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April 9, 1992

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas Baptist



Called and accountable
Page 12

Vol. 91, No. 8

April 9, 1992

COVER

Easter Freedom

Page 2

Jesus and divorce

Page 6

Parks explains retirement

Page 18

FMB benefactor cuts will

Page 19

Aid, hope in Croatia

Page 23



Arkansas Baptist

Cover story

Photo / Paul Obregon



Easter Freedom

Children and youth are an integral part of the Romanian Baptist Church in Chicago, where parents and church leaders are free to nurture their children in the Christian faith. With a happy mix of religion and culture, the church is a link to home for Romanians who fled Communist oppression. Parents and church leaders worry that young people will be lured into American materialism, forgetting their families' sufferings and forsaking their church's teaching to minister to the poor. Although the congregation struggles with values, Romanian children, who speak English at school and Romanian at home, learn the gospel transcends language and culture.

Also inside

Speak Up

You'll Be Glad to Know.....	4
Woman's Viewpoint.....	4
Letters to the Editor.....	5

Local & State

Arkansas All Over.....	8
------------------------	---

Nation

March CP down.....	15
Across the Country.....	17

Lessons.....	21-22
--------------	-------

World

Team surveys needs.....	24
-------------------------	----

Next issue: April 23

At a glance

6 Jesus and divorce

"Divorce is coming to church," Billy White, pastor of Little Rock's Second Church, says in his article exploring a biblical perspective on divorce. "In its wake are scores of hurting people and bewildered people.... How is the church to respond?"

12 Called and Accountable

The theme for the 1992 Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting, "Called and Accountable" was punctuated by moving missionary testimonies during the two-day event convened at First Church in Little Rock on March 20-21.

14 Agencies decide not to exhibit

Five Southern Baptist agencies which had earlier indicated they would have exhibits at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, April 30-May 2, have decided not to do so. SBC agencies still planning to exhibit are the Annuity Board, Radio and Television Commission, as well as an individual exhibit by Southern Seminary. The Woman's Missionary Union, an SBC auxiliary, also plans to exhibit.

18 Parks explains retirement

R. Keith Parks told the staff of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board his decision to retire as president in October was based on spiritual leadership, not political pressure. But he enumerated three reasons behind his decision: (1) no clear trustee support for his request to remain until 1995, (2) differences with the trustees over the president's role, and (3) basic philosophical differences regarding missions.

19 FMB benefactor cuts will

Baptist philanthropist J. Harwood Cochrane, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's largest benefactor, has disinherited the board of what could amount to tens of millions of dollars. Cochrane said he has written the board out of his will because he is "disenchanted" with the direction its trustees have taken.

23 Aid and hope in Croatia

Croatia, one of six regions in what was once Yugoslavia, declared its independence in 1991. Some 10,000 people have died in the ensuing war with dominant Serbia. A shaky cease-fire barely holds as Croatians await the arrival of 14,000 United Nations peacekeeping troops. Baptist churches are attempting to minister to refugees as they come for worship, medicine, food, and clothing.

Parks' resignation

J. EVERETT SNEED

The resignation of Keith Parks has shaken Southern Baptists as nothing has in the ministry of this editor. All Southern Baptists, including both "moderates" and "conservatives" were caught off guard by Parks' announcement. Knowledgeable Southern Baptists had expressed concern for the March 19-20 Foreign Mission Board trustees' prayer retreat near the Dallas/Fort Worth airport, but most had hoped for and believed there would be some resolution short of Dr. Parks' resignation.

Behind the drastic step taken by Parks, lie deep differences between him and the board of trustees on how our Foreign Mission Board should function. These differences include the role of the trustees, the kind of mission program that we should have in various countries, and should we assist countries where there are some doctrinal or functional differences with Southern Baptists.

No one can properly question Parks' mission commitment and personal theological position. He is one of the top biblical expositors in the Southern Baptist Convention. His knowledge of missions around the world is probably unparalleled in Southern Baptist life and his mission philosophy has been formed in the crucible of his own personal years of mission experience. Everyone who has heard Parks preach, knows that he is totally conservative in his theology. His knowledge of world missions has been demonstrated on numerous occasions. For example, a few months ago the editors were guests of the Foreign Mission Board. After making a presentation on missions, Dr. Parks invited the editors of the various state papers to ask questions. The mission secretaries of the various areas of the world stood behind Parks, but for one and one-half hours he answered questions, including names, numbers and places. Only once did he turn to ask assistance from a mission secretary.

Several months ago Parks outlined the goals and objectives for the Foreign Mission Board through the sesquicentennial in 1995. The board affirmed this plan, along with Parks as administrator, but the conflict between Parks and some of the trustees has continued.

Parks brought the matter into the open approximately seven weeks ago at the board meeting in Richmond. He maintained that he could not effectively lead, even with affirmation in an official meeting if



the trustees continued to publicly voice doubt and disagreement at times. He asked for a mandate to lead in our foreign mission program through the 1995 celebration.

The request for a mandate certainly is unusual for any administrator. The board scheduled the March 19-20 prayer retreat to deal with the request. Reports coming out of the retreat are that his administration was again affirmed, but short of the mandate that he had requested. In response, he gave his resignation effective in October when he will be 65 years of age.

Parks told the staff at Richmond his decision to retire as president in October was based on spiritual leadership, not political pressure. But he sighted three basic differences with trustees. These are: (1) no clear trustee support for his request to remain until 1995; (2) differences with the trustees over the president's role; and (3) basic philosophical differences regarding missions.

Reports indicate that some trustees were having caucuses prior to board meetings and were contacting employees of the board without the knowledge of President Parks. This, of course, is not only a violation of the policy manual, but makes it exceedingly difficult for any chief administrator to function.

While we may never know all of the

details of what is involved, it is evident that there is a philosophical difference between our traditional mission strategy and the desires of some of the trustees. It appears that some of the trustees desire absolute conformity with their theology by those who receive Foreign Mission Board financial assistance.

Historically diversity has been a part of the Southern Baptist heritage. For example, the *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, written by Frank S. Mead and revised by Samuel S. Hill, said, "Baptists have insisted upon freedom of thought and expression in the pulpit and the pew. This has made them one of the most democratic bodies in America—and one in which liberal or conservative doctrine is preached freely. They have insisted, too, upon absolute autonomy of the local congregation; each church arranging its own worship, examining and baptizing its own members." This statement was written by a non-Baptist long before the controversy was started in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Baptists always have insisted that the Bible is the only source of authority. When this is understood, major doctrines will remain constant from country to country. But individual priesthood of the believer will produce some diversity.

Southern Baptists have not been given all of the details of what has occurred and we may never have them, but it is clear that missions is at the heart of the work of Southern Baptists. The Foreign Mission Board is caught in the middle of the SBC controversy. Whatever resolution is made of this latest chapter in the Southern Baptist controversy, it must not curtail our world mission program.

Arkansas Baptist

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DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

I suppose my column this week could be called "Miscellaneous." Several things need to be addressed.

First, I want to thank all of you who have prayed and given toward the Siloam Springs improvements. April 10 is the day we have to verify that we have raised \$350,000, if the Mabee Foundation is to give us their challenge grant of \$295,000. As of today, March 27, we are \$96,000 short. This is in God's hands. Unless he moves mightily, we will lose the \$295,000. Many, many of you have responded. Please know of my deep gratitude and be assured that your gifts will go for the improvements at Siloam Springs. The additional work will begin as soon as camps are closed in August. By the way, the camps are filling up fast. Registration has already been cut off on two weeks. Praise God for this great ministry.

Second, let me share my joys. Our Guatemala and Iowa partnerships are thrilling. One is building toward its conclusion, and the other is just starting. More of our churches have given to our Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Dixie Jackson offerings than ever before. At the same time, Cooperative Program giving is staying strong, that is, in comparison to other states. In comparison to the amount of undesignated money our churches have received, the percent going to the Cooperative Program dropped this last year. The WMU Annual Meeting was a great delight. The inspiration and challenge were tremendous. No one does a better job of preparation and planning of good meetings than the WMU.

Third, let me urge you to pray for an awakening. There is no hope for our country without a spiritual awakening. May 7 is a National Day of Prayer. Christians will be gathering at the state capitol, court houses, and school flag poles at 12 noon to pray for our nation. We also need to be vigorously involved in the process of electing government leaders that will honor God and his Word.

Fourth, in your preparing, planning and praying for your spring revivals, do so as if it were your last. For many it will be their last.

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



BECKY HORNE

Woman's Viewpoint

Loneliness

Loneliness is, perhaps, the most frightening word in the English language. We have all felt it. Dennis Rainey shares that what so many people feel today in our fast-paced society is "crowded loneliness." Even when surrounded by people, we can feel very alone. My mother-in-law, who is a recent widow, shared with me this very idea. Loneliness does not depend on whether or not you are alone. The worst feeling of loneliness is what you experience in a crowd.

Perhaps you, like my mother-in-law, are now facing life without your life's companion. Many may be experiencing the empty nest syndrome. For the first time in many years, those precious children are not under foot or coming in and out of the house. There are many in our society who are experiencing the rejection of their mate and have never felt so alone. You may be hurting in a way no one even knows, and you feel you have no one to share this with. Of course, we all have many relationships. But perhaps they are not close enough to empty our hearts out to them. Because 20 percent of the American population moves each year, people may be hesitant to put down roots and develop relationships. It is too painful, we may feel, so we protect ourselves from the pain. Being in the ministry, this is something we have often experienc-

ed. Even our children may feel loneliness, as parents are often too busy to give needed attention. None of us are immune. At some point in our lives, we will face loneliness.

Swindoll shares in an article on loneliness how God truly does care. He knows, he understands, and he is touched by our anguish. After all, our Lord experienced the ultimate loneliness at the cross. Everyone, including his Father, forsook him. No words can convey that pain. But when we're lonely, we all need an understanding friend. We need strength to keep going. Jesus is there for us. God can heal our soul, if we turn to him. Then, we can be used of God to help someone who is lonely. Psalms 28:7-8 tells us, "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped; therefore, my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. The Lord is our strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed."

Becky Horne is a homemaker and wife of the pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock. She and Rex have four children. Becky is involved in the work of the church, particularly in the area of women's ministry. She teaches a ladies' Sunday School class and coordinates the speakers for monthly ladies' luncheons.



Dr. Rex M. Horne, Jr.

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- Part 5: Compromise (Daniel 6:4-23)

You may order your set on "How Faith is Tried" by calling Immanuel's Tape Ministry at 372-0217. The cost is \$15.00 per set.

Letters to the Editor

A pastor's wife

I appreciated the article on the pastor's wife in the Jan. 30 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. It uplifted me very much. We have been truly blessed with our churches Rex (my husband) has pastored. They have all been most gracious to us. But there are always things the pastor's wife goes through that sometimes the congregation isn't aware of. Her husband is on call 24 hours a day. That's more consuming than a doctor. A doctor has another doctor on call. The pastor doesn't have another pastor on call. How many other occupations has his salary printed up every month or so for every single person in the congregation to ponder, or even a visitor if they are there, to read what the pastor's salary, car allowance, insurance, housing allowance, Christmas bonus, etc.? It's an uncomfortable feeling to sit in that business meeting. But the good does outweigh the bad. Our members have, as a whole, been more than kind. They are exceptional.

I would love to read more about the pastor's wife in your magazine.—Sharon Easterling, Rogers

Are funds secure?

Back in the 1960s, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was given some \$300,000 to purchase a building. In the intervening years, with the SBC's permission, the money was placed in the Southern Baptist Foundation and interest used to pay

BJCPA rent. Recently they asked for the principal in order to purchase a building. Now, the SBC Executive Committee is going to recommend taking the \$300,000 away from the BJCPA and give them only the accumulated interest.

The president of our Arkansas Baptist Foundation, Harry Trulove, has written a letter, protesting any move to take this money away from the BJCPA. The question at the last Stewardship Committee meeting of our churches was, "What will keep our money, presently with the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, from being stolen?" In light of what appears to be happening at the national level, it seems like a good question to me. Doesn't it to you? Brother Trulove is concerned about it. I think we ought to be as well.—Layne E. Smith, Fayetteville

[Editor's note: President Harry D. Trulove works carefully with all who place money with the Arkansas Baptist Foundation to insure that the express wishes of the donor are carried out.]

Proper compensation?

I'm in my fifth decade of support for the Cooperative Program, having begun as a member of a Sunbeam band in a small Oklahoma church. I've supported it for all the good reasons such as mission sponsorship and funding of our seminaries and colleges. I have been generally approving of the other agencies and commissions.

The churches in which I have served as a staff member, and in recent years as pastor, have been strong contributors to the Cooperative Program and I will encourage them to continue as long as I am active.

I must confess, however, that the recent revelations concerning the salaries paid to leaders the Executive Committee and the 24-carat gold handshake given to the retiring president/treasurer, is a little hard to take.

A great many, if not a majority of Southern Baptist pastors and staff members, struggle to survive on a pitifully small percentage of the salaries and benefits paid to these denominational servants. Our retirement benefits will certainly not include a new Lincoln Town Car, nor lifetime convention expenses.

For many of us, our annuity income will derive only from the small amount that we have been able to spare from our own income to send to the Annuity Board. Our churches contribute only a token amount. The recent contributions by our state convention will benefit the younger men, but will be of little consequence to those of us who will be retiring soon.

I have no suggestions to make regarding denominational compensation, but am concerned that we may be succumbing to a big business mentality in our institutions. I understand that adequate salaries and benefits must be provided for men qualified to serve in these positions, but they are still ministry tasks and should be approached with a servant's heart.

I will try to keep an open mind as denominational salaries and benefits continue to spiral upward, but it is becoming increasingly difficult.—William R. Canary, Mount Vernon

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Jesus and divorce

by Billy White

Special to the Arkansas Baptist

Shock and pain. Both were etched deeply into his face as, between sobs, he tried to sort through the pieces of his broken heart. And his broken marriage.

He had been a good man. He was a regular churchgoer. He had trusted Christ as his Savior and tried to do his will. He was seeking God's will when he met her. It was great! She was beautiful, intelligent, and a believer. He was an ambitious and forward thinking Christian young man. Everything seemed so perfect. Now she has left him and he feels devastated and desolate.

Change the pronouns and perhaps the ages and what you have is an ever-increasing phenomenon among Arkansas Baptists. Divorce is coming to church.

In its wake are scores of hurting and bewildered people. The list of the injured includes not only former spouses but also their children, parents, brothers and sisters, and friends from Sunday School and church. If there were an equivalent to the Richter scale for measuring the shock waves and emotional tremors a divorce releases, the damage would have to be calculated in terms of all the relationships connected in any way with the couple found at the epicenter.

How is the church to respond? For too many years the only message heard from the church by people who have suffered through divorce has been one of judgment, condemnation, and rejection. Sometimes this has been the honest intent of the messenger and the members of a particular church.

In other churches people have simply not known what to say or how to approach so sensitive and personal an issue. As a result those hurting from divorce often times misinterpret the awkward silence to mean insensitivity and rejection. Now they feel doubly divorced—not only from his or her spouse but also by the church family as well.

There are, however, church fellowships where God's redemptive grace and healing forgiveness are both preached and practiced. These churches would be the first to admit that they are far from perfect in their sputtering attempts to apply the healing ointment of divine love. Nevertheless, they find their mission in making efforts to "preach the gospel to the poor... heal the brokenhearted... preach deliverance to the captives... recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are op-

pressed..." (Lk. 4:18). These words from our Savior may serve as a guidepost from which we can minister in this difficult area.

With this redemptive ethic as a general background the two central texts where Jesus speaks to the issue of divorce are Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:3-9. Though neither of these presents a complete and thorough treatment of divorce they do offer direction for our understanding and response. First, it seems clear that Jesus is acknowledging the divine kingdom ideal of marriage. We should join him in exalting this relationship. One man and one woman who commit themselves to one another in love for a lifetime of growth toward intimacy is God's ideal (Mt. 19:5-6). Moses is seen to have allowed divorce as a legal option for men. It was considered a man's right to divorce his wife by presenting her with a writ of divorce (Mt. 5:31, 19:7, Deut. 24:1 ff.). Jesus, however, viewed divorce as spiritual disaster, a sin against God's ideal for marriage with terrible consequences (Mt. 5:32, 19:9). (It should be noted that the phrase "except for fornication" does not appear in the oldest and best manuscripts of Matthew 5:32 but was probably a later addition to the text.) Marriage is thus highly exalted by Jesus to be honored among all men and women, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6).

In addition to reaffirming this ideal Jesus also acknowledges that we do not live in an ideal world. To the contrary, we live in a world of "hardened hearts" (Mt. 19:8) and as a result things do not work according to God's ideal plan. The Old Testament world was on the polygamy and slavery. Women were owned as property and divorce was rampant. Only men could divorce but they could do it indiscriminately and frivolously. It could be performed orally by simply saying seven times to one's wife, "I divorce you!" Into this world of hardened hearts and disposable wives the divine law was given to protect women from such treatment. Moses would not allow wholesale divorce. Now, in order to divorce one's wife a man must show some indecency in her and the divorce must be made in writing. It was also understood to be final. These provisions were made to make divorce harder not more accessible.

New Testament times also spelled disaster for women in many ways. Jesus was born into a world where women had no rights. Oriental patriarchy defined its values. Marriages were arranged by fathers usually as a business transaction. A

woman's worth had to do with how many sons she could produce and how hard she could work. The more sons she bore the greater a man's ability to gain wealth. In the world of Roman chauvinism, women were playthings and the best sex was believed to be found outside of marriage. Greek gnosticism with its dualistic view of body and spirit had two schools of thought. One taught "If it feels good, do it." The other fostered strict asceticism where women were to be avoided. Finally, the New Testament culture was one of great religious legalism among the Jews. Two approaches are well known. The conservative Shammai held divorce allowable only on the basis of sexual infidelity. Hillel, the liberal, interpreted Moses' instruction to mean a husband could divorce his wife if she found disfavor in his eyes, i.e., if she burnt the toast, failed to please, or if he just got tired of her appearance. Scholars believe the Pharisees that came to Jesus in Matthew 19 were from one of these camps and were



Christians need to be led to ask the question, "How can I stay married?" rather than "How can I get out?"

hoping to ensnare him on the horns of this dilemma when they asked him if it were lawful for a man to divorce his wife. If he answered "no" he would be contradicting Moses. If he answered "yes" he would be violating God's ideal. Instead, Jesus affirms the divine ideal and then explains that Moses' provision, though not God's original intent, was allowed as a concession and restriction because we live in a world of hard hearts.

We also live in a world where sin begets sin. Jesus seems to say that divorce causes adultery (Mt. 5:32, 19:9). There are at least three interpretations of this statement. He could mean that the man who divorces is

forcing his wife into a life of prostitution since women, having no rights, no property, and no income would have nothing to sell except their bodies in order to survive. In this case Jesus meant literal physical adultery and sexual sin.

Some interpret adultery here as "turning to another" and see divorce causing adultery in that it violates the exclusivity of marriage. Since God's original intent involved one Adam and one Eve in a one flesh union, any other person's involvement constitutes a violation of that oneness.

The third way in which divorce can be seen giving birth to further sin lay in the fact that it is impossible to sin privately in this matter. Divorce sets in motion dominoes of destruction that will fall not only in the lives of the immediate couple but also in those of any other previous or preceding partners.

The wonder of this text is that it reveals that we also live in a world where Jesus is our Redeemer. He avoids the trap of legalism by refusing the role of Rulemaker with the Pharisees. He treats marriage not as a legal battlefield nor fertile ground for religious controversy, but rather as a precious relational gift from God. He upholds God's ideal, allows for Moses' exception and invites the children to come to him. (Obviously some of the people of

little account to the legalists; Mt. 19:13-14.) Jesus always deals with sinners redemptively. In John 4 Jesus converses publicly with a woman who has been divorced five times. She was living in adultery at that very time! Yet Jesus has for her words of truth and hope as he leads her to drink the "living water" only he can provide. On the cross Christ died for all sins. His death was sufficient to cover divorce as well. He then rose to offer forgiveness, acceptance, and new beginnings to all sinners. If churches are to follow Jesus as Lord we must learn how to follow him in offering acceptance, forgiveness, and hope to those who are suffering through divorce in our fellowships even as we continue to uphold God's ideal for Christian marriages growing in a lifetime of intimacy.

What then can we do as churches? First, we can affirm the sanctity of marriage. We can provide helps for couples to enrich their relationships, resolve conflict, and sharpen communication skills that will lead to greater understanding. Christians need to be led to ask the question, "How can I stay married" in the truest sense of the word rather than "How can I get out?"

Second, we can acknowledge that we live in a fallen world where God's ideal is not realized in many areas of life. One of them is marriage. The hard hearts of sinful men and fallen women still weak

have in contemporary marriage.

Next, we need to accept the fact that divorce is sin. It is falling short of God's glory and should be avoided if at all possible. Divorce hurts people. It has been likened to surgery without anesthesia. As sin, divorce involves accountability. The divorcee needs to ask "What is it that contributed to the breakup of my marriage for which I was responsible? Was I too immature, selfish, insensitive, lazy, uncooperative, cruel, pouty, spiteful, stubborn? What changes can I allow to happen in me that will lead to the resolutions of these concerns?"

Finally, we simply must allow Jesus to redeem sinner throughout the struggle. Divorce is not the unparadigmatic sin. The trap of self-righteous legalism must be avoided. The model of Jesus is to be followed. In the same way that he offered new hope to the woman at the well. He also assured the woman caught in the act of adultery "No man condemns you and neither do I" (Jn. 8). He then empowered her to leave the sin that had held her captive. As his body in the world so must we learn to offer the cleansing, forgiveness, hope and healing of our Lord to those experiencing divorce in our churches.

Billy White is the pastor of Second Church, Little Rock.

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MILLIE GILL

People

James W. Johnson, a retired Baptist pastor and member of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, celebrated 50 years in the ministry March 29. He has pastored in Sherwood, DeWitt, Rover and Lonoke.

David Wesley of Sidney began serving as pastor of Salado Church March 15. He and his wife, Jan, are parents of two daughters, Sarah and Rachel.

Allen Thrasher has been named minister-at-large by First Church of Booneville. He may be contacted through the church for revivals, conferences and seminars.

Louis Criswell, who has been serving as minister of music at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock, has been named by the church as associate pastor with responsibilities for senior adults and activities.

Jon Woods, who has been serving the church as minister of youth and activities, has been named as associate pastor with responsibilities for youth and outreach.

Donita Stange was commissioned March 22 by Lakeside Church in Hot Springs as a Mission Service Corps volunteer. Her area of service will be centered around the local Crisis Pregnancy Resource Center, where she serves as director. In addition, Stange also directs a "Freedom in Christ" outreach from the church, ministering to those who have chemical dependency and co-dependency. Participating in the commissioning service were Pastor Ronnie Rogers, Associate Pastor Harris Shuffield and deacons of the church. She was given a certificate of commission at the close of the service.

Don Travis has retired as pastor of Ebenezer Church, El Dorado.

Doug Hixson was ordained to the gospel ministry Feb. 2 by Jessville Church where he serves as youth minister. L.W. Hixson preached the ordination sermon.

Kirk Crawford is serving as pastor of Mount Zion Church, Concord.

James Griffin is serving as interim pastor of Quitman Church.

Tim Ballard has joined the staff of Tumbling Shoals Church as youth director. He is a student at the University of Central Arkansas.

Randy Hogan is serving as pastor of First Church of Waldron, going there from Concord Chapel, Van Buren.

Pat Hovis is serving as pastor of First Church of Ravenden.

Steve Bennett is serving as pastor of Harmony Church, Paragould.

Arnold Teel has resigned as interim pastor of Cadron Ridge Church, Conway to serve as pastor of Zion Church, Conway.

Ron A. Ladd was ordained March 15 as bivocational pastor of Mandeville Church. Ladd recently came to the church from Concord Church in Tyler, Texas. He and his wife, Tonya, have three children, Tara, Todd, and Tommy.

Everett and Lou West, Arkansas natives who have been serving churches in New Mexico and Arizona in the areas of music and education, have retired in North Little Rock where they joined Remount Church.

Jane Mobley began serving March 15 as youth and activities director for Remount

Church, North Little Rock. She previously served on the staff of Runyan First Church, North Little Rock.

Obituaries

Geneva House Ross of Jones Mill, formerly of Holly Springs, died March 22 at age 81. She was the widow of Homer Ross. Her funeral services were held March 22 in Holly Springs Church where she was a member. Survivors include a daughter, Atha Faye Mahan, of Sparkman; two brothers; nine grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; and one great-great grandchild.

William Ernest Bray, a former member of Remount Church in North Little Rock and principal of Lynn High School, was killed in a head-on collision Feb. 28. An ordained minister, he had pastored several churches in Missouri. Survivors include his wife, Kathy, and two daughters, Karen and Kimberly, all of Myrtle, Mo.; his parents, Thomas and Cleora Bray of Jackson, Mo.; two brothers; three sisters; and his maternal grandmother, Rhoda Kaylor of Jackson-

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



Oakwood Church, North Little Rock, held a noteburning March 22. In 1985, the church purchased seven acres and a house for a parsonage and future expansion. The congregation paid \$75,000 for the property; \$65,000 was financed. In March 1992, the church paid the note off eight years early. The congregation is now debt free. Special guests for the occasion were North Pulaski Association Director of Missions Marvin Peters and Editor J. Everett Sneed, who delivered the morning message. Pictured (left to right) are Mike Johnson, long-range planning committee chairman; Jay Gentry, a trustee who signed the note; Lillie Mae Zink, whose father gave land on which the church is erected; Pastor James Martin; and John Breuczynski, a current trustee.

village. The Lynn School System has established a scholarship fund where memorials may be made.

Keili Jo Simpson of Sheridan, 18, a student at the University of Central Arkansas and a member of First Church in Sheridan, died March 30. Her funeral services were held April 2 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock. Survivors are her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Ed Simpson; a sister, Amanda Simpson; a stepbrother, Page Rochelle; and a stepsister, Callie Rochelle; all of Sheridan; her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Simpson, and Mr. and Mrs. Morris Jackson, all of North Little Rock; and her step-grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Wallace of Wright. Memorials may be made to First Church of Sheridan.

Mack S. Brown Sr. of North Little Rock, a retired Southern Baptist minister, died March 27 at age 64. He was a member of Highway Church in North Little Rock. Survivors include his wife, Geraldine Bradley Brown; two sons, Doug Brown and Danny Brown, both of North Little Rock; three daughters, Brenda Mobbs of Greenbrier, Becky Harrison of Hampton, and Ruth Ann York of North Little Rock; a brother; a sister; and 10 grandchildren.

Charleston First Church held a We Care Crusade March 1-6 with William Blackburn of Fort Smith as evangelist and Alan Morrison of Van Buren as worship leader. The revival resulted in 50 professions of faith and 27 other decisions. Mike Love is pastor.

East Side Church in Osceola has launched numerous new ministries that include a Sunday morning Children's Church with Tony Moore and Karen Brewer as leaders, a Wednesday evening children's choir with

Karen Brewer as director, a tape ministry for shut-ins, and a bus ministry for senior adults. The church also is renovating the nursery and has carpeted the sanctuary.

Leonard Street Church in Hot Springs held a recent crusade that resulted in 51 professions of faith, 21 on assurance of salvation, and 10 rededications. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was evangelist and John Dresbach of Jonesboro was music evangelist. Charles Mays is pastor.

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Briefly

Valley Church in Searcy held a spring revival March 1-4 that resulted in three professions of faith, one commitment to full-time Christian service, one commitment to youth ministry, and one by statement. Don Bert of Vandalia, Ohio, was the evangelist. Bert Thomas is pastor.

El Dorado First Church held a revival Feb. 16-19 that resulted in 185 decisions. Fred Stanley, evangelist, also spoke to 2,000 students in El Dorado High School and Rogers and Barton Middle Schools. Floyd Lewis, Jr. is pastor.

Magnolia Church in Crossett is in revival April 6-10 with Jim Richards, pastor of Southminister Church in Baton Rouge, La., and a member of the SBC Christian Life Commission, as guest preacher. Gene Thomas is pastor.

Monticello Second Church passed a resolution March 11, opposing homosexuality and the actions of the Olin T. Binkley Memorial and the Pullen Memorial Churches in North Carolina. Keith Brickell is pastor.



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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Springdale First Church began its weekly television national broadcast of DayStar March 23 on National ACTS Broadcast and the National FamilyNet Broadcast. Ronnie W. Floyd is pastor.

Hamburg First Church deacon ministry recently voted unanimously to begin a ministry to the Spanish speaking in the Hamburg area. This will be the first church in Ashley County Association to launch such a ministry.

Swifton Church recently ordained Danny Fears and Everett Richardson to the deacon ministry.

Fayetteville First Church has formed a clowning troop as an outreach ministry to children and youth and in nursing homes.

Hilldale Church at Alexander broke ground March 1 for the first unit of their new building. Speakers were Hugh Owen and James Swedenburg.

Hurricane Lake Church at Benton has begun work on a new building that will house six Sunday School rooms. Charles Holcomb is pastor.

North Main Church in Sheridan has organized a Woman's Missionary Union with Linda Holmes as director.

Salem Church in Benton held a commissioning service April 5 for Boyd and Rhonda Hall who have been appointed to serve as missionaries in Africa.

Nettleton Church in Jonesboro has launched a Bread of Life ministry, contacting

visitors and presenting them with a loaf of bread, symbolizing Jesus as the bread of life, and a handshake that symbolizes the human touch and compassion.

Paragould First Church honored Charles Bowers March 29 who is retiring as chairman of ushers, following 25 years of service.

Hot Springs First Church observed Loyol Rowe Day March 22, recognizing 30 years of service as "Keeper of the Keys."

Jonesboro Central Church sanctuary choir will present "How Great Thou Art," a musical drama about Jesus' last days on the earth, Saturday, April 25, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 26, at both 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Ric Hunt will be director.

Fordyce First Church Women's Ministry will hold their spring meeting April 6. Dorie Van Stone, a noted author and speaker, will be guest speaker.

Park Hill Church in North Little Rock music ministry is holding a Greater Little Rock Easter Pageant April 11-12 at the North Little Rock High School East Campus auditorium. This life of Christ pageant with a full biblical drama, sets, and costumes will feature the sanctuary choir and a 23-piece orchestra. Performances, for which complimentary tickets are available, will be at 7 p.m. Joe A. Fitzpatrick will be director.

Mena First Church ordained Bill Plunkett and Huck Van Sycoc to the deacon ministry March 29.

For Sale—1984 Suburban Flexible 49 passenger bus. Has a rebuilt Detroit engine; safety brakes, new upholstery. Contact Bob Shelton, Alma First Baptist Church, (501) 632-2020. 49

Needed—Music and Youth Director. If interested send resume to Personnel Committee, Pickles Gap Baptist Church, #2 Pickles Gap Road, Conway, AR 72032. 4223

Seeking—Full-time person to develop and co-ordinate youth/children ministries and activities. Send resume to Valley Baptist Church, Search Committee, P. O. Box 593, Searcy, AR 72143. 49

Easter Special—Plastic eggs complete with toys. 250 ct./case at .15 per egg. 501-279-2493. 49

Position Available—Mission Pastor (full-time). Send resume to Tim Prock, Pastor or Missions Committee, Concord Baptist Church, Rt. 1, Box 503, Van Buren, AR 72956. 49

Needed—Part-time music director. Send resume to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 91, Plumerville, AR 72127. 49

For Sale—Allen Organ 3160 Drawknob AGO console, custom oak finish, 8 speaker cabinets, 32 speaking stops. \$18,500. 501-751-4523. Music Department. 49

Let's Go—"To Russia with God's Love." Evangelist Charles Chatman is forming a crusade team of pastors and laypersons going to Moscow, St. Petersburg, and L'vov, June 15-26, 1992. The door is open, we must walk through it! Receive full detailed brochure. Charles Chatman Evangelistic Association, 5169 Longhorn Trail, St. Louis, MO 63033. 314-355-5444. 4223

Needed—Youth Director. Send resume to Beech Street Baptist Church, P.O. Box 408, Gurdon, AR 71743. 49

Organist Wanted—Saint Andrew Methodist in Little Rock. Call 562-1891. 49

Free—"Shame on Me." LSASE Chastain Petticoat, Dept. 202, 305 S. Cypress, Beebe, AR 72012. 49

Free—"Bear with Me." LSASE Chastain Petticoat, Dept 203, 305 S. Cypress, Beebe, AR 72012. 49

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.



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BSU director at Garland County

Beverly Cooke began her duties as part-time Baptist Student Union director at Garland County Community College in Hot Springs on March 1. She is a graduate of Mary Washington College (Fredricksburg) of the University of Virginia; George Mason University, Fairfax, Va.; and is currently enrolled at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She has been a elementary school teacher in Nebraska and Virginia, and is a certified MasterLife leader.



Cooke

Cooke is a member of Barcelona Road Church in Hot Springs Village. She is married to Ernest Cooke Jr., and they have two children and two grandchildren.

Joint Fellowship meets in Arkadelphia

On Feb. 9, more than 300 National and Southern Baptists gathered at Greater Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Arkadelphia for a Joint Baptist Fellowship Service. The service was hosted by the local Baptist churches of both denominations and the Red River Baptist Association and Southwest District Association.

A.W. Terry, pastor of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, brought a devotional meditation, and Lynn Worthen, pastor of Arkadelphia First Baptist Church, brought the evening sermon.

Ron Browning was the host pastor. Red River Baptist Association director of missions is Maurice L. Hitt.

Mississippi River ministry convocation

The Mississippi River Ministry will hold a convocation Aug. 7-8 at Eudora Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. The ministry is sponsored by missions departments in seven state conventions, Home Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union, and the Brotherhood Commission. The purpose of the convocation is to acquaint church and associational leaders with the needs of the region, share resources and models for ministry, and develop a network of volunteers and ministry projects.

For more information on the convocation, contact Tommy Goode, ABSC, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 376-4791, ext. 5249.

Raising kids alone

"Raising Kids Alone" is the focus for a single parent workshop to be held at Immanuel Church, Little Rock, on Saturday, April 25, from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Sessions are targeted toward single parenting by divorce, but could be adapted to other forms of single parenting. Sessions include: (1) After divorce: support for the next step; (2) Children of divorce: creatively responding to their needs; (3) Working together:

how both parents can positively influence their kids after the divorce, and (4) Visitation: making it work for children and parents. Two other sessions will be entitled: Building your child's self-esteem through communication, and Does your child's age at the time of divorce matter?

Lunch will be served, and child care through sixth grade will be provided, but reservations must be made by April 20. For more details, call Dianne Swaim at 376-3071 or 834-5843.

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Arkansas WMU President Marjorie Grober, national WMU Associate Executive Director June Whitlow, and Arkansas WMU Executive Director Julia Ketter.

Called and Accountable

1992 Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting

by J. Everett Sneed

SBC Woman's Missionary Union

"Enormous are the changes that come on a person who is on mission," declared ABSC Executive Director Moore to the more than 650 who attended the 1992 Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting. Dr. Moore, missionaries, volunteer missionaries, and others developed the theme "Called and Accountable To . . ." for the meeting that convened at First Church, Little Rock, March 20-21.

Moore, in his closing message, challenged the women to "Be on Mission." Having just received the news that Keith Parks had announced his retirement, he suggested that, "We will hear all kinds of statements about Dr. Parks' resignation. Some may be true and some may be false. Your role is to help stabilize mission support in your church during this time. We need to remember that our mission program is larger than one man or one board of trustees. We have never had to have a perfect mission board, mission board president, or missionaries to feel that we could give our support."

Moore went on to say that no circumstance "can change our God given responsibility for getting the gospel out to all of the world."

He concluded by challenging the women of the Woman's Missionary Union to pray.

"No group of people is more suited for facing this crisis than you, because of your ongoing commitment to pray for missions."

Numerous missionaries and volunteers shared their own personal response as to what it means to be "Called and Accountable."

James and Louise Brillhart, told how God called them to be missionaries in Togo. Dr. Brillhart, a physician, said, "My call started when I visited a hospital in West Africa. Much of what I saw would be discouraging."

Brillhart went on to tell of a baby that was born in very primitive conditions and his assisting in resuscitation of the baby. During the night the baby died. He was not called to assist and did not learn of the death of the infant until the next morning. He said, "I thought there are many who are in need of physical help who have never heard the gospel."

Louise, who grew up in North Little Rock, became a Christian while she was young. After her husband finished medical school, they moved to New Orleans. They made a mission trip together but still did not feel strong about becoming missionaries. At Ridgecrest, both responded to the call to go as missionaries. Their work in a church in east New Orleans caused the challenge to grow. The final confirmation that they were to be missionaries came on

a mission trip to Guatemala.

One group of Baptist Young Women Enterprisers shared their experiences related to their trip to the former Soviet Union. The four women went to witness and distribute Bibles shortly after the attempted coup. Additionally, many of them had faced personal problems with family, as well as obtaining the needed funds.

In order to be an Enterpriser Abroad, the young women were required to be involved in 60 hours of training and do a mission action project similar to the one they did in Russia. In Russia, they distributed Bibles, did puppet shows and flannel graphs. They discovered that the people in Russia were hungry for the Word of God and the gospel.

Carroll and Jackie Shaw shared their call to be foreign missionaries and reported on their work in South Africa. He said, "We are called to a country in turmoil, but we are to witness, disciple, and plant churches."

Jackie said that she was called as a teenager. When she asked her pastor, "What should I do?" He replied, "Study and prepare." She went to Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, on a WMU scholarship, and it was there that she met her future husband.

Carroll was saved as a teenager, but since he had relatives who were Baptist preachers and saw the difficulty of ministry, he was determined to not be a preacher. He was going to be a medical doctor. In college when he finally surrendered to the ministry, he called and told his mother who said, "I knew all the time that you would be a preacher." He said, "Why didn't you tell me?" She replied, "You had to find out for yourself."

The couple served for 19 years in Rhodesia prior to feeling a call to South Africa. The first 10 years in South Africa they served with the evangelism department of the Baptist Union. The last three years they have worked with churches in the convention.

South Africa is a land of diversity and change. The Communist party is very strong, but the country is very open. Because of the factional fighting, death is all around them.

The Shaws said that several men from Arkansas came to Zulu land and assisted in starting a new work. The Shaw's concluded by encouraging the women to continue to be "Called and Accountable to Missions Around the World."

A group of Acteen Activators served in Guatemala in July, 1991. In order to be an Acteen Activator Abroad, a girl must be 16 years of age or have completed the 10th grade. She also must have been an Activator in the United States, as well as have a

minimum of 50 hours of training. The girls that went to Guatemala had approximately 200 hours of training.

In Guatemala, they made presentations in five churches, four new mission sites, and three schools. This included 12 puppet presentations, two puppet clinics, and assisting in training Guatemalans to make hand held puppets so they could continue to present the gospel in their community. The event had a profound impact on each of the Achteens who shared with those attending the WMU Annual Meeting the problems in preparing for the trip and the joy they experienced as a result of the endeavor.

ABN photo / J. Everett Smead



James and Louise Brillbart, missionaries to Togo, gave their missions testimonies.

Alma McClendon, retired missionary to Alaska, said, "God showed me what he wanted me to do before I was age six."

At age six, McClendon never attended church. There were only trails in the exceedingly rural section of Arkansas where she would walk miles to catch the school bus. There was only one community church in the area. One Sunday a month an all day singing was held at this church. One Sunday a lady in the community started Sunday School for the children.

Forty years later, when Mrs. McClendon and her husband were serving on the Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, she found a situation very similar to the one that she had grown up in. She said, "God was preparing me for this mission opportunity."

The Prince of Wales Island had 12 logging camps in the area. Lewis McClendon, Alma's husband, conducted adult Bible studies and she worked with the children. There is now an active church on the island.

Sandy Wisdom, associate in charge of Girls' in Action and Mission Friends for Arkansas WMU, led a discussion entitled, "Be Available." In this feature, a retired missionary to Brazil, Betty Spiegel; a Christian Service Corps International worker in China, Thannis Phillips; a Christian social ministries consultant, Diana Lewis; and a

two-year home missions volunteer (US-2), Amy Hester, presented the various types of opportunities that are available around the world for career missionaries and volunteers.

The Bible teacher for the annual meeting was Jimmy Barrentine, ABSC Missions Department director, who developed the theme "Called and Accountable." In his messages, he indicated that every Christian is called to serve (Lk. 8:1-3). Those who are called are gifted (1 Co. 12:4-11), empowered (Ac. 1:8), and accountable (Ez. 33:7-9).

In Barrentine's first message, he listed several conclusions regarding the strengths of women. First, he said women often do their best work out of the church. He observed that the women went with Jesus when he left the synagogue.

Second, women often make strange friendships. This enables them to reach individuals that men never would be able to win.

Third, women are able to get away with things that men cannot. In a world full of hurt, women often have opened doors through which they can enter.

He concluded this first message by challenging women to use their opportunities. He said, "It is your responsibility to enter open doors."

During each of the four sessions, June Whitlow, associate executive director of SBC WMU, led a segment on prayer. In each presentation she introduced it by talking about some of the dynamics involved in prayer. She said that Jesus taught individuals how to pray and listed as four keys to true prayer: (1) pray for your enemies, (2) find a secluded place for prayer, (3) don't say the same words over and over again, and (4) if you want something, ask for it.

Whitlow concluded each segment by directing the prayers of those present. She directed them to pray intercessory prayers, to pray that they would be willing to sacrifice and be unified. She also directed them to pray for specific needs such as Southern Baptists developing regular prayer for missions and world evangelism, to pray for the Foreign Mission Board trustees and Dr. Keith Parks, and to pray for the 16-member committee which is developing a course of action in the future for WMU.

Each of the four sessions was opened with a "Reflection" by Sally Johnson, First Church, Little Rock. She presented dramatic presentations, depicting portions of the lives of outstanding women in the Bible. Among these were Hannah (the mother of Samuel), Esther, Naomi, and Mary Magdalene. Each session also was closed with a response and a challenge to commitment.

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COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

Agencies decide not to exhibit

by Herb Hollinger
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Five Southern Baptist agencies which had earlier indicated they would have exhibits at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, April 30-May 2, have decided this week not to do so.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is an organization created last year in Atlanta composed of moderate Southern Baptist churches and individuals who are critical of current conservative Southern Baptist Convention leadership.

The Sunday School Board, Brotherhood Commission, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary told Baptist Press they have decided not to have an exhibit at the Fellowship's Resource Fair, set for Fort Worth's Tarrant County Convention Center. The Fellowship earlier said more than 100 vendors were expected to display resources for churches and individuals.

John Hewett, an Asheville, N.C., pastor and moderator of the Fellowship, said "we deeply regret" the decision by the SBC agencies.

"We had hoped to provide those attending the widest possible exposure to Christian resources for ministry, mission, education and evangelism," Hewett said. "We will make the vacated space available to other exhibitors whose publications and ministries fit the overall goals of the Fellowship."

An invitation has been extended to those SBC agencies for the Fellowship's 1993 meeting in Atlanta, Hewett said.

SBC agencies still planning to exhibit are the Annuity Board, Radio and Television Commission, as well as an individual exhibit by Southern Seminary. Four of the six SBC seminaries — Midwestern, New Orleans, Southern and Southwestern — had planned to use the large common display exhibited regularly at SBC annual meetings. Woman's Missionary Union, an auxiliary to the SBC, also plans to exhibit at the fair.

James T. Draper Jr., president of the Sunday School Board, said after evaluating "our earlier decision . . . I have decided we will not go forward with our exhibit plans. . . . Cooperative Baptist Fellowship promotional materials advocate bypassing existing Cooperative Program channels."

The Brotherhood Commission said it had not officially registered as an exhibitor with the CBF, nor sent money for a space.

"We had made an internal decision to be there," Mike Day, director of church and denominational relations, said. However, commission officials decided March 31 not to participate.

A spokesman for New Orleans Seminary told Baptist Press simply, "We have changed our minds. We no longer plan to exhibit at the CBF meeting."

A spokesman for Southwestern first told Baptist Press the seminary would have some kind of exhibit but later called to say the seminary would not have an exhibit at all. Southwestern's national alumni association does plan to host a breakfast during the CBF meeting.

Southern Seminary officials told Baptist Press, as of March 31, their plans remain the same.

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Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church

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March CP down

NASHVILLE (BP)—The SBC Cooperative Program total received by the Executive Committee for March dropped more than 7 percent and designated gifts more than 22 percent, according to Harold C. Bennett, Executive Committee president.

However, for the SBC fiscal year — Oct. 1 through March 31 — the total for both Cooperative Program and designated gifts remained more than \$1 million ahead of the comparable period of 1990-91.

CP totals for March were \$12,246,492 compared to last year of \$13,219,744. The 7.36 percent drop is \$973,252. Year-to-date for the CP is \$70,200,901 compared to 1990-91 year-to-date of \$71,543,354 which is a 1.88 percent decrease or \$1,342,452.

Designated gifts for the month also fell, 22.59 percent, with March 1992 at \$14,704,765 compared to last year of \$18,995,700. The year-to-date designated totals were still up with \$80,918,178 for this fiscal year compared to \$78,221,160 in 1990-91.

Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

Educators to hold national meeting

FORT WORTH—Southwestern Baptist Religious Education Association President Royce Rose and SWBREA officers have completed program plans for the association's 1992 meeting, to be held on the campus of Southwestern Seminary on Aug. 10-12. The theme of this year's meeting, "Anticipating/Confronting the Challenge of Change," will focus on changes taking place in religious education, how to predict it and how to do something about it.

Registration and SWBREA membership information is available from SWBREA, Attn. Marian Needles, P.O. Box 22398, Fort Worth, TX 76122.

National campers rally planned

The National Campers On Mission Rally will be held June 16-18 at the Logan County Fairgrounds in Lincoln, Ill. The Illinois and Indiana Chapters of Campers On Missions are also planning children and youth activities, including a Lincolnland sights trip in Springfield for those 10 years old and up.

Those interested in attending should contact Elizabeth Starner, 901 Flame, Effingham, IL 62401; telephone 217-342-3230 (home) or 217-342-3876 (office).

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Videos linked to Mormon church

by Sarah Zimmerman
SBC Woman's Missionary Union

ATLANTA (BP)—Videos produced by Family Entertainment Network have direct links to Mormonism and are not appropriate for Christians seeking wholesome entertainment, claim leaders of a Mormon watchdog organization.

Mike Reynolds, director of Utah Missions, Inc., says two of the four owners of Family Entertainment Network are Mormons. Artists for the animated videos as well as screenplay and music writers also have been identified as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) or Mormons.

The LDS church is considered a Christian deviation group by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board interfaith witness department. The church's teachings include the Bible as not complete in its revelation or authority, that people determine their destiny by works and that God the heavenly father was a mortal man before he attained "godhood."

The Family Entertainment Network tapes are sold as sets from the New Testament, Old Testament and "heroes classics." Though the videos are marketed as Christian material, Reynolds said they introduce LDS concepts.

For example, lyrics from one of the videos says Jesus paid for sins as he sweat drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. Reynolds says Mormons teach that Jesus' death at Calvary is not essential for salvation.

Another example is the video's portrayal of Jesus' birth. The video portrays the angel Gabriel telling Mary that her child will be the son of God but it obscures the teaching that Mary was a virgin.

Robert McKay, associate editor of "The Evangelist," a newspaper printed by Utah Missions, Inc., has seen two videos from the Family Entertainment Network. He says the

videos, titled "The King is Born" and "He is Risen," are "neither high-quality animation, biblically accurate, historically correct nor free of Mormonism."

Family Entertainment Network tapes were sold in some Baptist Book Stores last year but the stores have quit selling the material. The tapes were also sold through television's Family Channel based in Virginia Beach, Va., and in shopping centers around the country.

N.C. to address homosexual issue

ASHBORO, N.C. (BP)—The leadership of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has drafted a recommendation which would refuse gifts from churches publicly approving homosexuality and dis-

qualify them as "cooperating churches."

The recommendation was drafted by E. Glen Holt, convention president; Dorothy Allred, first vice president; Edwin Vick, second vice president; Lamar J. Brooks, General Board president; Kathryn H. Hamrick, board vice president; and Roy J. Smith, convention executive director.

The recommendation was prompted by the decision of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh to approve the "union" of two homosexual males and the news Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill is considering licensing a homosexual male to the ministry. The "union" of the two homosexual males took place March 15 at the Raleigh church.

The recommendation will be given as information to the general board's executive committee in its April 7 meeting, and will go to the general board on May 19.

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Stewardship Commission reduces 1992 budget

NASHVILLE—Trustees of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission approved a slightly reduced budget for 1992-93 and elected a new chairman at their annual meeting.

The commission will operate on a \$2,377,583 budget in 1992-93, a 4.79 percent decrease from the current budget. Roy Moody, state stewardship secretary for the Kansas-Nebraska state convention, was elected executive committee chairman.

The trustees also voted to continue operation of the Cooperative Program Information Hot Line for the rest of 1992 or as long as the staff considers it beneficial to Southern Baptists. The toll-free number is 800-722-9407.

Burns joins national WMU as preschool leader

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—Kathleen (Kathy) Burns has joined the staff of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union as Mission Friends specialist. Burns previously was director of childhood ministries at First Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Prior to that position, Burns worked for nine years in the Sunday school and church administration department of the Alabama Baptist Convention as associate in preschool and children's work.

Ed Young announces for SBC presidency

HOUSTON—Ed Young, pastor of the 18,000-member Second Baptist Church of Houston, has agreed to be nominated as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis June 9-11.

Young's nomination brings to three the number of announced candidates for the SBC presidency. Jess Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church in Van Nuys, Calif., announced last September that a group of non-aligned pastors and others had asked permission to nominate him. Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., and, like Young, identified with the conservative movement, announced Feb. 21 he would be a candidate.

BJC hires law firm in dispute over \$300,000

WASHINGTON—The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has retained a Washington law firm to assist in the committee's claim of \$300,000 in disputed funds held by the Southern Baptist Foundation. The funds also have been sought by the SBC Christian Life Commission.

Representing the BJC will be the firm of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer and Murphy with offices in Washington and Atlanta. To date, neither side in the dispute has initiated formal legal action.

Sparkman given medical leave in resigning from Midwestern

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Citing "personal reasons," G. Temp Sparkman has submitted his resignation effective immediately as professor of religious education and church administration at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Sparkman, 60, was granted medical leave through July 31, with early retirement effective Aug. 1, according to a news release from the seminary. He has been on faculty since 1972.

A seminary spokesman said the seminary was honoring Sparkman's request not to disclose the nature of his illness and Sparkman did not return calls to Baptist Press.

New inner-agency task force to study blind needs

ATLANTA—The major need of blind and visually impaired Southern Baptists is literature in braille, Charles Couey of Nashville told a new inner-agency task force studying ministries to the blind. Couey is president of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind. Last year the conference adopted a resolution which resulted in creation of the task force to study the needs of blind Southern Baptists.

The task force is composed of representatives from the Home Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission. During the task force's first meeting March 31, Couey noted the Sunday School Board quit producing Sunday School literature in braille in 1987.



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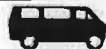


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Parks explains retirement

by Robert O'Brien
SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—R. Keith Parks told staff of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board his decision to retire as president in October was based on spiritual leadership, not political pressure.

But he added the decision, made at a retreat with 78 board trustees, did not change basic differences between him and trustees that make his continued service as president impractical.

Parks, who returned from the March 19-20 retreat in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, was greeted at a chapel meeting March 23 by several hundred mission board staff members bearing candles symbolizing appreciation for his leadership.

He told the staff his decision to retire in October — despite a worshipful retreat atmosphere with trustees asking him to remain as president — has confused some people.

"For a long time there has been the impression that if you can get together and pray together and have a good spiritual experience, that means you will all come out with the same conclusion," said Parks, a 38-year veteran of foreign missions and FMB president since 1980. "Although many of us had a very honest spiritual experience, that didn't change some of our basic ideas... convictions... and differences."

Some trustees "insist there are no basic



FMB staffers embrace Keith Parks.

differences (between us)," Parks said. But he noted at least five trustees told him at the end of the retreat he had done the "only honorable thing" by stepping down if he couldn't agree with them philosophically.

Interspersing his remarks with humor that eased tension and sorrow in the chapel session, Parks said his decision came out of "a strong sense of the Lord's leadership rather than in the midst of confrontation and anger." He commended trustee chairman Bill Hancock of Louisville, Ky., for his efforts to create a spiritual atmosphere at the retreat.

But he cited basic differences with trustees and said questions asked by trustees during the retreat indicated those differences would remain. He outlined three reasons discussed at the retreat that "reinforced my sense of the Lord's leadership" that October is the time to retire:

1) no clear trustee support for his request to remain until 1995.

2) differences with the trustees over the president's role.

3) basic philosophical differences regarding missions.

Parks gave similar reasons in a letter he and his wife, Helen Jean, have sent to all Southern Baptist foreign missionaries.

Elaborating on the second and third reasons, Parks said part of the disagreement over the president's role was his refusal to endorse the "conservative resurgence" or "new order" in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Parks reaffirmed his belief in the Bible and his conservative theology. But he told trustees he can't endorse the conservative movement "in good conscience... because my basic concept of the Bible is what I think Baptists have always stood for" — to cooperate in a non-creedal manner.

The denomination is moving toward a creedal approach of imposing theological control, he said, and FMB trustees expect him to exert more theological control over staff, missionaries and overseas Baptists than he feels comfortable in exerting.

Retirement, he said, was the only way to resolve the confusion and uncertainty surrounding his tenure and his authority as president.

The question of 1995 was discussed at the retreat, he said, "but it became apparent to me that, although the majority (of the trustees) would have said, 'Yes, we want you to stay,'... but I might be expected to retire in July or in June."



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FMB benefactor cuts will

by Robert O'Brien
SBC Foreign Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Baptist philanthropist J. Harwood Cochrane, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's largest benefactor, has disinherited the board of what could amount to tens of millions of dollars.

Cochrane said he has written the board out of his will because he is "disenchanted" with the direction its trustees have taken in the Southern Baptist Convention's theological-political controversy.

One source estimated the legacy due the board after the death of Cochrane and his wife could have been as high as \$30 million, according to news reports. Other sources said that figure was low.

In an interview with Baptist Press, Cochrane refused to confirm dollar amounts but indicated he had left some money in his will for use by the board in overseas hunger relief. But he said he will leave the bulk of his estate in other hands, which he declined to identify.

Cochrane, 79, and his wife, Louise, already have given the board about \$9 million in cash, stocks and property over the years. Their gifts included a 233-acre tract in Rockville, Va., now the site of the board's Missionary Learning Center.

A member of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Richmond, Cochrane built his fortune with Overnite Transportation Co., which he founded and built into an industry

leader before selling it to Union Pacific for \$1.2 billion in 1986. He came out of retirement last fall and founded another trucking company, Highway Express.

His decision became public shortly after FMB President R. Keith Parks announced he was retiring as president in October.

But Cochrane told Baptist Press he made his final decision "six to nine months ago" to remove the board from his will. He had not intended to make it public "now or ever," he said, but responded to specific questions from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, which first reported the story.

While the decision was not directly related to Parks' decision to retire, Cochrane said it was based on his growing "disenchantment" with the trustees' direction and what he called their failure to follow Parks' leadership.

"I'm very, very disappointed (about the direction of the board)," said Cochrane, himself a former board trustee. "I've been hurt for four or five years now. As I see it, they're trying to recycle everyone and make a fundamentalist out of them. I don't like it a bit."

Cochrane called Parks a friend and "the greatest leader of missionaries I have ever seen" and said he would support the mission leader in whatever he decides to do. But he declined to say whether that would involve financial support of any mission endeavors Parks might undertake after retirement "because I don't know what he

will decide to do."

Cochrane told the *Times-Dispatch* his experiences with the mission board have left him unenthusiastic about supporting the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group backed by a moderate faction among Southern Baptists. But he hinted he might consider doing so.

Although Parks will not speculate about his future, reports indicate the fellowship is interested in talking to Parks about leading a mission effort.

Parks declined to comment on Cochrane's action but said the Baptist layman had not discussed it with him.

FMB trustee chairman Bill Hancock of Louisville, Ky., commended Cochrane for his support for missions over the years, but said, "Just as we trust God to call out our missionaries, we must trust the Lord to provide the financial needs of the missions enterprise."

Hancock urged other Southern Baptists not to be too quick to take similar action. "Before Southern Baptists disinherit our foreign missions enterprise, I strongly appeal for them to pray and to inquire of present staff members in Richmond and be informed about what has happened and what's going on."

The trustee chairman said "humanly speaking, most of our trustees were disappointed that Dr. Parks announced his retirement." He said he believes trustees would have worked out a way for Parks to stay through 1995 if Parks had not said God was leading him to do otherwise at a March 19-20 retreat with trustees.

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The Nationwide Church Growth Conference is coordinated by the Sunday School Board and the Home Mission Board, in cooperation with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.



Convention Uniform

Removing the stone

by Jim McDaniel, First Church, Brinkley

Basic passage: Mark 15:42-16:8

Focal passage: Mark 16:2-4

Central truth: God's power is sufficient for every need.

Following the death of Jesus there was chaos and confusion in Jerusalem. The disciples were dazed and in hiding. The disciples of Jesus also were troubled. I can imagine the Pharisees sleeping off their late night rage and the Roman soldiers trying to get rid of a bangover.

One person had a sense of direction. Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and member of the council, stood against the crowd's hysteria. He took the body down from the cross and placed it in a tomb. He then waited to do more after the Sabbath.

A stone was rolled in front of the door. Stones were common for doors in the days of Jesus. They seldom elicited any concern. The stone rolled in front of Jesus' tomb was placed there without fanfare. Suddenly, however, it aroused a great deal of concern.

The Pharisees were concerned about the door because a great deal was at stake for them. If Jesus' body should come up missing they would lose prestige. It was a threat to their power and their pocketbooks. They had Caesar's seal put on the tomb and soldiers placed there to guard it. They had killed Jesus and now they aimed to keep him dead!

The women also were concerned about the stone. They didn't know about the seal and the soldiers. They were wondering how they could manually move the stone. They weren't planning to move the body. They just wanted to make it look nice and smell good. Many today worship a dead Christ. They make up a liturgy that sounds good and soothes the spirit. They do not serve the living God.

God the Father is also aware of the stone. He sends an earthquake to remove it and an angel to tell of it! In resurrection power, God the Father brought Jesus from the grave!

"And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great" (Mk. 16:4).

What Rome couldn't keep in its place; what friends couldn't roll away; God took care of.

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Life and Work

Telling the victory

by Stephen G. Hatfield, Baring Cross Church, North Little Rock

Basic passage: Matthew 28:1,5-10, 18-20

Focal passage: Matthew 28:19-20

Central truth: God commissions his people to tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

The familiar words of the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20) are the clarion call for Christians to witness to a lost and dying world. Can we test ourselves, not only as individuals, but as a church, to see if we are fulfilling the demands of this call? Consider four tests that can help us determine if we are serious about reaching our world for Christ.

First, do we pass the test of outreach? Jesus commanded us to go, which simply means, reaching out to others. Literally, the word "go" translates, as you are going." We know we have passed this test when reaching out to others is a normal part of our lives. Organized visitation is effective, but we should look for opportunities to share everywhere we go, everyday we live.

Second, consider the test of discipleship. Some have said that the backdoors of our churches are open wider than the front. Indeed, we sometimes lose people shortly after we bring them in. Have we forgotten that we must disciple and train young believers so that they can grow in the faith? Jesus did not intend for us to choose either evangelism or discipleship. We must practice both.

Third, there is a test of missions. The song says, "He's got the whole world in his hands." The Great Commission is a call to world missions. We begin in our own backyard, but our vision should not stop there.

Fourth, consider the test of faith. Jesus did not tell us to teach, evangelize, and disciple people without his help. He promised to be with us, everyday. As Jesus stood with his disciples just before his ascension into heaven, he reminded them that he was not to be just a fond memory. His ascending would be followed by the Holy Spirit's descending to dwell in the heart of every believer. This greatest commission is the greatest motivation to do the greatest work for our great God. May we serve him until he comes again.

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Bible Book

Realizing the resurrection

by Dennis M. Dodson, First Church, Monticello

Basic passage: John 20:1-2, 11-20

Focal passage: John 20:1-2, 11-20

Central truth: Realizing the resurrection of Jesus Christ causes rejoicing.

More dawned than just the day when Jesus was resurrected. The gospels state that at first the disciples did not understand the meaning of the empty tomb (Mk. 16:9-13; Lk. 24:10-11; Jn. 20:13). By the end of the day, however, the truth of what Jesus had told them about it (Jn. 2:20-22) had truly dawned and they were rejoicing in the presence of the living Lord! We see this truth dawn in the experience of Mary Magdalene of whom William Barclay said, "Mary is the great example of bewildered love; Mary is the supreme instance of one who went on loving and believing even when she could not understand; and that indeed is the love and the belief which in the end finds its glory."

When Mary came to the tomb that morning and found it open, she ran to Peter and John and told them that Jesus' body was missing. The two men ran to the tomb, where they found only the face-cloth and the linen wrappings. Though John believed (perceived with intelligent comprehension), he still didn't fully understand what had happened and, like Peter, went home.

Mary, upon returning to the tomb, found two angels who questioned her about her weeping. Seeing Jesus, whom she didn't recognize and thinking he was the gardener, she asked him if he knew where the body was. When Jesus said "Mary," she exclaimed "Rabboni!" and embraced him. She had overcome the obstacles of the tomb and her tears to be the first person to see the risen Lord and to realize and rejoice in the resurrection.

The Lord told Mary to stop clinging to him, because his ascension had not taken place and he wanted to go to the disciples with a message about it. In essence he was saying, "Mary, don't be selfish about me. Share me with others." She did and so should we!

"I have seen the Lord" is the essential experience of the Christian, who doesn't just know about Jesus, but knows him (2 Ti. 1:15). Evidence that doesn't lead us to experience the living Lord can leave us as empty as the tomb (Ro. 10:9; Ga. 2:20), with nothing to rejoice about.

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Lesson
Date:
April 26

LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

Incorruptible inheritance

by Jim McDaniel, First Church, Brinkley

Basic passage: 1 Peter 1:3-9, 13-21

Focal passage: 1 Peter 1:4

Central truth: There is an **unspeakable joy in the inner man for those who walk with Christ.**

Peter is true to the biblical admonitions to give thanks. Words of thanksgiving are always flowing from his pen, even in the midst of trials.

One thing is paramount to Peter—that salvation is in Jesus Christ. The starting point of praise and thanksgiving is to keep your eyes on Jesus.

We are saved by the abundant mercy of God. All of us have been lost in sin. Those who are redeemed have been saved by the shed blood of Jesus and the power of his resurrection. When an individual trusts his life to Jesus he is born again and becomes a new creation. He is not just worked over, but he is given new life.

This experience is based on the resurrection of Jesus. That is what we celebrate every Sunday, perhaps better termed the Lord's Day. Life is in Jesus Christ and no other. In Christ, the early Christians lived a life of triumph. There was a joyous anticipation in their worship and their work. They knew they were already raised in Christ. They rightly believed that their suffering was to take part in the suffering of Christ. Their focus was on Christ Jesus.

There is an inheritance promised to God's people. The original "Promised Land" or Canaan has been ravaged by war, insects, drought, and illness. It is indicative of the fact that this life has "flaws."

In the resurrection we become the recipients of an incorruptible inheritance. In that experience there is the promise of a "new" Canaan. It is imperishable and incorruptible. It can't be ravaged by the enemy. It will not experience decay or blight. It is undefiled. It is free from impurity. It is more precious than gold, man's most valuable material asset.

... To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

As we journey toward that inheritance, we will pass through trials. They will last but for a season and are for the proving of our faith.

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Life and Work

When Jesus speaks, listen!

by David Blase, First Church, Nashville

Basic passage: Revelation 1:1-8

Focal passage: Revelation 1:3,4-6

Central truth: We must listen to Jesus because of who he is.

Every time you turn on the television or read the newspaper, some expert is demanding that you listen to him. Many of these experts are proven wrong in a short time.

The Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation. He began by informing his readers that the book was about Jesus Christ. He identified Jesus as one who must be heard and obeyed. People may ignore the words of others, but they must not disregard Jesus!

John presents a list of credentials of Christ in verses 5-6. Here are seven:

(1) Jesus Christ is the faithful witness (v. 5). Jesus said, he was the truth (Jn. 14:6) and he lived it to the end. He backed up his words with his life (Ph. 2:8).

(2) Jesus is the first begotten of the dead (v. 5). When a person predicts his death and resurrection and the prediction comes to pass, you must listen to him.

(3) Jesus is the prince of the kings of the earth (v. 5). We all listen to world leaders. Jesus is the head over all of them. World leaders all pass away, but Jesus is forever.

(4) Jesus is the one who really loves us (v. 5). Most folks will listen to the one who loves them. Jesus loves more than anyone else. Listen to him!

(5) Jesus has washed us from our sins (v. 5). The world is looking for a problem solver. The greatest problem is sin. Jesus took care of that. He can take care of any "lesser" problem.

(6) Jesus has made us into a kingdom of priests (v. 6). People want to be somebody. Jesus makes nobodies into somebodies! He lifts people up. We must listen to him.

(7) Jesus is coming back to earth again (v. 7). A little boy said, "Why should I listen to you? You ran off and left me, just when I needed you most!" Jesus did go away, but he left another, just like him, to be with us (Jn. 14:16). He promised to come back in person (Jn. 14:1-2).

Jesus has all the best credentials. He is trustworthy. Whatever he says, we must hear and obey his every command.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: For the time is at hand" (Re. 1:3).

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Bible Book

Paul defends his ministry

by Dennis M. Dodson, First Church, Monticello

Basic passage: 2 Corinthians 3:1-8, 12-18

Focal passage: 2 Corinthians 3:1-8, 12-18

Central truth: Paul defends his ministry and declares it, being of the spirit in the New Covenant, is superior to the ministry of Moses, which is the law in the Old Covenant.

Being accused of conceit and deceit in his ministry, Paul defended himself by declaring that his ministry was better substantiated than his opponents' and was even superior to that of Moses. He dismissed the idea that he needed letters of recommendation since their first-hand knowledge of him and his ministry were enough to verify that he truly was an apostle of Christ.

Paul's confidence, his sense of competence about his ministry, was of God, who had authorized him and made him adequate (1 Co. 15:10; Ph. 4:13). Having confident expectation and hope in the assurance of glory in his ministry, Paul had boldness and freedom of speech.

Paul discussed his ministry in the Holy Spirit in reference to the two covenants between God and man. The Old Covenant was an external form to follow and only made man aware of his sin and left him unable to overcome it (Ro. 3:19-20; Ga. 3:21). The New Covenant has internal force, the Holy Spirit, to enable the believer to be obedient unto life (Ro. 6:23; Ga. 2:21).

The ministry of the Spirit, a ministry of righteousness, is more glorious than the ministry of the Law. Glory, the splendor of brightness of God's presence, which was partial and transient in its reflection in the law and on Moses' face, is reflected more powerfully and permanently by the Spirit in the lives of believers. The Old Covenant, like the veil of Moses, kept the Israelites from seeing (understanding) the truth of God. Christ removes that veil and enables man to see clearly the glory and truth of God. Unlike Moses, who reflected the glory of God coming to him from without, believers radiate the glory of God coming from within. Beholding as in a mirror or reflecting as a mirror the glory of God, believers: see the glory of God in Christ and/or show the glory of God in Christ as they are being transformed into his image.

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Aid and hope in Croatia

by Mike Creswell
SBC Foreign Mission Board

MOSCENICA, Croatia (BP)—“The enemy is right over there in those trees,” said Daniel Jekic, pointing to a stand of trees about a mile away.

Jekic, a Baptist layman, meant the Yugoslavian army, camped just across the Croatia-Serbia border.

Here at the front lines of the war, March gloom and winter-dead trees give the abandoned town an eerie look. Only camouflage-clad Croatian soldiers are visible, sticking close to sandbagged machine gun nests.

Today the town is quiet, but three artillery shells fell here yesterday. A small Roman Catholic church, hit by a shell, showed a gaping 10-foot hole in its wall. The chill wind chased dust across empty pews.

A nearby Baptist church was luckier; an exploding shell only broke out windows and pocked the outer walls with shrapnel.

Croatia, one of six regions in what was once Yugoslavia, declared its independence in 1991. Some 10,000 people have died in the ensuing war with dominant Serbia.

A shaky cease-fire — violated by frequent skirmishes — barely holds as Croatians await the arrival of 14,000 United Nations peacekeeping troops. In the capital city of Zagreb, new Croatian flags fly everywhere. No doubts about their future as a new nation are evident among the people.

Christians, like all other civilians, are caught in the middle. David Ogrizovic, pastor of a Baptist church in Petrinja on the Serbian side of the battle lines, fled the town with his family and 20,000 other citizens when shelling began.

“I have experienced the hell of Petrinja. No one who has not experienced this

can really understand it,” he said. “Thousands of bullets and artillery shells were flying all over. Street fighting was the most dangerous.”

Now a displaced person, Ogrizovic has baptized 11 people in recent days and plans to baptize 20 more soon. “For me this presents a great satisfaction. The Lord is blessing,” he said.

War has brought out the best in Baptists here. They have organized relief ministries, pushed ahead in evangelism and distributed Bibles and other Christian literature among refugees. Government sources say about 300,000 refugees crowd Zagreb, swelling its population to well over 1 million people.

Daniel Jekic and other Baptist laymen were at the front lines not as soldiers but as Christian witnesses. As rain began to fall they passed out copies of a Billy Graham book, “Peace With God,” to soldiers and spoke of Christian faith amid the horrors of war.

The interdenominational ministry group, Getsemani Mission, were originally intended to use the arts to communicate the gospel. In recent months Getsemani workers have won military approval to minister to refugees right at the edges of the war zone.

In cooperation with the government, they have distributed food to thousands of families, currently 1,000 families twice a month. They have received help from a wide range of Christian and humanitarian groups but need more, said Baptist participant Zeliko Mrz.

Back in Zagreb, the one Baptist church in the city is filled to capacity for Sunday services as refugees come to worship and pick up medicine, food or clothing. Pastor Josip Mikulic says the church's ministry program, “My Neighbor,” has helped more



Baptist layman Daniel Jekic distributes Christian literature to Croatian soldiers in front of a bombed-out Catholic church in the town of Moscenica; the town is about a mile from the front lines of Croatia's war with Serbia.

than 1,000 families. The ministry works in cooperation with the government and Croatian corporations.

Aid has come from a wide range of humanitarian agencies but not much yet from world Baptists other than some help from Canadian Baptists, Mikulic said. “We have gotten more help from the World Council of Churches,” he said.

Baptists are reconciled to the breakup of their Yugoslavian national Baptist union, which had 117 churches and missions. Forty-three churches and missions with about 1,000 members are in Croatia.

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PROJECT BROTHERHOOD

Team surveys Central Asian needs

by Jim Burton
SBC Brotherhood Commission

KHABAROVSK, Russia (BP)—An eight-member project assessment team has discovered numerous opportunities in the far east of the Commonwealth of Independent States for involvement by North American Baptists.

"The need is awesome," said team leader Jim Furgerson, director of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission adult division. "Anything we do will relieve the situation."

The team traveled to the former Soviet Union to survey possible ministries for Project Brotherhood, which the Brotherhood Commission is coordinating at the request of the Baptist World Alliance to respond to needs in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The effort is closely tied to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's "Green Alert" for the former Soviet republics.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union into the Commonwealth of Independent States is fueled by a transition to a free-market economy. This has caused rising prices, putting some basic goods out of reach to many families.

Food is readily available at the Khabarovsk bazaar, which is akin to an American farmers' market, Furgerson said. But for most Russian families in the region, the \$20-\$30 per month salary they receive doesn't keep up with free-market prices.

Preliminary assessment plans call for two containers of food boxes to be distributed through the Khabarovsk Baptist Church. This shipment would contain about 2,000 boxes of basic foodstuffs, each weighing 36 pounds.

Food distribution is a short-term solution to problems faced by people here, Furgerson said. Still, the need is great enough to respond with food boxes.

A long-term need noted by the assessment team involves English teachers who also can lead Bible studies, Furgerson said. "We've discovered an open door with a local college that could lead to the establishment of student work similar to BSU in the United States."

Other needs include training, medical assistance, church buildings and church buses.

There are 28 Baptist churches in the commonwealth's "far east," 13 currently without pastors. At least five pastors are bivocational, another five retired.

Churches in the area are reporting steady growth, with 423 baptisms in 1991, according to Far East Superintendent Gennady

Abramov. That is expected to double in 1992, he said. At least 10 new churches need to be built.

The first phase of Project Brotherhood is the distribution of 570 tons of USDA surplus food in Moscow, which is expected to begin in mid-April.

Volunteers interested in Project Brotherhood should contact their state Brotherhood director. Contributions for food and medicine distribution can be made to Project Brotherhood, Brotherhood Commission, SBC, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104 or Baptist World Alliance, 6733 Curran St., McLean, VA 22101.

FMB photo / Patsy Eitelman



Volunteer missions—Southern Baptist mission volunteer Jerry Dickson, a retired dentist from Springdale, Ark., checks a patient's teeth at a temporary dental clinic set up by missionaries in northern Togo. Two medical teams from First Church, Springdale, worked two weeks in February with missionaries and Togo Baptists in treating 958 patients in 26 villages. Eight Arkansas volunteers worked with people from at least eight different language groups. Each day, missionary and Togo evangelists held outreach services with patients waiting for treatment. More than 850 people said they were interested in becoming Christians during the services.