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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 93, Number 8

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL

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April 21, 1994

Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee



COMMITMENT
to purity.

Members of the youth group of Trinity Church, Searcy, display their True Love Waits commitment cards on the Old State House lawn April 1 during the State Youth Convention in Little Rock. More than 1,700 Arkansas youth signed the cards pledging sexual purity until marriage. For more on the Youth Convention, turn to page 7.

Baptist leaders join Catholics, others in historic agreement

NEW YORK (ABP/BP) — In a move described by some as symbolic of America's changing religious alignments, two Southern Baptist leaders joined 38 representatives of Catholic and evangelical groups in signing an unprecedented pledge of cooperation March 29.

"I feel like evangelicals have a lot more in common today with conservative Catholics than we do with liberal Protestants who deny the cardinal doctrines of our faith," explained Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, one of the signers.

"Some of us feel like we're fighting for our life to keep Judeo-Christian values intact in America today," Lewis added. "It's going to take all the strength we can muster to fight against this onslaught of secular humanism."

Lewis was joined by Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, among initial signers of the 25-page document titled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together."

"As evangelicals and Catholics, we pray that our unity in the love of Christ will become ever more evident as a sign to the world of God's reconciling power," the statement declares.

"We do not deny, but clearly assert, that there are disagreements between us," it continues. "Misunderstandings, misrepresentations and caricatures of one another, however, are not disagreements. These distortions must be cleared away if we are to search through our honest differences in a manner consistent with what we affirm and hope together on the basis of God's word."

Land said the statement reflects the fact that the relationship between evangelicals and Roman Catholics "has reached the stage where we can not only talk about points where we agree but we can honestly, openly and dispassionately lay out the areas where we diverge on doctrine and other matters."

"Nothing in this document should be construed as in any way diminishing the task of every Christian to seek to evangelize the entire world with the gospel of Jesus Christ," Land said.

The statement carries no official sanction from the Southern Baptist Convention or any religious body, but is identified as the opinion only of the signers.

Some areas of agreement cited are:
 ■ Jesus Christ is Lord.
 ■ Justification by grace through faith because of Christ.

■ The authority of the "divinely inspired" and "infallible" Bible.

■ A hope that all people will come to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The document hones in on the social issues both conservative Protestants and Catholics have been addressing. The signers declare their united opposition to abortion and pornography, their desire for "parental choice" in education and their belief that Christian perspectives often are trampled by too-strict interpretations of the First Amendment.

While the signers have found agreement on these social issues, they acknowledge differences still exist on some doctrinal issues. Yet the statement calls for an end to "proselytizing" members from each other's folds while affirming the need of all people to be converted to Christianity.

Cover Story

ABN photo / Russ Dilday



True Love Waits

7

More than 1,700 Arkansas Baptist youth have signed "True Love Waits" commitment cards, pledging themselves to sexual purity. A "True Love Waits" rally was a highlight of this year's State Youth Convention.

Also inside

Perspective

You'll Be Glad to Know.....	4
President's Corner.....	4
Straight from the Editor.....	5

Arkansas Baptists

Training opportunities.....	6
Senior adult ministries.....	8-9
Arkansas All Over.....	12-13
State CBF affirms Dilday.....	14

Nation

Dilday endorses Henry.....	15
HMB addresses universalism.....	16
RTVC votes to change name.....	20
Medical plan rates unchanged.....	21

World

Missionaries evacuate Rwanda.....	10
World Missions Digest.....	11
Human needs giving declines.....	17

Lessons.....	22-23
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Next issue: May 5

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Executive Board elects new staff

Leaders named for Sunday School, crisis support, language missions

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor

Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board members unanimously elected three new Executive Board staff members during a called session April 7 at the Baptist Medical Center's Gilbreath Conference Center in Little Rock.

Elected were Milton Redeker as director of the ABCS Sunday School department, J.D. Stake as director of the Ministry of Crisis Support and Jim Hausler as language associate in the missions department. All three will begin their duties May 1.

The candidates, presented by the board's operating committee, gained unanimous election by the full board. Board member Ben Rowell, pastor of First Church, Rogers, said he had "never seen three men more qualified to do the job" for which they were chosen. Rowell described the new employees as "three of the most outstanding men that have ever entered our work here in Arkansas."

He said he was particularly impressed with the three men's "warmth and spirit," as well as with "their spiritual lives, how they study God's Word and how they pray." Rowell said there was a "marvelous spirit" among the committee members during the interview process.

Redeker, an Oklahoma native, comes to the convention from Putnam City Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, Okla., where he has served as minister of education since 1992. He also has served as minister of education in other Baptist churches in Oklahoma and Texas.

He earned the bachelor of science degree from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas; the master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; and the doctor of ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla.

A self-described "music fanatic" and vocalist, Redeker has been active in associational, state and Southern Baptist Convention work and is a life member of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association. He and his wife, Ann, have three grown children.



Milton Redeker
Sunday School



J.D. Stake
Crisis Support



Jim Hausler
Language Missions

ABSC associate executive director Jimmie Sheffield said Redeker's duties will include "planning and implementing a statewide Sunday School program, leading training conferences and helping develop effective associational church Sunday School programs."

During discussion with the full board, Redeker noted that he comes to Arkansas "bringing a heart committed to Jesus Christ and the people." He said he has served in all sizes of churches and "I understand where you are."

Stake comes to his duties from First Baptist Church in Lafayette, La., where he served since 1981 as a staff minister and director of the church's pastoral counseling program. He also has been associate pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in New Iberia, La.; pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Thibodeaux, La.; and director of the juvenile division for Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office in New Iberia.

He earned the bachelor of arts degree from Louisiana College in Pineville; the master of arts in psychology and counseling from Nicholls State University in Thibodeaux; and the doctor of ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary, with a major in pastoral counseling.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Stake is a licensed professional counselor and charter member of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He and his wife, Gloria, have three sons.

As director of the ministry of the ABCS ministry of crisis support, Stake will be responsible for developing a program of crisis ministry for pastors and church staff and their families.

"There are a lot of pastors, staff members and their spouses that go through difficult

times in their lives," Sheffield noted. "They need someone they can share their burdens with, because of various circumstances, and this staff position is available to work with them. He will be available to help them with problems ranging from pastoral problems to money matters to problems with their children."

During interaction with the board, Stake related his personal spiritual walk to his work, noting that "all of my Christian experience, from the very beginning, I have been active in a consistent way with the Word."

ABSC president Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, and a trained counselor, told the board he was "impressed with (Stake's) biblical foundation" and "it was clear to me that he is very serious about Christian counseling."

Hausler comes to his new position from the foreign mission field, where he has served in Paraguay and Argentina as a church planter and field evangelist since 1984. Trained as an engineer, he was previously a project engineer with Coastal State Gas Pipeline.

He earned the bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Texas Tech University in Abilene and is currently working toward the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

As the language missions associate in the ABCS missions department, he will be responsible for relating to all Southern Baptist ethnic, language and deaf church work in Arkansas. Sheffield said Hausler also will be responsible for "developing and starting new works among language and ethnic ministries and relating to associations and churches involved in that work, writing materials to help new work, and conducting surveys to discover where these groups are."

Hausler has served as an interim in the position since January while on furlough from Argentina. Moore said Hausler "has already met most of the people in the language ministry areas in the state so he already knows how he feels about the work and we know how we feel about recommending him to do the work."

Hug a senior adult

Audrey is a typical, bubbly 4-year-old who sometimes struggles with the concept of remaining basically quiet and still during "big church." It certainly isn't from lack of practice. Like most deacons' kids, she has been faithfully attending "grown-up" worship services virtually all her life. Her mom and I have utilized encouragement, reward, discipline, modeling, you name it—and she really is making progress! But there are still those occasional Sundays when she can't quite capture the appropriate level of worshipful awe and reverence as her wiggles and whispers take control.

During a recent Sunday evening worship service, however, we were treated to a new approach that worked wonderfully. Rather than sitting with the rest of the family, Audrey was invited by her "adopted" grandparents to join them in the pew in front of us. Responding joyfully to the special attention heaped on her by R.B. and Thelma, Audrey sat quietly throughout the whole worship service, snuggling close to Thelma and loving every minute of it.

Pam and I are particularly thankful for R.B. and Thelma and dozens of other senior adults who take time to shower our children—and other people's children—with heartfelt affection. Although there's no substitute for occasional visits from Emily and Audrey's "real" grandparents who live hours away in Missouri and Ohio, the surrogate grandparenting provided by caring senior adults each Sunday and Wednesday plays a significant role in our daughters' lives.

Grandparenting is just one of countless activities that Southern Baptist senior adults do tremendously well. In hundreds of churches throughout the state, senior adult members are the backbone of support for a variety of ministries. They fill vital roles as Sunday School teachers, choir members,



STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON

WMU and Brotherhood leaders, deacons, maintenance workers, soul winners, financial supporters, mission volunteers and, of course, encouragers.

Our nation's senior adult population continues to expand as more and more Americans move into their retirement years. The nation had more than 31 million citizens age 65 or over as of 1990—an increase of more than 5 million senior adults during the previous decade. Arkansas, which has more than 350,000 people age 65 and over, ranks sixth among all states in senior adult population percentage. The percentage of senior adults in the nation in 1990 was 12.6 percent; in Arkansas the total was 14.9 percent—and growing.

Unfortunately, in American society today, many senior adults are treated as second-class citizens. They are sometimes pushed aside and ignored rather than honored and respected. By contrast, many societies around the globe place special emphasis on the wisdom and knowledge of older individuals that comes only from decades of personal experience.

Many senior adults in our nation are still quite active and healthy and have several years of productive contributions they can make to their churches, families and communities. And even those who do

face crises of health, finances or other obstacles deserve our expressions of thanks, support and encouragement.

On the state level, Arkansas Baptists provide a variety of ministry opportunities geared specifically toward senior adults such as the annual Golden Age Evangelism Conference held recently in Eureka Springs. The two-day conference, which focused on the theme, "Senior Adults Ministering to Win," attracted more than 1,100 participants.

Future opportunities for senior adult activity in the state this year include the June 2-4 Senior Adult Celebration at Ouachita Baptist University, sponsored by the Discipleship and Family Ministry department; the July 25-29 SummerSing at OBU, sponsored by the Church Music Ministries department; and even a senior adult golf tournament on Sept. 22 at DeGray Lodge, sponsored by the Brotherhood department.

Many churches and associations also have expanded their ministry options for senior adults in recent years, providing choirs, conferences, mission trips and other events aimed specifically at the needs and interests of senior adults.

As Southern Baptists observe Senior Adult Sunday on May 1, this is an ideal time for congregations to assess their ministry to senior adults, voice appreciation for their years of faithful service and continue to conspicuously involve senior adults in the life and ministry of the church.

I know Audrey is especially thankful for her "adopted" grandma who seldom misses an opportunity to scoop Audrey into her lap, wrap her in a grandmotherly hug and pronounce her "Thelma's little angel." Pam and I are deeply grateful too.

Take time May 1 to share a smile, a hug and a word of thanks for the special grandmas, grandpas and other dear saints of God in your congregation.

Blackaby urges Christlike responses in wake of firing

ALBUQUERQUE, NM (BP)—Many Southern Baptists are responding to the firing of Russell H. Dilday Jr. as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary the same way the world would respond, according to Henry Blackaby, director of the office of prayer and spiritual awakening for the Home Mission Board, as well as prayer consultant to the Foreign Mission Board and Baptist Sunday School Board.

"Many of the things I'm hearing are not of God," Blackaby said. "Right now, the response to the crisis is just as important as the crisis itself." He said this is an

opportunity for Southern Baptists to demonstrate that Christians resolve their differences differently than society does—with love and mercy.

"I deeply regret that the trustees have taken such a precipitous action and regret that they did not work it out in a Christlike way, but did it in the world's way," he noted. "I would hope the friends of Dr. Dilday will respond in as Christlike a way as he (Dilday) has done thus far."

People must listen to both sides, instead of reacting to the first thing heard, Blackaby urged. He said it is wrong to assume that everything one side says is wrong.

When asked how Southern Baptists should respond to the crisis, Blackaby referred to Luke 6:27-28 where Jesus told His disciples to love their enemies. In this case, the disagreement involves those who are brothers in faith, not enemies, he said. Certainly, if that is how enemies should be treated, that is how brothers should be treated, he said.

Blackaby said both sides have done things that have disrupted unity. He said all Southern Baptists must ask, "What kind of response will contribute to the unity God desires? How can I be a peacemaker during this time?"

Institute highlights discipleship courses

Arkansas Baptist discipleship teachers will be equipped for ministry at the first Institute for Christian Discipleship May 9-12 at Parkway Place Church in Little Rock. The training will focus on leading popular Discipleship Training courses.

Robert Holley, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention discipleship and family ministry department, said the institute is "intended to focus attention on the vital role of discipleship in churches and individual believers."

He said the purpose of the event "is to enable participants to lead their churches to offer quality discipleship growth experiences with resources such as Fresh Encounter, Mind of Christ and Experiencing God."

The Fresh Encounter workshop on Monday and Tuesday will be led by author Henry Blackaby, the Mind of Christ workshop on Monday and Tuesday will be led by author T.W. Hunt, and the Experiencing God workshop on Wednesday and Thursday will be led by David Carter, LIFE and MasterLife specialist at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The institute also will feature a MasterLife workshop Monday through Thursday for certification as a MasterLife leader and one-day special interest workshops on Thursday. The age-graded workshops for discipleship teachers will include Experiencing God for Youth, Lift High the Torch (for youth), Disciple Youth, Search (for youth), TeamKid (for children) and WiseCounsel (counseling skills for laypeople).

The cost for all participants is \$15 per person plus an additional cost of \$35 for Fresh Encounter and \$15 each for Mind of Christ and Experiencing God, with a \$65 per person maximum. The cost for the MasterLife Workshop is \$95 per person. The cost for all of the workshops includes materials. Participants are responsible for their own lodging and meals.

To request a brochure with complete information and a registration form, contact the ABSC disciple and family ministry department at 376-4791, ext. 5160.

'Break Out' conference equips for ministry

Arkansas Baptist missions leaders will be inspired and trained to "break out" of the four walls of their churches at "The Church Breaking Out" Conference May 23-25 at First Church, Benton. The conference, the first of its kind in the state, is jointly sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist

State Convention missions department and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Tommy Goode, an associate in the ABSC missions department, said the conference will train "lay missions leaders, pastors, missionaries and church staff to minister to hurting people in their communities."

He said the conference "is designed to be helpful to churches of all sizes, types and locations and it is especially for ministers."

The program will highlight church and community ministries, which Goode described as ministries in communities "where door-to-door is not an effective outreach tool" and that are typically "overlooked by traditional church-planting methods."

He said participants will hear from individuals already active in ministries, see rural and urban ministry models and develop a plan for reaching communities through ministry.

There is no cost for the conference but participants are responsible for their own food and lodging. The program will begin at noon on Monday and conclude at noon Wednesday.

For more information or to register, contact Goode or Neva Spradlin at the ABSC missions department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5150.

Young Musicians Camp scheduled for June

A full slate of musical and camp activities is scheduled for Young Musicians Camp June 27-30 at Ouachita Baptist University. The camp, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, is for children who have completed grades 4-6 the previous school year.

For the first time, campers may choose one of four musicals to learn and perform at the camp. The musicals include: *50th Annual Polk County Picnic*, a contemporary setting of the parable of the prodigal son led by Ladonna Williamson children's choir coordinator for Geyer Springs Church in Little Rock; *A Technicolor Promise*, a re-telling of events surrounding the rainbow led by Judy Rogers, director of children's choirs at First Church, Conway; *Paul & Co.*, based on Paul's second missionary journey led by Glenda Riddle, children's choir coordinator for First Church; *Ashdown*; and *Good Kings Come in Small Packages*, the story of Josiah, king of Judah at age eight, led by Cyndy Hewell, a children's choir conference leader and writer.

Camp coordinator Peggy Pearson, an associate in the church music ministries department, said the camp is designed to

"teach spiritual truths, music and understandings about church music through musical and nonmusical activities that involve the whole child."

She added that the children "see it as a way to have fun learning a musical, to be on a team at the Peanut Olympics with a bunch of goofy games and to get to stay in a college dorm. It's fun for them."

The program also will include a drama emphasis, a talent show, swimming, daily worship, and other musical activities.

The cost for the camp is \$60 per child or counselor. The cost includes all lodging, meals and materials and increases to \$70 per participant with registrations post-marked after May 31.

Participants must provide their own bedding, towels and personal items. Participating churches must provide at least one counselor for every one to 10 campers, with separate counselors for boys and girls.

For more information or a registration form, refer to your church's *Music Opportunities* booklet or contact Pearson at the ABSC church music ministries department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5121.

Deaf Conference offers training, recreation

Participants of all ages will have fellowship, worship, recreational and worker training opportunities at the Arkansas Baptist Conference for the Deaf (ABCD) and Junior ABCD May 13-15 at Camp Paron. The conference, sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department, will feature conference speakers: Carteg, Bearden, language consultant with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The program will feature tracks for adults and for Junior ABCD members age 11 and younger. In addition to training, fellowship and recreation, program highlights will include children's activities, Sunday School and a Sunday morning chapel service. Also featured are interpreter workshops led by Linda Dyer of First Baptist Church of Ada, Okla.

The cost for the conference is \$25.50 for adults and \$10.50 for children age 11 or younger. The cost includes food, lodging and insurance. Participants must bring their own sleeping bag, towel and personal items. A special one-day only fee of \$5 per person plus meals also is available.

The conference program will begin at 7:30 p.m. Friday and conclude at noon with lunch on Sunday. For more information or to request a registration form, contact Neva Spradlin in the ABSC missions department; phone 376-4791, ext. 5150.

'True Love Waits' highlights Youth Convention

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

It was no joke April Fools' Day when more than 3,500 Arkansas youth answered a "Call to Commitment" during the 1994 State Youth Convention at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock.

The convention, sponsored jointly by the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's discipleship and family ministry department, focused on "True Love Waits," the successful BSSB-developed campaign for sexual abstinence among teenagers.

More than 1,700 Arkansas youth have signed commitment cards during the campaign pledging sexual purity until marriage. The cards were displayed on the lawn of the Old State House in Little Rock Friday and during the True Love Waits rally there Friday night.

Bill Falkner, an associate in the ABCS discipleship and family ministry department, said the high number of participants indicated "a high interest in the True Love Waits campaign."

The sexual abstinence campaign "gave them an opportunity to make a statement in a very positive, Christian way that they are concerned about the moral crisis in the nation," Falkner commented. "This gave them a forum to do that not as a media stunt, but to express that they have made choices that are not out of reason for youth to make."

He said it is important to note that "these are youth making the statement themselves," not at their leaders' urging. "Actually these teens are saying, 'This is the way I'm choosing to be.'"

The convention was covered by three Little Rock-area television stations and given radio coverage on the Arkansas News Network. "This is the most comprehensive media coverage of anything Arkansas Baptists have done that was of a positive nature," said Falkner. "I was amazed at how positive their reporting was. They were not castigating us as a bunch of radicals."

Michael Mixon, a member of Mt. Olive Church in Crossett, said he signed a commitment card "because I want to do God's will and be a role model for other people." He said putting the commitment card on the State House lawn meant he was "going public" with his pledge. "I wanted to be a witness to others."



More than 3,500 youth gather at the Old State House for a "True Love Waits" rally.

The cards will be displayed this summer at special services in Washington D.C. and at the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla. in June.

Participants heard youth communicator Randall O'Brien of Waco, Texas, detail some disturbing statistics about teen sexual habits.

"Which factors will comprise your story?" asked O'Brien. "Forty percent of ninth graders, 57 percent of 11th graders and 72 percent of 12th graders say they have had sexual intercourse. Would you agree that America has taken a glutton's chomp of the forbidden fruit?"

He said Americans also are "paying the price for straying from God's Word. Each day 33,000 more Americans are affected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), more than a million teens have become pregnant in the last 10 years and one in three college coeds are infected with STDs."

He said the statistics are not much better among teens from eight major denominations attending conservative churches. "Among those surveyed, 73 percent said they receive little or no sex education from their churches. I thank God for the True Love Waits program. If Satan has a voice in our society, why not God?"

O'Brien defined "safe sex" as "intimacy between monogamous, married adults. God came up with the idea of us being sexual beings," he said. "It is a gift from God, but a wedding a gift."

"There's only one thing you and I can wear to have safe sex," he said as he pulled off his wedding ring and displayed it to the

crowd of Arkansas Baptist teens.

The youth also heard former Miss Arkansas Shannon Boy of Little Rock tell them "temptation is tough. It was tough when I was your age and it's tough for me now."

"But whatever you're doing, stay focused on God," she urged. "It's easy here, but when we go back to our hometowns, we start to return to our old habits."

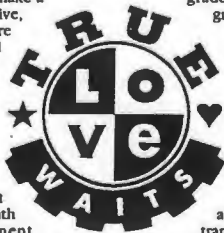
She gave participants two "tips" to keeping their pledges. "Surround yourself with people who will support you and decide why you signed that card. We all have a different motivation, so be committed to what is right. Decide what you want to do tonight."

Arkansas youth earn speaking, Bible drill honors

State Youth Convention activities included Arkansas Baptists' annual Youth Speakers' Tournament and Bible Drill state finals. The Speakers' Tournament featured youth presenting speeches from memory and the Bible Drill challenged older children in Bible verse memorization and familiarity with the Bible.

Finishing first in the Speakers' Tournament was Katie Shaver of First Church, Batesville. Saul Horner of First Church, Valley Springs, and Brian Coleman of Calvary Church, Paragould, tied for second place.

Jayma Roten of First Church, Valley Springs, captured top honors in the Bible Drill finals with Roy "Bubba". Brooks of First Church, Vandervoort taking second.



Layman's efforts help multiply churches

By Russell N. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Ernest Ward keeps with him a small typewritten saying by an unknown author entitled, "Christian Giving." It reads:

"He is no fool who gives away that which he cannot keep in order to gain that which he cannot lose!"

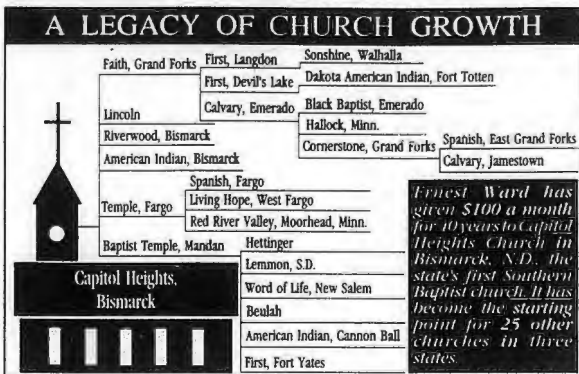
It is believable when the Arkansas Baptist layman says it is his favorite saying. In 1954 Ward helped form the first Southern Baptist church in North Dakota, pledging to give it \$100 a month. Now, 40 years later, the 96-year-old is still honoring that pledge and has given more than \$50,000 to the pioneer church. Amazingly, the church he helped form served as a mother church that now numbers 25 descendant churches and missions in three states.

Ward, born in Oklahoma Territory in 1897, was a land abstractor who got his business start during the Oklahoma oil boom. He later was a partner for a nationwide title abstracting service. Ward said he was on an abstracting job in Bismarck, N.D. in 1954, the year his wife died, when he received an offer to help start a Southern Baptist church in the state.

"Director of missions Benny Delmar approached me and some others in the winter of '54 about starting a new work in North Dakota," Ward recalled. "A group of us Southern Baptist men got started in a trailer and organized" the new work. "We just lacked people."

Delmar served as interim pastor until the church called it's first full-time pastor, Glenn Field, in 1955. Recalling the church's seemingly insignificant start, Field said, "It was in a mobile home on a pretty cold night in December of 1954 and four or five men with Mr. Delmar formed what was known as First Southern Baptist Church. We later changed the name to Capitol Heights Baptist Church to reflect its location."

Field said Ward was a well-respected community figure. "Mr. Ward came to church services all the time and was one of my great supporters," he said. "He talked to people about going to church and was a great inspiration. A lot of people in



Ernest Ward has given \$100 a month for 40 years to Capitol Heights Church in Bismarck, N.D. the state's first Southern Baptist church. It has become the starting point for 25 other churches in three states.

Bismarck said he was the most respected man in the oil business because he never went out and drank with them and was highly respected in his business dealings."

He also remembered sacrifices made by the original members. "Some of those years were kind of hard years. The men took money out of their savings accounts and put earnest money down on the land where the church now is."

Ward said there were more than just financial problems for the church. "The Northern Pacific Railroad went through Bismarck building a road and just dumped the employees, and we had a rough time with that sort of citizen," he commented. "It was like going to a foreign land."

Ward completed his job in Bismarck and

moved to Arkansas, marrying his current wife, Evelyn, in 1956 and joining Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock, where both are still members. She began to share his interest in the tiny new work in North Dakota.

"We eventually built the building in 1956 and Mr. Ward donated \$5,000 to the building program," Field recalled.

Ward said they support the church because "we felt that it was a worthy cause. It was the first Southern Baptist church in the state and most people were

either Catholic, Lutheran or nothing."

The Wards also continued to send their monthly gift which Field said the church put in its general fund to help his salary, missions giving, church expenses, and renting a building from the Seventh-day Adventists.

Field said he's not surprised that Ward still gives to the church. "Mr. Ward is a very determined man," he said. "And when he has some confidence that what he's doing is a good thing, he's going to stay with it and not let anyone turn him aside."

Harry Trulove, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, agreed. "He is a very energetic, positive-thinking individual that doesn't give up. He lost a fortune in the Great Depression and that did not discourage him. He put together another fortune."

Ward remains faithful to his original pledge. Trulove reported that in addition to sending Capitol Heights a monthly check, Ward has established a charitable remainder annuity trust that will benefit, among other Baptist ministries, Capitol Heights. "After his death, the church will continue to receive \$100 a month until Jesus returns," said Trulove.

Ward is still active at Pulaski Heights Church and maintains a ministry of his own there. "I call all the members of the church on their birthdays and wedding anniversaries and I call the church shut-ins each week," he said. "I think it is one of the contributions I can make."

"In my prayers I thank God He has let me live this long," Ward said. "And I pray for guidance in making my gifts that I may be led to properly distribute my wealth."



Ernest Ward

Love of teaching keeps 'Graney' active at 93

She is just "Graney" to her Sunday School students and other members of Central Church in Magnolia, but 93-year-old Verbie Graney wouldn't have it any other way.

"Everybody calls me Graney because I call myself Graney," she remarked. "I like Graney better than Verbie anyway."

Most church members would gladly let her call herself anything she chooses. She has faithfully served as a Sunday School or discipleship teacher in Baptist churches for the past 76 years.

"Maybe during that time there was about three months when I wasn't in a teaching position," she recalled. "I had two babies that came along and two moves during that time. But when we moved I always took my church letter with me and got right into a church the next Sunday. It seemed there was always a job waiting for me when I got there."

Reflecting on her decades of service, she affirmed that "the best of my years have been right here at Central for the past 46 years." During that time, she has served as director of the southwest Arkansas church's missionary society, Church Training, various Sunday School departments and as associational Church Training director.

She currently is a teacher and department director for the "Love" department at Central, a class for mentally handicapped adults. "The class got its name because it started out of love," she explained.

The class began when Graney "saw that something was missing" at the church. "I realized we did not have Sunday School for our special people. They are special,

but they are also equal. We are all created equal."

Graney's love for "special" people stems from her second of two daughters, Jo, who has Down's Syndrome. "Jo has been right by my side these years I've done this work. Right with me. I've enjoyed it every minute I've had her.

"I knew they were out there. We started with three and today our enrollment is 34. We now have a department with three classes," she said. "They're all different. Some are high level and some are low level, boys and girls, black and white."

Graney said her love for teaching means "I never get tired of it. It's still a challenge to me and it's a way I can serve my Lord, and I feel that if He's going to give me a job, He'll give me the time to do it. That's why I'm still hanging around, I suppose."

Her experience with teaching the handicapped has extended beyond Central's walls. She taught a class for the mentally handicapped sponsored by the local Kiwanis Club before it was available in Magnolia's public schools. "They now have special classes from kindergarten through high school."

Her work with the mentally handicapped has even earned her recognition in state circles. "I don't know how, but I got on the Governor's Council on Mental Retardation from Gov. Faubus to Clinton."

Graney also has been instrumental in helping establish several Magnolia facilities for the mentally handicapped, including Independent Living, a home providing shelter for 18 retarded women in the area.

Noting that Central Church provides the facility for Independent Living, she



At age 93, Verbie Graney still faithfully teaches her "Love" Sunday School class.

said the program has been a viable ministry for the church with many of the residents attending the Love class. "Some of these girls had never been to Sunday School or church or anything before. Some of them came from broken homes or homes that didn't want them."

Graney's local involvement in assisting the mentally handicapped has been so extensive, the board of the Columbia Association of Retarded Citizens named their center in her honor. The center provides activities and training programs for clients. She also helped initiate Abilities Unlimited, a Magnolia workshop providing employment opportunities for about 85 handicapped adults.

As a result of her ministry, many of her students have come to know Jesus as their personal Savior. "Several of my girls have been saved since I've had them in my class."

She said the church is supportive of her students. "They feel so at home here. The whole church has accepted those boys and girls, they love the church and the church loves them and the staff and (Central Church pastor) Bro. Rich (Kinc) are very understanding."

She encouraged other churches to initiate ministries for the mentally handicapped. "You can do it if you stay on your toes. There is really no difference from teaching other classes."

Perhaps her greatest acclaim comes from her students. Spencer Estes said, "Mrs. Graney is a wonderful woman. She is a good teacher and helps you to do it."

"I love her very much and she teaches us about Jesus," said class member Linda Gail. "She's just outstanding."

Decades of teaching bring rewards

Bunice Hamilton, 84, adds a wealth of teaching experience and ability to First Church, Piggott. But she insists she doesn't deserve special recognition. "What's so newsworthy about an 84-year-old teaching?" she asked.

Acknowledging that teaching "keeps me going," Hamilton said she taught children's Sunday School about 25 years as well as teaching senior adults seven years.

She said she has "kept on teaching because I enjoy it," although she has urged the nominating committee for the past three years to "find someone a little bit younger."

Noting that the committee has been unsuccessful in finding someone else to accept the responsibility, Hamilton said,

"That's not good. I think young people need the experience of teaching older people.

"When I tell the girls we need someone younger to give us a little 'spizerinctum,' they say, 'We're satisfied with you,' and I guess that's where I keep on," she acknowledged. "I couldn't just walk off and leave them."

She said her reward for teaching class is learning. "I learn more than they do because I study harder than they do. I take each verse, talk about it and let them expound on it a little bit. I enjoy making notes because at my age I can't remember."

Urging others to try teaching older adults, she asked, "If someone is needing a teacher, why not give it a try?"

Baptist missionaries safely evacuate Rwanda

By Don Martin

58C Foreign Mission Board

NAIROBI, KENYA (BP)—Ethnic and political killings in Rwanda have forced Southern Baptist missionaries there to join an overland evacuation being arranged by the U.S. Embassy in Rwanda's capital, Kigali.

The deaths of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi in an apparent attack on their plane April 6 touched off a spree of ethnic killings and attacks by army and police forces in Kigali. Fighting closed the airport in Kigali, forcing the U.S. Embassy to arrange an overland evacuation.

Celebrations over the safe evacuation of Southern Baptist missionaries from Rwanda, were tempered April 11 as the rescued missionaries urged prayers for the nation and its Christian community.

Concern had run high for missionaries Larry and Dianne Randolph. They had not been with any of the American evacuation groups and no other missionaries had been able to directly contact the Randolphs, who live near the airport in Kigali, Rwanda's capital. The airport area has experienced heavy fighting between the Tutsi-dominated rebel army and Hutu-controlled government troops.

However, the couple arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, on a Belgian transport plane late April 11.

"I've just talked to Dianne and they are fine," said Jean Blair, Mrs. Randolph's mother in Texas. "I was worried sick about them, but they've made it out."

The other Southern Baptist missionaries — nine adults with four children — have been taken to housing quarters at the Brackenhurst Baptist International Conference Centre in Limuru, Kenya, a town near Nairobi.

The other Southern Baptist missionaries evacuated from Rwanda were Vernon and Sandi Sivage, David and Janet Hooten, Martha Colwell, Katrina Knox, Stan and Marlene Lee, and journeyman Marty Felts.

They fear for the fate of Rwandan Baptists and other Christians, which include both Hutus and Tutsis.

"Our Baptists in Rwanda, I'm afraid, are in a bad situation," said David Hooten in an April 10 telephone interview with Baptist Press just hours after his arrival in Kenya.

Members of the Tutsi tribe "really have to fear for their lives, because these vigilante tribes ... who are generally Hutu people, are going around searching for Tutsis and trying to just wipe them out," said Hooten.

The Hutu and Tutsi peoples of Rwanda and neighboring Burundi have a long history of tribal enmity. The Tutsis, heavily

Rwandan Baptist leader calls for prayer

WASHINGTON (BP)—"Please pray for us, the people of Burundi and Rwanda," urged Eleazar Ziharambere, the Baptist World Alliance's regional secretary for Africa. "Pray that our people will have courage to confront even death."

Ziharambere pleaded that worldwide Baptists "will pray that the God of miracles will bring peace" to the troubled nations.

Ziharambere, who also is general secretary of the Baptist Union of Rwanda, voiced his concern during a telephone conversation with Tony Cupit, BWA director of evangelism and education.

Ziharambere said the awful events in

the nation's capital of Kigali has brought fear all over Rwanda. People have been ordered to remain in their houses, the market is hardly operating and the banks are closed. Thousands upon thousands have been killed, though Butare itself has so far been spared the worst atrocities occurring elsewhere.

Ziharambere said he suspects Baptist pastors and church members in Rwanda are among those who have been killed. There are more than 33,000 Baptist believers in Rwanda and 32,000 in nearby Burundi. He said he has been granted a pass by the military to move around to minister to Baptist people.

outnumbered by Hutus in both countries, were feudal leaders over the Hutus for centuries. The roles began to reverse after both countries gained independence from Belgium in 1962. Since then, the two ethnic groups have been locked in a protracted struggle that has killed tens of thousands and left more than 1 million homeless.

Fierce fighting continues

News reports April 11 from Rwanda said the relative calm of April 10 had been replaced by fierce fighting between the Rwandan army and rebels outside the capital of Kigali. Red Cross officials have estimated that 20,000 people have died in the ethnic slaughter.

Contending with such violence has left Southern Baptist missionaries, now in Kenya, physically and mentally drained after living through three days of tribal bloodletting.

The missionaries left Rwanda in several different groups. Because of failed telephone communications, one group often would not know the whereabouts of other Southern Baptist co-workers.

Most of the missionaries left the country in U.S. Embassy-sponsored convoys, which drove into Burundi. From there, the U.S. military placed them aboard transport planes and flew them to Nairobi.

Even though the embassy arranged safe passage for most Americans, escaping was a harrowing experience for some.

For the Hootens, who had to leave their home in Cyangugu by themselves in a car with their two children, the ordeal was terrifying. Cyangugu is about a five-hour drive southwest of Kigali.

"We had been told by the U.S. Embassy to sit tight and wait for a rescue convoy or maybe even a helicopter," Hooten said.

"But we later learned that it wasn't possible to get someone out to us. There was going to be no rescue operation."

The family decided to leave with a group of Free Methodist missionaries who live near Cyangugu. The Hootens packed their car before dawn April 9 and "made a dash" to where they were to link up with the other missionaries. But no one ever came to the arranged meeting point.

The Hootens soon encountered several roadblocks set up by men carrying machetes and knives, who demanded food and money.

"At one point we came upon a mob in the middle of the road. I forced my way through them with the vehicle. I didn't want to stop," Hooten said. "I was able to get through them ... but they came charging after us and one guy got hold of the side of my door. I had my window down, and he hung onto it, trying to get me to stop. The rest of the crowd came after us with machetes and clubs. He hung onto the car and tried to stop me, but I was able to force it into gear and shove him off, and we got away."

The Hootens eventually linked up with others leaving in a convoy. The group then made their way to Burundi.

"It was so hard to leave," he said. "The sooner we can get back the better."

Hooten, who grew up in Kenya and Uganda as the son of Southern Baptist missionaries, said his call to minister to the people of Rwanda is stronger than ever.

Many of the missionaries may soon begin looking for ways to help with relief work, said James Westmoreland, associate area director for Foreign Mission Board work in eastern and southern Africa.

Part of the work will be financed by \$54,650 in hunger relief funds the Foreign Mission Board released April 7.

Pakistan Muslims kill Christian defendant

LAHORE, PAKISTAN (BP)—A Pakistani Christian on trial for his life for allegedly blaspheming Islam was shot and killed April 5 by Muslim radicals outside the court.

Two other Christian defendants—including a 13-year-old boy—and another Christian suffered gunshot wounds in the attack.

Manzoor Masih died instantly when gunmen on motorcycles opened fire on the four Christians after a hearing at the Lahore High Court. His co-defendants, Rehmat Masih and 13-year-old Salam Masih, were injured along with a supporter, John Joseph.

One of the attackers has been identified as Maulvi Mohammad Fazle-Haque, a plaintiff in the blasphemy case, according to News Network International. Witnesses said all the gunmen appeared to be members of a Muslim extremist group led by the clergymen who brought the court case against the three Christians.

The three Christians were arrested last May in central Punjab province after being accused by the imam of a village mosque of scrawling anti-Muslim slogans on mosque walls and throwing notes insulting Muhammad into mosques. Under Pakistan's controversial Islamic law, all three face death if convicted of blaspheming Muhammad.

FMB missionary to Peru shot by robbers

LIMA, PERU (BP)—Southern Baptist missionary Gary Crowell came close to death March 18 after being shot and robbed outside his office in Lima, Peru. Crowell was reported in stable condition in a Lima hospital a few days following the incident.

The 41-year-old missionary underwent emergency surgery March 18 to repair a major artery severed when robbers shot him in the leg as he returned from the bank. He also sustained scraped nerves in his elbow from a bullet wound.

"The surgeon said Gary was very fortunate (to be alive), because when he arrived (at the hospital) his blood pressure was very low," said missionary Ronald Fox. "He didn't have a whole lot more time because of the bleeding. He lost so much blood so fast."

Surgeons performed another operation March 20 to clean Crowell's wounds. But Crowell still isn't "out of the woods," said Fox. "There's still a danger from infection and blood clotting."

Missionaries in Lima met together March 19 to pray with Crowell's wife, Robbin, and sons Ethan, 16, and Daryn, 12. "We had a time of prayer and support just to bring us together as a (missionary) family because everybody was hurting and frightened and just a little bit in shock," said missionary Kathy Phillips. Assistance from Fox and Larry Phillips is credited with saving Crowell from bleeding to death.

Refugee church starts totaled 65 in '93

ALBUQUERQUE, NM (BP)—Refugees in America started 65 Southern Baptist congregations in 1993, said the Home Mission Board's director of refugees and immigration ministries.

Southern Baptists helped resettle 866 refugees in 1993, said Bill Fulkerson, an assistant director for the HMB's language church extension division. That figure is down from recent years, but Fulkerson said the number of refugees coming into America also decreased.

Southern Baptists have been involved in refugee resettlement since 1962, Fulkerson said. Since then, about 25,000 refugees have been resettled, resulting in 563 congregations, he said.

Of the 65 churches or missions started by refugees last year, Haitians accounted for the most congregations of any ethnic group with 20. Cubans and Vietnamese refugees started 11 congregations each, and Russian refugees started 10 congregations.

Awareness of sponsorship opportunities and a lack of sponsors

are the two greatest challenges for Southern Baptist resettlement work, Fulkerson said. "Most of our people don't even know we're into refugee work."

Ban on missionaries in Lebanon extended

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Missionaries will be denied the right to live and work in Lebanon for at least another six months.

A U.S. State Department undersecretary, Thomas Donilon, has informed Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin that a travel ban on Americans in Lebanon has been extended into its eighth year.

In a letter to Rankin, Donilon noted that groups in the past who targeted and kidnapped Americans still operate in the country. But he did offer a glimmer of hope for the future.

The travel ban, which has come up for review annually since it was imposed in 1987, will now be reviewed twice a year. That change results from an order by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, according to Donilon, assistant secretary for public affairs.

European English churches meet Lottie goal

WIESBADEN, GERMANY (BP)—Churches affiliated with the European Baptist Convention gave more than \$100,000 to the 1993 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, surpassing their goal of \$99,999.99.

Churches affiliated with the convention have about 4,700 members. That means each member gave an average of about \$21 to the offering, said John Merritt, Southern Baptist missionary and convention general secretary.

Sixty English-speaking churches located throughout Europe are members of the European Baptist Convention, which currently is in a three-year missions partnership with Arkansas Baptists.

The European convention adopted the giving goal, proposed by its Woman's Missionary Union, despite decreased offerings in recent years. Many of the churches have lost members because of U.S. military cuts in Europe.

The Lottie Moon giving was less than half the convention's total missions giving in 1993. Convention churches also baptized 450 people during 1993.

FMB to use MSC volunteers on U.S. staff

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—As part of its effort to increase the use of volunteers worldwide, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will begin using Mission Service Corps volunteers to fill positions on its U.S. staff.

The board has five MSC assignments open in its Richmond, Va., office now, but hopes to expand use of the volunteers in the future. The current jobs range from a research project assistant to a secretarial assistant.

"We're in a period when many people are searching for meaning in their lives—trying to find something significant rather than just earn a paycheck," said Don Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president. "We believe some Southern Baptists who haven't had an opportunity to go overseas would like to touch the world through positions like these."

All the jobs would be unpaid one- to two-year assignments involving about 30 hours' work per week. The MSC assignments enlarge upon a home office volunteers program in which 61 local Southern Baptists work up to half a day a week assisting the Richmond staff.

People interested in the new program may contact Jim Edwards, staff personnel director, by calling 1-800-999-3113, ext. 364; or writing to him at the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230.

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

Church news

Lowell First Church recently voted to build a new 500-seat auditorium and remodel some existing facilities. The church reported a record attendance for Easter Sunday. The church had 498 in attendance, with its Hispanic Mission having 48 in attendance and also 48 in attendance at its Hickory Creek Mission for a total of 594. Gary E. Thomas is pastor.

Warren First Church broke ground April 10 for an activities building. This is the first time in 40 years the church will expand its facilities. Greg Stanley is pastor.

Grace Church, North Little Rock, recently sold its church property and the congregation currently is meeting at the North Pulaski Association office. They will be meeting at the associational office while they search for land and construct a new building.

Pine Grove Church of Sweet Home recently held a joint prayer, praise and worship service with the Primrose United Methodist Church that featured personal testimonies from members of both congregations. Jim Pope, pastor of the Primrose congregation, was the speaker. James Sanders is pastor of Pine Grove Church.

East Side Church in Pine Bluff will observe its 25th anniversary April 24 with a day of celebration that will include a 10 a.m. worship service, an "old fashioned dinner-on-the-grounds" luncheon and an afternoon fellowship worship service. Former pastors Ruffin Snow and Don Nall will be the speakers. Clyde Jones is pastor.

Life Line Church in Little Rock's music ministry will present "God With Us" in special services scheduled for April 23 at 7 p.m. and April 24 at 10:50 a.m. The presentation, directed by Leslie Willis, will feature an orchestra, a banner procession and the testimonies of church members.

People

Harold Stephens celebrated his 18th year of service to Trinity Church in Benton on April 3 with a pastor appreciation service. He currently is the longest tenured pastor in Central Association. Stephens is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and has served churches in Arkansas, Texas

and Oregon. He and his wife, Shirley, have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Ron Taylor recently completed 10 years of service with Calvary Church in Batesville. He began serving as youth and music minister in February 1984 and continues to serve in that capacity.

Tom and Kay Cox recently sponsored their 13th annual crusade to India with 59 team members from 15 states. Arkansans participating in the crusade included Roy Blisswell of Winslow, Ted Duke of Fayetteville and Kathy Brown of Van Buren. The teams served in Calcutta and the state of Andhra Pradesh, where they ministered through medical and dental clinics, teaching, preaching, singing and working with children. The Coxes are members of Springdale First Church.

Ordinations

Cross Road Church in Little Rock recently ordained Dee Brown to the deacon ministry.

Fayetteville First Church ordained Bruce Jones, Scott Hendren, Van Eckels, Bobby Harwell and Jim Smithwick to the deacon ministry March 6.

Silent Grove Church of Springdale ordained Avid Decker and Bill Samucison to the deacon ministry March 15.

Ruddell Hill Church of Batesville recently ordained Dale Creamer, David Campbell and Don Stewart to the deacon ministry.

Walnut Street Church of Jonesboro ordained Kevin Hodges to the deacon ministry April 10.

Hillside Church of Camden ordained Mike Russell to the deacon ministry April 10.

Ordinations

W.T. Holland, founding director of Boyce Bible School at Little Rock, died April 5. He previously taught Greek at Ouachita Baptist University where he was awarded the honorary doctor of divinity degree in 1974. He also was a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Holland, who had served as a pastor of Southern Baptist churches for more than 50 years, also had served as president of the Missouri Baptist Convention and as superintendent

of missions for Kansas City Baptist Association. His funeral service was held April 8 at Immanuel Church in Little Rock where he was a member. Survivors are his wife of 52 years, Kathleen Chapman Holland; two daughters, Kathy of Boston, Mass., and Debby of Louisville, Ky.; a son, Thomas of Mountain View; a granddaughter; and three sisters. Memorials may be made to Immanuel Church or Boyce Bible School.

Gerald Lewis, a former Arkansas pastor, died March 3 in Des Moines, Iowa. He was serving New Harmony Baptist Church in Martinsville, Mo. Survivors are his wife, Phyllis Lewis; a daughter, Garol Ann of St. Joseph, Mo.; two sons, Timothy of Darlington, Mo., and Phillip of Albany, Mo.; and a sister.

Charles R. Trammell of North Little Rock died April 3 at age 68. He was a member of Pike Avenue Church of North Little Rock. A retired Baptist minister, he had been pastor of Pleasant Grove Church of Little Rock and Steel Bridge Church of Lonoke. He also was the retired owner of Trammell Plumbing Company of North Little Rock. Survivors are his wife, Elizabeth Lingle Trammell; four sons, Jim of Little Rock; Michael of Dickinson, N. D.; Jerry Don of North Little Rock and Mark of Gadsden, Ala.; six grandchildren; his mother, Stella Brown of North Little Rock; two brothers; and two sisters. Memorials may be made to the Kidney Foundation or the American Diabetes Association.

Staff changes

Marshall Kurfees is now serving as pastor of Pencil Bluff First Church. He formerly was a pastor in the Alexandria Bay area of northern New York. He and his wife, Susan, have one daughter, Sherie.

Jimmy Burks has accepted the pastorate of Sparkman First Church after serving as interim pastor for 10 months. He previously was pastor of several churches in Texas and Arkansas, including 16 years as pastor of Cullendale First Church in Camden.

Bo Johnson has joined the staff of Arkadelphia First Church as minister of youth. He and his wife, Brenda, are coming there from First Church of Taylorsville, Miss., where he served as minister of youth and education. He is a graduate of California Baptist College in Riverside, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lindsey Atkinson has been called to serve as youth director at Eastern Heights

Church in Van Buren, coming there from First Baptist Church, Arkoma, Okla. Actkinson and his wife, Lori, have three daughters, Jessica, Hannah and Katie.

Debbie Burns is serving as children's director at Eastern Heights Church in Van Buren, coming from Windsor Park Church in Fort Smith. She also serves as the director of the mothers' day out ministry. She and her husband, John, have three daughters, and two grandchildren.

Kevin D. Dunn began serving as bivocational minister of music for Junction City First Church in March. He came from North Crossett First Church, where he served as bivocational minister-of music and youth. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Monticello and currently is band director for the Strong School District. He and his wife, Cheryl, have two sons, Daniel and Thomas.

Barry Morgan is serving as pastor of Calvary Church in Osceola. He attended Henderson State University and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and is a graduate of Mid-America Theological Seminary in Memphis. He previously was pastor of Pine Tree Church and Cabot Second Church. Morgan and his wife, Kimberly, have three children, Justin, Rachel and Mallory.

Warren Haley and **Karen Williams** are serving as interim music ministers at First Church in Mountain Home. Both are members of the church. He is interim music minister and she is associate interim minister of music.

Sidney Hunt has resigned as pastor of Harmony Church in Rector because of health problems.

Robert Wood is serving as pastor of Bethlehem Church, near Gurdon.

Joe Garret is serving as bivocational pastor of Center Point Church near Gurdon.

Henry Bell is serving as pastor of New Jerusalem Church in Arkadelphia. He is a master sergeant in the Army Reserve.

Eric Stanton will serve as summer youth worker for Calvary Church in Batesville. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University, and it is his third summer to fill the position.

Ronnie Mayes has announced his resignation as pastor of First Church in Beebe, effective the third week in June. He will join the faculty of Mid-America Theological Seminary in Memphis, following more than eight years of service with the Beebe church.

George Livermore resigned April 3 as pastor of First Church of Elkins.

Gary W. Digby is pastor of First Church in Farmington. He previously was pastor of churches in Arkansas and Mississippi. Digby is a graduate of Mississippi State University, Starkville, Miss., and Mid-America Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Annette, reside in Prairie Grove. They have two children, Jeremy and Christy.

Mike Nichols has accepted the call to join the staff of South Highland Church in

Little Rock as minister of youth and outreach. He will graduate in May from Arkansas Tech University with a degree in elementary education. His wife, Resha, is a student in the pharmacy school of the University of Arkansas School for Medical Sciences.

Joe Clement began serving April 3 as pastor of Temple Church in Searcy. He came to Searcy after serving more than 10 years at Central Park Baptist Church of Bossier City, La. Clement and his wife, Paula, have two sons, David and Jonathan.

Todd Davis began serving April 10 as pastor of Centerville Church. In addition, he is employed by Peter's Family Living in Russellville.

Valeria Couch is serving as music director of First Church, Plainview. She is a teacher in the Mena Public School System.

Elvin McDill is serving as pastor of Rover Church, coming there from Mount Zion Church in Hamburg.

Roy Buckelew has accepted the call to serve as interim pastor of First Church in Hot Springs. A professor at Ouachita Baptist University, he will go there following eight months as interim pastor of Baring Cross Church, North Little Rock.

Jim Shaw has been called as minister of youth for Maple Grove Church in Trumann. A former pastor of Neal's Chapel, Lepanto, he currently is attending Mid-America Theological Seminary.

Billy Davis joined the staff of Maple Grove Church in Trumann March 13 as minister of music. He and his wife, Terry, have six children, Rachelle, Daniel, Valerie, Timothy, William and Clayton.

Fred Fretz is serving as pastor of Pee Dee Church in Clinton, going there from Sallito Heights Church, Conway.

Kevin Peterson has joined the staff of North Park Church in Van Buren as youth and children's director. He came there from First Church in West Fork.

Robert L. Oden is pastor of Spadra Church, Clarksville. He previously served Cannan Church and Rocky Branch Church in Daingerfield, Texas. Oden and his wife, Nancy, have a daughter, Melody, who is a student at Arkansas Tech University.

Harley Petty has joined the staff of First Church in Sherwood as minister of youth. A student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he is a graduate of Arkansas State University. Petty has served other Arkansas churches. He and his wife, Leigh Ann, have a daughter, Victoria.



First Church, Gillett, held a groundbreaking ceremony March 6 for a new auditorium that will double the congregation's seating capacity. The church led Centennial Association last year in baptisms and has gained 60 new members in the past 14 months. Participating in the groundbreaking ceremony are (left to right) deacons Sam Snowden, Leon Perritt, Sonny Roach, pastor David Reddoch, Rickey Hayes and Donnie Wilbanks.

State CBF hears Sherman, affirms Dilday

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas met April 5 at the Baptist Medical Center's Gilbreath Conference Center for its second annual meeting since forming in March 1993. Members elected officers, adopted a statement on the firing of former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president Russell Dilday and received an annual report from national CBF coordinator Cecil Sherman.

Elected as officers during the meeting's business session were: Layne Smith, pastor of Rolling Hills Church in Fayetteville, moderator; Dianne Swalm, a member of Second Church in Little Rock, moderator-elect; and Henrietta Holcomb, a member of Rolling Hills Church, recorder.

Smith said he planned to "establish some goals for an inclusive Baptist presence in the state and create a missions statement reflective of historic Baptist principles that will be our guiding light for the future."

He said he views the organization's role in Arkansas as "continuing to be supportive of Arkansas Baptist life and creating a place for persons struggling in all that is happening in our convention. That is important because I don't want to lose good Baptists from our family."

In other business, members adopted a statement responding to the March 9 firing of Dilday by Southwestern trustees.

The statement, read to participants by author Fred Ball, pastor of Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock, affirmed Dilday and Southwestern students. It called for the school's trustees to "repent of their unchristian behaviors, to ask forgiveness of those they have wronged and to restore the vitality and academic integrity of the institution by reversing their actions."

The document charged that the process employed in Dilday's firing "included deception, the failure to grant due process and the abandonment of Christian regard for Dr. Dilday as a brother in Christ."

Ball explained to participants that there is a sense among many Arkansas Baptists that "something ought to happen" and that "students at Southwestern Seminary need to hear from Baptists to know we love them and support them."

Members voted to send the statement to students and trustees.

Sherman voices views

CBF coordinator Cecil Sherman shared his reasons for joining the fellowship and an annual report of CBF's activities.

He explained that the SBC's "first principles" had been as a missions-sending society, but "the things I was so proud of one by one, inch by inch, first were taken from me" as the convention "turned away from its first principles."

He reported a healthy financial picture for the past three years. He said in 1991, 391 churches sent checks to the CBF office in Atlanta, giving \$4.5 million, with \$749,000 sent to CBF. In 1993, those figures had grown to 1,210 churches giving \$11.2 million with \$6.7 million going to CBF ministries. He said 22 Arkansas Baptist churches sent money to CBF last year, up from 12 churches in 1992.

"Almost 78 percent of CBF money is passed to missions," said Sherman. "Right now, CBF is a missions society."

Sharing the philosophy of CBF with participants, Sherman said the group is committed to three precepts:

■ **Baptist benchmarks.** "We are committed to freedom of the individual and the congregation" and "the priesthood of the believer, the separation of church and state and old-fashioned Baptist polity."

■ **Cooperative missions.** "Conventions came of missions support. Right now the only thing CBF owns is chairs, desks, computers and 31 missionaries. We are what the SBC was in 1845—a missionary support organization." He projected CBF would have 50 missionaries by September.

■ **Theological education.** He said the CBF helps support theological education through the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va.

Sherman said CBF members should help people "think clearly" about crucial issues related to the Southern Baptist controversy. "Help them think clearly about fundamentalism and honest conservatism," he urged. "Fundamentalism is to Southern Baptists as Phariseism was to Judaism."



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Dilday declines call to seek SBC presidency, endorses Jim Henry

FORT WORTH, TX (ABP/BP) — Russell Dilday has been asked to run for president of the Southern Baptist Convention, but the fired seminary president said April 14 he has no plans to do so.

Dilday responded to an "Open Letter to Dr. Russell H. Dilday" by John Reid, director of missions for Tuckaseegee Baptist Association in Sylva, N.C. The letter suggests it is "time for Southern Baptists to decide that both conservatives and moderates will share equally in the governance of the (SBC). Let us start in Orlando this June by electing you as the president."

Dilday said Orlando pastor Jim Henry, already a candidate for the presidency, is better able to represent Baptists opposed to the SBC's current conservative leadership, which has controlled the presidency and the SBC since 1979.

Many conservative leaders already are backing the candidacy of Fred Wolfe, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala.

With Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, in the race, Dilday said, no other candidate is needed. Henry's candidacy represents "a strong wave that is calling the convention back to a constructive conservatism. I have great confidence in Jim Henry's willingness to be the leader" of that movement.

In other developments, the faculty of Southwestern Seminary has challenged trustee allegations that Dilday holds liberal biblical views.

Dilday "strongly affirms traditional, conservative Southern Baptist views of the Scripture," the faculty wrote in a statement they approved April 13. Faculty members purchased a full-page ad in the April 20 issue of the *Texas Baptist Standard* to publish the open letter.

A separate document from the school's music dean challenges trustee accusations that the seminary's music curriculum is "out of step with church music as revered and sung in most Southern Baptist congregations." Dean James McKinney said the music faculty has "documentary evidence refuting these claims."

Both statements will be included in a mailing from Dilday supporters to all Southern Baptist churches — an attempt to counter a similar mailing from trustees.

Kenneth Cooper, former chairman of the seminary's advisory council, and other members of the Southwestern Council raised the \$18,000 required to fund the mailing.

HMB directors address universalism, Freemasonry

ATLANTA (BP)—Home Mission Board directors adopted a statement condemning universalism at their annual spring meeting while narrowly rejecting a request to study whether Masons should be prohibited from serving as home missionaries.

The statement on universalism came in response to criticism of the board's report on Freemasonry presented to the Southern Baptist Convention last summer.

"May this forever and eternally be very clear," said board chairman Brad Allen following the unanimous vote to accept the statement.

HMB president Larry Lewis told Baptist Press, "The obvious consensus of our board is that they do not want further involvement with the Freemasonry issue and that we have dealt with this issue as thoroughly and adequately as we are able."

The April 13 statement by the board reads, in part: "It has never been the intention of the HMB to suggest that individual Southern Baptists may feel justified in affiliating with such (universalist) teaching on the basis of personal conscience."

"In light of the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Lordship of Christ, the teachings of Scripture and the findings of the report, then personal conscience may be used," the statement continued.

Freemasonry critic Larry Holly called the statement "a step in the right direction, but it does not begin to address the problems with Freemasonry." He predicted Freemasonry "will continue to plague the Home Mission Board until they do address it straightforwardly." He added, however, that he has no plans to bring the matter before the SBC annual convention in June in Orlando, Fla.

After the statement's unanimous adoption, director Jim Guenther, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Schenectady, N.Y., made a motion that the administrative

committee study barring Masons from serving as home missionaries.

Director John Avant, pastor of Northrich Baptist Church in Brownwood, Texas, opposed the request, saying the board had more important matters. "The people in my church and the lost people in my community, they don't care about this issue." The proposal was defeated on a 31-30 vote after chairman Allen broke the tie by voting against the motion.

Presidential address

In his annual address, Lewis noted that 1,500 churches were started last year and 74,860 people served as HMB volunteers. The areas of greatest concern, Lewis said, are decreased baptisms and projected budget reductions due to declines in Cooperative Program and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering gifts.

The 1995 budget will be 6 percent less than the 1994 budget, but that does not mean every state will have a 6 percent reduction in HMB funds, Lewis said. The Atlanta staff is reducing its budget so that cuts on the field will be minimal, he said.

The new HMB building, to be completed next year, "does not contribute to

our financial situation," Lewis said. "None of the expenses of the new building are in our budget or our projected budget."

The new building will be funded by \$14.5 million from the sale of the current location, \$2.3 million from HMB reserves, \$150,000 from the Southern Baptist Convention capital fund and \$3 million from a fund-raising campaign called "Building for the Future."

On another funding issue, Lewis reiterated his call to continue accepting funds from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The HMB receives about \$500,000 a year through the CBF, Lewis said. Those funds are from churches and individuals, Lewis noted, not the CBF itself.

Lewis said he opposes CBF activities but not accepting CBF funds would "polarize our convention even more, widening and hardening the division, making the possibility of future reconciliation even more difficult."

Board members created a staff position for an associate director of prayer and spiritual awakening and elected Kerry Skinner to the post. Skinner, a native of Texas, has served on church staffs in Indiana, Kentucky, Texas and Florida.

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Mission leaders alarmed at drop in human needs giving

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Top leaders at the Foreign Mission Board are alarmed at figures showing Southern Baptist giving for overseas hunger and disaster relief slid last year and have veered even more sharply downward in 1994.

In 1993 receipts dipped by 13 percent from 1992. And through March 1994 receipts show a 26 percent decline from the same period of 1993.

If the giving pattern persists, the board would collect \$4.9 million in human needs

offerings this year. It would be the lowest figure since 1981's \$4.8 million.

Receipts grew rapidly from the program's earliest stages in the late 1970s and peaked in 1985 at nearly \$12 million when Ethiopia's famine broke into world consciousness. They started leveling out between \$7 million and \$8 million in the late 1980s. Last year giving finished at \$6.6 million, down from \$7.6 million the year before.

Unlike many relief agencies operating

overseas, the Foreign Mission Board uses 100 percent of its human needs offerings on the field. Workers who plan community development programs and monitor or distribute aid are already in place supported through other funding channels.

Just before he retired March 31, human needs coordinator John Cheyne alerted Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin of the crisis. "In this regard, there would be no way that the level of appropriations and/or the number of projects could continue" as they have in the past, Cheyne warned.

Based on continuing generous giving to human needs through 1992, the program last year expanded to a record number of separate projects, 294, in 62 countries, Cheyne said. "The downward (giving) trend is very significant," he said. "The chronic problems of poverty, famine, refugees and major disasters create a need to respond repeatedly."

"We're grateful for the generous support by Southern Baptists, who have shown a confidence in the way the Foreign Mission Board uses these funds," said Rankin. "I hope Southern Baptists will continue to demonstrate their compassionate hearts for a lost world and enable us to help these hurting people."



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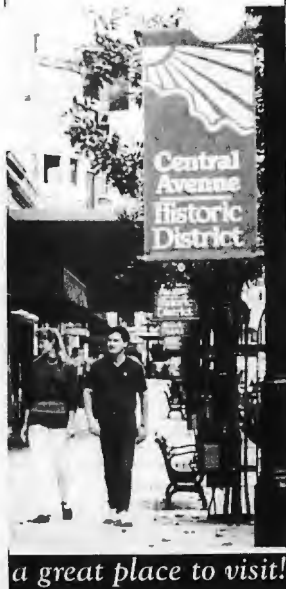


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RTVC trustees vote name change to focus on 'communications'

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—Trustees of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission voted April 12 to change the agency's name to Communications Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC Executive Committee is being asked to approve revising the RTVC charter to reflect the name change.

Trustees also passed a resolution noting that they "strongly affirm the leadership" of RTVC president Jack Johnson, "and look forward to many years of working together with him in communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

The resolution commended Johnson for the progress and fiscal stability of the RTVC under his direction, its increasing worldwide ministry outreach, promising future and for his Christian character and high standards of professionalism.

Trustees also began the process of developing a revised program statement to reflect the guidelines under which the RTVC operates. It states the programs of work assigned to the agency by the SBC and the parameters within which it operates and relates to other SBC entities.


Johnson told trustees that emerging technology in the communications field is mind-boggling and costly. "But we can't wait for prices to go down," he said, "because we are responsible for the souls of people. And information is worth nothing unless it can be communicated." The RTVC president said with 21st century technology there will be no excuse for anyone being uneducated.

"That's why the future for the gospel is so great," he said. "Through this emerging technology we can share the greatest news the world has ever known...how to become a child of God and how to effectively witness for Jesus Christ. I can see God's hand using this technology. For us it is opportunity. For God it is a means of reaching all with His eternal plan of redemption."

The name of the commission was changed previously when "television" was added to it in 1954. Trustees said the new name, Communications Commission, would better reflect the agency's desire to take advantage of new technologies in electronic communications as they emerge.

Trustees also authorized the RTVC's executive committee to establish a maximum annual budget amount for the coming fiscal year and to set any cost of living adjustment to salaries at the agency's June trustee's meeting.

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Annuity Board medical plan rates remain unchanged

DALLAS (BP)—Rates will not change at midyear for any of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's medical plans in the Personal Security Program and Seminarian Security Program. These programs offer coverage for ministers, church employees and seminary students.

Some participants who move to a different ZIP code area could see a rate change soon after the move. Participants who have a birthday in 1994 that puts

them in a higher age bracket will see a rate change on Jan. 1, 1995.

Rates in the plans have not changed in almost two years. The Annuity Board last raised rates July 1, 1992. Since that increase, medical trends used by insurance companies have been as high as 22 percent, according to Joel Mathis, senior vice president for insurance administration at the Annuity Board.

Current trends are rising at about 16

percent to 19 percent a year, he said. Many medical insurers have increased rates accordingly, Mathis said. This is the longest period between rate changes in the personal and seminarian medical plans since a three-year span in 1985 to 1987.

Mathis credited good medical claims experience, plan design and managed care as factors in keeping rates down. He noted that "the faithfulness of our participants has contributed to that."

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Convention Uniform

Delivered from bondage

By Ledell Bailey, DOM,
Calvary Association
Basic passage: Galatians 1:2
Focal passage: Galatians 1:6-7,
2:1-21
Central truth: Jesus is the only
means of deliverance from sin.

The Galatian letter stresses the centrality of Christ as the only Savior and the only means of deliverance from the bondage of sin.

After his usual salutation, Paul deals with a problem or crisis (vv. 6-7) that confronted the Galatian Christians. The problem was that of turning away from the truth he had taught to a different gospel which included legalism.

Paul let it be known that to turn from the gospel of grace was to turn to no gospel at all. Grace plus the law would only confuse believers and bring about the bondage of judgmentalism.

How tragic it is that the church of today is still troubled by those who would pervert the message of Christ to promote law and bondage rather than grace and freedom.

Paul moves from this to declare in verses 11-24 that the gospel he preached was not of men but of God. He shows the supernatural origin of his gospel and defends his right to speak as an apostle. He lets it be known he was divinely chosen to be an apostle.

He moves on in verses 2:1-10 to show he was endorsed by the Jerusalem leaders who recognized the fact that he had been entrusted with the gospel to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship and encouraged them to continue in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

The last part of our lesson deals with Paul confronting Peter with hypocrisy. When Paul saw this hypocrisy he challenged Peter along with the others to recognize and act in the freedom which they had in Christ. His main emphasis was that Jews as well as Gentiles are saved by grace and not through obedience to the law.

The plain, simple truth set forth in this lesson is that men are justified by faith and only through grace and faith can one have a right standing before God. It is only through His grace that we are delivered from the bondage of sin.

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Life and Work

A worthy Christian walk

By Mark Baber, pastor, First Church,
Marion
Basic passage: Philippians 1:27-2:4
Focal passage: Philippians 1:27
Central truth: Consistent Christian
living issues forth in a life of joy.

The central theme of Philippians is joy. In this passage we are challenged to live lives worthy of the gospel (v. 1:27). Paul taught that joy increases as followers of Christ live the worthy life. Several key elements of the worthy Christian walk are emphasized. These include:

Perseverance (v. 1:27). Paul was confident that the believers in Philippi would "stand firm in one spirit." A real test of the genuine Christian life is the test of longevity. Standing firm in faith through the bad circumstances of life gives evidence of faith that will produce joy.

Harmony (vv. 1:27, 2:2). Joy increases when intentional efforts are made for harmony. Paul teaches us that we are not to aim for harmony for the sake of harmony. Rather, harmony happens as we strive together for the faith of the gospel. Believers need to be encouraged to get the focus of faithfulness on the creative and aggressive spreading of the gospel. This harmonious sharing of the faith will increase the presence of joy.

Courage (v. 1:28). Believers in Philippi encountered opposition for their faithfulness. Serious followers of Christ today have no shortage of opposition. Expect obstacles to faithfulness and face them with courage. Note that Paul spoke from firsthand experience. His incarceration in a Roman prison at the time of his writing adds depth and credibility to his call for courage.

Unselfishness (vv. 2:3-4). Another element of the worthy Christian life is unselfish concern for the family of faith. There is no place for selfishness in the worthy Christian life. The aim of unselfish living has an intentional care for the needs and interests of others. Paul had a dream that believers in Philippi would take special note of the needs of fellow believers.

Our churches would be well served if leaders gave special attention to these instructions. In our increasingly "me" focused generation, the teachings of Paul in Philippians cannot be overemphasized. A lesson that creatively highlights and expands the themes of perseverance, harmony, courage and unselfishness is much needed and will be well received.

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Bible Book

Who is the Holy Spirit?

By John T. Evans, pastor,
Yarbro Church, Blytheville
Basic passage: John 13:31-14:31
Focal passage: John 14:9-17; 26
Central truth: The Holy Spirit is the
Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit of God.

Jesus goes out of His way in our text to make it plain that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one and the same. He says that He is one and the same with the Father (vv. 9-11). By telling His disciples that the Spirit will be in them and abide with them forever (vv. 16-17), Jesus equates the Spirit with Himself. He calls the Spirit the "Spirit of Truth" (v. 17). Since He has said in verse six that He is the truth, it stands to reason, that this "Spirit of Truth" must be His Spirit.

In the original language the phrase "another helper" (v. 16) was understood to mean "another helper of the same kind." So, Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit is the same type of Helper from God that He is. Jesus even divinely breaks the rules of grammar to make the point that the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead. Grammatically, a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender. In verse 26, Jesus uses a masculine pronoun, "He", to refer to a neuter antecedent, "the Holy Spirit." So Jesus breaks the rules of grammar to equate the Holy Spirit with Himself.

The obvious conclusion from all of this is that the Holy Spirit is a Helper like Jesus. The very Spirit of Jesus, sent from the Father like Jesus, in the name of Jesus, to indwell believers in Jesus, to teach believers in Jesus and to remind believers of the words of Jesus (vv. 9, 16, 17, 20, 26). Therefore, we can conclude that the actions and teachings of the Holy Spirit will be consistent with the actions and teachings of Jesus and His Word.

Many today are claiming that the Holy Spirit leads them to do things which are inconsistent with the actions and teachings of Jesus and His Word. Such claims are heretical. Perhaps the cause of these unscriptural practices is another spirit—an unholy spirit.

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Convention Uniform

God's adopted children

By Ledell Bailey, DOM,
Calvary Association

Basic passage: Galatians 3:1-4:7

Focal passage: Galatians 3:1-5, 23-29; 4:1-7

Central truth: Believers have the freedom and privileges of children of God

In our last study, Paul emphatically declared that God's plan of salvation is by grace through faith. He also said legalism does not bring freedom but bondage.

In this lesson Paul raises the question to the Galatian Christians: Were you changed through observing the Jewish law or through believing the gospel message?

He asks several rhetorical questions in verses 3:1-5. These questions all focus on the foolishness of believing that salvation comes from anything other than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole point of these questions is an appeal for Christians to remember that it is grace, not law, that brings a right standing with God. The entire Christian life is based upon God's grace and the Holy Spirit's leadership and guidance.

In verses 23-29, Paul emphasizes the fact that the law had its place merely as a moral custodian or supervisor until Christ should come. The law would prepare men for the faith in Christ and the deliverance that only He could provide.

With Christ's coming it was made possible through faith in Him for Jews and Gentiles alike to come into a new status of sonship to God. Salvation comes as the gift of God's grace and not through human achievement. When Christ came He changed the whole human situation.

In verses 4:1-7, we come to the glad reality that our bondage has ended and sonship is realized. The real beauty of this passage is seen in verses 4:7. Here we see Christ entering the human situation, becoming truly man to redeem those under the law that we might receive adoption as sons. This gives us a clear picture of what happens to us in His redeeming process.

We see clearly here the close, loving, personal fellowship which the Holy Spirit makes possible for every believer to have with God. Believers have the freedom and privilege of children of God.

Life and Work

The attitude of Christ

By Mark Baber, pastor, First Church,
Marion

Basic passage: Philippians 2:5-11

Focal passage: Philippians 2:5, 9-11

Central truth: Followers of Christ are to take on the attitude of Christ

Philippians 2:5-11 is one of the most profound statements of the nature of Jesus in the New Testament. Paul encouraged the believers at Philippi to develop the Christ's attitude. By taking on that attitude, believers become one in spirit and purpose. What was His attitude? Four characteristics can be gleaned from this passage.

First, He thought of others, not Himself (vv. 5-6). Jesus, fully God, did not grasp or selfishly hold on to all that it meant to be equal with God. His self-emptying is the ultimate example of living for the needs of others. The life of genuine faith must be characterized by thoughts of and action for the needs of others.

Second, He was a servant (v. 7). It is wonderful to meditate on the fact that Jesus, as exalted God, was willing to become a servant of all people. His supreme service was in becoming a man and in making a willful journey to the cross. On that journey He demonstrated that He had come not to be served but to serve. As Christians take on servant attitudes and actions their joy and effectiveness in living will increase.

Third, He sacrificed (v. 8). As a servant, Jesus was willing to sacrifice His life for others. An attitude of sacrifice does wonders to the spirit of a congregation. It was Christ's sacrifice that paid for our sins. Any amount of sacrifice on our part will not pay for our sins or those of others... Sacrificial service can create open doors in the hearts of people so that many can come to know and love Christ. All of us who know Christ can think of faithful believers who sacrificed in some way on our behalf. Let the example of Jesus and the memory of those faithful followers be a stimulant to similar attitudes and behavior.

Fourth, He brought glory to God (v. 11). Thinking of others as opposed to self, service and sacrifice has its reward; by these attitudes that issue forth in actions, God is glorified. Paul affirmed that God exalted Christ to the highest place and gave Him the name above every name. As people bend the knee to Christ as Lord and as they speak His name in acts of faith confession, the result is God is glorified.

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Bible Book

Blessings of Abiding

By John T. Evans, pastor,
Yarbo Church, Blytheville

Basic passage: John 15:1-16

Focal passage: John 15:4-16

Central truth: It is wonderful to be in Christ.

Jesus instructs His followers to "abide" in His love (v. 9). He speaks of abiding 10 times in verses 4-10. This prompts three questions:

1. What does "abide in Christ" mean?

The word means "to stay; to stand fast; to stay at home; to remain; to maintain fellowship; to put forth constant influence upon; to last; to endure; to dwell." The word is used in all these ways in the Scriptures. In this context it means to get close to Jesus and stay close to Jesus. We should abide in our abode; remain in Christ, our resting place.

2. How does one abide in Christ? We

may abide in Christ by keeping His commandments (v. 10), and by studying and dwelling upon His Word (John 8:31).

3. Why should we abide in Christ? The

obvious answer is that we should abide in Christ because He commanded it. But, as with all of God's commands, there are blessings for obedience. Jesus promised that if we abide in Him we will:

- bear fruit (v. 4)
- be able to do things that we could not do without abiding in Him (v. 5)
- not wither (v. 6)
- have His Word abiding in us (v. 7)
- have our prayers answered (v. 7)
- glorify God (v. 8)
- have fullness of joy (v. 11)
- be His friends and not just His servants (v. 13-15)
- bear fruit that remains or abides (v. 16)

Christians should maintain fellowship with Christ. Christians should stand fast in His Word and dwell in it continually. Christians should allow Christ to put forth a constant influence upon their lives. This is the essence of abiding in Christ.

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NEWS DIGEST

SBC Cooperative Program gifts above last year's pace

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for March were up more than 15 percent above last year and nearly 3 percent above the six-month total for the last fiscal year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee. The six month, year-to-date, figures are also 4 percent above the SBC program allocation budget requirement.

For March, total CP gifts were \$12,843,825 compared to March of 1993 of \$11,148,016 or a 15.21 percent gain. The year-to-date figures are \$71,890,891 compared to the same period last year of \$69,908,521 or a gain of 2.84 percent.

The year-to-date figures are 4.01 percent above the budget requirement of \$69,117,367 for the first six months of the 1993-94 fiscal year.

Goals 2000 education reform bill signed into law

WASHINGTON (ABP)—President Bill Clinton signed a major education reform bill March 31 that would establish national education standards and provide grants for educational reform.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (S. 1150, H.R. 1804) has been several years in the making, and nearly was stalled again in Congress following a school-prayer amendment offered by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C.

The Senate previously approved the Helms' amendment, which would deny federal funds to school districts that prevent participation in constitutionally protected prayer in public schools. But then a House-Senate conference committee substituted a less-stringent initiative offered by Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont.

The Williams' proposal would bar Goals 2000 funds from being used to prevent voluntary student prayer but would not mandate an across-the-board fund cutoff. The conference report's alternative sparked controversy in both chambers. But a filibuster attempt by Helms failed to derail the bill.

Midwest residents hoping for flood of volunteers

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptists in the Midwest are hoping for another flood this year—a flood of volunteers.

"We hope to have 200 volunteers a week now through September," said Ray Gilliland, Home Mission Board disaster relief coordinator.

Flooded rivers in Missouri, Iowa and Illinois in nearly 140 communities last year caused millions of dollars of damage. Some homes were totally destroyed, but others need extensive repairs, Gilliland said.

"We still have a number of displaced persons. Some of them have been out there seven or eight months," said John Farris, volunteer coordinator for Missouri Baptists.

Most of the cleanup has been done, but volunteers are needed to rebuild houses, from tearing out walls and replacing sheetrock to replacing floors, Farris said.

Federal judge bars Texas school from leading prayers

DALLAS (ABP)—A federal judge has issued a permanent injunction preventing Duncanville, Texas, school officials from promoting or participating in prayers with students at school-related events.

U.S. District Judge Robert Maloney on March 31 signed the injunction which also bars officials of the suburban Dallas school district from allowing Bibles to be distributed to students on school property during school hours or authorizing the performance of religious songs as theme songs of the school choir.

However, Maloney specified, "Students may voluntarily pray together, provided such prayer is not done with school participation or supervision." He also stated that the school choir could perform religious songs "if presented objectively as part of a secular program of education."

Missions veteran to lead FMB's human needs program

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Jimmy B. Foster, a veteran of meeting hunger and relief needs worldwide, took charge of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's human needs program April 1.

Foster, of Grand Prairie, Texas, succeeds John Cheyne, a former missionary who led the program to respond to world hunger and relief needs since its early stages in 1978.

For nearly three years, Foster, 49, has been based in London with Cooperative Services International (CSI), a Southern Baptist overseas aid agency. Before he began work with CSI in 1991, Foster directed an extensive rural development project as a missionary in the west African nation of Burkina Faso. Later he was business manager and treasurer for the organization of FMB missionaries in Ivory Coast.