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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

1-7-1988

January 7, 1988

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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When The Sky Fell

Arkansas Baptist

January 7, 1988



Cover Story



ABN photo / Mille Gill

Here Am I, Send Me 4

The great good news of God's deliverance in Christ Jesus calls us to commit ourselves to sharing our faith. Witness Commitment Day is Jan. 10.

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IT'S UPLIFTING

'Only A Girl'

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—As a Southern Baptist missionary drove through a heavily populated area overseas, the surge of a crowd near a bus stop accidentally pushed a 4-year-old girl in front of his car. The missionary could not stop in time, and the child died instantly.

The investigating policeman talked with witnesses and determined the missionary was not at fault. But because a crowd had gathered, he asked the missionary and the girl's father to go with him into a nearby building to discuss a settlement.

The policeman suggested that even though the missionary was not to blame, this was a poor family and perhaps the missionary could pay for the child's funeral. The missionary immediately agreed to do so, and, having three young daughters of his own, offered to do even more.

But the father said: "Don't worry about it. It was only a girl."

Recounting the story at the December meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, vice president for finance Carl Johnson said that a few days after this tragic accident halfway around the world, another crowd gathered in Crew, Va. They were there to dedicate a highway marker

identifying the gravesite of Lottie Moon, missionary to China from 1873 until her death on Christmas Eve, 1912.

Johnson noted Lottie Moon was born Dec. 17, 1840. When the Foreign Mission Board was organized May 8, 1845, she, too, was 4 years old.

"Only a girl." But in her name, Southern Baptists since 1888 have given more than \$850 million for foreign missions work.

Puppets Spark Trust

BARRANOUILLA, Colombia—Southern Baptist missionary Jim Dorsey from Fort Worth, Texas, has learned as a father that children enjoy various noises, gestures and colorful objects. So after 7-month-old Edgardo Garces underwent surgery to replace a valve in his brain, he introduced the child to two of his puppets, Henrique and Beto. "Edgardo really enjoys chewing on Henrique's nose and pulling his hair out," Dorsey says. The puppets also have allowed the missionary to make contact with Edgardo's parents. "Just as Edgardo learned to trust in my gestures for friendship his parents are learning how crucial it is to trust in a living Lord for purpose in their lives."

GOOD NEWS!

A Perpetual Memorial

Revelation 3:7-13

One might think the church at Philadelphia was placed after the church at Sardis to further point out what Sardis was not if a comparison were made between the two.

Three events in the secular history of Philadelphia help interpret what was said to this faithful little congregation with unlimited opportunity.

The missionary aspect of the church is reflected in the founding purpose of the city by Attalus II about 140 B.C. The city was to be active in Hellenizing the area of Mysia, Lycia, and Phrygia, all of which bordered at Philadelphia.

A second fact was the custom of erecting a great pillar in one of the temples of the city to honor certain persons. The name of the person would be inscribed on the pillar to serve as a perpetual memorial, hence the scriptural reference in verse 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God."

A third experience in the life of the

Philadelphians which the Lord used in speaking to them in Revelation came from the tragedy which hit Asia Minor in the earthquake of A.D. 17. Philadelphia was only 28 miles southeast of Sardis, and both cities were destroyed in that disaster. What Tiberius did for Sardis, and both cities were destroyed in that disaster. In gratitude they renamed their city Neokaisareia, or New Caesar. After about 25 years the name fell into disuse, but when verse 12 continues, "And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem," the warm glow of deep recognition must have flooded their hearts."

Many writers quote Gibbons' classic account of this period when he says that of all the churches in Asia Philadelphia alone "remained erect, a column in a scene of ruins."

Criswell said, "To this day it is largely a Christian town," evidence of God's faithful promise."

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Looking Ahead

J. EVERETT SNEED



The outlook for Arkansas Baptists in 1988 is very positive. There are numbers of reasons for viewing the new year as one in which we will have opportunity to magnify the name of the Lord. However, there are, as always, some issues with which Arkansas Baptists need to come to grips. Among the issues with which the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* plans to deal are abortion, pornography, the lottery, strengthening the family, conflict resolution, planning and goal setting, Church Arkansas and the Macedonian Missions Plan, and the Year of the Laity.

It is our plan to work ardently to support the abortion legislation which was passed in Texas. This legislation includes a ban on post-viable abortions. Simply stated, this means that when a fetus can live on its own, an abortion cannot take place. This legislation would cut off 20 to 25 percent of all abortions performed. It is our desire to do all that we can to stop the holocaust of abortions. Christians have a responsibility to join hands in putting an end to the estimated 1.2 million abortions performed each year in the United States.

Until recent years, all human life, born and unborn, was considered sacred and protected by the Judeo-Christian ethic. It was only in the heathen world that human life was taken lightly.

Closely related to the tragedy of abortion is pornography. Pornography not only increases immorality but it is degrading to all women, as their value or worth is assessed only in terms of being objects of sex.

The reason for the flourishing of pornography is basically ignorance and apathy. Most people are aware that sex is being used to attract attention by advertisers, but many are unaware of the kind of filth that can be bought at many drug stores, grocery stores, and convenience shops. If anyone doubts the accessibility of these kinds of materials, a quick survey will be quite revealing.

The effects of pornography are devastating. Among the negative effects are: (1) it lowers the moral standards of the community; (2) it lowers respect for women; and (3) it encourages rape, incest and abnormal sexual behavior.

The lottery is another area which will likely demand the attention of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. Currently, there is an effort underway to obtain

68,000 signatures to get the lottery on the ballot for Nov. 8, 1988. If those supporting the lottery are successful, it is incumbent on Christians to join hands in defeating this menace, which would place our state in the gambling business.

There are several reasons why every Christian should be opposed to this effort. First, it places government in the posture of working to victimize its citizens rather than protecting them.

The lottery preys upon the poor and the unemployed. This fact is borne out by the phenomenal "success" of the lottery in areas of poverty and high unemployment. Under a government lottery system, the government does not merely "allow" gambling, but it urges its citizens to do so.

The lottery is also unsound economical-ly because of the difficulty in administra-

tion. In comparison to the cost of administering a tax, a lottery costs from 25 to 30 times more government money than it does to collect and administer traditional taxes.

Another major need in our state is to strengthen families. During the coming year, Bud Fray, head of the religion department at Ouachita, and others will be providing materials designed to assist families in being what God desires them to be. The alarming divorce rate, as well as marital unhappiness, mandates attention be given to this matter. Someone has characterized many contemporary marriages as being merely "stoic endurance contests." When the family unit becomes what God wants it to be, parents and children will experience great joy.

Another area of need is conflict resolution. Conflicts are nothing new. In the New Testament, there was disagreement in the Jerusalem church (Ac. 11). The people at Corinth were divided over which preacher should be followed (1 Co. 12). Barnabas and Paul parted after an argument over John Mark (Ac. 15:34-40). Someone has said the root of all conflict is "people." It is true that conflict comes when there is personality clash or when there is a deep conviction that something is wrong. Our efforts will be to give materials that will assist in resolving such disagreements.

Other major emphases will be on Church Arkansas and the Year of the Laity. Obviously, any publication cannot predict all of the emphases that are needed at the outset of the year. But it is our desire to assist Arkansas Baptists in meeting the issues which confront them. The editor and staff of the ABN look forward to serving Arkansas Baptists in 1988.

Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

VOLUME 87 NUMBER 1
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Deaths of members of Arkansas churches will be reported in brief form when information is received not later than 14 days after the date of death.

Advertising accepted in writing only. Rates on request.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine (ISSN 0004-1734) is published weekly, except Easter, Independence Day, the first week of October, and Christmas, by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc., Little Rock, Ark. Subscription rates are \$6.48 per year (individual), \$9.52 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$6.12 per year (Group Plan). Foreign address rates on request. Second class postage paid at Little Rock, Ark.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, P. O. Box 552, Little Rock, Ark 72203. (576-4791)

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

Well, maybe "you'll be glad to know." On the other hand, most of you will be "sad to know." Here at the close of one year and at the beginning of another new year, there are some facts we need to face. They may inspire some actions that can make a difference in eternity. God knows our needs and his needs and chose to anoint the sessions of our recent annual meeting because the program afforded him an opportunity to address those needs.

Here are the hard facts:

— The percent of the undesignated monies the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention receive which goes to missions through the Cooperative Program has declined every year since 1970. The churches gave 9 percent in 1970. In 1985 they gave 7.8 percent.

— Between 1980 and 1985, offerings in the churches increased by 56.5 percent. Contributions to the Cooperative Program did not increase nearly that much.

— In addition, I have just learned only 79 percent of our churches gave to the Lottie Moon foreign mission offering in 1986. Only 67 percent of our churches gave to the Annie Armstrong home mission offering. Only 58 percent of our churches gave to the Dixie Jackson state mission offering.

With no more of our churches giving to the special missions offerings, and a decreasing percent of receipts going to the Cooperative Program, it appears a tremendous need exists for education and inspiration by both the pastoral and lay leadership of our churches. Perhaps that is why God chose to bless the convention as he did. It was one more (perhaps the last) opportunity to turn our hearts back to his great commission. Many decision shapers from the laity of the church could not be at the convention. Who will keep them informed and inspired? It doesn't have to be the pastor alone. A Church Missions Development Council could be formed, and with the help of WMU and Brotherhood the trend could turn around in your church in 1988. Videotapes of the convention messages could be used.

Let's go to work and "make a difference."

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



WITNESS COMMITMENT DAY

'Here Am I, Send Me'

Jan. 10 has been set aside as Witness Commitment Day, an annual emphasis in Southern Baptist churches which seeks to motivate Christians to share their faith in Jesus Christ.

The 1988 theme for this year's emphasis is "Here Am I, Send Me."

According to statistics drawn from annual church letters, in 1986 the average Southern Baptist church baptized only five people, and 5,729 churches baptized no one. Jack Smith, associate director of personal evangelism at the SBC Home Mission Board, says those statistics emphasize the need for witness motivation and training in all churches.

"We can't just motivate people to witness," cautions Smith. "Often we encourage the responsibility to witness, but then never tell people how. Witness training should follow immediately after Wit-

ness Commitment Day.

"There are two reasons people don't witness: they don't know how, and they don't know why. We need to let them know that God commands us to share the gospel, and then we need to teach them how to do what he commands," he continued.

"This commitment day is the ideal time to launch one or more of the personal evangelism witness equipping processes available to local churches," added Howard Ramsey, personal evangelism director.

The Home Mission Board offers a variety of methods to train church members in witnessing skills, including Lay Evangelism Schools and Continuing Witness Training. For more information on evangelism training tools, contact the Evangelism Department, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Woman's Viewpoint

With a Stamp and a Prayer

LYNNETTE WALLACE

Dear Mom,

How are you? We are fine. The weather here is a little . . . Sound familiar? Most of us don't even try to write letters any more. We are too busy, phone calls are cheap, or we don't know where to begin or end a letter.

I have discovered the little pleasures of personal correspondence; delighting in seeing an envelope addressed to me, licking stamps, or dropping my life capsule into the mailbox give my day an added boost. But letter writing isn't just for my personal gratification. I strongly feel that letters can be used to minister to others. Allow me to share a few examples.

It all started one day when I received an unsolicited letter with a disclaimer from a warden. The name in the upper



left-hand corner was not only unfamiliar to me but was accompanied by an inmate's number. Inside I found a plea for friendship from a young man. Sometimes I find it difficult to know what to tell Michael. I try to share God's principles with him. His dependence on the Lord is inspiring. I'm also reminded of how precious freedom is.

I have several other paper relationships going. One friend on the west coast is going through a divorce, one on the east coast is unsaved, a former student is in college, and a missionary couple which is

in need of prayer support. In my own small way, I have a prison ministry, I counsel, I teach, I witness, and I support missions. Think of a ministry you could start. Consider the options: a shut-in, a former pastor, or an unsaved family member. The possibilities are as endless as all of the addresses in the world.

If all of this sounds trivial to you, remember a letter writer named Paul, "I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand . . . The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit" (Pm. 19 & 25). Think of all the points of doctrine and words of encouragement that would have been lost forever if he had owned a phone. So pick up that pen and give a little of yourself. You won't waste a stamp.

Lynnette V. Wallace is an active member of Emmanuel Church in El Dorado. She is married and teaches high school.

Jesus And His Mother

by T.B. Maston
Southwestern Seminary

We do not know a great deal about the childhood of Jesus, and hence we do not know much about his relationship to his mother. We do know that when Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem for the purification of parents they took the baby Jesus with them (Lu. 2:22-40).

We also know that Joseph and Mary fled with the baby Jesus to Egypt, being instructed by the Lord to do so, since Herod was searching for him to kill him (Mt. 2:13-14).

The next mention of Jesus and his mother was several years later. Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem for a feast. Jesus was 12 years of age at the time. The feast was over, and they were on their way back home with a group of friends. They had traveled about a day's journey before Jesus was missed.

"They sought him among their kinfolk and acquaintances" and "when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him." After three days, they found him in the Temple, sitting with the teachers, listening to them

and asking them questions, and the record says, "All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers." (Wouldn't you like to know the questions he asked and the answers he gave?)

His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." His response was, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lu. 2:46-49).

The statement after this incident reveals a great deal about Jesus as a lad and about his mother: "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart" (Lu. 2:51). The next verse says, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

Other than an incident at Cana when Jesus turned the water into wine, there was another occasion during the public ministry of Jesus when his mothers and brothers asked for him. He pronounced a new basis for kinship to him

that should be a continuing challenge to those of us who claim to be followers of his: "Whosoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mk. 3:35).

There is one other occasion when the mother of Jesus is mentioned in a special way. That was at the time of his crucifixion. How grateful we should be that even when he was hanging on the cross he took time to speak to and provide for his mother. She was "standing by the cross of Jesus" with two or three relatives and friends, one of whom was Mary Magdalene. Standing near the women was John, "the beloved disciple."

What a thoughtful thing it was for Jesus, hanging on the cross in excruciating pain, to say to his mother, "Behold your son," and to John, "Behold your mother!" And we would expect the statement about John: "From that moment the disciple took her to his own home."

T.B. Maston is professor emeritus of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

DANIEL R. GRANT

One Layman's Opinion



New Year Honesty

It probably is not a coincidence that the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays are scheduled back-to-back in such close proximity to each other. The tradition of making new year's resolutions must have grown directly out of all of the human excesses of eating, spending, and focusing on our "want list."

My daughter-in-law, Liz Grant, recently told me about one of those remarkable bursts of honesty in her Sunday School class of four-year-olds. They were learning to say together, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." One of the little girls said, "I just can't say that. I want all the time!" I am not sure that we grown-ups have any better answer than the four-year-old Sunday School class.

The combination of guilt from Christmas excesses, and reform impulse from the new year's tradition of new beginnings calls us to a new sense of honesty with ourselves, with others, and with God. The increasing encroachment on our privacy by the overpowering technology of computers and the oppressive investigatory omnipresence of the mass media, may be making dishonesty with others increasingly difficult in our brave new world. It seems that political candidates for public office have no choice in whether to be honest with the public. If the candidate doesn't tell the whole truth, big brother will do it for him!

Who is to say whether all of this is progress? I have never forgotten one of my father's provocative questions when one of us children made the statement, "Honesty is the best policy." He asked, "Is honesty really honesty when it becomes a 'policy'?" I think I know the point that he was making, but I am still struggling to find the right answer in a day when people are forced by various developments in society to be "more honest" about their "private life" as well as their "public life."

I am trying to decide whether one of my 1988 new year's resolutions should be that I will be more honest this year, or simply that I will work harder to discover the real meaning of honesty, especially in such matters as my wants and my needs.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.

A SMILE OR TWO

The problem with life is all of its problems don't hit us when we're 18 and know everything.—*Harry Belafonte*

What you don't know won't hurt you, but it can bore your friends half to death if you keep repeating it.



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Letters to the Editor

Stand Up

I want to commend the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* for the increased coverage of the important issue of abortion. I agree that we as Christians have a duty to work to end the destruction of unborn children. The Scripture is clear that God is the giver of all life. Some Christians seem to support these truths, espousing opposition to abortion on demand. Yet, they consider cases of rape, incest, or possible deformity in a child, as acceptable reasons for the destruction of those babies. We need to remember that if the value of human life is to have any meaning, then its value can't be any less because of the circumstances that brought about that new life. We need to ask ourselves just how perfect does one need to be before he is allowed to live?

It is a sad commentary on this denomination that some leaders and lay people have so compromised truth with the present culture that they cannot or will not draw the line between right and wrong. Some won't stand up for human life because they don't want to be "divisive." The unborn child is a human being created in the image of God, and to deny this is to deny the authority of the Bible. Think about the following question posed by Dr. Francis Schaeffer, "But if we are not willing to stand even for human life, is there anything for which we will stand?"—Vicki Bean, Atkins

Disappointed

First I want to express my great disappointment in the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* for choosing to print the letter by G. Alan Aunspaugh of Huntington, Md. (Dec. 10, 1987). Granted that Bro. Aunspaugh has a right to his opinion regarding Larry Baker and his appointment to the Christian Life Commission. But his letter stating that Bro. Joe Atchison (DOM for Benton County Association and a member of the Christian Life Commission) "should be an embarrassment to Arkansas Baptists," and that "Arkansas Baptists should be ashamed" of Bro. Atchison goes directly against the stated policy of the *Newsmagazine* that letters "must not defame the character of persons." This letter was certainly an attack on Bro. Atchison.

Bro. Atchison, as a member of any SBC commission, board, or agency, has the right to speak his convictions. His motion had nothing to do with Baker's character nor

his past accomplishments in SBC life. It was only assumed as such by those who favored Baker's appointment which from the outset has been controversial, especially because of the manner it was brought about.

I, for one, am very proud of our DOM. In the three brief years he has been at the helm our our association our budget has nearly doubled, our percentage of giving to the Cooperative Program has increased almost 29 percent, there have been two new church starts, and participation in

associational activities has almost doubled.

We who know Bro. Atchison are certainly not ashamed nor embarrassed of him. He has served our association and denomination well.—Pat Robinson, Cave Springs

Letters to the editor expressing opinions are invited. Letters should be typed double-space and must be signed by one person, though the name may be withheld on request. Mailing address and phone number of the writer should be included. Letters must not contain more than 350 words and must not defame the character of persons. Letters must be marked "for publication." Only original letters will be considered.



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CHURCH CONFLICT: FIRST IN A SERIES OF FOUR

Victory Or Stress

by Jim Lowry
Baptist Sunday School Board

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)—Even though pastor and people often flinch in dreadful anticipation, church building programs do not have to be synonymous with congregational conflict, church leaders familiar with building programs maintained.

Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., and a veteran of building programs in several churches, is convinced building new churches can result in victory and unity instead of ruptured fellowship.

Gwenn McCormick, director of the church architecture department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said his department works with about 3,500—10 percent of all Southern Baptist churches—every year. He believes they now generally are doing a better job of planning and preparation than in years past.

"One of the greatest sources of conflict comes about because personal agendas intrude and become obsessions," McCormick said. "Leaders and congregation need to pray and strive for an openness to the Lord's leadership so they can build bridges of understanding and cooperation."

Keeping church members fully informed probably is the key to success in dealing with matters relating to potential congregational conflict, Henry stressed.

"Communication is the most critical thing, and prayer is the most important," counseled Henry, who urges pastors to "fully and completely inform people."

In Henry's experiences, a committee first studied the needs of the church, and then church leaders were apprised of progress. Next, "lots of information to look at and think about" was shared with the whole church body, with time for questions.

"As people see needs, most of the time they will rise to the occasion," Henry said. "If they don't understand, they probably won't participate."

At First Baptist of Orlando, where Sunday school attendance averages about

3,300, a new facility has been built from the ground up, requiring a move from the church's original downtown location. When the process is completed, costs will total more than \$24 million, all on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Building a new facility "doesn't have to have a negative side, because the positives far outweigh the negatives," Henry said. That is not to say, however, that there are not times of doubt, conflict and searching for answers.

For Henry, the decision to move was, in one way, "the darkest night of my soul," when he realized that some of the church members were going to remain in the old facility. Today, Downtown Baptist Church has about 900 members.

"My pastor's heart wanted to take all the sheep with me," he said. "When that didn't happen, I was disappointed because I didn't want to leave any one of them. Working through that drove me to more prayer and dependence on God than I ever had before. It also made me realize the strength I receive from

the laity, other staff members and pastors from other churches who reached out to encourage me and our church.

"I found that the Holy Spirit sent manna in the most unexpected ways to meet me when I was at my lowest point," Henry said, "like a letter, or a phone call from people I didn't know. The Lord knew where we were and what we needed."

Henry advised pastors involved in a building program to strive to keep their spiritual lives at their best. And whether people are for or against a new facility, the pastor has got to keep on loving them.

"When things look uncertain, stand by biblical principles to achieve stability, he continued. Church members should be challenged to sacrifice and give generously to avoid a financial bondage and great stress on the pastor and staff, which can result in loss of church members.

"It creates stress on the pastor and people when the church doesn't have money



Checking over the plans.

(BP photo / Jim Veneman)

for ministries, missions and salaries because it is paying off too much debt," Henry explained. "Stress creates anger, bitterness, resentment, fear and uncertainty.

"I have been in building programs in rural, suburban and downtown churches for 27 years." In all those situations, I have seen what a new facility can do in reaching people. I have also seen joy in victory and participated in celebration services when giving goals are reached or we move into a new building. When you come to that victory day, there is a unifying factor.

"There is pain in preparation, and it can be a tough experience," Henry acknowledged. "But in a race, when you cross the finish line, it's worth it. You forget the pain when you see the victory.

"We looked on our building programs as an opportunity to be a blessing for the generations to follow. We charged our committee to look to the future of our children and their children. That breeds unselfishness and speaks of a commitment that God is on his throne till he calls us home.

"It can be exciting on one hand, or 'Oh me!' on the other," Henry laughed. "For me it is exciting, speaking of progress, blessing, vision and hope for tomorrow."

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MILLIE GILL

People

Jerry Miller has joined the staff of Mount Carmel Church, Cabot, as minister of music and education, having previously served for more than three years as minister of music and youth at First Church, Malvern. He also has served churches in Arkansas and Texas. He and his wife, Linda, have one son, Nathan Andrew.

Stephen Nortier recently joined the staff of First Southern Church, Bryant, as minister of youth. A native of Detroit, Mich., he is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University with a major in religious education and a minor in church music. Nortier has served churches in Arkansas and Michigan. He also has served with the Home Mission Board in Michigan as part of an evangelistic team.

David Warren has joined the staff of Nettleton Church at Jonesboro as minister of music, youth, and college outreach, coming there from First Church, Pleasanton, Calif. He is a native of West Plains, Mo. Warren and his wife, Andra, have three children, Ty, Natalie, and Seth.

Bert Hargett is serving as pastor of New Hope Church, Black Oak.

Walter Lee Yeldell Sr. of Greenwood, Miss., formerly of Crossett, died Dec. 5. A retired Baptist minister, he had pastored churches throughout Arkansas and was a former member of the Board of Trustees for Ouachita Baptist University, a former president of the Board of Trustees for Southern Baptist College, and a former member of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was a former president of both the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and the Arkansas Baptist Pastors' Conference. Survivors include his wife, Kay Boswell Yeldell; a son, Walter Yeldell Jr. of Little Rock; three daughters, Carolyn Staley and Deborah McAfee of Little Rock, and Lynda Weyrick of Temple, Tex.; a brother, Adrian Yeldell of Little Rock; and eight grandchildren.

Scott Hinton is serving as pastor of First Church, DeWitt. He and his wife, Kathy, have two daughters.

A.C. Lyles has resigned as pastor of First Church, Wickes, to serve as assistant pastor at Calvary Church, Mena.



Miller



Nortier

The Keith Watkins Family of Searcy was recently recognized as White County Farm Family of the Year. They are members of Liberty Church, Searcy, where he serves as a deacon.

Willie Gold is serving as pastor of McRae Church, coming there from Brownsville Church in Lonoke County.

Tim Johns has joined the staff of Greenwood First Church as minister of youth and children.

James Jones of Harrisburg is serving as pastor of Providence Church, Trumann. He



Immanuel Church, Clinton, recently observed its 10th anniversary with a noteburning service and a potluck luncheon, according to Pastor Victor Koone. Burning the note were Thurman Elliott, James Evans, and Richard Reed.

also has served on the staff of Calvary Church, Harrisburg.

Carl Rice is serving as pastor of Hopewell Church, Mountain Home.

Kenneth Raines is serving as pastor of Bruno Church.

Tom Elliott is serving as pastor of Brown's Chapel, Manila.

Goldie Higdon was recently recognized by Little Rock Second Church for 14 years of service as a pianist. She currently plays for the senior adult choir.

Ray Huddleton was ordained to the preaching ministry Dec. 6 at Oak Hill Church in Plain Dealing, La. He serves as pastor of Village Church in Liberty Association.

Billy Hammonds is serving as pastor of First Church, Maumelle, coming there after more than six years of service at First Church, Helena.

Mark Frusha has resigned as minister of music and youth at Magnolia Church, Crossett, to join the staff of First Church, Perry, Okla.

Briefly

Needham Church held a noteburning ceremony Dec. 13 to mark completion of payment on an education building, according to Pastor Don Allred. The service was followed by a potluck luncheon and an afternoon musical program which featured the Songmen Quartet of Paragould.

Greenbrier First Church held a noteburning service Nov. 22 to celebrate payment of its sanctuary indebtedness. Speakers were Pastor Kenny Bunch and Bill Kreis, director of missions for Faulkner Association. Participating in the noteburning were Bob Graham, chairman of deacons; John Birdsong, a former pastor; Kreis; and Bunch.

Mississippi County Association has named Roland Chappell, pastor of Armored Church, as chairman of the search committee to seek a successor for Henry G. West, who is retiring as director of missions, effective Feb. 29. Serving with him will be John Dresbach, James Broughton Lovett,

Raymond Routon, Bob Gray, William Piercy, and Helen Thweatt.

Arkadelphia First Church Baptist Women are sponsoring a "Chu to China" project to enable "Mom Chu," dorm mother in Frances Crawford dormitory at Ouachita Baptist University, and her daughter, Jane, to visit mainland China as part of a SBC Woman's Missionary Union Centennial Tour in June and July 1988. Mrs. Chu has not visited her homeland since 1950, when she fled the Communist takeover in China.

East Side Church in Fort Smith launched its observance of the Foreign Mission Season of Prayer Dec. 6 when Graydon B. and Betty Hardister, missionaries to Jordan, spoke in the two morning worship services and also in the evening worship service.

Tuckerman First Church recently honored Pastor Lannie Younger, recognizing his sixth anniversary with a monetary love gift. They also gave Danny Ingram, youth leader, and his wife, Lorrie, a pounding.

Martindale Church in Little Rock recently opened a day care center in which 35 children are enrolled.

Olivet Church in Little Rock has launched a ministry to homebound adults with Johnie Catlett serving as director.

Winslow First Church ordained John Kutko to the deacon ministry Dec. 6. Participating in the service were Rene Lemons, Harold Gateley, director of missions for Washington-Madison Association, Lowell Ponder, and Pastor Fred Blake.

St. Charles Church observed Mr. and Mrs. S.A. Woodiel Appreciation Day Nov. 29, recognizing his service as a deacon, and as Sunday School superintendent and a teacher. She was recognized for her service as church clerk and as a Sunday School teacher. They were presented with a plaque and a money tree.

Boyce Term III

Term III of Boyce Bible School will open Jan. 22. Class offerings will be as follows:

Friday: 6 p.m., Mission Programs in the Church (06690), Randy Cash; 8:20 p.m., New Testament Survey (05600C), Everett Sneed.

Saturday: 7:45 a.m., Retelling the Bible Stories (06400), W.T. Holland; 10:15 a.m., The Christian Family (06880), Gerald Jackson; 12:50 p.m., English Grammar II (09020), Cecil Sutley.

For further information, contact Lehman Webb, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791.

New Offices, New Name

The Arkansas River Valley Association, formerly the Dardanelle-Russellville Association has purchased the property which formerly was used by the Immanuel Church, Russellville. The building, located at 801 East 16th Street, Russellville, has approximately 3,500 square feet in it. The building was constructed primarily as an educational facility and is valued at approximately \$85,000.

The lot on which the property is located is approximately 1.9 acres.

The association assumed a \$44,000 note on the Immanuel property. The association had previously used a house-office facility. When the facility previously used by the association is sold, it will be used to pay off the indebtedness. The association will then again be debt free.

In addition to assuming the loan on the property, the association adopted a new constitution. As a part of the newly adopted constitution, the name of the association was changed from Dardanelle-Russellville Association to Arkansas River Valley Association. Associational Director



New associational office in Russellville.

of Missions Jeff Cheatham, said, "The new constitution came as a result of a study that was started in the 1986 annual meeting. The committee worked on rewriting the constitution and bylaws for one year."

A name change had been discussed for several years. According to Cheatham, the name change will better describe the area served by the association. The association serves churches in four counties: Pope, Yell, Logan and Johnson.

In reflecting on the past year, Cheatham said, "We have had a great year. Our cooperation has been splendid, and at the moment we have only one pastorless church."

Area Media Library Conferences

January 18-21, 1988

Fayetteville
Monday, Jan. 18
First Church

Mountain Home
Tuesday, Jan. 19
First Church

North Little Rock
Thursday, Jan. 21
Central Church

Imogene Delap



How To Process Media

Schedule

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Lunch on your own
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Jack Lewis



How To Administer And Promote A Church Media Library

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Church Training Department

Call To Prayer

New ABCS President Sees Prayer As Priority

by J. Everett Sneed
Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Cary Heard, pastor of the Park Hill Church, North Little Rock, and president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was born in Atlanta, Ga., Sept. 2, 1940. Dr. Heard's father, now living with the Heards, is the son of a Baptist preacher.

Heard's objective as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention is to give emphasis to missions and evangelism. Specifically he plans to encourage individuals to pray for the various goals and objectives of the Bold Mission Thrust.

Dr. and Mrs. Heard grew up in First Church, Dallas. It was there that Heard was saved, licensed, ordained, and served on the staff.

Heard attended Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, for his first two years, as a pre-med student. He said, "As I began to pray about what God would have me to do with my life, it became clear that he wanted me to be a pastor."

Heard transferred from SMU to Baylor University in Waco, Texas. After graduation from Baylor, Heard enrolled at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and completed a bachelor of divinity degree (now master of divinity) in 1965.

He went from the staff of First Church, Dallas, to First Church, Salado, Texas, as pastor. He was at Salado for two and a half years. He was engaged and married while serving that church.

From Salado, he went to First Church, Shreveport, La., as assistant pastor, serving for three and a half years while doing research and writing his dissertation. He had pastoral responsibilities on Sunday and conducted the Wednesday night service.

After completing his doctor's degree, Heard went to First Church, Atlanta, Texas, where he remained for approximately three years. He came to the Park Hill Church from Atlanta in 1975.

Regarding his theological position, Heard said, "I consider myself to be very conservative. I believe the Bible is divinely inspired and totally authoritative. I'm convinced that our Scripture is totally the Word of God. I reject the idea that the Bible only contains the Word of God. Our task is to proclaim the Word of God so individuals will come to know Christ as Savior."

The year that Heard became pastor, Park



ABCS President Cary Heard in his office.



Cary and Mary Lou Heard with children Sam, Sarah, and Dan.

Hill Church was averaging just under 700 in Sunday School. Last year the Sunday School average attendance was approximately 1,350. The budget has grown from approximately \$500,000 to \$1.6 million.

Under Heard's leadership, a new four-story adult educational building has been constructed, a new activity center has been built, and a large portion of the previously existing space has been remodeled.

Heard observed that former President Lawson Hatfield had challenged Arkansas Baptists to read through the Bible. Heard said that he had led his people to do so and

had preached from many of the texts connected with the daily Bible readings.

Heard's goal is to involve people in praying for the various aspects of Bold Mission Thrust. He said, "I believe that if we would really unite in prayer for the various aspects of Bold Mission Thrust, all of our problems would disappear."

Heard indicated that another priority would be to give presidential support to Church Arkansas. He said that Park Hill had long been involved in local missions. At the present time, Park Hill is supporting a Korean mission and a mission in Bluffton, Ind.

In addition to providing a place of worship, Park Hill provides a house for the Korean pastor, Sang K. Lee, and his family. The Korean congregation decided on their own that they wanted to be Southern Baptists

rather than a nondenominational church. Heard baptized Lee, and he in turn baptized his own people. There are some who still have not joined the church but who attend regularly. The Korean congregation provides most of the salary, but the Home Mission Board provides some support.

For the mission in Bluffton, Ind., Park Hill provides approximately \$20,000 a year, and members of the church assist the congregation annually with numerous projects. The 100-member Bluffton Church has a new building that members of Park Hill helped to erect.

Park Hill was a co-sponsor of the Otter Creek Church as well as the Indian Springs Church when it was started.

This summer a group of young people from Park Hill will go to Canada. One group has already gone to the area. At the present, another group of Park Hill members are working at the Seaman's Center, New Orleans, to do repair work.

For the past three summers, members from Park Hill have been involved in the AMAR-Brazil project. Money is already set aside to be used in a partnership with First Church, Eureka Springs, to start a new mission at Holiday Island. Park Hill also is a co-sponsor with Family and Child Care Services in the Emergency Receiving Home at Sherwood.

"I think of my ministry," Heard said, "as being inclusive rather than exclusive. One of the factors that has produced growth in our church is a transition from a strong, military type of leadership to a team type leadership. This opens the door for maximum input of ideas and participation in leadership. I feel that people will have far more commitment to a church or denomination where they have input."

When The Sky Fell

by Mike Day
SBC Brotherhood Commission



The devastation of December's tornado at West Memphis threw hundreds of families into turmoil. Arkansas Baptist Men sprang into action to relieve the distress.

WEST MEMPHIS, Ark. (BP)—Tornadoes ripped through West Memphis, Ark., and the Northaven community outside Memphis, Tenn., shortly before 10 p.m. Dec. 14. Six people were killed, more than 150 injured, 273 residences destroyed and several local businesses leveled.

The storm cut a path two-tenths of a mile wide by 15 blocks long through the small northeast Arkansas city, leaving 4,500 people without power or utilities.

Within 12 hours, the Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief Unit was on the scene in West Memphis, serving hot meals and encouragement to residents, rescue workers and relief volunteers.

The unit, a ministry of Arkansas Baptists' Brotherhood Department, worked with American Red Cross and other disaster agencies to provide aid for the victims.

"I knew the Baptists would be here," said Rosemary Hammond, food distribution coordinator for Red Cross. "I've worked a lot of disasters, and the Baptists are always there."

The volunteers located their portable kitchen and radio base just south of Interstate 40 in the hardest-hit part of town. While most of the six-member team worked toward preparing an estimated 3,000 meals for the next three days, amateur radio operator Don Gephardt assisted out-of-state relatives searching for information about family members.

"This is a ministry that speaks without a spoken word," said Robert Tucker, director of missions for Tri-County Baptist Association, which includes churches in West Memphis. "We are giving people what they need—food, clothing, information, etc.—and we make some inroads for Christ by being here at this difficult time."

In the midst of the devastation is irony. The marquee at the nearby West Memphis Civic Auditorium promotes a local Christmas concert urging residents to "Hear the Sounds of the Season."

For 538 families in the community, the sounds of the season consisted of the howling, freight-train-like roar of a devastating tornado—and the friendly encouragement of Baptist volunteers.



Leading the Way

The Evangelism Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention has released its list of Arkansas churches which led the way in baptisms during 1986. The 10 churches which led in the ratio of baptisms to church membership were:

Church	Association	Pastor	Ratio
Pine Log	Concord	Mark Browning	1.88
Halfmoon	North Central	Loy Moody	2.53
Shannon Hills First	Pulaski	Bill Platt	2.58
Cedar Creek	Buckner	Danny Staggs	2.60
Midway	Calvary	John Davey	2.72
Snow Lake	Arkansas Valley	Harold Danley	2.77
Strawberry Southern	Independence	Alwyn Coleman	3.33
Graphic Southern	Clear Creek	Lee Bennett Moore	3.33
Victory	North Pulaski		3.40
Calvary Southern	Bartholomew	Charles Carter	3.42

The 10 churches which led the state numerically were:

Church	Association	Pastor	Number
Springdale First	Washington-Madison	Ronnie Floyd	262
Trinity	Southwest	Wallace Edgar	235
Mulberry First	Clear Creek	Rex Easterling	145
Central	Mount Zion	Rex Holt	143
Immanuel	Benton	Dale Thompson	130
Geyer Springs First	Pulaski	Paul Sanders	125
Forrest City First	Tri-County	Delton Beall	118
Grand Avenue	Concord	James Bryant	94
Gravel Ridge	North Pulaski	Danny Veto	92
Gentry First	Benton	Joe Finfrack	83

Merger Discussed

PAC, CLC Officers Consider Combining Entities

by Marv Knox
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Officers of the Southern Baptist Convention's Public Affairs Committee and its Christian Life Commission met Dec. 12 in Nashville to consider merging the two organizations.

The CLC is the convention's Nashville-based moral concerns agency. The PAC is a standing committee of the convention that also relates to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington-based religious liberty organization comprised of nine Baptist conventions.

The officers' talks centered on a merger proposal that would expand the CLC program statement to include responsibility for religious liberty and church-state issues. It would dissolve the PAC and ultimately also dissolve ties between the SBC and the Baptist Joint Committee.

PAC Chairman Samuel T. Currin of Raleigh, N.C., said three major factors led up to the merger talks:

— The CLC's September decision to open a Washington office and expand its legislative efforts regarding moral, ethical and social issues in the nation's capital.

— The PAC's October decision to recommend the committee become its own independent agency, separate from the Baptist Joint Committee, also with a Washington office.

— Concern over "duplication of effort and overlapping of responsibilities" of the two organizations, particularly as they relate to legislative or governmental issues. For example, abortion legislation involves ethical issues, making it the domain of the CLC. But it also involves church/state issues that touch the Baptist Joint Committee's assignment.

CLC participants included Chairman Fred Lackey, pastor of First Baptist Church of Athens, Ala.; Vice-Chairman Joe Atchison, director of Baptist associational missions in Rogers, Ark.; and Secretary Rudolph Yakym Jr., a stockbroker from South Bend, Ind.

PAC participants included Chairman Currin, a North Carolina state judge; Vice Chairman Albert Lee Smith, an insurance executive from Birmingham, Ala.; Recording Secretary Les Corbora III, executive director of Accuracy in Academia of Alexandria, Va.; and Richard Land, special assistant to the governor of Texas from Dallas, chairman of the PAC's planning and policy subcommittee.

Also participating in the meeting were the CLC's Baker, Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee; and Ernest E. Mosley, ex-

ecutive vice president of the Executive Committee, who provides staff assistance to the PAC.

Baker distanced the CLC from the meeting, particularly as it related to the ongoing dispute between the PAC and the Baptist Joint Committee. He said the meeting was initiated by the PAC's Currin, who contacted the CLC's Lackey. He also stressed the proposal for the merger first was drafted by the PAC's Land.

Currin, however, said: "The idea of the merger actually originated with the officers of the CLC. They broached the idea that led to the meeting."

Lackey declined to discuss who initiated the meeting, saying initiation of the meeting is not as important as its content. He noted the concept of a PAC/CLC merger "appears to be a natural outgrowth as a result of opening a (CLC) Washington office."

Baker told Baptist Press: "One thing needs to be understood clearly. The Christian Life Commission has taken no action that would move us toward a program statement different from that assigned to us by the convention.

The CLC executive noted he repeatedly expressed two concerns regarding the merger talks. First, he stressed the CLC is not taking sides in the PAC/Baptist Joint Committee dispute and pledged to continue to work with both groups. Second, he called the proposal "premature at best," citing the SBC's 50-year relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee, the Executive Committee's current study of PAC/Baptist Joint Committee funding and the PAC's own pending proposal regarding dissolution of SBC ties to the Baptist Joint Committee.

"To propose something different or new at this time would be to run ahead of the issues already under study and to circumvent established processes and procedures of the convention," he said.

Currin reported the merger proposal will be presented to members of both the PAC and the CLC and, if approved, will be presented as a joint recommendation to the Executive Committee at its February meeting.

The proposal can be handled on a "separate track" from the PAC/Baptist Joint Committee funding study currently being conducted by the SBC Executive Committee, he said. Since the merger proposal would require approval of both the Executive Committee and the full SBC, he predicted the earliest date for a completed merger would be following the June 1989 SBC annual meeting.

'Annie' Tops \$30 Million

ATLANTA (BP)—The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has received more than \$30 million through the 1987 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, an increase of 8.7 percent over last year's income.

The \$30,032,349 received through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering as of Dec. 8 is short of the \$37.5 million goal but represents an increase of 8.7 percent over income through the special offering at the same time last year, Banks said.

In addition to the \$30 million from the special offering in Southern Baptist churches, the board has received \$22.7 million through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program budget; \$3.3 million from gifts, grants and designations; \$11.1 million from interest on investments, church loans and bonds; and about \$360,000 from sales, rentals, and other income.

ACTS Preachers

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Four Southern Baptist pastors have been selected as 1988 preachers for programs on the ACTS satellite network.

Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, was named preacher for the morning edition of "The Baptist Hour." Preacher for the evening "Baptist Hour" will be Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. Gregory has been the speaker on "Word of Life," a weekly Bible teaching program.

Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., will replace Gregory on "Word of Life." John Bisagno will continue as speaker for the long-standing "Invitation to Life" evangelistic program. Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston, has been preacher on the revival program since it began in 1984.

Northeasterners Start School

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptists in the Northeast have launched a school for training ministers in their region.

The Northeastern Baptist School of Ministry, which will open next fall, will provide on-site theological and ministry education in the 12-state region. Initial classes are to be held in Boston and Pittsburgh, with eventual expansion planned for other cities.

The school will grant a master's degree as well as ministry diplomas. The master's degree will be a two-year program.

RESULTS ARE MIXED

When Churches Build

by Charles Willis
Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—Construction of a new church facility fulfills neither the promises of spectacular growth nor the dire predictions of financial ruin, according to results from a research project conducted by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's research services department.

The results, said Gwenn McCormick, director of the board's church architecture department, indicate a new building is likely to affect baptisms, Sunday school attendance, tithes and offerings and Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified

budget gifts. McCormick reported findings of the research project to state building consultants during their annual planning meeting in Nashville.

While sociological factors such as economic recession may have influenced the specific years, 1980-86, involved in the study, the findings for churches that had built a new facility in 1983 included three years of decreased growth through baptisms, increased Sunday school average attendance, a lower increase in tithes and offerings coupled with a higher percentage increase in Cooperative Program giving than churches that had not constructed a

new facility.

"The study reveals the need for much more aggressive follow-up to a building project," he said. "Significant growth rates for the three years before the building too often were followed by a declining percentage rate of growth. The 'we-have-arrived' attitude apparently leads to some complacency."

Baptisms declined in all membership categories of churches with new buildings during the three-year period studied. In Sunday school average attendance, those that built averaged a 10 percent increase while those not involved in a building project averaged a 1.1 percent decrease.

While Sunday school attendance in churches that built did show significant gains compared to those that did not build, even those churches that built new space grew at a slower rate for three years after building than they had for three years before building.

Generally, tithes and offerings and contributions to the Cooperative Program increased despite financial demands related to new facility construction. Churches with new buildings averaged a 7.2 percent lower increase in tithes and offerings but increased Cooperative Program giving 6.2 percent more than those that did not build.

"Churches really need to gear up for unparalleled thrust and outreach once the building is completed," McCormick said. "A new building means the tools are now in hand, but we must strengthen our efforts to use them responsibly."

The 1988 Home Missions Teleconference is Your Highway to Home Missions



"Pave" your highway with more knowledge about home missions as you tune in to this year's Home Missions Teleconference. You will meet missionaries who serve in various areas of the United States and see actual footage of them in their work place. You also will meet Southern Baptist missions leaders who will report to you the latest information concerning home missions.

Missionaries you'll meet...

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<i>James Myers</i>	Grangeville, Idaho
<i>Jim and Cathy Ward</i>	Dateland, Arizona
<i>Bill and Cindy Black</i>	Gatlinburg, Tennessee
<i>Tom Blase</i>	St. Louis, Missouri

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Church Secretary—Woman with eight years experience as church/pastoral secretary seeks employment in a church office, preferably in North Little Rock area. Skills: paste-up and layout, 80 wpm typing, word processing, 10 Key. Reference letters from former church employers available. Call 945-1712. 1/14

Work wanted—Nursing assistant. Home or hospital. Part-time. Nettie Thomas, 401 Wynn, Hot Springs, AR 71913; phone 623-8677 1/7

Notices of employment sought or available will be posted for three consecutive weeks without charge for members of Arkansas Baptist churches. Church staff positions will not be included. Send name, address, telephone number, and statement of qualifications, experience, and type of employment sought or available to "Jobs Exchange," Arkansas Baptist News Magazine, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. Placement of a notice in the Jobs Exchange does not constitute an endorsement by the ABN.

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Convention Uniform

Loving the Hard to Love

by Bill Bowen, First Church, Mena

Basic passage: Matthew 5:21-26, 38-48

Focal passage: Matthew 5:38-48

Central truth: We are to express godly love to all people.

One of life's pleasures is having friends whom we love. Their company gives us satisfaction and security. On the other hand, it is difficult to be around people we know do not foster love for us.

The same was true in the day of Jesus. However, Jesus introduced a concept of neighborly love contrary to the teachings of his day. The Pharisees taught that love should be reserved for one's friends. Those who followed the teachings of the Pharisees were expected to hate their enemy. They believed God have given them the privilege of being human instruments of God's wrath. God's wrath was to be shown to anyone they did not like.

Jesus taught love should be unreserved, just as God's love for us is unreserved.

In verses 38 and 43, Jesus quoted two passages from the Old Testament that had been corrupted by the people of his day. They had taken the law and used it to justify hating those they could not get along with.

Verse 38 is a quote from Deuteronomy 19:21. When God first gave this instruction, it was a part of the law of retribution.

The law of retribution was established to give guidance for the judicial system of Israel. It was never intended to give justification for vengeance. As a matter of fact, in Leviticus 19:18, God specifically warned Israel not to harbor vengeance.

The second Old Testament passage Jesus quoted is found in verse 43. This statement is part Old Testament and part popular theology of the day. Jesus quoted Leviticus 19:18. However, he also added a statement which was a commonly accepted idea of the day—hate your enemies.

In verse 39, Jesus introduced his statement of what Christian love is. We are to be a channel for the love of God to all men, even to those who are hard to love. As we show love for all men, we are demonstrating we are God's children.

The words of Jesus take us back to the Beatitudes. There, Jesus stated that the way you love your enemy is not as the world does, but as God has loved us. He has forgiven our sin, thus demonstrating perfect love to us.

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Life and Work

True Worship

by Johnny Ross, Calvary Church, Batesville

Basic passage: Exodus 20:1-3; Deuteronomy 6:13-15; Psalms 95:6-7b; Matthew 4:8-10

Focal passage: Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 4:8-10

Central truth: True worship is reserved for God.

The first commandment concerns the object of our worship, Jehovah, and him alone (Ex. 20:3). The nations around Israel had many deities and Jehovah set the priorities for his people in order that there would be no worship of those other gods.

People seldom worship the same types of idols today, but they have others: A person's pride might lead him to think too highly of self. Another might make the pursuit of money and the things it can buy his all-consuming passion. Still others have pleasure, sensual or otherwise, as the priority of life. Some just want to belong to a group, even if it is a cult.

The truth is that whomever or whatever one esteems, loves, fears, serves, delights in or depends upon, more than God, that object or passion becomes one's god. This displeases Jehovah!

Our text teaches that one must fear and serve God alone (De. 6:13). Pursuing and serving other gods incurs the wrath of God. True worship will always give God the glory. It involves the believer having both the inward worship of a right heart and the outward worship of obedience to his commandments.

The New Testament reiterates and affirms that the believer's worship must always and only be directed God-ward. Jesus' encounter with Satan during the wilderness temptation (Mt. 4:8-10) shows God incarnate correctly teaching the evil one from the Scripture that true worship is reserved for God alone.

One must beware of subtle counterfeits for genuine worship. In his dialogue with the woman at the well Jesus told the woman that she did not know what to worship (Jn. 4:22), then explained that true worshippers are those who worship the Father both in spirit and in truth. They are the ones whom the Father seeks to worship him (v. 23).

Worship of any other person or thing is misplaced and ungodly, and ultimately will incur the wrath of God.

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Bible Book

The Unchanged Life

by James W. Bryant, Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith

Basic passage: Genesis 25:19-27:45

Focal passage: Genesis 27:6-10, 18-23, 34-36a

Central truth: The unconverted, unchanged, and fallen human nature, so graphically typified in Jacob, lies at the root of family conflict.

The inclusion of this true story in the Bible is one of the proofs of the Bible's inspiration. Were the Bible no more than human thoughts and words, this shocking event in the life of Jacob (later to be named Israel, the namesake of God's chosen nation of people) would never have been handed down beyond the day it happened. One of the proofs of the Bible's inspiration is that it tells the truth even about its heroes, even if that truth is condemning. The ancient Egyptian histories never record defeats; only the victories of the Pharaohs. Yet the Bible tells us the truth about Jacob at his worst. He lied to his dying father. He tricked an old man. He stole his brother's birthright and then his blessing. It is not surprising that Esau hated Jacob for years and years until God finally changed both their hearts. Only the grace and providence of God kept Esau from finding and killing his brother Jacob, after what Jacob did.

The unconverted, unchanged, and fallen human nature, so graphically typified in Jacob, lies at the root of family conflict. This story is only one biblical example among many of the truth of passages such as Romans 3:10-18. Mankind without Christ is depraved. Human depravity is nowhere more clearly revealed than it is in family conflict. Last year a father in my community killed his own son in self-defense. "It was either him or me," he said. A cynical friend of mine once said, "Everybody is out to get everybody else. You'd better get them before they get you." Then he twisted the Golden Rule and said, "Do unto others before they can do unto you." Jacob did. He got the blessing, but he lost his brother.

One good thing came out of it all however, which ought to encourage all who find their families in deep conflict. It was ultimately through that conflict that Jacob felt his need of God, as we will see in the weeks ahead. If your family is in deep conflict, turn both yourself and your family over to God.

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WORLD

Malaysia Churches Closed

by Michael D. Chute
SBC Foreign Mission Board

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (BP)—Thirty-three Malaysian Baptist churches received orders Dec. 14 to suspend services within seven days, as Baptists in that country continue to feel repercussions from recent government enforcement of the Internal Security Act.

Sources in Malaysia say police are using zoning regulations to halt the services of 33 churches in the state of Negri Sembilan. Government officials say the sites on which the churches are meeting are not designated for religious activities. Therefore, they are said to be violating zoning codes.

However, Baptist leaders there claim some of those churches have been meeting in the same locations for more than 20 years.

In a related development, one of five Baptist leaders arrested in a nationwide sweep six weeks ago has been released from jail. Tan Bee Hwa, minister at Damasara Utama Baptist Church in Kuala Lumpur, was released at the end of November.

Four other Baptist leaders, including James Lai, remain jailed since their arrest Oct. 29. Lai, pastor of First Baptist Church of Petaling Jaya, reportedly is being held in solitary confinement. The government has allowed Lai's family to see him twice a week for about 30 minutes at a time.

Baptist leaders in Malaysia say they are not certain about the status of the other three prisoners. No formal charges have been filed against any of the Baptists arrested. The government claims the five Baptists, along with 106 other people, were arrested in an attempt to defuse racial and religious tensions between ethnic Chinese and ethnic Malays. All the arrested Baptists are ethnic Chinese.

Baptists Treat Gaza's Wounded

by Art Toalston
Baptist Press

GAZA (BP)—Dean Fitzgerald has been tending to some of the victims of mid-December clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian protesters in Gaza.

The Southern Baptist missionary physician was unable to treat a 17-year-old Palestinian who had been shot in the neck Dec. 15. The wound was too severe. The boy died. The same day, Fitzgerald operated on a young Palestinian man's arm. A bullet had blown apart an artery. The doctor reconstructed the artery using a vein from the young man's leg. Several days

earlier, Fitzgerald treated the wounds of a Palestinian man and his daughter.

Tension heightened in December as Palestinians hurling stones and other objects were countered by Israeli troops' gunfire. "We've never seen it like this before... so much tension and fighting and bloodshed and killing," said Fitzgerald of Waco, Texas, who has worked in Gaza since 1978. Gaza came under Israeli control when it was taken from Egypt in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Workers at the Baptist Center of Culture and Light received a threat Dec. 15 that the center would be bombed if it stayed open. The center closed and will reopen "when this blows over, whenever that is," Fitzgerald said. The ministry operates a lending library and offers classes in English and handicrafts.

Clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinians in mid-December have claimed nine protesters' lives, Israeli forces said, but Palestinian sources put the death toll at 15.

Mongolian Education

by Erich Bridges
SBC Foreign Mission Board

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (BP)—Mongolia's minister of education has invited Southern Baptist educators to aid in efforts to expand English instruction throughout the Mongolian school system.

Cooperative Services International Director Lewis Myers and his associate, Jack Shelby, met in the Mongolian capital with Education Minister Byambyn Davaasuren. They discussed Mongolia's education goals for 1990-95, which include teaching English as a second language.

Myers and Shelby offered the resources of CSI, the Southern Baptist organization that sends a variety of skilled personnel and assistance to countries that request the service.

Davaasuren responded to the offer and tentatively agreed to a summer 1988 visit of American teaching specialists in the field of English as a second language. The specialists would join Mongolian teachers in workshops and help develop the five-year education goals. The verbal agreement awaits final approval at higher levels of the Mongolian government.

Mongolia, a nation of about 2 million people, is surrounded by China and the Soviet Union. It is allied with the Soviets but established diplomatic relations with the United States in early 1987. The Mongolians claim 100 percent literacy among the population.