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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

1-14-1988

January 14, 1988

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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What Can A Will Do?

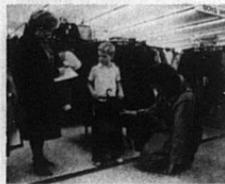
Arkansas Baptist

January 14, 1988



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Cover Story



ABN photo / Millie Gill

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Because of a generous bequest, Little Rock Second Church has been able to make Christmas happier for hundreds of children.

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IT'S UPLIFTING

She Gave It All For Missions

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (BP)—She could have bought something nice with the \$100 she'd saved, but instead, 11-year-old Jennifer Owen sent it to Africa to help build a church.

Jennifer was among a group of Girls In Action who saw a slide presentation about Southern Baptist missionary work in the West African nation of Burkina Faso.

During the slide show at Immanuel Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Miss., Gail Benedict, a volunteer who had worked in Burkina Faso, explained the plight of a Baptist church in Ouagadougou that had saved \$12,000 to construct a church building but needed that much more to build a structure that would comply with government regulations.

Jennifer "came with tears in her eyes to

me after the program," Benedict said. She told her, "I want to give my baby-sitting money to send to West Africa to help those children know about Jesus."

The slides showed the rural Africans' modest buildings and sometimes unclothed children, said Benedict, a secretary for Lamar County Baptist Association in Hattiesburg.

"It burned my heart to see all of these poor kids out there (in Burkina Faso)," said Jennifer, a Christian since age 7. "I hope by giving \$100, it can start other people to thinking about giving money. If a lot of people gave, it could also help some of the kids down in the other parts of the country that need clothes or shelter."

Owen said she and her husband, Fred, talked with Jennifer about the \$100 donation and told her "she could back out of it, but she said, no, she didn't want to buy anything for herself. She wanted to do it for missions."

GOOD NEWS!

Suffering from Spiritual Lethargy

Revelation 3:14-22

The church in Laodicea is the most southeasterly church in the chain, located in the Lycus Valley on the Maeander River. This is the same river which runs through Ephesus.

The city was rich. This banking center for the region had produced a proud, arrogant, self-sufficient people.

Their second industry was from the somewhat uncommon black sheep which flourished in the valley. Their black wool produced a fine garment which was in great demand in the empire.

The third business had to do with the medicinal ear and eye preparations made by the famous medical school in connection with the temple to the Phrygian god, Men-of-the-Carians.

These three things are used by Christ in the condemnation of the lukewarmness of the Laodiceans.

The church reflected the city life in its attitudes. Materialism had dulled the Christians' spiritual sensitivity until they were satisfied with just being good to grandma, not kicking the dogs, and paying their debts. If they had one glaring sin, it was that they had confused sentimentality with the Christian faith. They were indifferent to the great fundamental truths of the gospel.

Christ had nothing good to say about this

church, which was just rocking along and being good. Their tragedy was that they were dead, and their spiritual lethargy was enough to make Christ "spew them out" of his mouth (v. 16). Nothing is more insipid than a mouthful of warm mineral water. The mineral water abundant in the area of Laodicea would have made this expression most graphic. A church with no enthusiasm, no moving dynamic, no urgency or compassion for the world around them was most repugnant to Christ as he looked at the congregation of Laodicea. Most churches today would do well to ask themselves how they relate the gospel to the world around them.

One of the most beautiful pictures of the compassionate Christ is given in this message. The grammatical structure would suggest "having come to the door, I am standing and knocking." Christ is going to every heart's door in the Laodicean church and giving each the opportunity to repent. If they will open and let him, he will come in and fellowship with each of them.

There is nothing more despised than a halfway Christian, but there is nothing more loving than this picture of Christ's personal concern for those of his people who have fallen to the temptation of humanism in the midst of a materialistic world, whether in the first century or in the twentieth.

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Broken Relationships

J. EVERETT SNEED

Conflict resolution is one of the most difficult undertakings that can confront Christians. Most Christians have a strong desire to be at peace with all men. But human nature being imperfect, broken relationships occur, even within the Christian community. There is a particular type of individual with whom conflict is most difficult to resolve. The individual who maintains his own correctness under every circumstance poses a definite problem. Fortunately, the Bible provides guidance in restoring broken relationships.

Christians should be aware that broken relationships with others disturb our relationship with God. Hence, Jesus instructed, "... if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Mt. 5:23-24).

The offering to which Jesus referred was the sin sacrifice in Jewish worship. The principle is valid for today. Broken relationships, regardless of where the blame rests, disturbs our worship of God. Nothing (not even the giving of money) will restore a proper relationship with God, except mending our differences.

Jesus tells us clearly we cannot be right with God until we are right with men. We cannot hope for forgiveness until we have confessed our sin both to God and to those against whom we have sinned. Broken relationships separate man and God.

Perhaps the most important principle of mending broken relationships is forgiveness. Peter asked Jesus if his fellows were to forgive those who had wronged them seven times. Peter's statement appeared to be generous enough, since Rabbi Jose ben Jehuda had instructed that forgiveness was to be given three times. But "the fourth time," he said, "they do not forgive." Jesus replied that there was to be no limit placed on forgiveness (Mt. 18:20).

Jesus also laid down the procedure to use when we have been wronged (Mt. 18:15-17). First, we are to talk with those who have wronged us. If this fails, we are to take two or three others with us. Finally, the matter is to be taken to the church.

We, as Christians, are to make every effort to resolve any problem that exists between us and others. Second, the Christian is to make every effort to understand other



people's problems, suspicions and dislikes. It is much easier to forgive another if we attempt to understand the reason for his bad behavior. Sometimes a difficult person may be the victim of his own environment and surroundings. Others may have a temperament that makes human relationships a problem. Understanding of others generally assists in forgiveness.

The Christian also must learn to forget. Sometimes people say, "I'll forgive but I'll never forget." Such brooding on the injustice we have received is not forgiveness. When one truly forgives, he also will forget. It's true that nothing short of the cleansing spirit of Christ can erase the memory of old hurts that a person has received. But true forgiveness demands that injustice be forgotten.

The Christian must learn to love

everyone, even those who injure him. God's love for each person is an unequivocal benevolence which seeks the highest good for that person no matter what he has done or how he has treated others. Such love can only come to the Christian through Christ who dwells within our hearts.

There are also principles of restoring relationships when we wrong others. First, we should confess that we have been wrong. This is not easy. A person is often reluctant to admit any wrongdoing even to himself. But we must recognize that God knows, and we cannot have the proper peace with God until the matter is settled. We should go to the other person and say, "I was wrong. Will you forgive me?" Our apology surely will be accepted. But, if not, we have confidence that we have done that which is required of a Christian.

When we have wronged someone, how many should know of our apology? The attempt at reconciliation should be as wide as the wrongdoing. For example, if a man has said unkind words to his wife, it need not be confessed to the whole church. It should be confessed to his wife and to God since involvement of others can produce additional problems.

When necessary and possible, restoration should be made for wrongs that we have done to others. Zacchaeus, after establishing a relationship with Christ, said, "... if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Lk. 19:8).

When Christians follow the biblical principles of forgiveness, confession and restoration, conflicts can be resolved and mended. Most importantly, we will be at peace with God and our fellow man.

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

VOLUME 87

NUMBER 2

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Photos submitted for publication will be returned only when accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Only black and white photos can be used.

Copies by mail 50 cents each.

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), \$5.52 per year (lively 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, AR 72205. (376-4791)

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

"The call comes ringing o'er the restless waves, send the Light, send the Light." By now you and your church will have probably given your Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

You remember that all of this goes to foreign missions. None is kept for any purpose in Arkansas. You should also remember that this offering makes up approximately 50 percent of all Southern Baptists do for foreign missions each year. I hope and pray we have all done well enough that our covenant-wide goal (SBC) of \$75 million is reached. If we reach it, it will be the first time we have reached our goal in four years. As soon as you can get your checks in to us, we will forward it on to our mission board for their use. Thanks for the effort you have put forth and the generosity you have demonstrated. You'll see the result of your giving as your "works are made manifest" at the judgement seat of Christ. You'll be even more thrilled than that you did what you did.



What will the new year hold? More tornadoes, floods, mass murders—what? No one knows but the Lord. We do know he will be faithful and our opportunities will be great. Every fresh natural or social crisis serves to point up the need for us to be making our lives count. Have those who have unexpectedly gone out into eternity gone out prepared to meet God? Have those left to grieve and mourn their passing the comfort and peace of the loving Lord? Shouldn't everyone have the privilege of knowing him who walks with us "through the valley of the shadow of death"? What greater neglect can be committed than that of neglecting to get the message of God's redeeming love to the people all around us?

The opportunity is upon us. For some reason, few of our churches are showing any real growth. Either we need to try some new approaches to outreach or we need to bathe the old approaches with more prayer and consistency until God visits us with an anointing for effective evangelism. This is my prayer for 1988 for you and your church. Will you join me in this prayer?

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

WILLS EMPHASIS

What Can Be Done Through A Will?

by **Harry D. Trulove**
President, Arkansas Baptist Foundation

"Just how important is a will?" "What can be done through a will?" These are questions often asked by participants during wills conferences sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.

There are many things that a will can accomplish. Possibly one of the most important factors is that a will allows an individual to retain control of accumulated assets. Without a will, the estate is distributed in accordance with the Arkansas statutes of distribution and descent.

Through a will, an individual may provide for specific family needs. Distribution can be made based on individual needs rather than "share and share alike." A trust included in a will can provide guidance for handling the financial affairs of minor children, elderly parents, or even a spouse. A will says to the family, "I love you... I care!"

A will permits part of an estate to be distributed to one's church, association or one of our state SBC agencies. Such was the case of Mr. George Dame.

During his early childhood, Mr. Dame lived in Little Rock. As with many families of his generation, the Dames sometimes faced difficult times financially. On several occasions, gifts of food or clothing from

Second Baptist Church helped bring a ray of sunshine to the children. Even though he moved out of state, these expressions of love were not forgotten by Mr. Dame.

After his death, in 1981, Second Church in Little Rock was notified that Mr. Dame's will had established a trust that would provide income for the church to use in ministering to needy families during the Christmas season. Each year, the church follows the guidelines of the trust. Again this year, some 75 families from Second Church took 180 children on a Saturday morning shopping spree.

Each year the income from the trust has grown, enabling the church to reach more and more families. Through 1987, over 950 children have had a happier Christmas because Mr. Dame had a will. What about you? Have you provided for your family or Christian causes by having a properly written will?

The above case is just one example of what can be done through a will. You may want to do something similar for your church, association or some other area of Baptist work. For more information about Christian estate planning and the importance of a will, contact the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 376-0732 or 376-4791.

Today's Issues

Haunted House Religion

BOB PARKER

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Ph. 4:4, NIV).

Some will recall the late Fred Allen as being one of radio's greatest comedians. One of his funniest lines was an "off the cuff" remark made to a blank-faced musician who never smiled. During a vaudeville juggling act, Allen stopped, leaned over and asked, "How much would you charge to haunt a house?"

A fruit of the Holy Spirit



and a positive evidence of one being a Christian is joy. It's really sad that some professing faith in Christ practically never smile or express joy.

It's ironic that Paul's letter to the church at Philip-

pi was written from a Roman jail. Bible believing and practicing disciples of Jesus Christ are likely to be asked what charges there would be made to haunt a house.

"... God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Co. 9:7, KJV).

As Christians we must be "salt and light" influences in our troubled world (Mt. 5:13-16). To do so, it is absolutely imperative that we strive to both give and live cheerfully (2 Co. 9:7).

Bob Parker is director of the Christian Life Council.

Jesus and the Woman at the Well

by T.B. Maston
Southwestern Seminary

An incident that reveals a great deal about the attitude toward and relation of Jesus to women was his conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. The record of this incident is found only in John's gospel (Jn. 4:4-42).

There are a number of interesting things revealed in this conversation. The fact that Jesus was tired and sat on the side of the well reveals something of his human nature.

The woman "came to draw water." There were no pumps in those days. She had to put a bucket down where the water was and haul it up. She got so involved, however, in her conversation with Jesus that she left her water pot and went back to her home and reported the conversation she had had with Jesus.

There are several striking statements in the record of this incident. One of those statements is what Jesus said to the woman about the "living water." He told her that if she knew whom it was that was talking to her she would have asked him and he would have given her the living water. The woman pointedly asked, "Where do you get that living water?" Part of the reply of Jesus was, "Everyone who drinks of

this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst: the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Have you ever wondered what Jesus really meant when he said that one who drank of the living water would never thirst again? Has your experience been similar to mine—the more deeply you have drunk of the living water the more dissatisfied you have become with the life you live for him? At least the more conscious you become of how far short you fall of being what you ought to be. Evidently Jesus was referring here to the initial experience when we open our lives and let him come in. That experience brings eternal life. We continue to thirst, however, for a fuller and more complete walk with him.

Jesus also said to the woman, "You are right in saying 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband. This you said truly!" I wonder what Jesus would say in our day to men and women who live together but have never been married.

Let us notice two or three important teachings found in this incident:

If we really worship him,

we must worship him in spirit and in truth. He "is spirit" (v. 24).

He revealed to the woman that he was the Messiah. "I who speak to you am he" (the Messiah; v. 26). This statement may have been the first time that Jesus plainly made that statement to anyone. We need to remember that he revealed and continues to reveal himself to women as well as to men.

The disciples were surprised that Jesus was talking to a woman (v. 27).

Jesus also revealed to the disciples that he had food to eat that they did not know about. He said that his food was to do the Father's will.

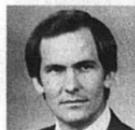
He also encouraged them, and would encourage us, to open our eyes on the fields that are already white unto harvest.

The major emphasis of this incident is that Jesus did not and does not permit race, sex, color, or condition of life to keep him from reaching out to people in need. His compassion was not and is not compartmentalized. It is universalized, which showed his love to those of us who are his followers.

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

RODNEY REEVES

Southern Accent



Seeing is Believing

John was Jesus' best friend. He was not only one of the first to follow Jesus,

John was also the only disciple to follow him to the end. While the other followers of Jesus kept their distance, John joined a few women at the foot of the cross and watched Jesus die. Impaled on the Roman cross, Jesus entrusted his most precious responsibility to the only friend that remained, "Behold your mother" (Jn. 19:27). In his darkest hour, John was there for our Lord. John saw Jesus suffer. It should come as no surprise that John believed when he saw the evidence of the resurrection, "we have seen with our eyes" (1 Jn. 1:1).

Peter and John had just received Mary's report that Jesus' body was missing. A foot race to the tomb follows with John arriving first. Cautiously, that is, in order to avoid ceremonial impurity, John peers in to the tomb only to see grave clothes lying on the floor; "but he did not go in" (Jn. 20:5). Impetuous Peter comes flying by, enters the tomb, and inspects its contents. Upon closer observation, Peter discovers something which had escaped John's notice. Folded up in a place by itself, away from the grave clothes, was the face-cloth which once covered Jesus' head. With this discovery, John entered the tomb, "saw and believed" (Jn. 20:8). Evidently, the peculiarity of the face-cloth caused John to lose all inhibitions. Why?

The purity regulations of table-fellowship of rabbis as described in the Mishnah may provide the answer. Part of the ceremonial purification included hand washing, the cleansing of hand with water and linen. Following the rite, Rabbis would fold the towel in a particular fashion—a trademark. Consequently, when John saw the folded face-cloth (possibly betraying a personal habit of Jesus), then he believed. Only a close friend would be so observant. Jesus was alive!

Rodney Reeves is associate professor of religion at Southern Baptist College.

MK Birthday Prayer Calendar: January

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Letters to the Editor

Atchison Responds

My motion to dismiss Larry Baker, director of the CLC Board, has been the subject recently of "Letters to the Editor." I would like to respond as to why this motion was made and affirmed by one half of the board. My motion was not an attack upon the person or character of Baker, but rather his clearly stated positions on crucial moral issues. Since there was no conservative representation on the Search Committee and we did not know who was being recommended until the last minute, we asked our questions before the whole board. Baker clearly stated his position on abortion: he was not sure when life began, was permissible in cases of life of mother, rape, incest, emotional distress of mother, and in some cases of economic hardship. He stated clearly he was for women serving as pastors of churches and against capital punishment. This is the reason Baker was hired on a split vote of 16-13. We did not think these positions reflected what Southern Baptists believe and want in a leader of this agency. Thus, six months later he was asked if he still held to these stated positions and he refused to give the board a reply, leaving us to assume he had not changed. It was then I made a motion to dismiss and the vote was 15-15.

At no time during these deliberations did any board member conduct himself in a manner unbecoming of a Christian. We all regret that it became necessary for such action to be taken, but a clear voice on moral issues of this agency has to be our primary consideration. Our desire is to be more biblically oriented rather than position based on "situational ethics." The real embarrassment is that his commission for many years has not related what Southern Baptists believe and stand for. The intent of my motion was not against a person or for a political cause but for the future well-being of Southern Baptists.—J.W. Atchison, Beatonville

A SMILE OR TWO

Nothing leaves a man colder in the winter than adding up the fuel bill.

—The Indianapolis Star

The only medicine that needs no prescription, has no unpleasant taste, and costs no money is laughter.

Food & Fellowship

Valentine Banquet

VIRGINIA KIRK & JANE PURTLE

Married couples enjoy a Valentine banquet as much as youth. Last year at First Church, Batesville, the younger couples' classes gave themselves a super banquet in a beautifully decorated fellowship hall. The women cooked the meal early in the day; it was served by several older couples, the women wearing white serving aprons and the men, black bow ties.

Touches of romance included long stemmed red carnations for each lady, wedding picture displays, and decorations celebrating the Valentine theme. Entertainment was by members of the classes who sang Broadway show tunes and Christian love songs.

A nursery committee saw to the needs of the children. They enjoyed Valentine refreshments and favors in the church nursery.

The menu was spinach and mandarin orange salad with poppy seed dressing, cream cheese chicken, rice pilaf, green beans with almonds, yeast rolls, and Black Forest cake. Before the meal the couples had appetizers: spinach dip served with sliced French bread, rye bread and crackers. Among the table decorations were chocolate baskets containing chocolate dipped strawberries.



Cream cheese chicken

(This recipe has been modified to accommodate a large crowd with less expense.)

- 1 deboned chicken breast for each person
- 1 can of cream of chicken soup for 8-10 breasts
- 1 package vacuum packed beef luncheon meat for 8-10 breasts
- 1 8-oz. package softened cream cheese for 8-10 breasts
- 1 package bacon end pieces

Mix cream of chicken soup and softened cream cheese together. Set aside. Line bottom of large baking dish with luncheon meat. Roll up breasts and place side by side in pan. Lay bacon pieces on top of chicken. Cover completely with soup and cream cheese mixture. Cover with foil and bake at 350 degrees for 2½ hours. Uncover to brown the last hour.

Black Forest cake

Bake a devil's food cake mix in a bundt pan. Cool and slice in three layers. Use a string for even slicing. Using canned cherry pie filling, spoon the cherries between the layers. Spread the rest of the filling over the top and allow to run down the sides of cake. With a sifter, sift powdered sugar over the top. Serve with whipped topping or whipped cream.

Chocolate baskets

Melt together 1 bar of German sweet chocolate and ¼ bar paraffin. Choose a bowl or pie pan that is the size of the basket you wish to make. Line with aluminum foil. Spray with no-stick cooking spray. Drizzle chocolate mixture into bowl or plate, making a lacy design. Refrigerate to harden. Carefully remove foil and fill basket with chocolate dipped strawberries or other sweets.

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

CHURCH CONFLICT: SECOND OF FOUR

Don't Ignore It!

by Jim Lowry
Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—A Southern Baptist church that avoids or ignores congregational conflict is permitting a potential crisis of effectiveness to encroach on its fellowship, according to a church administration specialist.

Change, which frequently results in conflict, is inevitable, said Joe Stacker, who believes nearly every conflict situation is manageable.

Stacker, director of the church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said substantive and interpersonal differences that result in congregational conflict are manageable if church members will deal with each other redemptively in the spirit of Christ.

"With tolerance and redemptive release of emotions, churches can get through situations which are potentially explosive," Stacker noted. "Jesus confronted conflict in the church, and we can't totally avoid it today.

"I think baptisms would double and missions giving increase significantly if churches would learn to deal with conflict," he said. "People need to get their eyes off themselves and start doing the Great Commission.

"Our churches spend too much time on non-biblical concerns," he said. "They lose sight of their mission and objective while alienations break down the church family relationships."

Almost any situation in a church, including growth, can result in conflict, Stacker claimed. For instance some church members do not want their churches to grow because of the changes that certainly will occur in organization and relationships.

Major or minor incidents and events can cause conflict. The addition of staff members, budget difficulties, disciplinary words directed at the child of a member, the color of the carpet or just two people sharing the same space all can cause the spark that starts the fires of conflict, he noted.

How the conflict started, what caused it and how to manage it are key questions which can result in growth and new unity or a divided congregation and broken fellowship, Stacker said.

He identified three divisions into which conflict can be classified. First, interpersonal conflict is inside a person. If ignored or mishandled, it eventually will spill out into the life of the church.

Second, interpersonal conflict is between two people, such as when they are more worried about who will get top-billing for some project or event.

Third is substantive conflict, Stacker continued, which is a difference of opinion over ideas involving facts and values. Ironically, this is the easiest kind of conflict to solve, unless some interpersonal

negotiate a conclusion.

When conflict first appears, the pastor and other church leaders should research the problem to determine the issues and who is involved, he said.

"Three common ways to deal with conflict are fright, flight and fight," Stacker explained. "Many persons either freeze in fear or run away as quickly as possible. We need to take a stand and negotiate.

"Church leaders need to realize that conflict was no stranger to Christ," he said. "We need to know how to manage conflict and live within the opportunities it brings.

(BP) photo / Jim Veneman



Joe Stacker, a former pastor himself, says conflict can be managed.

conflict develops out of the problem-solving process. Sometimes what appears to be a conflict over a substantive matter is a smoke screen for some personality conflict between members, he said.

"The most dangerous way to deal with conflict is to ignore it," Stacker said. "When you deny the reality of conflict, it generally deepens while going unresolved. Avoidance also is unacceptable."

A more effective way to deal with conflict is to defuse it by honestly addressing the problem, making suggestions to people who are involved and then waiting to see the reactions. Another method of dealing with conflict is confrontation, where a person in a leadership role has enough influence to mandate a decision and

Successfully resolving congregational conflict can teach tolerance, redemption and release of emotion which could have exploded and injured many.

"Jesus was willing to risk because he knew the power of God was with him," he added. "We must risk like Jesus risked, to resolve conflict in churches so we can get on with resolving the conflict of sin in the world.

"Church leaders must seek the wisdom of God and redemptively risk, as the Lord did, to find solutions and reconciliation with those in conflict," he said.

"If church leaders do not seek that wisdom and take that risk, chances are that churches will never be what Jesus intended them to be as his body on earth."

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

People

Lawrence Harrison began serving Jan. 1 as pastor of First Church, Huttig, where he has served as interim pastor since October 1986.

A native of Smackover, he is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Harrison other pastorates have included Parkview Church in El Dorado and First Church, Tillar. He is married to the former Donna Mason of Norphlet. They have three children, Laurie, Larry, and Lane. The Harrisons will reside in Norphlet and will continue to operate Harrison's Christian Book Store in El Dorado.



Jeff Cheatham Sr. of Eudora died Dec. 14 at age 82 following a lengthy illness. His funeral services were held at Northside Church in Eudora, where he was a charter member and a deacon and had served as a Sunday School teacher for more than 40 years. A retired pharmacist, he had served on the ABSC Executive Board and worked actively with the Brotherhood Department in lay evangelism crusades in both the United States and foreign countries. Survivors include two sons, Charles Cheatham of Searcy and J.P. Cheatham of Russellville, director of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association; eight grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Jimmy D. Fritchard resigned as pastor of Elliott Church, Camden, Jan. 3 to serve as pastor of Congress Avenue Church in Austin, Texas.

Don Harper is serving as pastor of Uniontown Church. He also has pastored other Arkansas churches, as well as in Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, Illinois, and Michigan. Harper attended Grand Canyon College in Phoenix, Ariz., Ouachita Baptist University, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Rita, have two adult children, Debra, in North Carolina, and Dewey in Springdale.

Roger Robins is serving as pastor of Hydrick Church, Cherry Valley.

Douglas Wilson is serving as pastor of Barton Chapel, Tyroneza.

Johnny Green is serving as interim pastor of Fitzgerald Church at Wynne.

Doug Turner has resigned as minister of youth and activities at Elmdale Church, Springdale, to attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Roy Cook has resigned as minister to senior adults and church activities at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock, effective Jan. 20. He has accepted a call to join the staff of First Church in Houma, La., as family life minister.

Martin H. "Marty" Deere of Plainview, the five-year-old son of Rev. and Mrs. Tom M. Deere, died Dec. 20. His funeral services were held Dec. 23 at Plainview First Church where his father serves as pastor. Other survivors are his grandparents, Coye L. Deere of Hot Springs, and Mr. and Mrs. Louis Tremblay of Freemont, Calif. Memorials may be made to Plainview First Church.

Ray Branscum has resigned as pastor of Holly Springs Church, Little Rock.

Marty Gibson of Searcy is serving as pastor of Thornburg Church, Perryville.

Rev. and Mrs. William Piercy were honored with a reception Nov. 29 by First Church, Manila, in recognition of his 15 years of service as pastor. He was presented a gift certificate for a new suit, and she was presented a gift of money. Piercy also has pastored other Arkansas and Kentucky churches. He is a native of the Childress Community north of Monette, and she is a native of Marked Tree. They have four children.

Rick Whitaker resigned Jan. 3 as minister of activities and administration at Harrison First Church to assume the position of minister of education and administration at First Church, Duncan, Okla.

Curtis W. Coleman has accepted an invitation to conduct an intensive evangelistic crusade in metropolitan Manila (Philippines) Nov. 6-9. A feature of the crusade will be a nationwide pastor's conference to help equip local church leaders for a follow-up effort Nov. 13-20. Coleman, president of the Curtis Coleman Evangelistic Association in Little Rock, is a member of Geyer Springs First Church there.

Johnna Coates, Kenneth E. Poague, Debbie Davidson, and Jon Self have been selected for the 1988 edition of *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges*. The four are students at Southern Baptist College.

Your invitation to . . .

The 1988 Baptist Doctrine Study Preview

The Doctrine of the Priesthood of Believers

Leader



Dr. William Stephens
Curriculum Coordinator
Church Training Dept.
BSSB

Monday, Jan. 25, 1988

in conjunction with the
State Evangelism Conference
Geyer Springs Church Little Rock

- Preview study immediately following the Monday afternoon session
- Evening meal to be served by host church

Cost: \$8 per person

includes registration, meal, and a copy of the book

Reservations deadline Friday, Jan. 22, 1988

Sponsored by
The Church Training Department
Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Chris Cupples is serving Amity Church as interim children's worship director.

John Welch has resigned as minister of music and youth at First Church, Mena, effective Jan. 17 to continue his studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

L.A. Sparkman was honored Jan. 3 by First Church, Crossett, for 10 years of service as pastor, during which time he has led in the organization of a senior adult ministry, a mother's day out ministry, the completion of an activities building, the remodeling of a parlor, and the increase of both Cooperative Program and associational missions giving. Sparkman currently is serving on the ABSC Executive Board and as a trustee of the SBC Stewardship Commission.

Mason Craig retired as pastor of First Church, McGehee, Dec. 31 following more than 28 years of service. The church presented him with a money tree at a retirement reception Jan. 10.

Stan Lee resigned as minister of youth at First Church, Jacksonville, Dec. 27 to join the staff of Gardendale Church in Corpus Christi, Texas.

William B. Gossett of Paragould died Dec. 23 at age 78. A retired Southern Baptist minister, he had pastored Paragould Mount Zion and Joiner Churches. Survivors are his wife, Esther Gossett; a daughter, Glenda McNew of St. Louis; two sisters, Mabel Woodriddle of Marmaduke, and Irene Lybarger of Chester, Ill.; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Briefly

Watson Chapel Church at Pine Bluff observed Anita Rushin Day Dec. 13 in recognition of her 20 years of service as both financial secretary and secretary to the pastor.

Sherrwood First Church hosted a luncheon Dec. 10 for 96 residents of three retirements homes: Bowker House, Heritage House, and the Willow House. Bratton Rhoades, who preaches in these homes each Sunday, coordinated the outreach ministry with eight other members assisting in serving the meal. Pastor Mickey Anders read Scripture and led in prayer, and the program was a slide presentation shown by John Paul Moccia on the church's involvement in the Manaus, Brazil, crusade. North Little Rock churches

providing transportation for the Christmas luncheon were **Levy and Highway**.

Bentonville First Church dedicated carillon bells and chimes at the close of its 11 a.m. service Dec. 20.

Eagle Heights Church in Harrison ordained Harold McEntire to the deacon ministry Dec. 6. L.B. Atchison, director of missions for North Arkansas Association, directed the service and delivered the ordination message. Stanton Cram is pastor.

Jonesboro Central Church ordained Tom Bishop, Tracy Clayton, Doffie Jarvis, Swain Simms, and Tony Weston to the deacon ministry Jan. 3. Pastor Rex Holt Jr. moderated the service.

Amboy Church in North Little Rock received \$2,649.50 for its 1987 Lottie Moon Foreign Missions offering, exceeding its goal of \$2,500.

Shepherd Hill Church in Pine Bluff ordained Austin Dwyer to the deacon ministry Dec. 13. Pastor Tommy Monk delivered the charge. T.M. Byrd, chairman of deacons, moderated the service and presented the ordination certificate. The church's Brotherhood has begun a tape ministry for shut-ins with Russell Puckett, associate pastor, serving as director.

Charity Mission in east Little Rock celebrated its first anniversary Dec. 13 with a service that featured Paul Williams, pastor of Greater Grace Church, Floyd Tidsworth, Arkansas Baptist State Convention church extension director, and Glenn E. Hickey, director of missions for Pulaski Association, as speakers. In its annual report the congregation reported 20 professions of faith with eight baptisms.

Pinnacle Mission in Little Rock held its first Sunday services Jan. 10 with Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. and morning worship at 10:30 a.m. The mission, primarily sponsored by Little Rock Calvary Church, is presently conducting Bible study classes each Thursday at 7 p.m.

Park Hill Church in North Little Rock held an ordination service Jan. 10 to ordain Bobby Shows, director of activities, to the ministry and to ordain Denzal Beall, Lee Davidson, Jim Howell, Jim Byrd, Jim Lancaster, and Phil Tacker to the deacon ministry.

Sulphur City Church at Fayetteville recently observed Buster and Margaret Price Day in recognition of their many years of service with guests from Colorado, Kansas, Montana, and Arkansas participating.

More Than Words

Lawson Hatfield believes strengthening missions should be more than just a phrase.

Hatfield, immediate past president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, recalls the state convention annual meeting last November in Fort Smith, a meeting which took "Strengthening Missions" as its theme.

"Many have expressed to me that the convention was of unusual inspiration to them," said Hatfield, who retired in June 1987 as pastor of Fordyce First Church. "A strong sense of unity pervaded the convention. The theme of 'Strengthening Missions' became more than a phrase. It became the spirit of the total program. From gavel to gavel, the foundation of bold preaching, increased giving, education, cooperation, and personal commitment was built 'line upon line, precept upon precept.'"

Hatfield noted that strong sermons by ABSC Executive Director Don Moore, Fort Smith Pastor Trueman Moore, and Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks worked well with the Bible studies presented by D.L. Lowrie, director of the State Missions Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Combined with presentations on Church Arkansas and Missions Advance 1987-89, the program elements served to bring the cause of world missions to life for the messengers, Hatfield said.

Hatfield offered two suggestions to help churches strengthen their support of Southern Baptist missions at home and abroad.

First, congregations should commit themselves to increasing their annual gifts through the Cooperative Program by one-half of one percent. Doing this annually until a "worthy percentage" is reached would be both practical and joyful, he said.

He also suggested each congregation set as a priority the enlargement of the church's ministry programs: Sunday School, Church Training, Brotherhood, Woman's Missionary Union, and music. In addition, more daily prayer, Bible reading, and witnessing also would strengthen missions, Hatfield said.

"Those of us who have been here awhile look with keen anticipation and expectancy on the new young and fresh faces of many pastors and members in the state," he added. "While the torch of leadership never belongs to any one age group, we pray for and joyfully expect great things from God as new leaders attempt great things for God. May God truly bless Cary Heard and his team of co-workers to whom the torch of leadership is committed."

FOR THIRD YEAR

New Heights Reached

For the third straight year, "Joy Explo," the annual Arkansas state youth evangelism conference has shattered records of previous years.

The most recent conference, held Dec. 28-29, 1987, at the Hot Springs Convention Center, registered 3,405 persons, an increase of 1,000 over the previous year. The record attendance was set despite snow, sleet, and heavy rains preceding the event.

The two-day meeting also more than doubled last year's number of recorded decisions, according to event coordinator Jim Lagrone. Of the 550 decisions recorded in Hot Springs, 66 were professions of faith and 58 were commitments to full-time Christian service. The 1986 convention recorded about 250 decisions.

Running under the banner, "Unlimited Guarantee," the program featured Jerry Johnston of Kansas City, Kan., and Jay Strack of Fort Myers, Fla. Other program features included a first-ever, 85-voice All-State Youth Choir, All-State Band, Christian comedians Phil and Russ of Fort Worth, Texas, Christian recording artists Harbor of Nashville, Tenn., and Jerry Pipes of Jackson, Miss.

Joy Explo is sponsored annually by the ABCS Evangelism Department to inspire and motivate junior and senior high youth to live as Christian witnesses on campus.

ACTS To Air Special

Highlights of the Joy Explo Youth Evangelism Conference will be aired the week of Jan. 18 on Arkansas affiliates of the American Christian Television System.

The one-hour program, produced by Little Rocks ACTS, will feature a sermon by Jerry Johnston and include music by Harbor and interviews with youngsters attending the meeting.

The program also will include an invitation for the television audience to call on-scene local church telephone numbers. Volunteers will man phone banks to assist individuals responding to the invitation.

The Little Rock ACTS affiliate will broadcast the program Monday, Jan. 18, at 9 p.m. and Friday, Jan. 15, at 11:30 p.m. For information regarding other affiliate broadcasts, contact the local ACTS station.

Seminary Studies Spring Term

Three courses will be offered in the Little Rock Seminary Studies Program when the spring semester begins on Feb. 22. All classes will meet each Monday through May 9 at Immanuel Church, Little Rock.

Sects in America, taught by James C. Browning, regional director of interfaith witness for the SBC Home Mission Board, will meet at 10 a.m. Educational Planning, taught by Bob I. Johnson, associate professor of religious education at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., will meet at 2 p.m. New Testament Studies: Acts and Pauline Epistles, taught by S. Cary Heard, pastor of Park Hill Church, North Little Rock, will meet at 6 p.m.

For more information, contact Lehman Webb, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791. Application deadline is Feb. 8.

Advance Cited

NASHVILLE—The Arkansas Baptist State Convention Church Training Department received an award recently for the largest increase in 1986-87 Church Training leadership awards.

The honor, recognizing an increase of 265 leadership awards, was announced during annual December planning meetings at the Sunday School Board.

Robert Holley is director of the ABCS Church Training Department.

Classifieds

Buses—New and used Champion buses. Call American Transcoach, Inc., 1-800-367-4845 1/14

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 85 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

Jobs Exchange

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

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 Newsmagazine, 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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ATTENTION: BAPTIST MEN

25 preachers needed for a church planting crusade in the Philippines April 5-19

How shall they go except they be sent?

This is a crucial effort to start churches from 250 Bible study groups. The opportunity and need is for groups of Arkansas Baptist Men to finance sending their pastors overseas for five days of evangelistic preaching and doctrine teaching. The cost will be approximately \$1,350. Contact the ABCS Brotherhood Dept., P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791.

Double Disaster

by Dan Martin

Baptist Press

WEST MEMPHIS, Ark. (BP)—Members of First Baptist Church of West Memphis, Ark., gave up Christmas Day with their families to minister to victims of the second part of a "double disaster" which hit the Mississippi River town in December.

About 16 or 18 inches of rain fell Christmas Eve, flooding sections of the town which had been badly damaged by a tornado which killed six persons, injured scores and left hundreds homeless Dec. 14. The Christmas flooding, complicated by the debris which clogged storm drains, left additional hundreds homeless, although no deaths were reported.

Tommy Hinson, pastor of First Baptist Church, said the flooding "was probably more disastrous than the tornado. The flooding was very deceptive since the water came up so rapidly in the night."

Hinson, also a member of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, added he is in his 27th year as pastor of the church and has "never seen anything to compare with this."

He was awakened at 3 a.m. Christmas Day by a telephone call from two church members who wanted to know if the Family Life Center could be opened to house people being forced from their homes by the rising waters.

"I told them I could have it open in 15 minutes," Hinson related. "Just as I got there and got the lights turned on, a fire truck drove up and wanted to know if we were receiving people. I told them to bring them on."

He said he called one of his deacons—a farmer—to ask if the man could use his farm vehicles to help rescue people from the waters.

"He asked me what I was doing calling him so early Christmas morning," Hinson said. "I told him the water was rising rapidly. He asked, 'What water?' but when he put his feet down, he stuck them into water which had flooded his bedroom."

He also told of the nurse who came early Christmas morning to help people with medical problems. "She told me it was her finest Christmas, even if she had not been able to spend it with her small children because she was doing what she had been trained to do."

Hinson said the church was manned by at least six people from the church, who spent Christmas Day and the five days following "monitoring, assisting, counseling and doing personal work. We know of at least six people who made professions of faith in Jesus Christ."

The pastor said many people have asked why the double disaster hit West Memphis. "I told them there is always the why, but I tried to turn the question around and tell them we are not God and that our response should be more a response of how rather than why; how we can help those who are in the midst of a tragedy."

Hinson added: "I am grateful God gave us the privilege of doing this."

He said the church provided food, in cooperation with the Red Cross, and has received the promise of aid—money, dried food, blankets and Bibles—from Operation Blessing, an arm of the 700 Club. "The folks who raise funds for television ministries have been made to look pretty bad (this year), but they have put about \$30,000 into this (relief efforts)," Hinson said.

He added the effects of the tornado and flooding will be felt in West Memphis for months to come. "Probably the flooding was even more devastating than the tornado," he said, "because most of the folks had insurance for the tornado, but not for the flooding. 'There is a need for a long-term recovery,'" he said.

Hinson said Baptist churches who wish to help can best provide aid by sending money.

"The local Baptist pastors, with the assistance of the associational director of missions, have committed themselves to administering the funds of churches who wish to send contributions. People who wish to contribute can send funds to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1835, West Memphis, Ark. 72301 and carefully mark the envelopes 'Disaster Funds,'" Hinson said.

Crusade Campaign Launched

Arkansas will be the site of a Billy Graham crusade this spring, if the efforts of a group of businessmen, clergy, and political leaders have their way.

The initial efforts of the recently-organized committee will be concentrated on "letting Dr. Graham know in a big, big way how much Arkansans want him to come to our state," said Jimmy Karam, a Little Rock businessman and coordinator of the committee.

To convince Graham to select Little Rock out of his hundreds of other requests, the group hopes to hand deliver thousands of personal letters from Christians across the state, Karam explained. Toward that end, the group is conducting an extensive campaign to secure letters expressing support for such a crusade.

Karam stressed that success would depend on "tremendous public support" and urged Arkansans who "believe our state would benefit" from a crusade to write.

Letters of support should be mailed to Karam immediately for delivery no later than the last week of January. The address is: Dr. Billy Graham, c/o Jimmy Karam, 609 Main Street, Little Rock, AR 72201.

Other individuals listed as members of the group's executive committee are Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, Senators Dale Bumpers and David Pryor, Congressman Tommy Robinson, W.O. Vaught, emeritus pastor of Little Rock Immanuel Church, and Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

SBC Names Vice-President

Southern Baptist College at Walnut Ridge has named a new vice-president for development.

Lloyd G. "Rusty" Ratliff is an Arkansas native and a graduate of the University of the Ozarks, Clarksville. He has had experience in accounting, insurance, financial and estate planning, and securities. He has done graduate work at Wichita State University and Texas Christian University. He is the author of *Direct Budgeting Within the Parameters of PERT/Cost, Small Business Start-Up Package*, and numerous articles on financial planning and management.

Ratliff's wife, Elaine, is secretary for Little Red River Association in Heber Springs. They have two sons, Allan, a law student at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and David, a freshman at Heber Springs High School. They are members of Heber Springs First Church.

We can't keep the lid on this a minute longer!!

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North Little Rock

Bar-B-Q Lunch: \$4.00
Special Guest
Karl Bozeman
Brotherhood Commission

For registration contact
the State Brotherhood Office

More On Manaus

MANAUS, Brazil (BP)—Arkansas and Brazilian Baptists fell only 500 short of a prayed-for goal of 10,000 professions of faith in Christ in 10 days as they went about presenting the gospel to a whole city in Brazil in late fall.

Nearly 200 Arkansas laymen helped Brazilian Baptists hand out 250,000 to 300,000 New Testaments in Manaus in October and November, visited door to door, distributed the last of 3.5 million tracts, sang in schools, and preached in churches, parks and on a beach, said Jack Bledsoe, a trustee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board who reported on the effort during a December trustee committee meeting.

Missionary Notes

Emmett and La Nell Barnes, Baptist representatives living in Cyprus, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 681 N. Perkins, Memphis, TN 38122). They served in Lebanon until all missionaries evacuated the country in early 1987. He is a native of Missouri. She is the former La Nell Taylor of Monnette. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1966.

Charles and Nancy Browning, Baptist representatives to Jordan, are the parents of Nancy Allison, born Dec. 15. They may be addressed at Box 1, Ajloun, Jordan. He is a native of Judsonia, and she is the former Nancy Woodward of Lonoke. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1983.

Harrison and June Pike, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: #11, Lavendon Circle Dr., Bella Vista, AR 72714). He is a native of Texarkana, and she is the former June Summers of Fort Smith. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1956.

Greg and Sue Smith, missionaries to Costa Rica, have arrived on the field to begin language study (address: Apartado 100, 2350 San Francisco de los Rios, San Jose, Costa Rica). He is from Hot Springs. The former Ida Sue Nutt, she was born in Fordyce and considers Carthage her hometown. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1987.

Arkansas and Brazilian Baptists also conducted a three-night crusade in a soccer stadium with Brazil's best-known evangelist, Nilson Fanini, who is a Baptist.

Bledsoe said he tells young preachers in Arkansas, "If you're tired of preaching every Sunday and seeing people sit there and not responding to the invitation—if you're tired of going week after week, month after month without ever going to your baptistry, let us send you overseas, and you'll have people saved every time you preach."

He quoted missionary Luther Williams as saying that in 10 days Arkansas Baptists had advanced Baptist work in Manaus by 20 years.

"What thrilled me the most was the power of God's Word as you went in and sat down in someone's home," he said. Out of respect for the Bible, a man without a shirt excused himself and returned wearing a shirt when people witnessing to him began reading Scripture.

A group of men drinking beer on a Saturday afternoon put away their beer and empty cans when Baptists began witnessing and reading Scripture. Each of the men made a profession of faith in Christ, Bledsoe said.

"Their hearts are open, and they're hungry for the word of God," he said of Brazilians.

In the hotel where they were staying, laymen led the hotel manager to Christ. The manager then called together his staff. The laymen preached, and most of the staff members made professions of faith, Bledsoe said.

Arkansas vocalists and musicians with brass instruments performed on the beach near the hotel and drew a gathering of beach-goers. After a sermon, "many people were saved on the beach," said Glen Ennes, associate director of the church music department of the Arkansas Baptist Convention.

Ennes, who attended the night services in the stadium, said 4,000 people made professions of faith. Baptists "just were not prepared for the masses of people that came forward," he said.

The lieutenant governor of the state of Amazonas and the governor's bodyguard made professions of faith during the stadium services, Bledsoe said. Also, a colonel was lead to Christ, and the governor of Amazonas expressed an interest in the gospel while in the stadium, Ennes said.

The crusade marked the completion of a four-year partnership project between Brazil and Arkansas. Arkansas Baptists worked in construction projects as well as evangelism.

HMB Appoints Church Planters, Chaplain

Atlanta, GA (HMB)—The directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta appointed three Arkansans as missionaries.

Steve and Susan Holdaway will be church planter apprentices in Jefferson County, Mo.

Holdaway, 29, a native of Wichita, Kan., has served as a summer missionary for the Home Mission Board in Iowa. He is currently minister of youth/senior adults at First Church, DeQueen, Ark.

Holdaway holds degrees from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Mrs. Holdaway also holds a degree from Baylor University in Waco.

The Holdaways are jointly appointed by the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Home Mission Board.

Rebecca Lewis will be the director of chaplaincy ministries in Houston, Texas.

Lewis, a native of Dallas, Texas, previously served with First Southern Church in Bryant. She has also served as an assistant chaplain intern with the Tarrant Baptist Association in Fort Worth and currently serves as director of chaplaincy for the Houston Metro Ministries in Houston.

Lewis holds degrees from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

Lewis is jointly appointed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Home Mission Board.

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Members Polled

Referendum on Proposed Merger Possibly Illegal

by Dan Martin
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Amidst renewed controversy, ballots have been sent to members of the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission and SBC Public Affairs Committee asking whether they favor a merger between the two organizations.

The proposal for the merger came out of a meeting Dec. 12, between the three trustee officers of the CLC, the convention's Nashville-based moral concerns agency, and four members of the PAC, a standing committee which, under its program statement, relates to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington-based religious liberty/separation of church and state coalition of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada.

The talk between the two groups resulted in a proposal which would merge the assignment of the PAC into that of the CLC; expand the 31-member CLC board to include the 12 at-large PAC members; dissolve the PAC; ultimately sever ties between the Southern Baptist Convention and the BJCPA, and affirm cooperation with other Baptist denominations and other groups... and "strongly encourage the expanded CLC to work closely with the BJCPA whenever possible and advisable...."

On Oct. 6, 1987, the PAC voted 8-4 to request the SBC to "dissolve its institutional and financial ties" with the BJCPA and to allocate the \$485,200 designated for the work of the BJCPA to fund and staff the PAC "as an agency" of the SBC.

Prior to the Dec. 12 meeting, the CLC had not discussed the question of a merger, although the six members of the commission's executive committee had been informed of the Oct. 6 action.

On Dec. 28, a letter and copy of the proposal were mailed to each of the 18 members of the PAC by Harold C. Bennett, president-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee. The packet included a ballot on which the members were to vote whether or not they favor the merger plan. The card was to be returned to Bennett at the Executive Committee in Nashville.

Bennett, who is staff to the PAC, a standing committee, said he was sending the material to PAC members at the request of PAC Chairman Samuel T. Currin "for consideration and action."

On Dec. 22, the 31 members of the CLC were mailed a letter and copy of the proposal by Fred Lackey, pastor of First Baptist

Church of Athens, Ala., and chairman of the CLC. The packet included a card upon which CLC members were to register their vote, with instructions the card be returned to Lackey at his church.

Almost immediately, controversy erupted anew:

— N. Larry Baker, executive director of the CLC, expressed his "dismay at this action" and called on Lackey "to halt this improper and illegal course of action." He also said the action taken by the officers "contradicts and violates the commission's bylaws."

The course of action was one taken independently of me, one that was taken without my consultation, input or counsel." Baker wrote to Lackey. "I did not receive a copy of the letter to the commissioners but learned of it through phone calls from other commissioners."

— Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and an ex officio member of the PAC, protested the merger talks in a letter to PAC Chairman Sam Currin of Raleigh, N.C., which was circulated to all of the members of the committee. Elder told Currin he wished "to register... my deepest concern that this conversation was held by members of the PAC without the knowledge of the total PAC...."

— The two immediate past chairmen of the CLC — Lynn P. Clayton of Alexandria, La., and Charles Wade of Arlington, Texas, immediately issued statements decrying the action of the officers and the poll of members.

Clayton, editor of the *Baptist Message*, newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said he finds the action "incredible," and added, "I think it is a tragedy that the commission responsible for moral and ethical concerns should be conducted in such an unethical manner."

He added: "Officers (of the CLC) as a body have no standing by themselves, according to the CLC bylaws. We do have an executive committee of six members, but apparently they haven't been involved in any of this." Clayton said the officers do not have the right to take any action.

Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church of Arlington, Texas, and chairman of the search committee that brought Baker to head the commission, said the CLC has responsibility for six areas and does not need "to take on religious liberty and church state issues, especially when we have this very able and respected BJCPA tending to those matters."

— The CLC's Nashville attorney, James P. Guenther, told Baptist Press the mail ballot may be illegal under the newly-enacted Tennessee Non-Profit Corporation Act: "Under the act, the commission can dispense with a meeting and vote on a matter by mail, but only if every member of the commission agrees to do so. My understanding is that there are some members of the commission who are not willing to deal with a matter of this substance by a mail ballot and therefore if even a single member of the CLC objects to a ballot by mail, it cannot be taken."

In his letter of Dec. 22, Lackey wrote to CLC members: "The chairman, vice chairman and secretary of the Christian Life Commission met with the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Executive Committee concerning bringing the Public Affairs Committee into the program assignment of the Christian Life Commission rather than their becoming a Southern Baptist Committee Agency (sic).

"This seems to be a very wise move, since it would save the Southern Baptist Convention thousands of dollars each year, better facilitate communication and eliminate any 'turf-battling' or overlapping of program assignment."

The proposal, which is included in Lackey's letter, includes a statement expressing appreciation to the SBC Executive Committee for its study of the relationship between the SBC and the BJCPA and says: "We therefore request that the Executive Committee of the SBC undertake a study of the possibility and advisability to:

"(1) expand the program statement of the CLC to include the current responsibilities of both the PAC of the SBC and the BJCPA. (2) Dissolve the PAC of the SBC. (3) Expand the trustee membership of the CLC by 12 at-large spaces to include as at-large members the then current members of the PAC of the SBC who would not be disqualified by virtue of being heads of other SBC agencies. (4) It is understood that the implementation of the above would dissolve formal organizational and financial ties with the BJCPA. (5) Affirm cooperation with other Baptist denominations and others of good will and strongly encourage the expanded CLC (especially through its expanded Washington office) to work closely with, and in concert when advisable and possible, with the BJCPA and others on religious liberty and church-state issues."

Lackey told Baptist Press the ballot "is a binding vote in that we are asking the members to vote whether or not they think that this would be a good route to suggest to the Executive Committee to take. We do not intend to go ahead of or to do the work of the Executive Committee. This is just to express to them the feelings of the CLC."

ECONOMIC STRAITS

Colorado Paper Suspended

DENVER (BP)—The Colorado Baptist General Convention has suspended publication of its 7,500-circulation, twice-monthly news publication, the *Rocky Mountain Baptist*.

In a letter to subscribers, Charles E. Sharp, editor of the paper and CBGC executive director, wrote: "It is with regret that we announce that the *Rocky Mountain Baptist* will no longer be published by the Colorado Baptist General Convention. The last issue will be Dec. 10, 1987. This is due to economic reverses. It is hoped that we will be able to resume publication in the future."

It is believed the suspension of publication of the *Rocky Mountain Baptist* is the first time a state convention newsjournal has ceased publication this century, although several of the state Baptist newspapers did reduce frequency of publication and size of the papers during the depression and war years.

The Colorado convention has been in economic difficulty since 1985, when two corporations of the CBGC—the Colorado Baptist Foundation and the Colorado Church Loan Corporation—suffered significant financial losses.

The two organizations were set up to raise money and then loan it to Southern Baptist churches in the state. The foundation began to experience losses as early as 1981 as a result of poor return on "over-the-counter" stock investments. The foundation assets were frozen in February 1985.

An audit in mid-1986 showed the losses of the foundation totaled \$1.2 million.

Since Sharp became executive in January of 1985, the convention has worked to pay off investors and bondholders. The convention has since eliminated several staff positions — including the newspaper's editor — cut back on the frequency of the newspaper, refinanced its office building, obtained a loan from the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board and consolidated its debts into a single loan.

When Don Turner, RMB editor, was terminated in early 1986, Sharp assumed the responsibilities of editing the newspaper, but cut it from a weekly to a semi-monthly.

Paying off the debt, Sharp said, "is something we had to do. We were committed. The Executive Board had voted and is still very positive we are going to pay those people back. We did not take bankruptcy, but decided to pay the people back. And, if we are paying it back, then we have to come up with the money somewhere."

He said 1988 marks the last year of the plan worked out to pay off the debt.

"We have been cutting back on a number

of things. Our Administrative Committee and Executive Board decided this (suspending the RMB) might be the way to go for a year or so," Sharp told Baptist Press.

He said the convention's business plan "mandates that our 1988 budget cannot be more than we gave during the previous year. We are doing pretty well, but we have lost some income. I have not gotten the final figures for 1987, but it looks like we will be pretty close to making the budget. But, we will not have any extra money for 1988. None of the staff got raises for 1988."

Sharp said the convention sold a building it had been renting, losing that income, and the final year of the payback plan will cost about \$20,000 more than last year. "The money had to come from somewhere, so something had to go."

In the 1987 annual meeting, messengers adopted a budget of \$2.4 million, of which \$1.2 million is to be contributed by the

churches of the state. The remainder primarily will come from the Home Mission Board and the Sunday School Board.

Sharp said the convention "is holding its own in the midst of economic difficulties in the state. We had a sharp downturn in the second or third quarter of 1987, but it seems to be coming back now." The *Rocky Mountain Baptist*, he said, cost about \$32,000 annually.

With the elimination of the paper, Sharp said about 2,500 pastors and church leaders will receive a monthly newsletter, *Colorado Baptist Leadership*, which includes promotional material as well as some state and national news. The leadership publication is done completely in-house, and will cost about \$18,000 annually.

"We have already been doing the leadership magazine. Rather than each individual department doing mailouts to the churches, they put their promotion pieces in this publication. We will have four to six pages a month and will include some news that is not so far out of date that it will not make sense to the readers," he said.

San Antonio Childcare Provisions

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)—San Antonio Baptists have begun preparing for children whose parents will participate in the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in the Texas city June 14-16.

Preschool child care will be provided at First Baptist Church, located downtown and within walking distance of San Antonio Convention Center, site of the annual meeting, and most downtown hotels. A missions day camp for grade-school children will be held at the Rube Community Center of Trinity Baptist Church.

Preschool care will be available to convention messengers' children who are five years old and younger. Parents may register their children by sending \$15 per child to SBC Preschool Care, First Baptist Church, 515 McCullough, San Antonio, Texas 78205.

Cost of the care will be \$7.50 for each four-hour session of the convention. The meeting includes three sessions Tuesday, June 14; two sessions Wednesday, June 15; and two sessions Thursday, June 16.

When their registration fees are received, the children's parents will receive information packets containing maps, health forms, and policies and procedures. The packets also will provide information about special parking for parents of children who participate in the program.

A new feature of the preschool program will be a noon meal for parents,

which will be served at First Baptist's fellowship hall, said Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist. The meal will be available for a nominal charge, he said, noting parents, not childcare workers, will be responsible for feeding the children.

The missions day camp will accommodate school-age children through the sixth grade. "Jesus Calls for Change" will be the theme of the camp, and children will study the 1988 Backyard Bible Club material prepared by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Other activities will include sports and crafts, recreation and a visit to San Antonio's zoo.

Day camp registration will be conducted in the convention center at a booth in the area where parents will register as convention messengers.

Sponsors of the day camp are the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Texas Baptist Men and San Antonio Baptist Association. Childhood education and activities/recreation staff members from Trinity Baptist will staff the camp.

Camp fees will be \$7 per day. Supplemented by the Brotherhood Commission, the fees will cover all camp expenses, including meals and snacks.

Preschoolers will be allowed into the convention center at all times when accompanied by their parents, Hedquist said. Daycampers will be allowed into the center during the annual meeting's evening sessions.

Convention Uniform

Learning to Love

by Bill Bowen, First Church, Mena

Basic passage: Matthew 7:1-12

Focal passage: Matthew 7:7-12

Central truth: Our love for others is based on God's love for us.

Two of the greatest truths expressed in the Bible are that God is our Father and that in Christ we are brothers and sisters. This family relationship we share with each other makes life much more happy and fulfilling because it is based upon the love God gives us.

As Jesus comes to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, he contrasts man's level of righteousness, which is found in the law of the Pharisees, with God's level of righteousness. God's level of righteousness is found in verse 12, commonly referred to as the Golden Rule. Jesus is telling us giving love will characterize a Christian.

In our passage we find Jesus contrasts a negative and positive side of love. The negative, things we should not do, is found in verses 1-6. The positive, things we should do, is found in verses 7-12.

Unfortunately, many times man's definition of love is only negative. We tend to measure our love by what we do not do to people. Jesus adds that extra dimension of positively doing things for people to demonstrate our love.

Sometimes it seems that some people are unlovable. It is difficult for us to be around them and demonstrate love toward them. In spite of an unlovable nature, still we are to do good to them and express the love of Christ. Unregenerate man is incapable of loving in the fashion Jesus describes in this passage. There must be a dynamic inside of a person to truly fulfill the Golden Rule stated by Jesus in verse 12. That dynamic is the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22 states that one of the fruits of the Spirit is love.

In verses 7-8, Jesus tells us that dynamic is achieved through prayer. Asking, seeking, and knocking are three words that show intensity in prayer. 1 John 3:22 adds that asking and receiving involves obedience to Christ. As our prayer life intensifies, we become more burdened for needs and more obedient to Christ.

Through our obedience to Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we stop a critical spirit, ask for those things that are essential to our lives, and demonstrate love to all men.

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Life and Work

No Substitute Gods

by Johnny Ross, Calvary Church, Batesville

Basic passage: Exodus 20:4-6; Isaiah 44:9-10; Romans 1:21-25

Focal passage: Exodus 20:4-6; Romans 1:23-25

Central truth: No substitute can adequately replace God as the object of man's worship.

The second commandment explains and expands upon the first. It teaches that the Creator God not only desires worship from his created beings, but also that he does not permit them to worship substitutes.

Mankind was created with a disposition of worship, and whether or not one realizes this innate compulsion, one nevertheless will always find some object to worship.

This commandment teaches that no image or likeness, either material or immaterial, can be substituted for the real thing. It further points out that Jehovah is a God of both justice and mercy: Being a jealous God, he will not excuse those who worship substitutes; but since he is also a merciful God, he loves and forgives those who correctly worship him and keep his commandments.

The basic problem with fallen mankind is his tendency to choose substitutes for almighty God. The New Testament affirms that all people know about God, either intellectually or by the natural laws of the universe; but they do not always glorify him as God. Instead, one is prone to let one's imaginations darken one's foolish heart and create for oneself images, objects, or ideals which suit his fallen nature. Romans 1:23 paints a picture of sinful man as exchanging God's glory for his own corruption in the form of figures of men, birds, beasts, snakes, and such likenesses.

God's response to such idol worship is to give such persons over to their own corruption (vv. 24-25). He has spoken authoritatively and consistently and will reject those who try to alter his plan. But since he is a God of love and mercy, he has provided an alternative for those who will repent and return to worship him through faith in Jesus Christ.

Instead of concentrating on temporal, material things which will perish with this world, the reader is encouraged to dwell on permanent, eternal blessings which only God can give.

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Bible Book

When God Opens Heaven

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

Basic passage: Genesis 27:46-36:43

Focal passage: Genesis 28:11-22

Central truth: God opens his heaven to us when we open our hearts to him.

Every child of God has a point in his or her life when God is encountered personally for the first time. Other special times arise in one's spiritual history which are high points indeed. But they would not be possible were it not for that first personal encounter with God.

Jacob's first personal experience with God took place near a little rural village named Luz. So life-changing was Jacob's first meeting with God that Jacob gave the place a new name: Bethel, "house of God." Although Jacob's name did not change until much later, Jacob's attitude changed at Bethel. God opened heaven to Jacob and God opened his heart to God.

The certainty of God's presence, even in the midst of a dream, gripped Jacob's very soul. He made an altar out of the stone on which he had laid his head. A pillow literally became a pillar. When Jacob awoke it was a new day in a place with a new name for a man with a new commitment. The simple vow which Jacob made to God, based on the simple promise that God had made to Jacob, expressed a commitment common between God and a believing man to whom God has revealed himself. God promised to be with Jacob, to keep him safely, to give him bread and clothing, and to restore his family in peace. Jacob promised to make Jehovah his God and seal it with a lifetime of tithing. Jacob's vow lifts tithing out of the financial realm and places it in the spiritual realm where it belongs. When God opens heaven to a man, a man must open his heart to God. Jacob did. Will you?

J.M. Kraft, the great cheese magnate, found his Bethel under a broken-down cheese wagon. On the threshold of despair, Kraft saw more than a broken axle underneath that wagon. He saw God, God's promise, and God's plan. He promised God a tithe of all the cheese that he sold. The Kingdom of God and Kraft's Northshore Church in Chicago experienced the fulfillment of Kraft's vow as he experienced the fulfillment of God's promise. That's what happens when heaven and a heart open at the same time.

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WORLD

Visas Granted

by Art Toalston

Foreign Mission Board

CARACAS, Venezuela (BP)—For the first time in a year, the Venezuelan government has granted visas to Southern Baptist missionaries.

The Venezuelan government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved visas for three Southern Baptist couples Dec. 18 and for a fourth couple Dec. 21. A fifth couple's visa request still is pending.

"Specific, united, continuing prayer" helped open doors, said Betty Law, associate area director of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board work in Spanish South America. The eight missionaries and their children will move to Venezuela as soon as possible.

The missionaries will join 78 other Southern Baptist workers in Venezuela "at a time of advance and great opportunity," Law said. They will work with the 10,000-member National Baptist Convention of Venezuela, which has adopted a 1-million-member goal for the year 2000. The eight missionaries were among personnel requested by the convention to assist in the campaign.

Two missionaries still waiting for visas are Bill and Kathy Cashion, both of Slater, S.C. They have remained in Costa Rica since finishing language school in San Jose in December 1986. Cashion has worked in Nicaraguan refugee settlements just inside the Costa Rican border. He started by organizing baseball teams for youths. Later came Bible studies and baptismal services. The Cashions are hoping to do church development work in Caracas.

During the year-long drought in visas, three couples were reassigned to work in Chile. The Foreign Mission Board's prayer office first reported the prayer concern in January 1987. The Tennessee Baptist Convention, which had been in a partnership with Venezuelan Baptists, called for a special day of prayer Aug. 6. FMB President R. Keith Parks also had noted the need for visas to Venezuela as a priority concern the first Sunday in August for the concerts of prayer in churches across the Southern Baptist Convention.

The four couples who received visa approvals finished language school several months after the Cashions.

Butch and Pam Strickland finished in April and have been waiting in Palmer, Alaska, for word about their visas. Strickland is from Dimmitt, Texas, and his wife is from Anchorage, Alaska. They are assigned to church development work in Maracaibo.

Paul and Robin Tinley finished language school in August and worked in Costa Rica

until their visas there expired at the end of November. Both consider Guadalajara, Mexico, to be their hometown. He is the son of Presbyterian missionaries, and she, the former Robin White, is the daughter of Southern Baptist missionaries to Mexico. They are assigned to church development work on Margarita Island.

Steve and Jan Lyon, both of Houston, finished language school in August. Until their visas expired in mid-November, Lyon had taught at the Baptist Center for Theological Education in Costa Rica. In Venezuela, he will join the faculty of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Los Teques.

Dickie and Dee Nelson finished language school in August and have been waiting in Slidell, La. Nelson is from Slidell and his wife is from Chickamauga, Ga. They are assigned to church development work in Barinas.

Two Arkansans Appointed

Two Arkansans were among 42 young adults approved for training as journeymen by the Foreign Mission Board during its December meeting in Richmond, Va.

Vince Everhart is a 1984 graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia. He most recently was employed at the YMCA in Midwest City, Okla., and is a member of Country Estates Church there. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack D. Everhart, missionaries to South Korea. He has been assigned as a basketball coach in Blantyre, Malawi.

Lisa Zeigler is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fay Zeigler of Yellville, where she is currently residing. She is a member of Yellville First Church. She attended North Arkansas Community College in Harrison and is a graduate of Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Goodwell. She has been assigned as a student worker in Lusaka, Zambia.

One Killed, Two Hurt

BARRANQUILLA, Colombia (BP)—A Colombian Baptist woman was killed and two missionaries injured Jan. 4 in an accident outside of Barranquilla, Colombia.

Betty Lemos, a mother of four children, was killed. Missionary nurse Jeni Hester suffered a fractured pelvis. Another Kay Brown received a concussion and was disoriented.