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### November 27, 1997

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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# ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine

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# HELP!

## THEIR CRY

## OUR CALL

### Week of Prayer for International Missions

November 30–December 7

### 1997 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

National Goal: \$100 million

State Goal: \$3.25 million



"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."



*Luke 4:18-19*

# Chinese Christian leaders oppose IMB's 'secret' work

**C**HINA'S government-sanctioned Protestant organization has ended its partnership with the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, charging that the board "secretly" sent missionaries into the country.

But officials of the IMB, which has quietly sent mission workers into China for a decade, say they will continue that practice "through any open opportunity to do so."

At stake in the dispute is the future of an undisclosed number of Southern Baptists ministering in a variety of ways in China.

A Nov. 3 "open letter" from the China Christian Council, which claims to represent 10 million Protestants in the country, said, "We...are disappointed that the IMB...has, without consulting us, adopted a 'two-track approach' vis-a-vis China." The letter, signed by Han Wanzao, president of the CCC, was placed on the Internet home page of Amity News Service, the council's communication arm.

"In this [two-track] view, while not giving up its partnership with the CCC as the 'open track,' it will try to give major attention to a clandestine track, through which church workers from abroad are secretly sent to China to carry out 'missionary' work as dictated by the IMB," the letter noted. "These persons do not intend to make their identities or their relationship to the IMB known, either to the CCC or to the Chinese government. We cannot see how this can be justified on Christian terms."

"Therefore the CCC has informed a representative of the IMB that we will not cooperate in their deception and that we cannot have partnership with any organization holding to a 'two-track approach' and give legitimacy to secret infiltration."

The IMB opened formal ties with the CCC in 1996 and currently has eight missionaries officially registered with the group or its social service arm, the Amity Foundation.

But ever since the 1980s, the IMB - formerly the Foreign Mission Board - has used other channels to send workers to China. Most respond to Chinese invitations to fill secular positions in the country's universities, hospitals and businesses, and share their Christian faith as opportunities arise.

Others, however, are appointed as missionaries and assigned the task of sharing their faith in China with "unreached people groups." These IMB workers live in adjacent countries and often travel in and out of China on tourist visas.

According to IMB president Jerry Rankin, "Southern Baptists love the people of China, and the board wants to facilitate Christians responding to requests for teachers, consultants and other personnel through any open opportunity to do so."

"There has been no change or recent development in what we are doing," he added. "While we do not work exclusively with the CCC, we have been grateful for the opportunity to provide personnel and resources for ministries and projects through the Amity Foundation."

"We would not consider other things we are doing as secretive, deceptive or clandestine, simply because it is not channeled through the China Christian Council."

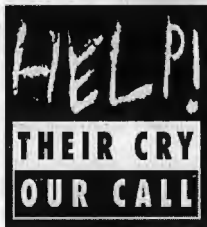
Not all IMB staff members have supported the "two-track" approach and some have pushed unsuccessfully for the board to restrict its work to the CCC.

Rankin acknowledged that two missionaries have resigned in disagreement over the policy - Judith Richards and another unnamed missionary who quit shortly after being employed and never traveled to the field. Other mission workers who have retired may have been motivated in part by opposition to the policy, Rankin added.

RICHMOND, VA (ABP)

# ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



## Cover Story

### Help!

Baptists will focus on prayer and giving during the 1997 Season of Prayer for International Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Arkansas Baptists have adopted a 1997 statewide offering goal of \$3.25 million.

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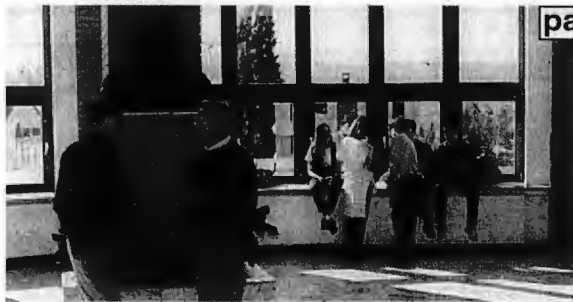
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## partnership missions

◀ European partnership coordinator Doyne Plummer (left) visits with Bob Zbinden, pastor of International Baptist Church in Budapest, Hungary, during a 1994 trip.

# 'We had to keep going'

## Partnership coordinator Doyne Plummer 'retires' following four years of post-retirement service

**Russell N. Dillard**

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

**W**HEN THE COORDINATOR of the partnership between Arkansas and European Baptists "retired" from the Arkansas Baptist State Convention staff effective Dec. 19, it wasn't the first time.

Doyne Plummer, who has led the missions partnership between the ABSC and European Baptist Convention since 1994, had planned to leave ABSC service at least three times in the past four years. So why hasn't he resigned before? He kept answering God's call.

Plummer, who retired from the Internal Revenue Service in 1990, is credited by many with the partnership's success.

Harry Black, who will coordinate partnership missions and Cooperative Program promotion for the new ABSC administrative and executive team, noted that Plummer's "gracious and patient personality has built bridges of relationship which span the Atlantic Ocean."

"Many Arkansans have participated in fruitful projects because of the foundation of trust built between Doyne and those in the EBC," Black explained. "The diversity and frequency of projects which mark this partnership is a tribute to the confidence which EBC pastors...have in him."

When Plummer began serving as coordinator, there had been only one church-to-church partnership made and a few projects completed. As of October, about 700 people had participated in 168 projects and 54 European congregations had been paired with Arkansas churches.

Plummer said he sensed, along with his wife, Betty, the call to volunteer missions work following his retirement

from a 30-year IRS career. He served the IRS in Arkansas, Colorado, Texas, Alabama and Washington, D.C., reaching the level of collections division chief.

The path to Plummer's mission call began as a boy. A native of Lonoke County, he was the son of a cotton sharecropper, the youngest of 11 children.

After his father's death, "my mother remarried and we moved to Ward, where two young men who were Christians became my best friends," he said. "After dad died, I got into a group that now would be called a gang. The influence of those two boys in getting me...into a relationship with the Lord changed my life."

### A call to missions

While he accepted Christ as a boy, his missions call came later in life. "Directly, my sense of call started in 1987 when we went with First Church in Cabot to Brazil as part of the Brazil partnership," he recalled. "I got close to those people and saw what God was accomplishing with them. We saw the Lord work down there."

"It also came during the Guatemala partnership when we went with a group in our association," he said. That trip led to a second, then a third. "If it hadn't been for those three trips, the chances are I would not even have sensed God calling us in this direction."

His missions call was strengthened again in 1989, when First, Cabot, started a new work. "We spent two years in that church, helping to establish it," he said. "It was a draining experience...but they were two of the greatest years we had in service. We knew we had to keep going."

His missions call changed direction again in 1993, when he became involved in the EBC partnership planning process

with ABSC Brotherhood department director Glendon Grober. The Plummers, sensing God's call to help with the partnership, attended the Foreign Mission Board's language center and were appointed as International Service Corps volunteers in 1993.

The following January, the couple was on the field in Germany as the first onsite coordinators for the EBC partnership. Serving until July 1994, Plummer had planned to curb his missions activity following his European service.

"We thought we were through with it after the six months, then we came to the realization that Glendon needed help," he said. In the last week of his term, Plummer agreed to serve one day a week as a volunteer coordinator for six months.

Two weeks later, on July 28, Grober and his wife, Marjorie, were killed in an auto accident and Plummer's missions call again was changed. He was asked to serve as a four-day-a-week coordinator for the partnership, again planning for "a maximum of six months," he noted, until a Brotherhood director could be found.

When Harry Black was named to that position, said Plummer, "Men's Ministries, RAs and other functions of the Brotherhood director needed attention. To let Harry get a breather, they asked me to help with the work. Again, we set six months as a limit and agreed to leave in July 1995." That term lasted two years.

He emphasized that his "greatest joy" in leading the partnership has been "to be over there in Europe, see a need, come back and communicate that need and someone or some church would say, 'That's just what I am supposed to do. Then they would go and from their report it was clear that it was intended by God to work out that way.'"

He cited one such need in Romania that resulted in physician Rogers Edmondson leading a medical mission tour that resulted in two spin-off trips and a total of more than 900 professions of faith among Romanian nationals.

"Hundreds of Romanians have come to know Christ, in part, because Doyne had a vision for expanding the partnership beyond the English-language work," commented Black.

As Plummer prepares to leave the coordinator's post, he said his hope is that "this partnership with the Turkish population in Bulgaria will materialize. Here is a door that is open to a people that numbers one million in a country of eight million. The door is open to Arkansas."

## PERSPECTIVE

### A Pastor's Heart



**Emil Turner**

ABCs Executive Director

**C**AN YOU IMAGINE the church business meeting? Deacon Smith makes the motion, "I move we call Brother Jones to be our pastor as soon as he can move to the field." Deacon Brown objects, "What about Brother Wilson's widow? She and the kids are still in the parsonage. We can't just put them out on the street!" Discussion followed.

Folks, this conversation has actually occurred. Pastors have died during their tenure and their families have had nowhere to go and no financial help. Most of us think that such would never happen in our churches. But twice in my ministry I have seen it.

Is your church providing for your

### President's Perspective



**Greg Kirksey**

ABCs President

**J**UDGING FROM THE VOTES cast at this year's meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, I would venture to guess that virtually every messenger "lost" a vote or two. Few, if any messengers, got "their way" on every decision. Most, therefore, probably left this year's convention a little disappointed. The disappointment was probably compounded by the slim margins which decided some of the crucial issues. A few more votes on one side or the other could have resulted in a totally different outcome. That fact probably made most of our conversations — regardless of how we voted — sound a lot alike on the drive back to our churches Wednesday afternoon. For instance, I don't know how many times myself, I heard the phrase "if only." "If only it had not rained." "If only there had been 16 more votes." "If only there had been 19 more votes." "If only nine or ten people would have voted differently." "If only someone would have said this...

pastor's retirement and for such an emergency? The Southern Baptist Annuity Board has a tremendous ministry to church employees and their families. I hope you are taking advantage of it. Pastors do not usually ask for such benefits. But wise and godly church leaders see to it that the ministers' needs are met. In December, most churches think about a special ministry to the church staff. This year perhaps someone in your church should ask, "Are we meeting the basic needs of our church staff?"

■ Have you read *You Are Special* by Max Lucado? (Crossway, 1997). This is a children's book. It is easy to read, but the message is awesome. Not only do I recommend it as a gift to a child, but there is not an adult I know who would not profit from it in some way. Folks, this one gets a gold star. Find it, read it, then buy it and give it to someone who needs it.

#### Executive director's schedule:

- Dec. 4-5 BSSB, Nashville
- Dec. 7 (a.m.) Cornerstone, Texarkana
- Dec. 8 Convention Program Committee, Baptist Building
- Dec. 9 Executive Board Meeting, Baptist Medical Center

or done that..." "If only..." "If only..." "If only..."

If we aren't careful, we will find ourselves living in the past. When things don't go our way, the disappointment that results is often accompanied with a temptation to dwell on how different things might have been, "if only..." I learned this myself almost three years ago following my wife's death. I fought the temptation of looking back and thinking: "If only we had gone to the doctor sooner." (But we hadn't.) "If only Pam had not died." (But she did.) "If only Pam were still here." (But she isn't.) It is so easy to get stuck in the past. But when we do, we stop living in the present. If we are to live productive lives we must face reality, regardless of how disappointing or painful our real world may be. None of us get "our way" all the time. That is the REAL world! How we respond to our disappointments in life will greatly determine our future.

There is no disappointment in our convention's past that, by God's grace, we can't overcome. But we must resist the temptation to dwell on the past. If only we will move forward together with our eyes on Jesus, we can show the world God's power is perfected in our weakness. His grace is sufficient in the midst of some of life's greatest disappointments. I know!

**Greg Kirksey**, pastor of First Church, Benton, is the new president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

### quotes

**"If we are praying for lost people and our missionaries... God will convict us of the need to give."**

— Julia Ketter, leader  
ABCs missions support team

**"The only kind of unity that is worth having is a unity based on the truth of God's Word in Scripture."**

— Timothy George, dean  
Beeson Divinity School

**"If you won't even go out of town without a map, don't go into eternity without one."**

— North American Mission Board  
television ad for local churches

## ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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# BWA makes global impact

**A** MID ALL THE FOCUS on the Ouachita issue during the recent state convention annual meeting, most other business items seemed rather routine—even those with long-term ministry impact.

At least one action with the potential for worldwide impact was final almost without notice during the final moments of the annual meeting. Among three resolutions approved simultaneously without discussion was one affirming the global ministry of the Baptist World Alliance.

While most Arkansas Baptists probably have heard of the Baptist World Alliance, many have limited knowledge about its historic role in international Baptist ministry efforts. Declaring that the purpose of BWA "is to draw Baptists together from all across the globe in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ," the resolution adopted by state convention messengers explains that the organization "confronts such international needs as human rights, racism and hunger" and "promotes evangelism, education, doctrine, ethics, worship and our Baptist heritage."

BWA currently includes more than 42 million baptized believers in 191 Baptist unions and conventions around the world.

Amid that background, the Southern

**Straight  
from the  
Editor**



**Trennis Henderson**

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Baptist Executive Committee recently approved a request by SBC president Tom Elliff to name a study committee to evaluate the SBC's future relationship to the BWA.

Acknowledging that "the BWA sometimes lends credibility to the Baptist witness in countries which might otherwise deny the opportunity for a significant presence," Elliff voiced concern that "questions have arisen regarding perceived changes in the mission, focus and doctrinal positions of the BWA." He added that "good stewardship requires that we be fully aware and in accord with their objectives, doctrinal positions and operational procedures."

Noting that he welcomes dialogue with SBC leaders, BWA general secretary Denton Lotz affirmed "the constant and

unchanging commitment of the BWA to uniting Baptists worldwide in our evangelistic task, social responsibilities, and defense of human rights and religious freedom."

The SBC's traditional relationship to BWA is similar to a large church's involvement in a local Baptist association. While larger congregations sometimes feel that they contribute more resources to the association than they gain in return, the true motivation should be seeking to cooperate together to advance God's Kingdom.

While concern over any "perceived changes" certainly merits careful study, hopefully SBC and BWA leaders can continue to find common ground to benefit ongoing ministry among Baptist conventions in Africa, Eastern Europe, South America and other needy areas of the globe. It would be tragic for Southern Baptists' decisions to be based primarily on the financial impact of supporting BWA.

As Arkansas Baptists' recent resolution clearly declared: "We encourage the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to give recognition to the work of the Baptist World Alliance and determine to continue our significant role in the work of our sister organization."



## letters to the editor

### Seminary action questioned

The Oct. 16 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* reports that Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Al Mohler has fired an employee of 35 years. The excuse given was that Dr. Paul Debusman wrote a personal letter to Dr. Tom Elliff, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, about statements he made in a chapel address. He did not agree with Dr. Elliff's statement that he would not have been invited to speak in chapel under previous moderate administrations.

Any president has the right to fire someone when there are justifiable reason for such action. If the excuse given is the real reason for firing Dr. Debusman, it appears to me to be very unethical. Since when did the president of the Southern Baptist Convention become infallible? And because of his infallibility for anyone to seek to correct what he has said is such a grave mistake that he should be fired immediately? How long will such things continue to take place in the Southern Baptist Convention?

**E. Fred Savage Jr.**  
Walnut Ridge, AR

### Firing prompts protest

There is a news item headed "Southern Seminary librarian fired over letter to Elliff" in the Oct. 16 issue of the *News-magazine*. Unless there is more to this story than presented in this article, Southern Baptists everywhere should rise up in protest.

Actions such as this smack of a "police state" type mentality. This is America and people are entitled to their opinions and if there is anywhere this should be true, it is in our denomination.

We cringe at the type leadership we now have that would condone or even evoke such an action as firing a person over his opinion expressed in a private letter. If this is tolerated today, what does tomorrow bring?

We have been Southern Baptists for over 55 years and find it exceedingly regrettable the direction our convention is taking.

I am a semi-retired pastor after serving Baptist churches since 1952. Is my pension going to be suspended because of my expressing my opinion?

**Jlm and Amy Morris**  
Searcy, AR

### Partnership impacts Iowa

As a director of missions in 24 counties in southern Iowa, I observe the development and growth of multiple Southern Baptist churches. Praise God for the tremendous impact of about 12 different Arkansas groups that have shared their resources, testimonies and lives with southern Iowa people. Church buildings have been built. Congregations were started. Plateaued congregations were challenged and blessed. Discouraged congregations were touched and encouraged. Kingdom work has been accelerated by years as a direct result of the partnership between Arkansas and Iowa. We can never adequately say "Thank you!" Perhaps the commitment to continue energetically advancing the Lord's work in Iowa is the best way to say "Thank you."

Your prayer support has made a difference in many situations, and your personal friendship has enriched our lives and blessed us with the gift of knowing a family who cares. Praise God for Arkansas Baptists!

**Phill H. Hall**  
Albia, IA

# 'It just ripples out'

## Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is Baptist answer to world crying Help!



Arkansas natives Tommie (left) and Stephen Smith, Southern Baptist International missionaries to Portugal, speak to students at Arkansas Baptist High School in Little Rock during a recent missions emphasis week. Both are 14-year veterans of the International Mission Board.

**Russell N. Dilday**

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

**D**URING the Week of Prayer for International Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, Arkansas Baptists will focus their prayers and gifts on extending God's kingdom around the world through international missions. This year's theme, "Help: Their Cry, Our Call," emphasizes the biblical call to reach out to the lost by meeting their spiritual and physical needs.

The national goal for this year's offering is \$100 million and Arkansas Baptists hope to raise at least \$3.25 million of that national total.

No one knows the impact of the Lottie Moon Offering more than the missionaries of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board it supports, and no one knows how it is spent in Portugal better than Stephen Smith, business manager and treasurer for the IMB's Portugal mission.

A Camden native and 14-year veteran of the Portugal mission field along with his wife, Tommie, Smith said the Lottie Moon Offering "directly affects our everyday work. I see that as our business manager. Without the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, there would be no need for me. It is wonderful."

He credited offering funds for "providing us the equipment necessary for us to do our job. We'd done everything by hand until five years ago when we got our computer. We did our bookkeeping and accounting by hand. It's let us take care of the other missionaries."

In addition to equipment, Lottie Moon funds also have strengthened the Baptist witness in Portugal.

"The offering has provided us with an opportunity to work with the Baptist camp in Agua de Madeiros, built with Lottie Moon Offering funds," Smith said.

"We work directly with the national convention and it serves more than 1,000 a year, many unchurched. The camp is one of our leading tools for reaching nationals, next to one-on-one witnessing."

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering has been a Southern Baptist tradition of giving to world missions efforts for almost 110 years. It began as a response to an 1887 letter from Lottie Moon, a missionary to China, requesting support for more missionaries to be sent to China.

In May 1888, Baptists responded. The Woman's Missionary Union was organized and a goal of \$2,000 was set by the new WMU for the first Baptist Christmas offering for missions, enough to send two missionaries to help Moon.

The goal was exceeded, with a total offering of \$3,315.26, enough to send three missionaries.

Carl Johnson, IMB vice president and treasurer, said that now, 109 years later, "the International Mission Board is still using gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering just as the Foreign Mission Board did that first year in 1888: exclusively for the support of missionaries and their work."

Johnson explained that "none of the \$3,315.26 given at Christmas 1888, was used to defray any stateside administrative or promotional expenses" and "none of the \$93,520,000 given at Christmas 1996, was or is being used for stateside administrative or promotional expenses—nor will any of the gifts to meet the \$100 million goal for Christmas 1997."

He said that of the \$93,520,000 received from the 1996 Christmas offering, \$79,740,979 (85 percent) is being spent on direct missionary support; \$11,259,021 (12 percent) is being spent "on work funds for missionaries to carry out their ministries in evangelism and

church development, Christian leadership development, media, health care, and human needs"; and \$2,520,000 (3 percent) is for capital needs, "such as missionary housing and cars, and for other tangible properties and equipment."

But how does that allocation directly affect the ministries of foreign missionaries? International missionary Ron Langston said it allowed him and his wife, Jan, to be the first missionaries to take the gospel to the Bakalanga people group of Botswana.

Langston said the Bakalanga are a "subtribe from Zimbabwe pushed down by tribal warfare and pushed north by other tribes who have 'never had missionaries to work with them and will only have the New Testament by the first of the year.'"

He noted that Bibles, tracts and other media printed in Kalanga, the Bakalanga tongue, is important because "the government in Botswana stopped printing or teaching anything in Kalanga when they gained their independence.

"The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering has helped us start the process of getting the 'Jesus' film translated into Kalanga," he said, adding that the offering also has paid for "other tracts and discipleship literature."

While the offering enables the Langstons to carry out a widespread ministry through media, Langston noted that Lottie Moon funds also provide for more local ministries, including "a tent for a church in Masunga, the village where we live, and chairs to go in that tent, provi-

**HELP!**  
**THEIR CRY**  
**OUR CALL**

**Week of Prayer**  
**for International**  
**Missions**

Nov. 30–Dec. 7

**Lottie Moon**  
**Christmas**  
**Offering**

**National Goal:**  
**\$100 million**  
**State Goal:**  
**\$3.25 million**

ding people with a place to worship."

He also has used the funds to purchase items many back home might take for granted, including equipment for a sports evangelism ministry and "allowing us to move up into the area by providing housing, a truck...and a water tank and pump so we can have water in house. We've gone as long as seven days without water. The Lottie Moon Offering lets us live in that village."

Langston, a native of Arkansas who was a missionary in Zimbabwe for 10 years before transferring to Botswana three years ago, said that the offering's effects "just ripples out. It not only helps the missionaries, but other volunteers that come and stay with us and our own home missionaries in that country."

### Vital link in IMB strategy

While the offering is vital for the day-to-day operations of international missionaries, how vital is it to the IMB's worldwide witnessing strategy?

"So vital that it supports 47 percent of the International Mission Board's budget," Johnson answered. "The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering has been providing more budget support than the Cooperative Program since 1961."

Johnson noted that "one of the strong promotional appeals of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is that all of it is used in the overseas budget and none is used for stateside administrative and promotional expenses."

"Some believe that in order for all of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to be used in the overseas budget, a significant portion of the Cooperative Program funds...must be used to defray the board's stateside administrative and promotional expenses," he explained. "However, there is a third source of budget funds, investment income...to help cover stateside expenses."

While Ted Stanton, a missionary to South America, appreciates the gifts sent in by millions of Baptists to support missions, he is just as appreciative for the prayers and spirit behind the gifts.

"Perhaps the best way I can describe it is that it gives us a feeling of support from home," he commented. "Pardon the expression, but you put your money where your mouth is. If people are really interested and concerned about missions, they will give."

That support from home means Arkansas for the Stantons. He and his wife, Mary, both grew up in South Highland Church in Little Rock and are Ouachita Baptist University graduates. He also served Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock as minister of music.

Sixteen-year veterans of the Argentine mission field, they have served most recently in Venezuela. He has served as IMB field associate area director for South America for the past seven years and has recently been named general director of the Spanish Publishing House, which produces Bibles, tracts and educa-

tional materials for 80 countries.

"The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering furnishes almost half the budget of the International Mission Board," explained Stanton, adding that the gifts represent "half the lifeline for all that we do overseas and that includes the Spanish Publishing House. If we didn't have the Lottie Moon Offering, we probably would not be missionaries."

"There would be no way to keep us on salary and provide us a way to live on the field," he explained. "There are about 4,500 IMB missionaries on the field. If you delete the offering, you delete about half the missionary force."

Wanda Swihart, a member of First Church in Sherwood, sees the stateside results of giving to the Lottie Moon Offering. She is the mother of Tim Swihart, an international missionary along with his wife, Mary, to South Korea, where he is a church developer.

As a missionary's mother, she said, giving to the Lottie Moon Offering "means that there are people in the United States who are aware that there are missionaries around the world, that they care about those missionaries and they show that care through offerings and prayers."

"It also means that when our missionaries have a vision to do something beyond what their regular financial support allows them to do, they can carry out that vision and serve the Lord in a greater way," Swihart observed, "to build the kingdom of God."

## Ketner: Missions giving begins with prayer

**WHEN IT COMES** to Baptists giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, said Julia Ketner, "We've got it backwards." Ketner, leader of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions support team, claimed that the special offering for missions needs prayer before money.

"Missionaries tell us prayer is the most important thing," she said, adding that prayer "is the only strategy we have in some places. If we are praying for lost people and our missionaries, the money will come and God will convict us of the need to give."

Ketner noted that Arkansas Baptists gave more than \$3.1 million last year, but, in addition to prayer, more money is needed to support international missionaries.

"We need to be ready to share the gospel and that takes personnel and money to keep them on the field," she said. "If our missionaries don't have the resources to work when they get there, they can't do anything. Part of their support is providing food, vehicles and housing. Keep in mind that as we give, it is for the practical things taken for granted here."

"All of the Lottie Moon Offering goes to the support of our missionaries on the field, not for the work of the board," she explained, noting that "1.7 billion people have no access to the gospel among 2,000 language groups and there are an

additional 2.6 billion who have heard but not believed.

"If we add one missionary family for each of those 2,000 language groups, we will have to double our gifts to the Lottie Moon Offering and the Cooperative Program," said Ketner. "That's not even considering the 2.6 billion who have heard but not believed."

"The urgency is that we don't know how much time these people have and the open doors that are there may not be there tomorrow," she said.

Ketner asked Arkansas Baptists to advocate increasing their churches' offerings to Lottie Moon. "At one time churches were encouraged to increase their offerings 15 percent per year to keep up with inflation on foreign mission fields. Sometimes it goes up 100 to 200 percent on foreign mission fields. It takes more in some areas than others."

To better promote the offering, she suggested that churches may "find ways of personalizing missions in their congregations, whether that is by having a missionary or volunteers who have worked alongside our missionaries speak and tell what they've experienced."

Other suggestions she gave include using the International Mission Study churchwide "as a beginning to the Season of International Missions" and adopting a church goal. "There have a vision that shows the giving to that."



## Texas messengers adopt historic report

Texas Baptists, who constitute the nation's largest state Baptist group, have approved historic changes expected to distance the state convention from the Southern Baptist Convention. Messengers also elected former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president Russell H. Dilday Jr. as BGCT president.

Gathering in Austin for its annual meeting Nov. 10-11, messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas affirmed its "autonomy" and authorized Texas Baptists to appoint missionaries, offer new options for theological education, publish their own Sunday School literature, and create mission partnerships with SBC and non-SBC groups, including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Critics immediately denounced the changes as hostile to the SBC. A group of Texas conservatives, upset with the changes, indicated plans to move toward forming an alternative state convention more in line with the SBC.

Soon after the annual session opened, messengers handily defeated a motion by John Hatch, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lake Jackson, to strike consideration of the report and recommendations from the convention's order of business.

Messengers voted one by one on the 16 committee recommendations that required a simple majority. Many of the proposals sparked extended discussion—particularly those related to theological education, missions and Sunday School literature—and several amendments were introduced. However, messengers rejected all of the amendments from the floor and approved all of the recommendations as presented by the committee.

Also approved were 10 changes to the convention's constitution, bylaws and articles of incorporation, including one amendment that will link participation in the BGCT to churches' financial support of the state convention rather than church size. However, those changes, which require a two-thirds majority, must be approved again at next year's meeting.

Dilday, distinguished professor of homiletics at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, who was fired by Southwestern trustees in 1994, received 3,751 votes (71.1 percent) compared to 1,524 (28.9 percent) for Ted Tedder, a San Antonio layman.

In a post-election press conference, Dilday said the sweeping changes

approved by the Texas convention do not indicate "we are leaving" the Southern Baptist fold or becoming competitive with the national convention. "There's no competition between lighthouses," he insisted. Instead, he added, the changes show Texas Baptists' determination to set their own agenda and mission.

Seven resolutions were adopted, including statements promoting bivocational ministry, a Religious Freedom Restoration Act for Texas, concern for victims of religious persecution, and protection of missionaries from the interference of foreign governments.

A motion, offered from the floor and approved by 85 percent of messengers, condemned partial-birth abortion.

AUSTIN, TX (ABP/BP)

## Louisiana elects consensus leader

In an action described by many longtime Louisiana Baptists as "unprecedented," messengers to the Louisiana Baptist Convention elected Bob Anderson of Baton Rouge as president by acclamation.

The action was a departure from the fiercely contested presidential elections of recent years and comes after months of dialogue between leaders of both sides of the conflict in the state convention.

"Think about a peace-driven convention," Anderson urged. "We're going to have to (achieve peace) by reaching out to one another, emphasizing that the Jesus in you loves the Jesus in me. We must stop labeling one another and start finding ways to love one another."

Anderson, the retired pastor of Parkview Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, is founder and president of Antioch Affection Ministries, a ministry for ministers and churches in conflict.

Messengers approved a host of resolutions without debate, including support for the Covenant Marriage Act passed recently by the Louisiana legislature; opposition to all abortions, particularly partial-birth procedures; a call for the state government to address the problem of alcohol abuse and underage drinking in the state; opposition to prenatal genetic testing and cloning of human embryos for the purpose of experimentation; and affirmation of churches which have prevention and ministry programs regarding HIV/AIDS.

ALEXANDRIA, LA (BP)

## Oklahoma approves Malawi partnership

Oklahoma Baptists approved a partnership with the Baptist Convention of Malawi during their Nov. 10-11 annual meeting. The three-year partnership with the Malawi convention was signed during the final session.

Akim Chirwa, president of the Baptist Convention of Malawi, said he hopes to see Oklahoma churches involved in mission projects with the southeast African nation.

"Come and help us," he said. "God has prepared many mansions for us; our desire is that Malawian people will enter into those mansions through preaching, teaching and other ways."

Messengers approved an \$18.5 million Cooperative Program budget for 1998, a 7 percent increase over 1997. All officers of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma were re-elected at the meeting, which attracted 1,083 messengers.

Four resolutions adopted by messengers included one against casino gambling. Oklahomans are scheduled to vote on whether to legalize casino gambling in a Feb. 10 election. The resolution calls casino gambling "a demonstrable social evil which destroys family finances, violates scriptural work ethics and victimizes society by promoting crime." It then urges Oklahoma Baptists to take an active stand against casinos and vote against them.

BETHANY, OK (BP)

## Missouri elevates vp to presidency

Wendell Page, second vice president of the Missouri Baptist Convention, was elected the new president of the convention during its 163rd annual meeting.

Page, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lee's Summit, defeated Benny King, director of missions for St. Louis Association, by a vote of 955-792.

Page, a former foreign missionary, described himself as "a mediator type of person, and hope that I can reach out to everybody."

Two motions to require the MBC and its affiliated entities to discontinue meetings at Tan-Tar-A Resort at the Lake of

the Ozarks — planned site of the 2000 MBC annual meeting — both failed. Tan-Tar-A generates revenue for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, makers of the motions contended, because of Mormon ties to the Marriott corporation.

Michael Haynes, pastor of First Baptist Church, North Kansas City, cautioned that rescinding a previous convention's vote and breaking a contract with Tan-Tar-A would compromise the MBC's integrity and put it at risk of legal action.

Haynes also read a letter from Len Camden, general manager of Tan-Tar-A, who explained that Marriott does not own Tan-Tar-A but manages it for Lehman Brothers, a finance company. "Anyone can own a piece of Marriott," Haynes read. "It is not a Mormon-controlled company. It is owned by numerous individuals of many diverse faiths."

Among other business items:

■ A motion to instruct the MBC Executive Board staff to discontinue the practice of accepting and forwarding designated monies to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was ruled out of order because the objective of the motion could be achieved only by amending the convention's business and financial plan.

■ A motion to require members of state convention committees and boards of convention agencies and commissions to affirm the *Baptist Faith and Message* also was ruled out of order because the MBC constitution stipulates that changes in corporate charters must be done through the Executive Board.

■ A motion was made that no business or elections be scheduled after the Wednesday morning session of future annual meetings. After two show-of-ballot votes were too close to call, the motion was defeated 621-619 on a ballot vote.

SPRINGFIELD, MO (BP)

## Georgia Baptists affirm Mercer plan

The Georgia Baptist Convention, meeting Nov. 10-11, affirmed a nine-point report that seeks to bring healing and reconciliation between the convention and Mercer University.

The recommendation concerning the Mercer relationship had been adopted in September by the GBC Executive Committee and the Executive Committee of Mercer trustees. It calls for more direct convention involvement in the selection of some Mercer trustees and stipulates that

the next president of Mercer should be a Baptist who can affirm the theology of the SBC's *Baptist Faith and Message* statement.

While controversy has surrounded the GBC-Mercer relationship for many years, it escalated last year with the publication of president Kirby Godsey's book, *When We Talk About God...Let's Be Honest*. Some of Godsey's theological views have been labeled as heresy by a special committee that was formed by the Executive Committee to interview Godsey concerning his beliefs.

Some critics have called for Godsey's immediate resignation or dismissal. The nine points adopted by the Executive Committee and the convention stopped short of that demand.

However, a further resolution adopted by messengers stated that if the full board of Mercer trustees fails to adopt the agreement and show good faith in accepting the compromise, then the state convention will begin the process of cutting funds to the university.

MARIETTA, GA (ABP)

## Kentucky declines to alter constitution

A constitutional change in the way churches gain representation to Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meetings failed to gain the two-thirds majority vote needed for adoption Nov. 12.

A slim majority of messengers favored changing the KBC constitution to include "and/or other convention work" alongside "Cooperative Program." However, the 298 to 271 vote fell far short of the two-thirds majority required.

Impetus for the change came from moderates who want to continue full participation in the KBC but don't want to continue sending undesignated gifts to the Southern Baptist Convention. That led to a motion at last year's annual meeting to substitute the words "convention's work" for "Cooperative Program."

The KBC's committee on constitution and bylaws offered a compromise wording that retained the words "Cooperative Program" while adding the reference to "convention work."

Committee members and KBC president Floyd Price argued that the compromise would benefit both moderates and conservatives. Not only would it have allowed moderates to give to the KBC without giving to the SBC, it would have allowed conservatives to give more

money designated directly to the SBC without the KBC taking a percentage out.

In other business, KBC messengers expressed opposition to gambling and partial-birth abortions as well as support for Louisiana's new covenant marriage law and federal legislation intended to combat religious persecution worldwide.

Messengers also approved an agreement on future relationships between the KBC and Baptist Healthcare System.

In March 1996, BHS trustees notified the KBC that the hospital chain was exercising its right to end the covenant agreement between the KBC and BHS. The primary effect of that decision was to ensure that BHS in the future would elect all its own trustees. Although the KBC no longer will elect trustees for BHS, trustees have agreed that at least 75 percent of the board will always be Baptists.

LEXINGTON, KY (BP)

## Tennessee leaders study relationships

A near-record 2,155 messengers heard an Executive Board report about the formation of a reconciliation-oriented committee on church-laity-clergy relationships during Tennessee Baptists' '97 annual meeting.

T B C president Herbert Higdon reported that he had appointed a 15-member "Relationships Focus Group."

Gene Cotey, outgoing executive board president, said the group would "focus on and explore ways and means to strengthen the ties and foster good relationships among the TBC churches, laity and clergy in order to pursue the mission of the convention." He said specific items to be addressed include diversity, commonality, alleviation of stress, effective communication and makeup of boards, committees and programs.

Doug Sager, pastor of First Baptist Church Concord, Knoxville, was elected convention president in a 968-850 vote over Earl Wilson, also of Knoxville, a former pastor and retired Tennessee Baptist Foundation executive. Sager was the announced candidate of Concerned Tennessee Baptists and other conservative groups and was endorsed by Pastors' Conference president Morris Anderson.

In other business, a three-year missions partnership with the Carioca Baptist Convention in Brazil was approved, and the current agreement with Canadian Baptists was extended three more years.

JACKSON, TN (BP)

## Book surveys ethnic cultures to broaden witness in U.S.

Christians who want to witness and minister in the United States should strive to understand a variety of people groups, according to Ele Clay in her new book, *Many Nations Under God: Ministering to Culture Groups in America*, published by Woman's Missionary Union's New Hope Press.

"God has called our nation to a bold, exciting and somewhat dangerous undertaking: ministry to the nations of the world who live within U.S. borders," declared Clay, a freelance writer from Lampasas, Texas.

The book is divided into several chapters that discuss a dozen ethnic cultures in the United States, including Hispanic, Anglo, deaf, Chinese, Korean, Greek, Haitian, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, African American and Native American.

Clay, who served as editor and coordinator of the project, came to the United States as a native of Trinidad-Tobago whose family had relocated to Anguilla. She led a diverse team of writers, each of whom wrote about his or her own culture.

The aim was to give the writers an opportunity to present the "voice" of their cultures. "Obviously, each writer can only speak for themselves," Clay said. "But their voice is helping others understand the culture of which they are a part."

Hoping churches will use the book in their efforts to build bridges to people who need the gospel, Clay said the book can be the subject of a study group within a congregation. The book is available at Baptist Book Stores and through Woman's Missionary Union Customer Service at 1-800-968-7301. BIRMINGHAM, AL (BP)

# World missions

## IMB to integrate Campus Crusade grads into strategy

Leaders of Campus Crusade for Christ and the Southern Baptist International Mission Board have reached a cooperative agreement designed to strengthen missions growth in unreached areas.

"We're entering a new era (in Christian missions), where we are coming to realize that there is so much left to do and that no one organization can hope to accomplish it all," said Bailey Marks Sr., vice president for Campus Crusade for Christ.

Marks led a team of Campus Crusade leaders to Richmond, Va., Nov. 5 for a day-long meeting with International Mission Board leaders. As a result, IMB missionaries will integrate into their local church-starting efforts overseas college graduates who have been involved with Campus Crusade during their schooling.

IMB president Jerry Rankin called the agreement "one of the most significant evangelistic developments in recent years."

International Mission Board representatives already cooperate with Campus Crusade to produce and use the evangelistic film, "Jesus," estimated to have been viewed by more than 1 billion people and to have helped lead 57 million to follow Jesus.

The new agreement, however, goes well beyond that. The two agencies will combine their energies to foster Baptist church movements in cities overseas where Campus Crusade already has a college campus presence. They also agreed to cooperate in creating mechanisms to take the gospel into hard-to-reach areas.

RICHMOND, VA (BP)

## Missionary facing trial for accidental traffic death

Two years after he ran into a 16-year-old pedestrian in Nairobi, Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionary Terry Bell has been charged with careless and reckless driving and summoned to appear in court.

The teenage girl died within an hour after she darted out into traffic in front of Bell's vehicle June 10, 1995. Bell, who drove straight to police headquarters to report the accident and avoid vigilante justice, was not charged at the time. Two years later, however, he received a summons to appear in court on the charges, and a civil suit was also filed. The case has been continued three times because prosecution witnesses failed to appear.

His most recent court appearance was set for Nov. 24. A civil suit filed by the family is scheduled to begin 15 days later. If found guilty of criminal charges, Bell could spend 10 years in a Kenya prison.

Bell and his wife, Twylla, are asking Southern Baptists for continued prayer support—the kind of support that has carried them through thus far. "It seems the prayer support has just increased and increased," Bell said. "It's very humbling, because I never felt prayer like this before."

WASHINGTON (ABP)

## Growing gap between classes impacts hunger

The gap between America's poor and rich is widening, according to a report released by Bread for the World Institute. The report notes that the United States has the highest income inequality of any industrialized nation.

According to the report, from 1975 to 1995, the income share of America's poorest 20 percent fell from 4.4 percent to 3.7 percent, while that of the richest 20 rose from 43.2 percent to 48.7 percent. The richest 5 percent earned 21 percent of the nation's income in 1995, compared to 15.9 percent 20 years ago.

Income inequality is "a barrier to the solution" of hunger, said Marc Cohen, senior research associate at Bread for the World. He said low-income people often must choose between spending on food, shelter or health care, a dilemma he termed "heat or eat."

The report, "Hunger in a Global Economy: Hunger 1998," also found that the U.S. has higher rates of infant mortality and poverty than other industrialized countries.

Twenty-one wealthy countries have lower infant-mortality rates than the U.S., whose rate is twice the average of other industrial countries. "Infant deaths are closely linked to nutritional deficiencies among pregnant women," the report stated, adding that the African-American infant mortality rate "is more than double the white rate."

Bread for the World is a Christian citizen's movement against hunger. The group, which lobbies Congress on issues of importance to hungry people, claims 44,000 members and 2,500 affiliated churches.

The report states that despite a booming economy, 841 million people in developing countries are chronically undernourished. It adds that 29 percent of U.S. children under age 12 (nearly 14 million) are hungry or at risk of hunger. WASHINGTON (ABP)

# Missions commitment

## NAMB leaders affirm missions education for men and boys

**A** RECENT MEETING between state Royal Ambassador leaders and Southern Baptist North American Mission Board representatives addressed concerns raised by supporters about the future of missions education for men and boys since the dissolution of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission in June.

Members of the state RA/Challenger committee met with Tim Seanor, NAMB director of missions education, and Wally Buckner, manager of church-based missions education organizations, Nov. 17 at the Baptist Building in Little Rock. The two men shared an overview of NAMB work and the assignment of the agency's communication and missions education group.

Explaining "what our role in missions education is about, our task and structure," Seanor said the group's "purpose is to help churches make disciples...through church planning and evangelism. Our four major target groups are students, ethnics, cities and volunteerism."

"Does that mean we will also do gender specific programs?" asked Seanor, former national RA director for the Brotherhood Commission. "Yes. That also includes co-educational missions education like Mission Kids and World Changers...and we also will work on customizing programs that meet the needs of the churches."

Buckner added that because children's and youth missions education are continuing to be a priority under NAMB leadership, support materials such as *RA Magazine* and *Lad Magazine* "are continuing like they are supposed to."

Questions directed to the NAMB representatives and their resulting answers appeared to help calm concerns by some RA and Challenger leaders that those programs would be dropped from Southern Baptist life.

State RA director Ozzie Berryhill asked the two if either saw "Challengers being soaked up by World Changers."

"No," Buckner responded. "I hope you hear from Tim and me our support of this."

Harry Black, Arkansas Baptist State Convention Brotherhood department director, said he is "concerned there may be one weak link" in the NAMB missions education strategy — Men's Ministries materials.

Seanor agreed. "You're absolutely right. We have the responsibility for missions education for adults. The women part is easy, that will fall to Woman's Missionary Union, but the men's part is what we are sorting through."

He explained that the NAMB will meet with a men's ministry department in the Baptist Sunday School Board to divide work between the two groups.

Meeting convenor Tommy Goode, state

leader for missions education in the ABCS missions department, said he was "very favorably impressed with the spirit and level of commitment of our directors for missions education at NAMB."

Goode said that after talking to many meeting participants, he felt that "they expressed relief from some of the fears they had, satisfaction and excitement about the new resources and leadership that the guys from NAMB previewed. They related to me that they are on board and will continue giving leadership."

He said that "there is a definite commitment from them to continue gender-specific materials for Baptist Men, RAs and Challengers." He added that "something else that came out of this meeting is the clear answer that NAMB has a clear assignment of ministry with men and the BSSB has the assignment of ministry to men."

Goode also noted that "the state missions office is the one-stop resource for missions education and involvement. We want churches to realize that if they have an RA program or Brotherhood program, then we, along with NAMB, are going to stay with them, support them and provide resources for them."

**“** There is a definite commitment from them (North American Mission Board) to continue gender-specific materials for Baptist Men, RAs and Challengers.

**TOMMY GOODE**  
Missions education  
leader, ABCS missions  
department

## Grober, Seaton inducted into legion

**T**HE AWARD OF MERIT in the International Legion of Royal Ambassador Leaders was one of the most prestigious awards presented by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, with only a few presented throughout the Southern Baptist Convention each year. Prior to the Brotherhood Commission closing its doors earlier this year as part of SBC restructuring, two Arkansans were among the final Southern Baptists granted the award.

Glendon Grober, a longtime Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil and Arkansas Baptist's Brotherhood department director at the time of his death in 1994, was granted the award posthumously. The award was presented to his family during the recent statewide RA Fellowship Banquet.

C.H. Seaton, who retired as Arkansas Brotherhood department director in 1978, was presented the award in a chapel service at the Baptist Building in Little Rock on Nov. 12 by state RA director Ozzie Berryhill.

"The award began several years ago to recognize significant individuals who played an important role in boys' lives and missions education, including support and promotion," explained Harry Black, current state Brotherhood department director.

"Glendon Grober was recognized for his significant work, especially with RA Congress," Black continued. "C.H. Seaton played a vital role in RA camps and RA ministry during his tenure."

"I'll never forget the opportunity the Lord gave me to touch the lives of so many boys and young men and see them go to the mission fields," Seaton said upon receipt of the award. "It's one of the fond memories that I have...There were so many of them and they did such a marvelous job. It makes you just feel good about it — the privilege of knowing them."

Only three other Arkansans hold the award: Berryhill; Howard Kisor, pastor of First Church, Hampton; and Alvin Hatton, a retired Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil who is now deceased.

## CHURCH LIFE

**Jacksonville First Church**, organized in 1872, observed 125 years of ministry Oct. 12 with services which featured speakers Don Moore, retired executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; pastor emeritus Mason Bondurant; and Mark Evans, former staff member and current pastor of Rock Creek Church in Little Rock. Other highlights included music of praise and thanksgiving and a fellowship meal. Marck Gibson is pastor.

**East Point Church** of Russellville celebrated its 125th anniversary Oct. 19 with all-day services that included the dedication of a newly erected multipurpose building. Speakers were former pastor Richard Vestal; Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; and Jeff Cheatham, director of missions for Arkansas River Valley Association.

**Park Hill Church** of North Little Rock music ministry will present "A Christmas Celebration" Dec. 7 with 3 and 6 p.m. performances. The celebration, under the direction of minister of music Joe A. Fitzpatrick, will feature the sanctuary choir, handbell choirs, a 31-piece orchestra and the banner ministry. Additional information is available by calling the church office at 501-753-3413.

**Springdale First Church** music ministry will present its 10th anniversary edition of the Living Christmas Tree with presentations at 3:30 and 7 p.m. Dec. 14 and at 7 p.m. nightly Dec. 15-17. The 1997 tree will feature a new digital computerized tree lighting system and will include a variety of selections featuring the 250-member Celebration Choir and Orchestra as well as a drama cast and crew of more than 100 members. Buster Pray is minister of music.

**Highlands Church** of Little Rock outreach drama members presented "Speak for the Unspoken" Nov. 15-16, with a sign language interpreter present for the Nov. 15 program. The drama, highlighting God's answers for those who have fallen silent from abuse, was written and directed by Louise Estoker, a drama member. Others assisting in coordinating the production were pastors Paul Jackson and Bob Eppers.

**Hot Springs First Church** recently hosted its 11th annual Abernathy Missions banquet, presenting volunteer missions service awards to John Wayne

Smith and Gary Curry, both of Hot Springs. The North America Mission Board service award recipient was Diana Edmondson Lewis of Benton and the International Missions award was presented to William and Susan Steeger of Arkadelphia.

**Northwest Association Woman's** Missionary Union executive board sponsored meetings Nov. 3 at First Church of Siloam Springs and First Church of Centerton in observance of Baptist Women's Day of Prayer. Nine churches were represented by the 50 participants in attendance and an offering of \$347 was given.

**Trinity Church** of Fort Smith hosted a fellowship Nov. 16 for Jo Ann Mounce in recognition of her 25 years of ministry as church pianist. She was presented with a corsage and gift certificate.

**Greenwood First Church** is hosting a 2 to 5 p.m. retirement reception Dec. 6 in recognition of pastor Milton F. James.

**Paragould First Church** deacons have launched a ministry to shut-ins and widows who need minor household repairs, yard work or errands run.

**Seven Arkansas associations** recently sent a 14-member mission team to Brazil to build a church, lead Vacation Bible Schools and do evangelistic outreach. Team leader Bratton Rhoades of First Church in Sherwood reported the mission effort resulted in 30 professions of faith. Frances B. Hatton of El Dorado, a retired Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, accompanied the team and served as interpreter. Walton Krissell of Stuttgart presented a communion service from the Woman's Missionary Union of Humphrey Church to a church in Presdentaria Figueriod, Brazil.

## TRANSITIONS

**Tom Elliott** began serving Oct. 5 as pastor of Cherry Valley Church, coming there from Antioch Church of Wynne. A Southern Baptist minister for 25 years, Elliott also has served as pastor of Bowman Church of Lake City and Brown's Chapel of Manila, as well as churches in Missouri and Indiana. He also has done mission work in Iowa and Minnesota. Elliott is a graduate of Southern Baptist College (now Williams Baptist College), East Texas Baptist College of Marshall and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Linda, have two adult daughters.

**Morris Shepherd "Trey" Lewis III** began serving Oct. 19 as pastor of First Church of Norphlet, going there from First Church of Cove. A graduate of Dallas Baptist University, he previously served as a staff member of churches in Texas. He and his wife, Jill Ellen, have two children, Anna Pauline and Andrew Shepherd.

**John Horne** is pastor of James Fork Church of Mansfield. He previously was pastor of South Side Church of Fort Smith and a staff member of Life Line Church of Little Rock. He and his wife, Myra, have two children, Meredith and Caleb.

**Melvin Thomas Landers** is pastor of Bluffton Church. He recently retired from public school teaching and administration. Landers, who has attended seminary extension classes in Little Rock, is a graduate of Arkansas State University and the University of Mississippi in Oxford. He is married to the former Donna Kay Lewallen.

**Edward L. Powers**, who has served as director of missions for White River Association for 15 years, will retire at the end of February 1998. He previously was pastor of Northvale Church, Batavia Church and Grubb Springs Church, all of Harrison, First Church of Yellville, First Church of Prairie Grove and First Church of Mountain View as well as churches in Michigan and Texas. Powers, a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has served on the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board. He and his wife, Phyllis, will reside at 103 Mockingbird, Harrison, AR 72601; phone 870-741-8679.

**Gary Bazer** of Carthage, Texas, joined the staff of First Church of Smackover Oct. 26 as minister of youth and education. He is a recent graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Bazer is also a graduate of East Texas Baptist University in Marshall.

**Keith Owens** joined the staff of First Church of Mena Nov. 3 as minister of youth and music, going there from First Church of England. He is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His wife, Amy, is also a graduate of Baylor University.

**John Hough** will join the staff of Central Church in Magnolia Dec. 1 as minister of education and outreach, going there from First Church of Crossett where he has been minister of education since 1995. He previously served as minister of education and Christian school administrator for Second Church of Hot Springs and associate pastor of education for Beech Street First Church of Texarkana. He also has served other Arkansas churches, as well as First Church of

Garland, Texas. Hough, a past president of the Arkansas Baptist Religious Educators Association, is a graduate of the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, the University of Maryland overseas branch and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Lynn, have two sons, Nathan and Chris.

**Linda Burroughs** is serving as part-time director of children's ministries for First Church of Pine Bluff. She and her three children, Bonnie, William and Rachel, are members of the church where she previously served as a leader for Girls in Action and the Young Adult and Children's Sunday School departments.

**Mason Bondurant** has accepted the call to become interim pastor of Crosspoint Church in North Little Rock. He and his wife, Margaret, have served as Southern Baptist missionaries to Costa Rica, Ecuador and Venezuela.

**Trueman Moore** of Barling is interim pastor of South Side Church in Fort Smith. He previously was pastor of First Church of Jenny Lind and is pastor emeritus of East Side Church of Fort Smith. Moore and his wife, Jane, served as Southern Baptist missionaries to Bangladesh from 1957-1972.

**Bob Wright** has been called to serve as interim minister of education for First Church of Harrison where he is a member. He previously was pastor of churches in Arkansas, including First Church of Harrison where he served from 1965-73.

**Raymond Atwood** is serving as interim pastor of Mount Zion Church of Paragould. Atwood, who is retired from

service as a director of missions in Tennessee, has been pastor of Arkansas churches.

**Mike Lindley** is interim pastor of the Palestine Church of Quitman. He previously served as pastor in the Stuttgart area.

**Lyle Cooley** recently resigned as minister of youth at Ridgeway Church in Nashville, following five years of service. The church honored Cooley and his wife, Tracey, with a "Sunday Night Breakfast" fellowship Nov. 9. The couple was presented with a plaque, gift certificate and other gifts.

## OBITUARIES

**Willis Roy Hinkson** of Little Rock died Oct. 24 at age 50. He was a Baptist minister, having served as pastor of Gassville Church and Searcy County Church and interim pastor of Rupert Church as well as pastor of churches in Tennessee and Kentucky. A veteran of the U.S. Air Force, he was president of Small Church Support Ministries. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte Lorenzen Hinkson; a son, Kelly Duke Hinkson of Arkadelphia; a daughter, Duchess Kimberly Hinkson Crossley of Little Rock; three grandchildren; his parents, John Jacob and Mary Jane Hinkson of Little Rock; three brothers; and a sister.

**Lois Keeling Draper**, 85, mother of Baptist Sunday School Board president James T. Draper Jr., died Oct. 28 as the result of a massive stroke. She was the widow of James T. Draper Sr., a Southern Baptist pastor who had served Arkansas

churches. Mrs. Draper, for 35 years made her home with her son in Euleus, Texas, where he was pastor of First Baptist Church prior to becoming BSSB president. For the past two years, she had been a resident of a retirement center in Franklin, Tenn. Her funeral service was Nov. 1 in Warren and a memorial service was held Nov. 2 at First Church of Euleus. Other survivors include a son, Charles Draper, a teacher at North Greenville College in Tigerville, S.C.; seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the building fund of First Baptist Church of Euleus.

**Richard Daniel Savacool**, 67, of Malvern died Oct. 8 at St. Joseph's Regional Health Center. He was a member of First Southern Church of Magnet Cove where he served as a deacon and adult Sunday School teacher. He was a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean War. He was preceded in death by a son, Ricky Savacool, who was a Southern Baptist pastor.

**Cecil Guthrie** of Newport died Nov. 7 at age 85. A retired Southern Baptist minister, he served for 27 years as director of missions for Black River Association. He was a graduate of Southern Baptist College (now Williams). Guthrie was a member and deacon of First Church of Newport. Survivors are his wife, Florence Reno Guthrie of Newport; a son, Gary Lee Guthrie of Troy, Ala.; three daughters, Sally Beth Dolby of Grand Blanc, Mich., Susan Vogel of Little Rock and Ann Guthrie Diaz of Murfreesboro, Tenn.; and six grandchildren.

## ORDINATIONS

**Pottsville Church** ordained Blake Herren as a deacon Oct. 5.

**Gravette First Church** ordained associate pastor Ronald H. Morris to the ministry Oct. 12.

**Trinity Church** of Searcy ordained Nick Coltharp, Randy Cross and James Haney as deacons Sept. 28. Marque Black, associate pastor of music and youth, was ordained to the gospel ministry Oct. 12.

**Forrest Park Church** of Pine Bluff recently ordained Joe Lowder to the deacon ministry.

**Booneville First Church** ordained Bobby Rogers as a deacon Oct. 26.

**Heber Springs First Church** ordained Dennis Bartlett, Steve Castleberry, Hubert Long, Don Hill, Mike Price, Kenny Sanders, Frank Bivins, Dan Latch and Clifton Stark as deacons Nov. 9.

**Sherrwood First Church** ordained Steve Armstrong, Rick Hill and Scott McCluskey as deacons Nov. 16.



Roger Patrick (left) and Kirby Martin, Arkansas Baptist Executive Board staff members, move furniture and storage items from the ABCS evangelism department offices to the new church growth and evangelism team offices located down the hall in the Baptist Building in Little Rock. The recent office reassignments throughout the building came in response to the state convention's vote earlier this month to streamline the Executive Board staff from 12 departments to seven ministry teams.

# NAMB names vice president, adopts cooperation guidelines

**Martin King**

SBC North American Mission Board

**I**N THEIR FIRST meeting since formation last June, trustees of the North American Mission Board on Nov. 5 hired an executive vice president, adopted guidelines for cooperation with non-Baptist entities, approved 16 new missionaries, and adopted the agency's first full year budget.

Randy D. Singer, a trial lawyer and business consultant from Chesapeake, Va., was named executive vice president of the new missions agency. In the post, Singer will assume much of the day-to-day operational responsibilities currently performed by NAMB president Bob Reccord.

Trustees unanimously elected Singer, who will begin his new responsibilities after the first of the year.

A graduate of Marshall-Wythe School of Law at William and Mary University in Virginia, Singer also serves as an adjunct professor at Regent University Law School. Prior to attending law school, he taught high school history and Bible in two Christian schools.

Singer, his wife, Rhonda, and their two children are members of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va., where Reccord served as pastor prior to election last summer as NAMB president.

Trustees also approved "Guidelines for Interdenominational Cooperation" that affirm agreement on essential theological truths as a foundation for any cooperation with non-Southern Baptist groups.

Acknowledging NAMB's commitment to several key statements on biblical inerrancy and theology, the document

states that cooperation in evangelism and missions will be done "only with groups who are self-described as evangelical: that is they adhere to a conversionist theology that all people must be born again by faith in Christ alone in order to enter the Kingdom of God; and that they uphold the Bible alone as the source of God's truth, and that salvation is by faith alone due to God's grace alone having Christ alone as its object."



Randy Singer

A motion to change the nature of the statement from guidelines to policy was rejected by a large margin.

Also adopted was an \$111.6 million 1998 budget. Created five months ago, NAMB has been operating on a partial year budget. The new budget anticipates 30 percent of agency revenues from the SBC Cooperative Program, 38 percent

from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, 9 percent from church loans and product sales, 6 percent from prior year's revenue and 8 percent from other sources.

Reccord requested trustees to pray for a Dec. 11 NAMB banquet to be held at the United Nations in New York City for U.N. ambassadors, their families and staff members. U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich will welcome the delegations, and Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee will be the keynote speaker, Reccord noted. "We can touch the world through its most powerful leaders if we can reach them for Christ," he said.

According to Reccord, NAMB has also reinstated a gift of \$150 for each year of service for retiring missionaries which had been suspended earlier in the year. "Nobody is more important than those serving on the field. They will again be so honored," Reccord said.

In other business, trustees approved the endorsement of 19 new chaplains, bringing the total number of Southern Baptist chaplains serving across the country and around the world to 2,739.

Trustees also gathered with other Southern Baptist leaders and guests to inaugurate Reccord as the agency's first president. ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)

## mk prayer calender

Missionary kids attending college in Arkansas with birthdays in December:

■ Dec. 5: Jim Langston, OBU Box 3398, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; sophomore from Botswana.

■ Dec. 6: Tim Akins, OBU Box 4360; junior from south Brazil.

■ Dec. 13: Jeremy Greenwich, OBU Box 4176; sophomore from Brazil.

■ Dec. 19: Donnie Copeland, OBU Box 4041; sophomore from Nigeria.

■ Dec. 25: Susan Beal, OBU Box 3475; sophomore from Venezuela.

■ Dec. 30: Jeremy Conrad, OBU Box 3749; sophomore from South Korea.

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# NAMB produces TV ads for local churches

**Martin King**

SBC North American Mission Board

**F**EAR. ANGER. Violence. Hate. The words flash on the screen over harsh music and images: a street mugging, an alcoholic hitting his wife, a young boy mesmerized in front of a video game and marching white supremacists.

A young man dashes panicked through inner-city streets, suddenly facing a solid brick wall. Instantly, he then finds himself in the sanctuary of a church. "In a dangerous world, there is a refuge. The First Baptist Church of Bowling Green."

It's a powerful MTV-style television commercial, bristling with the fears that haunt so many people today and offering a source of hope in the local church. The "Take Cover!" spot is one of four television commercials for local churches recently made available through the North American Mission Board's media technology center.

The spots are offered in four media kits, each of which includes a personalized radio commercial, newspaper advertisement and television commercial

based on a common theme. The campaigns are available individually for a one-year licensing fee, which gives a church exclusive rights to the ads in their particular market.

The campaigns are the result of a partnership between the NAMB media technology center - formerly the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission - and Phil Cooke, a nationally acclaimed Christian producer.

## Evangelistic impact

David Clark, director of NAMB's media center, said the campaigns were designed to help churches present an effective evangelistic message in their advertising.

"In a recent survey, 60 percent of Southern Baptist churches said they wanted to use media to reach their communities for Christ," he said. "This fits in well with one of our newest mandates in the Southern Baptist Convention restructuring. That is to assist churches in communication technology."

Each of the campaigns is centered on a different theme, targeting a different

audience. In addition to the "Take Cover!" campaign, there is:

■ "Just Imagine," which evokes soft, pleasant, family-oriented imagery to convey the sense of peace and serenity found through the local church.

■ "Destination Eternity," a fast-paced, high-tech look at how modern society has made getting lost virtually obsolete through detailed maps and other modern resources. "If you won't even go out of town without a map, don't go into eternity without one," the ad says, followed by the local church tag.

■ "Ray of Hope," targeting young adults, features a man moving erratically through a dimly lit abandoned building shutting window shutters. Responding to his fears about a chaotic world of "hopeless perpetual midnight," the ad concludes, "There is light," followed by the name of the church where that light can be found.

The ads can be used as regular paid advertising for local churches or some stations may agree to air them as public service announcements.

At Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., media coordinator Jo Karr said she purchased all four campaigns as soon as she heard about them because of the church's continuing need for quality, effective advertising.

"I think they've done an excellent job," she affirmed. "We needed something of that quality. These are the best that I've seen that are put out exclusively for Christian groups."

Individuals or churches interested in information about advertising licensing may contact Stan Grubb, affiliate relations associate for the NAMB media technology group, at 1-800-292-2287.

ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)



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# Catholic, Protestant leaders affirm salvation view

Dwayne Hastings

SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

**A** DECIDEDLY PROTESTANT view of salvation was affirmed in "The Gift of Salvation," a statement released Nov. 12 by a loose-knit group of Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians who have been meeting for prayer, study and discussion over the past three years.

The meaning of salvation has been a matter of disagreement between Roman Catholics and Protestants since the Reformation more than 450 years ago.

In the six-page statement, agreement that justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone constitutes the scriptural understanding of salvation, a central tenet of Protestant faiths, appeared to be endorsed by the Roman Catholic and Protestant signatories, which included several Southern Baptists.

"We understand that what we here affirm is in agreement with what the Reformation traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*)," the document reads. The statement also noted, "We agree that justification is not earned by any good works or merits of our own; it is entirely God's gift."

"This is the first time that evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics have publicly agreed to a common understanding of salvation," said Roman Catholic participant Richard John Neuhaus of the Religion and Public Life Institute.

The statement grew out of an initiative known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" begun in 1994. The group's initial report that year noted a growing "convergence and cooperation" between evangelicals and Catholics in many public tasks, Neuhaus noted.

The original ECT document sparked extensive debate among Southern Baptists, however. While intended by the signers to create greater cooperation on moral and social concerns between evangelicals and Catholics, the protest over the document prompted Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and Larry Lewis, former president of the Home Mission Board, to remove their signatures from the document in April 1995.

The statement on 'Salvation released Nov. 12 bears the signatures of Southern Baptists Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship and Timothy George, dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

## Land reverses decision

Land removed his signature from the current document after agreeing to sign it earlier in the week. Although he acknowledged that "The Gift of Salvation" is "a conscious clarification of the points that some considered ambiguous" in the Evangelicals and Catholics Together document of 1994, Land concluded that readers will "misunderstand the document and possibly even feel the document is contradictory."

In an introduction to the forthcoming release of the text of "The Gift of Salvation" in the December issue of *Christianity Today*, Timothy George wrote: "The Gift

of Salvation' directly addresses two important topics of perceived ambiguity in ECT: the doctrine of justification by faith alone and the biblical mandate for world missions and world evangelization."

While "persistent and serious differences" remain, George said he is confident the statement is in line with Baptist belief. "I don't believe this document comprises one iota of historic Baptist theology or historic evangelical theology, in any way," he insisted. "If I felt that, I wouldn't have signed it and participated in it."

Evangelicals have historically used justification by faith alone as a criterion to judge "our practice, our worship and our theology," George said, explaining that the Reformers opposed the Catholic Church's use of indulgences and some of the excesses of Marion piety and other matters that still exist.

"We still have to call our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters to a further reformation of the church based on the Word of God," he said. "That task is not finished."

"This is a statement about clarification for one thing," George said, "and it is also a statement that is made with a recognition that we are seeking to speak with both clarity and charity to one another in a spirit of love but also a spirit seeking truth."

"We are not interested in Christian unity at the expense of Christian truth," George added. "We believe the only kind of unity that is worth having is a unity based on the truth of God's Word in Scripture. That has been the guiding principle of our discussions."

NEW YORK (BP)

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## MINISTRY

### Foundation offers free seminars

**NOTING THAT** "studies indicate approximately 67 percent of senior adults in the United States have made no plans for what will be done with their estates after their death," Paul White emphasized that "stewardship in planning for the distribution and management of our God-given resources after our death is just as important as the stewardship of these same resources during life."

White, vice president and general counsel for the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, said the Foundation staff members "feel that many of our Baptist people have failed to make estate plans because of a lack of reliable information about the subject. One of our purposes at the Foundation is to make information about estate planning and charitable giving available to every Baptist in Arkansas."

He noted that the Foundation staff is available to help through free estate planning seminars conducted in churches. Both White and Foundation president David Moore have conducted estate planning seminars throughout the state.

"We have nothing to sell through our seminars," Moore remarked, "and we are not attempting to raise money for a particular Baptist cause. This allows us to more effectively educate and inform Baptist people about estate planning without burdening them with a sales pitch."

Moore and White are available to conduct the seminars throughout the year. For additional information or to schedule a seminar, contact the Foundation office in Little Rock at 501-376-0732 or toll-free at 1-800-798-0969.

### Medical fund established

In other Foundation news, Moore reported that "a special endowment fund for indigent patient care" has been established at the Foundation that will benefit Baptist hospitals in India, Yemen and Ghana.

"Earnings from the funds are distributed through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board to assist these hospitals in continuing to provide medical care for the impoverished in these countries," Moore explained.

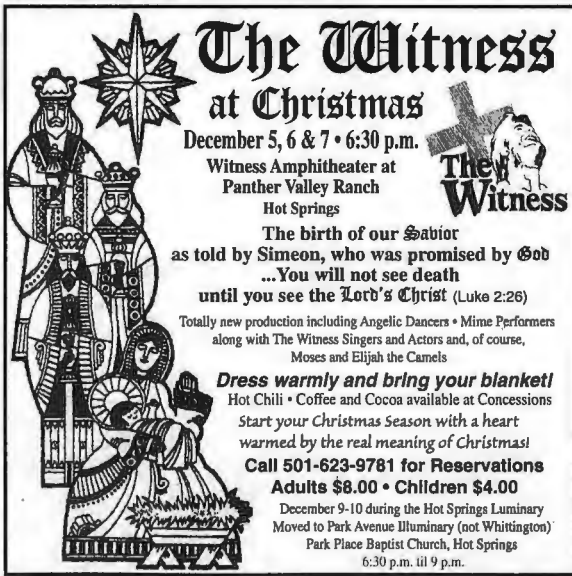
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# HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS




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## European Baptist Convention extends boundaries

**T**HE EUROPEAN Baptist Convention voted to extend its boundaries by accepting Emirates Baptist Church, International of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, into full membership during the convention's 34th annual meeting.

According to Gary Hawkins, interim pastor of Emirates Baptist Church, "Our church is not in Europe, but Europe is in the UAE." The European Baptist Convention includes 68 English-language

churches in 22 countries in Europe.

The convention's annual meeting, held at Faith Baptist Church in Kaiserslautern, Germany, focused on the theme, "Let Him Shine." Messengers elected host pastor Jimmy Martin as convention president.

The convention approved a 1998 budget of \$407,727, an increase of 0.9 percent from the 1997 budget.

The convention's outgoing president,

Race Lariscy, led in a dedication blessing of the convention's new general secretary, James Hefflin, and his wife, Wilma.

Emil Turner, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, spoke during the Thursday morning session. Arkansas Baptists currently are involved in a six-year missions partnership with the European convention.

"How long has it been since Jesus touched you?" Turner asked participants. Speaking from Mark 1:40-41, Turner described how Jesus touched the leper and healed him. From this account, Christians can learn several things about Jesus touching their lives, Turner said: There must be proximity, availability, humility, purity and intensity.

Noting that the leper desired nothing more than Jesus' touch, Turner asked, "Is there something you want more than Jesus' touch? If so, He won't touch you. Once He touches your life, you won't care where He sends you next...because you will go in His power."

In the closing sermon of the convention, Paul Hendrix, pastor of Grace International Baptist Church in Heidelberg, Germany, spoke about "God's Plan for Letting Him Shine."

As a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Army, Hendrix noted that every mission must have three parts. He said there must be an objective (what is going to happen), a strategy (a plan for what is to happen), and tactics (specific maneuvers that must happen).

Emphasizing that the convention's mission to "Let Him Shine" is no different, Hendrix said John 17 reflects God's plan for accomplishing this task. He said the objective is that the world may believe in God, the strategy is unity and the tactic is love. Describing love as the "flaming glory" that makes Jesus visible, he said love is the tactic that will overcome the world.

KAISERSLAUTERN, GERMANY (BP)

Park Hill Baptist Church welcomes

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# Annuitants get increase

## Annuity Board trustees authorize increases in benefits and relief

**T**RUSTEES of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board voted to give a 10 percent permanent increase in January 1998 to most of the 28,000 retirees in pay status in December 1997. The action came during their Nov. 3-4 meeting in Dallas.

Trustees also voted to increase Adopt An Annuitant supplementary benefits by 50 percent, to \$75 a month. People on the board's relief roll also will receive 10 percent increases in their checks at the end of January.

Treasurer William C. Lee reported on contributions and earnings through the third quarter, saying total assets reached \$6.41 billion, up 13.1 percent from \$5.67 billion at the beginning of the year. Lee reported net income of \$785 million in the first nine months, compared to \$412 million for the same period in 1996. Participant contributions were \$211 million, an increase of 15.3 percent over the first nine months of 1996. Benefit payments and withdrawals reached \$239 million.

The trustee administrative policy committee, chaired by Joseph Mack of South Carolina, recommended, and trustees adopted, a 1998 operating budget of \$44.3 million, an increase of slightly more than 4 percent over the 1997 spending plan. The Annuity Board receives no Cooperative Program funds for operations, but pays all expenses from charges against assets.

The benefit increase, the seventh in 10 years, and the largest since 1992, will apply to certain annuities funded from defined contribution accumulations coming from the Church Annuity Plan, Convention Annuity Plan and Voluntary Annuity Plan, as well as Plan A retired and deferred benefits. Also receiving the increase will be people eligible for

International Mission Board past-service benefits (deferred or in pay status). People still employed, who have deferred Plan A benefits, will receive the increase on Plan A when they annuitize that portion of their retirement program.

The 10 percent increase will not be paid to variable annuities or to death and disability benefits paid as a result of the Church Annuity Plan's protection section. Protection section benefits are paid from a separate fund. The increase also will not apply to fixed-period benefits of less than five years, or to installment benefits.

O.S. Hawkins, having just completed his first month as Annuity Board president, said, "This is what we are about — blessing the lives of the servants of God. Our investment success will always be channeled to the annuitants who have entrusted their funds to our plans. Every annuitant will have good places to spend the increased income."

### 'Adoptee' rates increased

Hawkins also said, "I am particularly pleased we have been able to increase relief and Adopt An Annuitant benefits. These are the people who need it the most. More than half the people on relief receive no regular annuity benefit because they were never enrolled in the Church Annuity Plan."

The Adopt An Annuitant benefit, which has been \$50 a month since the

program was started in 1981, will provide \$75 a month to nearly 2,800 individuals or couples with low monthly benefits.

In other meeting news, trustees heard that comprehensive medical plan rates in the Personal Security Program (PSP), offered by the board, will enter 1998 without a rate increase.

Actuaries and consultants concluded the plan could go forward at its present rates, Virgil Ayres, chairman of the trustee insurance committee, said during the trustee meeting. The announcement comes at a time when numerous media reports are projecting a new rise in medical costs.

Ayres, a Pineville, La., insurance agency owner, said, "We hope an increasing number of churches will budget health coverage just like they do property insurance for the church. It isn't fair to make pastors and staff pay for their coverage from a salary package. Medical coverage for the ministers ought to be seen as a cost of being a church."

Terry R. Wade, managing director of the board's actuarial division, noted the latest increase will raise the "old Plan A" benefit to 269.6 percent of its original formula benefit.

Trustees also used their Nov. 3 evening dinner as a time of tribute to Paul W. Powell, who retired as president Sept. 30, and remembered trustee Albert Lee Smith of Alabama, who died Aug. 12.

DALLAS (BP)

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**Seeking** — Full-time minister of music and education. Send resume to Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 160, Murfreesboro, AR 71958.

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## Ouachita Baptist University

**Festival of Christmas:** Ouachita's sixth annual Festival of Christmas program will be presented Dec. 5 and 6 at 7:30 p.m. in OBU's Jones Performing Arts Center. The community holiday concert, which features a variety of sacred and secular Christmas music, is sponsored by OBU's division of music and department of theatre arts. The show will include performances by the Concert Choir, Ouachita Singers, Ouachita Sounds, Praise Singers, OBU Handbell Ringers and Ouachita Wind Ensemble. Free tickets are available. Call 870-245-5129.

**Missions award:** William P. Steeger, chairman of OBU's division of religion and philosophy, and his wife, Susan, recently received the 11th annual "John and Jewel Abernathy Foreign Mission Service Award."

The award was presented during a recent missions banquet held at First Church, Hot Springs. The Steegers served as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries in Ethiopia, Seychelles and South Africa before he joined the OBU faculty. Mrs. Steeger works with developmentally disabled adults through a non-profit organization in Arkadelphia.

## Williams Baptist College

**Education chair funded:** A recent estate gift has enabled Williams to

establish the LaDelle Moody Chair of Education. Mrs. Moody, a retired public school teacher who died in 1995, was a longtime supporter of Williams. WBC president Jerol Swain said the college has received \$690,000 from Mrs. Moody's estate during the past two years, providing funding for the education chair, scholarship endowment and capital improvements.

### History book:

History professor Kenneth Startup, WBC's vice president for academic affairs, has published a new book, *The Root of All Evil: The Protestant Clergy and the Economic Mind of the Old South*. Startup noted that the book focuses on the economic forces that he believes helped bring about the Civil War. *The Root of All Evil* is published by the University of Georgia Press.

**WOW! draws record crowd:** More than 280 high school juniors and seniors visited Williams in November for the annual WOW! preview day. The number surpassed last year's record by 40.

WOW! (World of Williams) allows prospective students to preview classes and to stay overnight in the residence halls. "We continue to be delighted with the interest Williams is getting from these students," remarked Angela Flippo, WBC admissions director. "Many of these students came from hours away just to take a look at our campus."

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### Family Bible Walking in the Light

By Jimmy Barrentine, director,  
ABSC missions department

**Basic passage:**  
1 John 1:1-2:11

**Focal passage:**  
1 John 1:5-10; 2:3-11

**Central truth:**  
In a dark and troubled world,  
God's people can walk  
in the light.

Elda was finally in the hospital. For years, she had gotten up from the bed to make her nightly trip to the kitchen for a glass of water. With absolute resolve, she refused to turn on a light. The fall seemed sudden and unexpected. In truth, it was an overdue appointment with darkness.

Like Elda, many people walk about in a dark world pretending that they can see perfectly well. Little wonder so many trip and fall.

During a missions presentation in one of my favorite spots, DeQueen, Ark., I asked if anybody there could tell me what a missionary is. A small boy spoke up immediately, "A missionary is a whirleychopper whose batteries don't work." I never quite determined what he meant, but his remark does help me make an assessment in regard to the Lord Jesus. He is like a flashlight whose batteries never run low. He lights our path and shows us the way through a dark and troubled world.

Because He is Light, we can see. This Light in which there is no darkness gives God's people the confidence needed to walk with secure steps (1 John 1:5).

We walk in confidence because the Light shows us where the pitfalls and obstacles are. The real pitfall is sin. His light reveals sin and helps us avoid it.

We walk in confidence because the Light shows us where our helpers are. When God's people walk in the Light, they are able to find fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7). In a troubled world, it is good to be able to see the faces and find the hands of those willing to help. God's Light makes that possible.

God's people can walk in confidence because the Light helps us see His footprints. Scripture makes it clear that if we are His, we ought to walk like Him (1 John 2:6). The Light of Jesus helps us see His footprints and safely follow Him through a dark and troubled world.

### Life and Work Move out of my comfort zone?

By Danny Bryson,  
minister of education,  
First Church, Hot Springs

**Basic passage:**  
Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 42:1-9

**Focal passage:**  
Genesis 12:1-3

**Central truth:**  
God wants to move us into  
the action of sharing Jesus  
beyond our comfort zones.

The thought of moving rubs most of us the wrong way. Whether moving across town or across country, it usually stirs up much anxiety. Even with the promises of greener pastures, we give a half-hearted smile. We just cringe at the idea of pulling up roots and getting adjusted to something foreign.

God called Abram to abandon nearly everything familiar. Why should he have to give up extended family, friends and country? Why move to a place he had never even seen? Why couldn't God just bless him where he was?

Moving out of our comfort zone gives a fresh perspective on life. We moved out of familiar territory a couple of years ago. Wasn't easy. However, we have realized He has a purpose and a plan. We often see evidence that shores up our faith. Just as with Abram, God blessed us and is helpfully using us to bless others.

Change causes us to be more dependent on God. This spiritually sensitizes us. We realize

people are the same and their needs are the same around us and around the world. Maybe God moves us in order to move in us and through us.

So, how was God going to bless all the people of the world through Abram? Did Abram have a vision of how it could be? I don't think so. I believe he was clueless. By the end of his life he may have seen some of the promises come true. God made a great nation. He even made Abraham's new name great.

Through Abraham's lineage came the blessing to all people. Christ the Savior lived and died, and lived again! This same message we take for granted should be our heart throb. God's purpose goes on. God's message needs to go on.

Strange thing though, God, the prime mover of creation, chooses to move us out of our comfort zones. God moves in mysterious ways, not always a geographical move. Are you willing to allow God to move you in a way so that others might be moved to accept the greatest gift?

### Explore the Bible Don't give up!

By B. Aldon Dixon,  
vice president  
for student services,  
Ouachita Baptist University

**Basic passage:**  
Genesis 27:1-28:9

**Focal passage:**  
Genesis 28:3-4

**Central truth:**  
God never gives up on us  
regardless of our sins.

What happened to you when you read the focal passage? My thoughts always turn to how unhappy Isaac's family must have been.

Joe arrived as a freshman who was happy to get away from his abusive, alcoholic father and an unhappy home. But he had learned well the lessons of cunning, lying, disruptive behavior and drinking. There was something about Joe that radiated through all the trauma of his past. He had a smile, a desire to change his lifestyle, and in his own words, "to make something of himself." God gave me a special feeling for Joe despite all the problems that he caused. We talked often, because his actions led to probation, and then suspension from the university.

Once when I bailed him out of jail, he said to me, "This may have been the best thing that ever happened to me." Joe returned to Tulsa, and he talked with me often by phone. I prayed for him often between the time I first met him and his admission into another university. He later became a Christian, an active churchman and a

deacon. He has a beautiful family and God has used Joe in a career as a chief administrator of a prison system. God has used Joe's story to teach me some valuable lessons:

- Listen attentively when God speaks to you about a person. He may just use you as an instrument to help train, yes, even discipline that one that He has chosen for a specific task.

- Love the person unconditionally, in spite of all his or her bad decisions, mistakes and sins.

- Don't judge the value of one of God's children. He made that person in His own image!

- Pray constantly even when you don't know why you are doing it; remember God's ways are not our ways.

Many of us would have written Jacob off as a "no good" because of his deceit, his thefts, his disobedience, his lack of feeling for family members, and his selfishness — but God didn't.

God is in the business of taking potential "no good" characters and using them for His kingdom's purpose. Can we afford to do less?

In my second year of school, a very large dog taught me that there are times when it is perfectly acceptable to be motivated by fear. Holding down a job has shown me that there are those times when we must be motivated by duty. Having been less than a perfect child, I learned from my mother that guilt can also motivate.

As powerful as those motivators are, they do little to move us toward a purity of life that is internal as well as external. Only love can do that. Fear not eased by the hope that love extends can lead to despair. Duty not endowed with love can lead to bitterness. Guilt not set aside by the power of love can lead to greater and broader levels of misbehavior. It takes love to penetrate and purify us from within. God's love lavished on us causes us to experience internal change and gives us hope.

In the King James text, 1 John 3:1 says that God's love has been "bestowed upon us." It means exactly what we try to say with expres-

sions like, "His grandmother showered him with kisses." It is a lavish, even extravagant, extension of love. It is love that is demonstrated, shared, expressed. It is Jesus on Calvary. It is the God of all creation calling us His children. We want to be pure because we are so greatly loved.

Out of the experience of knowing that we are loved in this extravagant manner; an internal response comes that changes our spiritual genetic coding. 1 John 3:2 makes it clear that we are encoded by the Holy Spirit to become like Jesus. We grow in purity because God's love and our response to His love have changed us to the core. We were once the children of this world. We are now God's children. We will eventually grow up to be like Him.

God's love, lavish enough to change us from the inside out, gives us hope, confidence, an optimistic outlook. Sometimes sin overwhelms us, but we do not despair. Eventually, we will be like Him. His love will make it so.

Flying in an old, two-seater, one engine, no parachute, plane at night can be pretty scary! My buddy who was taking flying lessons conked me into going on his first night flight. After take-off we looked up into a black sky and I had no sense of where we were or where we were going.

Once we leveled off at our cruising altitude I could begin to see the tiny lights of cars on a highway He was flying by compass and landmarks of lights. We followed the lights on the highway to a cluster of lights, the next little town. Some were quite bright even as far away as we were. I finally began to gain a sense of direction and security as I could identify these highways and burgs acting as our guiding lights.

Eventually, we spotted the airport beacon, circled our destination and came in for our final approach. The airport was illuminated like a Christmas yard display. The runway, brightly defined, was a welcome sight. There were even landing lights that shone one color if you

approached at too low of an angle or another if too high. We touched down with a sigh of relief and knew we were home free.

Now I realize how a lost person must feel. Looking into the blackness of no hope and no sense of direction, fear sets in. All alone, there is no feeling of security or safety. Death seems too close for comfort. But wait. There are a few glimmers of hope. Look, a guiding light, a warm glow beckoning. Bright beacons showing the way. Friendly lamps instructing how to land on solid ground, a resting place.

Can you be a light along the way? Maybe you would be the first light of a caring gesture or a kind word. Your friendship and testimony might draw a lost person closer. You may be the one to witness and lead that one to Christ. Perhaps you could pray and give so someone else could go and share far away. Would you be the one to go on a short-term mission trip? Pray. Ask God how He wants you to light the world. Then shine!

Ever slept with your head on a rock? Probably not. Ever been on the run from something that you did? Perhaps not. Ever meet God in a strange place? Hopefully so!

Jacob was on the run. Suddenly he felt very alone, isolated by his own choices, and in the desert, both physically and spiritually. When Jacob put his head on the rock, he had no idea of what lay ahead. He met God - personally, in a most unusual place, at a most inappropriate time, and in a way that he least expected to meet Him!

Most Christians know that God is omnipresent. Why then are we surprised when we meet God in an unusual way or place?

Recently I sat in an airport doing one of my favorite things - observing people. I could see a young man who had every appearance of what I perceived as a gang member. The black leather vest, the long, disheveled hair, several tattoos on each arm, a collection of earrings in both ears, and silver chains that hung low from his drooping waistline. And then I noticed he was reading -

and for the next several minutes he read - from a Bible. A surprise! Then he bowed his head, obviously was in earnest prayer. Some passerby probably thought he was napping, but I knew he was praying. He, an unlikely candidate in my opinion, was meeting God in an unusual place. His prayer was interrupted only by his flight call.

God used this incident to remind me that He is found in some strange places. Not all of His children fit our stereotypes and many of them will not be worshipping as we do this Sunday. But God says to them, as He does to us, "I am with you" (v. 15).

Jacob found God in a desert, and God reiterated the promise that He had given to his grandfather, Abraham, "I am with you..." (v. 15). God spoke to Abraham, to Jacob, to the young man in the airport, and He speaks to each of us.

Do we allow God to be with us in every situation of life? Do we say with confidence as Jacob said, "Surely the Lord is in the place, and I did not know it."

## Family Bible Growing in purity

By Jimmy Barentine, director,  
ABSC missions department

**Basic passage:**

1 John 3

**Focal passage:**

1 John 3:1-5, 9-18

**Central truth:**

The love of God motivates us to grow in purity.

## Life and Work Light the way

By Danny Bryson,  
minister of education,  
First Church, Hot Springs

**Basic passage:**

Matthew 5:14-16; 9:35-38;  
28:19-20; Philippians 4:14-19

**Focal passage:**

Matthew 5:14-16; 9:37-38

**Central truth:**

We must each do everything we can, everywhere we can, to reach everyone we can.

## Explore the Bible Where is He found?

By B. Aldon Dixon,  
vice president  
for student services,  
Ouachita Baptist University

**Basic passage:**

Genesis 28:10-22

**Focal passage:**

Genesis 28:16

**Central truth:**

Don't ever be surprised where you meet God!



## subscriber services

The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine offers subscription plans at three rates:

■ **The Every Resident Family Plan** offers churches a premium rate when they send the Newsmagazine to all their resident households. Resident families are calculated to be at least one-fourth of the church's Sunday School enrollment. Churches who send only to members who request a subscription do not qualify for this lower rate of \$6.36 per year for each subscription.

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## House panel approves religion amendment

WASHINGTON (ABP)—For the first time since the Bill of Rights, a U.S. House of Representatives committee has approved a constitutional amendment addressing religious liberty.

The House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution has approved a revised version of the Religious Freedom Amendment on a party-line 8-4 vote with Republicans in favor and Democrats against.

The proposal offered by Reps. Ernest Frank, R-Ola., and Senator Bishop, D-Ga., would insert for the first time a reference to "God" in the Constitution and would allow for some forms of government-sponsored religious speech and school-sponsored prayer. It would also open the door for vouchers and other government money to religious groups that would otherwise be barred by the First Amendment's establishment clause.

The Istook proposal passed the committee after six amendments offered by Democrats failed and after a substitute proposal offered by Rep. Asa Hutchinson, R-Ark., passed. Among changes in the substitute, Hutchinson's proposal would bar government from establishing an "official religion."

## Voucher plan defeated in U.S. House

WASHINGTON (ABP)—House lawmakers defeated a bill Nov. 4 that would have allowed states to give federal education funds to low-income families to pay for tuition at private schools, including religious schools.

The House voted 228-191 against the Helping Empower Low-Income Parents (HELP) Scholarships Amendment, which would have used funds provided through Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 for the vouchers. The bill would have established the first national program for education vouchers.

Voucher proponents said the plan would allow low-income students to escape a failing system and improve public schools through competition. Opponents countered that vouchers would hurt public schools and that private schools' discriminatory admissions policies would give them an unfair advantage in competing for federal funds.

## Alabama injunction orders halt to prayer in schools

FORT PAYNE, AL (BP)—In Alabama's ongoing school prayer battle, U.S. District Judge Ira DeMent has issued a permanent injunction against the governor, state attorney general and state board of education from enforcing a 1993 state law permitting prayer in schools.

DeMent's injunction was his legal response to DeKalb County officials who refused to halt the religious activity DeMent determined unconstitutional in a March decision concerning a 1995 lawsuit filed by Michael Chandler, assistant principal at Valley Head High School in DeKalb County.

Gov. Fob James has promised to fight DeMent's injunction "by every legal and political means, with every ounce of strength I possess" and Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor announced Nov. 7 that the state will challenge portions of the ruling.

## Ministry retreat seeks to help 'wounded heroes'

DALLAS (BP)—Noting that there were 6,000 Southern Baptist ministers who walked away from their ministries last year, including 1,500 who were fired, Southern Baptist evangelist Freddie Gage said, "There is a better way."

Gage is hosting a Rapa Ministry to Ministers retreat for "wounded heroes" Jan. 26-31 at the Cooper Aerobics Center in north Dallas. The retreat is part of a program designed to meet the needs of pastors, missionaries, church staff, denominational workers, evangelists, their wives and families. Gage explained:

Speakers include James Draper, president of the World's Sunday School Board; O.S. Hawkins, president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board; Paul Powell, former Annuity Board president; Kenneth Cooper, president and founder of Cooper Aerobic Centers; Jack Graham, pastor of Firstwood Baptist Church, Dallas; and Rick Lineberger, pastor of First Baptist Church, Grapevine, Texas.

Retreat topics include: stress in the ministry; saving the minister for the ministry; busy preachers & lonely wives; and who pastors quit. Additional information is available by calling toll-free 1-800-257-2742.

# NEWS DIGEST