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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 92, Number 11

June 3, 1993



23-year foreign missions veteran nominated as FMB president

**"If I'm elected, it will affirm
the priority of the board's
missions agenda and hopefully
encourage missionaries, staff
and Southern Baptists about the
future of foreign missions."**

— Jerry Rankin

Foreign Mission Board area director
for Southern Asia and the Pacific



Arkansas Baptist institutions award degrees to 274 graduates

Arkansas' Baptist colleges recently held commencement activities, with a total of 274 graduates from the two institutions.

Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia awarded degrees to 218 graduates on May 8. Top academic honors went to Kym Rutherford of Prairie Grove, who graduated with a 4.0 cumulative grade point average. Summa cum laude honors, awarded for a grade point average of at least 3.95, went to Steven Harness of Newport Richlie, Fla., Tammy Harper of North Little Rock, and Rebekah Kinney of Fairfax, Va.

Commencement speakers included senior class president Alex Himaya from Bossier City, La. who represented the graduates, and faculty speaker William Steeger, chairman of the division of religion and philosophy. Speaking at the baccalaureate service was Little Rock attorney William H. "Buddy" Sutton, President of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Sutton was also awarded an honorary doctor of law degree at commencement exercises. Katie Speer of Hot Spring County was awarded an honorary doctor of letters degree.

Distinguished alumnus degrees were awarded to Dave Herrington of Little Rock and Carl P. Ramsey of Manning, S.C.

The outstanding faculty award was presented to Hal Bass, professor of political science at an awards banquet preceding commencement. At the same event, two students were selected for the Senior Ouachitoman Man and Woman by the OBU faculty as those who best reflect traits of exemplary students.

Chosen for honors this year were Jay Hefflin, a senior business administration major from Little Rock, and Beth Anne Rankin, a senior music theory/composition major from Magnolia.

Williams Baptist College awarded degrees to 56 students, 45 with bachelor's degrees and 11 with associate degrees. The college awarded its first bachelor of science degrees with a major in psychology to 10 graduates.

Top academic honors went to Toni Carrol Clayton of Paragould, who graduated with a 4.0 cumulative grade point average. Eleven other students graduated with honors.

Speaking at the commencement was Dr. R.W. Ross, a Fort Smith physician who is president of the WBC board of trustees.

The Distinguished Baptist Lady award was presented to Maxine Neece Bracy of Walnut Ridge. Distinguished Baptist Layman was Cleo C. White of Jonesboro and Distinguished Baptist Minister was awarded to James McDaniel of Brinkley.

At a previous honors ceremony, James Dwayne Bolin, assistant professor of history, was presented with the outstanding faculty award.

At the same event, two students were presented with the Mr. and Mrs. WBC awards. Scotty Smith, a senior church music major from Smithville, and Toni Clayton, a senior elementary education major from Paragould, received the awards. They were chosen by the college faculty and administration on the basis of their academic achievement, leadership qualities, campus involvement and determination to succeed.

Cover Story



FMB nominee 3

Jerry Rankin, a 23-year veteran of Southern Baptist foreign missions, has been unanimously nominated by the Foreign Mission Board search committee as the next FMB president. Rankin currently is FMB area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific.

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Rankin nominated as next FMB president

By Robert O'Brien
SBC Foreign Mission Board

BEDFORD, TX (BP)—A search committee seeking a president for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reached into the ranks of its overseas administrators and has unanimously nominated Jerry A. Rankin.

Rankin, 51, a 23-year veteran of missions from Mississippi, has served as the board's area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific since 1987.

Board trustees will vote on Rankin at a called meeting June 14 in Houston, Joel Gregory, chairman of the 15-member trustee search committee, announced May 25. The trustee session, set for 2 p.m. at a location to be named, precedes the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 15-17.

If elected by the required 75 percent majority of trustees, Rankin would succeed R. Keith Parks, who retired as president Oct. 30, 1992. Parks departed earlier than planned, citing differences with trustees over his leadership role and the direction of missions.

FMB executive vice president Don Kammerdiener has served as interim president since Nov. 1, trying to maintain the morale of personnel as a series of staff and missionaries have departed and the board has cut 37 jobs in response to financial shortfalls.

Selection of Rankin ended 14 months of speculation about whom the committee would nominate to succeed Parks. Late last January it seemed near to nominating Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla. But Elliff declined the nomination.

In nominating Rankin, whom trustee chairman John Jackson called "a dark horse," the committee opted for a candidate who has focused on missions over 23 years as a missionary and administrator.

Rankin and his wife, the former Bobby Simmons, were appointed as missionaries to Indonesia in June 1970. He rose through the ranks to direct missions in Southern Asia and the Pacific. Based in Singapore, he oversees the work of 480 missionaries in 15 countries.

"If I'm elected," Rankin told Baptist Press, "it will affirm the priority of the board's missions agenda and hopefully encourage missionaries, staff and Southern Baptists about the future of foreign missions."

Rankin said he didn't anticipate his four interviews with the search committee would lead to his nomination — and even declined to continue the process at one

point. But he said he and many others had prayed all along that the next president would be someone with strong missions experience — "someone who knows where we are and where we need to go."

He said he had expected that if the committee nominated someone inside the missions structure, it would be Kammerdiener, "who has done a good job" as interim president.

"I definitely affirm Don Kammerdiener and want him to remain as executive vice president if I'm elected," Rankin said. "He's a tremendous asset."

He echoed Gregory and Jackson in saying his nomination reflected "a spiritual process in seeking the will of the Lord" — not a political one.

***"Now is the time to
move ahead with a
missions agenda —
making Jesus Christ
known to a lost world."***

— Jerry Rankin
FMB presidential nominee

Gregory said Rankin was winnowed out of 80 original candidates, including 17 whom the committee ranked in its top two tiers of potential nominees and investigated extensively.

Finally, Gregory asked each committee member to rank the top four candidates and list anyone he or she could not support. Rankin "received by far and away the most first-place votes and no negative votes," Gregory said. "When we saw that, we voted to focus solely on him until there was a determination."

"Jerry Rankin was in the top five or six candidates all along, but not until the last did he rise to the top," said Jackson, who participated as an ex officio, non-voting member of the committee. "God put it together. Only in that way could Jerry have moved past board vice presidents and pastors and other leaders around the convention. It wasn't done with arm twisting. It came on a unanimous vote. God waited until the appropriate time and let him shine forth. We were able to see him as God's choice."

As area director, Rankin operates in two worlds. He is a staff member and sits on the board's Global Strategy Group of key planners. But except for periodic stints in the FMB's home office in

Richmond, Va., he lives and works overseas.

"Even though he's in the structure, he's in a healthy sense independent of the structure," Gregory said. "We questioned him carefully about independent judgment. We have no question he will take creative initiatives internally at the board and externally in the denomination and on the mission field."

Gregory said he believes Rankin will be elected without problem. "The search committee and the trustee chairman highly commend and endorse Dr. Rankin," he said. "That group represents the full spectrum of the trustees. Dr. Rankin was elected unanimously by secret ballot. We feel that of all candidates he best fits the profile we adopted originally and Southern Baptists have commended."

Rankin said the search committee talked to him extensively about his beliefs. "They were satisfied about who I am doctrinally, theologically and denominationally, but I think that's enough to say about that. Now is the time to move ahead with a missions agenda — making Jesus Christ known to a lost world."

Gregory said Rankin "expressed commitment to the inerrancy of the Scripture and demonstrated that he understands and will embrace pluralistic missions efforts of all Southern Baptists. We feel Dr. Rankin can spearhead a great movement among all Southern Baptists for global missions."

Rankin got his first view of missions as a summer missionary for the Home Mission Board in Vermont and New York in 1962 and as a summer missionary for the Foreign Mission Board in the Philippines in 1963.

After missionary appointment, he served as a general evangelist in Indonesia, consulted in evangelism and church growth in India, served as associate to the area director for South and Southeast Asia and then administrator for mission work in India, and finally became area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific.

Rankin, a native of Tupelo, Miss., grew up in Clinton, Miss., where he received the bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College, a Baptist school, in 1964. He received the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Mississippi College.

Mrs. Rankin, a native of Mobile, Ala., received the bachelor of science degree from Mississippi College in 1966. She attended Southwestern Seminary.

The Rankins have two grown children, Lori, 24, and Russell, 23.

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABSC Executive Director

For a generation that has already been pumped full of false propaganda about sexuality, it is too late. A subtle coalition of the arts, entertainment, education, legislation and the media have combined to blitz the present youth and young adult generation with distorted and perverted views of sexual behavior. The price being paid and yet to be paid is beyond calculation.

A society that stimulates and incites its members to free-love or open sex and then prosecutes those who give expression through rape, incest, pedophilia, bestiality or homosexuality is an irrational and inconsistent society. Man will never move past reaping what he sows. There will never be enough laws, policemen or jails to control the sexual savages that our society has produced.

Sadly, except for denouncing all of this, most pastors, churches and parents have done little to change the picture. For whatever reasons, we have all been too silent and our children have been victims.

This can change now! A complete set of materials has been developed to help parents and church leaders do a better job in this delicate area. To help our people learn how to use this material effectively, a "Christian Sexuality Education Workshop" will be held June 28-29, at Parkway Place Church, Little Rock. Parents and church leaders need to come in large numbers to gain insights and confidence in using this material.

Schools cannot offer this help. Sexuality has to be based on values. Those values come from the Bible. Unless the parents and church leaders take the initiative to do something about the younger generation, there is little hope for them to have normal, meaningful family relationships. Surely we will not sit idly by and let the world dictate our children's standards and leave them open and vulnerable to the vile and vulgar behavior being encouraged today. Call for more information and registration at 376-4791, ext. 5160.

ROMA ZELTNER

Woman's Viewpoint

Some time



My mother would often say to me, "Some time, you will know."

Many times I would question her about something I did not understand. She would try to explain to me the best she could. Some of the questions were difficult, next to impossible, to answer in a way that a child could fully understand. Experience was required to clearly understand. Maturity was required. She explained all she felt I could comprehend, then would come the statement, "Some time you will understand."

Today, I am a senior adult. There are still many things I do not always understand. I believe that having a mother who took time to listen and share with me that I am capable of better accepting and understanding the "some times" of life. I believe that many of the wonderful experiences that I enjoy as a senior adult have more meaning because of a mother who took time to listen and share with me.

From a woman's viewpoint, I consider listening and sharing time a part of my responsibility to my family.

I evaluate my experiences and learnings. I realize that my mother was

the structure for me to become an initiator. This aided me in the development of self-esteem. It provided assistance in helping me to understand the importance of learning, and applying what I had learned. It strengthened me at times when I failed, yet had to keep moving on.

Today, as a senior adult I still feel joy in learning and applying experiences that give me a will to enjoy the "some time" understanding.

It is very difficult to be patient and wait on the Lord. It requires the exercising of faith. It requires the recalling of the scriptures that God always keeps His promises. It is a reminder that I must be willing to meet the requirements of the one who structures before I can properly initiate.

As a senior woman adult, I still have to wait for the right timing to enjoy the awesomeness of God.

From a woman's viewpoint—what a wonderful privilege to help my children and others to accept God as the structure and us as the initiators.

Roma Zeltner is a pastor's wife and the director of education at Westside Church, Fort Smith. She is a senior adult.

Personal perspectives

"Sexuality has to be based on values. Those values come from the Bible."
—Don Moore, executive director, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

"We must challenge teens and young unmarried adults to say, 'Abstinence is okay.'"
—Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant, Baptist Sunday School Board

"There is such a need for literacy work. This is one of the real prisons people are in today."
—Gail Williams, literacy missions coordinator, ABSC missions department

"Even the nation's government forces a bipartisan foreign policy for 'national security' purposes; why should not our denomination forge a coalition of mission support for 'eternal security' purposes?"
—Lloyd Elder, former president, Baptist Sunday School Board

The future of foreign missions

Countless Southern Baptists have prayed, watched and waited as the Foreign Mission Board presidential search committee has conducted its work. It is no exaggeration to suggest that the election of a new Foreign Mission Board president is among the most pivotal decisions facing Southern Baptists today.

Throughout the search process, speculation has centered on whether the search committee would select a prominent Southern Baptist minister clearly identified with the denomination's conservative leadership or choose someone with extensive foreign missions experience.

With the announced nomination of Jerry Rankin, search committee members have chosen to make missionary service a primary consideration. That is as it should be. Search committee chairman Joel Gregory and the members of the committee are to be commended for heeding the calls of career missionaries and many others who consider missionary service essential in fulfilling the responsibilities of the FMB presidency.

Rankin is a career missionary with 23 years of foreign missions experience. He currently is the FMB's area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific, a position he has held since 1987. Prior to that, he was administrator for mission work in India, associate to the area director for South and Southeast Asia, evangelist and church growth consultant in India and a general evangelist in Indonesia.

Initial response to the announcement of Rankin's nomination has been generally positive. Arkansas Baptist trustees serving on the Foreign Mission Board have both offered words of affirmation.

"I think it's excellent," noted Jack Bledsoe, director of missions for Carey Association. "He has proven abilities and I think he is a wise choice." Bledsoe added that one of his personal goals as a trustee is to elect a president with "extensive on-site missionary experience."

Fellow trustee Wallace Edgar, pastor of Trinity Church in Texarkana, agreed that Rankin "is an excellent choice." He described the presidential nominee as someone who "has all the credentials it takes to make it work."

Retired missionaries from Arkansas who have worked with Rankin have voiced similar views.

"I'm just thrilled to death," said Kathleen Jones, a former missionary physician in

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

By TRENNIS HENDERSON



Indonesia who now lives in Little Rock. Predicting that Rankin will be able to work with the FMB's conservative trustees, Jones noted, "I think he will be a bridge builder. He's very firm in his beliefs."

Ruth Vanderberg, a missionary nurse who served with Rankin in Indonesia, also now lives in Little Rock. "He's head and shoulders above anybody we've heard mentioned," she declared. "He served out in the boonocks. He and his wife stuck by the staff. They are truly wonderful Christian people."

Perhaps the most significant word of affirmation comes from former FMB president Keith Parks who left that position last year in a dispute with conservative trustees over missions philosophy. Parks is now missions coordinator for the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Electing Rankin as his successor "will create a great deal of relief in the minds of missionaries and missions supporters," Parks told Associated Baptist Press. "It's a much better choice than getting someone who has no missions experience."

Parks said Rankin "has a lot of gifts and a lot to commend himself for this position," adding that he "is very bright and has a clear grasp of mission principles and a background in missions experience."

Among all the words of affirmation, one question which has surfaced concerns Rankin's view of charismatic gifts, including speaking in tongues.

"I believe the gifts of the Spirit are valid and relevant to today and are used of God," Rankin told ABP. "From the standpoint of biblical authority, I don't think we can arbitrarily eliminate one or two gifts. That's an infringement on the sovereignty of God."

"From a missiological perspective," Rankin continued, "the abundance of God is moving in manifestations of power, particularly overseas and in

Third World countries."

He said the presidential search committee "has looked into this thoroughly and is convinced there is no doctrinal problem in this."

In an interview with the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, search committee chairman Gregory said, "We investigated these allegations fully."

Based on the committee's research and Rankin's testimony, "we feel there are no grounds for concern," Gregory added. He explained that Rankin, "on isolated occasions" on the mission field, found himself in ecumenical settings where speaking in tongues was practiced.

Rankin "does not encourage it, support it or practice it," Gregory declared. "We wouldn't want to promote anybody who had a proactive view of that and he certainly doesn't."

Concerning Rankin's nomination in general, Gregory said, "We were committed first of all to finding God's person, without any other agenda. We felt like we found God's man who did happen to have field experience as a missionary."

Noting that "there is a growing consensus and affirmation" of Rankin's nomination, Gregory said SBC president Ed Young, SBC Executive Committee president Morris Chapman and Baptist Sunday School Board president James Draper are among convention leaders who have affirmed Rankin's nomination.

Rankin told Baptist Press that the search committee is "satisfied about who I am doctrinally, theologically and denominationally."

"If I'm elected," he added, "it will affirm the priority of the board's missions agenda and hopefully encourage missionaries, staff and Southern Baptists about the future of foreign missions."

Seeking God's leadership and affirming the future of Southern Baptist foreign missions are, indeed, what this search process should be all about. If questions about Rankin's views on charismatic gifts can be answered to the full satisfaction of the entire board, it appears clear that his overall qualifications can serve him and Southern Baptists well in the years to come.

Regardless of the full board's final decision, it is encouraging to see missions commitment and experience as key qualifications for this vital position. All Southern Baptists should continue to pray, watch and wait as trustees seek God's leadership and direction.

Fort Smith churches address health needs

By Colleen Backus

Arkansas Baptist

With the issue of health care currently in the national spotlight, Americans are continually reminded how many people cannot afford basic medical care. Two Fort Smith congregations have channeled their awareness into action, providing free health care clinics for two specific groups — children and expectant mothers.

A free prenatal clinic had always been a dream for Dr. Randy Feezell, an obstetrician/gynecologist who practices in the Fort Smith area. A member of the missions board of East Side Church, he shared his dreams with fellow members and his pastor, John Marshall. After some time in the planning process, checking insurance and securing equipment and volunteers, the dream became a reality earlier this year.

For two hours every Tuesday evening, volunteers transform part of East Side Church into a prenatal clinic complete with reception, clerical intake, nurses, child care and an examining room. Volunteer coordinator Veta Rush, a church member with experience working in a crisis pregnancy center, has a phone line in her home where she takes appointments for the clinic. "The most patients we've seen in one evening is 34," Rush noted.

The first clinic drew 13 patients with no advertising, just word of mouth. Two local television stations have given the center some coverage, and two local crisis pregnancy centers make referrals. The clinic has seen 125 patients, and as of May, there were 88 currently in the program.

The ministry relates well with area hospitals, since it provides the institutions with medical records and adequate prenatal care for women who otherwise would have neither. One local hospital even donated all the equipment the clinic has in use.

The clinic is carefully planned so that every woman not only receives good prenatal care, but knows what other services may be available to her. "When the ladies first come in we ask them to select a hospital, and we requisition blood work and ultrasound through that hospital," Rush explained. "They talk to our 'social friends' who obtain vital information and explain what government assistance may be available." The "social friends" committee also provides a spiritual ministry follow-up.

The patients then see a nutritionist, who makes sure they are eating properly and gaining the correct amount of weight. They continue on to see the intake nurse,

have lab work done, and then see Dr. Feezell. Feezell does nearly all the examinations himself, occasionally assisted by friends in the medical community.

The clinic sees all kinds of patients in a wide variety of ages. Patients, or their husbands, frequently are working, but make "too much" to be eligible for Medicaid, yet cannot afford a private physician.

Rush commented that the ministry has been discovered by the Hispanic community. Most of the Hispanic clients are older and married, but have limited access to health care. "It's wonderful to be here for them," Rush said. "Often they can't get any assistance from the government and we are their only source of help."

"One person can't do it alone, but people helping people, with our hands interlocking, can make a big difference."

*-Linda Musgraves
Pediatric Clinic Coordinator
Fianna Hills Church, Fort Smith*

"By reaching into the community with this ministry, we can show that we love Christ," Rush explained. "We try to show our enthusiasm, that we really do care for the girls that we see — and we want to know how they're doing."

One patient, she recalled, gave birth on a Tuesday morning, and since the clinic was that evening, dropped by with her new baby on the way home. "I couldn't believe it, but she was just so grateful," Rush said.

Another Fort Smith church is ministering to the next generation by providing a free pediatric clinic to the community. The Fianna Hills Church clinic grew out of a congregational search for a mission project, and surveying the needs in the community.

Volunteer coordinator Linda Musgraves knew that her 10 years of working in a pharmacy has been preparing her for the work God would have her do. When pastor Bruce Tippitt asked her to head up the ministry, she knew the answer.

The church started talking about a free clinic five or six years ago, and Musgraves knew "that this was something I could be involved in. People are really struggling

out there, often making minimum wage," she noted. Fianna Hills Church had a ministry to fill children's prescriptions when the parents could not afford it, and understood the need for pediatric care.

"We're here to help the working family survive and make a home for their children," Musgraves said, explaining the clinic's goal. "Often parents can't afford a \$50 prescription for an ear infection," she commented, having seen such situations many times at the pharmacy where she works.

The clinic started in January and ran through May. Over the summer the church will take inventory and evaluate any needs before it picks up again in October. "We had been able to chart the need through the prescription ministry," Musgraves explained, noting that the need drops off in the summer months.

The clinic treats only children, birth to 16 years, and requires that a parent or legal guardian be with them. It is housed in a day care near low-income housing. On Thursday evenings, as soon as the day care closes, the clinic moves in and runs from 6 to 8 p.m. In its five months of operation, the clinic treated nearly 100 children. These families, like many in the prenatal clinic, often are falling through the cracks of society. They can't afford private medical care, but are ineligible for Medicaid. "The parents are so gracious," Musgraves noted. "It's been a positive ministry for our church; we provided a community service, but we've received a lot in return."

The clinic sometimes can identify other needs that are not being met. Musgraves recalled one family where the father had just left, the mother was unemployed, and the children were sick. There was no food in the house, and the family was about to be evicted. The church paid the rent, bought groceries, and treated the sick children. "It seemed like so little, but it made a world of difference to that mother," Musgraves said.

"One person can't do it alone, but people helping people, with our hands interlocking, can make a big difference."

Tommy Goode, Arkansas Baptist State Convention church and community ministries director, said many churches can make a difference, but that they must know the needs. "Part of why churches don't do ministry is because they have no idea what the needs are in their community," he said. After a study to determine needs, examine resources and the mission of the church, Goode said, congregations across the state can start the planning process to establish needed ministries in their local settings.

Campers on Mission rally has record crowd

By Millie Gill

Arkansas Baptist

When Arkansas Campers on Mission moved into Maumelle State Park May 20-23, there were more than 90 participants, marking the largest gathering of the group during its 15-year history.

"It is almost impossible to think we could have grown like this," said Pete Petty, director of special ministries for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. "There were four units and 12 people present for our first meeting on Beaver Lake near Rogers in 1978."

Petty attributed the growth of the Arkansas COM to regional divisions. "The key to our growth has been dividing the state into the central, northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest divisions," he explained. "More people have become involved because they can meet and minister within their own areas."

"When we organized in 1978 our main item of business was the enlistment of units to attend a national COM rally in Myrtle Beach, S.C. This weekend we are launching steps to host the 1995 national rally in our state," Petty noted. "It is thrilling to see the response of our people in planning for this."

Clayburn Bratton, state COM president, finds it exciting to be leading the organization as it prepares to host the rally. "I am completing my second year of service as COM president," Bratton said. "I am thankful to be presiding as preparations are begun for the rally to be held at Hope fairgrounds."

Bratton also is elated about "doors of witness opportunities" that are opening for him and his wife, Jessie, through COM.



More than 90 people gathered for the recent COM rally at Maumelle State Park.

"We are retired and want to be available to do whatever we can for the Lord," Bratton declared. "Ministering in Homestead, Fla., for three weeks following Hurricane Andrew has been one of our recent mission experiences. Our July door of service will be in Calmar, Iowa, where we will help with Bible study fellowships and visitation, as well as assist in preparations to establish a church."

"Campers on Missions is a lot of fun," Bratton concluded. "Even though we only have two statewide meetings each year, we are involved in the state throughout the year, assisting with Bible schools, revivals and building repairs."

Lendol Jackson, state COM coordinator, and his wife, Dorothy, state treasurer, said assisting with state convention and associational needs are some of COM's goals. "One of our upcoming projects is to construct 10 trailer pads at Siloam Springs and we have just completed 10 pads for Tri-County Association camp at Wynne," Jackson noted. "We also will build an entire mission facility in August for Central Church in Jonesboro."

Individuals interested in participating in Arkansas Campers on Mission may contact Petty at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5249.

Foundation director to retire; search begins

Harry Trulove, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, has announced his retirement effective May 1, 1994. At the time of his retirement, he will have completed 20 years of service with the Foundation.

A search committee has been established to seek an individual to fill the vacancy that will be created. Committee members are: Byron Elsemann, chairman, Little Rock; Allen Thrasher, Booneville; Jim Lanier, Russellville; Tom Watts, Camden; and Allen Smith, Little Rock.

Recommendations may be sent to Elsemann at the law offices of Friday, Eldridge and Clark, 400 Broadway, Suite 2000, Little Rock, AR 72202.

Arkansas pastors named to SBC committees

Two Arkansas Baptist pastors have been named to Southern Baptist Convention committees by SBC president Ed Young.

In addition to earlier appointments announced by Young and nominations to be presented by the SBC Committee on Nominations, the latest appointments bring to 17 the positions to be filled by Arkansas Baptists. The appointments and nominations will be presented during the SBC annual meeting June 15-17 in Houston.

The most recent appointments include Greg Kirksey, pastor of First Church, Benton, who will serve on the

SBC Credentials Committee, and Rich Kincl, pastor of Central Church, Magnolia, who will serve on the Tellers Committee. Kirksey is first vice president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and president of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* board of directors. Kincl is president of the ABCS Executive Board.

Young named Tommy Knotts, a director of missions from South Carolina, as chairman of the 26-member Credentials Committee. Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, will chair the 24-member Tellers Committee.

Gail Williams serving as volunteer literacy coordinator

Gail Williams, a member of Balboa Church in Hot Springs Village, is serving as volunteer literacy missions coordinator for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department.

She will assist Tommy Goode, director of church and community ministries, as well as relate to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's program of literacy missions.



Williams

"She will be responsible for promoting the awareness of literacy missions in churches," Goode explained. "This promotion will include reading, writing and teaching conversational English for speakers of other languages.

"In addition, she will serve as a consultant for churches and associations, responding to their requests for tutor training workshops and ministry assessment planning."

Williams, who has been teaching conversational English for three years in Central Church of Hot Springs, said, "I accepted this volunteer position because

I feel there is such a need for literacy work. This is one of the real prisons people are in today and I knew what I would feel like if I could neither read or write.

"Our goal is to share Christ and His love for all people as we are teaching them to either read or write or speak conversational English," she added.

A graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss., Williams is a former resident of Magnolia where she was an active member of Central Church.

She and her husband, J.N. Williams, a retired dentist, have three adult children and four grandchildren.

Seventeen Arkansans earn seminary degrees



CHARLES ALEXANDER
Associate of
Religious Education
Little Rock



ERNEST V. COOKE, Jr.
Doctor of Ministry
Hot Springs Village



MELISSA FOX
Master of Church Music
Fayetteville



WILLIAM D. HARRIS
Doctor of Ministry
Royal



ROBERT JACKSON
Master of Divinity
Clarksville



DERICK MILES
Master of Divinity
Little Rock



A. SCOTT PATTON
Master of Divinity
Benton



BURTON PERRY
Master of
Religious Education
Little Rock



RICK W. SEATON
Doctor of Ministry
Searcy



ROBERT SMITH
Associate of
Religious Education
Rogers



WILLIAM SPRAY
Master of Divinity
Pine Bluff



DALE R. SUEL
Doctor of Ministry
Camden



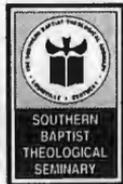
WARREN J. WATKINS
Doctor of Ministry
Pine Bluff



V. BRYAN WEBB
Doctor of Ministry
Canton



RANDY E. WILLIAMS
Bachelor of
General Studies
Melbourne



PATRICK A. GRAHAM
Master of Social Work
Hope



CAROL L. MOODY
Master of Divinity
Little Rock

Photo Not Available

Kingdom and Last Things are inter-related

By Herschel H. Hobbs

Special to the Arkansas Baptist



The doctrines of the Kingdom and Last Things, while separate, are inter-related. When John the Baptist heralded that the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, he was filling his role as the forerunner of Christ.

The Kingdom came when the King came. The Kingdom will reach its final consummation at His second coming.

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over people who willingly acknowledge Him as King.

Satan made a false claim to sovereignty in the universe (Luke 4:5-7). Christ came into the world as a flesh and blood man to refute that claim and to provide redemption for a lost race. In return for an act of worship on Jesus' part, Satan promised to abdicate in Jesus' favor. "All shall be thine" (Luke 4:7). "All" translates *pasa*, "every single part of the whole."

The climax of Revelation is 11:5. Literally, "The sovereignty of the cosmos became that of our Lord (Jehovah) and of His Christ, and he shall reign as sovereign unto the ages of the ages." "Unto the ages of the ages" is the strongest Greek phrase for eternity.

Note the word "became." It is an aorist tense (*egeneto*), the historical tense, denoting a point in history when God in Christ became undisputed sovereign of the universe. He had been sovereign all the time. But He had proved that Satan's claim was false.

When was that point in time? It was when He came forth from the tomb. In delivering the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) Jesus began by saying, literally, "To me was given every single part of the whole of authority in heaven and upon earth." Note the emphatic position of "to me." "To me and no one else." "Every" renders *pasa* (all) without the definite article, meaning "every single part of the whole," none excepted. "Was given" renders the aorist passive verb form, pointing to a definite time in history. The passive voice points to God the Father as the Giver. "Authority" translates *exousia* (*ek*, out of; *ousia*, being). Out of the very

nature of His being as the crucified and risen Lord this total authority was given to Christ. Satan continues to oppose Christ. But when He rose from the dead, the evil one's ultimate doom was assured.

The kingdom of God is not a geographical area. For instance, no nation is Christian. People are Christian!

On one occasion some Pharisees demanded that Jesus tell them when the kingdom of God would come. He replied, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, 'Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you'" (Luke 17:20-21). Every time a soul in faith submits to Christ, a citadel of evil falls. The kingdom of God comes in that heart and life.

Christ is now reigning in His mediatorial kingdom (1 Cor. 15:25). And it points to the time when He will return for the full consummation of the Kingdom (1 Cor. 15:26-28) when God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) will be all in all.

***"Every time a soul in
faith submits to
Christ, a citadel of
evil falls. The
kingdom of God
comes in that heart
and life."***

So it is correct to say that the kingdom has come; it is coming and it will come. Eternally God in Christ is "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:16).

The doctrine of Last Things is called eschatology, from *eschatos*; last things, and *logos*, the science of last things. It means that God in His own time and way will bring the world to its appropriate end. At the end of the age Jesus personally and visibly will return to earth in power and glory. The dead will be raised. Those living at His return will be caught up together with the resurrected dead to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-17). Then Christ will judge all people with righteous judgment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. The unrighteous will be punished to Hell, the place of eternal punishment.

Date-setters concerning the time of

Jesus' return have been with us through the centuries. They have all been wrong. We may assume that they will be with us until the end. As we near the end of the second thousand years of the Christian era, if Jesus delays His return, we can expect a flood of such. But they will continue to be wrong.

Events often pointed to as signs that the Lord's return is near: wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes (Matt. 24:6-7) are things that will mistakenly be thought to be signs of the Lord's return. They are only a part of history. Jesus warns us not to be misled by such things.

He never spoke of His return in terms of time but of condition. "When" (Matt. 25:31) translates *hotan* which primarily refers to condition, not time. "For, whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together" (Matt. 24:28). The carcass is the condition which determines the time of their gathering. When conditions are right in God's judgment, that will be the time of the Lord's return.

Jesus said that the time of His return is hidden in the mind of the Father (Acts 1:7). While Christ now knows that time (in heaven), on earth He said He did not know it (Mark 13:32). In His incarnation He voluntarily accepted certain limitations, including knowledge, as He identified with man, apart from sin. If He did not know while on earth, we should not try to out-Jesus Jesus!

Jesus taught five things about His second coming:

- It is certain.
- The time is uncertain.
- When it happens it will be sudden and all eyes will see it.
- We are to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes.
- We are to be busy in the meantime trying to get other people ready for it (see Acts 1:7-8).

We should leave in God's hands that which is His responsibility alone. And we should be busy about that which by God's will is our business alone—preparing the condition in people's hearts.

Paul summed up the matter in Titus 2:13. We are to hold on to the blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God, even our Savior, Christ Jesus.

Except for a brief benediction the last words in the Bible are "Come, Lord Jesus!" Amen!

© 1993 Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

Elder report urges sweeping changes to head off SBC crisis

NASHVILLE, TN (ABP/BP) — Lloyd Elder, former president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, is asking Southern Baptists to start a "modern-day missionary movement" to rescue the Southern Baptist Convention.

The threat to the SBC, Elder said in a recent letter, is seen in dangerous statistical trends that will force the SBC to lay off missionaries and close down agencies and institutions, possibly by the year 2000.

Neither the SBC's "controlling majority" nor the "voting minority" can rescue the SBC alone, Elder said. Instead, he called for a "mission-support coalition within the whole Baptist family to stop the critical trends and support missions as we know it."

Elder asks that grassroots Southern Baptists — "not a new political party" — mandate that the 14-year denominational controversy be stopped through sweeping constitutional and bylaw changes that "would involve the whole family in missionary governance, and call on our people to renew their zeal in missions support."

Elder's proposals would have the president and the first vice president be elected for two years and alternate between laypersons and ordained ministers; involve

state conventions in the nomination of half the persons to serve on SBC boards, commissions and committees; change how messengers qualify for the SBC annual meeting; increase the maximum number of messengers from a church from 10 to 20; and hold the convention every two years and include simultaneous regional conventions through television hookups.

'Calling the family together'

His proposals are outlined in a three-page cover letter and a 16-page research report entitled "Calling the Family Back Together" which was mailed to 6,300 "representative missions leaders in the churches, associations, state conventions and SBC."

Elder, who was forced to retire in August 1991 after seven years as BSSB president, said he had paid the \$7,300 cost of research, editing, printing of 8,000 copies and distribution of the report.

The report and action plans grew out of his concern for the future of the denomination, he said in the cover letter.

"The controversy has a life of its own, is deepening its hold in Southern Baptist life, and continues its destructive course throughout the denominational family," Elder wrote in the report.

Beyond urging both conservative and moderate factions to end the controversy and work together, he urges the "people faction" of the convention — encompassing "the largest number of members" in the SBC — to "forge a bipartisan, biblical coalition to get on with the main business of missions, education, prayer and financial support."

"Even the nation's government forges a bipartisan foreign policy for 'national security' purposes; why should not our denomination forge a coalition of mission support for 'eternal security' purposes?" Elder implored.

Elder, in an interview with Baptist Press, said he has not received reactions from key leaders of the SBC or the moderates' 2-year-old Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

But, he said, the most important reactions will be those of church members throughout Baptist life.

He said he has no plans to formally present his proposals to the SBC's annual June meeting in Houston. If or when grassroots Baptists "feel there is something they want to do, it needs to come from them," he said.

"Either the Southern Baptist Convention has become what the people want but are not willing to support financially, or, the Southern Baptist Convention can be changed by the people into what they do want and will, in fact, support," he emphasized.

High court won't review Bible distribution ruling

WASHINGTON (ABP/BP) — Distribution of Bibles by Gideons to elementary school students during instructional time is not permissible under a federal appeals court ruling which the U.S. Supreme Court allowed to stand May 17.

Without comment, the nation's highest court refused to disturb a ruling by the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that struck down a Rensselaer, Ind., school district's policy that for years had permitted the Bible distribution by Gideons International.

The appeals court's ruling reversed a federal district court's finding that the practice was no more offensive than allowing representatives of Little League baseball to discuss the sport in the classroom.

The school district argued that it had created a designated public forum by giving school officials the authority to allow distribution of literature by community members and that it could not discriminate against religion in such a forum.

In rejecting the school district's argument, the appeals court noted that the superintendent had excluded one

publication and intended to exclude others found to be objectionable. The school district cannot exercise control over content while claiming to be tied to the requirements of content neutrality, the court said.

Baptist church-state attorneys warned that school officials and others should not read too much into the court's action.

"The decision should not be interpreted as prohibiting the distribution of religious literature by students," said Oliver Thomas, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. "Such distribution, as long as it is not disruptive, is generally permissible, subject only to reasonable restrictions on the time and place of distribution."

According to Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, "A denial of appeal by the Supreme Court does not amount to a decision affirming the lower court. Thus, the Supreme Court has not banned all Bible distributions in public schools. It has decided not to hear the appeal of this case.

"The Seventh Circuit has banned Bible distribution where the Gideons were invited into elementary classrooms," Whitehead said. "Perhaps distribution in high schools or in hallways or with parental consent would still be permissible."

Brent Walker, BJCPA associate general counsel, agreed that the decision does not mean that Gideons cannot distribute Bibles on the sidewalks adjacent to public schools.

"The ruling only prohibits outside groups from having access to a captive audience of impressionable students," Walker said.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State praised the court for protecting the "religious neutrality of our public schools."

"Public schools must serve students of all faiths and none," said AU executive director Barry Lynn in a written statement. "They should not be turned into a bazaar where rival religious groups compete for converts. Parents, not school officials, should decide what devotional materials children read."

Carter, missions highlight CBF assembly

BIRMINGHAM, AL (ABP) — With a ringing endorsement from former President Jimmy Carter, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship commissioned its first missionaries and adopted a permanent constitution and bylaws May 13-15.

About 5,100 people registered for the Fellowship's annual general assembly in Birmingham, Ala. But more than 7,000 people were present to hear Carter during the first of two evening sessions.

At a missions service the second night, a commissioning ceremony was held for the Fellowship's first 25 missionaries — most serving in Europe and all appointed in the last 16 months.

Among those commissioned were Bert and Debbie Ayers, the first Fellowship missionaries who are not former employees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The Fellowship's other overseas workers all resigned from the Foreign Mission Board, most in protest of the FMB's more conservative direction.

The Ayers and their four children soon will be sent to work as agricultural missionaries in Albania.

In response to an invitation from Keith Parks, former FMB president and now missions coordinator for the Fellowship, 33 men and women walked to the front of the auditorium to say God was calling them to be Fellowship missionaries. Some of them likely will be among the 20 new missionaries the Fellowship plans to appoint by the end of the year.

Carter embraces Fellowship

The night before, former President Carter embraced the whole Fellowship movement.

"In the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, my wife and I have found a home," Carter said, prompting an extended ovation.

"I pray that as Rosalyn and I cast our lot with this fellowship for the rest of our lives, we can be part of a transcendent movement," he said later in the speech.

Carter, a lifelong Southern Baptist, said he was always proud to be a Southern Baptist. "The last few years, however, Rosalyn and I have been in a quandary about what to do," Carter said.

He referred to the 14-year-old division within the SBC that eventually led to the Fellowship's formation by moderates, who said they were being excluded by SBC conservatives.

In each of his appearances during the Fellowship, Carter said Baptists should not force a uniformity of belief on others.

"When there is a definition of what is a proper person, a proper Baptist, a proper American, we are violating the basic

Arkansans participate in CBF gathering

An estimated 90 Arkansas Baptists participated in the recent Cooperative Baptist Fellowship general assembly in Birmingham, Ala. according to state Fellowship moderator Billy White, pastor of Second Church, Little Rock.

Describing the gathering of moderate Southern Baptists as "positive and upbeat," White noted, "The whole conference focused on our freedom in Christ and our faithfulness in responding to that freedom."

He added that the CBF's missions emphasis, highlighted in an address by CBF missions coordinator Keith Parks, "focused on our responsibility to the unreached world."

Parks, the former president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, is scheduled to speak twice this month in Little Rock. He will speak Saturday evening, June 12, at Calvary Church

and Sunday morning, June 13, at Second Church where he will receive the annual Brooks Hays Memorial Christian Citizenship Award.

Arkansas Baptists re-elected as members of the CBF's national coordinating council are Marianne Williams, a member of First Church, Jonesboro; W. Payton Kolb, a member of Pulaski Heights Church, Little Rock; and Layne Smith, pastor of Rolling Hills Church, Fayetteville.

Mrs. Williams said an international student choir from First, Jonesboro, participated in the conference, singing at a reception following former President Jimmy Carter's address.

Calling missions "the driving force" for CBF, Mrs. Williams said the general assembly was "incredibly exciting because of the total emphasis on missions."

principles of what we believe," he said. "When we enforce uniformity on other people, it saps their freedom."

Carter praised the Fellowship for upholding the Baptist principles he believes in — the autonomy of the local church, total separation of church and state, and the priesthood of believers.

Yet Carter warned against being critical of SBC leaders with different views. He urged the Fellowship to follow the example of Woman's Missionary Union, which earlier this year adopted a plan to cooperate with all Southern Baptists, as well as other missions-minded Christians.

Carter praised WMU for attempting to unite Baptists through missions rather than divide them over theology and politics. "They are not casting aside anyone who wants to support missions overseas," he said. The president asked the Fellowship to embrace women not only as WMU members, but as ministers and deacons in local churches.

Fellowship coordinator Cecil Sherman, in his address to the assembly, said the two evening sessions typified two important themes in the Fellowship — inclusiveness and missions. Yet, he said, not everyone in the Fellowship identifies with both themes.

He said the general assembly is "the place where we are supposed to be wide enough to let both streams run freely."

One anticipated test of the Fellowship's diversity never surfaced during the three-day meeting. Some observers predicted Fellowship participants would argue over

homosexuality after Sherman issued a statement in April denouncing the gay lifestyle, but the issue did not surface during the meeting.

Constitution, bylaws adopted

The Fellowship's business sessions produced increasing signs of permanence for the two-year-old organization. The Fellowship adopted a permanent constitution and bylaws, set guidelines for membership, and made some changes in its funding plans.

Sherman reported that 900 churches now channel some funds through the Fellowship, up from 400 in 1992. An additional 3,000 individuals contribute directly to the organization.

During the assembly, the Fellowship said goodbye to outgoing moderator Pat Ayres of Austin, Texas; installed moderator-elect Hardy Clemons, pastor of First Baptist Church of Greenville, S.C., to succeed Ayres; and chose Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler of Cincinnati, Ohio, as new moderator-elect.

For the first time, the Fellowship will begin in 1994 defining membership by financial contributions. The bylaws state that membership "shall be composed of individual Baptists, Baptist churches and the members thereof, who contribute annually to the ministries and operations of the Fellowship."

All individual members and any member of a participating church may be eligible to vote at general assemblies.

Arkansas All Over

MILLIE GILL

Staff changes

Glenn Norris will begin serving June 6 as pastor of Woodlawn Church in Little Rock. He will move there from near Blytheville where he has been serving Clear Lake Church. He is a graduate of both Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Norris and his wife, Greta, have two children, David and Rebecca.

Shannon Hassell has accepted the call to join the staff of Highland Heights Church in Benton as minister of youth, effective June 6. He and his wife, Cyndla, will move there from Fort Worth, Texas, where he has been serving Hulen Street Church as youth director.

Billy Hines Jr. began serving May 15 as evangelism director for the state of New Mexico. A native of Magnolia, he also served there as associate pastor of Central Church. He has previously been associate evangelism director for the Tennessee Baptist Convention and associate evangelism director for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention. Hines is a graduate of East Texas Baptist University, Marshall, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Kathy, have three children, Lara Rachelle Beard, Melanie Anne Safa and Lydia Faye Hines.

Lillie Mae Cronin has resigned her position as chairman of the extension ministry to homebound members at First Church of El Dorado. Cronin, who has served for 25 years, is moving to Mississippi to live near a son.

Kime Eubanks joined the staff of Central Church in North Little Rock June 1 as minister of youth and recreation. He and his wife, Tina, moved to North Little Rock from Granbury, Texas, where he had been serving as unit coordinator for Happy Hill Farm Children's Home. A native of Little Rock, Eubanks is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been on the staff of churches in Jacksonville and Little Rock.

W. W. Dishongh is serving as pastor of Lancaster Road Church in Little Rock where he had been serving as interim pastor. In addition, Dishongh will continue as chaplain for Pulaski County Jail, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board appointment. Other Arkansas churches he has served include First Church of Newport; First Church of Beebe; Park Place Church, Hot Springs; and Trinity Church, Searcy.

Lee Gwin has resigned as pastor of Temple Church, Waldron, due to health problems.

Matt McClellan of Conway began serving May 16 as summer youth worker for First

Church of Dardanelle. He is a senior at the University of Central Arkansas.

Gerald Baker is serving as pastor of New Providence Church, Leachville. He and his wife, Sarah, and their two sons moved there from Tyroneza where he was at West Ridge Church.

Bob Gray was honored May 16 by First Church of Blytheville in recognition of 10 years of service as minister of education. During his ministry with the Blytheville church, the Sunday School reached a 20-year record in attendance. He is a graduate of William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Christine, have two sons, David and Mark, and one grandchild.

Joyce Thomasson recently retired as secretary of Elliott Church of Camden. The church presented her a plaque in recognition of 33 years of service.

John Hall is serving as interim director of missions for Delta Association. Hall has been pastor of Northside Church in Eudora since 1982.

Troy Bush began serving May 9 as pastor of Richland Church, West Memphis. He moved there from Lakeshore Church of Hughes.

Rick Hedger began serving May 23 as pastor of First Church of Forrest City. He and his wife, Sandee, and their two children moved there from Springfield, Mo., where he was pastor of Grant Avenue Church.

Keith Baker has accepted the call to serve as minister of music at Mount Zion Church, Walcott. He resigned as children's minister at Walnut Street Church in Jonesboro, following two years of service.

Allan Ellison will join the staff of Oak Cliff Church in Fort Smith June 6 as summer youth minister. Ellison is a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ike Isenhower has been serving Jessierville Church as youth minister since April 18. He was a member of the church.

Jim Woolley has joined the staff of Glendale Church as minister of music. He was a member of First Church of Booneville.

Cathy Tisher has joined the staff of Glendale Church as youth minister. She was a member of East Side Church in Fort Smith.



North Tenth Street Mission in Blytheville broke ground May 5 for an auditorium and classroom space to be constructed by Arkansas Nailbenders for Jesus. This mission, sponsored by First Church of Blytheville and launched February 16, 1992, already has outgrown two temporary facilities. Pastor Henry Applegate gave a challenge in April calling for a \$90,000 construction commitment that resulted in pledges of more than \$98,000. Named as finance committee members were James Carter, J.D. Eatmon, Billy Meharg, Clyde Perry, Gene Pierce and Bill Morris. Building committee members are Reggie Craig, Olen Green, Morris, Robert Payne and Perry. Trustees are Olen Green, Morris and Perry. Ruth Craig is treasurer.



The congregations of Concord Church and Concord Chapel in Van Buren held a groundbreaking service May 2 for a new chapel building that will house educational space and provide sanctuary seating for 200. Mission committee members who broke ground are Norton Rainwater; Kenny McGee; James Kirkpatrick; James R. Rice, chapel pastor; Bob Floyd; Tim N. Prock, sponsoring church pastor; Jim Taylor; Ted Burkhart; and Bob Wilson.

Obituaries

Mary Elsie "Maria" McDonald of North Little Rock died May 22 at age 84. She was the wife of Erwin L. McDonald, editor emeritus of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* and a former religion editor for the *Arkansas Democrat*. The McDonalds had been married for more than 63 years. A former public school teacher, she was a member of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock. Funeral services were held May 25 in Russellville. Other survivors are two daughters, Mrs. Sam H. Jones of Dothan, Ala., and Judy Carole Lucas of Little Rock; two brothers; two sisters; and three grandchildren.

R.L. Whitten of Booneville, pastor of Grayson Church in Concord Association and a retired teacher, died May 8 at age 76. Whitten also had served Union Hall, Haw Creek, Coal Hill First and Watson churches.

Church news

Immanuel Church in Rogers children's music ministry spring concert, combined with a dedication of Benton County Christian School, was held May 16. The concert featured children's choirs, preschool through six grade. The school choir also presented several selections.

Grand Avenue Church in Hot Springs burned a \$345,000 sanctuary note April 11, marking the first time in 34 years the church has been debt free. Bill Heaton, chairman of deacons; Jerry Brown, finance

committee chairman; Matthew Harris, treasurer; and Troy Tucker, a deacon; assisted pastor Barry King in the ceremony. Wayne Davis and Dwayne Monk gave testimonies. Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was the featured speaker.

West Memphis First Church recently held a four-day revival that resulted in 166 professions of faith and 56 baptisms, according to pastor Tommy Cunningham. An additional 49 candidates were baptized



Trinity Church in Searcy broke ground April 25 for an 8,000-square-foot, two-story building that will provide space for additional Sunday School rooms and office needs. Participating in the service were building committee members Ronnie Goff, Mike Barnett, Ada Lewis, chairman Bill Giles, Barbara Meacham, Harold Lewis, Jerrell Barnett and Bill Lewis. Program guests were Ledell Bailey, director of missions for Calvary Association, and Searcy mayor David Evans. Anton Uth is pastor.

May 9. Longtime members of the church agreed that this was the greatest outpouring of revival ever experienced in their time as members of the church. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was the evangelist and Jim Burleson of Hermitage, Tenn., was the guest worship leader.

DeQueen First Church held an "Old Fashioned Tent Revival" May 9-13 that resulted in 29 professions of faith and three rededications. Walter K. Ayers and Brad Bickham served as the evangelistic team.

Tom and Kay Cox of Mountainburg recently led their 12th Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board-approved trip to India, coordinating a 39-member team from 15 states. The group ministered to more than 5,000 people in daily medical and dental clinics. Evening evangelistic crusades resulted in 4,624 professions of faith in Christ. Other Arkansas team members were Kelly Hill of Mountainburg and Kathy Brown of Van Buren.

Ordinations

Morton Church near McCrory licensed Dennie Taylor, minister of music and youth, to the gospel ministry May 2.

McRae First Church ordained Calvin Estes, Don Gay and J.H. Spurlock to the deacon ministry April 18. Pastor Vaughn Blue was the moderator.

Jessleville Church ordained Bob Huddleston to the deacon ministry April 25.

Arkansas BYW volunteers meet needs at Dixsonville

By Millie Gill
Arkansas Baptist

"The response of the children, their enthusiasm and the glow in their eyes after receiving new clothing and haircuts left us with a feeling of a successful weekend mission trip," said Monica Keathley, Baptist Young Women's director for Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Keathley was speaking of a recent mission trip to the Dixsonville community. The Central Association ministry is coordinated by Southern Baptist home missionary Diana Lewis of Benton.

"Our state BYW committee, in cooperation with the ABSC missions department, chose Dixsonville as the 1993 BYW mission field," Keathley noted. "Eleven BYW members, representing First Church of Pea Ridge, Second Church of Russellville and University Church of Fayetteville responded to this need, meeting in Benton April 30 for an orientation session prior to beginning work at Dixsonville Saturday morning."

After traveling down a dirt road to the isolated community of 40 homes in Dixsonville, the team's first effort was to stock the clothing, school supplies,

personal items and dental supplies sent by their churches. "These churches' donations tripled closet supplies," noted Keathley.

A Saturday Kids Club that included Bible stories, crafts, puppet shows and music had 45 participants.

"The response to our Sunday services was the highlight of it all," Keathley declared. "We had 24 in attendance for the community's first Sunday Bible classes that were followed by a noon meal of hotdogs."

"As a result of our weekend efforts, Lewis launched an ongoing Sunday School program May 9 and had 31 in attendance," Keathley said.

Mitzi Peronia, BYW president and Woman's Missionary Union director for First Church of Pea Ridge, noted that BYW members from her church had been looking for a way to make missions come alive. "We learned of the Dixsonville need through a BYW newsletter," she said. "We knew immediately that we could have an actual hands-on missions experience if we

responded to the BYW newsletter's request for assistance.

"As the result of our weekend in Dixsonville, we had more than a hands-on missions experience," Peronia continued. "It opened our eyes to the needs of our own community as the people of Dixsonville responded to our ministries."

Lewis was delighted with how the Dixsonville families responded to the BYW ministry efforts. "Their work was most effective, especially the response that came from the men and children to the free haircuts they provided," Lewis said.

"The children were so proud of the new hairstyles they were given that it created an enthusiasm for attending Sunday services," Lewis added. "They voiced the hope of having Sunday School every week, not just that one weekend."

Lewis said other Arkansas Baptists may contact her at 501-794-0840 to discuss ministry needs at Dixsonville. "However, it is my prayer that the people of our state will not only seek to minister to those at Dixsonville, but will get a vision for ministering to those with needs in their own immediate areas," she declared. "People have physical and spiritual needs throughout our state."

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'Breakthrough' helps churches plan, grow

By Colleen Backus

Arkansas Baptist



"We would like to get a church consultant in every church and mission in the state, especially those that are plateaued or declining," explained Freddie Pike, director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, referring to the Great Commission Breakthrough project.

Great Commission Breakthrough is one of Arkansas Baptists' 1993 priority projects related to the state convention's five-year "Building God's Family" emphasis. According to promotional information, Breakthrough "is a custom designed consultation approach" targeted especially toward plateaued and declining churches "to help them redefine their nature and mission and be more effective in carrying out the Great Commission."

The consultants are pastors, ministers of education and directors of missions who agree to serve free for a year. The 60 Breakthrough consultants are trained in basic biblical emphases from the Great Commission.

As the project begins, a consultant meets with the pastor, visiting with him about dreams, direction and vision, Pike

explained. The consultant is equipped with Uniform Church Letter statistics and demographic information and has been trained to explain the impact of these materials on the church's ministry area. One key to the project, Pike noted, is that the pastor and the consultant work closely together.

The consultant and pastor then meet with key leaders in an assessment session. The group then decides on a date for a three-day on-site church consultation for a strategy planning session, providing the consultant the opportunity to meet with as many church members as possible.

"The cost for the project is very low," Pike noted. "The church provides a room and meals for the consultant, and the ABS Sunday School department pays all other expenses."

After church members have agreed on a planning and implementation strategy, the consultant remains available for the next 12 months for follow-up. "This is not a program, it's a process," Pike said. "Churches have different needs, not just related to Sunday School, but to all resources they can use."

One congregation that has utilized Breakthrough is Prairie Grove First Church, under the leadership of consultant Lendol Hobbs, who is minister of music at Oak Cliff Church in Fort Smith, and Prairie Grove pastor Joe Jones.

"My conviction is that we ought to share in the work—help other churches,"

Hobbs said, explaining his willingness to be a consultant. "I hope I helped with provisions to enhance the church's growth."

Jones concurred, "We weren't a declining church, but we had become comfortable. The church has a great fellowship, but needed to get over the hump of just being complacent and visualize improvement."

"We renewed our vision for the church. Some things we needed to do were simple, cosmetic things to improve our appearance to the community, and others had to do with worship," Jones explained.

"It was really worth it—I'd do it again," Jones emphasized. "We had to change our mentality and really think about where the church needed to be going."

Hobbs found that he also learned a lot in his experience as consultant. "The church already had a good fellowship and responded well. The training had covered every situation, especially dealing with conflict, but when I got to Prairie Grove the harmonious spirit provided a great opportunity for growth. We were able to get right down to work."

Other Creek Church in Little Rock is still going through the Great Commission Breakthrough process. Pastor Reed Bethel said, "We've had some really positive things happen, but we're not finished. The consultant, and the process itself, helped us identify some action steps that needed to be taken."

"Now we have a place to start and things to work on. The process really got everybody together and able to take a look at where we are going," Bethel noted.

For more information on Great Commission Breakthrough, contact Pike at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 376-4791, ext. 5128.

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WORLD MISSIONS

Prayer thrust

A large number of Arkansas Baptist ministers and laypeople plan to participate in an India-wide evangelistic crusade Nov. 1-13. This will be a part of the 200th anniversary celebration of the beginning of Baptist foreign missions. William Carey arrived in India in 1792 as Baptists' first foreign missionary. Among specific prayer requests related to the crusades:

■ Rebekah Naylor, a Southern Baptist medical missionary in Bangalore, India, has requested prayer for the conversion of large numbers of the Indian people during the days of evangelistic effort. Pray that at least 200 teams from America might be a part of the November emphasis.

■ Pray for 1,000 Baptist churches in India. There are over 200 today. Pray that many will begin as a result of the November celebration.

■ Approximately 25 percent of the Bangalore hospital staff is not Christian. This is about 60 people who need Jesus. Pray that the witness of the Christians on staff may be used to lead them and the patients to a personal relationship with Jesus.

■ Pray that the government of India will become more open to grant visas for missionaries to enter the country, and that the Foreign Mission Board will be aware of God's timing about when to apply for missionary permits.

■ Dr. Naylor's permission to practice medicine in India will expire in September of 1995. Start praying now that the

government will renew it so she can continue to serve.

Individuals interested in participating in the India partnership may contact the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Brotherhood department at 501-376-4791, ext. 5158 for additional information.

Missionary notes

Barry and Sonia Burnett, missionaries to the Dominican Republic, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service. They received their mail at Lynx Air/SD-DR, P.O. Box 5600, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33340. They both consider Arkadelphia their hometown. She is the former Sonia Lindstrom. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1992.

Gary and Susan Fulton, missionaries to Guatemala, have completed language study and are on the field (address: Guatemala Baptist Mission, 01901 Apartado 1135, Guatemala, C.A.). He is a native of Lepanto and she grew up in Tyrone, Pa.

MK prayer calendar

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in June are:

■ June 4, Alyson Dickerman, 1993 graduate from Macao, OBU Box 3463, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001.

■ June 12, Rhonda Shemwell, senior from Togo, OBU Box 3205, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001.

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Ouachita degrees are Rice family tradition

By Jeff Root

Ouachita Baptist University

ARKADELPHIA (OBU) — It's the kind of story that is rich with traditional values like family, faith, hard work and education.

The Rice family of Wabbaseka is an all-too-rare example of the power of strong family relationships. As one might expect, the story begins with the parents.

Born to Arkansas sharecroppers, Tommy Rice and Dorothy Woolfolk grew up near Wabbaseka, where their families worked the same plantation. They attended high school together and were married in 1952. She was 18. He was 17.

"We married young and started our family right away, and then I realized that I really could have used more education," said Tommy Rice. "I was determined that if that wasn't possible for me, it would be for my children."

It wasn't a hollow cliché when Tommy Rice uttered those words. On May 8, 1993, the Rices saw their youngest children, Chris, receive his diploma from Ouachita Baptist University president Ben M. Elrod. Since Chris was their last, the moment was particularly touching. But in another sense, it was nothing new. It was their eleventh commencement.

From Randy, who graduated from Ouachita in 1973, through Chris, the Rices raised 11 children. All 11 are college graduates, and nine are graduates of Ouachita.

"I don't know of a story more unique than that of the Rices," said Elrod. "Tommy, Dorothy and their children personify the

kind of selfless love that a family is supposed to be all about.

"Knowing how the Rices feel about the importance of quality education, we fell honored that so many of the Rice children have chosen Ouachita for their undergraduate education," said Elrod. "It says something about their commitment to both academic quality and Christian principles."

God is family foundation

While honoring his parents at a recent Ouachita Former Students Association luncheon held during commencement weekend, Chris said God is the foundation of his family, and that coming to Ouachita was an extension of that commitment.

"Randy came when he was only 16 or 17 at the suggestion of one of his teachers," said Chris. "He was pleased with what he found at Ouachita, and my sisters followed his lead."

Soon a tradition had developed. There was a long line of Rices at Ouachita, and influence spread by word of mouth, from one sibling to another.

Eight of his brothers and sister were able to return to Ouachita for commencement, and Chris spoke for the group by thanking his parents and announcing that the children had started the Tommy and Dorothy Rice Scholarship Fund at Ouachita.

"You have done so much for us, and now these scholarships will continue to help students in your names for as long as Ouachita exists," Chris said.

Chris will head to law school in the fall. His brother, Randy, is also an attorney. In

fact, all of the Rice children are active professionals, including four with earned doctorates.

How did a rural farming family produce 11 college graduates?

For Chris, there is no real mystery.

"My father believes in hard work, and he values education, while my mother is just a very positive person," Chris said. "It doesn't seem unusual to us; we grew up expecting to go to college."

Tommy Rice had set the pattern early. Not long after his marriage to Dorothy, he went to Chicago searching for a better way to make a living. He came back believing that his years of hard work would be best spent in farming, and, in particular, on his own farm.

From there, the children learned to work through the various chores always available on a farm, and their parents required them to work just as hard on their schoolwork.

"Once, when I was young, I was working alongside a tractor, putting up rows, and the work was very hard," said Chris. "I remember telling my father that I just couldn't do it. He walked over to me very animated and said, 'Don't ever say you can't do it, don't ever say that.'"

"I understand what hard work is," Chris added. "I thank my dad for that."

As each sibling has finished college, he or she has volunteered assistance to their younger brothers and sisters. It was a lesson they learned well from their parents, and the Tommy and Dorothy Rice Scholarship Fund guarantees the lesson will not be forgotten.

A Dinner Invitation To Arkansas Baptists



Dr. Keith Parks

A Baptist Challenge To Missions

Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock

Saturday, June 12

6:30 p.m.

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Dinner Reservations (\$5.00 per plate) must be confirmed by June 9 (Calvary Baptist Church - (501) 663-8303). Dr. Parks's message will be followed by a brief question and answer session.

Annuity Board sells K-mart stock

DALLAS (BP)—After unsuccessful attempts to influence K-mart policy regarding the sale of offensive materials at its Waldenbooks subsidiary, the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has sold its stock in the corporation.

Following trustee action on Nov. 3, 1992, the Annuity Board announced in January it had filed a resolution with K-mart Corp., requesting its inclusion in proxy materials and consideration by shareholders at their annual meeting May 25.

The resolution asked K-mart's board of directors to instruct the corporation management to "stop the promotion, display and sale in its Waldenbooks subsidiary of literature and other media that is largely devoted to the description of sexual encounters or that has a graphic depiction of exploitative sex and/or gratuitous violence."

Annuity Board president Paul W. Powell said at the time that he had asked every church pension board in the nation—and all Baptist foundations and state conventions—to support the resolution.

But the board's efforts to be included in

proxy material and on the stockholders meeting agenda were unsuccessful, according to Thomas E. Miller Jr., Annuity Board senior vice president for public relations.

"The president had said that if we were not successful in the shareholders resolution, then we should divest ourselves of the stock in a prudent and orderly fashion," Miller said.

K-mart has been targeted for boycott by Donald Wildmon's American Family Association since March 1990 because of "pornographic" materials sold at its Waldenbooks subsidiary.

The Annuity Board began addressing K-mart's Waldenbooks policies in the spring of 1992 and had sought through several avenues to use its shareholder status to influence K-mart corporate policy.

Following the Annuity Board's trustee meeting last August, Powell wrote a letter to Joseph E. Antonini, K-mart's chairman and chief executive officer, saying K-mart was "making a conscious decision to pander to baser instincts" through its Waldenbooks policies on the sale of offensive materials.

Seeking Minister of Youth and Education

— First Baptist Church of Lebanon, Missouri, is seeking Minister of Youth and Education with seminary degree. Would prefer 5+ years experience. Send resume to: Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1180, Lebanon, MO 65536.

Pastor Search — Keo Baptist Church is presently without a pastor. Resumes will be received for consideration by the Pastor Search Committee until June 4, 1993. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, Keo Baptist Church, P.O. Box 87, Keo, AR 72083.

Needed — Two secretaries with computer/word processing skills. Mail resumes to: First Baptist Church, 1120 East Main, Van Buren, AR 72956.

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	Sept. 15-18	Little Rock	Oct. 13-16
		Little Rock	Nov. 17-20

Anyone interested in attending the Emmaus Walk should contact someone who has attended or call Gary Westerman (521-2856 day or 521-2539 night) or Hoyt Thomas (362-7533 day or 362-5657 night).

Persons who have attended an Emmaus Walk or Chrysalis Flight outside of Arkansas and would like to become an active member of the Arkansas Emmaus community are also asked to contact Gary Westerman or Hoyt Thomas at the above numbers.



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There is hope for families, says Home Life editor

By Lonnie Wilkey

Tennessee Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The Ward and June Cleaver and Ozzie and Harriet Nelson "family types" are fast becoming a vanishing breed.

And, while those TV families of the 1950s and '60s perhaps were "too" perfect, they did represent the ideal American model of a single-income family with a working dad, stay-at-home mom and children.

Statistics show, however, that today's family is far from the "ideal." In fact, says Charlie Warren, the family unit is generally unhealthy.

Warren, editor of *Home Life* magazine published by the Baptist Sunday School Board, cites statistics which show "the family we have known in the past is no longer." Among those:

- Violent crimes have increased 560 percent since 1960.

- Illegitimate births have increased 400 percent in the past 30 years.

- The divorce rate has quadrupled and the percentage of children in single-parent homes has tripled since 1960.

- Only 15 percent of American households are single-income married couples with children under the age of 18.

- 1.6 million children in the U.S. today are the result of teen pregnancies.

- Teen suicide has tripled in the last three decades, making it the third-leading cause of death among teens, behind traffic accidents and homicides.

"These are pretty alarming statistics," Warren acknowledged.

By the year 2000 futurists predict 75 percent of all mothers will work outside the home and the traditional family will make up less than 4 percent of the U.S. population, he added.

Warren calls families today the "not at home generation" and says it applies to Christian families as well as non-Christian families. Among churchgoers, he said, "Mom and Dad often are at church committee meetings during the week."

Warren said there are things churches and families can do to make families stronger.

He noted churches can take healthy families and help them become healthier through different programs and emphases. Those emphases should be year-round, he added.

Something else families and churches must do to ensure healthy families is to emphasize sexual morality, Warren said. He noted statistics related to teen pregnancy are alarming because families have not done a good job of teaching morality.

He observed that previous generations "did not teach sex education but they did teach morality."

"Now, families teach sex education but do not teach morality. It sends a message that sex outside marriage is okay. Christian families need to come down strong and say, 'It's not okay,'" he emphasized.

Warren said the "most loving thing a parent can do for a child is to love his or her spouse."

"If children see a good relationship between the husband and the wife, it gives them a sense of security and well-being," Warren says.

Churches can take a lead in helping to strengthen marriages which, in turn, strengthen families, he said.

Despite the gloom and doom statistics, there is hope for the Christian family, Warren said. "I am seeing more and more emphasis on the family," he noted, predicting, "Churches will be on the cutting edge of society in helping families in their marriages and parenting skills."



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Apology over Madonna book leads to contract for SBC Book of Reports

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—Following negotiations and an apology from the publisher of Madonna's *Sex* book, the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee awarded the printing contract for the 1993 Convention Annual and Book of Reports to R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company.

According to the announcement by Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice president of the Executive Committee, officials of Donnelley, the world's largest printing company, and the SBC signed contracts following "consultation and negotiations."

A Donnelley Book Group vice president, Thomas A. Freking, sent Mosley a letter following the contract negotiations which indicated the firm "certainly would have understood if you had concluded that you had no choice but to move the work.

"We understand that your awarding this work to us in no way lessens the outrage you expressed to us over the Madonna book," Freking said. "You may also be aware that Madonna's publishers know that we will not be involved in any

soft cover edition this fall. They understand that we now know the content of the book and have always avoided such books. We are sorry for any embarrassment or inconvenience this incident has caused you."

The apology played an important part in the Executive Committee's decision to renew the contract with Donnelley.

"The spirit and content of Donnelley's response to our clearly stated objections was such that I felt we could contract for their printing and distribution services this year," Mosley told Baptist Press.

Through a separate division, Donnelley prints Bibles, hymnals and other religious materials for the Baptist Sunday School Board and other national religious publishers.

James T. Draper Jr., the board's president, told Baptist Press Donnelley had apologized to him.

"If we are asked for forgiveness we should be ready to grant it," Draper said. He said Donnelley would be allowed to continue to bid on BSSB projects.

The Arkansas Baptist's

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'True Love Waits' campaign teaches abstinence is okay

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—"Abstinence is okay." For unmarried couples, it's biblical. And it is the lifestyle to which Christian teens should abide, a youth ministry consultant said.

That is the message behind the theme, "True Love Waits," a campaign backing the new Christian Sex Education resources being released by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

In this day and age, "we must challenge teens and young unmarried adults to say, 'Abstinence is okay,'" said Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant in the general leadership department of the board's church growth and Sunday School division. Ross, creator of the "24-Hour Counselor" cassettes for youth, participated in the five-year development of the Christian Sex Education series for parents and children.

The board's new Christian sex education materials and the campaign theme, True Love Waits, were introduced to youth ministers at the recent Youth Ministry National Conference in Nashville.

Jimmy Hester, coordinating editor of the sex education materials, said the BSSB is "joining the bandwagon already happening in the country dealing with the emphasis on abstinence."

The purpose of the campaign is to inspire, inform and call youth to adhere to the biblical mandate from God and commit to refraining from sex before marriage, Hester said.

"We believe that the only safe sex is abstinence," he added.



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By Roland Chappell, pastor, First Church, Dell

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Focal passage: Philippians 2:11, 17-18

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Human nature causes us to desire recognition, praise and honor. We tend to desire service rather than to serve, be right rather than surrender self desire. How unlike the world is Paul's suggestion that one of our greatest joys comes from being a servant.

The concept of servanthood produces joy in unity with fellow believers. Selfish ambitions must be put aside in order to be united in our thinking, our purpose and our goals. Only in humility can we edify others as we serve together. A servant has the task of pleasing his master and giving up self to serve others. We can do that only out of real love for Christ and for each other. Until we have the servant mindset of Jesus, we find no real joy in servanthood.

Jesus came into the world as man. He was real, and faced the world as man in all of His limitations. He was also divine, but emptied Himself of all that would keep Him from being truly man. As man, He lived a life that we could not live, obeyed God as we did not obey, served humanity as we would not serve, than offered it all for our sin and failure.

His servant role went beyond just serving, but even to giving His life on the cross. Only unity with God, love beyond our understanding and true humility could sustain Jesus through the shame and agony of Calvary. His exaltation came because He filled to the full the role of a servant. Our joy is in sharing His manner of thinking.

Paul understood the joy Jesus had in being a servant. He rejoiced at the opportunity of being a sacrifice for his beloved people. He found deep joy in all of his sacrifice and service. Now he urges his fellow believers to share that kind of joy by joining him in being a servant.

The world can offer a moment of pleasure, but only in joining Jesus in the servant role can we find the joy that is beyond speech. The greatest shouts of praise to God still come from hearts that find real joy in being the servant. Let us join with Jesus in putting aside pride and enter the joy of servanthood.

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Life and Work

Label of integrity

By James Preston, pastor, First Church, Stamps

Basic passage: Acts 11:19-30

Focal passage: Acts 11:20-30

Central truth: The integrity of God's church can be judged by its members' likeness to Christ.

Labels can be instructive, even when they are unofficial. Some labels are derogatory and sound that way. Others may seem flattering. We may not believe such labels represent who we are, but sometimes they reflect how others see us.

When others saw the church at Antioch, they recognized the integrity of their commitment to Christ.

The populace of Antioch originated the label "Christian" for those people who followed Christ and talked so much about Him. They probably thought Christ was a proper name and confused it with a similar word which means 'kindly' or 'useful.'

Regardless, the believers at Antioch wore this new label as a badge of honor in a way similar to the American revolutionaries who wore the derogatory label "Yankee" like a feather in their cap. To these early believers the label "Christian" symbolized the integrity of their witness to the fact that they "belonged to Christ."

A more official label received by the believers in Antioch originated from the church at Jerusalem. Having heard about this great movement of God among the Gentiles in Antioch, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to investigate. No longer were they simply "God-fearers." Barnabas discovered that God was making of them a church. For the first time in Acts a group of believers other than in Jerusalem would be called a church.

The evidence of God's grace upon them established the integrity of the church at Antioch. Taught by Barnabas and Paul, this church would grow and learn to give. They would send an offering to the Jerusalem church which faced hardship.

Jesus said that the world would recognize we are His if we abide in Him and if we love one another. Such was the case with the church at Antioch. Such is the challenge for each of us: that others would be able to label us "Christian" and that we could bear the label "church."

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Bible Book

Universal invitation

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

Basic passage: Isaiah 54:1-55:13

Focal passage: Isaiah 55:1-3

Central truth: God offers salvation to all people under His new covenant of grace.

In verses 1-3, God extends a universal invitation both to the exiles in Babylon who could look forward to returning to their land and to all who are lost without eternal life. His invitation is to all who are thirsty and to all who are hungry to come buy water and food without money and without price. This is the same invitation Jesus gave to the woman at the well in John 4:14. Also in John 6:51, Jesus stated that He was the living bread and to partake of the living bread, one would live forever. Jesus alone can satisfy that spiritual thirst and hunger that is in the heart of every lost person.

Isaiah 55:3-5 - God promises eternal life based on an "everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David." In Acts 13:35, Paul says this was fulfilled when Christ died on the cross, was buried and rose again. This gospel was shared with the rest of the world by Christ's disciples until today. People of all nations have entered the kingdom under the covenant of grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 55:6-9 - God is willing to forgive and pardon all who will repent and have faith in Him. People are warned to seek Him while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near. The wicked must forsake his ways and the unrighteous his thoughts and he must return in faith to God. True faith and repentance result in a changed life. God's part of the new covenant of grace is that He will abundantly pardon. If this seems too simple or absurd, God reminds us that His thoughts are far above ours and His ways are not our ways.

In verses 10-13, we have the wonderful assurance that His invitation of salvation will not fail. God says just as sure as the moisture that comes from the rain and snow causes the weed to sprout and produce bread for the sower, so shall His words prosper and bring such change in the lives of men. So drastic will be the change, instead of the thorn, a fir tree will come up instead. As a result, there will be great joy in the hearts of those who believe, just as there was great joy when Israel returned to their land.

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Convention Uniform

Joy in submission

By Roland Chappell, pastor, First Church, Dell

Basic passage: Philipplians 3

Focal passage: Philipplians 3:1-14, 17
Central truth: Abiding joy is found in total surrender to Christ.

How can joy come from giving up, admitting defeat and confessing our inability? Paul shares his secret of real joy that comes from total submission to Christ as Lord. It is in confessing our sin and failure that we come to know the joy for forgiven sin. We trade our inability for all of His ability. Only in this kind of submission are we free from the sense of guilt that destroys our deep joy.

Paul shared his own background. He had everything that was sought by those of the circumcision. He could boast in the flesh of being head and shoulders above those who would add tradition to God's plan of salvation. He also reports that all of these things were really worthless compared to what he had gained in submission to Christ. He had found joy through submission. Now his desire was to become more Christlike in a growing surrender to Christ. We can only grow in surrender as we grow in Christ. Out of his own experience of submission, Paul could encourage his fellow believers to "rejoice in the Lord" in surrender.

Submission to Christ does indeed bring real joy to our hearts, but it brings so much more. Submission also provides for us the power of the resurrection of Christ in our lives. Submission gives to us a real fellowship with Christ that comes from being more like Him. While it is true that the world can bring temporary moments of pleasure, submission to Christ brings us the full joy of assurance of eternal life.

Like Paul, we have not grown to the point of total submission. We can join with him in continually growing in our surrender as we strive for all God has for us in Christ Jesus. Even so, we do not reap all of the joy God has for us while in this world, but there is that eternal prize of joy in His very presence for eternity. Any who would complain about what is given up in surrender to Christ has not yet learned the source of joy that Paul knew.

Paul encourages us in verse 17 to follow his example in finding the abiding joy that comes from submission to Christ. Doing so will also cause us to be examples for those who follow after us.

Life and Work

God delivers

By James Preston, pastor, First Church, Stamps

Basic passage: Acts 12:1-25

Focal passage: Acts 12:1-24

Central truth: God is able to deliver us when we are in His will.

God delivers. God, however, is not an errand boy. His special help is for those who seek help, and especially to those who live in service to Him. In such a context, God's deliverance is best understood as part of His work to accomplish His purpose.

In Acts 12:1-24, three incidents occur in which God was at work to accomplish His purpose. The first incident was the imprisonment and execution of James by Herod.

James was the brother of John and the first disciple to be martyred. There was no miraculous intervention, or last minute rescue. We know little about the event itself. The resolute manner in which James' death is recorded reminds us of the early church's resolve to endure all hardship for Christ's sake.

The second incident was Peter's imprisonment. Herod threw Peter into prison to please his Jewish subjects who took delight in the arrest and execution of James. But before Herod could execute Peter, the Bible says that an angel suddenly appeared and told Peter to get up from his chains and follow. Peter thought he was dreaming. Only when he reached the street and the angel disappeared did Peter understand that God had delivered him.

The disciples with whom Peter sought refuge also indicated disbelief at first. No doubt James' fate was fresh on their minds. Yet they had prayed earnestly for Peter's deliverance.

We know God promises help, but still are surprised by the miraculous ways of God. We are encouraged by Peter's delivery.

The final incident was the death of Herod. Herod tried to stand against the flow of God's will and in the swell of one self-destructively arrogant moment, he was ingloriously removed.

Herod's death reminds us of the danger of living outside God's will. Peter's deliverance reminds us that God is able to deliver us when we are in His will. James reminds us that, regardless of our prayers and our troubles, our prayer remains that of the Savior's: "Thy will be done."

Bible Book

The need of redemption

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

Basic passage: Isaiah 56:1-59:21

Focal passage: Isaiah 56:1-2; 58:1-59:2, 59:20-21

Central truth: True righteousness comes through repentance and faith in Jesus.

God demanded of Israel justice, righteousness, reverence and obedience. The people failed to obey God and their sin caused them to be separated from God and be in exile. God promised in 56:1-2 a deliverer who would redeem them.

God refused to hear and answer their prayer (Isa. 59:2). Their sin problem was rooted in their empty worship. They delighted to go through the form of worship, but they failed to keep God's laws and His ways. Their thoughts were about their own pleasure and how they could get more out of their laborers (Isa. 58:1-4).

God's standard of worship and righteousness in Isaiah 58:67 was to loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens placed on the poor, let the oppressed go free and break the yoke placed on their necks, to feed the hungry, invite the poor and outcast into their houses and help those who were in need.

Their lack of worship and fellowship with God resulted in their hands being defiled with blood and their fingers filthy with sin. They spoke lies and oppressed all that was good. They did not care about what was fair and truthful. Their minds were dominated with sinful thoughts.

God condemned these sins and called for repentance. God instructed in Isaiah 58:1: "Cry aloud and declare unto my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob, their sins."

God's warnings and judgment was to bring His people to repentance (Isa. 59:1). He offered to save them and answer their prayer.

In Isaiah 59:20, He promised a Redeemer will come to turn them from transgressions. In Romans 11:26-27, Paul stated that this Redeemer is Jesus Christ. He is both Redeemer of all mankind and the glorious fulfillment to this prophecy.

The world must repent and trust in Jesus to meet God's demands of righteousness. We must be bold in proclaiming this message to the lost everywhere.

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NEWS DIGEST

Brotherhood Commission receives Red Cross award

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)—The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission has been named the recipient of the 1993 American Red Cross Good Neighbor Award in recognition of its efforts in hurricane disaster relief during the year.

The Good Neighbor Award is presented annually to an individual or organization outside the American Red Cross making "a significant humanitarian contribution to the local, national or international community" in support of the Red Cross.

James D. Williams, president of the Brotherhood Commission, accepted the award in Nashville May 23 at the 68th American Red Cross National Convention.

"In accepting the award, I do so on behalf of all Southern Baptists, and especially our state convention disaster relief units," Williams said. "And I thank God for our volunteers and their commitment to share 'a cup of cold water in the Savior's name.'"

After Hurricane Andrew came ashore in Florida Aug. 24 of last year, Southern Baptist volunteers prepared more than 2.5 million hot meals in Florida and more than 186,000 hot meals in Louisiana. After Hurricane Iniki struck Hawaii in September, kitchen equipment was shipped to allow more than 200 volunteers to serve 225,000 meals.

Floyd to open international communications conference

ARLINGTON, TX (RTVC)—Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, will be the opening speaker for an International Conference on Communications Ministries (ICCM) scheduled June 28-July 1 at the Arlington Convention Center, according to Radio and Television Commission executive Cade Garrison.

"Floyd is an appropriate keynote speaker to exemplify the ICCM theme 'Through Closed Doors,'" said Garrison. "He has built a highly successful counseling response system as part of the Springdale church's 'Daystar' program seen on ACTS network." Floyd has recently been named by RTVC as successor to Richard Jackson as speaker on the long-running "Invitation to Life" evangelistic program seen on ACTS and FamilyNet.

ICCM also features multi-tiered tracks of conferences on equipment, programming, production and promotion for radio, television, non-broadcast video, and electronic publishing, said Garrison, as well as a "bottom line" track designed to show pastors, directors of missions and evangelism directors how to use "all of the above" in multiplying churches' outreach efforts.

Additional information about ICCM's programs and conferences is available by calling Garrison at the Radio and Television Commission, 1-817-737-4011.

Baptist campus ministers to meet at Ouachita University

ARKADELPHIA, AR (BP)—The annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers will be June 10-12 at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia.

The ASBCM will meet in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Baptist Association of Student Affairs. ASBCM's featured speaker will be Judy Hamlin of Austin, Texas, author of *The Small Group Leader's Training Course*.

Further information can be obtained from ASBCM's president, Kyle Klemcke, Baptist Student Union director at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas, phone 409-564-0473.

Unsettled convictions can yield to apostasy, says Mohler

WAKE FOREST, NC (BP)—R. Albert Mohler Jr., president-elect of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told graduates from sister school Southeastern that their ministries will be measured by whether they stay true to the gospel—or move away from it in an effort to explain the difficult standards of Jesus Christ.

There is a desperate need for Christians with a strong faith who do not apologize for their beliefs, nor try to explain away the truth of the gospel, said Mohler, baccalaureate speaker at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., May 14.

"Unsettled convictions is a recipe not just for compromise and accommodation, but for apostasy, the falling away of the church," Mohler said.

Southern should train women for all roles, Honeycutt says

BIRMINGHAM, AL (ABP)—Whether or not churches are calling women as pastors, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary should be training women for whatever roles God has called them to, the seminary's outgoing president said May 14 in direct contradiction of the views of his successor.

"A local congregation is free to call whom it will as a minister," Honeycutt said. "Does not Almighty God have as much freedom to call whom He will?"

There should be "no gender distinction" in the community of God, Honeycutt said. "God's Spirit may empower anyone and everyone to fulfill a prophetic role."