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June 4, 1992

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas Baptist



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At a glance

5 Honoring the retired servant

"Honoring the Retired Servant" is the 1992 theme for Annuity Board Sunday June 28. Many Southern Baptist ministers and their spouses can enjoy comfortable retirements, but it has not always been so. In 1918, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention approved what has become the SBC Annuity Board. By 1920, the board was distributing \$1,000 a week in relief benefits; in 1992, more than 22,000 annuitants will receive benefits totalling more than \$100 million.

8 Preparing to Marry

In a frank look at premarital counseling, Benton First Church Pastor Greg Kirksey takes a pastor's perspective that explains the many aspects of marriage preparation. Engaged couples, pastors, and even married partners can benefit from Kirksey's examination of a couple's ability to communicate, divide responsibilities, deal with finances, avoid pitfalls and find strengths in their relationship.

13 Newsmagazine turns corner

The *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* financially has turned the corner. The finances are now on a solid footing. On Jan. 1, 1991 the Newsmagazine's net worth was a negative \$37,499. As of the last financial report, April 30, 1992, the ABN's net worth is a positive \$10,050. In April, income was \$18,386 more than disbursements.

17 Draper announces restructure

A restructuring of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's senior executive team and formation of a transition team to implement further changes were announced May 18 by President James T. Draper Jr. Instead a president and three executive vice presidents, overseeing operations, finance and administration, and corporate planning, research and denomination relations, Draper said he will recommend to trustees in August a restructured senior executive team including himself and four others with titles yet to be decided.

18 Pressler still a nominee

Although urged to withdraw as a nominee for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board by a number of SBC leaders, Judge Paul Pressler insists he has a lot of supporters and is still a trustee nominee to the SBC Foreign Mission Board. "I have received two letters asking me to withdraw, one letter supporting my nomination," Pressler, of Houston, Texas, said, "I have received four negative calls (on the nomination) but 50 calls which were supportive."

Cover



Still teaching the Word

Alice Triplett, 96 and blind, uses a tape recorder to listen to Scripture background as she prepares for a Bible study class she leads at Maple Lawn Nursing Home in Palmrya, Mo. She began using the Bible on cassette tape almost 25 years ago when her eyesight began to fail. She has taught Sunday School since she was 16 years old and is included in the Sunday School Teachers Wall of Fame that will be displayed at the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., June 9-11.

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Beware of conceit

J. EVERETT SNEED

Conceit can destroy individuals who are otherwise good people. The writer of Hebrews said that being conceited is worse than being a fool (Pr. 26:12). The tragedy of conceit is that it can pervert the very best of human qualities. An individual is conceited who has an exaggerated opinion of himself, his abilities, or his worth. The solution to conceit is for an individual to discover its cause and to apply biblical principles to his life.

Conceit is a parasite. It thrives on virtues and turns them into vices. Conceit does not have to have much of a base in order to exist. Given a large base, though, it can become an unthinkable monster.

Conceit can thrive in one's life because of one's office or position. Everyone is vulnerable, from the president to the pastor, from the administrator to the editor, and from the college president to the Sunday School teacher. Conceit tells us, "You have the position; therefore, you are qualified for it." Unfortunately, unqualified individuals are sometimes chosen for jobs. Believing himself capable simply because he has the job, he may fail to do what is necessary to achieve excellence in the position.

Conceit often leads to the misuse of power. A person obsessed with power is likely to use it whether it is appropriate or inappropriate. The full force of power in small and unimportant matters may bring harm to many.

Conceit is particularly detrimental to intelligence. Intelligence is the ability to understand quickly, discern meaning, and logically determine and bring productive solutions to the problem. Conceit can make a person think that because he is intelligent he is always right. Such a one may become so arrogant as to think that only the highly intelligent can discern truth.

Conceit flourishes on prestige. It can cause a person with fame or standing to believe the flattery of others. He can forget who he is and where he came from. When a person thinks he is what he appears to be, he often works harder on the appearance and the reputation than he does on the true self. Once an individual becomes puffed up, he loses his value and effectiveness.

The Pharisees are an example of people who were filled with conceit. Morally, they were upright. They would never have considered stealing anything from anyone. Yet,



conceit led them to be active in the effort to crucify Christ.

Conceit often infects religious individuals. Some of the most vicious and heinous crimes have been carried out in the name of religion. Some have praised

Christ as they put to death others who were also praising Christ. Conceit perverts the finest qualities that Jesus set forth in the Beatitudes.

Conceit can blind a person to his own needs. The greatest problem with such insensitivity is the failure to realize how much depends on God. Whether with power, with intelligence, or with prestige, in all walks of life we need God's help.

Micah long ago said, "Do justly. . . love mercy. . . walk humbly with thy God" (Mi. 6:8). In this formula are two relationships. The first is with God, which assists an individual to place himself in proper perspective. The second is with one's fellow man.

As one compares himself to God, he discovers that power, intelligence, and prestige truly are insignificant. The closer one draws to God, the more aware he becomes of his own sin.

When an individual properly evaluates himself, kindness and mercy toward others become a normal way of life. It is futile for us to talk about God when we fail to respect the highest creation of God. We are not likely to love one whom we have not

seen, unless we first come to love one we have seen day by day (1 Jn. 4:20).

Often, conceit is a cover-up for one's own feelings of inferiority. Many things can spawn such deep-seated feelings. It may be something that happened in childhood, or failure to fully obtain the goal one has set for himself. It may be the way a person is treated at work or by his family. To compensate for an inferiority complex, one may misuse position, intellect, or prestige.

The most important question is: "How can a person overcome conceit?" First, one must confess the problem.

Second, it is important to identify the factors producing it. After the root cause has been identified, an individual must quit making excuses for himself, accept the reality of the problem, and go to work to overcome it.

Finally, an individual cannot overcome conceit without God's help. Our carnal nature causes us to think we are better than others. Satan will frequently reinforce this idea if an individual allows him to do so.

A person can only conquer conceit by daily following biblical and spiritual growth principles. Among these are: (1) to maintain a vital faith in Christ by daily Bible study, which magnifies Christ and places man in his proper perspective; (2) to maintain a daily devotional life which magnifies the greatness and holiness of God; and (3) make Christian witnessing a daily pattern of life.

If one is to be at his best for his fellow man and for God, he must not be conceited about his faith and his works. But, he must be humble before the Lord, admit his mistakes and sins, and diligently work to serve the Master.

Arkansas Baptist

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DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know



Shortly after this paper is received, the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention will convene. For the first time, the SBC will be meeting in Indiana, Indiana. Estimates are that 20,000 to 22,000 will be registered as messengers.

Conventions are very expensive, tiring and sometimes frustrating, whether it be from the deliberations of the body or from traffic and parking problems in a strange city. Nevertheless, if we keep our Baptist traditions and keep the decisions of the convention in the hands of the people, then messengers from the respective congregations must see to it that they get to the convention and express their convictions on the matters that come before the body. No person has a right to complain about the actions of the convention if he will not go and share in that action.

There is an experience in Scripture that has characterized too much of our convention. Following the death of Saul, his captain, Abner, sought to put Ishbosheth, Saul's son, in power. Joab, David's captain, knowing that David had been chosen and anointed to be king, wanted to put David in power. They chose a dozen men each to meet for a showdown. It says, "They caught everyone his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together" (2 S. 2:16).

Yet, the fighting did not stop, even after they saw they were killing off each other.

Finally, Abner asked, "Shall the sword devour forever? Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?" (2 S. 2:26).

Abner saw the danger. Similarly, Joab saw the senselessness of fighting each other. "So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more" (2 S. 2:28).

Both leaders were able to lead their people to stop the fighting. Tragically, 379 men died before the fighting stopped.

Pray for the convention whether you attend or not.

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

Letters to the Editor

Election year

Election year is upon us and we as God's people have a tremendous responsibility. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." What he was saying is you, "my people," are that influence, that preserving ingredient that keeps the world from going to rot, from putrifying. I am very disturbed and concerned about God's people losing their savor, their influence on the direction of this great nation. Many of God's people put their political party before God and sell out the moral convictions they claim to have when voting for candidates that advocate abortion (murder of the innocent) on demand and special gay rights. Some states have already passed gay rights laws. Laws that prohibit even churches from

discriminating against homosexuals and lesbians in hiring practices. Also these laws prohibit churches using literature that may be offensive to the homosexual. That eliminates the Bible. Hawaii has just passed such legislation. As a Southern Baptist preacher it is inconceivable to me how anyone can be a supporter of such perversion or the murder of innocent infants and still stand and sing, "O How I Love Jesus." It's no wonder this nation as a whole is going to hell on a greased sled. Truly this nation has become the Sodom and Gomorrah of the last days. Look up brethren, our redemption draweth nigh. Christian, take a close look at your Christian convictions before you cast your ballot. You are responsible for your actions.—**Odell Davis, Huntsville**

BUDDY SUTTON

The President Speaks

Losing the J. T. Bowdens



In May, a modest obituary notice announced that J. T. Bowden, Jr., 80, of Hope had died. You may not think you knew him, but if you grew up in a good, strong Baptist church you did—even if under a different name.

Mr. Bowden was my Sunday school teacher. He was one of those who "sorta" promoted with us as my group grew older, following us from early teens to manhood. Just recently I was enjoying a visit with another member of that class, Major General William C. Wilson, Adjutant General of the Texas National Guard. Not knowing that Mr. Bowden was near death, we talked about the extraordinary love he had for all "his boys" and what a privilege it was to be one of them.

Looking back, there were no many logical reasons for Mr. Bowden to love us the way he did. We were typical, self-centered, hard-to-reach young people who probably returned little of the love extended to us. His pastor, Stan Parris, stated that Mr. Bowden faithfully called on him just to offer constant encouragement and support, adding that he felt sorry for all pastors who did not have a J. T. Bowden.

Over the years he cheered for us, prayed for us, hurt when we hurt, and rejoiced when we rejoiced. When we went away to military service and col-

lege, he published a class newsletter to give us news from the church and about our friends. When we came home he was the warm greeter, telling us how beautiful our children were and how proud he was of all of us.

By example as well as by word, he taught the essence of Christian fellowship in the body of Christ. As one of his pupils I rejoice in the fact that he stayed the course to the end.

When he died I thought of his sweet gentleness and these words which he must have taught us many times: "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant; does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Co. 13:4-8).

With the passing of each year we lose too many J. T. Bowdens. Pray that God will replace them all.

William H. "Buddy" Sutton, Little Rock attorney and member of Little Rock Immanuel Church, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

ANNUIITY BOARD SUNDAY JUNE 28

Honoring the retired servant

by Thomas E. Miller Jr.
SBC Annuity Board

DALLAS—"Honoring the Retired Servant" is the 1992 theme for Annuity Board Sunday June 28.

Paul W. Powell, president of the Annuity Board, said, "I hope every church in which a retired minister or widow of a minister holds membership will honor these people on their special day."

Many Southern Baptist ministers and their spouses can enjoy comfortable retirements, but it has not always been so.

In the fall of 1916, William Lunsford, pastor of Edgefield Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., spoke to a regular Monday meeting of the Nashville Pastors' Conference. He told of the wretched plight of old and disabled baptist preachers, their widows and their children. From that meeting, a denominational conscience was stirred.

In 1917 the Southern Baptist Convention appointed a committee, and in 1918

messengers approved what has become the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. By 1920 the Board was distributing \$1,000 a week in relief benefits and the first pastor annuitant received a \$15 retirement check that year.

In 1992 more than 22,000 annuitants will receive benefits totalling more than \$100 million.

Despite the large total benefit figure, 10,000 of the retirees received less than \$200 a month. Most of these served in the days of the Great Depression and World War II when little or no money was available to set aside for retirement. Some do not even receive Social Security.

Though Annuity Board assets are nearing \$4 billion and more than 67,000 church and agency employees have active accounts, much of the huge asset base belongs to the future. For those already retired, it is late to prepare. For those who are in greater need, the Annuity Board has a relief ministry.

The Cooperative Program provides \$678,551 in the current budget for distribution by the Annuity Board. It will be paid as monthly grants, expense grants (usually medical and drug bills or utility bills) and emergency aid. Many of the recipients do not receive any annuity benefit.

An "average" relief recipient is 77 years old, has income of \$566 a month and expenses of \$694 a month. The Annuity Board tries to bridge the gap.

"Unfortunately," said Powell, "the gap is getting wider and the declining gifts through the Cooperative Program means we get less." The Annuity Board, like most agencies, is scheduled for a cut in Cooperative Program allocation next year. This reduction means less money for relief.

In addition to the Cooperative Program support, the Annuity Board raises money through its Adopt an Annuitant program to add \$50 a month to incomes of more than 900 annuitants. The Endowment Department raised \$528,958 last year for this program.

The Annuity Board receives no Cooperative Program funds for operations. All expenses are paid from earnings on assets.

Said Powell, "Our first assignment was to provide relief. The poor will always be with us. We'll help all we can, but surely, every church can say, 'Thank you,' and minister in a personal way to the dear people who are members of their congregations."

Powell noted that the Annuity Board recently advanced one place to become the



Preparation is the key to a secure retirement.

131st largest pension fund in the United States. "We ought to be even bigger," he said, "because we are the largest non-Catholic denomination in the country."

"Because churches love their ministers," said Powell, "they provide protection from financial hardships of sickness, disability, death, and old age."

William Lunsford, who left a Virginia law practice in 1897 to study for the pastorate, became the first executive officer for the original Board of Ministerial Relief and Annuitants in 1918. At that time he was pastor of Edgefield Baptist Church, Nashville.

In his report to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1923, Lunsford pledged to the pastors, "We will stand back of you; if you fall in the work, we will care for you; if you die, we will not permit your family to suffer; if you grow old in it, we will comfort your declining years."

"These promises," said Powell, "still inspire us. Annuity Board Sunday is a good time to honor God's retired servants. It's also a good time to evaluate the retirement and protection plans for each church staff member."

Widows prominent on annuitant lists

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell likes to shock gatherings of pastors by observing, "Eleven of every 12 pastors' wives will be widows."

It's just a matter of life expectancy, he observes, but all too often it means not just a widow, but a poor, old widow.

"Ministers and their churches must share the blame for the pitiful financial condition of these godly women left in such trouble," declares Powell.

Of the 25 longest term annuitants receiving Annuity Board checks, 21 are widows and only six receive more than \$100 a month.

One widow in Tennessee has received a monthly benefit for 54 years. Another in North Carolina has been receiving a check for 48 years.

"We'll help every needy pastor and widow we can," promised Powell, "but the only way to be certain you don't outlive your money, is to prepare for old age while you work. That's where the Annuity Board can help the most. The secret of a good retirement plan is to start early, contribute at least 10 percent every month, and let it grow with compound earnings."

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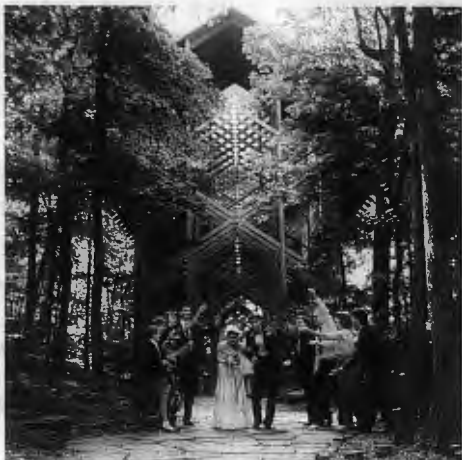
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Preparing to Marry

Engaged couples, pastors, and even married partners can benefit from a frank look at premarital counseling

by Greg Kirksey

Special to the Arkansas Baptist

"Premarital counseling? We don't need any counseling. That's for people who have problems; we're in love. All we need is someone to marry us. This counseling business is just a waste of time."

I am convinced after more than 20 years of counseling with young adults on the verge of marriage, this is the attitude most of them have about premarital counseling. That is why it is the most difficult kind of counseling.

In order for premarital counseling to be effective, then you must first overcome this negative attitude. I attempt to do this by comparing it to preventative medicine. For instance, many people, although they may feel fine at the time, take flu shots in an effort to avoid suffering from influenza later. Likewise the young couple may not yet be experiencing any problems in their relationship, but with the rate of divorce still alarmingly high it seems wise to seek counseling in an effort to avoid the suffering and pain which many experience from a broken marriage. If the young couple truly loves each other, they ought to be eager to do whatever they can to insure the future happiness of their mate.

I will not perform a wedding unless the prospective groom and bride agree to attend a premarital counseling session. Some pastors meet with a couple for as many as six counseling sessions before the wedding, but I have found the many time restraints make it more feasible to meet only once, although for a longer period of time. In this session we plan the wedding ceremony, look at what the Bible says about marriage, help establish healthy relationship patterns, and point out major threats to today's marriages along with suggestions for how to avoid these problems.

I begin by clarifying that I approach marriage from the biblical perspective. A couple legally can be married by a Justice of the Peace but most choose a minister. In doing so, whether deliberately or not, they are admitting that God has a role in marriage. The truth is God instituted marriage. It was his idea. Because of this I ask the couple if they have prayed about their marriage. Marriage as God designed it is like a triangle with God being the apex and the husband and wife the other two points. The closer the man and woman get to God, the closer they will be to one another.

The biblical definition of marriage is a "one-flesh" relationship. In Genesis 2:24, God says, "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." If a couple can grasp this concept and live accordingly, most, if not all, marital problems could be avoided. Unfortunately many people try to form a "one-flesh" relationship without surrendering their freedom as an individual. This kind of selfishness makes a poor foundation for marriage and undermines the joy God intended in the one-flesh relationship.

It is also important to talk about good communication. Learning to effectively communicate is basic to any healthy relationship but particularly marriage. There should be no secrets in a one-flesh relationship. Honesty is essential for a good marriage. You can not have a one-flesh relationship without trust.

Openness is also a vital part of healthy communication. No subject should be off limits. Of course not everything is easy to talk about so special effort is often required. I believe one reason today's marriages are so fragile is because we only communicate on a superficial level. Couples seldom share with one another their deepest feelings. Many couples, for instance, find spiritual things hard to talk about. I personally have known many couples who have lived as husband and wife for years but never heard their mate's personal testimony. They attend church together but never share from the depth of their spiritual life. What a loss of joy such neglect causes. Conflict is an inevitable part of any relationship, but good communication skills can help solve many problems before they arise.

Friendship is another important topic to discuss with those planning to marry. Rarely when I ask a young man and young lady in the counseling session to name their best friend will they mention someone other than their fiancé. I challenge them to nurture that friendship even after they get married by continuing to date their mate. Friendship is not automatic and must not be taken for granted.

Another area we cover in pre-marital counseling that is basic to a good marriage is simply understanding the differences in male and female. Not only are we physically different but more importantly we are emotionally different. I usually recom-

mend the prospective groom read *Letters to Phillip* by Charlie Shedd, which helps him understand how to treat a woman. I recommend the prospective bride read Shedd's *Letters to Karen* which helps ladies understand how to treat a man. Many marriages unnecessarily are destroyed out of ignorance. Some men, for instance, never understand why their wife isn't thrilled over a new rod and reel he buys her. Shedd's books help locate "the button" that can turn our wife or husband on.

The pre-marital counseling session is also a good place to discuss the roles and responsibilities of marriage. I refer to the basic outline of responsibility as recorded in the Bible (Co. 2:18-20 and Ep. 5:22-23).

Because God's guidelines often have been distorted I spend some time talking about what it means for a "husband to love his wife as Christ did the Church," and what it means for a wife to be submissive to her husband. Much of the confusion over what God is saying in these texts is cleared up when viewed from God's perspective of a marriage being a "one-flesh" relationship.

I also touch on the practical roles of running a household which must be decided by the couple. Because each person comes from a different background everybody comes into marriage with different ideas about what a wife does and what a husband does. A prospective wife may have come from a home where her father carried out the garbage but in her fiancé's home the mother put the trash on the curb. If they do not discuss this there may soon be a mound of trash in the new house as each waits for the other to "do their job." There are many "jobs" which must be decided when establishing a new household, such as who keeps the checkbook, who does the yard work, and who buys the groceries.

Finally I point out and discuss the five most prominent problems leading to divorces today. It may seem to be a negative approach but by alerting the groom and bride about the areas creating the most trouble in today's marriages, they become aware of the danger of allowing problems to go unresolved in these areas. It is hoped they will exercise special care and caution in these matters.

The number one cause of divorce in America today is financial problems. I give

a budget worksheet to the counselees and go over some basic principles and guidelines for handling finances. Those leaving home for the first time resist the temptation to use excess credit opportunities in order to attain a similar standard of living their parents may enjoy. When a young couple overextend themselves financially they become vulnerable with the first illness, accident, pregnancy, or layoff. You can not emphasize too strongly the need for young couples wisely to manage their money. Proper money management is the secret to successfully negotiating this trouble spot in marriage.

The second most frequent problem leading to divorce concerns sex. The most prominent sexual problems which attribute to the breakup of marriages is course adultery. It is important, particularly for young people about to marry, to understand that sex is good. Sex is God's idea. It becomes something bad only when we violate the clear guidelines God gave in his instruction manual for life, the Bible. Adultery, I believe, would never occur, and the temptation greatly would diminish if every married couple understood themselves as partners in a one flesh relationship. Sex is a wonderful gift God has

given to a married couple to express their love and promote intimacy for each other. A happy marriage where each partner is sexually satisfied at home is the best means to avoid adultery.

A third cause of divorce is problems with in-laws. Only in a few rare cases have I known parents deliberately to interfere in their child's marriage in order to create problems. Most in-law problems are not deliberate but they are nevertheless real. I share five guidelines with counselees which help avoid in-law problems getting out of hand. First, each partner should make it clear their primary loyalty now is to their mate. Second, do not discuss marital problems with parents. They seldom can be objective and they are slower to forgive the son or daughter in-law. Third, do not allow your mother or father to criticize your mate. Remember you are now one flesh and so they also are criticizing you. Next, do not ever say bad things about your in-laws. Don't even agree with your mate if they are critical of his or her parents. Finally, don't ever make your mate feel as though he or she must choose between you and the parents. It should never be an either/or situation.

Alcohol and drug problems also have

become a major threat to today's marriages. Drugs erode the very fiber of a marriage relationship. Drugs and alcohol alter a person's personality and change who they are. Many women have discovered after the wedding that they are living with a different man than the groom who stood with them at the altar. Drugs and alcohol change people. It is a destructive, not to mention expensive, habit which should never be tolerated.

The last area of difficulty I talk about is in the realm of religion. Here we need to hear what God says about being "unequally yoked." Believers do not need to be made one flesh with nonbelievers. And denominational differences can create great strife and difficulty if not thoroughly discussed and solved before the wedding. Most counselees do not see this as any big deal but it is, and should be handled before marriage plans proceed very far. A couple's relationship with God will be their greatest resource for a happy lifetime of marriage, therefore, they should not discount the importance of this vital area.

Before concluding the session with prayer I always give the couple a book and ask them to read it. Usually I give them Dr. Ed Wheat's book *Love Life*. It is the most complete book I have ever found on marriage. I also have recently given the book *Toward a Growing Marriage* by Dr. Gary Chapman. There are a number of good resources available for those who approach marriage seriously enough to prepare themselves for it. It is my desire that by spending some time in premarital counseling with young couples, I might help them realize the lasting joy and happiness God intended for them as husband and wife.

Greg Kirksey, pastor of Benton First Church, is first vice-president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



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MILLIE GILL

People

Bill Elliff began serving May 31 as pastor of First Church in Little Rock, coming there from Niles, Michigan where he was a revivalist with Life Action Ministries. A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he is scheduled to receive his doctor of ministry degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in December. Elliff has pastored churches in Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma, as well as serving as a staff member in Arkansas churches. He and his wife, Holly, have six children, Jennifer, Rebecca, David, Joshua, Bethany, and Daniel.



ELLIFF

Vern Pickrell, who has been serving as interim pastor of Arkana Church, Mountain Home, is now serving the church as full-time pastor.

Steve Pelz has resigned as pastor of First Church of Lake City, effective June 14 to move to Gentry where he will be serve in a sales position with J & H Custom Church Furnishings.

Fran Coulter, associate professor of history at Ouachita Baptist University, received an appointment from the National Endowment for the Humanities and is attending an Institute for College Teachers at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., May 31-June 26.

Steve Dumas of El Dorado is serving as pastor of Eden Church, Hamburg.

John Paul Holt is serving Fordyce First Church as summer youth minister. He will be a senior at Ouachita Baptist University.

Nathan Rose is serving Mount Zion Church, Paragould, as youth minister.

James Strait has resigned as pastor of North Main Church, Jonesboro.

Gerald Nash has resigned as pastor of New Hope #1 Church at Black Rock.

Louise Marberry Huddleston of Gassville, a department head for Wal-Mart, Inc., died May 14 at age 72. She was the wife of Carl Huddleston, pastor of First Church of Henderson. Other survivors are a son, Bill Huddleston of Shreveport, La; a daughter, Carla Winter of Gassville; a brother; four sisters; seven grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

Patrick E. Hunter joined the staff of First Church of Jacksonville June 1 as associate pastor of youth and education, coming there from Calvary Church of New Orleans, La., where he served as minister of youth and activities. Hunter is a graduate of Baylor University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was ordained to the ministry in August, 1990, by First Church of Mansfield, Texas.

Mary Pat Cook, a member of Second Church of El Dorado, recently was voted by her fellow teachers as "Teacher of the Year" for the El Dorado School District.

Jeff Paul, pastor of Emmanuel Church, Blytheville, will accompany a group to Ukraine June 30-July 14 to do ministry in evangelism and church planting.

Kay Mansell resigned May 3 as pastor of Southside Church of Heber Springs. He may be contacted by calling 501-362-8705.

Kevin Chenoweth has joined the staff of First Church of Siloam Springs as minister to youth, coming there from Longmont, Colo. He is a graduate of John Brown University.

Missy Collier began serving June 1 as an intern in the preschool/children's division of Immanuel Church in Little Rock. She is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University.

John Waters has joined the staff of First Church of England as minister of music and youth.

Angle Boydstum has joined the staff of First Church of Cabot as minister of preschool/children education.

Jeff Skrdlant and **Megan Strother** will serve as summer youth interns for Park Hill Church of North Little Rock. Skrdlant is a first year student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Strother is a pre-med student at Princeton University.

Richard Maness is serving as pastor of Immanuel Church in Fort Smith, going there from Immanuel Church in Fayetteville.

Jarrell Woodhull is serving as pastor of Excelsior Church, Greenwood.

Richard Stipe, who has been serving as music intern, has joined the staff of First Church in Springdale as associate minister of music.

Phil Hardin resigned May 31 as minister of music at Central Church of Magnolia to take the position of assistant to the president and director of alumni affairs at Ouachita Baptist University, effective June 1.

Al Gebauer began serving May 31 as pastor of First Church of Garfield, coming there from Wyoming. Gebauer and his wife, Janice, have three children, Andy, Cheri, and Claire Beth.

Wade McCarley has resigned as pastor of Highway Church in North Little Rock.

Raymond Martin has resigned as pastor of Johnson Church, having served there since 1979.



The annual Chaplains Conference, hosted by the ABSC Nations Department and Carter Tucker, director of chaplaincy ministry, drew 50 chaplains and spouses to the Sublaco Retreat Center. The conference was led by Karl Olsson of Columbia, Md., who has authored numerous books on relational Bible study.

Tommy Justus has resigned as pastor of Wedington Woods Church, Fayetteville.

Mark Griffith, pastor of Shady Grove Church, Van Buren, was ordained to the ministry May 3 by Haven Heights Church of Fort Smith. Participating in the service were Host Pastor Neal Prock, George Domesse, director of missions for Clear Creek Association, and Nelson Wilhelm, director of missions for Concord Association.

Ronny Bedford has resigned as minister of music at First Church of Farmington to take a position as internal auditor with Occidental Petroleum Corporation in Tulsa, Okla.

Kevin McCollum has joined the staff of First Church of Farmington as minister to youth. He is a senior at the University of Arkansas where he formerly served as president of the Baptist Student Union.

Joe Stephens is serving as summer youth worker for Lake Village Church. He is a junior voice major at the University of Arkansas at Monticello.

Dianne Swain resigned May 31 as single adult director at Immanuel Church in Little Rock, having served there since 1988.

Linda Fleming observed 10 years of service in May as director of food services for Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

James Newt Milum, a lifelong resident of Pyatt and a deacon of the Pyatt Church, died May 14 at age 75. Survivors are his wife, Martha Hortense Godfrey Milum; two sons, Jim L. Milum and Larry G. Milum of Harrison; one daughter, Kathryn Sue Jefferson of Pyatt; four grandchildren, Charmagen Milum Leger of Longview, Texas, Bradley Scott Jefferson of Springfield, Mo., and Elizabeth Ann and John David Milum of Harrison; two brothers; and two sisters.

Kevin Holt is serving as pastor of Highland Hills Church of Texarkana, coming there from Victory City Church in Hooks, Texas. He and his wife, Karen Laverne, have two children, Cody James, and Jacob Wayne.

Linda Brendlinger recently observed her 10th anniversary of service as associate director of Christian family life ministries at First Church of Little Rock.

Johnny Hutchison began serving May 31 as pastor of Highland Drive Church in Jonesboro, coming there from an eight-year pastorate in Mississippi. He previously has served with the Home Mission Board in New York and as a youth minister in Louisiana. A native of Starkville, Miss., he is a graduate of Northeast Louisiana State

[continued on p. 12]



A total of 328 attended the State Youth Music Festival held at Benton First Church, which represented 51 entries in solos, piano, song leading, instrumental, ensembles, and choirs. Receiving recognition for Outstanding Performances were: Jonesboro Central Church Youth Choir (pictured); Doxology ensemble, Nashville First Church; Jr. High Girls Ensemble, Texarkana Hickory Street Church; Jr. High Girls Duet, Magnolia Central Church; Tad Hardin, piano, Magnolia Central Church; Flute duet, Magnolia Central Church; Chris Moix, trumpet, Little Rock South Highland Church; and Allison Hunt, violin, Jonesboro Central Church.

ABN photo / J. Everett Sneed



White Hall First Church dedicated new facilities May 17. The new 10,220-square-foot facility, with an insurance value of approximately \$263,000, was constructed at a cost of \$205,676 because numerous volunteers assisted in construction. The building, dedicated debt-free, was erected as funds became available with the church doing its own fund-raising program. The new facilities house five offices, a conference room, four Sunday School rooms, two bathrooms, and a multi-purpose space. This space is designed for a fellowship ball that will seat 400 people, a basketball and game area, and a large kitchen. The dedication service included recognition of all who had assisted with construction. Pastor Bob Harper brought the dedicatory message. The evening service featured Gerald and Catherine Taylor, missionaries to Senegal, who served the White Hall church when the present sanctuary was erected.

fellowship hall and education building. Coy Camp is pastor.

Harvey's Chapel at Hot Springs was in a revival April 26-29 that resulted in 64 professions of faith and 25 other decisions. William Blackburn of Fort Smith was evangelist. Ken Thompson directed music. Gene Ellis is interim pastor. Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action groups from the church recently participated in the IGA Home Town Tree Planting Program by planting trees at Ouachita State Park.

Charleston First Church mission team is participating in Crossover Indianapolis May 29-June 6, assisting the Redeemer Church in Anderson, Ind.

Farmington First Church began construction May 15 of a 29,700 square foot multipurpose facility that will be used for worship, fellowship, education, recreation, and administration. In two years, the church has given more than \$450,000 to begin the relocation project. Ken Evans, a layman from University Church in Fayetteville and missions builder, is the volunteer general contractor. Hal Henson is pastor.

Oak Grove Church at Van Buren has begun missions education organizations that include Baptist Women, Girls in Action, and Acteens.

Newport Immanuel Church recently ordained Gerald Madden to the deacon ministry.

Antioch Church of Flippin held their annual spring homecoming May 17 with special services led by Pastor Glen Hicks.

Fort Smith East Side Church youth mission team will be in Berryville Aug. 1-7 to assist Valley View Mission with a vacation Bible school.

Alma First Church recently completed a church building project at Planes De Miner, a fast growing community about 10 miles from Guatemala City. Helping with the construction of the Jerusalem Church were Lee Lawson, Scott Peters, Mike Washburn, Joe Cloven, Tom Steward, Larry Tapp, Pastor Bob Shelton, Kenneth Hanna, Jan Shelton, and Shelia Tapp. The Alma church plans to return for a medical mission and vacation Bible school crusade.

ABN FINANCES

Newsmagazine turns corner

The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine has financially turned the corner. The finances are now on a solid footing. On May 23, 1991, we reported that we had a deficit due primarily to the continuing postal increases. We further stated that the staff and board of trustees had taken steps to correct this deficit.

There are several ways to judge the financial standing of any organization. The most common is by its net worth. On Jan. 1, 1991, the Newsmagazine's net worth was a negative \$37,499. As of our last financial report, April 30, 1992, our net worth is a positive \$10,050. In April, the last month for which we have a financial report, our income was \$18,386 more than our disbursements. It should be acknowledged that April was a better than usual month.


The second way of judging the financial standing of an organization is on the basis of any indebtedness. On Jan. 1, 1991, the Newsmagazine had a single outstanding balance of \$75,069. Today, this has been reduced through regular agreed upon payments to \$28,876. Our current financial situation should allow the Newsmagazine to even more rapidly reduce this balance.

Several steps were taken to correct the Newsmagazine's financial situation. Among these were: Not replacing three staff members who left the employ of the Newsmagazine, and publishing the ABN on an every other week schedule.

In the May 6, 1992, meeting of the ABN Board of Trustees, the trustees voted to change the Newsmagazine's typesetting procedure, which will accrue an additional monthly savings of \$907.

In the May board meeting, the trustees also voted to give a small salary increase to the three Newsmagazine associates (this does not include the editor). This was the first salary increase given in two and one-half years.

Editor Sneed asked for the continuing prayers of Arkansas Baptists for the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine. He said, "It is imperative that the Newsmagazine have the support of the Baptists of Arkansas. Of greatest importance is their prayers, but it also is necessary for churches and individuals to make subscribing to the Baptist state paper a priority. It, also, is of great importance that the ABN Editor's Search Committee be bathed in prayer as they seek a new editor."



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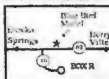
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Seminaries graduate Arkansans

Southwestern

Seventeen Arkansans were among those graduating from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, during the spring commencement May 8.

Receiving the doctor of ministry degree was Stanley Earl McKown of Fort Smith.

Receiving the master of arts in religious education degree were: Karen Birkenholz of McGehee; Gary Wayne Glasgow of Nashville; Connie Lynn Robbins of Clarksville; Ronnie Lee Rogers of Fort Smith; Wayne Douglas Turner of Pinetop; and John Douglas Waters of El Dorado.

Receiving the master of arts in marriage and family counseling and master of arts in religious education was Kenneth R. Edwards of Fort Smith.

Receiving the master of divinity degree were: Michael Paul Hamilton of Grifftsville and Darryl W. Woody of West Helena.

Receiving the master of divinity with biblical languages degree were: Darin Vance Garton of Fayetteville and Scott Sterling Hobbs of Stephens.

Receiving the master of music degree were: Mark Richard Danner of Searcy; Tina Renee Murdock of Pine Bluff; and Ronald Wayne Selby of Springdale.

Receiving the master of arts in communication degree was Bradley Wayne Sutton of Rogers.

Tracy Lynn Tyler of Springdale received a diploma in theology.

Midwestern

Eight Arkansans were among those receiving degrees during commencement exercises at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Arkansans awarded the doctor of ministry degree were:

—David G. Holder, pastor of Sylvesterino Church in Fouke, a Texas native.

—Ricky L. Hyde, pastor of Muirfreesboro First Church, is the son of Ruby Hyde of Paragould, and considers Paragould his hometown.

—Gregory A. Jackson, minister of education and administration at North Little Rock Central Church, a Missouri native.

—Larry O. Pillow, senior pastor of Conway Second Church, is the son of Gladys Pillow of Monette and the late O.E. Pillow, and considers Monette his hometown.

—Keith L. Taylor, director of pastoral care for Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock, considers Little Rock his hometown.

The master of divinity degree was presented to Bob W. Johnson, a Texas native and graduate of Ouachita Baptist University who currently serves as pastor of Lewis & Clark Church in Rushville, Mo. Arkansas graduate Harold C. Coggins Jr.

received both the master of divinity and the master of religious education degrees. He is a native of Little Rock and considers England his hometown. Currently, he serves as associate pastor and minister of single adults at Northland Chapel in Kansas City, Mo.

Receiving the master of divinity-correlated degree was Kenneth E. Poague, a native of Van Buren, currently serving as pastor of First Church in Laddonia, Mo. He is the son of Kenneth B. Poague of Fort Smith and Martha A. Holt of Van Buren.

New Orleans

Four persons with Arkansas connections were among those receiving degrees during the May 15 commencement exercises at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisiana.

Michael Hawley, formerly of Conway, was awarded the doctor of theology degree.

Receiving the master of divinity degree were:

James Michael Taylor of Camden, a graduate of Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia.

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Barney C. Rehm of Morrilton, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Rehm of Morrilton, is married to the former Judith Reed of Bradford. A graduate of Hendrix College in Conway, Rehm holds a teaching certificate from the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, and currently is children's pastor at First Church in Chalmette, La.

Receiving the associate of divinity degree with special emphasis in pastoral ministries was Randy E. Williams from Batesville. Williams, pastor of Airport Road

Mission in Slidell, La., is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ewell Campbell from Batesville and Otto E. Williams from Gravel Ridge.

Southern

Thirteen individuals with Arkansas connections were among those receiving degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., during commencement exercises May 22.

Receiving the master of divinity degree

were: Rick Johnson, son of Richard and Ruby Johnson of Little Rock; Janae Shatley, daughter of Hughlen and Delores Shatley of Paragould; Bradley Shaw, son of C. Earl and Wanda Shaw of Little Rock; Andrew C. Toler, son of Ray and Peggy Robbins of Little Rock; John Anthony Dainty; Sandra Fruland George; Michael Britton Madding; and Kenneth Ray Walker.

Stephanie Lynn Shaw of Little Rock received the master of arts degree. She is the daughter of Gary and Pat McDaniel of Paragould.

Beth Waters of Little Rock received the master of social work degree. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Matt C. Waters of Little Rock.

Harold Eugene Thomas earned the master of theology degree.

Receiving the certificate in ministry training were: Thomas Eugene Miller and David Lee Withers.

Henderson State BSU director

Mark Robinson will begin serving as Baptist Student Union director at Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, July 15. He is a native of Corsicana, Texas.

Robinson holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Texas at Arlington. He will graduate with a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, in July.

Robinson's secular experience includes working for both Nabisco and Texas Power and Light Company as an intern.

Mark's BSU experience includes working at Texas Woman's University and at the Presbyterian Hospital. Currently he is serving as BSU director for Tarrant County Junior College, Northwest, in Fort Worth. His volunteer experience includes serving as a Sunday School teacher at the Lake Arlington Church, Arlington, Texas.

Robinson's plans for HSU include developing an evangelistic program which undergirds every aspect of BSU, including the social programs.

In order to facilitate the expansion of evangelism, missions, and discipleship, Robinson plans to have multiple student led Bible studies, as well as weekly worship services.

Mark is married to the former Karen Hise.



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Looking Ahead

June

5-7 ABCD Planning Retreat (Mn)

6 Disaster Relief Meeting, Arkansas River Valley, Russellville (Bbd)

9-11 Southern Baptist Convention, Indianapolis (SBC)

9-12 SBC Handbell Celebration, Ridgecrest, NC (M)

12-14 Hispanic Sunday School Conference, Fort Smith (12) DeQueen (13) Hermitage (14) (Mn)

15-19 Super Summer, OBU, Arkadelphia (Ev)

20-26 Ridgecrest Music Week, Ridgecrest, N.C. (M)

22-25 Young Musicians Camp, OBU, Arkadelphia (M)

22-26 Arkansas Baptist Assembly, Siloam Springs (SS)

22-29 Guatemala Crusade, Guatemala (Bbd)

25-27 Forced Term: Agenda for Healing, OBU, Arkadelphia (CL)

28 Annuity Board Sunday (SBC)

28 Christian Citizen Sunday (SBC)

29/7-1 GA Mini-Camp, Camp Paron (WMU)

29/7-3 Arkansas Baptist Assembly, Siloam Springs (SS)

29-30 Marriage Enrichment Leaders, Parkway Place, Little Rock (DT)

to 11:30 a. m. to register, secure textbooks, and receive class assignments

For further information please contact Lehman Webb at 501-376-4791, ext. 5149.

Missions rally

A missions rally will be held at Little Rock First Church in the chapel on June 22 at 7:30 p.m. Current information concerning the Foreign Mission Board will be shared, and information on long and short term mission volunteers also will be available. For more information on the rally call Randy Ruins, candidate consultant, personnel selection department, FMB, at 1-800-999-3113.

New offerings from Boyce Bible School

The Epistle of John will be taught June 20 and June 27. These two consecutive Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. will give the required 16 class hours for academic credit.

The course will be taught by Dr. Maurice Hurley and classes will meet at the Baptist Medical System Education Center on Colonel Glenn Road in Little Rock. The cost is \$35 plus a \$10 registration fee. Because of tightness of the schedule on those two Saturdays, it will be necessary to meet at the center Saturday, June 13 from 10 a.m.

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Pray for Monte Sinal in Guatemala City as it seeks to minister to their community. Pray especially for the remodeling of their building.

Pray for San Juan Bautista in DeQueen as it ministers to Hispanics and as they begin their building. Pray, also, for transportation needs to bring people to their church.

Pray for Buddy Sutton, president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Pray for those who work in the Discipleship Training Department of the ABSC: Bob Holley, Gerald Jackson, Bill Falkner, Jean Myers and Nan Maxwell.

Pray for Jimmy Millikin, president of Williams Baptist College and Ben Elrod, president of Ouachita Baptist University.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD

Draper announces restructure

by Linda Lawson
Baptist Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—A restructuring of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's senior executive team and formation of a transition team to implement further changes were announced May 18 by President James T. Draper Jr.

The changes are part of recommendations from four employee teams who con-

ducted research and developed reports and proposals presented May 5-6 to the senior executive team.

Instead of a president and three executive vice presidents overseeing operations, finance and administration, and corporate planning, research and denominational relations, Draper said he will recommend to trustees in August a restructured senior executive team including himself

and four others with titles yet to be decided.

Gene Mims, executive vice president for corporate planning, research and denominational relations, will lead the church growth and programs area. Michael Arrington, executive vice president for operations, will head corporate services. E.V. King, executive vice president for finance and administration, will lead finance and administration.

Charles Wilson, assistant vice president for business, will become a member of the senior executive team and will head trade and retail markets.

"We told trustees when they approved the senior executive team level we might expand that. What we're actually doing is expanding it by one," Draper said.

"We also are putting people in those positions who already have been approved by the trustees. While we will begin to share responsibilities and move toward transition, the full implementation of this will not take place until after the trustee meeting in August," Draper said.

Decisions about what components will be located in each of the four areas are being finalized and will be announced in coming weeks, he said.

Division of the board into four major areas, Draper said, was the recommendation of the organization options team made up of eight employees and chaired by Billie Pate, associate director of the Sunday school division.

All actions are being taken in light of a new vision statement of the Sunday School Board which was completed in February, Draper said.

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Pressler still a nominee

Urged to withdraw, says he has support

by Herb Hollinger
Baptist Press

HOUSTON (BP)—Although urged to withdraw as a nominee for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board by a number of SBC leaders, Judge Paul Pressler insists he has a lot of supporters and is still a nominee.

In an interview with Baptist Press, Pressler responded to an Associated Baptist Press May 14 story which said a number of SBC leaders had urged him to voluntarily withdraw as a nominee before the SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis, June 9-11.

"I have received two letters asking me to withdraw, one letter supporting my nomination," Pressler, of Houston, said. "I have received four negative calls (on the nomination) but 50 calls which were supportive."

Pressler said he is always "subject to the Lord's leadership, nothing is set in concrete," but at this point is still a nominee. He reportedly told the SBC leaders he would pray about their request but told Baptist Press "I always pray about these matters."

Former SBC presidents Adrian Rogers, Jerry Vines, Jimmy Draper, Morris Chapman, presidential candidate Ed Young and SBC Executive Committee member Fred Wolfe, according to the ABP story, held a

conference call with Pressler in which they asked him to consider withdrawing his nomination.

On May 19, Draper, president of the Sunday School Board, told Baptist Press he had been in contact with three former SBC presidents — Rogers, Memphis, Tenn., area pastor; Vines, Jacksonville, Fla., pastor; Bailey Smith, Atlanta evangelist — and Chapman, present SBC president and Wichita Falls, Texas pastor, the previous day to confirm they were in agreement in publicly supporting a request for Pressler to withdraw his nomination.

Draper stressed the men were supporting that request because they felt rotating the same people from board to board was not a good policy and, in fact, was what they had criticized previous leadership for doing. He emphasized the men did not have an alternate nominee in mind. Draper said they also did not want to usurp the business of the convention by publicly supporting any move to replace Pressler at the convention.

Also, Bill Hancock, Kentucky pastor and recent chairman of the FMB board of trustees, said he called Pressler and expressed his concern Pressler's nomination would be a "poor action."

"It distresses me that those of us, leaders of the conservative resurgence, would try

to extend authority and control (of the SBC) by rotating from board to board," Hancock told Baptist Press. There are many strong leaders from the various state conventions who could serve and the SBC would profit," Hancock said.

"I'm not opposed to Pressler, I'm opposed to the image of a few people controlling the boards and agencies," Hancock said.

Hancock said he was considering making a motion in Indianapolis to nominate an alternate to Pressler for the FMB but had not yet made a final decision. He said he felt a Texas Baptist ought to make the motion since it concerns a Texas Baptist position.

But Pressler said it is ironic charges of "cronyism" were being made against his nomination when he could remember several husband-and-wife combinations on SBC boards prior to 1979, the start of the "conservative resurgence." Pressler is given credit for being one of the architects of that movement which gained control of SBC leadership over the past decade.

Pressler, 61, served seven years on the powerful SBC Executive Committee before rotating off last year.

Baptist Press called a number of SBC leaders and high-profile conservative pastors in Texas and most of them were sympathetic to the withdrawal of Pressler's nomination. However, all asked not to be quoted and said they would not publicly support any movement to provide an alternate nomination.

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North Carolina ousts two churches

by R.G. Puckett

North Carolina Biblical Recorder

Asheboro, N.C.(BP)—Stating "more than anything else, we must give a positive witness to the world," Kathryn H. Hamrick, president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's general board, presided over a historic session in which two churches were ousted from the

convention over decisions regarding homosexuals.

The action was taken in the board's regular May 19-20 meeting at Caraway Conference Center in Asheboro.

In March, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh voted to bless the "union" of two homosexual males. The service was held March 15 with pastor

Mahan Siler officiating. In April, Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill voted to license a homosexual student at Duke University to the ministry.

The two decisions set off a firestorm of reaction among Baptists in the state and nation, one North Carolina executive director/treasurer Roy J. Smith described as "without equal in my 30 years with the convention."

Officers of the state convention and its board proposed in March the financial policies be changed to exclude "any church which knowingly takes, or has taken, any official action which manifests public approval, promotion, or blessing of homosexuality." The change states "Any such church shall not therefore qualify as a 'cooperating church' as defined in Article IV, A, 3 of the Constitution of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina."

The approval of the officers' recommendation was by ballot vote, 59-28 with one abstention, a 67-33 percent split.

S.C. Convention severs ties with Furman University

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)—Messengers to a special South Carolina Baptist Convention voted May 15 to dissolve legal and financial ties with the convention's oldest institution, Furman University.

The vote came after 19 months of controversy and debate. Furman University trustees first voted to amend their charter and give their board sole authority to elect trustees in October 1990.

The second largest number of messengers in the convention's history, 4,873, met in the Canteen and Ellis buildings at the state fairgrounds in Columbia, Hal Lane, pastor of West Side Baptist Church in Greenwood who opposed Furman's release, said the vote "will set a precedent for the loss of other Baptist institutions. God has not called us to retreat in the face of intimidation and controversy."

Robert Shrum, president of the general board and pastor of Oakland Baptist Church in Rock Hill, called on messengers to end the controversy. "It is time for a different and new relationship to be formed between Furman and South Carolina Baptist Convention. It is time for Furman to chart its own course."

Prior to the Furman vote, messengers voted to rescind the November 1991 recommendation to seek legal action against the college. The motion to rescind was approved overwhelmingly.

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Convention Uniform

When servants disobey

by Earl Humble, retired, Walnut Ridge

Basic passage: Jonah 1:1-9; 15-17

Focal passage: Jonah 1:1-9; 15-17

Central truth: God loves his servants too much to let them sin and get away with it.

Jonah was a Hebrew prophet who served about 800 B.C. God called him to go on a preaching mission to Nineveh, capital of Assyria. The Assyrians were an aggressive, warlike race, noted for their cruelty to conquered people. They were idolaters who were believed to have no interest in knowing Yahweh, the Hebrew God. Jonah might have reasoned that his life would be endangered and his mission fruitless. If Jonah was typically Jewish, he disliked all foreigners, and preferred to keep his ministry to his own people.

Instead of heeding God's call to go to Nineveh, he took passage on a ship going in the opposite direction, toward Tarshish, or Spain. God does not forsake his people when they sin, nor does he forget them. He follows them in many ways to bring them back to himself. Jonah knew not only that God created the world but that he controlled the world. In spite of this Jonah risked getting away with his act of disobedience. When a great storm blew up, the sailors became alarmed, but when they awakened Jonah, he confessed that he was the reason for God's action in sending the storm.

Jonah told the men that the storm would stop if they threw him overboard. Reluctant to drown a fare-paying passenger, they continued to row for a time, but gave in and threw Jonah into the sea. The storm at once abated. The sea was calm again, and each mariner thanked his god. We wonder how these idolaters interpreted Jonah's claim to be a prophet of God, the one who had first started and now stopped the storm.

God was in control of this incident from beginning to end. Chapter 1 is probably as much as these sailors ever knew about Jonah's experience, but to us it has been given to look inside the soul of this prophet and, to a degree, into the mind of God also. We are told about the great sea monster that swallowed Jonah. In our next lesson, we shall see something about Jonah's further experiences. Let us carry this thought with us: we can not hide from God anywhere.

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Life and Work

Church pillars

by David Blase, First Church, Nashville

Basic passage: Revelation 3:7-13

Focal passage: Revelation 3:10-12

Central truth: True Christians are secure in Christ.

An older couple died. People in the community said, "They were pillars in our church and community!" This was a compliment to a couple who had served Christ faithfully for more than 50 years.

The church at Philadelphia had a small membership, but they were loyal to the Word of God and had not denied the name of the Lord. A small church can do much for the kingdom work. Some small churches in Arkansas do better, percentage wise, than some large ones. In the history of Baptists, some small congregations have given birth to numerous missions and churches. There will always be an important place for the smaller church.

Jesus makes a big promise to little people who have as much faith as "a grain of mustard seed" (Mt. 17:20). We need to trust in Christ and not rely on our own strength. Little David knew where his strength was. He knew that the battle belonged to the Lord (1 S. 17:45). All of God's children need to remember that wonderful truth.

The church belongs to Christ. She has been bought with a price (1 Co. 6:20), and she is a precious jewel to her Lord. Faithful believers need to claim the promise in verse 12. There is a glorious future for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus promised the church at Philadelphia that their enemies would come and worship before their feet (v. 9). They were not to hide out in fear. The churches of today need to stop being afraid of anything but the judgment of her Lord. Jesus built the church and made the initial promise that, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). As Paul said, "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Ro. 8:31).

The overcomers in the church at Philadelphia were assured that no man could take away their crown (v. 11). They were pillars in their local church and would, one day, become pillars in the temple of God!

Some Christians today understand that the church of tomorrow must be more like the early church. It must be an army marching as to war! Every believer is a soldier and must be the best.

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Bible Book

Strength in weakness

by Dennis M. Dodson, First Church, Monticello

Basic passage: 2 Corinthians 11:22-25; 12:1-2, 7-13

Focal passage: 2 Corinthians 11:22-25; 12:1-2, 7-13

Central truth: The weakness of a Christian may be the reason for him to have pride and strength in the Lord.

The boastfulness of Paul's opponents at Corinth had made them appear more powerful than he because of his meekness being perceived as weakness. Though Paul felt very uncomfortable about boasting, he realized he would have to boast about his ministry if he was to regain his authority among the Corinthians, who were being led astray by this practice by his opponents. By so doing, Paul approved of having pride about one's Christian life and service, while giving the glory to God.

In chapter 11, Paul matched his heritage as a Jew with his opponents' and gave an extensive list of experiences by which he had proven himself to be more of a servant for Christ than they. He pointed out that the physical distress of those experiences was less burdensome than his daily concern for the churches.

In chapter 12, Paul described a specific experience for which he could have exalted himself. To avoid self-exaltation, he shared his experience in the third person rather than the first person. To prevent Paul from exalting himself because of that experience, which was a trip to heaven where he heard what man is not permitted to speak, God permitted Satan to give Paul a "thorn in the flesh." Paul prayed three times that the Lord would relieve him of that affliction caused by Satan. God responded by giving him grace to perfect God's power through Paul's weakness and make him content while being able to contend with his weakness and woes.

Paul's actions to restore his authority at Corinth teach us: (1) Church leaders may need to make members aware of their record of service, giving God the glory, to maintain their authority and keep the members from being led astray by false teachers, who boast. (2) Affliction or weakness can be a blessing rather than a burden, a stepping-stone to strength and service rather than a stumbling block, when accepted for God's use and glory.

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Convention Uniform

Grace and disgrace

by Earl Humble, retired, Walnut Ridge

Basic passage: Jonah 3:1-5,10;
4:1-4,10-11

Focal passage: Jonah 3:1-5,10;
4:1-4,10-11

Central truth: In spite of human weaknesses, God will accomplish his purposes.

Delivered from his watery grave, Jonah was quite willing to go and preach to the Ninevites. God is the God of a second chance, and aren't we glad? This is not a chance after death, but after disobedience. We see in this story that Jonah did not preach with his whole heart, but he did deliver God's message. He called for Nineveh to repent and turn to God, or that great city would be destroyed. Jonah was amazed that the Ninevites repented, all the way up to the king.

God spared Nineveh, a city so great that it would take three days to walk through it. As Jonah walked he preached, "Yet forty days and God will destroy this city unless you repent." Jonah delivered his message and went outside the city and sat down to see what would happen to the city. When he saw that God had spared the city, he became angry, and asked God to take his life.

Jonah sat on the east side of the city under a makeshift, shelter from the heat of the sun. God caused a plant, called in some translations a gourd vine, to grow up quickly to shade him. Jonah was happy about the shade. God now caused a worm to cut the plant, and it died. Jonah was displeased and asked God to let him die, but God did not grant his request. God was displeased with Jonah, and rebuked him sternly, "You had compassion on the plant; should I not have compassion on this great city?"

Jonah's problem was that he was prejudiced against the Assyrians. Perhaps it was their reputation for cruelty, their appearance, their language, customs, or religion that lay behind his prejudice. Whatever it was, Jonah decided the Ninevites were not worthy of salvation. He was angry that God loved them.

Who is worthy of salvation? Certainly not these murderers, rapists, and thieves. They were idolaters. But what about the Hebrews, and especially Jonah? Were they worthy? God did not choose the Hebrews because they were worthy, but because he loved them (Dt. 7:6-8).

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Life and Work

Open the door!

by David Blase, First Church, Nashville

Basic passage: Revelation 3:14-22

Focal passage: Revelation 3:15,16,19-21

Central truth: Men need to open their hearts to Christ.

Many fathers and husbands are living in Laodicea. Laodicea is a place filled with men who are not living for Jesus and are not leading their families to Christ. It is the hangout for lukewarm Christians who are neither cold or hot. It is a place in danger of the judgment of God!

The church in Laodicea thought they were all right. They were blind as to their real spiritual condition (v. 17). Many men are like that today. They are proud, self-centered, and think they have it made. They have no time for the church or the Lord, but they have time for almost everything else. They especially have time for doing the things they want to do.

One man asked another what the word "apathy" meant. The reply was, "I don't know and I don't care!" Some men today have this deadly attitude toward their own life, the home, the school, the government, and the church.

The word "man" in verse 20, is a term for all mankind. We can use it, however, on Father's Day to appeal to the men. Jesus loves the men of this world. He considers them the head of every family (1 Co. 11:3; Ep. 5:23). He puts a lot of stock in the men.

Homes and churches are suffering because of a lack of strong godly men who will lead out for Christ. Children are suffering because men will not obey Ephesians 6:4. Wives are suffering because husbands will not obey Ephesians 5:25-31. Clinics are crowded with women and children who have been abused in one way or another by men who are either lost or lukewarm.

The great need of today is for men to hear Jesus knocking at their heart's door (Re. 3:20). They need to open up their hearts and let Jesus come in. They need to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ep. 5:18) and begin to really live the Spirit-filled life. This relationship with God will change the man and change the home.

One day Joshua made a commitment that every man should make. He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" (Js. 24:15). On this Father's Day, men must repent of their sins, so Jesus will not "spew them out of his mouth" (v. 16).

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Bible Book

Concluding challenge

by Dennis M. Dodson, First Church, Monticello

Basic passage: 2 Corinthians 12:14-15,20; 13:2-11

Focal passage: 2 Corinthians 12:14-15,20; 13:2-11

Central truth: For churches to be healthy, strong, and growing, it is essential for them to solve their problems caused by sin through repentance and make the repairs needed to rebuild their relationship and to restore themselves to their best service.

2 Corinthians was written by Paul to avoid another painful confrontation with the Corinthians. He had written to them before and had sent Titus in efforts to resolve their differences and restore their relationships. Paul was concerned about visiting them because he was fearful that neither he nor they would be pleased with one another. Finding sinful conditions that required severe discipline would not be pleasing to Paul. For Paul to depart from his fatherly way with the Corinthians and discipline them as a judge would not be pleasing to them. He preferred to resolve the situation without confrontation, but he was ready to exercise his authority, if necessary.

Paul's visit would not be a financial burden to them because his purpose was to give rather than to get. Their spiritual prosperity, not his financial, was his primary concern.

Apparently, the Corinthians felt that Paul showed no evidence of God's power in his life while they claimed to possess that power themselves. Their perceptions were wrong in respect to both. Paul, like Jesus, was strong when he appeared to be weak. They, not he, needed to prove their relationship with the Lord.

The purpose of Paul's letter was also the purpose of his prayers. As one whose purpose was to develop the church rather than to destroy it, he wanted the Corinthians to be complete. The word "complete," also translated "perfect," means something restored or put in proper condition for service, like the mending of a net (Mt. 4:21). Thus, Paul's final farewell in the letter challenged them about being committed to completeness, unity, and harmony, which carried the assurance of "the God of love and peace" being with them.

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Across the Country

HMB trustees respond to claims of racial exclusion

ATLANTA—In response to charges that the Southern Baptist Convention is not inclusive of racial groups, Home Mission Board trustees adopted a resolution expressing admiration for ethnic and black congregations. The resolution, approved during the trustees' May executive committee meeting, also called for the denomination to include non-Anglos in leadership roles.

The Southern Baptist Convention includes more than 6,000 ethnic churches which use 100 languages and serve 102 ethnic groups. All American Indians are classified as one group so the figures do not reflect the variety of American Indian congregations. Last year, 466 language churches were started.

Carter to lead study of racism by BWA

WASHINGTON—Former President Jimmy Carter has agreed to serve as honorary chairman of the Special Commission of Baptists Against Racism being formed by the Baptist World Alliance.

Carter will head an international committee of Baptist leaders from the United States and other countries, many of which currently are embroiled in racial and ethnic conflict. The special commission on racism is being appointed by the BWA general secretary to study the causes of racism, the biblical answer to racism, and what Baptists can do to help defeat racism.

Oklahoma pastor to challenge Porter

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.—Bob Bender, pastor of First Baptist Church in Ada, Okla., will be nominated next month in Indianapolis to serve as registration secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention. He will vie for the position with current registration secretary Lee Porter who has held the job 15 years.

Louisiana evangelist candidate for SBC VP

RUSTON, La.—Louisiana evangelist Joe Aulds has announced his candidacy for first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Election of officers, including a new president, comes during the June 9-11 annual meeting of the SBC in Indianapolis.

Although there are at least three announced candidates for president, Aulds apparently is the first to announce for a vice president's post.

A full-time evangelist for two years based in Ruston, Aulds is a member of the SBC Committee on Order of Business and the Order of Business Committee for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. Well-known in Louisiana for his conservative views, Aulds has preached revivals in 20 states.

Lowrie accepts Texas church after three years in Tennessee

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)—D. L. Lowrie, executive director/treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention for three and a half years, will become pastor of First Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, in September.

Lowrie, a Tennessee native, joined the Tennessee Baptist Convention Jan. 1, 1989. Lowrie, 57, will take the Lubbock pastorate after the Sept. 4 meeting of the Tennessee convention's executive board. The chief executive is returning to the church he led as pastor from 1980-86.

Oklahoma board recommends shift in CP percent

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.—Citing nine straight years of flat growth in Cooperative Program receipts from Oklahoma churches, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's board of directors recommended lowering from 44.25 to 42 percent the percentage of receipts sent on to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Directors also voted to change the method of changing the CP division in the future and no longer handle to funds designated to agencies not supported by the BGCO or SBC.

The recommended percentage change came after months of study by the board's Cooperative Program study committee, which compared records from 1925 to the present, looking at facts and trends.

William G. Tanner, BGCO executive director-treasurer, said the convention's problems were caused by the oil boom/bust that wreaked havoc on the state's economy.

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NATION

SOUTHEASTERN SEMINARY

Patterson elected president

by Robert H. Dilday
Virginia Religious Herald

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—In a widely-anticipated move, trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary elected Dallas educator Paige Patterson as the school's fifth president during a special called meeting May 14 on the school's Wake Forest, N.C., campus.

The 24-1 secret ballot vote followed an hour-and-a-half discussion between Patterson and trustees, whose sometimes pointed questions probed his role in the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative movement; his relationship with trustees of Criswell College in Dallas, where he has served the last 17 years as president; and the approach he will take with seminary professors uneasy with Southeastern's increasingly conservative tack.

Although spectators and the press were permitted to attend the discussion, voting took place in executive session. Board chairman Roger Ellsworth said an attempt after the election to make the vote unanimous failed by "three or four votes."

"Several people who voted for Dr. Patterson voted against making it unanimous," he said.

"It's a great honor to be chosen for any position like this," Patterson, 49, told reporters at the conclusion of the closed session. "To follow Dr. Lewis Drummond (as president) is also a great honor and I ask all to pray for me. I hope to do as credible a job as he did."

Patterson will join the seminary's administrative staff June 15, giving him a two-week period of overlap with Drummond, who retires June 30 after four years as president. Inauguration ceremonies are expected in the fall.

In addition to his responsibilities as president, Patterson will serve as a tenured faculty member.

Trustees approved an annual salary package of about \$70,000, said Paul Fletcher, vice president for internal affairs. Patterson also will receive an additional \$21,000 in annual insurance and annuity benefits, an automobile and use of the president's house on campus, Fletcher said.

The new president will face daunting challenges in his role, including potential loss of accreditation, declining student enrollment, loss of faculty, and decreased financial revenues.

Southeastern has traveled a rocky path since 1987, when a new majority of conservative trustees voted to employ only biblical inerrantists as professors. That decision prompted the resignation of pres-

ident Randall Lolley and other administrative staff members and subsequently hastened the departure of several professors.

Drummond's election as president in 1988 met resistance from remaining faculty, as student enrollment declined from more than 1,000 in 1987 to about half that today. The deepening conflict eventually drew the attention of the school's accrediting agencies, the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. SACS has placed the seminary on probation, a disciplinary action that could lead to loss of accreditation and ATS is considering a similar move.

Satisfying accreditation concerns will be "agenda No. 1," said Patterson, assuring trustees the stipulations could be met. "They have not asked us to do anything unconscionable. They are reasonable requests. They can be achieved."

While he has "some sympathy" with a growing movement among Southern Baptists to "dump accrediting agencies," he dismissed the possibility of severing ties with ATS and SACS. "In the kind of world we live in you can't proceed effectively without accrediting agencies," he said. He noted "every major corporate giving unit" expects schools to be accredited. In addition, today's mobile students transfer from institution to institution and only classwork from accredited schools will transfer with them.

Patterson said he is optimistic the newly raised conservative banner at Southeastern will attract a growing number of students — perhaps as early as this fall — to offset the past four years' losses.

Faculty selection process modified

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Although electing Paige Patterson as the school's new president topped the agenda of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's board meeting May 14, trustees used the special called meeting to give themselves a greater role in selecting faculty and to authorize the seminary's president to choose chapel speakers.

The new faculty selection process modifies a proposal tabled at the March meeting which reduced faculty participation in selecting new professors to an advisory role. The new process gives final say for choosing chapel speakers to the seminary's president.