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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 92, Number 10

May 20, 1993



Mongolians are the focus of the 1993 Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization. Thousands of Mongol people in the Middle Gobi plains continue to live as traditional, semi-nomadic herdsmen.



**1993 DAY
OF PRAYER
AND FASTING
FOR WORLD
EVANGELIZATION**

6 p.m., Fri., May 28 to 6 p.m., Sat., May 29

MONGOLIA FACTS AND FIGURES:

- Current population of 2.3 million
- Nation has strong Buddhist influence
- Millions of Mongol people also live in Russia and China
- Only 800 known Christians in Mongolia

Up to 25,000 SBC messengers expected next month in Houston

By Herb Hollinger
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptists will return to Houston for an annual convention meeting for the first time since 1979 with as many as 25,000 messengers expected June 15-17 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Lee Porter, SBC registration secretary, told Baptist Press he expects between 23,500 and 25,000 messengers to register for the 136th session. There were 17,956 registered for the convention's first-ever meeting in Indianapolis last year and 15,760 in Houston in 1979.

Porter has had an impressive record in predicting messenger registration since 1978, including a prediction of 18,000 in Indianapolis last year.

Hotel rooms still available

With spouses, visitors and guests, total attendance at the 1993 annual meeting could approach 28,000 to 30,000, SBC officials said. Most of the hotels in the downtown area, closest to the convention center, have been filled but there are still rooms available in the outlying areas, like the Galleria area west of the downtown and the Astrodome area southwest of the convention center.

Although Porter's registration prediction is considerably higher for Houston than Indianapolis, the largest SBC registration total of 45,519 in Dallas in 1985 apparently will remain unchallenged.

An unknown is how much the "Masonic Issue" will swell the registration figure, Porter said. The SBC Home Mission

Board will bring a report and recommendation on Freemasonry membership in SBC churches that the matter primarily be decided by local churches and by individual church members. Although it is generally felt that the HMB's recommendation has diffused the issue, Porter said nobody knows for sure.

Porter said registration will open at 4 p.m. Sunday, June 13, and 8 a.m. Monday and Tuesday, June 14-15. Messengers should take the escalators up to the ballroom area upon entering the convention center, Porter said. There will be signs giving directions on how to get to the registration area upon entering the building.

Messengers qualify based on either membership or contributions by their churches, Porter said, although no church can send more than 10 messengers to the meeting. Article III of the SBC constitution notes one messenger can be sent by a church "which is in friendly cooperation with this Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work and has during the fiscal year preceding been a bona fide contributor to the Convention's work."

One additional messenger from each church is allotted for every 250 members or for each \$250 paid to the work of the convention during the fiscal year preceding the annual meeting, according to Article III.

Porter, 63, asked by Baptist Press, said he would allow his name to be presented for re-election as SBC registration secretary. Porter has been re-elected for 14 years even though he has had opposition the past few years.

Cover Story

BP photo / Charles Ledford



Day of Prayer/Fasting 7

The nation of Mongolia has a population of 2.3 million people with only 800 known Christians. Southern Baptists are being asked to pray for the Mongolian people during this year's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization, scheduled from 6 p.m. May 28 to 6 p.m. May 29.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Mille Gill.....Executive Assistant to the Editor
Paige Cooper.....Operations Manager

Colleen Beckus.....Production Manager
Diane Fowler.....Production Artist (part-time)
Erwin L. McDonald, Litt. D.Editor Emeritus

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FMB appoints four couples with state ties

Four couples with Arkansas ties were among 41 people appointed missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board during a recent commissioning service in Columbus, Ohio.

The four couples and their fields of service include: Bryan and Dana Bullington, Namibia; Mark and Debby Fricke, Guatemala; Mike and Kerry Gilchrist, Windward Islands; and Michael and Janice Johnson, Portugal.

Bullington, a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, will work with youth in Namibia. Also a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he is a former youth minister of Olivet Church in Little Rock. Since 1989 he has been youth minister at Ash Creek Baptist Church in Azle, Texas.

Bullington's parents were missionaries to Togo in west Africa for 20 years. His father, Billy, joined the staff of the Foreign Mission Board in 1987 as area director for West Africa and in 1990 was elected regional vice president for Africa.

Mrs. Bullington was a missionary in Burkina Faso from 1987 until her resignation in 1990 following the death of her first husband, Barry Nottingham. She is a graduate of Louisiana State University and also attended Baylor University.

The Bullingtons have four children: Jeremy, Kael and Zachary Nottingham and Chad Bullington.

Mark Fricke will work in literature administration and start and develop churches in Guatemala. Since 1990 he has



Bryan and Dana Bullington



Mark and Debby Fricke



Mike and Kerry Gilchrist



Michael and Janice Johnson

been pastor of Linwood Church in Moscow, Ark. Fricke is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary. His parents are missionaries in Costa Rica.

Mrs. Fricke, the former Debby Thacker, grew up in Pike, Texas. Since 1990 she has been secretary at Greenlee Church in Pine Bluff. She is a graduate of East Texas State University.

The Frickes have one child, Cameron Taylor.

Mike Gilchrist will start and develop churches in St. Vincent in the Windward

Islands. Since 1990 he has been pastor of Matthews Memorial Church in Pine Bluff. Gilchrist is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University and Southwestern Seminary. He also attended Criswell College.

Mrs. Gilchrist, the former Kerry Duke, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Duke of El Dorado. She considers Immanuel Church there her home church. A graduate of Louisiana Tech University, she has been secretary at New Life Christian School in Pine Bluff since 1992.

The Gilchrists have two children: Rachel Ann and Michael Murrill III.

Michael Johnson will start and develop churches in Portugal. A graduate of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Southwestern Seminary, he has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Stover, Mo., since 1989.

Mrs. Johnson, the former Janice McNeal, was born in Little Rock. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald McNeal, missionaries to Brazil. She is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University and Southwestern Seminary.

The Johnsons have two children: Caleb Michael and Hannah Elizabeth.

All four couples will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. They will go to Rockville, Va., in June for a seven-week orientation before leaving for their respective fields of service. They are among more than 3,900 Southern Baptist foreign missionaries serving in 128 countries.

Arkansans named to two key SBC committees

Four Arkansas Baptists have been named to two key committees appointed by Southern Baptist Convention president Ed Young. The Committee on Committees and the Committee on Resolutions will serve during the SBC annual meeting June 15-17 in Houston.

Arkansans named to the 68-member Committee on Committees are Earl Adams, pastor of First Church, Lincoln, and Mary Schroeder, a member of First Church, Little Rock. Young named C.B. "Bill" Hogue, executive director of the California South-

ern Baptist Convention, as committee chairman.

The primary responsibility of the Committee on Committees is to nominate members of the Committee on Nominations, which, in turn, nominates trustees to serve on the 23 national entities of the SBC.

Two Arkansas Baptist pastors were appointed to the 10-member Committee on Resolutions. Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, will serve on the committee as an SBC Executive Committee representative. Ben Rowell, pastor of First

Church, Rogers, also was appointed by Young to the Committee on Resolutions. Rowell also has been nominated to serve as a Baptist Sunday School Board trustee.

Young named James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga., as committee chairman. The committee is responsible for preparing resolutions for consideration by SBC messengers.

Preliminary copies of proposed resolutions may be mailed to Convention Relations, SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Suite 750, Nashville, TN 37203.

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABSA Executive Director

You will never know what it has meant to have so many of our friends from over the State and Southern Baptist Conventions praying for us. Being human, we are subject to all of the afflictions that come upon the race. Being human, we want answers and we want relief. Finding neither answers nor relief on the human level, we are left to the reality of things we do not see but absolutely affirm. Being Christians, we know God is at work, that His promises will not fail, and that His grace is being amply supplied to see us through the long, dark valley of pain.

We are hopeful that by the time you receive this, Shirley will have begun to get relief. The doctors have given no indication as to how long this painful condition may go on, except to say that it could be for weeks, months or years. Thus you can see that we continue in great need of your prayers.

Those many cards and letters have meant more than you can possibly know. Many have come from people who are a part of regular ongoing prayer ministries in our churches. This is a new and wonderful thing that is happening in our churches. It is such a thrill to observe that most of these churches are led by young men who have a heart to see God work in mighty ways today. If they and their followers continue on this path of intercession, Arkansas Baptists will see God work in tremendous ways.

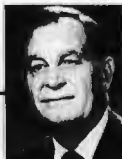
It has been particularly inspiring to find so many men so sensitive to our need. The fact that they would take time to write personal notes and letters or make phone calls to tell us they were praying has been very gratifying.

When the fiery trial is finished and by grace our faith has been refined, may the Lord who sees us through it be reflected to each and every one of you. Surely He will be able to manifest His life more clearly and powerfully through our lives and ministries.

WILLIAM H. SUTTON

The President's Corner

Have I said anything unworthy?



When Daniel Webster died in 1852 his reputation as a lawyer, senator and statesman was awesome. He had argued more landmark cases before the U.S. Supreme Court than anybody in history. As part of a triumvirate with Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, he was credited with forging compromises which preserved peace and unity in the nation. On more than one occasion, he served the country as Secretary of State. He was acclaimed as the greatest orator of his era.

In his last moments of life Webster awoke from unconsciousness and anxiously inquired of those in attendance as to whether he had said anything "unworthy of Daniel Webster."

Such concern for anything inappropriately spoken, even in an unaccountable state of unconsciousness, is in sharp contrast to the gleeful fashion in which some eagerly embrace opportunities to engage in intemperate, inappropriate and unchristian verbal excesses.

It is particularly grieving to realize that preachers have not always set a good example in resisting the mischief of a cruel and destructive tongue. Levelling ridicule and criticism at a fellow servant to the echoes of amens may have an exciting intoxication for the moment. But at the end of the day, it

will not square with God's commandment to "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom. 12:10).

If Daniel Webster could be so concerned that his speech not be unworthy of Daniel Webster, how much more should we be concerned that ours not be unworthy of the Lord Jesus.

Ephesians 4:29-32 is the text for a great sermon begging to be preached: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

As one of many, many Baptist laypersons, I would beg you, preacher, dear man of God, not to disqualify yourself from preaching such a desperately needed message.

Buddy Sutton, a Little Rock attorney and active member of Immanuel Church, Little Rock, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Personal perspectives

"Faith in God will make life more meaningful. The closer you get to eternity the more you need something to believe in."

—Art Linkletter, Southern Baptist Senior Adult Convention speaker

"What's at stake in the war against pornography is the survival of healthy, normal male/female relationships in our civilization."

—Richard Land, executive director, SBC Christian Life Commission

"The students realized, 'If I can share my faith in another country, I can do it at home.' They really experienced missions."

—Kristi Langemeier, BSU associate at Ouachita Baptist University and leader of BSU mission trip to Ecuador

Baptist associations: 'We are family'

When the Pittsburgh Pirates won the World Series back in 1979, their official theme song was the pop tune, "We Are Family." They attributed much of their success to the principles of cooperation and teamwork—banding together to accomplish a common goal.

Team captain Willie Stargell selected the upbeat theme song. According to his 1984 autobiography, "What our theme song stressed was unity, not just unity in the clubhouse but also in the community.... I saw love, affection, caring, the way things could always be if we'd all drop our grudges and prejudices and just decide to get along."

Similar concepts of family unity are promoted throughout The Baptist Hymnal, with such hymn lyrics as: "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God"; "We are one in the bond of love"; "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

Cooperation and unity—being family—are historic Baptist commitments. While those principles have suffered abuse and neglect in many areas of Baptist life in recent years, at least one entity continues to emphasize the grassroots family ties that bind Baptists together. That entity is the local Baptist association.

As Southern Baptists set aside this week to observe Associational Missions Week, this year's theme is "Churches in Association: Partners in Ministry."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

The local Baptist association has been described as "a family of churches." Families don't always see eye-to-eye on every issue that comes along. But a healthy, properly functioning family does band together for the common good, demonstrating love, cooperation—and partnership.

Local Baptist associations play a variety of roles in Baptist life, ranging from strategy planning and leadership training to fellowship and hands-on ministry projects. Many associations provide ongoing ministries to children and youth through associational camp programs and other events. Consider how many hundreds of young people have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior during an associational camp setting.

Associations also are increasingly help-

ing meet the ministry needs of singles and senior adults. Church growth, prayer ministries and associational mission trips are among other ministry resources being provided on the associational level.

During a recent interview with Jeff Cheatham, Arkansas Baptists' 1993 director of missions of the year, he accurately described the local association as a "facilitator." Cheatham, director of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association, added that the association is a key link in Southern Baptists' understanding of "what's going on at the grassroots level."

Associational Missions Week is an excellent time for local churches to renew their commitment to working together as a family of churches on the associational level. Churches which consider themselves too big or too busy to support associational mission efforts often miss the blessing of what it means to be part of an extended family.

For "Churches in Association" to truly succeed as "Partners in Ministry," it takes all family members working together for the common good.

The '79 Pirates had no problem discovering the key to success. Local Baptist churches must do no less. As Christian brothers and sisters gathered to serve in local Baptist associations, we can say together with confidence and conviction: "We Are Family."

Lessons from the ashes

By Michael B. McCullough

Editor, Nevada Baptist

America was horrified by the recent events related to the Branch Davidian cult near Waco, Texas. Our country watched as the compound burned, with scores of people dying. Hearts were broken when it was clear that many of the dead were young and innocent children.

Because of 51 days of publicity, many Americans will identify mainline Christians with the distorted beliefs of David Koresh and his followers. This misunderstanding will present an opportunity for us as Christians to boldly share our beliefs. There are several things we can tell our friends, co-workers and neighbors about our beliefs as opposed to those of Koresh.

First of all, tell them that we are people of relationship, not religion. Christianity is not so much about religion as it is about our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Because we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, we have a right relation-

ship with God as His children. This relationship is the cornerstone of Christianity.

The followers of Koresh were people of religion, following the distortions of a pretender. They worshipped a man and his teaching. Their knowledge of God was not based, it appears, on a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we can share with others the proper understanding of God's Word, the Bible. Koresh's teaching of the seven seals was a distortion of the central theme and purpose of God's Word.

As Christians, we believe that the Bible is God's revelation to man. To take teachings of God's second coming and separate them from the love theme of the Bible is wrong. Koresh preached and practiced violence and abuse, but the Bible teaches love, forgiveness and peace. Koresh taught and practiced sexual immorality, but the Bible preaches the sanctity of marriage. Koresh taught that he was the messiah, but the Bible clearly tells us that Jesus

Christ is the one and only son of God.

Jesus was God's ultimate act of love in this world. David Koresh and his followers failed to demonstrate God's love. Koresh's life was lived in opposition to such love. His obsession with the seven seals was a complete distortion of the message of John 3:16.

Lastly, we can share with others that God's love is so great that Christ died on the cross for the sins of everyone, even someone like David Koresh. Share that no one is beyond the love of God. Let others know that they can have more than religion in their lives. Tell them how they can have a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The situation near Waco is a terrible tragedy. The loss of life, particularly the children, is heartbreaking. But as the days and weeks before us bring opportunity, let us boldly tell our lost friends the truth of the gospel. Let us lead them from a mindset of religion to a personal relationship with Love.

Turn the television off

What can every Christian do for God? How can we "clean up" the entertainment field? TV and the movies are so bad that there are only a limited number of TV shows and movies that are fit to be seen. Oh, they have great actors, stories; good producers. But most is moral and educational flth.

If every Baptist would find some other outlet for their families and turn off the TV networks and leave the movie houses, then they would have to clean up their productions. If you do not see the shows, you will not see the advertising, and you will not buy the products or services. If a company does not get business from its advertising, then they stop advertising, and the shows have to put on productions that people will watch so they can sell advertising.

Every born-again child of God needs to just turn it off.

Russ Curry
Bentonville, AR

Avoid worldly priorities

The church has come a long way since it was established during the New Testament era. But which way has it come? There may well be room for alarm on that score.

The church was originally instituted to glorify God, to win souls and to edify believers. But today, I am afraid that other practices and goals have crept in unaware — and with real cause for spiritual reevaluation. We have our fellowship dinners and limited recreational events in church meeting rooms and quite possibly this is all well and good. But I, for one, feel we are taking it a bit too far when we allow the things of the world such as "professional type" exercise classes to take place in church buildings. The latest seems to be allowing aerobic classes and exercise routines to be partaken of in church facilities.

Let someone misunderstand me, without a doubt, physical exercise is helpful to our God-given bodies. But though I may be considered a bit old-fashioned for feeling this way, I cannot help but feel that the church is not the place for this type thing.

Yes, God wants His children to serve Him with gladness and to have liberality (Psa. 100:2, II Cor. 3:17) and not to be too bound down with too many "thou shalt nots." But, at the same time, let's not go so far in expressing our Christian liberality that we let God's House become an alternative to the local health spa.

Ned R. York Jr.
Blytheville, AR



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A modern parable

Once upon a time some church fathers became puffed-up by the success of their denomination. (In those days churches were called families. They consisted of fathers, brothers and sisters. God was said to frown on church mothers.) There were many signs that these men were losing their influence. People resigned long-held jobs; the usually docile ladies challenged the authority of these men over their mission activities; and some faithful members withdrew to form a more cooperative fellowship. Still, the church fathers were secure in their spiritual correctness.

They refused to anoint anyone who did not agree that the many people who wrote the many books of the Bible did not make a single error. Thoughtful members knew that Jesus made up stories to teach truths; they couldn't see why His Jewish ancestors might not have done the same thing. As time passed, the church fathers were confusing control with love and dogma with faith.

Most church members felt that the question of inerrancy was getting in the way of telling the world about the love of God and about His Son's living and dying to provide grace for sinners. But the church fathers persisted in their demand for fundamentalism above all else. So, some members quit reading the literature. Some quit giving. Some joined groups of believers that were more loving. Almost everyone quit praying for the leaders because they persisted ever more strenuously in their rightness. And the SBC dwindled until it was a shadow of its former self. But the church fathers lived on and blamed all their troubles on the liberals.

Nell Anderson
Newnata, AR

Heartbroken over SBC

Thank you for your good reporting in our newsmagazine.

On page 2 of the May 6 issue was the report that this year's SBC Committee on Nominations is being chaired by Arkansas Joe W. Atchison. He described the nominees as "mainline Southern Baptists who are excited about what is happening in the SBC." He said members voiced "concern about nominating anybody who was supporting the Cooperative Baptist Fellow-

ship," an organization of Southern Baptist moderates dissatisfied with the current direction of the SBC.

How sad! How it must grieve the heart of God. Many of us who are "mainline Southern Baptists," steeped in the philosophy and traditions of Southern Baptists, are heartbroken about what is happening in the SBC.

Augusta Bobright
Alma, AR

Orientation appreciation

As the pastor of Cotter First Baptist Church and a new staff person to Arkansas, I would like to say a word of thanks to the convention and to anyone else who made it possible for my wife and I to enjoy the recent new pastor/staff orientation at the Baptist building. My wife, Karen, and I had a great time of fun, food and fellowship as we learned all about the work and support of each department and agency that the convention has.

We would also like to thank the people from the bookstore and the two colleges who provided all of us with great food during the break times. It was a fast tour and the food made the fast timetable easier to handle. We would also like to thank the good people of Baring Cross Church for the great dinner and warm fellowship.

Last but not least we would like to thank the people in our home church here in Cotter who made it possible for us to attend. Thank you all again and may God bless each one of you.

Rob Brown
Cotter, AR

Thanks to WMU

What a real joy to have so many Woman's Missionary Union members visit the Hope Migrant Mission Center as you traveled to or from the recent WMU annual meeting in Texarkana. We want to express our deep appreciation to you for the many items you brought to the center to share in the ministry with the migrants as they visit us. The many health kits, Bibles, New Testaments and other Christian literature you share is a tremendous help as we minister to these migrants. The migrants themselves are also very appreciative for the ministry you are providing through us here at the center.

Many of you who were unable to attend the annual meeting or to come by the center have mailed us material and we certainly thank you also for sharing in the ministry in this way. May God bless each of you as you serve Him where you are.

Paul E. Roatan, Director
Hope Migrant Mission Center
Hope, AR

Day of Prayer highlights Mongolians

RICHMOND, VA (BF)—Just as the Asian nation of Mongolia scripts the first chapters of its new democratic movement, the Christian community there has begun chronicling the first pages of its own history.

"It's all so new to them," explained a Christian observer who recently returned from Mongolia. "These days are the first chapters of Acts for Mongolian Christians."

In the early 1990s, as Mongolia turned to a multi-party democratic system, the government began to allow foreigners, including Christians, into the country. With this entrance came the opportunity for Christians to share their faith with people who had never heard the name of Jesus Christ.

And one by one, just as the New Testament church began, Mongolians began to embrace the faith. Today, Mongolia has at least 800 known believers, and about 1,400 Mongolians regularly attend church.

But the fledgling Mongolian church is a young body of Christians. Most believers have been Christians for only about two years. The most mature Christians accepted Christ about three years ago. They have an urgent need for sound discipleship and Christian training.

Administrators at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board believe Southern Baptists have a role in Mongolia's Christian development. They are asking Southern Baptists to pray for the Mongolian people during this year's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization, scheduled from 6 p.m. May 28 to 6 p.m. May 29.

Specific prayer requests include:

- That young believers will grow and develop spiritual discernment.
- That personnel who work through Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization, will remain safe and healthy and enjoy success in their work.
- That God will provide Bibles, draw Christians from neighboring countries to minister in Mongolia and create a network of people to pray regularly for this young Christian community.

Mongolia experiences spread of New Testament faith

By Donald D. Martin
SBC Foreign Mission Board

ULAN BATOR, MONGOLIA (BF)—For some, it's like living in the New Testament Book of Acts.

What began as a handful of about six Mongolian Christians in 1990, has grown to about 800 believers around the country and about 1,400 attending Christian worship or Bible studies. New followers of Christ — many young and joyfully enthusiastic — gather often to worship, pray and study Scripture.

Mongolian believers see God's timing in the availability of a new Mongolian New Testament and in an unprecedented interest in religious faith at a time when Mongolians face hard economic times and collapse of parts of their social structure and political system. People are searching. "They say now that they don't believe anything," Altanchimeg Gibbens explained. Gibbens, thought to be the first Mongolian believer of modern times, accepted Christ while assisting in the translation of the Bible into her language.

Mongolians once ruled the largest empire in history, stretching from the Pacific Ocean west into parts of Western Europe. More recent generations have lived in landlocked isolation. Legendary rulers, horsemen, traders and artists have no well-known modern counterparts. Today's Mongolia is a 605,000-square-mile land inhabited by 2.3 million people with the second-lowest density in the world — four people per square mile.

Millions of Mongolians, or Mongol people, also live in the eastern regions of the former Soviet Union and in a province of China, once called Inner Mongolia. (The nation of Mongolia was once called Outer Mongolia).

Until the breakup of the Soviet empire de-emphasized Russia's power, Mongolia spent years as the meat in a superpower sandwich, surrounded by Russia and China. It still has only those two links to the outside world.

"Mongolians trusted communism and what communism told was lies," said Gibbens, who now directs the Mongolian Bible Society. "They're open toward any religion. They're looking to hold something."

Gradually, Christianity has found its way back into Mongolia and is beginning to grow.

Those working alongside Mongolian believers include several English teachers, medical personnel and others representing Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization.

CSI's first representatives in Mongolia were Stan and Laura Kirk. The Kirks, now in the United States, taught English from 1991-92 at the 3,000-student Mongolian National Medical University. They plan to return on a more permanent basis in late 1993.

In an effort to be effective, CSI has conferred with the government and signed contracts to help in several areas — education, health care and agriculture. "We can place people at every sector of the society to do some kind of work which would benefit the Mongolian society," Kirk said.

The concept of becoming followers of Christ needs to gain credibility with Mongolians, Kirk stated. Christians from outside Mongolia can play a role in this effort. Practical help, such as agriculture, business, medicine and education, would gain credibility.

For those who have found new life in Christ, reaching others is a matter of satisfying the searching going on in their hearts.

One key to love, said Enkhbayar, a young man emerging as a leader of one of Ulan Bator's Christian groups. "Whatever you say, if they can't see love, it is empty," he said. "What changed my heart was just love. Even if nobody talked about Jesus but they really (showed) love ... people would start to be interested in Jesus."

The contagious enthusiasm of Mongolian Christians for their new faith inspires non-believers and longtime Christians alike. Almost every Bible study or worship time has a lot of prayer during the meeting. Then small groups gather to pray about specific needs afterwards.

Mongolian believers are fighting a spiritual battle at the same time they are growing in their own new-found faith.

"They need to leave behind old life and change...in the heart," Gibbins said. "This is the hardest thing for them. Satan holds them really tightly. Satan doesn't want to lose even one Mongol."



1993 DAY
OF PRAYER
AND FASTING
FOR WORLD
EVANGELIZATION

6 p.m., Fri., May 28 to 6 p.m. Sat., May 29

Key Baptist doctrines focus on worship

By Herschel H. Hobbs
Special to the Arkansas Baptist



The doctrines of baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day are all related to worship. The first two are the ordinances of a New Testament church. And, except for Seventh Day Baptists, Baptists generally ob-

serve the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, as the day for corporate worship.

Baptism

"Baptism" comes from the Greek infinitive *baptizein* which means to dip, plunge or submerge in water. In nonbiblical Greek it is used of a ship sinking at sea. The Jews practiced proselyte baptism or the immersion of a Gentile who adopted Judaism. The baptism of John the Baptist was one of repentance by which a person denoted his willingness to participate in the kingdom of God when it came. New Testament baptism is symbolic, not sacramental. It symbolizes what Christ did for our redemption, namely, His death, burial and resurrection. It also symbolizes what He does in us when we believe in Him: death to the old life, its burial and being raised to a new life in Christ Jesus.

Various Christian bodies admit that New Testament baptism was by immersion-mergion. The Roman Catholics simply say that they changed it. Actually the change came gradually from immersion to pouring to sprinkling. In the New Testament the Greek verbs for "pour" and "sprinkle" are never used for baptism. The change in mode followed the change from symbolism to sacramentalism.

Historically the change was called clinical baptism. A terminally ill person had not been baptized. Believing that baptism was necessary for salvation, water was poured on the person since immersion was not practical. Gradually this gave way to sprinkling water on the head. During the 13th century sprinkling was declared to be baptism. In European cathedrals built prior to that time, I have been where murals or mosaics show Jesus being baptized, it is by immersion. But not after that time. Non-Catholic groups which use sprinkling got it from that tradition.

Those who hold that baptism is necessary for salvation refer to Acts 2:38 and 1 Peter 3:20-21. Acts 2:38 reads that we are to be baptized "for" the remission of sins.

"For" translates *eis* which may be translated "with respect to," "on the basis of" or "as the result of." In Matthew 12:41 it is rendered as "at." The Ninevites did not repent in order that Jonah might preach; they repented as the result of his preaching. Actually we use "for" as in "He was executed for murder," not that he might murder but because he had already murdered. So we are to be baptized as the result of the remission of sins.

In 1 Peter 3:26 "by" renders *dia*, through, "through water." Noah and his family were not saved by being in the water. They were saved through the flood by being in the ark, a type of Christ.

"Baptized" (v. 21) renders *baptisma*. It denotes the meaning in the act of baptism, namely, death, burial and resurrection. The word for the act of baptism is *baptismos*. *Baptisma* is not found anywhere in all Greek literature except in the New Testament and in later ecclesiastical writings, which took it from the New Testament. Apparently the Holy Spirit coined the word to express, not the act of being baptized, but the meaning in the act.

These two citations clearly show that New Testament baptism is not sacramental but symbolic.

New Testament baptism calls for proper meaning and a proper mode to depict that meaning. The meaning is a symbol of what is involved in our redemption—death, burial and resurrection. Only immersion in water and emersion from water is the mode depicting the symbol.

Obviously, pouring and sprinkling do not meet the criterion. Likewise, even a sacramental idea falls short. Hence the practice of most Baptist churches in rejecting the proper form without the proper meaning.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is also sacramental in nature. Likewise it symbolizes what Jesus did for our redemption. The elements of the Supper represent Jesus' body and blood or His death for sin as our substitute. It is a memorial Supper "in remembrance" of our Lord's atonement for our sins (1 Cor. 11:23-25). Also it looks forward to our Lord's return at the end of the age (1 Cor. 11:26).

Baptism is an initiatory ordinance. It does not initiate believers into the Kingdom of God; it initiates them into the fellowship of a local church. Baptism of a believer is to be observed one time. The Lord's Supper is to be observed at intervals "in remembrance" of our Lord's atoning death and resurrection. Both are included,

since it points back to His death and forward to His return.

To call Baptists "closed communionists" is a misnomer. All Christian groups which observe this ordinance (Lord's Supper, Communion, Mass) hold that one must be baptized to be eligible. Baptists hold to the same. The question concerns what constitutes New Testament baptism. If we are closed anything, we are closed *baptismists*.

Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10). Pagan Romans observed the first day of each month as "Augustus Day" in honor of Caesar's birthday. To counter this, Christians observed the first day of the week as the Lord's Day.

Jews observed the seventh day of the week as their Sabbath. The Hebrew word for "Sabbath" means rest, not seven. By its observance they commemorated the end of God's creative work. He rested from creating, not because He was tired but because He was through creating.

Christians, on the other hand, observe the first day of the week as a celebration of Jesus' resurrection, the end of God's redemptive work in Christ.

Some Christians, such as Seventh Day Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists, still observe the seventh day as their day of worship. They point to the fact that Jesus observed this day and that mention is made of certain Christians attending Jewish synagogues on the seventh day. However, in Jesus' case it was before His resurrection. Paul and Barnabas attended Sabbath day services in the synagogue. It was on this day that they found an audience to whom to preach the gospel.

But when Christians as such assembled for worship, it was on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7-12; 1 Cor. 16:1).

The Lord's Day should be spent in physical rest, worship and spiritual devotions. Jesus gave three exceptions: deeds of worship, mercy and necessity (Mark 2:25-3:5; Luke 13:15; 14:5). But note that you should not have an ox fall into a pit on Thursday and wait until Sunday to pull it out.

Multitudes today have turned this holy day into a holiday. As a result they return to work on Monday in worse condition physically, spiritually and mentally than they left the job on Friday. Years ago I read that Sunday is the only thing which stands between a free man and a slave. So many have enslaved themselves to the pursuit of selfish desires. In due time such takes it toll physically, mentally and spiritually. © 1983 Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Arkansas senior adults enjoy Atlanta event

By Millie Gill

Arkansas Baptist

Scores of Arkansas senior adults traveled by van, church buses and chartered buses to participate in the three-day national Southern Baptist Senior Adult Convention held in Atlanta, Ga., April 26-28.

There were 82 senior adults who traveled in two chartered buses hosted by the Discipleship Training department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, according to Bob Holley, director.

"We were pleased with the response to this statewide effort," Holley noted. He said he found the group to be appreciative and enthusiastic. "Those riding our buses were very much excited, positive, upbeat and appreciative for the whole tour," he declared.

Juanita Phillips, senior adult coordinator from First Church of Gravel Ridge, who was among the senior adults riding the ABS-C-hosted buses, said, "Every senior adult heart in the convention center was touched when Mildred McWhorter, a retiring Southern Baptist Home missionary, spoke on 'In the Service of the King.'"

Phillips also praised Brian Harbour, a former Arkansas pastor, for his biblical approach to senior adults making a difference. "Using Enoch, Lois, Anna and Noah as examples, he led us in Bible studies, revealing how we could make a difference as grandparents, in our local churches and throughout the world," she concluded.

Bob Hettinga, administrator for First Church in Russellville, found the fellowship of other Arkansas Baptists to be among the outstanding events of the trip. "I formed lasting Christian friendships with some of those who traveled," he said.

"I was able to have both the cake and its frosting on my trip," said Marlene Ruth Abernathy of Hot Springs who rode the



Hazel Gannawar (left) and Marian Bowden of Arkansas City browse in the Baptist Book Store at the recent Senior Adult Convention in Atlanta.

state convention buses. "Even though I attended the first senior adult convention in Fort Worth in 1987, this Atlanta convention enabled me to visit a place where my roots began. While sightseeing in the Atlanta area, I visited the Hardy Ivy Commemorative Park. Ivy, who was my great-grandfather, has been recognized as downtown Atlanta's first citizen, having constructed a cabin there in 1833.

"As for the convention itself, I thought it was tremendous, especially the music," continued Abernathy who served for more than 41 years as organist for Second Church in Hot Springs. "I also am grateful that the Southern Baptist Convention has not forgotten us as senior adults and is providing us with conventions, special programs and outstanding literature."

Wally Portman, minister of pastoral care with responsibility with senior adults for East Side Church in Fort Smith, noted

"The convention was incredible and super, especially the messages by Harbour and Art Linkletter."

Another chartered bus going to Atlanta carried 45 senior adults from South Highland Church in Little Rock and nine senior adults from Highland Park Church in Texarkana, Texas. Hosting this bus were Randy Maxwell, South Highland's pastor, and Alan Moore, minister of music.

The '39'ers, composed of the South Highland senior adult choir and ukulele band, combined a mini choir tour with the convention, performing enroute for a retirement center in Tupelo, Miss., and for Wednesday evening services at Wildwood Church in Kennesaw, Ga.

"Our people found the convention overwhelming with so many in attendance, the lines of chartered buses and the hectic pace of it all," Maxwell said. "McWhorter's address was the highlight for us."

Convention offers seniors practical, spiritual helps

ATLANTA (BP)—Packing about half of the 40,000-seat new Georgia Dome in Atlanta, senior adults received practical and inspirational helps during a three-day convention, April 26-28.

The four general sessions at the national Southern Baptist Senior Adult Convention offered the 20,000 senior adults from 31 states musical entertainment, preaching, drama and Bible study.

The theme of the second-ever national convention, sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division, was "Senior Adults Making a Difference."

Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, told senior adults they cannot make a difference in their churches or communities until they know what it means to be "in Christ."

"Being in Christ means having a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ," he said. "Jesus Christ must be our very life, not just our Savior and Lord."

Meanwhile, TV personality Art Linkletter told Southern Baptist senior adults the key to a quality life is deep faith in God.

"Faith in God will make life more meaningful," said Linkletter, who is 80. "The closer you get to eternity the more you need something to believe in."

Leading the Bible study each session, Brian Harbour, pastor of First Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas, preached about the only grandmother cited in the Bible. Quoting from 2 Timothy, Harbour said a woman called Lois modeled the qualities of grandparenting.

When Christian grandparents teach and live their faith, grandchildren often become Christians, he added.

Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., brought the closing message. He pointed out three ways in which Jesus brings victory — over sin, over time and over life.

Arkansans host anti-pornography conference

By Louis Moore

SBC Christian Life Commission

ROGERS, AR (BP) — Pornography is an \$8 billion to \$10 billion-a-year business that has grown more violent and sadomasochistic in recent years, according to speakers at a special conference on pornography.

The regional conference entitled "Pornography: Truth & Consequences" was held April 29 at First Church of Rogers. It was co-sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and Citizens for Family Values of Rogers, a nondenominational, nonprofit organization.

Joe Aichison, director of missions for Northwest Association, is chairman of Citizens for Family Values. He said the conference, which was in the planning stages for a year, was an effort to respond to the growing number of X-rated videos available in area video stores.

Aichison, a CLC trustee, said the effort was designed to provide education and generate public interest in addressing the issue of pornography.

Pornography has changed dramatically since the 1950s (when the issue was over nude women in *Playboy* magazine), said Rob Showers, a Washington, D.C. lawyer who previously headed the National Obscenity Enforcement Union of the U.S.

Department of Justice. He is also a CLC trustee.

"The stuff that became available in the 1980s contained themes of violence, incest, spankings, whippings, chains, orgies, pseudo-child, male homosexuality and lesbianism," he said. "Most people just don't realize how bad pornography has become."

"There is a link between porno and crime and public health," Showers said. "This stuff is harmful just like drugs are harmful."

'This is lethal stuff'

CLC executive director Richard Land told the more than 200 seminar participants, "What's at stake in the war against pornography is the survival of healthy, normal male/female relationships in our civilization. We are talking about the survival of a home in which the mother and father have a healthy physical, spiritual, psychological relationship so they can raise physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally healthy children."

"This is lethal stuff," he said. "This is radioactive material. Pornography leads to acts of violence against women and children. Pornography is a major contributing factor in divorce."

Land said pornography "destroys the biblical creation of sexuality. It destroys

the model of a loving holy matrimony based on the concept of 'till death do we part.'"

CLC staffer Lamar Cooper said the growth of pornography sales and degeneration in its content reflect the decline in America society in general.

"The byproduct of a secular society is that it becomes rampant with alcoholism, child abuse, pornography, divorce, drug abuse, homosexuality and all sorts of other evils," he said.

"God always judges the pornographic society," Cooper said. "That was true of Sodom and Gomorrah...and it will be true of America too."

He said Christians must enter the battle against pornography by saying, "This is God's Word...thus saith the Lord."

Another speaker, Marilyn Simmons, a Christian lobbyist from Little Rock, and a CLC trustee, said Christians can make a difference in the war against pornography by lobbying their state legislatures and other government entities to adopt and enforce laws against such products.

"Get your facts together and present those facts to your legislator," she said. "If a legislator gets 10 calls on a particular subject, they stop and pay attention."

"God will hold us Christians accountable for this (the spread of pornography) if we don't do anything," she warned.

More than 1,000 boys attend state RA Congress

"The 1993 Royal Ambassador Congress was a success because of the volunteers who assisted," noted Glendon Grober, Brotherhood director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

More than 1,000 boys gathered on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University April 23-24 for the congress, according to Grober. "The boys had approximately 8,000 entries in 144 events and entered 600 cars to be judged for both speed and design," he said.

Grober commended Pete Petty, featured speaker and associate in the ABSBC missions department. "He held the boys in the palm of his hand as he used illusions to illustrate the plan of salvation, the work of commissioned missionaries and the application of their field work," Grober said.

Grober said volunteers who helped make the congress successful included Ozzie Berryhill, Gary Mianer, Jan Kelly, Bryan Carroll and David Wallace, all of North Little Rock; Mark Rutherford, Billy Kilmer and Jerry Neal, all of Little Rock; Jocelyn Burleson of Bryant; Jim Sullivan of



Racing events were among the activities at the April 23-24 RA congress sponsored by the Brotherhood department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Benton; Harry Black of Roland; and Howard Kalsor of Hot Springs.

"Also assisting us were 250 RA counselors, representing 67 churches," Grober continued. "These counselors are to be commended because of their continuous

efforts in developing boys in well rounded Christian lives, including meaningful understanding of Baptist mission work.

"All of these are Kingdom builders who like those in Nehemiah 4 have 'a mind to work' for the Lord," Grober concluded.

Diane Parker named associate on BSU state staff

A long-planned restructuring of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Baptist Student Union department has culminated with the hiring of a new BSU associate. Diane Parker will begin work with the department on July 15.

"We have been trying to fill this position for two years, but did not want to do so without an evaluation of current staff strength," said department director David James.



Parker

"One of the great needs that emerged was that of strong leadership in part-time BSU, and that person is (associate director) George Sims," explained James. "At that point, we moved George's responsibilities to part-time BSU, assisting me in all personnel work, to spend extra time and effort working with alumni and maintenance and development of property."

That left a need—a program associate who could coordinate student missions and develop a strong state-level discipleship and evangelism emphasis.

"In looking for someone, Diane became the key person," James said, citing "her experience in BSU, her strong commitment to student missions, personal discipleship and heart for evangelism."

Parker has 17 years of experience with BSU, coming to Arkansas for Southwestern Oklahoma State University where she served as associate BSU director for 14 years. Parker currently is on a six-month sabbatical project with the Northwest Baptist Convention in Oregon. She is a graduate of Oklahoma City University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Every step of the way we have been affirmed in our choice and we believe we'll have a strong team," James said. "Our staff emphasis will be to equip and encourage our directors to reach lost students, disciple them, and involve them in ministry."

BSU students put faith into action during spring break mission trips

By Colleen Backus
Arkansas Baptist

Images of college students on spring break often are quite negative, centering on reckless behavior on the beach and overindulgent behavior. But many Arkansas college students spent their spring break time taking their Christian faith to others through trips sponsored by the Baptist Student Unions on their campuses. More than 290 students from 11 Baptist Student Union campuses participated in projects in Jamaica, Mexico, New Orleans, Ecuador, Wyoming, Chicago, Iowa, Washington D.C., Philadelphia and Florida, as well as here in Arkansas.

"BSUs have always done special projects," explained George Sims, associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention BSU department. "Spring break projects have become a good way to involve students in missions. The short-term projects don't interfere with summer jobs and other commitments like the longer term projects do." The interest in short-term projects has become great enough to involve students not only on a state and national level, but even internationally.

'A completely changed outlook'

"Often students come back with a completely changed outlook," Sims observed. "They realize that if they can go across the country and do ministry, then they can do it at home."

Nine students from the University of Arkansas at Monticello invested their spring break time at campuses in Arkansas' partnership state of Iowa. The students distributed surveys inquiring about the spiritual climate at three different campuses.

"It wasn't as hard to reach out as I thought it would be," said Lisa Watson, a senior from Arkansas City. "There are a lot of lonely people on the campus. We just need to take the time to get to know them and share Christ with them."

David Young, director of Baptist Campus Ministries at Iowa State University, is excited about the possibilities for students as an outgrowth of the Iowa/Arkansas partnership. "It was encouraging to our students just that other Baptists know they exist. The students from Arkansas brought with them a strong commitment to missions and ministry."

Arkansas State University's BSU mounted a trip to Jamaica in cooperation with two Jonesboro Baptist churches, Walnut Street Church and First Church. The 37 students and seven sponsors included two music groups, a drama group

and puppet team and a dentist. The impetus for the trip began two years ago when ABSC Brotherhood director Glendon Grober approached Arliss Dickerson, BSU director for ASU, about the possibility.

The teams performed assemblies in schools for more than 2,400 elementary to high schoolage students. They also painted a school and a church, led worship services, performed concerts and held four dental clinics. Students assisted a Jonesboro-area dentist who pulled 135 teeth in clinic locations that included a choir loft in a Jamaica Baptist church.

All this was quite an experience in a country that has no Southern Baptist missionaries, Dickerson explained. "We took all of our own food—more than 40 trunks of it. We stayed at a Baptist camp built years ago by North Carolina Baptists, and coordinated all of our activities through local Jamaican pastors." Five Jamaicans were brought to the Lord through individual witnessing, he commented.

Another Arkansas campus launched two mission trips during spring break. Ouachita Baptist University's BSU leadership took teams both to Florida and Ecuador. BSU director Ian Cosh decided that even though OBU usually mounts an international mission trip in the summer, more students could be involved if an international spring break trip was available in addition to a national trip.

Cosh took a group to Florida where they worked with churches, led revival services and performed contemporary Christian drama. Two groups worked at a county fair with "carnies," the itinerant workers who travel from city to city with the fair. One student group assisted with a dental clinic for the workers, and the other distributed balloons and "power bracelets" to witness to children.

Ouachita's BSU associate, Kristi Langemeier, led the trip to Ecuador. Working with Southern Baptist missionaries in Guyaquil, the 25-student team concentrated on youth ministry, conducting Vacation Bible School and visitation, as well as providing church services for all ages.

"For a lot of the students it was their first time out of the country," Langemeier said. "It was an eye-opening experience for them. Some were concerned about the language barrier, and were amazed how it wasn't a problem. They built relationship so quickly."

"It was really an encouragement, she added. "The students realized 'If I can share my faith in another country, I can do it at home.' They really experienced missions."



Foreign Missions: (1 to r) Alan Reed, UALR and Deborah Packwood, OBU, Kazakhstan; Gillian Pate, ATU and Chris Qualls, ASU, Israel; Vladimir Martinez, U of O, El Salvador.



Guatemala: (front row, 1 to r) Jennifer Fowler, PCCG; Toni Clayton, WBC; Tara Smith, ASU; Rebecca Bearden, WBC; Dani Rhynes, ATU outreach coordinator; (back row, 1 to r) Jerry Mayer, WACC; Todd Cochran, WACC; Scott Crabb, ATU; Kenny Sandefur, UAF; Darrel Ray, BSU director, WACC.



Children's Home: (1 to r) Diana Habeger, RMCC; Crystal Taber, WACC; Kristi Bowen, UAM; Ava McDaniel, WBC; Beth LeDuc, WBC; Laura McCammon, UCA; (back row) Billy Layton, ASU; Doug Robertsón, UAF; Nathan Jowers, UAF.

Arkansas stu prepare to min around the v

Baptist Student Union members from throughout Arkansas are providing financial support for 57 of their peers to be involved in summer missions, according to George Sims, BSU associate director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

BSU members on campuses across the state provide the annual financial support which pays expenses and stipends for students who participate in the 10-week ministry effort.

This summer's BSU ministry fields will range from Israel to Iowa, with students also serving in El Salvador and Kazakhstan in the former Soviet Union. A team of nine students will participate in a nine-day mission trip to Guatemala.

Out-of-state assignments, in addition to Iowa, will include California, Florida, Hawaii, Texas and Washington, D.C., as well as a team of 10 students who will serve in mission centers in New Orleans.

Ministry opportunities in Arkansas include a team of summer missionaries who will work for the Arkansas



Resort/Construction: (front, 1 to r) Johnnie Willkinton, ASU; Kristine Shikle, ASU; Natasha Barton, WBC; (back) Jim Brown, UAF; Rex Peters, UCA; Kenny Sandefur, UAF; Tony Christensen, OBU; Terry Tolbert, UAF (not pictured: Karon Edge, OBU).

Students
Minister
World

BSU



BSU Share Team: (front row, l to r) Jennifer Lanier, UAM; Valerie Loftis, UALR; Michelle Eason, UGA; (back) Jason Langley, ASU; Paul McClung, WBC; Greg Taylor, WBC.

Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries. Others will be involved in resort ministries and construction teams.

In addition to the 57 students appointed through state BSU efforts, Sims said approximately 50 other students are being appointed directly by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Describing the BSU and HMB efforts as "companion programs," Sims said students in both programs will be involved in such activities as church-planting, children's ministries and inner-city mission work.

Sims said the purpose of the summer missions program is to send students to ministry settings where needs would otherwise go unmet. As an example, he noted that Arkansas summer missionaries reported more than 200 professions of faith in Christ last summer.

"The benefit in the lives of the students," he added, "is to get a new vision of what missions is all about and how to be involved in missions throughout their lives."



New Orleans: (front, l to r) Dawn Turney, UAF; Carolyn Yopping, WBC; Paula Davis, UAF; (middle) Amy Berry, UAM; Trevia Mansell, WBC; Melissa Allen, ATU; (back) Jamie Harmon, WBC; Junior Jaques, WBC; Brad Kinsey, UAF; Roy Zimmerman, UCA.



Out of State: (l to r) Jimmy Austin, ASU, Iowa; Holly Seegers, ASU, California; Marla McDiarmid, SAU, Iowa; Christy Cowling, OBU, Hawaii; Jennifer Snouden, OBU, Texas; Tammy Northcutt, OBU, Florida; Alou Nain, WBC, Washington D.C.



Home Mission Board Appointments: (front row, l to r) Amy Bass, WBC; Denise Reavus, SAU; Amy Casey, RMCC; (middle) Renae Butler, WBC; Mollie Ruth Rains, ATU; (back) James Pase, SAU-Tech; Christian Gann, UALR; Joey Cobble, UALR.

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

Staff changes

Mark W. Jones resigned April 30 as minister to youth and college at Central Church in North Little Rock. He has accepted the position of minister to students at First Baptist Church in North Augusta, S.C.

Al Green began serving May 2 as pastor of First Church of Gould. A graduate of Baptist Christian College in Shreveport, La., he has been serving as pastor of First Southern Church, Bearden. Green and his wife, Charlotte, have three children, Matthew, Christie and Aaron.

Howard Pankey began serving April 18 as pastor of Ravenden Springs Church. Pankey and his wife, Carolyn, live at Imboden where he serves as Cedar Glade Encampment manager.

Reggie Lisebmy began serving May 9 as part-time interim youth minister for First Church of Fordyce. He is an evangelist and manages the Psalms Youth Camp south of Kingsland.

Glynn Tyson resigned April 18 as pastor of Trinity Church in El Dorado, following four years of service. He began serving May 2 as pastor of Luella First Baptist

Church in Sherman, Texas. Tyson, while in Arkansas, was moderator of Liberty Association.

Ken Stogsdill joined the staff of Central Church in Magnolia May 2 as minister of music. He moved there from Fort Smith where he had served for seven years on the staff of East Side Church.

Lindall L. Apon has joined the staff of East Side Church in Fort Smith as minister to students. He moved there from Eastern Heights Church in Muskogee, Okla., where he was minister of youth. Apon is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Crystal, have a son, Austin Seth.

Tommy Hough is serving as interim music director for First Church of Booneville. He is a member of Windsor Park Church in Fort Smith. Hough and his wife, Julie, have a son, Will.

Lamar Frizzell is serving as pastor of West Acres Church in West Helena, coming there from Lakeshore Estates Mission in Marion. Frizzell is a student at Mid-America Seminary. He and his wife, Penny, have two children, Joshua and Jonathan.

Steve Tanner resigned May 16 as pastor of First Church, Hector. He has moved to Harrison where he is employed.

Joseph D. Hurst joined the staff of Runyan First Church in North Little Rock May 16 as minister of music and youth, coming there from First Church of Paris. Hurst, a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, also has served other Arkansas churches, including Highway Church in North Little Rock, Indianhead Lake Church of Sherwood and Westside Church of Warren. He and his wife, Teresa, have a son, Joseph.

Doug Hixson is serving as pastor of Prosperity Church at Ramsey. He is a student at Ouachita Baptist University and the son of Rev. and Mrs. L.W. Hixson of Hampton where his father is pastor of Grace Church.

Julie Snider will join the staff of Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock June 6 as summer youth intern. She is a student at Ouachita Baptist University.

Church news

Nettleton Church in Jonesboro recorded its highest Sunday School attendance April 11. The attendance of 789 surpassed the

Runyan First Church celebrates 25th anniversary

"A strengthened evangelism emphasis is our goal for the future," noted pastor Gary Wise as Runyan First Church of North Little Rock observed its 25th anniversary April 25.

Runyan First Church was launched as a mission of First Church of Gravel Ridge in September, 1963, following a tent revival. There were 20 present for the first Sunday School service Sept. 29, 1963, and 154 were in attendance for the 25th anniversary celebration. The mission was constituted as Runyan Church April 28, 1968, and became Runyan First Church in 1974. North Pulaski Association and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention provided financial assistance in early organizational efforts.

During the church's first 25 years, there have been numerous building improvements, including the construction of a family life center in 1987.

Wise, who became pastor Oct. 1,

1989, reflected that all areas of the church are of vital importance. "We have a very successful bus ministry through which we reach many children and youth," he said. "Our Wednesday evening missions and music awareness programs are well attended, as are Sunday morning services and therefore all meeting space is filled.

"We also have a strong Tuesday evening visitation program that has grown from nine to 25 regular participants. To achieve this we changed schedules and are having a Tuesday evening visitation meal rather than a Wednesday evening meal," he said.

Participating in the anniversary celebration were Don Moore, ABSC executive director; Marvin Peters, associational director of missions; Verlon Stone; Jerry Bonds; and former pastors Hank Harrington, Eugene Irby and Bill Phillipier. Morning Star provided special music.



Pastor Gary Wise (right) holds a three-year service plaque that was presented by chairman of deacons Willie Morse as a part of the anniversary service.

previous high of 749 set in April 1992. The 1993 attendance included 135 in the preschool division and approximately 100 in the young adult division. Stan Ballard is pastor and Dave McKinney is minister of education.

University Church in Fayetteville collegiate choir, The New Creations, recently returned from a choral tour, ministering to the people of Guadalajara and Merida, in the Yucatan Peninsula. The tour included performances in churches, high schools, for the mayor of Merida, in a state prison where 50 professions of faith were made, on Mexican television and in Mayan temples. Jack Bedford serves as choir director.

Mena First Church ordained Rick Lochala to the deacon ministry April 18.

Warren First Church ordained Marlin Raines to the deacon ministry April 25.

Mulberry First Church was in a revival April 11-14 that resulted in 91 decisions, 75 of which were professions of faith in Christ. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was the evangelist. Jim Box is pastor.

Osecoia First Church honored Jean Stracener May 2 in recognition of 10 years of service as church secretary. Stracener has completed a total of 17 years as church secretary, including an earlier seven-year tenure.

Park Hill Church in Arkadelphia celebrated 40 years of service April 18 by dedicating a new activities building.

The 4,000-square-foot building houses five classrooms and department room upstairs while downstairs there is a conference-classroom, a kitchen, bathrooms and a basketball half court that can be used for a fellowship hall and other activities.

Because of their volunteer efforts under the direction of L.D. Corn, building supervisor, the church owes only \$21,000 on the facility which is valued at \$80,000.

Members of the long-range planning committee included Charles Holland, chairman, Mary Francis, Sharon Hearnberger, Nancy Sumner, J.T. Collins, Steve Garner and Charles McAnally.

The dedication speaker was Garland Brackett, a former pastor. Bobby Cook is pastor.



Bryant First Southern Church held a service April 11 to dedicate a preschool area that is designed to triple the church's capacity to minister in that area. John Oldner served as building committee chairman for the project that is valued at \$220,000. Jim Lagrone, pastor, led the dedication prayer as members held hands around the new facility. Lagrone reported that a "Growing Forward" stewardship campaign also was launched April 11. Funds from the campaign will be used to begin another building phase, planned for July.

sas, Indiana and Kentucky. In addition, he had served as director of music and education for First Church of Princeton, Ky. He had been a member of the Arkansas Baptist and Southern Baptist Directors of Missions Fellowships. His funeral services were held April 22 at Central Church of Hot Springs where he was a member. His survivors are his wife, Clara Holton Overton; three sons, James Floyd Overton of Clinton, Iowa, Kenneth Wayne Overton of Marked Tree and Charles Alan Overton of Lexington, Ky.; three sisters; and six grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the Central Association building fund, 928 W. South Street, Benton, AR 72015.

Lola M. Melton of Mountain Home died May 2 at age 73. She was the wife of Troy Melton, a former director of missions for White River Association. A lifelong Southern Baptist, she was a member of First Church of Mountain Home. Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Jerry Maxine Sanders of Little Rock died April 25 at age 87. She was a member of Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock where her son, Paul R. Sanders, is pastor. Other survivors are two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Mansel H. Howie, 75, of Heber Springs died April 28. A retired Southern Baptist minister, he had served as pastor of Parkway Church, Lake Village, and as interim pastor of Pleasant Ridge Church. Survivors are his wife, Mary Jo Howie; a son, Mikiel Howie of Judsonia; a brother; a sister; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Correction: A reporting error concerning Jack Porter was published in the April 22 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist News-magazine*. Porter, who recently retired as pastor of First Church, Marmaduke, may be contacted at P.O. Box 418, Charleston, AR 72933; phone 501-965-2563

Oscar Golden retires from 29-year pastorate

Oscar Golden has announced his retirement as pastor of Calvary Church in Benton, effective June 6.

Golden began his service at Calvary June 1, 1964, coming there from Piney

Church in Hot Springs. Under his leadership, the church embarked in August of 1964 on a building program that was dedicated in January 1966. There have been two additional building expansion programs since that time.

Calvary Church is honoring Golden and his wife, Betty, during the month of May with special music and testimonies each Sunday morning. They will be honored June 6 during the Sunday morning service and with a 2 p.m. reception to which the public is invited.

Following his retirement, Golden will be available for supply preaching and to lead revivals. He may be contacted at 1302 N. Olive, Benton, AR 72015; phone 501-778-8297.



Obituaries

Carl M. Overton of Hot Springs died April 19 at age 71. A native of Arkansas, he was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College (University) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Overton, a former director of missions for Central Association, had served as pastor of churches in Arkan-

Williams Baptist College

WBC Library receives grant — The Felix Goodson Library recently received a \$4,500 grant from the Union Pacific Foundation to purchase CD-ROM workstations to access databases which support the 11 baccalaureate degrees offered at WBC. The Union Pacific Foundation has given the library a total of \$15,500 in grants during the past three years.

Professor elected — Rodney Reeves, chairman of the WBC department of religion and philosophy, recently was elected vice president/president-elect of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion.

Ouachita Baptist University

Summer school scheduled — Two summer sessions for 1993 have been scheduled at OBU. The first session is set for June 7 - July 8 and the second session is scheduled for July 12 - August 6. Registration for the first session will on Monday, June 7. For more information contact Mike Kolb, registrar and director of admissions, OBU Box 3757, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; phone 245-5578.

OBU listed on honor roll — OBU has

been listed on the fifth annual John Templeton Foundation Honor Roll for Character Building Colleges and Universities. The Pensacola, Fla.-based foundation recognized 111 institutions from a field of more than 900.

OBU student honored — Brian Davidson of Lewisville, a sophomore accounting major in OBU's Frank D. Hickingbotham School of Business, placed third in the national Americanism Educational League Private Enterprise College Essay contest. This year's topic, chosen by Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Friedman, was "Parental choice in education — how broad?"

Professor selected for fellowship — William D. Downs Jr., chairman of OBU's communications department, has been chosen as a 1993 Poynter Teaching Fellow. The fellowships are awarded to com-

munications specialists each year to further acquaint them with the latest trends in scholastic and commercial journalism.

McBeth elected bandmaster president — W. Francis McBeth, professor of music at OBU, was elected president of the American Bandmasters Association (ABA) at its recent convention in New Orleans. McBeth will serve as president of the ABA for the 1993-94 term and will preside during its joint convention with the Japanese Bandmasters Association in March 1994 in Hawaii. He has been a member of the OBU faculty since 1957.

Stagg elected to post — Robert Stagg, the J.C. and Mae F. Fuller professor of Bible at OBU, was recently elected President of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, Southwestern Regional Section, for 1993-94. He joined the Ouachita faculty in 1968.

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The Executive Board will provide each pastor a set of three tapes recorded during the 1992 Baptist Men's Prayer Retreat at First Baptist Church of Little Rock. Henry Blackaby's messages proved to be very meaningful and inspiring, and the Executive Committee and the Operating Committee of the Executive Board voted to send the tapes to all Arkansas Pastors that request them, at no charge. If you would like these tapes, please send your request to:

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NEWS NOTES

State building tour slated for July

Arkansas Baptists' summer state building tour will take place July 19-23 under the leadership of Gary Nicholson, a consultant with the Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department. Churches interested in assistance with building needs can schedule on-site visits through Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department.

"The state building tours are designed to assist churches that are contemplating building, remodeling, relocating or which need long-range studies with relationship to properties and buildings," said Ed Hinkson, an associate in the ABSB Sunday School department. "Some churches may need to reallocate usage to facilitate growth, where others may need to refurbish or create a different atmosphere, especially in the worship area.

"The neat thing about church architecture department involvement has to do

with their understanding of the program, and therefore allowing proper space to do the program," Hinkson continued. He added that the service does not replace the need for a church to employ an in-state architect to design major specifications to address local codes.

Gary Nicholson, who has an architectural degree from the University of Texas, has also served on a church staff.

Fees for the service range from \$55 for a small church on-site consultation to \$180 for a church exceeding 1,500 in membership. There are additional charges for sketches and plan reviews. The state building tours take place three times a year, usually in March, July and October.

For additional information about the building tour, or to schedule a consultation, contact Ed Hinkson at 376-4791, ext. 5128. The deadline for scheduling on-site visits is July 1.

Anthony to join BSU staff at UALR



Anthony

Anna Anthony, who has been serving as interim assistant Baptist Student Union director at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock since Jan. 1, recently began serving permanently in that position.

Anthony is a graduate of Southwest Missouri State University and has completed one year as a chaplain's intern at

East Mississippi State Hospital. She is married to Tommy Anthony, who is on staff at Calvary Church in Little Rock. They have three children.

"UALR BSU is very fortunate to have someone of Mrs. Anthony's training, experience and Christian character," said Dan McCauley, director of the BSU on the Little Rock campus.

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FMB cuts 37 jobs due to budget shortfalls

RICHMOND, VA (BP)—Thirty-seven jobs, representing 8 percent of its 450 home office positions, are being cut by the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board.

Most of the cutback will be in effect by June 1. A few people close to retirement are being allowed to work several more months until their planned retirement date.

The board's interim president, Don Kammerdiener, said a reduction in home office expenses was necessary because of "shortfalls in Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon giving as well as some decline in investment income caused by the decline in interest rates."

In a message sent to mission board trustees, he said the cuts include support level, professional and management positions. With the reductions, the board will be able to reduce its staff salary and benefits expenditures by "more than \$1 million annually," he wrote trustees.

Kammerdiener noted 10 of the positions being cut were vacant. The remaining 27 people, including 14 support staff and 13 professional or management staff members, were notified May 5.

For those losing their jobs, the board will provide full pay, continuing insurance and pension participation for three to six months, depending on years of service. They also will be paid for unused leave time.

The board will cover the cost of at least two months' professional assistance to secure another job. A two-day training

seminar will be provided, along with individual assistance in resume preparation, job search counseling and job interview training.

Kammerdiener said these stateside budget cuts will be accompanied by reductions in the board's overseas budget, but these have not yet been determined. He estimates the Foreign Mission Board will have \$1.5 million less funding available for 1994.

Of the board's \$183.8 million budget for 1993, 12.2 percent, or \$22.4 million, was allocated for stateside administrative and promotional expenses. Staff salaries and benefits make up \$15.5 million of the stateside total.

'We have no choice'

"While we regret that this (staff reduction) is necessary, we have no choice but to move on with the reduction of some home office jobs," Kammerdiener said in his explanation to staff.

He noted the study included only positions for which the president is directly responsible and did not include those filled by trustee election. The elected administrators include the president, executive vice president, vice presidents, area directors and others constituting the global strategy group.

Arkansas trustee Jack Bledsoe, director of missions for Carey Association, told the *Arkansas Baptist News Magazine* that the cuts "will help us bring the 1993 budget

into balance." He said trustees and administrators "are still in the process of formulating our 1994 budget."

Bledsoe said Kammerdiener "is to be commended for his astuteness in addressing the budget shortfall. We were in a real bind."

While "we have to find a way to motivate Southern Baptists to make up the shortfall," Bledsoe, "I think we're going to have to do some re-evaluation.... We have to adjust to the realities we face."

Bob Shoemaker, executive assistant to Kammerdiener, said the downsizing included the loss of four computer programmers; dissolving the missionary enlistment department and placing its administrative staff in other existing FMB slots; eliminating the Baptists Living Abroad, Tentmaker and CEO program of mission opportunities for Baptist laypeople living or traveling overseas; and significant downsizing of the word processing unit, with technology allowing more work to be done in administrative office.

In conjunction with the downsizing of staff, Kammerdiener announced the board will not renew its contract with David Barrett, consultant to the board's World Evangelization Research Center. Barrett, who has been related to the board since 1985, was a missionary and research officer based in Nairobi, Kenya, for the Anglicans before moving to Richmond, Va. Barrett, 65, is considered one of the top missions strategists in the world.

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Fourth administrator to leave Southern

LOUISVILLE, KY (ABP) — David Wilkinson has resigned after more than six years as vice president for seminary relations at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Wilkinson is the fourth administrator to step down since March 26, when trustees elected Albert Mohler to succeed Roy Honeycutt as seminary president.

"In the context of dramatic changes at Southern Seminary, Melanie (his wife) and I believe this decision comes at an opportune time for the seminary's new administration and for us," Wilkinson told the Kentucky Baptist Western Recorder.

"This decision was made without regrets but with an overwhelming sense of grief. For me, Southern Seminary has consistently represented the best of what it

means to be a Baptist Christian, and my prayer is that the seeds of this precious heritage will continue and find fertile ground in Baptist life."

Wilkinson, 38, is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Southern Seminary. He joined the seminary in his present capacity in 1987. Previously he was information specialist at the Baptist Sunday School Board, 1976-77; staff writer and then director of news and information services at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, 1977-79; associate editor of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's newspaper, *World Mission Journal*, 1979-81; director of communications at Southern Seminary, 1981-83; and director of news and information at the Christian Life Commission, 1984-87.

Saturday Evening Post features SBC

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Southern Baptists are featured in a four-page article in *The Saturday Evening Post's* May-June issue: "Southern Baptists: Beyond the Stained-Glass Windows." A similar article appeared in the April 1983 issue.

The new article highlights Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts after Hurricane Andrew; the Southern Baptist Convention's ethnic diversity; and the mix of some 50 megachurches in a convention with a "backbone" of smaller churches. It also deals with the conservative direction of the SBC after "a decade-long struggle... between conservative and moderate forces."

The Saturday Evening Post commissioned James C. Hefley, writer-in-residence at Hannibal-LaGrange College in Missouri, to do the article. Each SBC church will receive a sample reprint this month.

Marjorie Grober, president of the Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union, is among Southern Baptist leaders quoted in the mailing. She notes that the article "clarifies the freedom each church has to decide the financial support they will give to the Cooperative Program," adding that the article "is an encouragement to Southern Baptists and others by reminding us of the many positives in our denominational life."

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Basic passage: John 14

Focal passage: John 14:1-21

Central truth: We are equipped to make it through difficult days.

Troubled events have occurred causing confusion in the minds of Christ's disciples. Jesus has just predicted His forthcoming death. He then insists on washing the feet of His followers (the task of servant, not the Messiah). And if that wasn't enough, He predicts the betrayal by Judas and the denial of Peter. His next words seem almost contradictory to the previous events. "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (14:1). How did He expect them (and us) to stand with peace and certainty in the midst of turmoil and uncertainty?

First, we need to be reminded that we can trust the words of Jesus! While that may seem very basic, many followers question the faithfulness of the Lord during times of difficulty. Jesus proclaimed all the truth that we need to know to be overcomers in this world and beyond. If there was more that we needed to know, He would have told us (v. 2). Trust Him!

Philip's statement is so typical of believers today (v. 9). "Lord, show us just a little more, and then we shall be convinced!" The Lord has been faithful to give His word, His promises and His presence in our lives, but we faithfully seek for more tangible evidence. In so doing, we are asking the Lord to take away the foundational element of our relationship with Him...faith.

Can we make it through difficult times? Dependent on our own wisdom and strength, we cannot. By His power in us, we have His promise to overcome (v. 12). This promised power is channeled through our lives when we align our will with His will, and faithfully communicate with Him through prayer (vv. 14-15). He wants us to know His plan more than we could ever want to know it. He wants us to experience His power more than we could ever desire to experience it.

Remember that we are not alone (v. 16). Believe His truth, step out by faith, allow Him to be your source of power and enjoy His presence each and every day! Trust Him!

This lesson treatment is based on the International Bible Lesson for Christian Teaching, Uniform Series. Copyright International Council of Education. Used by permission.

Life and Work

Cooperative ministry

By Roy F. Lewis, pastor, Forest Tower
Church, Hensley

Basic passage: Acts 9:15-31

Focal passage: Acts 9:17-18, 23-31

Central truth: Service for God is enhanced and expedited by the support and assistance of fellow Christians.

Paul the apostle, prior to his conversion, may have been strongly influenced by Stephen's behavior and prayer during Stephen's stoning. Even then God was preparing others to help Paul in his ministry.

One such helper was Ananias (v. 17). Through his personal help, Paul's eyesight was restored, and Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. It also is quite likely that Ananias gave to Paul some basic instruction in the Christian faith and encouraged him to be baptized (v. 18b).

Paul, by becoming a believer, lost his earlier friends. The same Jews who had awaited his arrival in Damascus and would have helped him locate and persecute the Christians, now turned on Paul and would have killed him (v. 23).

Other believers came to Paul's rescue (v. 25). Their assistance was not given to one of whom they were unsure, but was based on their personal observation of Paul's ministry over a period of some months.

Yet Paul still encountered suspicion on the part of believers at Jerusalem (v. 26). Some have interpreted this verse as the first recorded instance of a believer's rejection for church membership.

Barnabas then became Paul's advocate and sponsored him for church membership (v. 27). This illustrates the need for what Baptists call the church letter.

Based on the recommendation of Barnabas, acceptance by the Jerusalem believers was then extended to Paul (v. 28). Paul was then able to resume his dynamic and effective preaching (v. 29a).

More trouble for Paul was quick in coming (v. 29b), but Paul's fellow believers again assisted him (v. 30). The net result was progress in all the churches (v. 31).

The ministry of Paul is outstanding, but his ministry would have been severely handicapped and limited without the support and assistance of other believers.

This lesson treatment is based on the Life and Work Curriculum for Southern Baptist Churches, copyright by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Used by permission.

Bible Book

Salvation offered to all

By Marvin Reynolds, DOM, Mississippi
County Association

Basic passage: Isaiah 44:24-48:22

Focal passage: Isaiah 45:22

Central truth: God's salvation is for everyone who will receive it.

In Isaiah 44:24-28, God proclaimed Himself as the redeemer of His people, even though at the time they were in Babylonian captivity. The Lord further stated that Jerusalem and other cities of Judah would be rebuilt (Isa. 44:26). He also told the means by which His people would be set free.

God chose to use Cyrus, a Persian king, to destroy Babylon (Isa. 44:28 and Isa. 44:1-2). Babylon was very proud and boasted that she was a queen among nations that could never be destroyed (Isa. 47:7). Because of wickedness her destruction would come quickly (Isa. 47:8-9).

God in His providence knew Cyrus would free the Jews and provide financial support to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. There is no evidence Cyrus knew the Lord. God's use of him demonstrates that it is God who controls history. As God used Pharaoh to further His purpose, He used Cyrus to do the same.

Chapters 46-48 of Isaiah deal with the destruction coming to Babylon, God's sovereignty, and His word of comfort and instruction to His people.

Some of God's people had become comfortable in Babylon and reluctant to leave. They had no doubt built houses as Jeremiah had told them to do (Jer. 29:4-5) and had become attached. However, God had a work for them to do. He had not called them to sit, but to serve. In Isaiah 48:20, God told them to go forth from Babylon and to go forth singing, for their God had redeemed them. God forbid that we as His people today would be found sitting when we should be serving.

Most of the prophecy in chapters 44-48 deal with the Jews being saved out of captivity. However, God extends His salvation to take in the whole world when He says, "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22).

One song says that He's got the whole world in His hands. Isaiah 45:22 says that He's got the whole world on His heart. God offers His salvation to everyone but only those who receive it by faith will be saved (John 3:16).

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Convention Uniform

Joy in partnership

By Roland Chappell, pastor, First Church, Dell

Basic passage: Philippians 1
Focal passage: Philippians 1:1-11, 25-30

Central truth: Real joy comes from working together with God and His people.

When I was a boy, we attended the Saturday movies. The hero got into some impossible situations, and we were concerned for his safety. Then, just when things seemed hopeless, help arrived and together the bad guys were defeated and right prevailed.

Paul was in an impossible situation. He was in a Roman prison for preaching the gospel of Christ. His future was indeed bleak and uncertain. Then, word came from his beloved church at Philippi as Ephroditus brought their offering to Paul. No, the Romans did not flee as in the movies, but Paul was greatly encouraged. He was reminded that he was not alone. The church stands ready to share with him all his trials. In response to this reminder, Paul wrote to them a thank-you note that has become our handbook on Christian joy and service.

Paul joyfully prayed for the church and thanked God for their continued partnership with him in the work. What joy fellow laborers provide. We are partners with Christ in His work, and as believers, partners with each other for Christ. Paul and the church shared the same task and goal. There is always joy in victory when pastor and people share trials, labor and victory in partnership.

Joy in partnership springs from our love for each other. Paul prays that their love would abound more and more. Love is the cement that holds partnership together and produces real joy. One unarguable evidence that Christ is real is our love for each other.

Another way we show Christ to be real is in how we endure trials in faithfulness. Paul did not say he enjoyed trials or that they were easy. He did say that God used trials to win lost and give courage to believers. In my ministry, I have visited many who were terminally ill. I go to encourage and come away rejoicing in the triumphant faith of these saints of God. I am strengthened by their example. We can give courage to our partners in Christ by joyful triumph in trials.

Life and Work

An unbiased witness

By James Preston, pastor, First Church, Stamps

Basic passage: Acts 10:1-11:18
Focal passage: Acts 10:34, 35

Central truth: Just as God accepts all who are willing, we are to be impartial about to whom we will witness.

Bias shapes what we do and, to a certain extent, who we are.

We have a bias toward American automobiles so we avoid import car dealerships. We have a bias against certain foods which, in our experience, have upset our stomachs. Our bias can change, however, re-training what we do and reshaping who we are.

Sometimes our bias places limits on God's desire for us. In such instances, God may work in our lives to reveal the shortcomings of our bias and encourage growth.

In this lesson, we find Peter confronted by his bias toward the Gentiles. Awakened from a dream that challenged his concept of what was acceptable to God, Peter was summoned to meet with a Gentile named Cornelius. Already seeing God's Holy Spirit at work in Cornelius, Peter's bias dramatically changed. He realized that God accepted anyone who willingly responded to the gospel.

Peter began his witness to Cornelius with the statement that God shows no partiality, but accepts those who, with reverence for God, want to do what is right.

Partiality means to "lift the face" like a king who, with bias, lifts the face of the bowing subject to whom he will show favor. God shows no such partiality. Instead, he shows favor to anyone who is willing to do right by accepting the gospel.

We are like the remorseful child who trembles with head bowed before the parent. God is like the parent who sees the child's remorse and lifts the child's chin to show her she has found favor in her parent's eyes. This is the grace of God we are to share with partiality to a world which looks to us for a sign of God's favor.

We must not turn our faces from the world because of a bias that won't let us be a witness. Instead, we are to grow beyond our bias to be a witness of God's impartial grace which He offers to all who are willing.

Bible Book

The suffering servant

By J.T. Harvill, pastor, Fairview Church, Camden

Basic passage: Isaiah 49:1-53:12
Focal passage: Isaiah 49:5-6; 53:1-12

Central truth: Jesus is triumphant in saving people through His suffering, death and resurrection.

Isaiah has used the term "servant" to identify the nation Israel. In the focal passage only Jesus could be the fulfillment of the servant in every detail.

Isaiah 49:5-6. The servant's mission is twofold. He is to bring Israel back to God and He is to be a light to all nations.

Isaiah 52:13-15. The servant will be successful in His mission. He will be exalted and lifted up very high. He will startle and amaze many nations; before Him even kings will stand speechless as they see and hear of His suffering and death.

Isaiah 53:1-3. The servant had such a humble beginning that Isaiah asked, "Who had believed our report?" Who would believe that in Jesus with His humble beginning, "a root out of dry ground," could redeem the world from sin? The world could see no beauty in Him. He was despised and rejected of men.

Isaiah 53:4-6. He suffered vicariously for others. Isaiah said, "Surely, he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our place was upon him; and with His stripes we are healed." Though he suffered all this to deliver all people from the penalty of sin.

Isaiah 53:7-9. Isaiah describes Jesus before Pilate's court to His burial in Joseph's new tomb. He opened not His mouth before Pilate and accepted His conviction and death "as a lamb that is led to the slaughter." Thus, freely giving His life as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It was the intention of the crowd that He be buried with the criminals. God, in His providence, provided a new tomb where He would be honorably buried.

Isaiah 53:10-12. The Suffering Servant was triumphant in His death. God's honor was vindicated. Christ's suffering and shed blood were accepted by the Father as the final sacrifice for man's sin. Christ was resurrected and millions have been made righteous through faith in Him. What a privilege to proclaim the glorious gospel of the triumphant Suffering Servant who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

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NEWS DIGEST

Most Americans pray to God but want to do better

GLENDAL, CA (ABP) — Nearly nine of 10 American adults pray to God, yet only one in four adults is completely satisfied with his or her prayer life. That's the finding of a nationwide poll by the Barna Research Group of Glendale, Calif.

Regular church attendance and a strong commitment to Christian beliefs are markers of the nation's most fervent prayers, according to the data. However, such distinctions make little difference in how satisfied people are with their prayer lives.

"Many Christians feel that no matter how fulfilling their prayer lives are, there is still plenty of room to grow," said George Barna, president of Barna Research Group.

Other findings indicate six in 10 Americans pray one or more times per day; prayer is a regular part of the lives of 82 percent of Americans; women are more likely to pray than men (95 percent to 83 percent); and almost all people who call themselves "born-again" Christians pray (99 percent).

Religious liberty bill passes U.S. House by voice vote

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, plagued by opposition on several points during much of its nearly three-year history, passed without resistance when it finally received a floor vote in Congress.

The House of Representatives approved RFRA (H.R. 1308) by voice vote May 11. It was the first time either house of Congress had voted on the legislation since its introduction in mid-1990.

The Senate Judiciary Committee had approved its version of the bill (S. 578) by a 15-1 vote five days earlier. It is uncertain when RFRA will be considered by the full Senate but indications are it could be before the end of May.

Fire guts part of Philippine Baptist seminary in Davao

DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES (BP)—A fire gutted several buildings at the Philippines Baptist Theological Seminary in Davao City, Philippines, and narrowly missed destroying the school's library and dormitories.

Student security guards discovered the blaze in a storage area near the classroom building, said Tony Latham, a Southern Baptist missionary, who teaches at the seminary. The fire apparently started in electrical wiring, possibly in a fan switch.

About 70 students were at the seminary but none was seriously injured. Several sustained minor burns while trying to save books and equipment from the library as the blaze approached the building, Latham said.

The fire destroyed the classroom building, the administration office, faculty offices, a conference room and a storage space.

Mercer University to consider starting divinity school

MACON, GA (ABP) — Mercer University may start its own divinity school if a study now under way proves the project feasible.

Mercer trustees agreed April 15 to conduct the study at the request of Baptist pastors in Georgia. Mercer president Kirby Godsey will appoint a committee which will bring a report to the trustees' next meeting in December.

The school joins several other Baptist colleges that either have started divinity schools or are considering such a move.

"This is not something Mercer has pushed for," said Mercer spokesman Larry Brumley. "We need to underscore the university is not going into this study with the preconceived notion that we will or won't start a divinity school." The study will determine if there is a need for a divinity school, how much it would cost, and if the financial resources are available.

Richmond Seminary adopts resolution supporting women

RICHMOND, VA (ABP) — The faculty of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond has endorsed women as ordained ministers serving in Baptist churches.

"At this moment in our history, Baptist women need to know of our affirmation of their calling, our respect for their ministry, our appreciation for their service, and our pledge to work with them in the many tasks of ministry," the faculty statement says.

The resolution comes on the heels of comments by Albert Mohler, president-elect of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, that he and most other Southern Baptists are opposed to women serving in pastoral roles.

The resolution from the moderate-backed Richmond seminary does not mention women pastors but affirms women in all church roles, "whatever that ministry may be."