February 18, 1988
Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas Baptist
February 18, 1988

Another Option
Football Service
A Winner

DALLAS (BP)—It was Super Bowl Sunday at Second Baptist Church in Houston. Pastor Ed Young knew attendance at the evening worship service would be down. He was set for a low turnout. But with just seconds left on the clock he decided to hit the ball to two other team members, asking them to find a way to offset low attendance.

They took the idea and ran with it.

Associate Pastor Ed Young Jr. and Family Life Minister Lee Maxey decided they shouldn’t penalize church members by asking them to miss the game or watch it on taped delay. Instead, they chose to show the game live on a 20-by 15-foot television screen and to incorporate their evening worship service into the halftime break.

"If sports bars can do it, the church should do it and put the gospel into it," said Associate Pastor Young.

During the halftime worship service, he brought an evangelistic message urging listeners to accept the Bible as their "playbook."

Although the Sunday evening crowd of 1,200 was less than the usual attendance of about 3,500, the unusual approach did prove to be an effective vehicle for outreach. "It brought in so many prospects," he said, pointing to more than 200 visitors' cards that were completed. "We reached out to a lot of non-Christian folks.

Democracy is based on the premise of inner discipline, while dictatorship is based on the premise of outer discipline.

Discipline is achieved by concentration.

When Gladstone was asked the secret of his success, he replied in one word: "Concentration."

You cannot do everything well! If you want to be a champion, you must determine priorities, set goals, and give yourself without reservation to attaining them.

A champion is willing to sacrifice.

Being a winner is costly; it involves sacrifice. Paul disciplined his body (1 Co. 9:27). He disciplined himself to loneliness (2 Ti. 4:16), to scorn (1 Co. 4:10), to poverty (see Ph. 4:12), to suffering (2 Co. 4:9), and finally to death (1 Co. 15:31). This is part of the secret.

And here is the conclusion of it. "I press toward the mark" (Ph. 3:14). Paul never quit. One of the last addresses Winston Churchill ever gave was to his alma mater. His entire speech consisted of three words. He walked to the lectern, grasped each side of it, looked into the face of those students and said, "Never, never quit!"

Unprecedented opportunity lies ahead. You can seize the opportunity. Take time. Discipline yourself. Be willing to sacrifice. You can be a champion!

A Solid Foundation

J. EVERETT SNEED

Editor's note: This guest editorial was written by Russell D. Harrington Jr., president of Baptist Medical System.

All of us are familiar with the story from the Gospel of Matthew that tells of two men who decided to build houses. One built his house on the sand. When the rains and winds came, his house could not withstand the storm, and it collapsed in ruins. The other man built his house upon a rock. When the rains and winds came, his house withstood the storm because it had been built on a solid foundation.

Much like the house referenced in the Bible, the health care industry is being rocked by the winds of changing times. Baptist Medical System is no exception. All of us are aware that hospitals are having difficulties. Many hospitals have been closed, including some in Arkansas. Federal reimbursement programs continue to adversely impact the financial base of those that are able to remain operational and new consumer attitudes are causing our industry to take a look at how we package, promote, and deliver our services.

As we at Baptist Medical System have sought effective responses to these winds of change, we have had to look no further than our mission statement and values to guide our every decision. The fact that our founders built our system on a solid rock almost 70 years ago has enabled us to remain on the leading edge of health care delivery in the 1980's.

It was in 1920 that the Arkansas Baptist State Hospital opened with a philosophy that the Christian attitude should be joined with science and technology given by God to mankind, as an instrument of health and healing. The intention was to place special emphasis on such values as service, honesty, respect, stewardship, and performance.

This same philosophy and values are just as important today as they were then, perhaps more so. Times, people, and the environment may change, but values should remain constant. Baptist Medical System was established on the sure foundation of Christian principles. In today's fast changing high-touch, high-tech health care environment, that foundation has been our fortress in the face of change and will be the catalyst that will allow us to remain on the leading edge of the delivery of compassionate, quality health care.

Three specific areas of vital interest to Baptist Medical System demand our attention. They include a changing population, changing health care trends, and changing resources.

First, the changing population. It is no secret that Arkansas is usually near the bottom of the economic ladder, and, in the past couple of years, our state has experienced an increase in the number of those who are medically indigent. The term "medically indigent" should be defined as not only those who are at poverty level, but also those who might have adequate incomes but have no medical insurance coverage. The impact of indigent health has definitely been felt within our state and within our system in recent years. It is also a well recognized fact that, second to Florida, Arkansas has the highest percentage of senior adults in the nation. This places an additional burden on our hospitals because of Medicare patients. In recent years, the federal government has provided us with only negligible increases for these patients. In fact since 1985, Medicare reimbursement rates have increased at a level approximately only one-third of the actual cost increase. Coupled with the fact that the average length of stay for Medicare patients has risen from 8.7 days to 9.7 days during this same period, it is understandable that we would be concerned as we watch our contractual writeoffs increase substantially every year.

We are also facing dramatic changing trends in health care. Our nation is more health care conscious and the consumer more sophisticated than at any time in history. Wellness is the new concern. Consumers, and especially women, want to play a greater role in the management decisions regarding their health care. To meet this change, we are now emphasizing more public education.

Last, but definitely not least, we want to look at changing resources. There is no doubt that in years to come, we must expand the capacity of existing capital assets through careful management of our financial resources and effective motivation and training of our human resource—our employees. At Baptist Medical System, we are proud of our employees and we value the contribution they make to our successful provision of patient care.

In the midst of these changes, a Christian foundation is necessary for Baptist Medical System to provide quality health care today and in the future. We are committed to this, and we covet your prayers.


Letters to the Editor

The Great Commission

This is from a prayer partner of the mission effort through 1989: the Commission of Ten, the Task Force of 100, and missionaries at home and abroad. What we choose to call the Great Commission is a direct commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's found in Matthew 28:19-20. It is understandable that we all can't go, but we can have a part, giving to those who can go. We also can pray. Look in Matthew 28:18. When we pray, we are calling on all the power in heaven and earth to bless and help them. Anyone who thinks that there is waste lets them out of giving and praying, had best check what Jesus says in Matthew 28:19-20.

Matthew 25:32-46 shows a scene that everyone should look at. We surely want to hear him say, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' You fed me, you clothed me, you gave me drink when I was thirsty, you visited me when I was sick, you came unto me when I was in prison. We will say, when did we do all this to you? Jesus will say in so much as you have done it to the least of these my brethren you have done it unto me! God grant that everyone that is called by his name will be found so doing when Jesus comes.—Vivian M. Stone,
Mayflower

Woman's Viewpoint

Freedoms

JANE JONES

In my last article I mentioned that my husband and I had traveled outside the United States this past summer. I have always known that I love America and am most proud of my heritage and country. This knowledge is even sweeter and dearer to me now. Even though all the people we met abroad were most gracious to us, some things were made known to us after we returned to the United States. The city of Taipei had been in a 'clean-up and beautification' thrust the month prior to our arrival.

Military police had been increased and were everywhere in great numbers. As I attempted to take a snapshot of one policeman, he put his hand in my face indicating "no picture." My heart skipped a beat, and I was sure I would be on my way to the local jail in a matter of minutes.

As one train passed in front of us, we noticed all the windows were raised on the last car and out each window were mounted machine guns. We were told that the government was fearful the opposing party might have an uprising while we were visitors in their country.

At the Seoul, Korea, airport, we were told not to take any pictures or our cameras would be confiscated. I shall never forget that airport scene with military police stationed with guns both inside and outside the terminal. Each entrance and exit was guarded. Police guarded each luggage and gasoline truck that loaded and serviced the planes.

As our plane flew back over the Pacific, I began to think of the many freedoms and everyday luxuries we have and enjoy here in the United States. A peace came over me as we landed on U.S. soil.

Do we appreciate all these freedoms? Do we appreciate safe drinking water from the faucets? Do we appreciate sanitation in our city streets? Do we appreciate a clean, bacteria-free napkin in restaurants? Do we thank God for our wonderful America? Do we thank God for the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion?

Yes, yes, and yes!

Jane Jones is an active member of First Church, Fayetteville. She is married and the mother of two grown sons.

A SMILE OR TWO

The little girl walked angrily away from two small boys. One of the boys muttered, "She broke our engagement. She returned my frog."
One Layman’s Opinion

An Acute Problem

One of the most alarming developments in the 1970s and 1980s has been the decline in the competitiveness of America’s industrial output. Its implications run far deeper than hurt national pride. The good things that America stands for throughout the world are weakened as our national influence is weakened.

A soon-to-be published book, entitled *Global Competitiveness: Getting the U.S. Back on Track*, reports what some 65 movers and shakers in American business and related fields believes is important in getting our nation back on track. I was surprised but pleased to find education at the top of their list of requisites for reversing America’s declining competitiveness.

Their summary report states that education is the single most critical element in enhancing the individual’s contribution to our society’s competitiveness. It concludes that continuously improving education must become a first priority.

The conference pointed to a particularly acute problem—our failure not only to produce students who are literate and mathematically able before leaving school, but our failure to equip students for an internationally interdependent world. What is to be done about this problem? It requires that we do a better job of teaching math, science, and language—not only our language, but foreign languages; it requires that we significantly upgrade teacher training, find better ways of encouraging students to become innovative and experimental, and teach engineering, science, and technology in such a way that the campus is effectively linked to the factory floor.

As impressive as it is, the report disappointed me in giving the subject of values only a token postscript. It rightly points out that our “standard of living” and our “standard of values” are inseparable. Yet I looked in vain for even a minority opinion that many of the problems of American education today are the result of its steady drift away from its Christian roots. A cut-flower morality for American education and American society would be tragic indeed.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.
FAITH AT WORK

FIRST PERSON

Missions-Minded Lady

by Irma Duke
SBC Foreign Mission Board

Ruby Coleman was never a missionary. She never went to college or seminary. But she's lived missions as much as any woman I know.

You see, she has been my missions leader from as early as I can remember. She led me through all of Paul's missionary journeys, through all the Scripture passages that had to be learned for Girls' Auxiliary steps. Over and over again, she rehearsed with me the names of the 54 countries where foreign missionaries served at the time (now more than 110). She helped me as we organized a Baptist Young Woman's organization.

She has been a Woman's Missionary Union leader in almost every church of which she's been a part; in many cases, she's taken groups that were all but dead and revived them. In Broadus Memorial Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., she's in her fourth term as WMU director and is currently also centennial chairman. Only four women were present at the first WMU meeting she attended at Broadus; interest and attendance was at an all time low. Under her leadership, Acteens and Baptist Young Women have been reorganized and two new GA and two new Mission Friends groups have been organized.

But even more than this—she's shown me her love for missions through her life. I've seen her go without pepper on her table because she was too expensive but then give to the Cooperative Program so that missionaries could have pepper. In her retiring years, I've seen her take birthday and Christmas monetary gifts and give them to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

When our church-sponsored Vietnamese family was awaiting a permanent home, she took them into her two-bedroom apartment. She not only shared her home with the non-English speaking family of five, including a month-old infant, but also showed the mother how to grocery shop, wash clothes, and begin to use English.

I saw her walk a 10-mile hunger walk with the youth of our church to raise money for the starving people in our homeland and overseas. In the group of 25 or so, she was the only senior citizen on that blustery day.

I've seen her get up from her sick bed to prepare meals for others who were sick or who had lost loved ones. On hot summer days she's ridden her three-wheel bicycle dozens of times the three-mile roundtrip to the grocery store. Many times, she's cooked far beyond what she's needed and made "TV dinners" for shut-ins around her.

She's spent hours on posters and audiovisuals for foreign mission studies and for WMU leadership conferences.

I've seen her study diligently for her Sunday School class. Then on Monday, begin preparation for the Bible study she started among her neighbors in the retirement complex where she lives. Several people from her neighborhood have become a part of our church, primarily because of her excitement about her faith.

She's gone to the hospital with persons going to the emergency room who had no one else to hold their hands. She's made phone calls and written letters for others who couldn't do it for themselves. She's organized all kinds of activities for her senior citizens' neighbors to get to know each other and get beyond the loneliness of their apartments.

Recently, I heard her introduced as one of the WMU ladies and I thought to myself, that was probably one of the highest compliments a person could pay her.

No, Ruby Coleman will never be listed on the missionary prayer calendar but she's my mother and one of the most missions-minded persons I know.

Ruby Coleman helps a neighbor.

Are you a world changer?

State Youth Convention
Friday, April 1, 1988
Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock
Sessions: 10 a.m., 2 p.m., 6 p.m.

Chester Swor
Jackson, Tenn.

Jeri Graham
Shawnee, Okla.

James Woodward
Shawnee, Okla.

For Junior and Senior High Youth
Sponsored by the ABSC Church Training Dept.

Staff Needed

Urgent need for Camden Receiving Home. Seeking resident manager and relief houseparent. Prefer mature Christian couple with no children living at home. Husbands can work outside the home. Address questions and interest to:

Earlene Clearman
Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services
P.O. Box 912
Hope, AR 71801
phone 501-777-1896.
Arkansas can be won for Christ, says Thomas Halsell.

One Heart’s Desire

by Mark Kelly
Managing Editor, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Arkansas can be won for Christ. It's not unrealistic at all, according to Thomas Halsell.

Just as the power of the Holy Spirit exploded in the lives of first-century Christians, Arkansas Baptists could be mightily used by God to reach their state for Christ, if only they would give themselves wholeheartedly to the task.

That was the message Halsell, retired executive director of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, delivered to participants in the Feb. 5 Mission Arkansas Rally at Park Hill Church, North Little Rock.

Halsell, a Little Rock native whose father, W.C. Halsell, started 21 churches in the state, preached the keynote address during the rally, which was planned to promote Church Arkansas, a 12-year plan to start 30 new churches each year before the year 2000.

Looking to the New Testament record of the early church, Halsell warned the assembly that today's congregations must not become, like the Jewish Temple was, "prisons of the gospel." The sole purpose of the church is to spread good news of redemption in Christ Jesus, he declared.

And when the power of God fell on those first "Christians," they began to boldly proclaim the gospel, Halsell observed. Laymen like Stephen and Philip witnessed to salvation in Christ, and when persecution scattered the church, they went everywhere preaching the Word.

"If you and I will do that, people will be saved," Halsell asserted. "If we all had one heart's desire, if we all had one all-embracing vision to see Arkansas saved, it would happen. It would happen in your community. It would happen in the next community. It would happen every time."

Halsell also noted that Jesus did not issue his Great Commission to the disciples in Jerusalem, but in Galilee. The commission was given to a people who had been freed of the shackles of Judaism so they could "cross every barrier and preach the gospel to all people everywhere," he said.

"Jesus said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' That majestic claim includes Arkansas," Halsell declared. "And when Jesus told his disciples to make disciples, they took him seriously and did it."

Arkansas Baptists need to take Jesus just as seriously and busy themselves with the task of starting new churches everywhere, he continued. "If we do what the Lord tells us to do, we will preach the gospel. That's the heart of the church."

Yet, the commission to make disciples of all the nations is not for everybody, Halsell cautioned.

"The cost of the Great Commission is so high, there's no mass appeal," he said to the congregation. "The Great Commission is for people like you, who have turned aside to be here tonight." And despite the fact that every Baptist in Arkansas was not in attendance, the persons present—empowered by God's Spirit—were plenty to reach the state "over and over again," Halsell said.

"Too many churches have said, 'We don't have enough people.' 'We don't have enough time.' 'We don't have enough money.' " Halsell concluded. "But God's grace is the only resource you need. God's grace is sufficient."

February 18, 1988
Dan Caldwell has resigned as pastor of Immanuel Church in Fayetteville following more than four years service. He has accepted a call to serve as pastor of First Church in Vian, Okla.

Mark K. Morris has resigned from the staff of Stuttgart First Church to serve as minister of music at Howard Carlisle Church in Panama City, Fla.

Bob Fielding of Newport is serving as bivocational pastor of Alicia Church. He is manager of a Newport restaurant and a student at Southern Baptist College.

Jeff Knowlton is serving as pastor of Cross Roads Church near Blytheville. He formerly served as pastor at Blackwater.

Oscar Coolbaugh is serving as full-time pastor at Old Union Church, Benton, coming there from Dalton, Penn. He has pastored churches for 29 years in Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Iowa.

Robert Parsley will begin serving March 6 as pastor of First Church, Dardanelle. He and his wife family will move there from Prescott, where he is serving as pastor of First Church.

Allen and Sherry Thrasher were named by Gov. Bill Clinton to represent the State of Arkansas Feb. 4 at the 36th annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. Thrasher serves as pastor of First Church, Booneville.

Danny Wilson recently observed his third anniversary as minister of youth at Blytheville First Church.

Larry Thomas is serving as pastor of Kibler Church, Van Buren. He received his seminary extension diploma through Dardanelle-Russellville Association and has attended Westark Community College, Garland County Community College, and Ouachita Baptist University. Thomas has pastored churches in Arkansas for 16 years. He and his wife, Patricia, have three children, James, 10; Jeremy, eight; and Rebekah, two.

Mike Harvison is serving Clarksville Second Church as part-time minister of youth, coming there from First Church in Kemmerer, Wyo.

Irby Bryan has resigned as pastor of Altus First Church.

Lee Bennett has resigned as pastor of Graphic Church, Alma.

Sam Hargrave is serving as pastor of York Town Church, Star City. He formerly pastored Bay Street Church in Pine Bluff and has served as associate pastor of Shepherd Hill Church, Pine Bluff. He and his wife, Pat, have two children.

Hiwasse First Church in Benton County Association will hold its first services Feb. 21. Workers, finances, and guidance are being provided for the new congregation by Bentonville First, Centerton, and Mason Valley churches, the sponsoring congregations.

Park Hill Church in North Little Rock has opened a home on “C” Street to provide additional educational space for single adults. The house also will be used as a hospitality center during major conferences and conventions. Youth of the church have planned a summer mission trip to Edmonton, Canada, where they will conduct a Vacation Bible School, backyard Bible clubs, a churchwide youth led revival, and sing Christian concerts.

Shepherd Hill Church at Pine Bluff will expand its ministry with a weekly “Mother’s Day Out” program that will be launched March 3 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Manila First Church hosted an evening reception Jan. 24, honoring Rev. and Mrs. Henry West prior to his retirement as director of missions for Mississippi County. West preached at the evening worship service, according to Pastor William Piercy.

Markham Street Church in Little Rock is observing “Heart-to-Heart” month with activities which include appreciation days honoring Sunday School workers, Woman’s Missionary Union and Royal Ambassador members, deacons, sanctuary choir members and music ministry workers. Visitations and a men’s cake baking contest will be included in the observance.

Gosnell Church will celebrate the Centennial Celebration of Woman’s Missionary Union Feb. 20-21 with activities which include a breakfast hosted by Pastor and Mrs. William P. Oakley; and recognition services for Woman’s Missionary Union leaders and members. Girls in Action, Acteens, and Baptist Women members will present a reception and program.

People

Alicia Church recently celebrated its debt-free status with a noteburning service. Participating were (left to right) Kemmel Eldridge, a deacon; Novene Rogers, treasurer; Oscar Woodard, Berlin Taylor; and Joe Whaley, deacons; and Ron Berry, interim pastor.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE
Sunday evening missions emphasis program. Pattie Oakley serves as WMU director, and LuAnn Yoast, BW president; Youth leaders are Lisa Bigland and Trish Jones, Acteens; Brenda Davis, Dorcia Lucius, Michelle Vaught, Shirley Middleton, Michelle Little, Brenda Davis, Melissa Williams, GA; and Gail Kemper, and Grace Haynie, Mission Friends.

**Mountain Home First Church** began its observance of the Centennial Celebration of Woman's Missionary Union when Marjorie McCullough, president of WMU, Southern Baptist Convention, was speaker Feb. 7.

**Beech Street First Church** in Texarkana will host a seminar on “Stress and the Christian Woman” Feb. 19-20. Elizabeth Baker of Mount Pleasant, Texas, will be leader.

**Monticello Second Church** will observe Baptist Men’s Day Feb. 28 to launch “Days of Renewal” that will continue until Easter. Carliss Odom of Little Rock will be speaker.

**Hamburg First Church** will honor Rev. and Mrs. Klois Hargis Feb. 28 at the morning worship service and with a noon luncheon. Hargis, who served as Hamburg pastor from 1965-73, is now pastor of Tillar Church.

**Baring Cross Church** in North Little Rock men assisted with construction work at the North Little Rock Union Rescue Mission Feb. 6.

**Little Rock Second Church** observed its 104th anniversary Feb. 7 by recognizing its Heritage Club members, those with a membership tenure of 50 years or more. New members receiving certificates were E.R. Guthrie, Hilton Pate, and Madge Richardson. Speaking on one of the church’s newest outreach ministries was D.M. Lewis, who serves as chaplain for Little Rock Central Fire Station.

**Cabot First Church** has planned special services Feb. 28-May 22 on “The Sufficiency of the Grace of God.” Areas of discussion will deal with overcoming obstacles, today’s youth, family crises, marriage, and raising children. Speakers will include B.J. Sams of Little Rock and Larry and Cheryl Linam of Pittsburgh, Texas. The final service on facing the future will include a special recognition of the high school graduating seniors. Del Medlin is pastor.

**South Side Chapel**, a mission of Alma First Church, began services Feb. 7. Tom Steward is serving as pastor, going there from the sponsoring church, where he served as minister of youth and activities.

**North Park Chapel**, a mission of Van Buren First, was constituted as a church Jan. 3. Ordained ministers and deacons from churches in Clear Creek Association formed the council. Those on program were Stanley Daniel, pastor of the sponsoring church; George Dorman, director of missions for Clear Creek Association; Lewis Ballard, Pastor Murl Walker, Mike Jones, music director; and Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

**Crystal Hill Church** in Little Rock will ordain Gary Alquist, Terry Bryant, Larry Carter, J.R. Dodson, Jeff Haley, Tommy Hammet, Donnie Holdcraft, Jimmy Ramsey, James Rogers, and Monroe Smith to the deacon ministry Feb. 28. Don Hook, a former pastor, will be speaker.

**Gum Springs Church** at Siloam Springs is sponsoring a Tuesday evening extension Sunday School class in the Robinson Community.

**Searcy First Church** recently observed the fifth anniversary of Sidney Jackson, minister of education and youth, with an old-fashioned pounding.


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Arkansas evangelist Jack Hazlewood and Little Rock businessman Shelley Gatright look over $250,000 worth of medical equipment and supplies shipped to Korea in January for the new Shin Heung Hospital and Retirement Center in Donghuchon, Korea. The Jack Hazlewood Evangelistic Association collected the equipment, donated by hospitals, doctors, and individuals in Arkansas and Tennessee, for the hospital, which was built with funding from the South Korean government. The hospital, scheduled to open Feb. 1, is reportedly the first retirement facility in the country, which has a strong tradition of families caring for their elderly persons.
### 1987 ABSC CONTRIBUTIONS

Total cash contributions through the Cooperative Program received in the office of the Executive Director of the Executive Board, from January 1, 1987, through December 31, 1987. If any errors are found in this report, please notify Don Moore, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203.

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Note: Total Pay = Hourly Rate * Total Hours + Total Tips
SBC Standstill

by Jim Lowry
Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist growth virtually ground to a halt in 1986-87 when denominational programs reported small changes and some conventionwide statistical areas had gains or totals smaller than have been seen in decades.

The denomination's missions organizations, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood, are the brightest spots, with increases of 1.4 and 0.7 percent, respectively, over the previous year's totals. The Southern Baptist Convention fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 to the following Sept. 30; the new statistics reflect the year ending Sept. 30, 1987.

Church membership, which has shown annual increases since 1926, recorded a gain of 109,203, or 0.7 percent, to reach a new total of 14,727,770, as compared to the 1986 total of 14,618,567.

The increase in church membership, however, is the lowest number by which Southern Baptists have grown since 1936, when the denomination gained almost 93,000 new members.

The number of churches in the convention increased by 170, or 0.5 percent, to a new total of 37,286. Except for 1985-86's smaller increase because of the loss of 40 Southern Baptist-affiliated churches in Canada, the 1986-87 total was the smallest increase in nine years.

Baptisms in Southern Baptist churches, down by 6.8 percent, to 24,629, totaled 338,495. Except for the baptisms total of 336,050 in 1977-78, the new baptisms total is the lowest for the convention since 1949. The all-time high for baptisms in the SBC was 445,725 in 1972.

The 1985-86 baptism total registered an increase over the previous total, but it had been preceded by three consecutive decreases. More than 7,000 churches did not report a baptism on their Uniform Church Letter survey forms for the 1986-87 church year.

The denomination's church music enrollment reflected the 22nd consecutive increase, with a gain of 0.8 percent, of 14,202, to a new total of 1,738,294. It followed an increase of 2.8 percent, or more than 46,000 participants.

The enrollment increase for Woman's Missionary Union of 1.4 percent, or 16,512, is the second consecutive increase, bringing that program's ongoing enrollment to 1,197,479. WMU enrollment has gone up more than 30,000 in the last two years.

Brotherhood, with an increase of 3,783, or 0.7 percent, reached a new total of 572,987. This increase follows an 0.8 percent loss.

Sunday school, the denomination's largest program, registered a change of 0.0 percent, with a small actual loss in ongoing enrollment of 1,867, bringing the total enrollment to 7,942,106. It marks the second consecutive loss for the denomination's Bible study program, after posting annual gains from 1980 through 1985.

Enrollment in church training also registered a change of 0.0 percent, because of a small actual loss of 408, bringing the total enrollment to 1,953,937. This follows three years of small declines, which were preceded by four consecutive increases. According to Martin Bradley, director of the research services department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board:

"Reporting procedures used by one state convention for church training resulted in inflated figures for 1986. Had this not occurred, the change for church training enrollment in the SBC in 1987 would likely have been positive."

Total receipts in Southern Baptist churches increased by 4.3 percent, or $176,109,005, to a new total of $4,293,683,245. The increase in total dollars given in Southern Baptist churches is 1.7 percentage points less than the previous year's gain of 6.0 percent.

Mission expenditures, which are included as part of total receipts, went up by 4.3 percent, or 27,313,943, to a new high of $662,691,289. The increase is almost one-half of a percentage point more than the previous gain of 4.0 percent.

The report was based on Uniform Church Letters from 36,674 churches.

January CP Reverses Trend

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptists contributed a record $15.5 million to their national Cooperative Program budget in January.

The big January total reversed a two-month downward trend in the Cooperative Program and brought the budget back ahead of the pace for the same period last year, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

The 15,514,367 January receipts topped the previous monthly total—a $13.1 million in January 1987—by 18.63 percent. Bennett said. It brought total receipts for the 1987-88 fiscal year to $45,650,004, or 3.55 percent ahead of the total for the first four months of last year's budget.

Cooperative Program total receipts had fallen to 2.81 percent behind the 1986-87 budget by the end of December. However, the strong January lifted the year-to-date total to within one percentage point of the current inflation rate, which is about 4.5 percent, said Tim A. Hedquist, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance.

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Easier To Pay Than Go

by Susan Todd
Woman's Missionary Union

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—All Southern Baptists agree that everyone needs Jesus. Southern Baptists also agree that everyone needs a church in which to worship.

But Southern Baptists aren't providing a church for everyone.

That's a problem that concerns home missionary Tom Blase. "Everyone believes we should be involved in missions. But it is easier to pull out a check for a missions offering than to go personally and be involved," he said. "Some churches lack the priorities. It takes a deeper commitment."

Jesus gave the mandate for personal involvement in the Great Commission, he said. The responsibility of sharing Christ and starting churches lies with every church, not a select few, he asserts.

Helping Southern Baptist churches see and accept this responsibility is what Tom Blase is all about.

While Blase was a seminary student at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., he pastored an inner-city church. "It was during that time, seeing the needs of the the inner city, that I saw the differences in people," he said. He realized that, despite their differences, they each needed Jesus.

"How we introduce people to Jesus is to meet them where they are," Blase said. But that inner-city church was not meeting people where they were. The members weren't reaching into all of the groups of people within their neighborhood. As the needs more sharply came into focus, Blase developed a desire to provide a church for everyone—from the down-and-outs to the well-to-do.

The inner city of Kansas City became, for Blase, a church starting training ground. That training has equipped him to do what he does today. He is church extension and language missions director for the St. Louis Metro Baptist Association.

"My role is one of a catalyst, a coordinator of beginning new work. I help to determine where new work is needed (in the St. Louis area) and then work with sponsoring churches to help them catch the vision. Some already have the vision but just need someone to help it become reality."

Making visions become reality is Blase's specialty. He has personally had a part in starting 10 new works in St. Louis during his four years with the association. Each group is in varying stages of development, from Bible studies to chapels to full-fledged churches.

Each new work begins as a Bible study. As its members grow and mature in the Christian faith, many of these groups eventually become churches.

Even though Blase speaks only English, he has worked with groups of Chinese, Koreans, Laotians, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Japanese, American Indians, Arabs and the deaf.

According to Blase, language is not the only barrier which must be overcome.

Planning for outreach.

Many times, a need is identified, but he is unable to find a church willing to sponsor a mission.

But frustrations reach beyond finding sponsoring churches, according to Blase. "One of the biggest (frustrations) is (knowing) God's timing. We can strategize on paper, but if it is not in God's time, it is not going to work."

Starting churches can be draining when things don't fall into place easily, Blase said. But as the responsibilities are spread among several people, the job becomes easier. "The key is getting the laity involved."

Those efforts work more smoothly when partnerships are established, Blase said. "The idea is that we don't start new churches at the expense of existing works." Churches working together can accomplish the task, he said.

"My prayer is that more churches would catch a vision to start new congregations — be it Anglo, black, whatever. I believe that just as we as Christians are called to multiply, churches are called to multiply."

A Church for Everyone
Week of Prayer for Home Missions
March 6-13, 1988
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering National Goal
$37.5 million
HOME MISSIONS EMPHASIS

Missions Tug-of-War

by Mary Knox
Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—Competing forces yank Southern Baptists’ pocketbooks back and forth in a tug-of-war over money for missions.

Their prize is the lifeline of Southern Baptist endeavor: the conventionwide Cooperative Program budget, which supports evangelistic, missionary and educational ministries around the globe; and the special offerings, which supplement state, national and foreign missions efforts.

Observers describe a full roster of forces on either side of the struggle. Positive influences have brought missions giving to record lengths. But negative factors have kept it from advancing further and threaten to pull it back.

Southern Baptists contributed a record $130.3 million to the Cooperative Program during the past fiscal year. The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions also set records in the past year. Obviously, Baptists are doing some things right.

Among factors that positively affect missions giving are:

— Missions priority. “There is the prevailing desire for us to find renewal of our missions priority and get on with it,” says Cecil A. Ray, national director of Planned Growth in Giving, the denomination’s stewardship and discipleship campaign.

— Evangelistic emphasis. “Southern Baptists always are anxious to support any effort to reach people for Christ and to establish churches. People see the need of establishing churches as a priority,” reports Larry L. Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. “Everywhere I’ve gone and talked to people about church planting—our goal is 50,000 churches (an increase of 13,000) by the year 2000—they’re excited and want to be a part of that.”

— Cooperative attitude. Southern Baptists embrace “a total concept of missions,” explains Dan C. Stringer, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention. “Baptists are committed to giving to ministries in their church, association, state, the nation and around the world, all at the same time. We know we can accomplish things together we could not do singly.”

— Personal involvement. “Recently, a whole slew of people have been involved in volunteer missions—about 52,000 last year,” notes James H. Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission. “When people go away and participate in missions situations, they come back with a whole different perspective, and it is their churches that support missions. This crest of the wave today has done more positively for us than anything else.”

— Sacrificial spirit. “Southern Baptists are willing to make major sacrifices if they know the money is going to be used to reach people for Christ in a meaningful and effective way,” adds Lewis. “If they know we’re going to give every attention we can to establishing 1,500 new church starts every year, they will give sacrificially.”

— Supportive programs. Woman’s Missionary Union and Brotherhood, Southern Baptists’ missions education and action programs for women and men, have kept Baptists informed and inspired about missions, motivating them to support the cause, Lewis says.

Nevertheless, the boundaries of mission support are not limitless. The Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon offerings have not met their goals in recent years. Some state Baptist conventions are holding the line on their budgets. Scores of domestic and overseas missions priorities go unmet.

Among factors that negatively affect missions giving are:

— Economic crisis. “The economy definitely has had an impact on mission support the past few years. You can’t deny that,” Smith reflects. Reports from state Baptist conventions support that claim.

— State spending. Although some state conventions have sought to increase the percentage of their receipts that go to national and worldwide mission causes, others have had to freeze or cut back their SBC Cooperative Program allocations.

“Regret that because of the financial crisis some states have had to go backward,” says Lewis. “Every state should have a goal of moving to at least a 50-50 percentage distribution (between state and conventionwide causes).” When the Cooperative Program was first implemented, that was the thought, that funds would be divided evenly between state and worldwide causes.”

Stringer agrees, noting strong state support of the Cooperative Program “is keeping faith with the people. Most Southern Baptists think of missionaries when they think of missions giving. If we do not keep faith with them, we have violated their trust.”

— Church priorities. The state conventions’ commitment to missions giving is insufficient if churches do not also support missions giving, Stringer adds, citing a “steady decline in the percentage of the church dollar going to mission needs.”

“Missions giving always has competitors in the church budget: larger staffs, larger buildings, more expensive programming,” he says.

That’s what Ray calls “church localism versus church globalism,” or the tendency to “build a local empire without a global emphasis and responsibility.”

And while local needs are vital, churches have a mandate to look beyond themselves, Lewis says. He thinks each Southern Baptist church should give a minimum of 10 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program, promote the missions offerings and “think in terms of reproducing itself” by helping to start another church.

(continued p. 18)
**Tug-of-War**

(continued from p. 17)

— Yuppie decision-makers. "Bottom-line people who make quick decisions" hurt missions giving, Stringer claims.

"They want an immediate response, an immediate return on their investment" and are blinded by dollar signs, unable to see the spiritual rewards of missions.

— Provincial pastors. "I'm a preacher by calling and profession, but the major obstacle we have in supporting missions is our pastors," Smith says. "They can talk about being missions-minded, but most of them are not, and this is reflected in the way their churches give to missions."

— Blind ignorance. Southern Baptists have an "uninformed and uneducated constituency," Ray says. "That ignorance level is catching up with us. What Baptists don't know about missions is hurting us."

A major factor in this is "the diminishing role allowed to Woman's Missionary Union in most of our churches," he suggests.

"They have been the best voice in support of missions. Most missionaries grew out of our missions program. But increasingly we're giving this group a secondary role, and that is ominous."

A corollary of this idea is that Southern Baptists now have a generation of church leaders who "have not been trained about cooperative missions," Stringer adds. "We have failed to communicate the evangelistic aspect of the Cooperative Program," he concedes.

Translated into raw figures, that means only about 16 percent of Southern Baptist churches have organized, planned programs for stewardship enlistment, or the commitment of financial resources to missions causes, Ray reports. That leaves more than 80 percent of churches casting about with no plan for training their members and equipping them to support missions.

Regardless of the obstacles, the missions endeavor is worth Southern Baptists' continued support, missions leaders say.

"Meeting the challenge of Bold Mission Thrust is a costly goal," admits Carolyn Weatherford, national executive director of Woman's Missionary Union. "Yet Southern Baptist sights must remain on its missions purpose. We can't afford to be sidetracked from missions. Nothing can take precedence if we are to reach every person with the gospel message."

Lewis agrees, noting he has found Southern Baptists to be excited about the emphasis on starting new churches and telling people about Jesus. "Now, if we can put all this other behind us and concentrate on reaching this nation for Christ, we'll have the greatest days we've ever enjoyed in Baptist life."
RELEASED TIME

Another Option

by Kathy Palen
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AP)—It’s Tuesday afternoon and 12 third graders leave their public school classroom. They scurry across the school playground, cross a side street and climb the steps of a Baptist Kolon School into a noon and 12
day in the United States.

Those third graders, like other public school students throughout the nation, receive religious instruction each week through a program known as released time.

The constitutionality of such programs was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1952, when it held in Zorach v. Clauson that schools may release students for off-campus religious instruction. In an earlier decision, the high court had held such religious instruction could not be held on public school property. Although the Zorach decision allows school administrations to grant released time, it does not require them to do so.

While no exact figures are available, it is estimated released time classes are held in about 3,000 of the 16,000 school districts in the United States. Although some states have laws requiring public schools to allow students to participate in released time programs, most states leave the decision up to the local school administration.

Organizations sponsoring released time programs ask schools to allow students who present signed parental permission forms to be released for a short period of time on a regular basis to receive religious instruction at an off-campus site. The sponsors are responsible for obtaining parental permission, transporting students to and from off-campus sites, selecting curriculum, and providing teachers and needed supplies.

A sponsoring organization may not ask the school to pass out permission forms, announce or otherwise promote the program, or give credits for the classes. Legally, a school’s only role is to allow the students to leave campus without penalty and to arrange classwork schedules so as to accommodate the release.

According to a report by Ruth Correll, who conducted a study of released time programs in conjunction with doctoral work at New York University:

- Most released time classes were begun by a group of pastors and/or laypersons. Programs are sponsored by Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups.
- Funding for released time programs comes from church budgets, individual donations, fund drives, and tuition and registration fees.
- Although some programs use pre-packaged curricula, most programs develop their own curricula.
- Most released time classes are held for children at the elementary school level, with grades three through five the most popular.
- Parents usually have no relationship with the programs except to give permission for their children to attend.
- Released time teachers and staff members range from part-time volunteers to full-time professionals.
- The most frequently mentioned advantage of released time is the availability of large numbers of children on a regular basis for religious education; the main disadvantages are related to scheduling adequate periods of time and arranging transportation.

Many of the released time programs in operation today began before the Supreme Court’s 1952 Zorach decision. An example is the Evansville, Ind., Area Council of Churches’ Weekday Christian Education program, which is celebrating its 45th anniversary.

The Evansville weekday program conducts released time classes for third and fourth graders at 20 elementary schools. It uses three mobile classrooms and four local churches to house classes that are held during the regular school day for one class period each week throughout the school year.

Terry Heck, secretary of the National Association for Released Time Christian Education, pointed to three major advantages of released time programs.

First, she said, about one-half of all students participating in released time programs never set foot inside a church. “For these children,” Heck said, “God is the released time teacher We recognize a real hunger in them to learn about God.”

Second, released time programs undergird the morals, values and discipline students learn in public schools, said Heck, who directs released time programs for the Cincinnati Council of Christian Communions.

Third, she explained, such programs give students the opportunity to talk about God with their schoolmates, who are usually their best friends.

Although Heck said the advantages of released time programs outweigh the disadvantages, she did mention such drawbacks as problems with discipline, inadequate time for instruction, and lack of follow-up in homes and communities.

Heck offered advice for interested churches or other organizations:
- Make sure the program is legal. Remember that the sponsor, not the school, has to do the work.
- Build relationships with the schools and school boards. Few states require schools to release students.
- Develop a broad-based support group for the program. Programs that appeal to a wide range of church affiliations are preferable.
- Do not make students who do not participate in the program feel ostracized.

Echoing many of the same recommendations and warnings already cited by others, Correll concluded her report on released time by stating: “The viability of released time depends on a three-legged support system of home, church and school. If respect and acceptance of any one is lacking, released time is bound to be slanted or topple.”

February 18, 1988
New Plans Proposed

DALLAS (BP)—Annuity Board trustees unanimously voted in their Feb. 1-2 meeting to ask the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee for approval to develop new property and casualty insurance programs and new retirement plans.

If the proposals are approved, the Annuity Board expects to begin offering new insurance programs including church-owned property coverage, general liability, workers' compensation, bus liability, day-care liability and minister's malpractice insurance.

Also, if approved, the proposals would allow the Annuity Board to offer retirement plans under "tax-qualified" plans rather than "not for profit" plans.

The insurance recommendation requires Southern Baptist Convention approval since it requires a change in the board's program statement. The proposal is expected to be acted on during the SBC Executive Committee's Feb. 22-24 meeting in Nashville.

Darold H. Morgan, Annuity Board president, told trustees he does not anticipate any problem with amending the program statement since the SBC Executive Committee had requested the Annuity Board to study the program.

In the retirement plan proposal, the Annuity Board is seeking approval to charter subsidiary corporations which would offer "tax-qualified" retirement plans to SBC institutions. The charter and bylaws currently permit the board to offer only 403(b) plans, which are specifically for not-for-profit organizations.

Despite the stock market collapse in October 1987, Treasurer Harold Richardson reported that all Annuity Board funds ended the year with positive performance.

Investment income totaled $112 million. The year saw assets rise above $2 billion for the first time, and $55.8 million in retirement and relief benefits were paid.

Contributions to member accounts rose from $125.6 million in 1986 to $132.2 million last year.

Swinford Elected

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)—Maurice Swinford has been named the seventh executive director of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

Swinford, who has been Illinois church development division director for nearly 10 years, was elected unanimously Feb. 8 during a special called meeting of the Illinois association's board of directors.

The new leader succeeds Ernest E. Mosley, who resigned March 31, 1987, to become executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

He and his wife, Charlotte, are the parents of three adult daughters.

Reagan Invited To San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)—President Ronald Reagan has been invited to address messengers to the 1988 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 14-16 in San Antonio, Texas.

The invitation has been issued by SBC President Adrian P. Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., but the White House is not expected to respond for several months. If Reagan does accept the invitation, he is scheduled to speak at noon Thursday, June 16.

If the president accepts, the June meeting will mark the first time since 1976 that a sitting president of the United States has addressed the SBC. At the 1976 annual meeting in Norfolk, Va., then-President Gerald R. Ford addressed messengers. In 1982, Vice President George Bush addressed the annual meeting of the SBC Pastors' Conference in New Orleans.

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Convention Uniform

Restoration

by Don Miller, First Church, Trumann
Basic passage: Matthew 18:10-22
Focal passage Matthew 18:10-22
Central truth: Living in harmony with God and man is of utmost importance.

At first glance one might see three unrelated passages in today's Scripture. But their association is more than just casual. Each passage relates to an aspect of restoration and righteousness.

Matthew 18:10-14 is a parable of the restoration of a lost sheep. Argument could be made both directions whether this is an unsaved person or one who is in a straying or backslidden state. The real focus is God's love and longing for the one who is separated from him and his joy at their restoration. He goes to the fullest extent and effort to bring about or restore a righteous condition.

Matthew 18:15-20 centers on the restoration of broken/damaged relationships. The emphasis is on the salvaging and strengthening of a relationship not exposing the wrong or assigning the fault. The burden of seeking restoration is given to the offended not the offender. If this fails then a small group is to seek the restoration. This "committee" should be composed of wise, respected, and mature believers. If the wrongdoer still refuses reconciliation, then the matter is brought to the church. Then, as a whole, they urge reconciliation.

If the offender remains hardhearted at this point he is to be treated as a lost person. He acts like one, so treat him like one. But how should we treat the lost? With a Christlike love and a seeking to help them to hear and respond to the gospel. This process is never to be done hastily or with eagerness. A broken heart and much time in prayer are vital pre-requisites. Restoration, not punishment or the satisfaction of the wronged, is the goal.

In verse 21-22 Peter poses a question. How often should one seek restoration and grant forgiveness? Jesus answers, "Continually."

How often do we allow little problems to get out of hand. Our relationship to God can be measured by our relationship to one another. If we are not right or seeking to be right with one another, then we are not right with God. If you have a problem with someone, forgive him, and then seek reconciliation with him and God.

Life and Work

Sexual Purity

by Earl Humble, First Church, Osceola
Basic passage: Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-32; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Corinthians 7:1-6
Focal passage: Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-28; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5
Central truth: God's Word takes seriously the demands of God for a responsible stewardship of the sex life.

Those who place all Scripture on the same level of authority for Christian living have a real problem with sexual purity in reconciling certain passages in the Old Testament. Generally speaking, adultery in both Testaments means violation of marriage vows through illicit sexual activity. Sex between the unmarried is called fornication.

1) The sex life calls for rigid discipline. In the Old Testament if adultery could be proved, both parties were to be stoned (Dt. 22:23-29). If fornication could be proved, the father might require the offending male to marry his daughter, or he might demand money from the offender (Ex. 22:16-17).

Multiple wives were allowed and divorce was relatively easy for the man (Dt. 24:1-4).

When we come to the New Testament, the climate of sexual purity is changed. Here adultery begins with lust rather than with the overt act. Both premarital and extramarital usage of sex is condemned (1 Th. 4:3; 1 Co. 7:2).

2) Lust is one of God's gifts. It is not only to secure the perpetuation of the sex race, but also to express and foster love within marriage (1 Co. 7:1-5). Note that from Genesis the use of sex was blessed by God before sin entered the human race.

God is creator, but he has given to men and women the precious seeds of life. They become creators in a secondary sense when their children are born.

3) There are some practical guidelines for Christians. First, in the choice of a mate for our children, parents have a great responsibility. It is not that we choose who our children will marry. It is rather that we should guide our children from childhood onward in the true appreciation of friendships. We should also guide them when they begin their dating life. Children should always be brought into family counseling in male-female relationships. We must teach our children the value of prayer in finding God's will in this matter.

Bible Book

When a Family Hurts

by Eddie L. McCord, Independence Association DOM
Basic passage: Genesis 37:1-36
Focal passage: Genesis 37:3-8, 13-14, 23-27
Central truth: The family must constantly be on guard against disruptive influences.

Is your family hurting? If so, it is no exception. Many families are hurting.

There was trouble in Jacob's family and every member contributed to the hurt. There comes a time when parent and child must answer the question, "Am I a part of the problem?"

Some of the nastiest of human passions were festering in Jacob's family. What havoc they wrought! How disruptive they are in our homes today! They are very easily detected in today's Scripture passage.

1) Favoritism (v. 3). The favoritism is Jacob's. It seems that he has learned nothing from his experiences as a youth, when he was his mother's favorite and Esau his father's.

2) Envy (v. 8,11). The brothers are guilty at this point. Jacob's home was a bitter and unhappy place. His action was most unwise at this time.

3) Pride (v. 5-7, 9). The first reason for the brother's hatred and envy was Joseph's evil report, the second reason was the coat, and now the third reason was his pride.

4) Revenge (v. 23-27). Jacob became uneasy about the safety of his other sons and sends Joseph to find them.

Had Jacob known all the details concerning Joseph's absence, he should not have been surprised. All the ingredients were present for severe conflict in his home.

Many homes are about to crumble because of the presence of disintegrating influences.

Are your emotions all mixed up? Do you find yourself reacting outside your faith? Do you find yourself doing things you do not want to do and failing to do things you really desire to do? When the home hurts God understands. We must bring our difficulties to him.
A Struggle for Identity

by Art Toalston
SBC Foreign Mission Board

JERUSALEM (BP)—Messianic Jews are battling for their Jewishness.

No longer are they truly Jewish, their critics claim. The issue is their belief in Jesus, or Yeshua (ye-SHUA-uh), as they call him in Hebrew.

"Any rabbi will tell you there is no room within traditional Judaism for any such belief," says Pinhas Peli, a Jerusalem Post columnist and professor of Jewish thought and literature at Ben Gurion University in Be'er Sheva. "Claiming to be both a Jew and a Messianic believer is a contradiction in terms and an aberration of Judaism. Once you leave the Jewish religion or add to it something which is not genuine, you stop being a Jew."

But this small minority—about 3,000 in a nation of 4.4 million people—is intent on "remaining Jewish in a meaningful sense," says Baruch Maoz, leader of a Messianic congregation in the Tel Aviv area. And they are unwavering in their conviction that Jewish Scriptures, in Maoz's words, "find fulfillment nowhere else but in Christ as described in the New Testament."

"We live our lives as Jews in every sense, except those that deny Christ," Maoz says. He and his family observe Passover, for example, because "it's part of our history. I'm glad that my forefathers left Egypt. God brought them out, and that is something to celebrate."

Jewish believers "cannot, in the end, turn to the rabbi to find the ultimate definition of being Jewish," says Avner Boskey, one of the leaders of a Jerusalem congregation. "Rather, we need to turn to Yeshua the Messiah to do that. The leaven of the Pharisees that Yeshua talked about is the same leaven which refused to accept his divinity and Messiahship, and these people ended up writing the Talmud," ancient writings interpreting the Jewish Bible.

At least a dozen organizations in Israel are devoted to assailing Messianic Jews. Several leaders in the best-known group, Yad L'Achim, refused to be interviewed for this story. Believers say Yad L'Achim periodically harasses congregational leaders by gathering information about them, often meshing it with falsehoods, and disseminating the mishmash in neighboringhoods and to municipal and national officials.

A poster with a photo of one Messianic couple and their toddler son warned: "Watch out for these people. They love you because they want you to love Jesus." Yad L'Achim's tactics also include demonstrations. And some believers claim the group bugs telephones, opens mail and breaks into homes.

Another antagonist is Shmuel Golding, known for various booklets, cassette tapes and weekly debates at his Jerusalem Institute of Biblical Polemics that target some 180 New Testament fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy. Golding's skepticism, believers counter, could be equally destructive if applied to Jewish Scriptures.

Golding also offers training for dissuading young Messianic Jews, and "counselors" now are in place in several countries. In his own counseling, Golding claims a 75-percent rate of Messianic Jews "coming back to their Jewish roots."

Messianic Jews: being Jewish, believing in Jesus.

Antagonists often label Messianics as missionaries, which in Israel is "only slightly more positive than being called a child molester," one believer says. The term has been twisted to mean "a soul robber," one seeking to "steal Jews away from their heritage" or "make Jews into Gentiles," believers say.

Messianic Jews face an even more intense challenge from ultra-Orthodox or Hasidic Jews, also known as blacks because of the black hats and coats the men wear. They comprise only 5 percent to 7 percent of the population, yet wield a disproportinate amount of clout because they are wooed by Israel's two major political parties. Far more vehemently than mainstream Orthodox, they oppose the Messianic movement—and any other departure from rigorous Judaism.

Ultra-Orthodox Jews hurled stones into a Tiberias congregation's worship services during a six-month period in 1985. On several occasions, believers have been roughed up. Newspapers, fearing Hasidic protests, will not accept Messianic advertisements, a congregational leader says.

And Ultra-Orthodox Jews often pressure local officials to use zoning regulations against Messianic congregations. A congregation near Tel Aviv struggled more than two years to reverse a municipal injunction against meetings in a building they were renting. No injunctions were placed against nearby synagogues.

The blacks especially are hostile toward Messianics because believers do not give the creedence to their religious authority that many other Jews do, Sorko-Ram believes. "That's the same problem as in the first century," he adds, when believers chose Jesus as their authority.

Despite broad guarantees of religious freedoms, the evangelism is another matter, Peli says. Evangelizing Jews is "chutzpah...something which is not acceptable in any way." To anyone wanting to carry the gospel to the Jews, he admonishes: "Hands off. Not now. You want to talk to us, give us another hundred years, another 50 years. Let's heal the wounds still bleeding from the Holocaust. We lost a third of our people," 6 million Jews to Nazi exterminators. "Every Jew is important to us."

Peli acknowledges a religious void in Israel, but urges, "If you want to be a true friend of Israel...if you want to help people who are looking for spirituality, help them find it within their own religion."

Nor are Messianic Jews open-minded when it comes to pleas to refrain from evangelizing. "We do not have the right to compromise on...the Great Commission which the Jewish Messiah gave to us in Matthew 28," Boskey says. The Apostle Paul in Romans 1 said the gospel should go "to the Jew first," he says. And the Apostle Peter in Acts 4 told Jews "there is no other name under heaven" for salvation. To fail to take the gospel to the Jews would be the "Great Omission," Boskey says.

Some Messianic believers have begun moving beyond one-on-one evangelism in recent years. "We're no longer satisfied with one here and one there," says Yaakov Danikani of Jaffa, one of three full-time evangelists spearheading the use of tracts to reach the masses. "The prophets were never satisfied with one here and one there," nor were the apostles, he says. "All the nation is familiar with the Christianity of the pope, the crusaders, the inquisitions. We just need to plow the heart of the nation."
A Thriving Church

Brazilian Pastor Cites Sacrifice, Commitment

by Frank Wm. White
SBC Foreign Mission Board

BARRA DO CORDA, Brazil (BP)—Although a Baptist missionary first gave access to a Bible to the people of Barra Do Corda about 100 years ago, the city was without a Baptist church until two years ago.

Now a church on a busy street corner in the Equatorial Brazil city of 50,000 is thriving with a Baptist pastor and a layman who have made personal sacrifices to reach the community.

Miguel Paiva became pastor of the church in December 1987 but already has goals to more than double the membership of 30 and develop a trained evangelistic force with the Sunday school.

He baptized 10 new members during his first month as pastor and hopes to have 40 new members within a year. Training sessions in the coming year for Sunday school workers will be a priority "because I feel Sunday school is the basis of the evangelism work we will do," Paiva said.

His previous church, about 150 miles from Barra Do Corda, had eight members when he arrived two years ago and had grown to 60 members when he left.

Paiva's involvement with evangelism and missions began years ago. Instead of a honeymoon, he and his wife, Annarita, spent 28 days on an evangelism tour of remote interior areas.

Annarita's involvement in Barra Do Corda includes plans of filling the church on weekdays with 30 to 40 students learning "basic alphabet." The school will provide basic reading skills for children and outreach possibilities for the church, she said.

The pastor and his family live in the back of the church which originally was a spiritist hospital. The hospital building was purchased for $5,200, a bargain that has allowed the church to establish a work much more rapidly than would have been possible otherwise, said Warren Rose, a Southern Baptist missionary who has assisted the church.

The church also has played a role in bringing a much-needed addition to professional medical services for Barra Do Corda. Jarbas Moraes, a Baptist layman and physician, moved his medical practice to the city from Sao Luis because he felt God wanted him to serve there.

Although he earned more money in Sao Luis, "leaving the comfort of the city to go to the interior was a step I was willing to take," he said. "The medical need and the Baptist work were things God had put together for me to be involved in here."

Moraes plans to start a Sunday school class for young people and has involved the pastor as a chaplain at the hospital.

"He'll attend to their physical needs and I'll attend to their spiritual needs," Paiva said.

The church's leadership has the benefit of groundwork laid by Brazilian and Southern Baptist mission efforts.

Baptists from Sao Luis, the state capital about 250 miles away, did a survey of Barra Do Corda in 1985. Six months later, the state convention, the Brazilian Home Mission Board and First Baptist Church in Imparatriz, a city across the state, purchased the building and a Brazilian home missionary moved to the town to begin the work.

The missionary had nine converts when an Arkansas partnership mission team arrived three months later. There were 25 new Baptists in the community when the Arkansas group left.

Students from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and other Arkansas mission teams have returned to Barra Do Corda several times, according to Rose.

The team visits were part of an effort by Rose and Don McNeil, a Southern Baptist missionary who is state convention executive director, to target Barra Do Corda for priority work.

As an evangelist pilot, Rose is a crucial link with Barra Do Corda. With his single-engine, seven-passenger plane, he takes mission teams and others to the community on the eastern rim of the Amazon basin in less than an hour rather than the 12-hour trip by road from Sao Luis.

The Baptists who helped establish the church apparently were received more warmly than the first missionary 100 years ago. Residents say that missionary fled the town after Catholic leaders threatened his life. Now, it seems Baptists are accepted and are in the 150-year-old city to stay.

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WORLD

‘Miracle Child’

by Eric Miller
Foreign Mission Board

RECIFE, Brazil (BP)—Brazilians’ reactions to a Southern Baptist missionary child with no hands or feet have ranged from fear to fascination. But often the encounters allow his parents to present Christ’s message of love.

Philip Newberry, 3, the son of missionaries Randy and Jan Newberry, has been called the “miracle child.” After much prayer, he recovered from severe meningitis that caused portions of his arms and legs to be amputated after gangrene set in. Later, he was fitted with prostheses.

The Newberry family was on furlough when Philip got sick in April 1986. Philip, his parents, and their other children, Joey and Amy, returned to Brazil about a year ago.

“It’s quite an experience to be on the streets with Philip because people really stare,” his father says. “Everywhere we go, people say, ‘Was he born that way or did he have an accident?’”

The Newberrys were walking through a market in Sao Paulo, Brazil, one day when Philip noticed a beggar with a tin can.

“All of a sudden, Philip said, ‘Daddy, look, that man doesn’t have any feet! It didn’t dawn on Philip that he didn’t either,’” Newberry says.

Philip walked over and talked to the beggar, who was sitting in the street. “It was like there was a bond there,” says his mother. The beggar asked how Philip had lost his legs. He was “very excited to see that Philip could walk with his prostheses because this man didn’t have any.”

They talked with the beggar a few times, telling him how God had spared Philip and that “God has a plan for Philip’s life and for every life, this man’s life too,” Mrs. Newberry says.

With Brazilians “always asking” about Philip, the Newberrys have encountered others with problems. “We were able to minister to one lady who had a little boy who had some mental problems,” Mrs. Newberry says. “Her husband had separated (left her) because of the problems with the child.”

In another case, a woman begging on the street approached the Newberrys with her hand extended. When she discovered Philip’s lack of hands, she was ashamed of herself and turned away.

Philip’s preschool classmates have mixed reactions to him. “Sometimes they are afraid of him; he looks different,” says his mother.

Other children want to help him all the time, she adds. They bring toys to him. A girl had a piece of candy for him, and instead of handing it to him, she put it in his mouth. However, Philip is able to play with toys and eat with no assistance.

“There are some who see absolutely no difference in Philip,” Mrs. Newberry explains. “One little boy told him one day, ‘I can run faster than you can.’ The child spoke to him like he would anybody else.”

Philip had a slight setback when the Newberrys first returned to Brazil. He fractured a leg while kicking a soccer ball with his father.

He still was wearing a cast when the Newberrys transferred from Sao Paulo to Recife so that Newberry could teach in Baptist Theological Seminary. The preschool administrator would not allow Philip to enroll in the school at first. She assumed meningitis had caused brain damage and Philip would be too uncoordinated to function well and wouldn’t fit in because he didn’t speak Portuguese.

But when she learned he’d been playing soccer and found him to be outgoing, she was willing to give him a try.

“She wanted to give Philip the chance to prove that he could function with other children in a regular school situation,” Mrs. Newberry says. “She also wanted her students to realize that just because someone is different, he is no less a person—that someone with physical difficulties can still lead a normal life.”

Flood Relief

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—About 600 families who were left homeless by a flood in Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro state will receive food and supplies from Southern Baptist missionaries.

The Foreign Mission Board sent about $60,000 in hunger and general relief funds Feb. 8 to missionary Gregory Deering, who is coordinating relief efforts, said Bill Damon, associate area director for Brazil. With the $60,000, missionaries will buy and distribute a one-month supply of food, as well as blankets, mattresses, cleaning supplies and health kits to ward off diseases.

They also will be looking for ways to comfort the people and present the gospel of Christ.

Five days of heavy rains in early February caused floods and mud slides that killed at least 85, injured 200 and left 4,800 homeless, according to wire reports. Forty buildings collapsed in Petropolis, a mountain resort north of Rio de Janeiro.