love. Philemon exhibited love and faith toward others. Paul did not order Philemon, though he probably could have the right to do so, to make things right with our Christian brother, Onesimus. He instead appealed to Philemon's Christian character to straighten out the relationship.

Second, we learn that in relating to other Christians we are to do so in a manner of cooperation. Onesimus apparently had helped Paul out a great deal after his conversion and now he was sending Onesimus back to Philemon. Remember Onesimus was Philemon's slave. Paul was not going to keep Onesimus to assist him unless he knew for certain that it was with Philemon's blessing. The message didn't take advantage of other Christians by making them feel to do something is their duty. Philemon's decision to let Onesimus stay with Paul was made out of love.

Third, we learn that in relating to other Christians we are to accept them. Paul hoped that he would see Onesimus as a Christian brother and not as a slave. Paul told Philemon that he loved Onesimus and in verse 17 he stated to Philemon that if you count me as your partner (brother) you will welcome him in and forgive him. The message is we as Christians are to approach new believers with open hearts.

Fourth, in relating to other Christians there is a responsibility we have for them. Paul in verse 18 acknowledges that he was not going to ignore past wrongs. Paul offered compensation. He also wrote the letter himself which was a rarity (v. 19) which shows another level of commitment to making things right with Philemon. It could be considered a promissory note to Philemon from Paul.

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## Bible Book

### *God Restores*

by Bradley A. Rogge, Forest Tower Church, Hensley

Basic passage: Exodus 32-34

Focal passage: Exodus 32:1-4,30-33; 34:6-7a,10-11a

**Central truth:** When we fail and repent, God renews his confidence in us.

Have you ever been mad at God? So mad that maybe you quit church? I know of a pastor friend who several years ago became so mad at God that he destroyed his library, his sermons, tossed his ordination papers in the trash, and threw his Bible across the church and said, "I'll never preach again."

Things had not gone according to his plans and he became impatient with God and finally with everyone. He did not realize that the problems he had in his life were mostly self-inflicted.

For two years this pastor did not darken the door of a church. His health began to fail and today he still has a disability caused by his own foolishness.

During this time things at home got really bad. When people are not at peace with God, they cannot be at peace with each other.

God told Moses the people of Israel must repent or be punished because of their sins. They were responsible for their acts and attitude.

One day through a series of strange events this rebel preacher found himself sitting in a pew, tears pouring from his eyes, pleading for forgiveness of his sins. He finally realized that he was responsible for the sins in his life and only God's mercy could heal his broken life and heart.

Once the preacher asked forgiveness, God restored his relationship with the young pastor. Suddenly the love life improved. The marriage began to be repaired. Soon God had led him to a small rural church where once again God renewed his call to this young man.

Today, because of God's renewed confidence this preacher sits surrounded by his library. There are 10 years of sermons in his files. He sent back to his church for a new copy of his certificate of ordination, fully explaining how his other had been destroyed. He now has two children, a third on the way. Today he sits writing a lesson for a magazine.

Every day I thank God for restoring his faith in me. Do you need to repent and restore today?

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FMB photo / Don Rutledge



Missionary Jeannie Spear visits with Thai friends.

## FOREIGN MISSIONS

# Breaking the Shell

by Michael Chute  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

Thailand is a world unto itself, an often elusive place with a profound dislike for extremes. The paradox is that it's a land of immense extremes.

Thailand is not only free. The very name means the "land of the free."

It's not just unique. It's the most exotic land in Asia. It's not just friendly. It's the "land of smiles." It's not just prosperous. It's the "rice bowl of Asia."

It's not just culturally diverse. It's the melting-pot at the crossroads of Southeast Asia. It's not just Buddhist. It's the most Buddhist country in the world.

And if that's not enough, the Thais aren't just unresponsive to the gospel. Thailand is by far the least-responsive mission field in Southeast Asia.

For Southern Baptists, Thailand reflects the challenge of missions today. Missionaries are trying to "break the shell" that encases the Thai people. It's as durable as the lacquer used on their finest artwork.

It's a shell that says a loyal Thai citizen

can't be a Christian because a loyal Thai is a Buddhist. It says Christianity is a foreign, Western religion with no significance for Thailand. It says there is no God, no heaven, and that sin is only five things: stealing, lying, adultery, killing and intoxication. It's a shell that says becoming a Christian means selling out family, friends and country. Relationships—so important to the Thai—are cut off.

This is the shell Southern Baptists' 87 missionaries in Thailand are trying desperately to crack. After 40 years of work, they have little to show for it. The bottom line is that there are only 2,300 Baptists in just 32 churches. In a country with 60 million people, only about one-tenth of 1 percent of the population is Christian.

But it's not from lack of trying. There has been enough hard work done to win whole countries. But success often must be measured differently in Asia, especially in Thailand. The Eastern mind thinks in terms of months and years, not in hours and days as does the Western mind.

Yet, missionaries report that positive breakthroughs are occurring throughout much of Thailand. Many young people are giving up the old religion, a "hodge-podge" of Buddhism, animism, Hinduism and superstition. They say it doesn't work for them.

If this younger generation has a religion, it's materialism. But missionaries see a developing interest in Christianity. Many Thais now come to missionaries, asking questions and giving responses. That never used to happen.

"One of the things the Thais are most impressed with is our Book, the Word directly from God right there in black and white," says veteran missionary Bob Stewart.

Another thing that impresses the Thai is the Christian lifestyle. Buddhism teaches that every person is an island. No one can help another. There is little sense of community, and morals are lacking in many Thai homes.

As Kuhn Suprachai remembers before he became a Christian: "I looked at their lives (the Christians) and I looked at my life. I saw there was something they had in their lives that I wanted in my life." He's now the administrator of the Baptist Hospital in Bangkok.

The missions story in Thailand does have some bright spots like Suprachai. Others have names like Achran Boonkrong, Kuhn Thongchai, Achran Pracha and Kuhn Wichai. Yet, there's not a missionary here who wouldn't write the same story for the other millions of Thais, if they could.

Until the day comes when they can, they're trying to turn disadvantages into advantages. They look for creative, effective ways to tell the gospel story in this land. And they try to break that shell.

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—Gerry Odum, missionary to Taiwan

Lottie Moon  
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National Goal:  
\$84 million

## Still Learning To Trust

by Toby Druin  
Texas Baptist Standard

ROCKWALL, Texas (BP)—Their faith, time and Southern Baptist's concern have borne James and Martha Parrish through pain and grief since a July 4 gasoline explosion took the life of one of their sons and badly burned another.

They expect to resume their calling as Southern Baptist missionaries in January. Hundreds of people have written or otherwise communicated with the Parrishes following the tragic accident in Esmeraldas, Ecuador, when the explosion at a service station killed their three-year-old son, John Martin, and severely burned seven-year-old Stephen. Parrish also was burned on his face and arms as he pulled Stephen from their burning automobile. Parrish and Stephen were flown to Dallas

July 8 for treatment at Methodist Medical Center. Mrs. Parrish and their son Micah, 6, who were not involved in the accident, accompanied them.

News of their ordeal brought a flood of cards and letters and other expressions that have helped them get through the last few months, the Parrishes said.

"We were overwhelmed," at the response, Mrs. Parrish said. "We received some of the most comforting letters that made us realize we were not alone, that we were part of a great fellowship of sufferers, a 'commonness.' There are an awful lot of people who have lost a child."

They said they were struck by the sense expressed by so many of the writers that the Parrishes were "their" missionaries. "There was the feeling that we belonged to everybody and that our loss was their loss," she said.

They are now realizing more of the grief process over the loss of John—a process they had to postpone in the days following the accident due to the critical nature of Stephen's condition that demanded all of their attention.

"We don't understand why it happened," Mrs. Parrish said, "and we may never know why. But we have begun to see some positive results—people whose lives have been touched." Some people have come to know Christ as savior because of the tragedy, she said.

"We are realizing the hurt will always be there," she said. "But it gets better with the passing of time. We don't have the depths of emotion we had at first."

"Right now we are still learning to trust the Lord and not lean on our own understanding. He is directing our paths."

Stephen, who was severely burned on his face, arms and legs, has responded well to treatment. But he is badly scarred and continues to have therapy twice weekly. He and his dad wear garments over the burned areas to protect them and to reduce the thickening of the scars. Stephen also wears a plastic mask during much of the day and a cloth one at night to protect his face.

They praised the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for the concern showed them through the ordeal. The board has paid virtually all of their expenses and put no pressure on them to get back to Ecuador. They were on medical leave for the first four months following the accident and are now on medical "furlough."

"The Foreign Mission Board has shown us its first priority is to take care of us," said Mrs. Parrish, "and we want to thank the people, Southern Baptists everywhere, who have made that possible through their support of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Cooperative Program" unified budget.

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## CENTURYMEN

# China Tour

by **Lounette Templeton**  
Baptist Press

BEIJING, China (BP)—The Centurymen, Southern Baptists' best-known male choir, performed Nov. 14 on national television in China. Five Arkansans were among them.

The prime-time, hour-long program called "Musical Bridges," produced by Chinese Central Television, was one of the highlights of the group's 19-day concert tour. The Chinese network invited the choir to China.

Accompanied by the Chinese Broadcasting Traditional Orchestra and directed by Southern Baptist composer-conductor Buryl Red, the Centurymen performed both American and Chinese music for the television production.

The choir also premiered a work composed especially for the program by Peng Xiuwen, director of the Chinese orchestra.

"The orchestra was superb, of the highest standard," said choir member Tom Smith of South Carolina. Kentuckian Doyle Searcy was pleased that songs with Christian themes were allowed. "Five years ago when we came, it would have been impossible for us to sing 'Amazing Grace' in China, let alone on Chinese TV," he said. The Centurymen first performed in China in 1983.

Jimmy Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and executive producer of the Centurymen, said the opportunity for the choir to appear on Chinese television came because of the "excellence of their music." "They could have chosen any number of choral groups, but they chose us, a Christian group," added choir member Dennis McIntire of Mississippi.

The purpose of the tour was twofold: for cultural exchange with China's musical community and to encourage the Chinese Christian community, Allen said. Ninety-eight of the choir's 145 members went to China on the tour.

The five musicians from Arkansas making the tour were Larry Bradley of Hot Springs, Charles Butler of Harrison, John Dresbach of Osceola, Ken Stogsdill of Fort Smith, and Tom Wideman of Little Rock.

By arrangement with the Radio and Television Commission, a documentary on the Centurymen's tour of China is scheduled to air on ABC television March 5. Broadcast time is to be announced.

Southern Baptists' Cooperative Services International organization, which serves countries where missionaries do not reside, helped schedule Centurymen concerts in Shanghai, Nanjing and in several churches.

## WORLD

The applause of sophisticated audiences in crowded concert halls impressed the singers, they said, adding the warm response of people in packed churches inspired them even more.

Georgian John Kurtz said he saw a reverence and eagerness in the faces of Chinese Christians that he seldom sees in the United States. "They seemed so encouraged," he said. "It was as if they were soaking up the music."

Texan Lowell Rollins echoed Kurtz, "When we sang 'God Be With You,' and the people joined in, it was so touching, I couldn't sing."

Tom Lynn of Florida said: "The church in its purest form must be in China. . . . Obviously, a revival is going on."

The Centurymen did not limit their singing to scheduled engagements. They broke into song at schools, factories, hotels, restaurants, parks, department stores, train stations and airports.

The choir gave one impromptu concert at a high school under a welcome banner made by the students. One of the teachers said the school had been run by missionaries before the revolution.

Harlan Hall, president of the Centurymen, and several colleagues sang in a large department store where, during the group's 1983 tour, Hall had sung "Silent Night" at the request of a clerk. The same clerk appeared again during their second visit and asked Hall to sing. "I was afraid it might get him in trouble, but he said it didn't matter. Our music gave him a few minutes of happiness," Hall said.

Kermit Tandberg of Louisiana was asked to sing in Shanghai's huge Exhibition Hall. He sang "Jesus Loves Me" in English and in Chinese, adding sign language for good measure.

Public evangelism is restricted in China, but the choir members found other opportunities to talk about the gospel.

"The tour people told us not to pass out pamphlets indiscriminately, but that didn't bother me," said Bill Gardner of Georgia. "It's not my style anyway. If I establish a relationship, then I speak about Christ."

Doyal Spence of Virginia befriended a young Chinese man who was on his way home from a U.S. business trip. During the 16-hour flight to Beijing, they discussed a wide range of topics, including religion. A week later, after a concert, the young man came to tell Spence he had decided to become a Christian.

The tour was not entirely trouble-free. Taping for the national telecast took 60 hours. "There were times during the last session (which lasted 20 hours) that we just stopped and prayed," said Roy Barnes of South Carolina.

Jack Kay of Tennessee broke his foot in an accident but didn't miss a concert.

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